



THE ROLE OF THE ADDITIONAL EDUCATOR

FIRST PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 2007. REVISED MARCH 2011.

THE ROLE OF THE ADDITIONAL EDUCATOR

This fact sheet aims to provide answers to some of those frequently asked questions about the role of the additional educator when a service is approved to access either Inclusion Support Subsidy (ISS) or Flexible Support Funding (FSF).

WHAT IS ISS AND FSF AND HOW CAN FUNDING BE USED?

The ISS and FSF are two of the funded supports available to assist educators in Australian Government approved child care services to include children with demonstrated ongoing high support needs.

One of the ways this funding is used in centre based services is to contribute to the costs of employing an additional educator to increase the staff to child ratio above the licensing requirements for some of the time when the child with ongoing high support needs is in care.

Eligibility requirements and subsidy limits apply. Subsidy limits will differ depending on your service type. You can find out more on the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) website at www.deewr.gov.au or through your local Inclusion Support Agency (ISA).

WHAT DOES THE ADDITIONAL EDUCATOR DO?

The additional educator is employed as an extra member of the team, to share the daily team responsibilities to ensure that all children can access and participate in all aspects of the program and curriculum.

This shared responsibility means that while the additional educator may have some involvement with a child with ongoing high support needs, they work with all children in the care environment. The same is true for all staff. The role of the additional educator will therefore look very similar to that of other educators in your service.

It is inappropriate for the additional educator, or any educator, to only work with a child with ongoing high support needs in a one-to-one capacity, and to the exclusion of other children or educators in the care environment. Working in this way can single out the child and limit their opportunities to fully engage with other children, adults and the learning environment. What is important is that ALL educators support and remain with ALL children in the care environment, to ensure they can participate fully in all aspects of the day.

WHAT IS THE SERVICE'S RESPONSIBILITY?

You will need to ensure that the additional educator is employed according to the appropriate industrial laws and that ISS or FSF funds are used for approved purposes. You will also need to keep relevant records (such as child attendance records and educator's time sheets) and submit claims forms within specified time frames. These will be outlined with your original funding approval information.

If you have already obtained ISS or FSF funding approval to employ an additional educator you will have a clear idea about how the increased staff/child ratio will assist the team to include a child with ongoing high support needs and provide a more inclusive quality care environment for all children. This will have been documented in your ISS or FSF application.

Your Service Support Plan (SSP), a prerequisite for ISS and FSF funding, will also help you clarify with all educators, including the additional educator, your goals for inclusion and the action steps you will take to achieve them.

It is important that all educators, including the additional educator, have an opportunity to discuss and clarify everybody's daily roles and responsibilities in enacting your SSP. This will avoid confusion and misunderstanding and ensure a team approach to promoting inclusive practice.

SOMETIMES A FAMILY EXPECTS THE ADDITIONAL EDUCATOR TO ONLY WORK WITH THEIR CHILD. WHAT CAN I SAY?

All families want the best for their child, just as you want the best for all of the children in your service. This is a great way to start the conversation, identifying your shared goals and making a commitment to work together to achieve them.

One way to overcome the issue of differing expectations is to talk with families about expectations right from the beginning. Talk with families at enrolment about your philosophy and policies, including those that relate to inclusion. This gives you a chance to talk about the benefits of inclusion for all children, acknowledging that how you respond to individual children and families might look different, according to their specific needs and preferences.

If they are still unsure, ask families to share with you more about their concerns so that you can identify the best way to address them. Create a culture where asking questions is valued and encouraged – for families and educators.

You can also give families information from the ISS information for families pamphlet, ISA information brochures, and the IPSP guidelines, so they are clear about the aims of the program and the way in which funding may be used.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Questions for reflection:

When looking to apply for ISS or FSF funding:

- How will the increased staff/child ratio assist the team to include this child, and all children?
- Specifically, what will all educators, including the additional educator, be doing throughout the day?

When funding has already been approved:

- How are all educators, including the additional educator, informed about team goals as outlined in the SSP and the action steps to achieve them?
- What processes are in place for recording progress towards goals, key learning points and future directions?

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING:

More information about ISS and FSF is available in the Inclusion and Professional Support Program Guidelines. To access or download a copy of the current version of the guidelines go to:

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Programs/ChildCareforServices/SupportFamilyCCS/Documents/IPSPGuidelines.pdf>

Additional ISS information can be sourced from the National ISS Provider. This includes resources specifically for families, including the information brochure, Inclusion Support Subsidy: Information for families (2010).

To access or download a copy go to:

<http://www.ku.com.au/inclusion-support/inclusion-support-subsidy.aspx>

Additional FSF and ISS information can also be sourced from your local ISA. To find out how to contact the ISA in your region, go to Children's Services Central website at:

<http://www.cscentral.org.au/support/inclusion-support-agencies.html>

