

Therapy
Assistance
SUNSHINE COAST



AN INTRODUCTION TO THE THERAPY ASSISTANCE SUNSHINE COAST (TASC) PROGRAM

Thank you for your interest in accessing in-home therapy services with the TASC program. I write to provide you with an overview of our service, including expectations, costs and inclusions in advance to the signing of a service agreement to allow your child to become a participant in this program.

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RATIONALE FOR THE PROGRAM



Evidence in Early Intervention (EI) suggests that EI programs for children with Autism should be Extensive and Intensive (Prior and Roberts, 2006). We believe these terms denote the following:

Extensive – Covering a wide range of different developmental areas including the 5 main areas of Child Development.

Physical Development

Cognitive Development

Behavioural Development

Social and Emotional Development

Skill and Learning Development

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RATIONALE FOR THE PROGRAM



Intensive – Delivered in a frequency sufficient to be likely to lead to measurable improvement. Evidence suggest that the ideal amount of intervention provided is 15-25 hours per week (Prior, Roberts, Rodger, Williams & Sutherland; 2011). In the Guidelines for Best Practice by Roberts and Prior (2006), they outline that for EI programs require a minimum of 20 hours per week for a period of two or more years to lead to major gains in development and function. This intervention is provided by those who are trained to deliver the therapy program, including parents, teachers, therapists and other supporting professionals.

The Good Practice Guide (2006) also outlined the importance of the quality of the intervention. It should be family centred, individualised, should start early and be delivered with consideration for the next stage of the child (i.e. school readiness).

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THE PROBLEM

In Australia, we are extremely lucky to have the opportunity to access funding for EI programs via the National Disability Insurance Scheme. However this has also led to some unexpected challenges. You may have noticed that since the roll-out of the NDIS, it has become significantly harder to access regular and frequent sessions with many of your preferred allied health-care providers, with many closing their books altogether or maintaining month or year-long waiting lists. This is due to a major increase in families seeking support and a concurrent lack of staffing of new allied health professionals who have sufficient training and experience for this clientele. We have also found that there has been a significant increase in clinic-based services, rather than services that are able to be delivered in natural settings such as homes and schools.



