

The ISP Guidelines Series

No. 3 Including Children with Medical Conditions

Purpose of IDF Subsidy

In centre based services, the Inclusion Development Fund (IDF) Subsidy refers to IDF Subsidy for an Additional Educator and Immediate/Time Limited Support. The IDF Subsidy subsidises the employment of an Additional Educator to increase the educator to child ratio in the care environment to support the inclusion of children with ongoing high support needs with typically developing same age peers. In the care environment educators work as a team, including the Additional Educator, to support all children's participation and interaction with peers.

Non-Approved Purposes of IDF Subsidy

Non-approved purposes of the IDF Subsidy are listed in the [Inclusion Support Programme Guidelines](#). Non-approved purposes include, but are not limited to, the following purposes:

- To administer medical/nursing assistance or backfill an existing staff member to do so;
- One to one support for a specific child; and
- Assistance to meet licensing requirements, such as management of and response to risks concerning children's health and safety and the provision of adequate supervision of children, as outlined in the [National Regulations](#).

What this means in practice

Service responsibilities

The [National Regulations](#) require all services to have appropriate practices and procedures in place, including the management of and response to risks concerning children's health and safety. This includes:

- Policies and practices are in place for managing children's medical conditions. Policies must include management of medical conditions including asthma, diabetes or a diagnosis that a child is at risk of anaphylaxis.
- When enrolling a child with a medical condition, a service must have plans in place, developed in consultation with parents, to manage risks concerning children's health and ensure all staff are aware of the risks and actions needed to minimise risks. This includes developing practices and procedures in relation to the safe handling, preparation, consumption and service of food.
- Staff must be aware of and follow the child's specific plan, provided by the parent, in the event of an incident relating to the child's specific health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition.
- Services are required to ensure there are always staff on the premises who have current approved training in first aid, anaphylaxis management and emergency asthma management.
- The provision of adequate supervision to ensure an educator can respond immediately, particularly when a child is distressed or in a hazardous situation. To determine what is adequate supervision a service considers a number of factors such as the abilities and individual needs of children and risks in the environment.

It is a service's responsibility to ensure an appropriately trained person carries out medical/nursing procedures such as the administration of insulin and monitoring of glucose levels, or oxygen administration and monitoring. Medical/nursing assistance is defined as anything that is not covered by general first aid procedures and requires specific training.

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A service must also ensure there is adequate staffing, and training and procedures in place, to enable educators to undertake these duties if required. IDF Subsidy cannot be used to administer medical/nursing assistance or backfill an existing staff member to do so.

Support available through the Inclusion Support Programme

Inclusion Agency

A service can contact the Inclusion Agency to discuss the barriers to inclusion for a child with a medical condition commencing at the service. The Inclusion Professional will be able to provide advice and support, including assisting the service to plan strategies and actions to address the barriers to inclusion to ensure that educators have the knowledge, skill and confidence to include the child. This may include assisting educators to:

- Meet with families and other professionals working with the child;
- Access appropriate training and information;
- Review service policies and procedures; and/or
- Adjust educator practices, programs and environments.

The Inclusion Professional will assist educators to consider the whole child, not only their medical condition, and look for strategies to support the child's participation in the program and interactions with peers.

Inclusion Development Fund

Funded Support Options

There are funded support options that can assist a service to include a child with medical conditions, depending on the barriers to inclusion at the service. Services should contact the Inclusion Agency to discuss whether any of these funding options are appropriate.

► Specialised training

To enrol a child with a medical condition, educators may require specific training that is essential to the child's inclusion. That is, the child could not attend the service without educators having this specific knowledge and skill, and this training is above the requirements set out in the National Regulations. If there is a barrier to educators accessing this training services can apply to access Innovative Solutions Support to enable the service to provide this essential training for educators.

► Medical advice and support

Alternatively, educators may require the specific advice and support of a medical practitioner or allied health professional to include a child with a medical condition. This support may relate to strategies educators need to implement which are specific to the individual child and/or relate to how to implement strategies in the care environment in a way to support the child's participation in the program and interactions with peers. If there is a barrier to educators accessing this support, such as it is not included in the child's NDIS Plan, services can apply to access Innovative Solutions Support to enable the service to provide this support to educators.

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► Child with a disability or developmental delay

Some children who have medical conditions may also have a diagnosed disability or developmental delay. In these instances, educators may be required to implement additional strategies within the day to day program, unrelated to the medical/nursing assistance required, to support the child's inclusion. Through development of the Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP) a service may determine that an Additional Educator is required in the care environment to implement the strategies and actions to address the barriers to inclusion, unrelated to medical/nursing requirements. In these instances, a service can apply for IDF Subsidy.

Assessment and Outcome of Application for IDF Subsidy

The IDFM must assess all applications in line with the Inclusion Support Programme (ISP) Guidelines. To be eligible for IDF Subsidy for an Additional Educator or Immediate/Time Limited Support the service must meet all [application requirements](#). These requirements include consideration of the child's high support needs and the degree to which an increased educator to child ratio is the most appropriate solution to the identified barriers to inclusion within the care environment.

If an application is submitted which demonstrates that the need for an Additional Educator or FDC Top Up, relates to (1) the provision of medical/nursing assistance, (2) one to one support for a child, or (3) the provision of support the service must already provide under the National Regulations, it **cannot** be approved.

Examples of requests for IDF Subsidy which **cannot** be approved include;

- where support is needed for the provision of adequate supervision of children;
- to implement practices to ensure the safe handling, preparation, consumption and service of food; and/or
- administration of insulin and monitoring of glucose levels.

Further information and clarification

The [National Regulations](#) require all services to have appropriate practices and procedures in place, including the management of and response to risks concerning children's health and safety. The following must be in place when **enrolling a child with a medical condition**:

- **Medical Management Plan** provided by the parents, which must be followed in the event of an incident relating to the child's specific health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition
- **Risk Minimisation Plan** developed in consultation with the parents of the child to ensure risks associated with the child's medical condition are assessed and minimised and to ensure that practices and procedures are in place for all staff to follow. This includes the development of practices and procedures in relation to the safe handling, preparation, consumption and service of food are developed.
- **Communication Plan** developed to ensure staff members and volunteers are informed about the medical conditions policy and the medical management plan and risk minimisation plan for the child; and a child's parent can communicate any changes to the medical management plan and risk minimisation plan for the child.

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Adequate Supervision

The provision of Adequate Supervision is a requirement under the National Regulations. Educator to child ratios alone do not achieve adequate supervision. Adequate Supervision means:

- That an educator can respond immediately, particularly when a child is distressed or in a hazardous situation; and
- Knowing where children are at all times and monitoring their activities actively and diligently.

The National Law and Regulations cannot prescribe the staffing levels required to ensure adequate supervision for each component of a service's educational program. The service must use their own experience, judgement and discretion in determining this. A number of factors may be considered as helpful context when determining if supervision is adequate, including:

- the number, ages, abilities and individual needs of children
- the number and positioning of educators
- each child's current activity
- areas where children are playing, in particular visibility and accessibility of these areas
- risks in the environment and experiences provided to children
- the educators' knowledge of each child and group of children
- the experience, knowledge and skill of each educator

References

- Inclusion Support Programme Guidelines 2016-17 to 2018-19
- Education and Care Services National Regulations, 1 July 2018
- The Guide to the National Quality Framework (NQF) Operational Requirements (February 2018), Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)
- Spotlight on Quality Newsletter (Issue 2, 2018), Early Childhood Education Directorate, NSW Department of Education