



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment  
and Workplace Relations



Inclusion & Professional  
Support Program

# Program Guidelines for:

Inclusion Support Agencies

Professional Support Coordinators

Indigenous Professional Support Units

National Inclusion Support Subsidy Provider

**2013–2016**

## VERSION CONTROL

---

Date	Version	Description
December 2011	1.0	First release of 2013-2016 guidelines

# CONTENTS

---

<b>VERSION CONTROL</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>ACRONYMS</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>ABOUT THE IPSP GUIDELINES</b>	<b>8</b>
1. Purpose of the Guidelines	8
2. Structure of Guidelines	9
<b>SECTION A - INCLUSION AND PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAM</b>	<b>10</b>
A1. IPSP philosophy	10
A2. IPSP objectives	11
A3. The IPSP and the National Quality Framework	11
A4. Key principles of the IPSP	13
A5. IPSP model	14
A5.1 IPSP Regions	14
A6. IPSP Forums and Alliances	15
A6.1 Alliances	15
A6.2 National IPSP Conference	16
A6.3 State/Territory Forums	16
A7. IPSP communication protocols, naming conventions and logos	17
A8. IPSP eligibility	17
A8.1 Services eligible for support through the IPSP	17
A8.2 Services not eligible for support through the IPSP	17
A8.3 Eligibility for Inclusion Support Subsidy funding	18
A9. Roles and responsibilities	18
A9.1 DEEWR	18
A9.2 IPSP Grant Recipients	18
A9.3 Joint roles and responsibilities	18
A10. IPSP needs analysis planning for ISAs, PSCs and IPSUs	19
A11. IPSP performance monitoring and compliance	19
A11.1 Monitoring	19
A11.2 Progress and expenditure reports	20
A12. Complaints procedures	20
A13. IPSP continuous improvement and evaluation strategies	20
<b>SECTION B - INCLUSION SUPPORT AGENCIES</b>	<b>21</b>
B1. Description	21
B1.1 Priority groups	21
B2. Objectives	21

B3.	Roles and responsibilities	22
B3.1	Support to ECEC services	22
B3.2	Role of ISAs in relation to the Inclusion Support Subsidy	23
B3.3	Role of ISAs in relation to Flexible Support Funding	23
B3.4	Role of ISAs in relation to Inclusion Support Facilitators	24
B3.5.	Role of ISAs in relation to planning and coordination	24
B4.	Networking and collaboration	25
B5.	Participation in IPSP forums including the ISA Alliance	25
B5.1	ISA Alliances	25
B5.2	National IPSP Conferences	26
B5.3	State/Territory IPSP Forums	26
B6.	Budget and performance monitoring	27
B6.1	Funding and budget management	27
B6.2	Use of funding	27
B6.3	Progress reporting	27
B6.4	Monitoring visits	28
<b>SECTION C – NATIONAL INCLUSION SUPPORT SUBSIDY PROVIDER</b>		<b>29</b>
C1.	Description	29
C2.	Objective of the NISSP	29
C3.	The role of the NISSP	29
C4.	Networking and collaboration	30
C5.	Budget and performance monitoring and reporting	30
C6.	Approval of the Inclusion Support Subsidy	30
C6.1	Approved purposes	30
C6.2	Non-approved purposes	30
C7.	Accessing the Inclusion Support Subsidy	31
C7.1	Eligibility	31
C7.2	Eligible ECEC services	31
C7.3	Children with ongoing high support needs	31
C7.4	Short-term and irregular utilisation in centre based care	31
C7.5	Approval period	32
C8.	Applying for the Inclusion Support Subsidy	32
C8.1	How to apply for the Inclusion Support Subsidy	32
C8.2	Exceptional circumstances	33
C8.3	Shared Care arrangements in centre based care	33
C8.4	Inclusion Support Subsidy assessment and approval	33
C8.5	Inclusion Support Subsidy agreement by ECEC services	33
C8.6	Review and continuation of funding	33
C8.7	Variations or changes to the child care environment	34
C8.8	Conditions relating to ECEC educators/carers employed with the Inclusion Support Subsidy	35
C9.	Inclusion Support Subsidy rates	35
C9.1	Inclusion Support Subsidy rates and limits for centre based care services	36
C9.2	Inclusion Support Subsidy rates and limits for home based care services	37
C9.3	Two tier Capacity Payment for Family Day Care	37
C9.4	Two tier Additional Payment for In Home Care	37

C9.5	Absences from care	38
C10.	The claims process	38
C10.1	How to claim Inclusion Support Subsidy	38
C10.2	Periodic auditing of ECEC services making Inclusion Support Subsidy claims	38
<b>SECTION D – PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT COORDINATORS</b>		<b>39</b>
D1.	Description	39
D2.	Objectives	39
D3.	Professional development and support approach	39
D4.	How to access the PSCs	40
D5.	Roles and responsibilities of the PSCs	40
D6.	Communication activities	42
D7.	Priority areas for professional development and support	42
D8.	Sub-contracting	43
D9.	Professional support fee structure	43
D10.	Planning	44
D11.	Networking and collaboration	45
D12.	Participation in IPSP Forums and the PSC Alliance	45
D12.1	PSC Alliance	45
D12.2	National IPSP Conferences	46
D12.3	State/Territory IPSP Forums	46
D13.	Budget and monitoring funding	46
D13.1	Funding and budget management	46
D13.2	Use of funding	46
D13.3	Funding for Bicultural Support and Specialist Equipment	47
D14.	Progress reporting	47
D14.1	Monitoring visits	47
<b>SECTION E – INDIGENOUS PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT UNITS</b>		<b>48</b>
E1.	Description	48
E2.	Objectives	48
E3.	Roles and responsibilities	48
E4.	Communication activities	49
E5.	Priority areas for professional development and support	49
E6.	Support for mainstream ECEC services	50
E7.	IPSU Fee Structure	50
E8.	Planning and coordination	51
E8.1	Needs analysis	51
E8.2	IPSU Region Plan	51
E9.	Networking and collaboration	51

E10.	Participation in IPSP Forums and the IPSU Alliance	52
E10.1	IPSU Alliance	52
D10.2	National IPSP Conferences	52
E10.1	State/Territory IPSP Forums	53
E11.	Professional development for IPSU staff	53
E12.	Budget and performance monitoring	53
E12.1	Use of funding	53
E12.2	Professional support fee structure	54
E13.	Progress reporting and monitoring	54
E13.1	Reporting	54
E13.2	Monitoring visits	55
E14.	How to access the Indigenous Professional Support Units	55
<b>SECTION F – IPSP RESOURCES</b>		<b>56</b>
F1.	Service Support Plans	56
F1.1	Description	56
F1.2	Why a Service Support Plan is needed	56
F1.3	What the Service Support Plan includes	56
F1.4	Evaluation of the Service Support Plan and the development of a new one	57
F2.	Flexible Support Funding	57
F2.1	Description	57
F2.2	Approved purposes for Flexible Support Funding	58
F2.3	Types of support for which Flexible Support Funding cannot be used	58
F2.4	Flexible Support Funding application and approval processes	59
F2.5	Flexible Support Funding claims	59
F2.6	Flexible Support Funding subsidy rate and limits	60
F2.7	Use of Flexible Support Funding for specialist training and/or Service Support Plans	62
F2.8	Exceptional circumstances over the 15 hour limit	62
F2.9	Role and employment conditions of educators	62
F3.	Bicultural Support	63
F3.1	Description	63
F3.2	What Bicultural Support provides	63
F3.3	Funding for Bicultural Support	64
F3.4	The role of the PSC in providing Bicultural Support	65
F3.5	How Bicultural Support operates	65
F3.6	Useful contacts for Bicultural Support providers	65
F4.	Specialist Equipment	66
F4.1	Description	66
F4.2	What is available from the Specialist Equipment?	66
F4.3	How ECEC services borrow Specialist Equipment	67
F4.4	Fitting Specialist Equipment	67
F4.5	Non eligible services accessing Specialist Equipment	67
F4.6	Role of the PSC in relation to Specialist Equipment	67
F5.	IPSP Resource Library	68
F5.1	Description and access	68
F5.2	Role of the PSC in relation to the IPSP Resource Library	68
<b>APPENDIX A - GLOSSARY</b>		<b>69</b>

# ACRONYMS

---

<b>AMEP</b>	Adult Migrant English Program
<b>ACECQA</b>	Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority
<b>BBF</b>	Budget Based Funding
<b>CALD</b>	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
<b>CCB</b>	Child Care Benefit
<b>CCMS</b>	Child Care Management System
<b>DEEWR</b>	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
<b>COAG</b>	Council of Australian Governments
<b>DSP</b>	Disability Support Pension
<b>ECEC</b>	Early Childhood Education and Care
<b>FDC</b>	Family Day Care
<b>FSF</b>	Flexible Support Funding
<b>IHC</b>	In Home Care
<b>IPSP</b>	Inclusion and Professional Support Program
<b>IPSU</b>	Indigenous Professional Support Unit
<b>ISA</b>	Inclusion Support Agency
<b>ISF</b>	Inclusion Support Facilitator
<b>ISS</b>	Inclusion Support Subsidy
<b>IS Portal</b>	Inclusion Support Portal
<b>LDC</b>	Long Day Care
<b>MACS</b>	Multi functional Aboriginal Care Service
<b>NISSP</b>	National Inclusion Support Subsidy Provider
<b>OCC</b>	Occasional Care
<b>OSHC</b>	Outside School Hours Care
<b>PSC</b>	Professional Support Coordinator
<b>SSP</b>	Service Support Plan
<b>VAC</b>	Vacation Care

# ABOUT THE IPSP GUIDELINES

---

## 1. Purpose of the Guidelines

These Guidelines contain information about the Inclusion and Professional Support Program (IPSP) and information relating to the obligations of organisations in receipt of grants funded by the Australian Government for the IPSP. These Grant Recipients are:

- the National Inclusion Support Subsidy Provider (NISSP);
- Inclusion Support Agencies (ISAs);
- Professional Support Coordinators (PSCs); and
- Indigenous Professional Support Units (IPSUs).

These Guidelines commence on 1 January 2013. These Guidelines may be amended from time to time during the term of the Funding Agreement. Such amendments may be necessary to reflect Australian Government priorities. Grant Recipients will be advised of any changes to the Guidelines in writing.

These Guidelines will be updated and maintained on the DEEWR website at:

[www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood/programs/childcareforservices/supportfamilyccs/pages/inclusionsupportprogram.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood/programs/childcareforservices/supportfamilyccs/pages/inclusionsupportprogram.aspx).

To understand the full obligations of each Grant Recipient, these Guidelines are to be read in conjunction with the relevant IPSP Funding Agreement.

In accordance with clause 3 of the Funding Agreement, in the event of any conflict or inconsistency between any part of these Guidelines and the Funding Agreement, the terms of the Funding Agreement take precedence over these Guidelines to the extent of the conflict or inconsistency.