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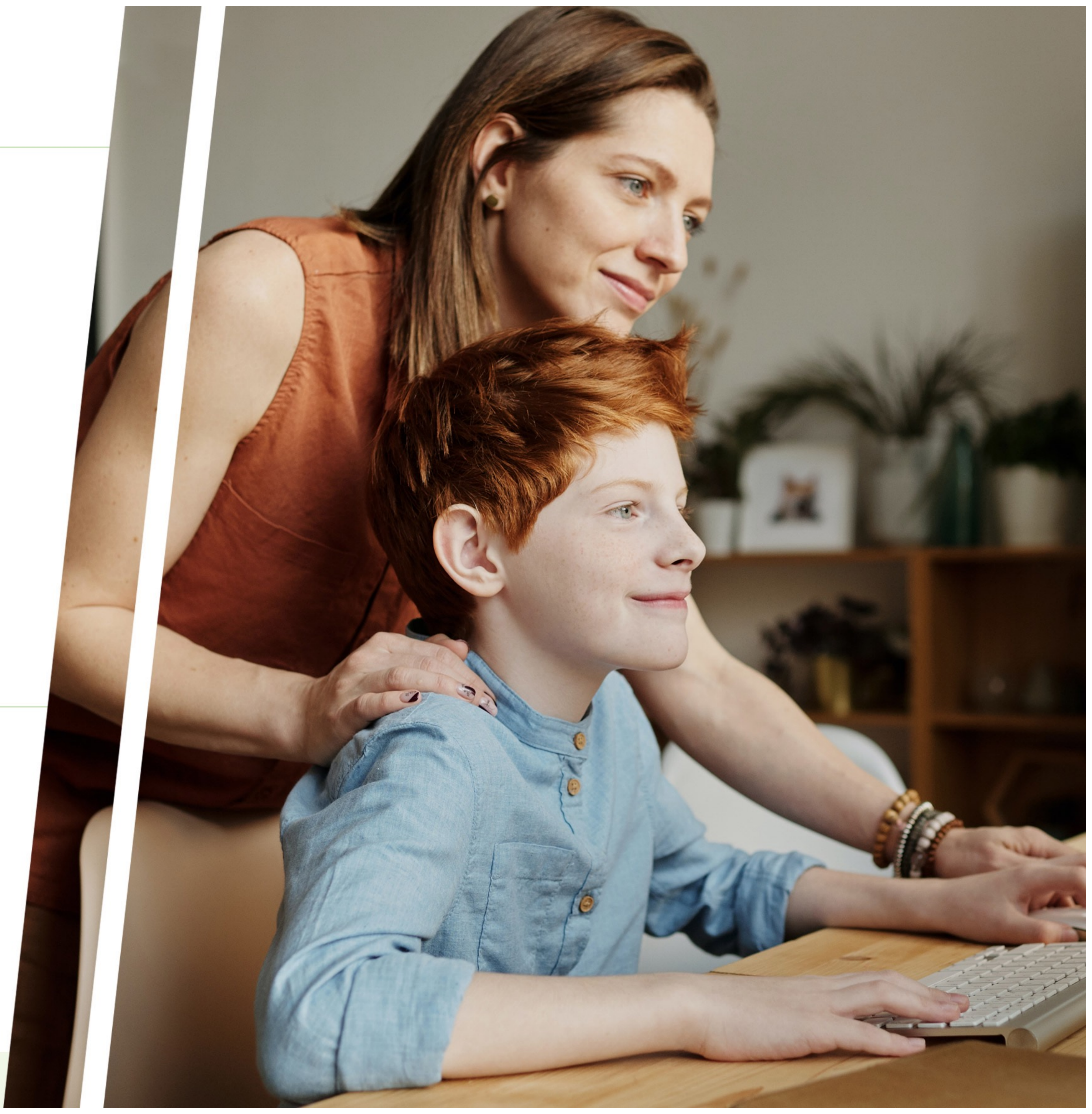
THE PROBLEM

In the past, your preferred allied health provider may have been able to see your child for a weekly session or even more frequently to deliver EI services, which may have included in-home support. However, since the rollout of the NDIS, health providers are now so heavily booked, it can be difficult to access sufficient support to meet the Intensive support requirement outlined by the Good Practice Guide.

OUR SOLUTION

Collaborative Partnerships is looking to address this gap in services through making Therapy Assistant services available to Early Intervention clients.

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OUR GOAL IS TWO-FOLD:

1 Increase the frequency of therapy services: While it remains the responsibility of families and therapists to contribute to that ideal 20 hours of quality early intervention per week, we understand that in many circumstance this goal is unachievable due to competing expectations for parents, families and therapists. Participating in the Therapy Assistant program will enable families to employ a trained allied-health Therapy Assistant for regular, extensive and intensive home based therapy sessions.

2 Provide a more home and family-centred experience for early intervention: While clinic sessions are likely to still be a necessary part of families interactions with EI service providers, we aim to provide more access to formal therapy services that offer in-home therapy programs rather than it being delivered in a less natural setting such as a clinic or treatment centre.



OUR AIM



With these things in mind, the Therapy Assistant Program aims to supply families with a Therapy Assistant to visit their home regularly for 1-3 sessions per week for a minimum of 2-hours per session (depending on needs and availability). The goal of this is that we provide families with homebased, family centred intervention in a frequency which offers the benefit of intensive support. The intervention provided in these sessions is based on treatment plans provided by private therapists that include low-risk home therapy activities that will help address your child's developmental goals.



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OUR THERAPY ASSISTANTS



In the TASC program, we employ therapy assistants at two main levels of proficiency.

Advanced Therapy Assistants – TAs who have extensive direct supervised experience working with children with ASD in a early-intervention, education or disability support capacity, and/or an equivalent qualification in a relevant child-centred field/discipline (e.g. Teaching degree, Allied Health Degree, Cert 4 in Children's services or Allied Health Assistance).

Advanced TAs are authorised to work under the indirect supervision of the therapist, meaning that they are able to go into homes and follow set therapy plans with clients independently.



