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The NDIA Inklings pilot is available to Western Australian (WA) parents and caregivers of babies and toddlers aged 6 to 18 months who are showing early differences in how they connect and communicate with others.

The Inklings program aims to support caregivers to adapt their own communication and play styles to their baby's early developmental differences.

This helps babies to learn in a social environment that is adapted to meet their individual and unique needs.

The Inklings pilot in WA is funded by a grant from the NDIA to The Kids Research Institute Australia (The Kids).

The pilot is being delivered in partnership with WA Child and Adolescent Health Services (CAHS) and WA Country Health Service (WACHS).

The pilot started in November 2023 and will end in November 2026, with last intake into the pilot at the end of May 2026.

An independent evaluation will assess if Inklings can be delivered at a larger scale. It will also look at how it should be adjusted for different settings.

The evaluation will provide insights on program implementation and effectiveness and will support future decisions.

Find out more about the Inklings program on the [Inklings website](#) .

## How families can participate in the Inklings WA pilot

Families interested in learning more about the pilot or its final stages can speak with their local CAHS or WACHS office or contact Inklings directly for further information.

- [Child and Adolescent Health Service](#)
- [WA Country Health Service - Contact us](#)
- [Inklings - Check My Eligibility](#)

## How the NDIA will evaluate the Inklings WA pilot

The NDIA is evaluating how the Inklings program works in real-world settings using a 3-phase approach. The evaluation is guided by an Evaluation Reference Group including people with disability.

Findings will offer insights on how best to support families needing early childhood intervention.

The evaluation aims to:

- evaluate if the Inklings program can be implemented and delivered at scale in real-world settings
- identify the benefits Inklings can deliver for infants showing signs of social or communication differences, and their caregivers
- identify lessons and approaches for promoting integration between the NDIS and mainstream health services in early childhood intervention.

The NDIA is delivering Phase 1 of the evaluation which will look at:

- the number of people accessing Inklings in WA
- how Inklings is delivered using different approaches for example, telehealth
- the experiences and satisfaction of caregivers, clinicians, and providers with Inklings
- considerations for delivering Inklings successfully on a larger scale.

Following a competitive procurement process La Trobe University was appointed to conduct Phase 2 and 3 of this evaluation. La Trobe University is an independent organisation that is not involved in the delivery of the Inklings program.

These phases of the evaluation will assess:

- whether Inklings delivers better outcomes for children and caregivers compared to other currently available supports
- how Inklings can work with other early childhood support services to ensure the best outcomes for children and their caregivers.

The final evaluation report for the Inklings pilot is planned for release in late 2027.

## **How Inklings is working with First Nations communities**

As part of the pilot, The Kids consulted with First Nations communities in WA to understand how Inklings can be more culturally safe and accessible.

The consultations focused on how Inklings can better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in the early years.

The consultation included 71 meetings with First Nations peoples and people from services that support First Nations communities.

Key feedback included:

- the early years are a priority for First Nations communities
- there is a need and want for more education and awareness around early development and when to seek support
- programs must be culturally safe to support family engagement.

A key finding of this consultation was that First Nations families felt adaptation of Inklings was not a priority at this time.

It also found that Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) should lead the design of how the program should be adjusted for First Nations families in remote communities.

The summary consultation report is available on the [Inklings website](#) .

## **How Inklings is working in other locations**

Inklings is an initiative of The Kids.

The NDIA has no direct involvement in Inklings being run elsewhere.

The Kids may make independent decisions about the application and operation of Inklings outside of the currently funded pilots.