## 2. Structure of Guidelines

<b>The IPSP</b>	
<b>Section A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IPSP philosophy, objectives and focus</li> <li>• IPSP model and key principles underpinning the delivery of IPSP</li> <li>• Strategies for facilitating integration in the IPSP</li> <li>• National Quality Framework</li> <li>• Eligibility requirements for IPSP support</li> <li>• IPSP program planning</li> <li>• Continuous improvement and evaluation strategies</li> </ul>
<b>Inclusion Support Program</b>	
<b>Section B</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion Support Agencies (ISAs)</li> </ul>
<b>Section C</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Inclusion Support Subsidy Provider (NISSP), including the Inclusion Support Subsidy</li> </ul>
<b>Professional Support Program</b>	
<b>Section D</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Support Coordinators (PSCs)</li> </ul>
<b>Section E</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous Professional Support Units (IPSUs)</li> </ul>
<b>IPSP Resources</b>	
<b>Section F</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Support Plans</li> <li>• Flexible Support Funding</li> <li>• Bicultural Support</li> <li>• Specialist Equipment</li> <li>• IPSP Resource Library</li> </ul>
<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A – Glossary</li> </ul>

# SECTION A - INCLUSION AND PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAM

---

## A1. IPSP philosophy

Early childhood is a critical time in human development. There is comprehensive research that shows the experiences children have in the early years of life set neurological and biological pathways that can have life-long impacts on health, learning and behaviour. Evidence suggests that there are great returns on investment in early childhood services for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Australian Government is committed to addressing disadvantage and social inclusion through a wide range of actions, including the IPSP.

The IPSP is part of the broader Council of Australian Governments (COAG) vision that, by 2020, all children have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves and for the nation. The IPSP promotes the objectives and principles of the *National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education*<sup>1</sup>, the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*<sup>2</sup>, the COAG agreed *National Disability Strategy*<sup>3</sup>, the *National Indigenous Reform Agreement*<sup>4</sup> (Closing the Gap), and the Australian Government's *Access and Equity Strategy*<sup>5</sup>, *Social Inclusion Agenda*<sup>6</sup> and *National Quality Agenda*<sup>7</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup>[http://www.coag.gov.au/intergov\\_agreements/federal\\_financial\\_relations/docs/national\\_partnership/national\\_partnership\\_on\\_early\\_childhood\\_education.pdf](http://www.coag.gov.au/intergov_agreements/federal_financial_relations/docs/national_partnership/national_partnership_on_early_childhood_education.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> The objects [in part] of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* are to:

- a) eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination against persons on the ground of disability in the areas of:
  - (i) work, accommodation, education, access to premises, clubs and sport; and
  - (iv) the administration of Commonwealth laws and programs; and
- b) ensure, as far as practicable, that persons with disabilities have the same rights to equality before the law as the rest of the community; and
- c) promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the principle that persons with disabilities have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community.

<sup>3</sup> The *National Disability Strategy* outlines a 10-year national policy framework to guide government activity across six key outcome areas, and to drive future reforms in mainstream and specialist disability service systems to improve outcomes for people with disability, their families and carers.

<sup>4</sup> The National Indigenous Reform Agreement has been established to frame the task of Closing the Gap in Indigenous Disadvantage. To ensure consistency across the development of National Partnership agreements, COAG has agreed service delivery principles and principles for investment in remote areas for Indigenous Australians. These principles are a guide for all COAG reforms, and all governments are expected to take these principles into account in designing policies and providing services.  
[http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/national\\_agreements/indigenous\\_reform/National\\_Indigenous\\_Reform\\_Agreement\\_from\\_13\\_Feb\\_11.pdf](http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/national_agreements/indigenous_reform/National_Indigenous_Reform_Agreement_from_13_Feb_11.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> The Australian Government aims to achieve fairer and more accessible government services and programs through its Access and Equity strategy. The strategy seeks to promote fairness and responsiveness in the design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of government services in a culturally diverse society.

<sup>6</sup> The Australian Government's Social Inclusion Agenda encourages all Australians to participate in public life and the community. Go to: <http://www.socialinclusion.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> The Australian Government's agenda for early childhood education and child care focuses on providing Australian families with high-quality, accessible and affordable integrated early childhood education and child care.  
[http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy\\_Agenda/Pages/home.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy_Agenda/Pages/home.aspx)

The IPSP philosophy for early childhood education and care (ECEC) services is based on:

- universal access<sup>8</sup> to education and care services for all children;
- education and care services being ready to meet the needs of all children and equipping them for life and learning;
- support provided to education and care services being based on the needs of the total care environment; and
- educators developing the capacity to meet the needs of all children attending the service.

## A2. IPSP objectives

The objectives of the IPSP are to promote and maintain high quality, inclusive education and care, for all children in eligible early childhood education and care settings. This is achieved by increasing the knowledge and skills of educators, and the capacity of education and care services, through providing professional development, advice and access to additional resources and support.

This includes:

- professional development and workforce development that enhances the quality of education and care services;
- access to a range of resources that educators need to provide care for all children;
- access to additional educators or carers when required;
- flexible programs that support education and care services to be responsive to the needs of all children;
- good practice and continuous improvement in service delivery; and
- the readiness of education and care services to become more inclusive.

The content of IPSP professional development will be guided by DEEWR, in collaboration with the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), and State and Territory Regulatory Authorities. It will support the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes required by those working in education and care services to meet the National Quality Standard, and to be guided in their daily practices by approved frameworks such as the Early Years Learning Framework and the Framework for School Age Care. This includes knowledge and skill development to support the inclusion of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, from refugee and humanitarian backgrounds, Indigenous children and children with disability.

## A3. The IPSP and the National Quality Framework

The IPSP drives change, and supports education and care services to understand the National Quality Framework and to actively work to adopt and improve their practices in line with approved learning frameworks.

---

<sup>8</sup> The Australian Government has committed to providing universal access to education and care services, provided by a four-year university-trained early childhood teacher, for 15 hours a week in the year before formal schooling.  
[http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Policy\\_Agenda/ECUA/Pages/home.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Policy_Agenda/ECUA/Pages/home.aspx)

In December 2009, all Australian governments, through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), agreed to a partnership to establish a National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care (the National Quality Framework) for most Long Day Care, Preschool/Kindergarten, Family Day Care, and Outside School Hours Care services in Australia.

The National Quality Framework aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement and consistency in education and care services, including school age care.

While not covered by the National Quality Framework, Budget Based Funded, Occasional Care and In-Home Care services are also eligible for support through the IPSP.

The National Quality Framework includes a:

- national legislative framework consisting of the:
  - Education and Care Services National Law; and
  - Education and Care Services National Regulations;
- National Quality Standard consisting of seven Quality Areas, which are:
  - Educational program and practice;
  - Children's health and safety;
  - Physical environment;
  - Staffing arrangements;
  - Relationships with children;
  - Collaborative partnerships with families and communities; and
  - Leadership and service management.
- national quality rating and assessment process through which services are assessed against the National Quality Standard by Regulatory Authorities, and provided with a rating from one of the five rating levels;
- Regulatory Authority in each state and territory that will have primary responsibility for the approval, monitoring and quality assessment of services in its jurisdiction in accordance with the national legislative framework and in relation to the National Quality Standard; and
- new national body, ACECQA, to oversee the new system and guide its implementation in a nationally consistent way.

The National Quality Standard sets a new national benchmark about the quality of early childhood education and care and school age care services. It will also give services and families a better understanding of what constitutes a quality service. This enables families to make informed decisions about the services providing education and care to their children. The National Quality Standard allows each service to adopt approaches that are most appropriate to the children being educated and cared for at that service.

A central focus of the National Quality Framework is on outcomes for children. This requires that all education and care services must provide a program that is based on an approved learning framework, which considers the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and takes into account the individual differences of each child. The approved learning frameworks have been developed to guide educators in developing quality programs that support children's learning.

*Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* (the Early Years Learning Framework) and *My Time, Our Place, Framework for School Age Care in Australia* (Framework for School Age Care) outline practices to support and promote children's learning.

The aim of the Early Years Learning Framework is to extend and enrich children's learning from birth to the transition to school. It forms the foundation for ensuring that children in all early childhood education and care settings experience quality teaching and learning. It has a specific emphasis on play-based learning, and recognises the importance of communication and language (including early literacy and numeracy), and social and emotional development.

The aim of the Framework for School Age Care is to extend and enrich the wellbeing and development of school age children in education and care settings. It assists services to provide children in school age care with opportunities to engage in leisure and play based experiences.

Other approved learning frameworks under the National Quality Framework include:

- Australian Capital Territory: Every Chance to Learn—Curriculum framework for ACT schools preschool to Year 10
- Tasmania: the Tasmanian Curriculum, the Department of Education of Tasmania, 2008
- Victoria: the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework
- Western Australia: the Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten to Year 12 Education in Western Australia.

Further information on the National Quality Framework, National Law, National Regulations, the National Quality Standards and the Regulatory Authorities is available from the ACECQA website at: [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au).

## A4. Key principles of the IPSP

The Australian Government is committed to improving access for all children to high quality, inclusive education and care services in both early childhood settings and school aged settings.

For the purposes of brevity, in these Guidelines, both early childhood and school aged education and care services, including: Long Day Care, Family Day Care, Outside School Hours Care, Occasional Care, In-Home Care and Budget Based Funded services (see section A8 of these Guidelines), may be referred to as 'early childhood education and care services' (ECEC services).

The following principles underpin the delivery of the IPSP:

- **Equity of access**—eligible ECEC services, regardless of their geographic location or service type, will have equitable access to support services provided by the IPSP.
- **Inclusion**—the IPSP supports eligible ECEC services to be inclusive of all children.
- **Professional workforce**—the IPSP supports an increase in the professionalism of the ECEC workforce, and is proactive in meeting the needs of the ECEC workforce and ECEC service management.

- **Quality**—the IPSP assists eligible ECEC services to provide quality ECEC services by actively promoting the National Quality Framework, the Early Years Learning Framework and the Framework for School Age Care.
- **National consistency**—eligible ECEC services can expect to have access to IPSP services that are delivered in an efficient, flexible, culturally appropriate and timely manner.
- **Integrated approach**—IPSP Grant Recipients will work collaboratively with each other and develop organisational relationships that support an integrated approach to service delivery.
- **Capacity building and strengths-based approach**—IPSP Grant Recipients will use a strengths-based approach (that is, understanding the capacity and capability of the ECEC service as a starting point for determining the type and intensity of assistance and support required) to build the capacity of eligible ECEC services to continuously improve the quality of their environment.

## A5. IPSP model

IPSP Grant Recipients are required to deliver IPSP activities in an integrated and collaborative way to support the needs of ECEC services within specific regions (see sub-section A5.1 of these Guidelines).

The IPSP comprises two main types of support – inclusion support and professional support:

- **Inclusion Support** improves access and inclusion for children with additional needs. This support is provided:
  - by Inclusion Support Agencies (ISAs);
  - by the National Inclusion Support Subsidy Provider (NISSP); and
  - through access to the Inclusion Support Subsidy and Flexible Support Funding.
- **Professional Support** raises the quality of the education and care provided in ECEC settings. This support is provided by:
  - Professional Support Coordinators (PSCs); and
  - Indigenous Professional Support Units (IPSUs).

For clarity in these Guidelines, the types of activities undertaken by the ISAs, NISSP, PSCs and IPSUs are referred to as the Program Elements.

### A5.1 IPSP Regions

Each Program Element is delivered by an IPSP Grant Recipient within a specific geographic region.