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OUR THERAPY ASSISTANTS



Junior Therapy Assistants – TA's who have less experience working with ASD (however may have other experience in working with children generally). These TA's may have other relevant graduate qualification and also participate in ongoing professional development. Junior TA's work under direct supervision of qualified, registered and experienced Allied Health Professionals and are usually on a qualification pathway to become an Advanced Therapy Assistant.

Our Therapy Assistants are used in both clinic and home based sessions in varying capacities as outlined by the treating Allied Health Professional. All therapy assistants hold full Apply First Aid and CPR qualifications, and hold current Working With Children Blue Cards/Exemption Cards.

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WHO CAN ACCESS THE THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM?



The TASC program has been designed for early intervention services for children with Autism, however as many of the same standards of practice apply to other developmental conditions, disorders and delays, we are able to make our therapy assistant program accessible to families of children who are older or who have other delays or challenges. Access to the program is at the discretion of the Collaborative Partnerships Allied Health team.

Does this program replace my current Allied Health Team?

Many of our clients are receiving services from a variety of Allied Health providers. The TASC program is not intended to replace your Allied Health team. In-fact, accessing the expertise of your current team is essential to the success of this program.

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WHO CAN ACCESS THE THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM?



We invite other private Allied Health providers to provide a detailed treatment plan of home-program activities (similar to what they give you to do at home) and our Therapy Assistants will aim to deliver this intervention during home-based sessions. Clients may still need to participate in regular sessions with their private health professional (and should consider this in considering NDIS funds required for this program), however we are confident that with greater participation with home programs by using TA's, less frequent intervention sessions may be required with your current therapist, allowing them to also deliver more therapeutic support to other children.



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HOW MUCH DOES THE PROGRAM COST?

