

Media Release



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Carers Australia is the national peak body for carers. Our vision is an Australia that values and supports the contribution that carers make both to the people they care for and to the community as a whole.

Anglicare report confirms that disability support programs must take into account the needs of carers and families

Carers Australia welcomes the report released by Anglicare yesterday on *Caring for a Child with an Intellectual Disability and Challenging Behaviours*. The report dramatically highlights the strain on families caring for such children. Access to suitable, affordable respite care to allow families to take a break from focussing on the care and management of the child and to spend some time focussing on themselves and each other is paramount among these needs.

Among the report's recommendations is that, in providing support packages for people with an intellectual disability, the Federal Government through the NDIS should take into account the needs of parent carers and siblings and to undertake a separate assessment of these needs.

"While understanding that the NDIS is for people with disabilities, Carers Australia has advocated strongly that the needs of carers and their families also need to be taken into account," said Ara Cresswell, CEO of Carers Australia.

"This applies to all family and friend carers, not just those caring for someone with an intellectual disability.

"Last week I visited the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) at Geelong with the Assistant Minister for Social Services, Senator Mitch Fifield. Although I was most impressed with the services that were being provided to the first intake of NDIA clients, it was clear that if, as a carer, I asked for respite to be made available I would need to seek supports outside of the agency.

"While such assistance to families can be sought under the NDIS, carers need to learn a special language to have their request considered.

"For example, we have been told by carers of children with a disability under 6 years old that if they need respite the request must be framed in terms of the direct benefits to the child and not in terms of their own needs.

"The requirement to learn and navigate such a circuitous route to accessing necessary supports is both frustrating and worrying, especially since existing respite funding for carers from programs outside the NDIS is being transferred into the NDIS," said Ms Cresswell.

"We are concerned that carers will go without the assistance they need to sustain their caring role and their own health and wellbeing because they are not versed in 'NDIS talk' and processes."

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