

# Innovative Solutions Support

Information for Support Providers

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## What is Innovative Solutions Support?

Innovative Solutions Support is one of four [Inclusion Development Fund \(IDF\) subsidy options](#) available to eligible early childhood education and care services (ECEC), through the Inclusion Support Program (ISP).

When a service has identified Barriers to inclusion that cannot be addressed through support from the Inclusion Agency, another IDF funding stream, or other state/territory funding options or programs, Innovative Solutions Support provides them with a flexible and responsive solution to increase their capacity and capability to include children with additional needs.

While there is no national definition of additional needs, for the purposes of Innovative Solutions Support, additional needs may arise for children who:

- have a disability or developmental delay or are currently undergoing assessment for disability
- have a serious medical or health condition, including mental health
- are presenting with challenging behaviours or trauma related behaviours

Meeting the needs and requirements of:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children from refugee or humanitarian backgrounds

may also require specific considerations, such as language or cultural support, to ensure that these children are able to participate fully in ECEC services and experience positive outcomes.

## Project Types

When seeking to access Innovative Solutions Support services develop an **Innovative Solutions Support Project** tailored to meet their individual needs and designed to address their specific Inclusion Barrier/s.

Projects usually involve engaging an external Support Provider who has the necessary skills, experience, and qualifications to support the service to address their inclusion needs and enhance their inclusion capacity.

There are five types of Innovative Solutions Support Projects:

- Bilingual Support
- Cultural Mentoring
- Specialised Training and Advice
- Guided Practice
- Unique Projects

These Project types are outlined briefly on the following page and in more detail within this guide. Services are supported by their Inclusion Professional (IP) to determine the most suitable Project type.

## Overview of Innovative Solutions Support Project Types

Bilingual Support	Cultural Mentoring	Specialised Training and Advice	Guided Practice	Unique Projects
<p>Bilingual Support Projects provide access to a bilingual facilitator and /or translating and interpreting services, to support the inclusion of children where language differences present a Barrier to inclusion.</p>	<p>Cultural Mentoring Projects provide services with cultural advice and mentoring in order to support the inclusion of children and families from specific cultural backgrounds.</p> <p>Cultural Mentoring support can be accessed in relation to all cultures, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures.</p>	<p>Specialised Training and Advice Projects provide training and/or advice to support educators to meet the specific needs of children with a disability or medical condition.</p>	<p>Guided Practice Projects typically engage an external Support Provider with expertise in relation to the particular Barriers being faced by a service. The Support Provider works with the service over a period of time to provide tailored professional development and coaching and mentoring of educators to enable them to effectively implement new approaches.</p>	<p>Unique Projects include new or unique approaches to inclusion support that do not fit within any of the other existing support categories, or that combine elements from several different Project types. Unique Projects are usually highly specific to the context of the service/s involved.</p>

## Developing an Innovative Solutions Support Project

After identifying their Barriers to Inclusion, ECEC services are responsible for approaching potential Support Providers to be involved in their proposed Innovative Solutions Support Project.

In the early stages of Project development, the service, possibly with the support of their IP, might contact multiple potential Support Providers to discuss the design and focus of their Project.

It is the responsibility of the Support Provider to accurately represent their qualifications, skills and experience in discussions with services. Through these discussions, the service will identify a suitable Provider, one who best meet their individual needs and circumstances.

The service will share relevant information about their identified Barriers to inclusion and their impact on children and educators with potential Support Providers to ensure they understand the Project proposal, the Project Type and the anticipated role they will play in helping to facilitate the Project.

Drawing on their experience and professional knowledge, the Support Provider may offer suggestions or advice to help inform the design and delivery of the Project. These three-way discussions help the service to develop a detailed Project Plan that will clearly identify all of the activities that will be undertaken as a part of the Project.

When the service has identified a suitable Support Provider and the Support Provider feels comfortable with the Project Plan and their ability to deliver the required components of that Plan, the application can progress.

## The role of Inclusion Professionals

Inclusion Professionals (IPs) play a vital role in supporting services to access and implement Innovative Solutions Support. Successful Innovative Solutions projects typically involve close collaboration between a service, their IP and the chosen Support Provider for a project.

IPs are able to provide information about Innovative Solutions Support and to help services to identify Barriers to inclusion. They also work with services to identify potential solutions and outcomes to these Barriers and to help them articulate and document what they plan to do.

IPs play an important role in helping services to identify and work with potential Support Providers and in liaising with the Inclusion Development Fund Manager (IDFM) when required.

IPs are also required to endorse each application before it is submitted to the IDFM for assessment.

## The Support Provider Role

Support Providers play an essential role in most Innovative Solutions Support Projects. In the context of Innovative Solutions Support, a Support Provider is an individual or organisation with relevant experience, skills and qualifications who is engaged by an Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Service to provide support to educators, to help address the services identified Barriers to inclusion, through an Innovative Solutions Support Project.

Support Providers do not work directly with children, they work with educators to support them in their work with children. Their role is to build a service's capacity to be inclusive. This typically

involves upskilling educators to implement new ideas and approaches, in a way that can be independently sustained after a Project is completed.

Each Innovative Solutions Support Project will be different and tailored to the specific circumstances of the relevant service; however Support Providers typically engage in a number of broadly defined activities which include:

### **Delivery of professional development for educators**

Most projects involve the delivery of specific content by the Support Provider to improve educators' knowledge and understanding to address the Barriers that they have identified.

