



Role of the Additional Educator

This Information Sheet answers frequently asked questions about the role of the Additional Educator subsidised through the Inclusion Development Fund (IDF) under the Inclusion Support Program (ISP).

What is an Additional Educator?

An Additional Educator can be employed in Centre Based Day Care and Outside School Hours Care services through funding provided under the IDF Subsidy for an Additional Educator and IDF Subsidy for Immediate/Time-Limited Support streams, as outlined in the [ISP Guidelines](#).

This support provides a significant contribution towards the cost of employing an Additional Educator to increase the educator-to-child ratio in the care environment above the licensing requirements, thereby assisting services to include children with additional needs alongside their peers. Note: educators work as a team, including the Additional Educator, to meet the needs of all children within the care environment. The Additional Educator engaged under the IDF Subsidy is not providing one-to-one support for individual children.

How do services access Additional Educator and other IDF support?

In the first instance, early childhood education and care (ECEC) services can contact the [Inclusion Agency](#) in their jurisdiction to discuss strategies and supports available to address inclusion barriers. If appropriate, the service can apply for funded support through the IS Portal. Eligibility requirements and subsidy limits apply. Further information is available in the ISP Guidelines.

What is the Additional Educator employed to do?

The Additional Educator:

- is employed as an extra member to increase the number of educators in the care environment when a child with high support needs is attending
- works as a member of the team, sharing the daily tasks and responsibilities to support the participation of all children across all program aspects

- will carry out roles similar to the other educators in the room. Similar to all educators, they will interact with all children and provide support to individual children when needed, including the child (or children) with high support needs.

The Additional Educator is **not** responsible for:

- providing ongoing one-to-one support for a child with additional needs
- having the primary relationship with the child's family, or for being the key contact communicating with the family
- providing medical or nursing assistance to a child or early intervention therapy.

Note: the Additional Educator is not to be used to release educators from the care environment for programming/planning purposes, training and/or meetings and is not responsible for providing support that would otherwise be provided by the Inclusion Agency.

Will the Additional Educator have specific skills, knowledge and training related to supporting children with additional needs?

No, all educators within the team will be working with the child with high support needs, to ensure a range of knowledge, experience and skills are available to support the child's inclusion within the program.

What should a service consider when advertising for and employing an Additional Educator?

When advertising for and employing an Additional Educator, it is important to remember their role as a member of the educator team. Therefore, the skills, knowledge and attributes needed will be similar to other members of the team. Services should review their IDF Approval Letter to consider the number of approved hours each week, the approval period dates and the Conditions of Funding. The service must identify and keep attendance records of the Additional Educator employed to make and substantiate claims for payment for the IDF subsidy.

Is the Additional Educator employed for all of the hours that the child with additional needs is in care?

No, the service and Inclusion Agency will identify which part/s of the day that the educator team requires the increased educator-to-child ratio. Educators will use the 'Strategies' and 'Actions' identified in their Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP) to identify when support is required to address the barriers to inclusion.

Questions from the Educator Team

What does having an Additional Educator mean for the team?

With an increased educator-to-child ratio, educators have an extra resource and can work together to implement the 'Strategies' and 'Actions' identified in their SIP. This will help educators to address the identified 'Barriers' to inclusion, embed inclusive practices and support the inclusion of all children.

What information will the Additional Educator need?

The Additional Educator requires the same information needed to work as a team member in the care environment and service. This includes being familiar with the care environment routines and program, all children, educator roles and tasks across the day, as well as the SIP 'Strategies' and 'Actions' being implemented by the team.

What information will all educators need?

It is important that all educators, including the Additional Educator, have an opportunity to discuss and clarify daily roles and responsibilities within the team, including implementing the Strategies and Actions in the SIP. This means educators will need to know when the Additional Educator will attend each week. This team approach will assist in providing a quality inclusive service, where educators feel supported.

Questions from Families

What do families want to know?

Families may not be familiar with the role of the Additional Educator when a service has approved IDF Subsidy. Families with children with high support needs may anticipate that the support provided will be similar to early intervention therapy or may expect one-to-one support for their child. Services should explain that the Additional Educator works as a member of the team in the care environment and this increase in the educator-to-child ratio will help educators to meet the needs of their child and all children.

What does an inclusive approach mean for a child with additional needs?

- All educators will know the child and can respond to their needs, strengths and interests throughout the day.
- Opportunities are provided for the child to fully engage with their peers and all learning opportunities the service offers.
- Children with high support needs are seen by others and themselves as capable learners who participate in the program like their peers.

What does an inclusive approach mean for all children?

- Children are recognised and valued as individual learners, with educators considering and responding to the learning needs of each and every child.
- Children learn to recognise, value and respond to each other's strengths, and the diversity of abilities and interests among their peers.

Where can families and services find further information?

- The Department of Education, Skills and Employment website
<https://www.education.gov.au/inclusion-support-program-isp>
- The Inclusion Development Fund Manager (IDFM) website:
<http://www.idfm.org.au>
- A flow chart for families on how the ISP can assist your ECEC service to include your child: <https://docs.education.gov.au/node/53383>