For the ISAs, there are 67 ISA Regions across Australia:

- New South Wales - 18 ISA Regions
- Victoria - 17 ISA Regions
- Queensland - 13 ISA Regions
- Western Australia - 8 ISA Regions
- South Australia - 5 ISA Regions
- Tasmania - 3 ISA Regions;
- Australian Capital Territory - 1 ISA Region
- Northern Territory - 2 ISA Regions

For the PSCs, there are eight Regions and each Region encompasses an entire state or territory.

For the IPSUs, there are also eight Regions, one Region for each state, and two Regions in the NT. IPSU activities in the ACT are undertaken by the NSW IPSU.

The NISSP is a single national provider and has a single national Region - Australia wide.

## **A6. IPSP Forums and Alliances**

Given the collaborative and integrated approach to the delivery of IPSP support across Australia, DEEWR, IPSP Grant Recipients and key stakeholders meet in a number of formal settings throughout the year. These include Alliance meetings (see sub-section A6.1 of these Guidelines), an annual National IPSP Conference (see sub-section A6.2 of these Guidelines), and State/Territory Forums (see sub-section A6.3 of these Guidelines).

These meetings provide opportunities to:

- review program activities and the extent to which they are meeting their objectives;
- facilitate communication, collaboration and information sharing between IPSP Grant Recipients;
- develop a shared vision for the delivery of inclusion and professional support for the ECEC sector;
- review referral processes and communication protocols; and
- plan for IPSP delivery at a national, state and regional level, including in rural and remote areas.

### **A6.1 Alliances**

There are national and state/territory based Alliances. These include:

- a National ISA Alliance;
- a National PSC Alliance;
- a National IPSU Alliance; and
- in states with a large number of ISA Regions, State ISA Alliances.

Members of the Alliances are representatives of the Grant Recipients for each Program Element.

The Alliances are an effective and formal mechanism for developing and maintaining a cohesive vision of each Grant Recipient's roles and responsibilities, and promoting nationally consistent and collaborative approaches to inclusion, and professional development and support for the ECEC sector.

DEEWR is invited to Alliance meetings and may use this opportunity to provide updates on priorities and directions for the program.

ISAs, PSCs and IPSUs must provide representatives to participate in, and/or contribute to, their respective Alliance meetings.

The host and chair of each Alliance meeting rotates and is responsible for:

- arranging a venue, preparing an agenda and liaising with DEEWR as required;
- keeping records of issues discussed;
- noting recommended actions and the responsible party for that action;
- providing minutes and action items to members;
- providing an overview report to DEEWR; and
- providing a handover to the host of the next Alliance meeting.

The National Alliances meet twice each year for a conference over 1 to 3 days. One of these Alliance meetings will align with the annual National IPSP Conference, which will be held in Canberra.

In consultation with DEEWR, Grant Recipients for each Program Element will develop the Terms of Reference to articulate the goals, functions, membership and governance arrangements for each Alliance.

### **A6.2 National IPSP Conference**

DEEWR will arrange an annual National IPSP Conference to bring together the National Alliances, the NISSP, DEEWR and other peak stakeholders, such as ACECQA, to discuss issues related to the whole program.

The National Conference will coincide with one meeting of the National Alliances and be held in Canberra each year. DEEWR will organise the venue, agenda and catering for the annual National IPSP Conference. Travel and accommodation requirements for participants will be the responsibility of individual Grant Recipients or the National Alliances.

The National IPSP Conference will provide the mechanism for achieving greater cohesion between IPSP Grant Recipients, and provide opportunities to discuss and respond to any issues or gaps identified in the provision of the program. DEEWR will also use the National IPSP Conference as one mechanism to provide updates to IPSP Grant Recipients on priorities and key initiatives.

Grant Recipients will be advised of the timing of the first National IPSP Conference before the commencement of the Funding Agreements.

### **A6.3 State/Territory Forums**

The State/Territory IPSP Forums provide an opportunity for representatives of each of the Program Elements within the state/territory to meet with each other, DEEWR, the relevant Regulatory Authority, and other key stakeholders to focus on issues at the state/territory level.

The timing and frequency of these forums will be determined at meetings held at the beginning of the funding period.

## A7. IPSP communication protocols, naming conventions and logos

IPSP Grant Recipients are required to develop clear communication and feedback mechanisms between the Program Elements within each state and territory to enhance collaboration, and to ensure eligible ECEC services are able to access the appropriate IPSP support regardless of which Grant Recipient is contacted. This is referred to as a 'no wrong door' approach.

IPSP Grant Recipients must use IPSP naming conventions and logos in all written and electronic communication, as specified in the Funding Agreements.

## A8. IPSP eligibility

### A8.1 Services eligible for support through the IPSP

Education and care services eligible for support from ISAs and PSCs, and able to access the Inclusion Support Subsidy, are:

- Services approved for Child Care Benefit (CCB), including:
  - long day care;
  - outside school hours care (including vacation care);
  - family day care;
  - occasional care; and
  - in home care.
- Services funded under the Budget Based Funding (BBF) program, including:
  - flexible/innovative services;
  - mobile ECEC services;
  - Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services;
  - Indigenous playgroups;
  - Indigenous outside school hours care and enrichment programs;
  - crèches; and
  - innovative ECEC service centres.

Education and care services eligible for support from IPSUs are:

- Indigenous focused services funded under the Budget Based Funding (BBF) program, including:
  - flexible/innovative services;
  - mobile ECEC services;
  - Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services;
  - Indigenous playgroups;
  - Indigenous outside school hours care and enrichment programs;
  - crèches; and
  - innovative ECEC service centres.

### A8.2 Services not eligible for support through the IPSP

Any service of a type not listed in section A8.1 is not eligible for support under the IPSP. This includes registered care, and state and territory government funded occasional care, preschools, kindergartens and early intervention services.

Services included under the National Quality Framework, but which are not eligible for the IPSP, such as preschools and kindergartens, may seek support from PSC, ISA and IPSU Grant Recipients on a fee for service basis (see sections D9 and E7 of these Guidelines).

### **A8.3 Eligibility for Inclusion Support Subsidy funding**

Certain services eligible for IPSP are not eligible for Inclusion Support Subsidy funding. For the purposes of the Inclusion Support Subsidy, where a service has advised that all of the enrolled children have ongoing high support needs, the service is deemed to be a specialist service. These services are not eligible for the Inclusion Support Subsidy as they do not offer the opportunity for the children with ongoing high support needs to be included alongside typically developing peers. This is irrespective of whether they are approved for CCB.

In addition, although a service may be eligible for IPSP and also eligible for the Inclusion Support Subsidy, this does not mean an automatic entitlement to Inclusion Support Subsidy funding. To receive Inclusion Support Subsidy funding, ECEC services are subject to additional criteria. For more information, refer to Section C of these Guidelines.

## **A9. Roles and responsibilities**

### **A9.1 DEEWR**

DEEWR's National Office and State/Territory Offices have responsibility for administering the IPSP:

- **National Office** is responsible for national program management, program objectives and priorities, national reporting and evaluation, and the contract management of the Funding Agreement for the NISSP. National Office is also responsible for arranging the annual National Conference.
- **State/Territory Offices** are responsible for the contract management of Funding Agreements with PSC, IPSU and ISA Grant Recipients, and local service delivery issues. State/Territory Offices are responsible for arranging the State/Territory Forums, and for keeping National Office informed of program issues.

### **A9.2 IPSP Grant Recipients**

IPSP Grant Recipients are responsible for:

- delivering inclusion support and professional development activities; and
- sharing information and materials between Grant Recipients, as described in these Guidelines and as specified in their Funding Agreements.

### **A9.3 Joint roles and responsibilities**

DEEWR and IPSP Grant Recipients have a role in supporting good practice and maintaining linkages with other IPSP providers, ACECQA, the Regulatory Authorities, and providers of other related programs and services.

## A10. IPSP needs analysis planning for ISAs, PSCs and IPSUs

The IPSP supports a planned approach to program management and delivery to ensure resources are targeted to areas of greatest need. This approach increases focus on outcomes, and provides clarity on the direction, and roles and responsibilities of the respective IPSP Grant Recipients in achieving these outcomes. Nevertheless, the capacity to respond to emerging or specific local needs will be important, particularly as ECEC services go through the assessment and rating processes of the National Quality Framework.

To ensure a nationally consistent approach to planning and understanding the needs of eligible ECEC services within regions, DEEWR will develop a data collection framework for use by IPSP Grant Recipients. IPSP Grant Recipients will be required to implement the data collection processes in accordance with the terms of their Funding Agreement. Based on this information, and in consultation with DEEWR, IPSP Grant Recipients will prepare a plan for delivery of their services for the funding period. IPSP Grant Recipients will review the plan each 6 months to ensure it is still addressing identified needs within the region. The plans will form the basis for Exception and Progress reporting to DEEWR.

DEEWR may also conduct surveys of eligible ECEC services to gain feedback on the support provided, and to gauge areas where further support is needed in the ECEC sector. Information from these surveys will be shared with IPSP Grant Recipients as part of DEEWR's monitoring processes and at IPSP forums.

The IPSP forums contribute to the planning process by providing opportunities for strategic discussions with DEEWR and other key stakeholders, and enabling the sharing of activities and resources. Over and above any specific needs analysis, DEEWR may identify key areas where a national program of support is to be developed and delivered.

## A11. IPSP performance monitoring and compliance

DEEWR is responsible for ensuring that IPSP funding is expended in an efficient and transparent manner, and for monitoring IPSP Grant Recipients' compliance with the terms and conditions of their Funding Agreements.

DEEWR's performance monitoring and compliance strategy includes analysis of detailed reports on IPSP funding expenditure, monitoring of performance reports, regular liaison with IPSP Grant Recipients, and monitoring visits.

Performance monitoring, in addition to meeting DEEWR's accountability requirements, is used to:

- determine how the IPSP is operating in each state/territory;
- contribute to the performance information on the IPSP; and
- enhance opportunities for learning and performance improvement by DEEWR and IPSP Grant Recipients.

### A11.1 Monitoring

Monitoring of IPSP Grant Recipients will draw on a number of sources, including visits, data analysis, review of reports, quality assessment and rating reports, review of processes and procedures, review of websites, and survey results.

Monitoring visits undertaken by DEEWR will include:

- meetings with IPSP Grant Recipients to discuss their progress reports and any issues or questions arising from the reports or other monitoring activities. IPSP Grant Recipients are required to provide examples of their work, for example, training or professional development calendars, resources, and evaluations; and
- meetings with ECEC services that have received support from IPSP Grant Recipients to gauge levels of satisfaction.

DEEWR will establish a rolling program of visits and provide advice to IPSP Grant Recipients on the timing and approach for the monitoring process.

DEEWR will also use data from a range of other sources, including surveys of ECEC services, to assess the effectiveness of the IPSP.

### **A11.2 Progress and expenditure reports**

IPSP Grant Recipients are required to report regularly on program activities and demonstrate compliance with program requirements using templates defined by DEEWR.

The reporting requirements are detailed in the Funding Agreement.

## **A12. Complaints procedures**

IPSP Grant Recipients are required to establish and maintain effective complaints-handling and problem-solving mechanisms for eligible ECEC services. These mechanisms must ensure timely and effective resolution of complaints.

The complaints-handling mechanism must inform ECEC services of the process for lodging a complaint and the process for providing feedback. The mechanism will ensure that issues arising from complaints are reported to management and are used to improve service delivery.

