

RESPOND RESOURCE HUB

Support Worker 101 Starter Checklist

A practical shift check for NDIS support workers

Created 3 September 2026 by RESPOND Therapeutic Services

Use this checklist when starting work with a participant and revisit it whenever their support, risks or circumstances change. This is a practice support sheet, not a replacement for participant-specific plans, workplace procedures or legal requirements.

NDIS rules and guidance change. Review [ndiscommission.gov.au](https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au) regularly and update your practice accordingly.

Before my first shift

- ☐ The participant has had the opportunity to tell me what matters to them and how they want to be supported.
- ☐ We have a shared understanding of the agreed support and the purpose of my role.
- ☐ I have read the current documents I am authorised to access.
- ☐ I know the participant's goals, preferences, routines, identity and strengths.
- ☐ I know how the participant communicates choices, discomfort and consent.
- ☐ I have asked who the participant wants involved in decisions and discussions.
- ☐ I understand that an NDIS nominee's authority concerns NDIS matters and does not automatically extend to health, personal-care or lifestyle decisions.
- ☐ For a child participant, I recognise parental responsibility and involve the child in decisions in a way that reflects their age, maturity, communication and circumstances.
- ☐ I understand the participant's view of relevant risks and the agreed ways to manage them.
- ☐ I am trained, competent and authorised for every task I am expected to perform.
- ☐ I do not diagnose, independently provide professional therapy, or represent myself as qualified to perform work outside my role. Where I assist with a therapeutic program, I follow the responsible practitioner's delegation and instructions.
- ☐ My required screening, licences, qualifications and training are current.
- ☐ I have completed the Worker Orientation Module where required by the provider's registration obligations.
- ☐ I know what to do if instructions are missing, unclear or inconsistent.

I know where to find

- ☐ emergency information and contacts
- ☐ medication, manual handling and seizure support instructions, where relevant
- ☐ assessment, planning and worker-skill requirements for high-intensity daily personal activities, where relevant
- ☐ the participant's behaviour support plan, where relevant
- ☐ incident and escalation procedures
- ☐ shift or progress note and record-keeping requirements
- ☐ the complaints process
- ☐ independent advocacy and external complaint options
- ☐ on-call, supervisor or provider contact details
- ☐ my documented incident process and direct reporting contacts if I work independently

At the start of each shift

- ☐ I speak directly with the participant and ask what matters to them today.
- ☐ I check consent rather than relying only on past agreement.
- ☐ I confirm any relevant changes in health, plans, appointments, risks or support needs.
- ☐ I check that I have the information and equipment needed to work safely.
- ☐ I clarify conflicting instructions before acting, unless immediate safety action is required.

During the shift

- ☐ I use the participant's preferred communication method and allow enough time for them to respond.
- ☐ I offer choices in a way the participant can understand.
- ☐ I ask how the participant wants help and start with the least assistance needed.
- ☐ I ask before touching the person, entering private spaces, handling belongings, taking photos or sharing information.
- ☐ I respect a change of mind or withdrawal of consent.
- ☐ I balance safety with the participant's right to make decisions and take reasonable risks.
- ☐ I use the least restrictive practical option.
- ☐ I follow current participant-specific instructions and stay within my role and competence.
- ☐ I keep professional boundaries clear, including around gifts, money, social media and personal contact.
- ☐ I do not engage in sexual behaviour, sexual misconduct or an inappropriate relationship with any participant I support.
- ☐ I do not flirt, date, use sexualised comments or messages, make unnecessary intimate disclosures, touch inappropriately or create a secret or "special" relationship.
- ☐ I recognise that apparent consent or initiation by a participant does not remove my responsibility to maintain the professional boundary.
- ☐ If a participant directs sexualised behaviour towards me, I set a respectful boundary, protect their dignity and follow the agreed support and escalation process.
- ☐ I report suspected or alleged sexual misconduct immediately through the provider's incident procedure, or through my documented incident process if I work independently.
- ☐ I understand that registered NDIS providers must notify the NDIS Commission within 24 hours of becoming aware of actual or alleged sexual misconduct, including grooming.
- ☐ I protect private information in conversations, messages, photographs, devices and records.
- ☐ I do not enter participant information into personal apps, unapproved AI tools or personal cloud storage.
- ☐ I accurately record any participant money, purchases, property or expenses I handle.
- ☐ I record time, expenses and claims accurately. I never claim for support that was not delivered or misrepresent the service, time or price.

Before ending the shift

- ☐ I check with the participant what has been completed, what remains outstanding and what they want communicated.
- ☐ Relevant changes, concerns and follow-up actions have been communicated through the correct channel.
- ☐ My shift or progress note records facts, the participant's voice, the support provided, changes, actions and outcomes.
- ☐ I have separated observation from information reported by others and from my interpretation.
- ☐ My language is neutral and respectful, without labels or judgement.
- ☐ My time, travel, expenses and support records are accurate.
- ☐ Records have been saved in the approved system and private information is secure.

If something changes or goes wrong

- ☐ I respond first to immediate safety and call 000 for an immediate threat to life or serious injury.
- ☐ I listen to the participant, preserve their words and explain what will happen next in a way they can understand.
- ☐ I report the matter promptly through the provider's incident or escalation pathway, or through my documented incident process and directly to the relevant authority where required if I work independently.
- ☐ I record what I observed, heard, did and who I notified.
- ☐ I use the participant's own words where relevant and avoid leading questions.
- ☐ I do not promise secrecy, investigate beyond my role or confront someone in a way that increases risk.
- ☐ I seek further advice if the internal response does not address a safety or quality concern.
- ☐ I support the participant to make a complaint or access an independent advocate if they choose.
- ☐ I consider whether a separate legal reporting duty applies in my state or territory.

Five questions when I am unsure

- ☐ What does the participant want?
- ☐ Do I have clear consent?
- ☐ Is this within my role, training and authority?
- ☐ Is there a less restrictive or more independence-building option?
- ☐ Do I need to record, report or seek advice?

If you cannot answer these questions, pause and clarify unless immediate action is needed to prevent serious harm.

My essential contacts

Provider or supervisor	
After-hours or on-call	
Incident reporting location	
Emergency	000

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission: 1800 035 544 | ndiscommission.gov.au