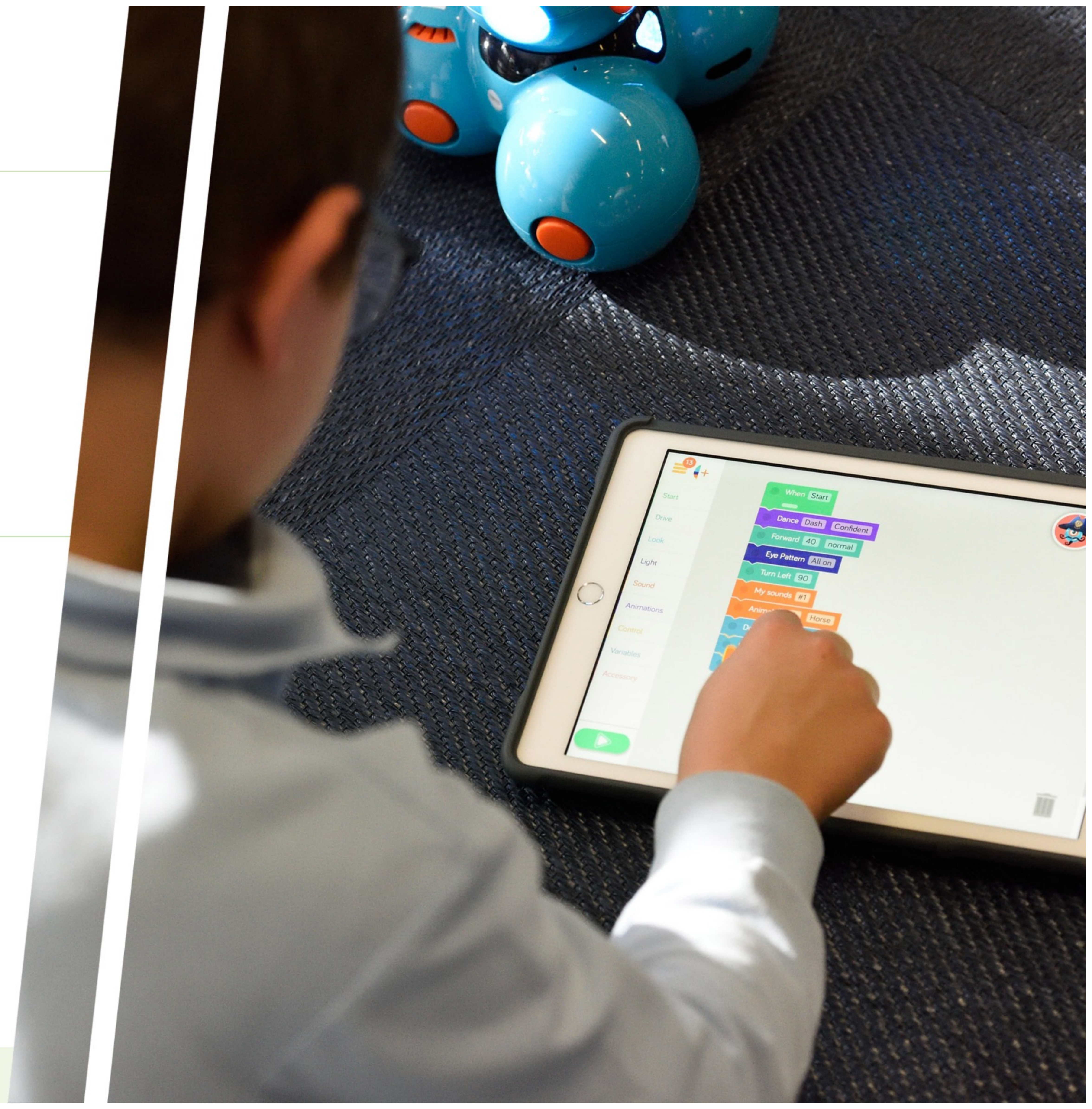


Please see the attached schedule of fees for more information about the financial commitment for participation in this program. Please consider your child's available NDIS funds in the Capacity Building category and budget before signing your service agreement.

WHAT CAN OUR THERAPY ASSISTANT DO?

The Therapy Assistant is authorised to provide therapy services as outlined in this document in your home, or at another location that is mutually agreed upon. Our therapy assistants can do all of the nonspecialised low-risk therapy activities that your therapists might give you to do with your child at home with their regular home program, and also plenty of more specific and specialised approaches (based on their training) including the development of routine charts, social stories, etc.

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WHAT CAN OUR THERAPY ASSISTANT DO?



If required to do something that is a little more specialised, they will be directly trained in these methods by their supervising allied health professional or by your child's regular therapist (by negotiation) so that they can do these effectively and safely.

WHAT CAN'T OUR THERAPY ASSISTANT DO?

While their training equips them with many of the skills they need, therapy assistants are generally not authorised to support your child in personal care tasks (e.g. feeding and toileting) unless it has some therapeutic value (such as practicing cutlery use, or following a visual schedule) and has been authorised by the supervising therapist. Our therapy assistants aren't authorised to provide childcare services (minding your child without you or another responsible adult present in the home) or to transport your child in their car (however they can accompany you in your car if it is safe to do so) unless authorised by their supervising therapist.

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WHAT IF I FEEL THAT THE THERAPY ASSISTANT I AM ASSIGNED IS NOT THE RIGHT PERSON FOR MY CHILD?



During your participation in the Therapy Assistant program, we will send you survey emails to get feedback on how things are going. Only the supervising therapist will have access to your responses and being honest and transparent will assist us in identifying areas for future training for our TAs. With that in mind, if you have concerns about the conduct of the TA, please raise it to our attention via email to sam@collaborativepartnerships.com.au and we will contact you for more information and if needed, make the necessary changes to the support arrangement (including providing a different TA). We also have a complaints process which is outlined in your service agreement.

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WHAT IF I NEED TO CANCEL OR RESCHEDULE A SESSION?



If you need to cancel a session with your TA, please notify us with at least 24-hours notice and there will be no charge for your cancellation in line with our cancellation policy (please see service agreement). If you would like to reschedule, this will be considered on a case by case basis according to the availability of the TA. Please send a text to 0412215053 if you are needing to cancel or reschedule.

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CONTACT US



We are excited to see your child's development during their participation in this program. If you have any questions about this program please contact:

Collaborative Partnerships Pty Ltd
admin@collaborativepartnerships.com.au

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