The mechanisms must also include the development and distribution of written information to IPSP Grant Recipient staff or sub-contractors about their rights and responsibilities in relation to the delivery of professional development and inclusion support.

The complaints procedures, and records of issues and responses, must be available to DEEWR on request.

## **A13. IPSP continuous improvement and evaluation strategies**

To ensure the ongoing improvement of the IPSP, IPSP Grant Recipients will develop and implement internal systems to facilitate continuous improvement in their service delivery.

In addition, DEEWR will undertake an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the IPSP for 2013-2016, and the extent to which program objectives have been achieved. All IPSP Grant Recipients will be required to participate in the evaluation.

## SECTION B - INCLUSION SUPPORT AGENCIES

---

### B1. Description

The Inclusion Support Agencies (ISAs) are funded across 67 regions to provide eligible ECEC services with practical support that will help services to build their capacity to provide a quality inclusive environment for children with additional needs. This includes working with eligible ECEC services to remove barriers to participation for children with additional needs, and promote and maintain high quality care that is free from discrimination, segregation and prejudice.

#### B1.1 Priority groups

For the purposes of the IPSP, children with additional needs are those from the following priority groups:

- children with disability, including children with high support needs;
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- children from a refugee or humanitarian intervention background; and
- Indigenous children.

For the purposes of the IPSP, quality inclusive ECEC environments are those that:

- provide welcoming, accessible, supportive and engaging environments that are responsive to all children and their families;
- use flexible programming approaches that are responsive to individual strengths, interests and needs;
- build on and develop the strengths of the ECEC community (child, family, educators and community);
- work in partnership with families and respect their cultural values, needs and circumstances; and
- are well supported through networking with other relevant services and supports.

Eligible ECEC services may contact their local ISA for assistance if they have, or are intending to enrol, a child with additional needs, or they may be referred to the ISA by another IPSP Grant Recipient or other referral pathways approved by DEEWR.

### B2. Objectives

The objective for the ISAs is to assist eligible ECEC services to build the knowledge and confidence they need to be able to offer quality inclusive ECEC environments to children with additional needs. This will enable children with additional needs to participate in the activities available in the service, and to have the same opportunities as others to participate, belong, develop and succeed.

In particular, ISAs aim to:

- promote and support access to quality ECEC services;
- help build the capacity of eligible ECEC services to successfully include children with additional needs;
- ensure inclusion support is delivered in a flexible manner, and is responsive to the needs and priorities of eligible ECEC services; and
- ensure inclusion support is delivered in an efficient and cost effective manner, and in accordance with these Guidelines and the Funding Agreements.

### **B3. Roles and responsibilities**

In relation to the roles and responsibilities set out below, DEEWR may direct how these are fulfilled by ISAs and may also direct ISAs (or ISAs may seek DEEWR's agreement) to undertake activities that align with the aims and objectives of the program, but are outside of those listed, to meet emerging needs.

#### **B3.1 Support to ECEC services**

ISAs are responsible for undertaking activities that provide eligible ECEC services with practical advice and assistance in accessing resources that will support them to build capacity and the ability to provide a quality environment inclusive of all children.

These include:

- within the region, widely promoting the support and resources available through the IPSP;
- assisting eligible ECEC services to access IPSP support and resources as appropriate, including professional development, the Inclusion Support Subsidy, Flexible Support Funding, Bicultural Support, Specialist Equipment and library resources;
- engaging suitably skilled and experienced staff (Inclusion Support Facilitators (ISFs)) to work directly with eligible ECEC services, to provide support, information and guidance that assists them to provide inclusive quality ECEC environments. The activities of the Inclusion Support Facilitator includes:
  - promoting an awareness of, and responsiveness to, the identified priority groups within eligible ECEC services;
  - providing practical professional advice and guidance, and sourcing information to respond to identified needs;
  - providing on-site assistance with the development and review of planning (Service Support Plan, see section F1 of these Guidelines) to support the establishment, and/or improvement and maintenance, of quality inclusive environments;
  - where appropriate recommend applications for Bicultural Support or Specialist Equipment to the PSC to approve and action;
  - where possible, visiting the ECEC service when Bicultural Support is being provided;
  - assisting eligible ECEC services with the preparation of Flexible Support Funding and Inclusion Support Subsidy applications and, where appropriate, endorsing applications once completed.
- assessing and, where approved, facilitating Flexible Support Funding to eligible ECEC services;

- assisting eligible ECEC services to link with relevant community groups, services and organisations;
- supporting eligible ECEC services to work in partnership with families and local support networks;
- identifying policies and practices that facilitate inclusion of children with additional needs in ECEC settings, and sharing these with eligible ECEC services and with other IPSP Grant Recipients;
- adopting a 'no wrong door' approach to requests for IPSP assistance from the ECEC sector, and making referrals, as appropriate, to other ISAs or the relevant PSC or IPSU;
- assisting eligible ECEC services to identify their professional development needs and opportunities, and make referrals, as appropriate, to the PSC, IPSU or providers of other services and programs;
- supporting eligible ECEC services to engage in ongoing reflective practices and continuous improvement related to inclusive practices; and
- responding in a timely manner to requests and referrals for inclusion support from eligible ECEC services and other IPSP Grant Recipients.

### **B3.2 Role of ISAs in relation to the Inclusion Support Subsidy**

Eligible ECEC services that have enrolled, or are intending to enrol, a child from a Priority Group may apply for funding under the Inclusion Support Subsidy to support the engagement of an additional educator (see section C7 of these Guidelines).

ISAs assist, as appropriate, eligible ECEC services to apply to receive the Inclusion Support Subsidy by:

- supporting the service to develop a plan to support the inclusion of a child with additional needs. This plan is referred to as a Service Support Plan;
- assisting eligible ECEC services with the preparation of Inclusion Support Subsidy applications and other forms;
- assisting eligible ECEC services with uploading information onto the IS Portal;
- assisting eligible ECEC services (once approved for the Inclusion Support Subsidy funding) to complete a review of their inclusion plans to identify whether the Inclusion Support Subsidy is required for a further period of time; and
- providing information to the National Inclusion Support Subsidy Provider (NISSP) as required.

The NISSP assesses Inclusion Support Subsidy applications and facilitates payments to the ECEC service through the Child Care Management System (CCMS).

### **B3.3 Role of ISAs in relation to Flexible Support Funding**

ISAs are responsible for managing Flexible Support Funding and ensuring it is administered in a manner consistent with the guidance in section F2 of these Guidelines. This includes monitoring Flexible Support Funding expenditure to ensure that requests are managed and approved within their regional allocation.

A key principle in the administration of Flexible Support Funding is that applications for funding are approved at a local level by the ISA. This reduces the level of administration and ensures greater responsiveness to local needs. ISAs must ensure that Flexible Support Funding expenditure is targeted appropriately across all eligible ECEC services.

ISAs are required to report on Flexible Support Funding expenditure in Six Month Expenditure Reports and in their Audited Financial Acquittal Reports.

The amount of Flexible Support Funding available in each ISA region will be allocated each 6 months. Future allocations will be based on usage and acquittal of the previous 6-month allocation. In situations where an ISA does not utilise its full allocation, DEEWR may reduce the subsequent allocation for that region and direct the funds to regions with higher demand for Flexible Support Funding.

### **B3.4 Role of ISAs in relation to Inclusion Support Facilitators**

ISAs are expected to employ suitably skilled and experienced Inclusion Support Facilitators to work at the local level with eligible ECEC services and their qualified ECEC educators. ISAs are responsible for ensuring Inclusion Support Facilitators have ongoing support and access to training to assist them to successfully undertake their role. This includes undertaking comprehensive orientation training, as directed by DEEWR, and other professional development they may require to successfully undertake their role. ISAs may access PSC professional development and training on a fee for service basis. This may include training in the following areas:

- guiding change in ECEC services;
- child development and inclusive practice;
- adult learning principles;
- coaching and mentoring;
- reflective practice;
- strengths-based practice and capacity building approaches;
- innovation and change in child care theory and practice;
- interdisciplinary team work and interagency collaboration;
- family-centred practices; and
- cross-cultural competencies.

### **B3.5 Role of ISAs in relation to planning and coordination**

ISAs are required to develop an ISA Region Plan as specified in the Funding Agreement. The plan will document how inclusion support will be promoted, coordinated and delivered to eligible ECEC services requiring support within the region over the funding period.

ISAs will review the plan as part of their processes for reporting to DEEWR. This twice yearly review provides an opportunity to ensure identified priorities and activities are on track, and to seek approval from DEEWR to make adjustments so that the plans remain relevant to the needs of the region.

The plan will include:

- the demographics of the region;
- an analysis of regional needs, developed in consultation with relevant local stakeholders, which reflects the needs of ECEC services in the region;
- activities to be undertaken to provide the services with support in areas identified as a priority;
- marketing strategies to ensure eligible ECEC services and relevant stakeholders are aware of the services available through the ISA;

- stakeholder management strategies to ensure effective partnerships are built and maintained with all stakeholders in the region and IPSP Grant Recipients;
- a client satisfaction strategy for receiving feedback from ECEC services on the quality of ISA support provided;
- a complaints-handling strategy, which ensures complaints are effectively managed and resolved;
- a continuous improvement strategy, which identifies and addresses opportunities to build on and improve the service being delivered;
- communication and referral processes, to access other IPSP services, including other ISAs, and the PSCs and IPSUs; and
- a risk management strategy.

## **B4. Networking and collaboration**

ISAs are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective partnerships with all stakeholders, including other ISAs, the NISSP, PSCs, IPSUs and regional networks.

ISAs will work in collaboration with IPSUs to assist mainstream ECEC services to become culturally sensitive, and inclusive of Indigenous children and their families. ISAs are responsible for sharing information and materials with other ISAs and other IPSP Grant Recipients where appropriate.

IPSUs may charge ISAs a fee for service for requests that have significant resource implications for the IPSU (see sections E6 and E7 of these Guidelines).

## **B5. Participation in IPSP forums including the ISA Alliance**

ISAs must participate in:

- ISA Alliance(s)
- National IPSP Conferences (through National ISA Alliance representation); and
- State/Territory IPSP Forums.

### **B5.1 ISA Alliances**

Depending on the number and geographical location of ISAs within the state or territory, DEEWR and the ISAs may agree to the establishment of a state/territory based ISA Alliance. The state/territory based ISA Alliance members will each represent a number of Regions within the state/territory and will attend the State/Territory Forums.

The National ISA Alliance consists of members representing the ISAs in each state and territory (including a metropolitan and a rural or remote representative for each state/territory). ISAs in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland will each be able to elect up to three representatives, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory will each be able to elect two representatives, and the sole Australian Capital Territory ISA will have one representative.

The National ISA Alliance will meet twice each year for a 2 to 3 day forum. One meeting each year must be held in Canberra to coincide with the National IPSP Conference.

The ISAs, in consultation with DEEWR, will develop Terms of Reference for both the state based and National ISA Alliances.

The ISA Alliance meetings provide a forum:

- for strategic discussions that identify priority areas for action and opportunities for continuous improvement;
- to facilitate collaboration and communication between ISAs and the NISSP;
- to share best practice and develop strategies for continuous improvement;
- to promote innovative approaches to service delivery, particularly in remote localities;
- to look for opportunities for innovation;
- to identify and respond to issues that have national implications; and
- to review ISA activities and the extent to which they are meeting IPSP objectives.

