

Inclusion Support QLD

Frequently Asked Questions for Families

Q1. What are the benefits of an inclusive early childhood education and care service for all children?

- A.** Research shows that inclusion benefits all. Children with additional needs as well as children without additional needs benefit academically and socially from interacting and participating in inclusive settings. Inclusion can lead to stronger skills in literacy and numeracy as well as positive changes in children's confidence, self-esteem and understanding of diversity (through respecting the uniqueness of others). Inclusion also supports all children's rights, consistent with the United Nations (UN) Convention on [the Rights of the Child](#) and other international conventions, including the UN [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) and UN [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#).

Inclusion is about identifying the barriers and obstacles learners encounter in attempting to access opportunities for quality education, as well as removing those barriers and obstacles that lead to exclusion. Educators who have the highest expectations for all children's learning and development are committed to equity and believe in children's agency, competence, and capacities to succeed, regardless of diverse circumstances and abilities (reflected in the Early Years Learning Framework).

Q2. How do I know if a service is inclusive and what can I look for?

- A.** When you are seeking care options, an early childhood education and care (ECEC) service may invite you for a tour and/or playdates at the service. During this time, you will be able to view care environments, share information about your child, and ask questions that are important to you. This will assist you to make an informed decision on a suitable ECEC service for your family. For further tips on choosing a suitable ECEC service, there is more information here: <https://www.startingblocks.gov.au/at-child-care/>

An ECEC service that is already actively engaged with Inclusion Support QLD will have an 'Our service values inclusion' sticker prominently displayed and it will be accompanied by a coloured star to demonstrate every year they have continued to be an inclusion-ready service.



Q3. What is the criteria to access the Inclusion Support Program?

- A.** All eligible services engaging with the Inclusion Support Program (ISP) must develop a Strategic Inclusion Plan. This is a reflection and planning tool for ECEC services that includes short and longer-term strategies for improving and embedding inclusive practices. These may include adapting the physical environment, changing the program and routines, and/or changing educators' practices.

During this process, ECEC services may identify that additional support is required for them to implement the strategies in their planning. Services may be able to access this support through one or more of the multiple funding streams available, which include [IDE](#); [Immediate/Time Limited](#); [FDC Top Up](#); [Innovative Solutions](#); and/or the [Specialist Equipment Library](#). Please refer to the [Inclusion Support Program Guidelines](#) for more information.

Q4. What is my role as a parent/guardian when my child's ECEC service is accessing support under the ISP?

- A.** If your child's ECEC service identifies that they require external support to include a child, they will contact their local Inclusion Support QLD hub to share and discuss their barriers to inclusion in the relevant care environment. An inclusion professional will provide tailored support to the service, so educators are able to build their skills and confidence, to ensure the inclusion of children with additional needs.

Your role as a parent/guardian will be to continue to work in partnership with the service to discuss, share and explore the learning that is possible in everyday events, routines and play, so that your child is provided with daily opportunities to actively participate and contribute to these experiences. You may also be required to sign permission forms to agree that the service can share your child's information.

For further information please go to the *For Families* section on the [Inclusion Support QLD](#) website and the [ISP Flow Chart for Families](#).

Q5. Can a service refuse to accept my child's enrolment if they have high support needs or a disability?

- A.** Every child has the right to participate in an ECEC service on the same basis as their typically developing peers. When seeking enrolment at an ECEC service, discuss your child's development, interests, and your expectations with the service educators. A service has a legislative obligation to provide support and make reasonable adjustments to include your child under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. For further information please visit the [Inclusion of Children with a Disability](#) section on the QLD Department of Education website.

If you feel your child is being discriminated against by an ECEC provider or their staff, you should talk to the Director of the service involved. You may also contact [Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland](#) or phone 1300 130 670 for advice, including how to make a complaint under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1992.

Q6. Will I be included in the inclusion planning process?