### **Coaching of educators**

**Coaching** describes direct 'on-the-floor' support whereby the Support Provider provides practical guidance to help educators to implement new practices. Support may range from 'passive' (e.g.: observing the educator's practice and providing feedback) to 'active' engagement by the coach (e.g.: direct modelling of specific techniques providing spontaneous real time directions or guidance to an educator as they work).

Refer to the *Guided Practice Project Guide* located in the [Innovative Solutions Support Guide for Services](#) for further information about coaching in the context of Innovative Solutions Support.

### **Mentoring of educators**

**Mentoring** describes advice, support and guidance that is provided in an 'off-the-floor' capacity. A mentoring session may provide an opportunity for an educator/s to debrief about what happened during a coaching session or reflect on a specific experience and seek advice from the mentor. Mentoring sessions may also provide opportunities for broader reflection and discussion about the progress and future direction of a Project.

Refer to the *Guided Practice Project Guide* located in the [Innovative Solutions Support Guide for Services](#) for further information about mentoring in the context of Innovative Solutions Support.

### **Provision/Development of Resources**

Innovative Solutions Support is not intended to fund the purchase of resources. However, in some cases, the provision or development of specific resources may be essential to the successful implementation of a Project.

Resources can only form a minor part of the overall cost of a Project and cannot be more than 10% of the total Project cost.

When resources are needed, the service is required to provide information about what the resources are and why they are essential to meeting the Project Outcomes. Support Providers may also contribute to/provide this information.

When a project involves the provision or development of resources, the service is required to identify what those resources are and explain why they are essential for achieving the project's outcomes. Support Providers can contribute to/provide this information.

## Support Provider Responsibilities

### During the Application Process

During the Application Process the Support Provider is required to provide the service with a detailed Financial Quote, Statement of Expertise and information about the evidence based practice they will be drawing upon/using in their work with the service.

#### Detailed Financial Quote

A checklist of requirements for Innovative Solutions Support Quotes is available available on the IDFM Website to assist Support Providers to develop their quote.

- The Support Provider must provide the service with a detailed Financial Quote that matches the activities and hours outlined in the service's Project Plan.
- The quote must also align with the cost limits outlined in the [Innovative Solutions Support Price Guide](#)

#### Statement of Expertise

Support Providers are required to provide the service with a Statement of Expertise outlining their qualifications, skills and experience relevant to the focus of the services Project. This statement will accompany the services Project Application.

- Where the Support Provider is an organisation, this statement should outline the organisation's expertise as well as the specific expertise of the individual/s who will be working with the service.
- Support Providers providing Cultural Mentoring do not require formal qualifications, but their statement should show that they have relevant cultural knowledge and the skills and experience to mentor adults.

#### Evidence -Based Practice

Where a Project involves the delivery of Professional Development, services are asked to provide an overview of the content to be delivered and the theory/evidence that supports its use. This is to ensure that Projects delivered via Innovative Solutions Support are based on reputable and accepted evidence-based content, that aligns with an inclusive approach.

Support Providers are best placed to provide this information directly to the service to include in their application.

### When Delivering Support

Support Providers will:

- Act in good faith and make every effort to deliver services as outlined in the approved Project Application and Plan.
- Work within the Innovative Solutions Support guidelines to support the development of educator capacity and the sustainability of Project Outcomes.
- Only work directly with children in the context of supporting educator capacity building, and this will not form a significant component of a project.

- Where a conflict arises between the Support Provider and the service, educators or other stakeholders at the service, the Support Provider will act to resolve the conflict in a professional manner.

#### Support Providers will not:

- Support providers will not provide therapeutic interventions (including undertaking assessment of children or developing Individual Education Plans) as part of an Innovative Solutions Support Project.
- Utilise their project work to promote or attract business from families attending the service.

### Confidentiality and Child Safety

During the implementation of Innovative Solutions Support Projects, services will comply with State, Commonwealth and service Privacy and Confidentiality requirements at all times. They will not share personal and confidential information with Support Providers relating to children, families and staff.

#### Support Provider will:

- Comply with State and Commonwealth Privacy and Confidentiality requirements in their work services.
- Comply with all relevant child protection requirements (including service policies) for the State or Territory in which they are working and will ensure that their work aligns with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and supports children's safety and wellbeing.

### When changes to a Project are required

If due to unforeseen and/or unavoidable circumstances, changes are required to a Project that has been approved, the service will collaborate with the Support Provider to amend the Project Plan in a way that is mutually satisfactory.

**NB:** All changes to an approved Project, including changes to who will be delivering support to the service, must be approved by the service's Inclusion Professional before the change can occur. Where major changes are proposed, these may also require approval by the IDFM.



## Definitions and Acronyms

<b>IA</b>	Inclusion Agency
<b>IDF</b>	Inclusion Development Fund
<b>IDFM</b>	Inclusion Development Fund Manager
<b>IP</b>	Inclusion Professional
<b>ISP</b>	Inclusion Support Program
<b>NQS</b>	National Quality Standards
<b>Support Provider</b>	An individual or organisation with relevant skills and qualifications who is engaged to provide support to a service through an Innovative Solutions Support project.
<b>Service</b>	An Early Childhood Education and Care Service that is eligible to receive IDF support. Includes centre based early childhood services, family day care and outside school hours care services.
<b>SIP</b>	Strategic Inclusion Plan
<b>The Department</b>	The Australian Government Department of Education (which has responsibility for the Inclusion Support Program)