Funding to cover costs associated with participation at the National ISA Alliance meetings (for example, economy class flights, accommodation and meals) will be covered separately by DEEWR.

Costs associated with participation in the state level meetings must be met by each ISA Grant Recipient.

Representation by the ISAs will be on a rotational basis to enable each ISA an opportunity to attend Alliance meetings. To make the process efficient, representatives should attend at least two meetings to allow for continuity. Meetings will be held twice a year, with one meeting aligning with the National IPSP Conference.

## **B5.2 National IPSP Conferences**

The National ISA Alliance members participate in the annual National IPSP Conference.

The National IPSP Conference provides an opportunity to review program activities and the extent to which they are meeting the IPSP objectives. The National IPSP Conference also provides the opportunity to network with other IPSP Grant Recipients and key stakeholders, and to promote nationally consistent and collaborative approaches to inclusion and professional development and support for the ECEC sector (see section A6 of these Guidelines).

## **B5.3 State/Territory IPSP Forums**

ISAs are required to participate in the relevant State/Territory IPSP Forums. In consultation with DEEWR, each ISA region may elect to attend or be represented at the meetings. Costs associated with this participation are to be covered within the ISA administration budget as specified in item E of the Schedule to the Funding Agreement.

The State/Territory IPSP Forums provide opportunities for planning for the delivery of IPSP services at a regional and state level, reviewing communication protocols, networking with the NISSP, IPSUs and PSCs, and sharing best practice with other ISAs (see section A6 of these Guidelines).

## **B6. Budget and performance monitoring**

### **B6.1 Funding and budget management**

ISAs are required to manage and monitor their budgets in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement. ISAs will be required to provide a detailed budget to DEEWR at the start of each financial year of the funding period. ISAs are also required to provide detailed expenditure reports against this budget on a 6-monthly basis and to provide an annual audited financial report.

### **B6.2 Use of funding**

The majority of funding (at least 75 per cent) within an ISA region is to be used for direct service delivery each financial year. The ISA will be able to retain up to 25 per cent each financial year for administrative and coordination costs. ISAs may only spend funding for administration and coordination purposes as proposed in the budget items they specify and which have been approved by DEEWR each year.

As an indication, administrative and coordination costs may include costs associated with:

- recruiting and training staff;
- salaries for administrative staff;
- setting up and maintaining an office, including insurance, rent, signage, general office equipment, telephone and internet costs;
- monitoring and acquitting all funding allocated to the ISA region, including Flexible Support Funding;
- reporting to DEEWR and participating in evaluation processes;
- engaging, and ongoing management and support of, Inclusion Support Facilitators; and
- liaison and stakeholder management, including regional networking and communicating with state/territory based PSCs and IPSUs, where applicable.

Note: when stakeholder liaison involves ECEC services, this activity will be funded from the direct service delivery allocation.

Funding cannot be used for overseas travel, outright purchase of a vehicle, or major office renovation or building construction (capital works).

All income generated from the activities funded under the IPSP, including bank interest, must be clearly identified and detailed in financial reports. This funding will be considered part of the ISA's operating budget and must be used for the purpose of delivering inclusion support as per the Funding Agreement with DEEWR.

On occasion, when an ISA is to host the ISA Alliance meeting, a separate funding agreement or variation will be arranged between DEEWR and the relevant ISA.

### **B6.3 Progress reporting**

In accordance with the Funding Agreement, ISAs are required to submit 6-monthly and annual reports using the templates provide by DEEWR. ISAs may also, from time to time, be required to provide ad-hoc reports to DEEWR.

The 6-monthly reports include: an exception report against the priorities and activities detailed in the Region Plan that have not been undertaken as planned, along with a strategy or proposal to address the issue, a data report, and an expenditure report. IPSP Grant Recipients must also provide an annual progress report and an annual audited financial report.

#### **B6.4 Monitoring visits**

DEEWR will undertake monitoring visits with ISAs to meet with staff, and discuss their progress reports and any issues or questions arising from the reports or other monitoring activities. See sub-section A11.1 of these Guidelines.

## SECTION C – NATIONAL INCLUSION SUPPORT SUBSIDY PROVIDER

---

### C1. Description

The National Inclusion Support Subsidy Provider (NISSP) is responsible for assessment and approval of applications for the Inclusion Support Subsidy.

The Inclusion Support Subsidy assists eligible ECEC services to include children with ongoing high support needs so that they can be cared for in environments with typically developing peers. The Inclusion Support Subsidy is a contribution towards the costs associated with employing an additional carer or educator.

The Inclusion Support Subsidy is limited to a flat hourly rate, depending on the service type, which is determined by DEEWR and indexed annually.

### C2. Objective of the NISSP

The objective of the NISSP is to assess Inclusion Support Subsidy applications in a way that ensures eligible ECEC services have equitable access to the Inclusion Support Subsidy, and that applications are assessed consistently within timeframes that support services to provide quality inclusive environments.

### C3. The role of the NISSP

In relation to the roles and responsibilities set out below, DEEWR may direct how these are fulfilled by the NISSP and may also direct the NISSP (or the NISSP may seek DEEWR's agreement) to undertake activities that align with the aims and objectives of the program, but are outside of those listed, to meet emerging needs.

The NISSP will:

- ensure nationally consistent application of these Guidelines, and any other information provided by DEEWR, when assessing, managing and administering the Inclusion Support Subsidy;
- facilitate equitable access to Inclusion Support Subsidy assistance across all eligible centre based and home based service types;
- assist ISAs and services to complete Inclusion Support Subsidy applications;
- notify applicants and the relevant ISA within 5 business days if the application is incomplete;
- process all completed Inclusion Support Subsidy applications within 15 business days of receipt;
- ensure the Inclusion Support Subsidy commitment remains within allocated funding;
- pay claims for the Inclusion Support Subsidy on a fortnightly basis for any services that are not yet using the IS Portal;
- respond to all inquiries within 5 business days;
- collect, analyse and monitor Inclusion Support Subsidy data, and identify demographic usage trends in the Inclusion Support Subsidy;

- participate in National and State/Territory IPSP Forums and provide reports on trends;
- maintain an up-to-date website with information on the Inclusion Support Subsidy, and a 1800 phone number to respond to inquiries and provide guidance on applying for the Inclusion Support Subsidy;
- develop an annual work plan for NISSP activities; and
- in consultation with DEEWR, investigate ways of streamlining the Inclusion Support Subsidy application and approval process to improve outcomes for eligible services and children.

## **C4. Networking and collaboration**

The NISSP is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective networks with other IPSP Grant Recipients, and working collaboratively with ISAs and services to assess and process Inclusion Support Subsidy applications.

## **C5. Budget and performance monitoring and reporting**

The NISSP is required to submit 6-monthly progress reports on the NISSP's activities against the annual work plan. The NISSP must also provide Quarterly Financial Expenditure Reports and an annual Audited Financial Acquittal Report. All reporting must be in a format agreed by DEEWR.

DEEWR will undertake monitoring visits with the NISSP to meet with staff, and discuss the progress report and any issues or questions arising from the reports or other monitoring activities.

## **C6. Approval of the Inclusion Support Subsidy**

### **C6.1 Approved purposes**

The NISSP will ensure that the Inclusion Support Subsidy is used in the following ways:

- In centre based services:
  - to contribute to the engagement of an additional educator to increase the staff to child ratio when a child or children with ongoing high support needs are in care.
- In home based services:
  - as a Capacity Payment to family day care educators in recognition of the additional care and attention required by children with ongoing high support needs in their care and the impact of this on the educator.
  - as an Additional Payment to In Home Care carers in recognition of the additional care and attention required by children with ongoing high support needs in their care and the impact of this on the carer.
  - to engage an additional carer to accompany a Family Day Care educator or In Home Care carer and child or children with ongoing high support needs on out-of-home excursions or other special activities (for example Family Day Care playgroups or vacation care excursions).

### **C6.2 Non-approved purposes**

The NISSP will also ensure that the Inclusion Support Subsidy is not used for the purposes advised by DEEWR. Examples of such purposes are also available on the DEEWR website.

## **C7. Accessing the Inclusion Support Subsidy**

### **C7.1 Eligibility**

The Inclusion Support Subsidy is limited to an annual capped allocation available under the Child Care Services Support Program. Eligibility for the Inclusion Support Subsidy does not mean an automatic entitlement to Inclusion Support Subsidy funding.

The NISSP will apply the following criteria in assessing an application for Inclusion Support Subsidy funding:

- ensure the child who is attending the ECEC service has ongoing high support needs; and
- a Service Support Plan has been developed to assess the ECEC service's inclusion capacity, and the ECEC service and the Inclusion Support Facilitator assesses from the plan that there is justification to proceed to apply for Inclusion Support Subsidy funding.

### **C7.2 Eligible ECEC services**

The NISSP will ensure that the Inclusion Support Subsidy is only available to eligible ECEC services that are approved for CCB or funded under the Budget Based Funding program (see section A8 of these Guidelines).

### **C7.3 Children with ongoing high support needs**

Children with demonstrated ongoing high support needs include children:

- with assessed/diagnosed disability;
- who are undergoing continuing assessment of disability; or
- from a refugee or humanitarian intervention background.

The Inclusion Support Subsidy application must include current documentary evidence of the child's assessed/diagnosed disability, continuing assessment of disability, or refugee status.

Some children with assessed/diagnosed disability may not require ongoing assistance in order to be included in the care environment. For example, a child might only require environmental modifications to be included in a care environment. Where children require specialist equipment for their inclusion, see section F4 of these Guidelines.

The Inclusion Support Subsidy age eligibility of a dependent is up to 24 years at the discretion of ECEC services in conjunction with relevant state and territory regulations.

### **C7.4 Short-term and irregular utilisation in centre based care**

For children with ongoing high support needs who attend child care on an occasional basis, or whose pattern of attendance is not regular and not likely to be ongoing, services may apply for Flexible Support Funding (see section F 2 of these Guidelines). ECEC services should seek advice from ISAs regarding Flexible Support Funding support.

## **C7.5 Approval period**

The NISSP can approve Inclusion Support Subsidy for up to 6 months from the start date for eligible children undergoing continuous assessment, and for up to 12 months for a child with assessed/diagnosed disability or a child from a refugee or humanitarian intervention background.

The approval period for school aged children will also depend on the care type as different care types (such as vacation care and care during school terms) need to be applied for separately. Further information on the process for applying is available in the Inclusion Support Subsidy application fact sheets, available on the DEEWR website.

The number of times an application for the continuation of Inclusion Support Subsidy funding can be approved for a child undergoing continuous assessment will depend on the individual circumstances of each case. Further information on these circumstances is available in the application for continuation of funding factsheet, available on the DEEWR website.

## **C8. Applying for the Inclusion Support Subsidy**

### **C8.1 How to apply for the Inclusion Support Subsidy**

Inclusion Support Facilitators assist eligible ECEC services to develop a plan, referred to as the Service Support Plan, to support the inclusion of the child in the service.

If the Service Support Plan identifies a need to apply for the Inclusion Support Subsidy, or if the service insists on applying for the Inclusion Support Subsidy, the ISA will assist the service to submit an application for the Inclusion Support Subsidy. This will either be online through the Inclusion Support Portal, or in paper form. The application must be endorsed by the service's local ISA and the application is then submitted to the NISSP for assessment. For further information on submitting an application, refer to the Inclusion Support Subsidy application factsheet, available on the DEEWR website.

