



## Is there any extra assistance for my child with additional needs?

The Australian Government recognises that it is important for all children to be cared for in an environment in which they are accepted, belong, interact, learn and succeed.

If your child has a disability or is from a culturally and linguistically diverse or Indigenous background, your child care service may be eligible for extra assistance through the Inclusion and Professional Support Program.

### What assistance is available?

Specialist assistance is available through Inclusion Support Agencies. These regionally based organisations employ a network of skilled staff, called Inclusion Support Facilitators. These facilitators work directly with child care services to develop their capacity to include children with additional needs.

Inclusion Support Facilitators also assist child care services to access additional assistance such as:

- **Inclusion Support Subsidy (ISS).** The Inclusion Support Subsidy helps eligible child care services with the additional costs of including a child or children with ongoing high support needs, such as those with a diagnosed disability. In centre based services, the ISS provides funding as a contribution towards the costs associated with employing an additional staff member to increase the staff to child ratio and to relieve regular carers while they attend inclusion training. The ISS provides an extra payment for carers in home based services which includes family day care and in home care. The ISS also funds the purchase of specialist equipment to assist the inclusion of an eligible child.
- **Flexible Support Funding.** Flexible Support Funding also helps eligible child care services with the additional costs of including a child with high support needs for a short period (for example when a child is first enrolled in a service, or when a child is moving from one service to another).
- **Bicultural Support.** Bicultural support is time limited specialist support to assist child care services include children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, including refugee children, and children from Indigenous backgrounds. Bicultural support can facilitate communication between staff, the child and the child's family as well as raising awareness of different cultural practices.

### What is the process for accessing the Inclusion Support Subsidy, Flexible Support Funding, or Bicultural Support?

In order for child care services to access support through the Inclusion and Professional Support Program, they can contact their local Inclusion Support Agency. The agency will then arrange for an Inclusion Support Facilitator to visit the child care service to discuss the service's needs. Part of this discussion may involve the preparation of a Service Support Plan. These plans determine if additional assistance is required and, if so, what type of assistance would best meet the service's needs.

Child Care Services can also contact their Professional Support Coordinator or Indigenous Professional Support Unit. A Professional Support Coordinator is located in every state and territory and provides professional development, advice or resources to help services provide quality child care. Indigenous Professional Support Units have a similar role to the Professional Support Coordinators, except their focus is to help Indigenous child care services. Contact details for the Professional Support Coordinators and Indigenous Professional Support Units can be found at the department's website (see below).

## Which services are eligible for assistance through the Inclusion and Professional Support Program?

Services that can access assistance through the Inclusion and Professional Support Program are:

- Australian Government approved child care services, including private and community based Long Day Care; Outside School Hours Care (including Vacation Care); Family Day Care; Occasional Care; and In Home Care.
- Australian Government funded non-mainstream child care services (non-Child Care Benefit), such as flexible/innovative services; multi-functional Aboriginal child care services; non-mainstream outside school hours care; non-formula funded occasional care (100 per cent Australian Government funded); and mobile children's services.

## Where do I get more information?

To discuss your child's care needs, speak with your local child care service who will advise you on the type of support they can provide, or the support they may need to access through the Inclusion and Professional Support Program.

For more information about the Inclusion and Professional Support Program you can visit the department's website at [www.dest.gov.au/sectors/early\\_childhood/programmes\\_funding/child\\_care\\_inclusion\\_professional\\_support\\_program.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/early_childhood/programmes_funding/child_care_inclusion_professional_support_program.htm).