



## Phone Link Ups

## Inclusion Support Subsidy for Centre Based and Non Mainstream Services

### Inclusion Support Program

The **Inclusion Support Program** is a Federal Government program that assists child care services to include children with additional needs in a quality child care environment. This support is available to Australian Government Approved Child Care Services, including centre-based services such as long day care, outside school hours care (i.e. before/after school care and vacation care) and occasional care. Support is also available to Australian Government funded non-mainstream child care services including flexible/innovative services, Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services (MACS), non-mainstream outside school hours care, non-formula funded occasional care (100 per cent Australian Government funded) and mobile child care services.

### Inclusion Support Agencies

Assistance is provided through regionally based Inclusion Support Agencies (ISAs) and a team of Inclusion Support Facilitators (ISFs) who work directly with child care services. This assistance replaces support previously provided through the SUPS Program and SUPS workers.




In NSW there are 18 ISAs. Nine are located in the Sydney metropolitan area and nine in rural NSW. To find out about the ISA in your region contact **Children's Services Central** on **1800 157 818** or visit their website at [www.cscentral.org.au](http://www.cscentral.org.au).

### Inclusion Support Subsidy




The Inclusion Support Subsidy (ISS) is one of the funded supports available to help eligible child care services include children with ongoing high support needs into quality child care. The ISS replaced the Special Needs Subsidy Scheme (SNSS) and DSUPS from 1 July 2006.

Eligibility of a child care service for ISS does not mean an automatic entitlement to ISS support. A child care service will be required to demonstrate that they are including a child with high and ongoing support needs within the care environment.

Eligible groups are:

-  Children with a diagnosed disability;
-  Children undergoing continuing assessment for a disability;
-  Refugee children who have been subject to torture or trauma.

ISS funding is a contribution towards the costs of providing additional support to include one or more children with ongoing high support needs. ISS may be approved for the following purposes:

-  to engage relief staff while carers attend training or professional support relating to the inclusion of a child or children with ongoing high support needs;
-  to engage an additional carer to increase the staff to child ratio when a child or children with ongoing high support needs are in care;
-  to fund the purchase of specialist equipment identified as essential for a child's inclusion in a child care service.

Subsidy limits apply and vary according to service type. Information about the subsidy limits specific to each service type can be sourced in the Inclusion Support Subsidy Guidelines (version 11, 26 February 2007) which are available on the **FaCSIA** website at [www.facsia.gov.au](http://www.facsia.gov.au).

## Service Support Plans




Eligibility of a child or children for ISS does not mean an automatic entitlement to ISS support. The need for ISS is determined through the process of developing a Service Support Plan (SSP) that assists the service to identify how a child with additional needs (including those high and ongoing support needs) will be supported in a care environment and which resources and supports will help. An ISF will assist the service to complete the SSP.

Where it is determined that a service has exhausted the range of existing and/or local resources and supports available to them to include a child or children with ongoing high support needs, they may consider additional support options, including those available through the Inclusion Support Program. This might include the Inclusion Support Subsidy or other funded supports such as Flexible Support Funding (FSF) and Bicultural Support.

Where the SSP has identified that additional support (through the ISS) is required, an ISS Application Form should be completed along with a SSP and forwarded to the ISS Provider.

The SSP should provide sufficient contextual information to give the ISS Provider an understanding of the care environment and any specific issues impacting on the room dynamics. This includes relevant details about the physical layout of the care environment, the range of needs of children already in care, and the staff's current capacity to meet these needs.

The SSP should also clearly identify the type and level supports needed, eg:

-  an **additional worker** for x hours per day x days per week;
-  a **relief worker** for x hours to cover permanent staff absences while they attend targeted training;
-  **specialist equipment** (as recommended by a professional, e.g. the child's therapist).

Where more than one child with ongoing high support needs is in attendance, opportunities to adopt a flexible approach in the use of ISS must be explored as part of developing the SSP.

ISS approvals are for a maximum of 12 months. Ongoing ISS support is dependent on a regular assessment of the capacity of the service to include an eligible child. Where it is determined that ongoing ISS support is required, a re-application must be made on an annual basis in consultation with the ISF. Re-application involves a review of the previous SSP and the development of an updated SSP. The service then submits the updated SSP and a new ISS application form to the ISS Provider for assessment.

Apart from the annual re-application, other events will also trigger a review of the SSP and the ISS. An example of a trigger is where a child with ongoing high support needs either enters or leaves the service and/or care environment.

## Other Funded Supports

The ISS is one of a range of support options available. Services may also be able to access additional support through FSF and Bicultural Support funding.

**Flexible Support Funding (FSF)** is support provided to child care services to help them build their capacity to include a child with additional needs by employing additional staff to increase the staff to child ratio for a time limited period.

**Bicultural Support** is time limited specialist support provided to assist child care services to include children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD), refugee children or Indigenous children. This support may include onsite or telephone assistance at the time of enrolment.

The process of developing a SSP will help the service to determine if FSF or Bicultural Support is required and how it will assist the service to include a child or children with additional needs. These supports may be considered a more suitable option (than ISS) for short term care or when the attendance of a child with ongoing high support needs is irregular and unpredictable, for example in occasional care.

## References and Further Information

This discussion paper has been developing using information contained in ISS Guidelines (version 11, 26 February 2007). The ISS Guidelines and additional information about the Inclusion Support Program can be sourced from the FaCSIA website at [www.facsia.gov.au](http://www.facsia.gov.au).

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