#### ***Service Support Plan***

The development of a Service Support Plan may be triggered by the enrolment of a child with ongoing high support needs. The focus of the Service Support Plan is on building the capacity of educators to include the child in the child care environment, and must reflect the needs and modifications educators will make to support the inclusion of all children. The completed and signed Service Support Plan must be included as part of the Inclusion Support Subsidy application.

For further information about service support planning, see section F1 of these Guidelines.

#### ***Documentary evidence***

The NISSP's assessment of an application for Inclusion Support Subsidy funding is based on an eligible ECEC service supplying documentary evidence of the child's refugee status and/or diagnosis/assessment of disability, or that the child is undergoing assessment of disability. Examples of such evidence are available in the Inclusion Support Subsidy application factsheet, available on the DEEWR website.

Documentary evidence will be assessed by the NISSP. In some cases, the ECEC service will be notified that documentary evidence will not be required for future applications for this child while enrolled at the service.

### **C8.2 Exceptional circumstances**

Where it can be demonstrated that exceptional circumstances exist in respect of a child who is currently being supported through the Inclusion Support Subsidy and the ECEC service requests additional hours to provide this additional support, an exemption from the normal eligibility requirements for the Inclusion Support Subsidy may be granted by the NISSP in negotiation with DEEWR. The details of the additional need must be included in the Service Support Plan and included in the Inclusion Support Subsidy application submitted to the NISSP.

Exceptional circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis and are subject to approval by DEEWR. DEEWR will advise the NISSP of the outcome of the request for exemption from the ECEC service.

### **C8.3 Shared Care arrangements in centre based care**

Where more than one child with ongoing high support needs is in attendance in the same care environment, the ECEC service must explore the use of a Shared Care arrangement. A Shared Care arrangement occurs where one additional educator is employed to support the inclusion of more than one child in an ECEC environment. When completing the Inclusion Support Subsidy application, the ECEC service (in consultation with the ISA) will determine if a Shared Care arrangement could meet the service's needs.

### **C8.4 Inclusion Support Subsidy assessment and approval**

The NISSP will assess the Inclusion Support Subsidy application against the eligibility requirements as set out in these Guidelines, and will notify the service of the outcome of the Inclusion Support Subsidy application.

If the Inclusion Support Subsidy application is approved, the NISSP will inform the service of the:

- approved level of funding;
- approved number of hours an additional educator can provide per week;
- start and end date of the Inclusion Support Subsidy funding period; and
- date on which the service should apply for a continuation of funding.

### **C8.5 Inclusion Support Subsidy agreement by ECEC services**

The approval of an Inclusion Support Subsidy application is contingent on an ECEC service agreeing to the terms and conditions of the Inclusion Support Subsidy funding application, as detailed on the Inclusion Support Subsidy application form and the DEEWR website.

### **C8.6 Review and continuation of funding**

After the initial 6 month or 12 month approval period, eligible ECEC services can apply for a continuation of Inclusion Support Subsidy funding.

Firstly, the ECEC, in consultation with their ISA, must review:

- the previous Service Support Plan and care environment;
- whether ongoing Inclusion Support Subsidy funding is required; and
- whether there is a change in the level of funding needed.

Other events that can trigger a review of the Service Support Plan include:

- changes in the child's needs, impacting on the number of hours approved, Shared Care arrangements, or the physical environment;
- a child with ongoing high support needs enters or leaves the service and/or care environment;
- significant changes in the care environment, such as staffing changes; or
- a change in service ownership.

Where a review indicates that the required level of Inclusion Support Subsidy funding has increased, the service can apply to the NISSP to vary its approval. Variations to the original Inclusion Support Subsidy approval may carry the same end date as the original approved application.

A decrease in the level of support needed will also require the service to notify the NISSP of this change.

An ECEC service must notify the NISSP if the required level of Inclusion Support Subsidy support changes, or is no longer required, by completing and submitting the appropriate Inclusion Support Subsidy forms. DEEWR may audit claims made by ECEC services (see sub-section C10.2 of these Guidelines).

### **C8.7 Variations or changes to the child care environment**

#### ***A child with ongoing high support needs enters or leaves the care environment and/or ECEC service***

The level of Inclusion Support Subsidy funding required will be determined by the NISSP, taking into consideration the ECEC service's capacity to include children with ongoing high support needs. When a child with ongoing high support needs moves to another environment (or room) within the ECEC service, discussion with the ISA will determine whether to review an existing Service Support Plan or to develop a new Service Support Plan. The Service Support Plan process will identify if the ECEC service requires additional support to include the child and, if so, what level of support is required.

#### ***A service changes owner and/or operator***

Where an ECEC service in receipt of Inclusion Support Subsidy funding changes owner and/or operator, the new operator is required to submit a new Inclusion Support Subsidy application. The service should contact the ISA to assist in doing a review of the Service Support Plan to determine if Inclusion Support Subsidy support is still required and what level of support is needed.

Note: The NISSP is not able to backdate approvals for Inclusion Support Subsidy except under exceptional circumstances and with DEEWR approval.

Claims for payment made before the notification of the outcome of the Inclusion Support Subsidy application cannot be accepted.

### **C8.8 Conditions relating to ECEC educators/carers employed with the Inclusion Support Subsidy**

Where the ECEC service receives the Inclusion Support Subsidy to employ an additional ECEC educator/carer, the ECEC service is responsible for:

- complying with the requirements of the relevant state/territory legislation, regulatory requirements and awards for ECEC employees, or applicable Federal Industrial Relations Laws and its requirements, and considering these requirements when employing additional educators; and
- ensuring that the number of Inclusion Support Subsidy funded additional educators/carers in a service at any one time is limited to no more than 10 per cent of the ECEC service's currently utilised child care places.

Note: Due to the nature of vacation care bookings, Vacation Care Services that are unable to provide utilised child care places for the full application period may provide an estimate of expected utilisation based on usage over the past 12 months.

Where a child is absent from the ECEC service, the Inclusion Support Subsidy funded educator/carer employed under Inclusion Support Subsidy should receive appropriate notice in line with award provisions. If employed as a casual staff member, stand down provisions should apply.

ECEC educators/carers funded by the Inclusion Support Subsidy cannot be used to meet state or territory licensing or regulatory requirements. Any educators/carers funded by the Inclusion Support Subsidy must be in addition to the number of staff already required by licensing or regulatory requirements.

Trainees cannot be employed as the additional ECEC educator at the same time that they are completing their required trainee hours.

## **C9. Inclusion Support Subsidy rates**

Below are the Inclusion Support Subsidy funding rates and limits for centre based care services and home based care services. Inclusion Support Subsidy funding limits differ depending on the ECEC service type.

## C9.1 Inclusion Support Subsidy rates and limits for centre based care services

Care Type	Subsidy rate (\$/hour) as at 1 July 2011 <sup>9</sup> (indexed annually)	Hourly limit	Absence limit
Long Day Care, excluding vacation care programs provided through a Long Day Care centre	\$16.43	Up to 25 hours per week, 52 weeks per year (based on 5 days attendance)	4%
Flexible/Innovative Services, MACS, Mobile Services, excluding vacation care programs	\$16.43	Up to 25 hours per week, 52 weeks per year (based on 5 days attendance)	4%
Before School Care (BSC), including non-mainstream BSC	\$16.43	Up to 10 hours per week, 42 weeks per year (based on 5 days attendance)	5%
After School Care (ASC), including non-mainstream ASC	\$16.43	Up to 15 hours per week, 42 weeks per year (based on 5 days attendance)	5%
BSC and ASC pupil free days	\$16.43	Up to 8 hours per day, 6 days per year Note: services can only claim a pupil free day for either BSC or ASC, not both	17%
Vacation Care, including Vacation Care provided in a Long Day Care centre	\$16.43	Up to 40 hours per week, 12 weeks per year (based on 5 days attendance)	17%
Occasional Care (OCC), including non-formula funded OCC	\$16.43	Up to 25 hours per week, 52 weeks per year (based on 5 days attendance)	4%
Vacation Care and Occasional Care pupil free day (including pupil free day in a Long Day Care centre, Flexible/Innovative Services, MACS, Mobile Services)	\$16.43	Up to 8 hours per day, 6 days per year	17%

<sup>9</sup> Indexed amounts for each financial year will be available in May of the previous financial year and published on the DEEWR website.

## C9.2 Inclusion Support Subsidy rates and limits for home based care services

Care Type	Subsidy rate (\$/hour) as at 1 July 2011 <sup>10</sup> (indexed annually)	Hourly limit	Absence limit
Family Day Care (FDC)	Tier one - \$4.36 Tier two - \$8.74	Up to 50 hours per week, 52 weeks per year	10%
FDC out-of-home excursions	\$16.43	Up to 5 hours per week, 52 weeks per year	10%
FDC pupil free days	Tier one - \$4.36 Tier two - \$8.74	Up to 8 hours per day, 6 days per year	17%
In Home Care	Tier one - \$4.36 Tier two - \$8.74	Up to 50 hours per week, 52 weeks per year	0%
In Home Care out-of-home excursions	\$16.43	Up to 5 hours per week, 52 weeks per year	0%
In Home Care pupil free days	Tier one - \$4.36 Tier two - \$8.74	Up to 8 hours per day, 6 days per year	0%

### C9.3 Two tier Capacity Payment for Family Day Care

Family Day Care educators caring for an eligible child or children may be approved for \$4.36 per hour (Tier One) per care environment where the impact of caring for the child or children has a mild impact on the educator. Educators may be eligible for this payment even where they are caring for the full complement of children under state and territory licensing regulations.

Family Day Care educators may also be eligible for a payment of \$8.74 per hour (Tier Two) per care environment where it is determined that the child or children being cared for have a significant impact on the educator's capacity to include that child or children in the care environment, resulting in the educator needing to carry less than the full complement of children.

For guidance on assessing the impact on the home based care environment, refer to the DEEWR website.

### C9.4 Two tier Additional Payment for In Home Care

In Home Care carers caring for an eligible child or children may be approved for \$4.36 per hour (Tier One) per care environment where the impact of caring for the child or children has a mild impact on the carer.

In Home Care carers may also be eligible for a payment of \$8.74 per hour (Tier Two) per care environment where it is determined that the child or children being cared for have a significant impact on the carer's capacity to include that child or children in the care environment.

For guidance on assessing the impact on the home based care environment, refer to the DEEWR website.

<sup>10</sup>Indexed amounts for each financial year will be available in May of the previous financial year and published on the DEEWR website.

## **C9.5 Absences from care**

For Inclusion Support Subsidy purposes, an absence occurs when an eligible child does not attend an approved session of care.

Funding allocated to cover an Inclusion Support Subsidy eligible child's absences from care is calculated based on the relevant percentage according to service and/or care type, multiplied by the total number of hours over the Inclusion Support Subsidy approved period (see sub-sections C9.1 and C9.2 of these Guidelines).

Note: Absences cannot be claimed in relation to In Home Care.

### ***Exceptional circumstances and absence hours***

Where ECEC services reach their total allocated absence hours before the end of the approval period, they may submit a case for additional absence hours. However, this must be done before the end of the approval period. Any requests for additional absence hours will be assessed by DEEWR on a case-by-case basis through an exceptional circumstances process (see section C8.2 of these Guidelines).