- A.** No, inclusion professionals assist educators to develop a tailored Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP) identifying inclusion strategies that focus on the whole environment and not just individual children. When identifying strategies that might support the care environment, educators will take into consideration the needs of all children in their care, so it is beneficial to share as much information as possible with the service, to assist educators during the planning process. This may include information about Allied Health professionals, your child's needs, and strategies you are using at home etc. Refer to *Role of additional educator*, *FAQs for families* and *IA QLD Brochure*.

Q7. Do educators need to create a separate program for my child?

- A. Under the [nationally approved learning frameworks](#), ECEC services are aiming to provide an inclusive program to ensure all children can participate and engage successfully. This occurs when ECEC services work in partnership with families and other professionals to make informed and thoughtful decisions relating to curriculum, care and support.

It involves changes and modifications in policy, pedagogy, planning, experiences and the physical environment to overcome barriers to inclusion, with a vision that covers all children, and a belief that it is the responsibility of services and educators to support all children's learning and care. ([Inclusion Support Program Guidelines Version 2.2](#), p.5)

Q8. The service told me they are not eligible for an additional educator. Why doesn't the service have inclusion support for my child?

- A. It is the ECEC service's responsibility to seek assistance from the Inclusion Support Program. Inclusion professionals will support the service to develop a Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP) to identify and address any barriers to inclusion ([ISP Flow Chart for Families](#)).
- There could be a variety of reasons why the service may not be applying for an additional educator. We recommend that you discuss this with the service your child is enrolled at. Reasons could include:
- ▶ The service may not yet have access to the inclusion support portal system, which is required to complete their Strategic Inclusion Plan online and access various funding streams.
 - ▶ The service has not yet developed a Strategic Inclusion Plan. The development of a Strategic Inclusion Plan is the mechanism for accessing ongoing support from the program and is necessary to obtain funding through the Inclusion Development Fund.
 - ▶ A diagnosis of a disability alone does not mean that funding for an additional educator is the best type of support. It is during the development of their SIP that the service may identify barriers to inclusion that an additional educator may support them to overcome. ([IDF Information for Families](#)).
 - ▶ Services may experience difficulty obtaining sufficient documentary evidence from the family for the IDF Subsidy for an Additional Educator ([refer to documentary evidence Information Sheet](#)).
 - ▶ The child or children the service is seeking to include through support from the program, may not meet the eligibility requirements for the [Child Care Subsidy](#).

Q9. If my child enrolls at another service or moves into another room within the same service, does the funding transfer with my child?

- A. When a child on an approved IDF Subsidy for an Additional Educator case moves into a different room within the service, in collaboration with its inclusion professional, the service must review the Strategic Inclusion Plan and the Inclusion Profile of the new environment to determine the level of support required.

This also applies if a child changes ECEC services.

Q10. Does my child need to have a diagnosed disability to access support under the Inclusion Support Program?

- A. The Inclusion Support Program is focused on supporting children with additional needs to participate in ECEC services alongside their typically developing peers. It is not a *disability*

program but an *inclusion* program, which prioritises support for children with additional needs, particularly those with a disability ([ISP Guidelines 2020](#)).

If the service is seeking to apply for the IDF Subsidy for an Additional Educator, this may include children with a diagnosed disability (including developmental delay), or a current and ongoing assessment for disability, or other additional needs. You must provide current documentation (dated within twelve months if not a permanent disability), signed or otherwise validated by relevant professionals, that confirms your child has high, ongoing support needs.

You will also need to consider that a diagnosis of a disability alone does not mean that funding for an additional educator is the best type of support. During the development of their inclusion planning, the service may identify barriers to inclusion that an additional educator may support them to overcome.

Q11. How will I be informed on what support is being accessed?

- A.** It is the responsibility of your child’s ECEC service to communicate any information being provided by the Inclusion Support Program with you. It is important to keep talking to your child’s educators or the Director.

Q12. Is there an ‘out of pocket’ cost to the family?

- A.** The Inclusion Support Program is a key component of the Australian Government’s Child Care Safety Net and is a free service for eligible ECEC services, at no cost to the service or families.