

Supported Decision Making



When your child is young, you will make decisions about their life.

These might be decisions like:

- when to go to the doctor
- what school to go to
- what to eat for dinner

As your child grows into an adult, they will want to make more decisions about their life.

It is important for parents to help their children learn to make decisions for themselves, even if they need support.

This is called supported decision making.



What is on this page?

This page is about supported decision making.

It has information about:

- what is supported decision making
- how to support your child to make choices
- making choices for teenagers
- making choices for adults
- consent and keeping private
- things you can try to help support decision making



What is supported decision making

Supported decision making means helping your child to make their own choices.

If your child has a disability or autism, they might need extra support to learn how to make decisions about their life.

Some children will grow into adults who can make many decisions by themselves.



Some children will need extra support to make decisions through their life.

This is OK.

Everybody needs help making decisions sometimes.

Supported decision making is an important way for parents to help their child to grow up safely.

It can help your child to build their skills and their confidence.

There are three rules for supported decision making.



1. Everybody has the right to make decisions about their own life
2. Everybody should have access to good support that can help them make decisions.
3. Respect the wishes of the person you are supporting to make decisions



How to support your child to make choices

You can help your child to practice making decisions in day to day life.

Decision making takes lots of practice.

It is important to let your child make decisions, even if they make mistakes.

Learning from mistakes is a great way to learn about positive choices.

You can practice this each day by offering your child two to three choices about things like:

- what they want to wear
 - Red shirt?
 - Blue shirt?
 - Yellow shirt?





- what movie they want to watch
 - Frozen?
 - Lego Movie?
 - Minions?
- what snack they want to eat
 - Muesli bar?
 - Yoghurt?
 - Fruit?

It is OK if your child chooses the same thing every day.

This is a choice they are making for themselves.

As your child grows up, you can give them choices about harder things like:

- what to spend their pocket money on
- what haircut they want



- which activity they want to go to

By practicing making small decisions when they are young, your child can learn to make bigger decisions as they grow up.

Making choices for teenagers



As your child grows into a teenager, they will need to make bigger choices about their life.

Teenagers might make harder choices like:

- which activities they want to go to
- who they want to be friends with
- how they want to dress

They might also start to think about:

- who they like or do not like
- their gender



To learn more about sexuality and gender, go to: [Supporting gender and sexual identity](#)

Parents might feel worried when their teenager starts to make more choices for themselves.



This is OK.

It is important to talk to your teenager about choices.

You can tell them how you can support them to make good decisions.

Sometimes teenagers might want to make a choice that is not safe.

For example, they might want to drive in a car without a seatbelt.



It is important to help them understand why it is not a safe choice instead of just saying 'No'.

Teenagers might also want to make decisions about their own health.

For example the might want to see the doctor on their own.

It is important to help your teenager to be involved in their health care and support as they grow.



This is because services like:

- the doctor
- the NDIS
- disability service providers

will include your teenager in making choices more and more as they get closer to 18 years old.

It is important to involve your teenager in making choices about health, even if they are still building their skills.

This is so they can be confident in understanding their own needs.

It will also help them to manage their own needs when they are an adult, even if they need support.



Making choices for adults

When your teenager grows into a young adult they will need to make bigger choices about their life, just like you do.

This can seem scary for parents and carers, especially if your teenager needs lots of support.

Adult decisions can include things like:

- their life goals
- what they want in their NDIS plan
- which services they want to use
- how to spend their own money
- making choices about their health care and support
- whether they want to move out of home



- whether they want to date, find a partner or have sex
- whether they want to have a baby

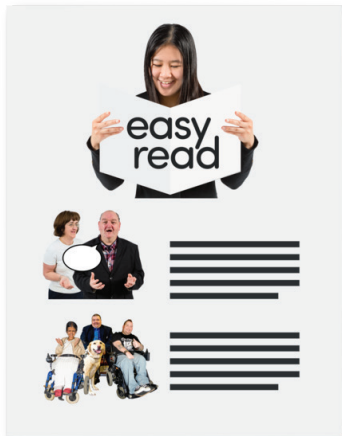
You can help your teenager to make informed decisions about their life.

An informed decision means having all of the information you need to make a choice that is best for you.

To make an informed decision, your teenager will need information that is easy for them to understand.

This might be:

- easy read information
- pictures
- videos





It might also mean that you need more time to explain different things and ask questions.

This is so your teenager can get all of the information they need to make a choice.

It is important to talk to services to make sure they have information that is easy for your teenager to understand.

It is also important to make sure that your teenager can ask questions in their appointment.

You can also support your teenager by making sure that doctors and services speak to them directly when they have an appointment.



Consent and keeping private

When your teenager grows into a young adult, it is important to know about consent and confidentiality laws.

They are laws that help keep your young adults' information private.

Consent and confidentiality laws are laws that help your young adult to make choices about their life.

Consent and confidentiality laws are different in every state in Australia.

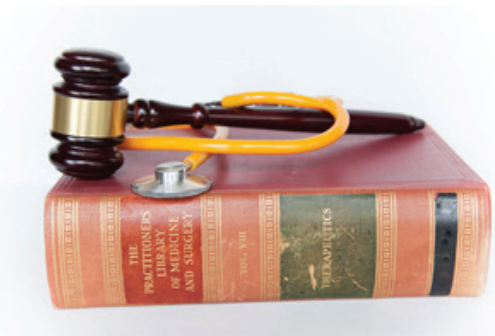
Consent and confidentiality laws can change what information is shared with parents and carers.

Confidentiality laws happen automatically.

This means that they start when your teenager reaches a certain age.

The age at which a teenager has automatic confidentiality rights is:

- 14 years and over in the Northern Territory
- 16 and over in New South Wales and South Australia
- 18 and over everywhere else in Australia



This means that health professionals have to keep what your teenager says private from everyone, including parents and carers.



If your teenager cannot make decisions by themselves, it is important to talk to the administrative tribunal or public guardian early.

The administrative tribunal or public guardian can help you to make a plan for supporting your teenager to make decisions.

If your teenager cannot make decisions or give consent, it is still important to give them information about decisions that are being made.



Resources for you to use

Health fact sheets

Council for Intellectual Disability

www.cid.org.au/our-health-fact-sheets/

Intellectual disability rights service

www.idrs.org.au



Disability advocacy NSW

www.da.org.au/

Disability Advocacy Resource Unit

www.daru.org.au/



People with Disability Australia

<https://pwd.org.au/>

Disability Advocacy Network Australia

<https://www.dana.org.au/>



Supported Decision-Making guides

<https://supporteddecisions.org/resources/supported-decision-making-guide/>

Down Syndrome Australia decision making

https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/DSA_Decision-making_and_Guardianship.pdf



IDEAS supported decision making

<https://www.ideas.org.au/uploads/resources/1392/Supported%20Decision%20Making%20A%20handbook%20for%20Facilitators.pdf>

Reachout.com

<https://au.reachout.com/articles/what-is-age-and-confidentiality>



What to read next:

- [How to say 'no' and 'yes'](#)
- [Introduction to consent](#)
- [Consent in relationships](#)

**For more information go to the
Planet Puberty website**

www.planetpuberty.org.au