## **C10. The claims process**

### **C10.1 How to claim Inclusion Support Subsidy**

For information on how to claim the Inclusion Support Subsidy, including the period in which services can make a claim, refer to the factsheet on how to claim Inclusion Support Subsidy, available on the DEEWR website.

In the case of centre based services, Inclusion Support Subsidy is paid direct to the service. In relation to Family Day Care educators or In Home Care carers, the payment is made to the Family Day Care scheme or sponsors of the In Home Care service.

### **C10.2 Periodic auditing of ECEC services making Inclusion Support Subsidy claims**

Periodic audits of ECEC services' records will be conducted to verify claims for payment. These audits will require ECEC services to submit relevant documentation, including Inclusion Support Subsidy eligible children's attendance records and ECEC educators' attendance records relating to Inclusion Support Subsidy claim periods.

The details of any audit requirements will be provided in writing, giving a minimum of 2 weeks notice. Services will be required to provide the relevant information required within the time period stated. Services that do not comply will be unable to claim the Inclusion Support Subsidy until the information is supplied and the audit process is completed.

Further action may be taken if ECEC services are found to make fraudulent claims for payment for the Inclusion Support Subsidy.

## SECTION D – PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT COORDINATORS

---

### D1. Description

Professional Support Coordinators (PSCs) deliver and/or facilitate professional development to eligible ECEC services to assist them to understand and meet the requirements of the National Quality Standard, and to implement approved learning frameworks, including the Early Years Learning Framework; Belonging, Being, Becoming, and, if appropriate, the Framework for School Age Care; My Time our Place.

DEEWR, in collaboration with ACECQA and the State and Territory Regulatory Authorities, will provide guidance to the PSCs to assist them to deliver nationally consistent professional development and support. In addition, PSCs are required to share knowledge and resources with their counterparts in other jurisdictions in an effort to reduce duplication and ensure national consistency.

PSCs also manage Bicultural Support, the IPSP Resource Library, and Specialist Equipment (see section F of these Guidelines).

### D2. Objectives

The objective of the PSCs is to provide professional development that meets the needs of eligible ECEC services, and that is based on evidence and good practice, in order to:

- drive continuous improvement;
- support services to meet the National Quality Standard, in particular with self assessment and development of Quality Improvement Plans, and to understand and implement approved learning frameworks, including the Early Years Learning Framework, and the Framework for School Age Care;
- prepare and support ECEC educators for their changing roles under the National Quality Framework, and enhance their knowledge and skills on existing and new areas of practice; and
- support the inclusion of children from diverse backgrounds, including Indigenous children, children with disability and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

### D3. Professional development and support approach

Professional development is an ongoing process that provides the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of skills and knowledge. It also helps develop the interpersonal qualities necessary for ECEC educators to carry out their responsibilities and enhance their performance.

Professional development provided under the IPSP will:

- have a sound theoretical and philosophical base;
- take into account participants' individual backgrounds, experiences and context of their role;
- demonstrate clear linkages between theory and practice;
- adopt an interactive approach where appropriate;

- incorporate the use of new technological advancements where appropriate; and
- be delivered by persons with relevant training and skills. Persons delivering accredited training must have a minimum of Certificate IV in training and assessment.

The content of IPSP professional development will be guided by DEEWR in collaboration with ACECQA and the State and Territory Regulatory Authorities. It will support the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes required by those working in ECEC services to meet the National Quality Standard, and support the understanding and implementation of approved learning frameworks, including the Early Years Learning Framework and the Framework for School Age Care. This includes knowledge and skill development to support the inclusion of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, from refugee and humanitarian backgrounds, Indigenous children and children with disability.

Professional development must be provided in a variety of formats suitable to the needs of ECEC services and the workforce, including those in remote areas.

Professional development may include:

- accredited and non-accredited courses;
- conversations and informal sessions;
- events, forums, hubs and networks;
- collaborative projects;
- mentoring and coaching;
- advice and information; and
- access to information/resources.

Where feasible and appropriate, technologies such as teleconferencing, email, social networking and other developments in information technology may be used to deliver professional development.

Professional development and support must, in addition to meeting local needs, be delivered using nationally consistent materials that can be accessed by ISA and IPSU staff on a fee for service basis.

#### **D4. How to access the PSCs**

The PSCs must widely promote within their state or territory upcoming training opportunities, and provide information to eligible ECEC services within their state or territory on how to access this professional development and support, library resources, Bicultural Support and Specialist Equipment. This information must be provided regularly and in a variety of formats.

#### **D5. Roles and responsibilities of the PSCs**

DEEWR may direct how the roles and responsibilities of the PSCs are fulfilled, including, but not limited to, approval of resources and the content of training and professional development.

DEEWR may also direct PSCs and/or PSCs may seek agreement from DEEWR, to undertake activities that align with the aims and objectives of the program, but are outside of those listed below, to meet emerging needs.

The PSCs will:

- Provide eligible ECEC services with nationally consistent professional development, support and training to assist them in meeting the requirements under the National Quality Framework, and to implement the Early Years Learning Framework and, if appropriate, the Framework for School Age Care.
- Develop calendars of training and courses, in consultation with DEEWR, and widely promote these to ECEC services in the state or territory.
- Provide tailored professional development, support and training to individual eligible ECEC services when they are referred through approved referral channels advised by DEEWR.
- In consultation with DEEWR and other relevant stakeholders, develop and regularly review a plan for the delivery of PSC services across the state/territory for the funding period, which includes face-to-face delivery and the use of emerging technologies to ensure eligible ECEC services, including those in remote areas, are able to access IPSP services and resources.
- Adopt a 'no wrong door' approach to all requests for IPSP services, and link eligible ECEC services needing additional support to make their environment more inclusive to the local ISA or IPSU as appropriate.
- Provide eligible ECEC services with free access to a range of up-to-date online resources and materials that will assist them to provide high quality inclusive environments. These resources will be available from the IPSP Resource Library.
  - Note that over the period of the Funding Agreement, the PSCs will consolidate appropriate resources currently available in individual General Resource Libraries and make these available from a national IPSP Resource Library, which will be accessible from a website managed by the PSC Alliance (see section F5 of these Guidelines).
- Manage the provision of Bicultural Support, and make available from the IPSP Resource Library resources developed to assist with the enrolment and inclusion of children from culturally and linguistically diverse and/or Indigenous backgrounds (see sub-section D13.2 and section F3 of these Guidelines).
- Manage IPSP Specialist Equipment (see sub-section D13.2 and section F4 of these Guidelines).
- Attend and participate in IPSP Forums and the PSC Alliance to contribute to planning and the sharing of information, and to provide input and assist in the development of nationally consistent approaches, such as: an outcomes reporting framework and measuring tools, the development of a national IPSP Resource Library, and the consolidation of information on the PSC Alliance website.
- Establish and maintain effective partnerships with ACECQA, State and Territory Regulatory Authorities and other key stakeholders to ensure the professional development delivered through the IPSP is meeting current and emerging needs.
- In consultation with DEEWR, establish effective referral pathways with State and Territory Regulatory Authorities, ISAs and IPSUs for PSC services.
- In consultation with DEEWR, establish efficient, effective and consistent referral and approval processes to enable eligible ECEC services to access Bicultural Support and Specialist Equipment.
- In consultation with DEEWR, establish a fee structure for the delivery of IPSP professional development and support for eligible and non-eligible ECEC services (see section D9 of these Guidelines).

## D6. Communication activities

Each PSC will:

- maintain a 1800 phone line to provide eligible ECEC services with an access point for PSC professional development and support;
- maintain a website or webpage with links to the websites and contact details of other IPSP Services Providers, the PSC Alliance website and the IPSP Resource Library;
- actively and widely promote professional development, publications, the website and other media to eligible ECEC services in the state or territory;
- actively promote the PSC and network with relevant stakeholders, including other IPSP providers; and
- in collaboration with the state/territory IPSUs, establish strategies for updating eligible Indigenous ECEC services with the latest child care research and news from the sector.

## D7. Priority areas for professional development and support

The priority areas for professional development and support are aligned with the quality areas of the National Quality Standard. Further information is available in the Guide to the National Quality Standard, available from the ACECQA website: [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au). The priorities include:

- National Quality Framework and other mandatory requirements.
- Implementing mandatory requirements, including the National Quality Framework and the national Child Care Management System and developing Quality Improvement Plans.
- Indigenous ECEC services funded under the Budget Based Funding program to understand and implement compliance with the requirements of their Funding Agreements.
- Educational program and practice.
- Using an Approved Learning Framework to inform the development of a curriculum that enhances each child's learning and development.
- Educators and coordinators are focused, active and reflective in designing and delivering the program for each child.
- Children's health and safety.
- Promoting the health of each child.
- Embedding healthy eating practices and physical activities in the program for children.
- Protecting each child.
- Physical environments.
- Designing and locating premises so they are appropriate for the operation of an ECEC service.
- Developing inclusive environments that promote competence, independent exploration and learning through play.
- Actively caring for the environment and contributing to a sustainable future.
- Staffing arrangements.
- Staffing arrangements that enhance children's learning and development and ensure their safety and wellbeing.
- Respectful and ethical behaviours for educators, coordinators and all staff members.
- Relationships with children.
- Developing and maintaining respectful and equitable relationships with each child.

- Supporting each child to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with other children and adults.
- Collaborative partnerships with families and communities.
- Developing and maintaining respectful supportive relationships with families.
- Supporting and respecting families in their parenting role and their values and beliefs about child rearing.
- Collaboration with other organisations and service providers to enhance children’s learning and wellbeing.
- Leadership and service management.
- Establishing and maintaining effective leadership that promotes a positive organisational culture and builds a professional learning community.
- ECEC service directors and other staff are committed to continuous improvement.
- ECEC services have effective leadership that promotes a positive organisational culture and builds a professional learning community.

DEEWR reserves the right to:

- direct the content of professional development to other emerging priorities; and
- approve training resources and materials developed and/or used by IPSP Grant Recipients.

## **D8. Sub-contracting**

PSCs may subcontract other providers to assist with service delivery as per the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement.

In general, the following would not be approved as a sub-contractor by DEEWR:

- bodies that are not incorporated and without a sponsoring organisation; or
- Australian Government departments.

PSCs may also request IPSUs, where appropriate, to provide:

- advice on culturally appropriate service delivery to meet the needs of Indigenous children attending mainstream ECEC services;
- advice on the needs of Indigenous children and Indigenous educators, and strategies for meeting their needs;
- advice for the PSC on strategies to ensure the IPSP Resource Library contains resources to support the social inclusion of Indigenous children and families, and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and identities; and
- consultancy services for the PSC when required on a fee for service basis.

## **D9. Professional support fee structure**

PSCs will establish and adopt a consistent fee structure for the delivery of professional development and support for eligible and non-eligible ECEC services. The fee structure must be agreed by DEEWR and must cover provision of professional support.

The fees will be based on the following national fee setting principles. That is, fees:

- reflect the capacity of the market to pay;
- charged to eligible ECEC services are not based on full cost recovery;
- charged to non-eligible ECEC services are based on full cost recovery;
- maximise client participation (low enough to encourage attendance but high enough to be a disincentive to non-attendance post booking); and
- will not be charged to eligible Indigenous children's services (receiving Budget Based Funding) for the provision of professional development and support.

## D10. Planning

While recognising the need to maintain some flexibility to respond to individual eligible ECEC services referred to the PSC in special circumstances, PSCs will take a planned approach to the delivery of professional development and support.

PSCs are required to develop a plan, in consultation with DEEWR, as specified in the Funding Agreement for the funding period. The plan will document how professional development will be promoted, coordinated and delivered to all eligible ECEC service types across the state/territory and within ISA regions, including in remote areas.

PSCs will review the plan as part of their processes for reporting to DEEWR. This twice yearly review provides an opportunity to ensure activities are on track and to seek approval from DEEWR to make adjustments so that the plans remain relevant to the needs of the state/territory. The review will also take into account advice and research from ACECQA and/or DEEWR in relation to changes in priority.

The plan will include:

- proposed approaches to delivering professional development to all eligible ECEC services in the state/territory;
- activities to be undertaken to provide the services (including professional development, Bicultural Support, Specialist Equipment and the IPSP Resource Library) with support in areas identified as a priority;
- a marketing strategy to ensure eligible ECEC services and relevant stakeholders are aware of the services available through the PSC;
- stakeholder management strategies to ensure effective partnerships are built and maintained with all stakeholders;
- a client satisfaction strategy for receiving feedback from ECEC services on the quality of PSC support provided;
- a complaints-handling strategy, which ensures complaints are effectively managed and resolved;
- a continuous improvement strategy, which identifies and addresses opportunities to build on and improve the service being delivered;
- communication and referral processes to access other IPSP services, including from the ISAs and IPSUs; and
- a risk management strategy.

## D11. Networking and collaboration

PSCs are expected to use the IPSP communication protocols and are responsible for establishing effective partnerships with all stakeholders, including the IPSUs, ISAs, Regulatory Authorities and ACECQA.

The PSCs are expected to work in collaboration with IPSUs and ISAs to assist eligible ECEC services to be culturally inclusive of Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse children and families.

All resources and materials developed by the PSCs must be shared through the PSC Alliance for use and or adaptation by other PSCs.

## D12 Participation in IPSP Forums and the PSC Alliance

The PSCs will participate in the:

- PSC Alliance;
- National IPSP Conference; and
- State and Territory IPSP Forums.

### D12.1 PSC Alliance

The PSC Alliance is a national forum of the PSCs. It aims to:

- identify strategies to strengthen collaboration and information sharing between PSCs;
- ensure professional development and support being provided by the PSCs is nationally consistent;
- maintain a register of all resources and materials developed by the PSCs and ensure that all materials and resources that are developed by PSCs are shared and adapted, if necessary, for use by other PSCs;
- facilitate linkages between different parts of the IPSP, including through invitations to ISA and IPSU Alliances to have representation at PSC Alliance meetings;
- provide opportunities to share information and respond to issues experienced by eligible ECEC services;
- look for opportunities for innovation;
- review program progress, including referral processes and pathways;
- develop and/or review and agree:
  - a professional support fee structure for DEEWR's approval;
  - the terms of reference for the PSC Alliance;
  - a roster for hosting and chairing PSC Alliance meetings; and
  - at the direction of DEEWR, oversee projects of national significance, such as establishing a single repository for a national IPSP Resource Library, and strengthening the level of information on PSC activities available on the national PSC Alliance website.

In rotation, each state/territory PSC will be invited to host a meeting of the PSC Alliance (see section A6 of these Guidelines). Alliance meetings will be held twice a year, with one meeting coinciding with the annual National IPSP Conference.

Costs associated with participation in PSC Alliance meetings are to be covered within the PSC administration budget as specified in the Funding Agreement.

## **D12.2 National IPSP Conferences**

The PSC Alliance members participate in the annual National IPSP Conference.

The National Conference provides an opportunity to review program activities and the extent to which they are meeting the IPSP objectives. The National Conference also provides the opportunity to network with other IPSP Grant Recipients and key stakeholders, and to promote nationally consistent and collaborative approaches to inclusion and professional development and support for the ECEC sector (see section A6 of these Guidelines).

## **D12.3 State/Territory IPSP Forums**

The State/Territory IPSP Forums provide an opportunity for networking with other PSCs, IPSUs and ISAs. Each state and territory PSC will be required to participate in the relevant State/Territory IPSP Forums. Any costs for this participation are to be covered within the PSC administration budget.

# **D13. Budget and monitoring funding**

## **D13.1 Funding and budget management**

PSCs are required to manage and monitor their budgets in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement. This includes providing detailed expenditure reports on the budget on a 6-monthly basis and an annual audited financial report. PSCs will also be required to provide a detailed budget to DEEWR at the start of each financial year of the funding period.

## **D13.2 Use of funding**

The majority of funding (at least 75 per cent) is to be used for direct service delivery each financial year. The PSCs will be able to retain up to 25 per cent each financial year for administration and coordination costs. PSCs may only spend funding for administration and coordination purposes as proposed in the budget items they specify and which have been approved by DEEWR each year.

As an indication, administration and coordination costs for the activities of the PSCs, including but not limited to professional development, resource development, Bicultural Support, Specialist Equipment and the IPSP Resource Library, may include costs associated with the following items:

- recruiting and training staff;
- salaries of administrative staff;
- maintaining an office, including insurance, rent, signage, and general office equipment;
- operating the toll free phone line;
- developing and maintaining a website;
- maintaining policies, such as fee structures, equipment loans and conflict resolution;
- monitoring and acquitting all funding allocated to the PSC, as well as incoming funds from service users;
- reporting to DEEWR, including undertaking needs analyses and revision of service delivery plans;
- participating in evaluation processes;

- liaising with stakeholders;
- engaging and managing all aspects of any subcontracting; and
- participating in IPSP forums and PSC Alliance meetings.

All income generated from the activities funded under the PSCs, including fees for service, consultancy services, training, resources and bank interest, must be clearly identified and detailed in financial reports. This income will be considered part of the PSC's operating budget, and must be used for the purpose of delivering professional development and support as per the Funding Agreement.

Funding cannot be used for overseas travel, outright purchase of a vehicle, or major office renovation or building construction (capital works).

### **D13.3 Funding for Bicultural Support and Specialist Equipment**

The PSCs receive a separate allocation for the provision of Bicultural Support and Specialist Equipment. The PSCs are responsible for ensuring that the Bicultural Support and Specialist Equipment are provided to eligible ECEC services within the funding allocation and purposes specified in the Funding Agreement (see section F of these Guidelines).

PSCs are required to include details on the expenditure of Bicultural Support and Specialist Equipment funding in their 6-monthly and annual reports.

## **D14 Progress reporting**

In accordance with the Funding Agreement, PSCs are required to submit 6-monthly and annual reports using the templates provide by DEEWR. PSCs may also, from time to time, be required to provide ad-hoc reports to DEEWR.

The 6-monthly reports include: an exception report against the priorities and activities detailed in the Region Plan that have not been undertaken as planned, along with a strategy or proposal to address the issue; a data report; and an expenditure report. IPSP Grant Recipients must also provide an Annual Progress Report and an annual Audited Financial Report.

### **D14.1 Monitoring visits**

DEEWR will undertake monitoring visits with the PSCs to meet with staff, and discuss their progress reports and any issues or questions arising from the reports.

## SECTION E – INDIGENOUS PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT UNITS

---

### E1. Description

Indigenous Professional Support Units (IPSUs) provide or facilitate professional development and other support to assist Indigenous focused Budget Based Funded (BBF) services and their managing bodies to provide high quality education and care environments. IPSUs also provide advice to other IPSP Grant Recipients on culturally appropriate support and resources to assist mainstream services to include and support Indigenous children and educators.

### E2. Objectives

The objectives of the IPSUs are to provide support that meets the needs of the managing bodies and staff in Indigenous focused BBF services, which is based on evidence and good practice, in order to:

- improve the quality of their environments;
- implement approved learning frameworks, including the Early Years Learning Framework; and
- improve governance and build the capacity of the service and its managing body.

### E3. Roles and responsibilities

DEEWR may direct how the roles and responsibilities of the IPSUs are fulfilled, including, but not limited to, approval of resources and the content of training and professional development.

DEEWR may also direct IPSUs and/or IPSUs may seek agreement from DEEWR, to undertake activities that align with the aims and objectives of the program, but are outside of those listed below, to meet emerging needs.

The IPSUs will:

- provide and/or facilitate professional development, support and training to management and employees in Indigenous focused BBF services, in relation to minimum standards and high quality service provision in regulated and non-regulated Budget Based Funded services, with reference to the relevant state and territory licensing requirements and the National Quality Standard;
- provide support and advice to Indigenous focused BBF services experiencing difficulties, or that are identified as being at risk of failing to meet requirements under their funding agreements, and refer them to other relevant service providers, including the PSCs for tailored intensive support;
- provide tailored intensive support to Indigenous focused BBF services at the direction of DEEWR and/or a PSC;
- refer Indigenous focused BBF services to relevant service providers, including the PSC, where necessary, to assist them to improve the quality of their services;
- where appropriate, facilitate partnering and mentoring between Indigenous focused BBF services and non-Indigenous services;

- assist Indigenous focused BBF services to access other IPSP support and resources, including the Inclusion Support Subsidy, Flexible Support Funding, Specialist Equipment, and Bicultural Support as appropriate;
- foster relationships between Indigenous focused BBF services and DEEWR to support the development of the services' workforce and their governance;
- assist Indigenous focused BBF services in linking with relevant community groups, services and organisations;
- assist Indigenous focused BBF services to identify their professional development needs and opportunities, and support them to access relevant resources that cannot be provided by the IPSU;
- provide pathways for Indigenous focused BBF services to access information that promotes high quality programs for children;
- in consultation with DEEWR and other relevant stakeholders, develop a plan for the delivery of IPSU services across the state/territory for the funding period; and
- adopt a 'no wrong door' approach to all requests for IPSP services, and link Indigenous focused BBF services needing additional support to make their environment more inclusive to the local ISA or PSC as appropriate.

#### **E4. Communication activities**

Each IPSU will undertake the following communication activities:

- maintain a 1800 phone line to provide a central point of contact for Indigenous focused BBF services seeking professional development and support;
- actively promote the contact details and range of support available from the IPSU to Indigenous focused BBF services within the region, and network with other relevant services and IPSP providers;
- develop a range of communication activities and resources suited to Indigenous focused BBF services and their managing bodies. These may include online resources and marketing materials;
- establish strategies for updating Indigenous focused BBF services with the latest ECEC research and news from the sector, including collaborating with PSCs to ensure the IPSP Resource Library contains relevant and appropriate information; and
- establish, maintain and promote a website providing relevant information about the IPSP services available and how Indigenous focused BBF services can access these.

#### **E5. Priority areas for professional development and support**

The professional development and support provided by IPSUs will be in the priority areas agreed by DEEWR. These may change over time but currently include:

- Leadership and management.
- The development of operational management systems for Indigenous focused BBF services in the areas of:
  - financial management;
  - employment and workforce issues, such as recruitment and retention strategies;
  - business planning;
  - orientation training and support for management committees, directors and educators; and
  - the role of service directors as leaders.
- Relationships and partnerships.

- Building the capacity of Indigenous focused BBF services to work together with families.
- Curriculum development.
- Programming and curriculum development.
- Provide a quality environment that supports learning and development, guiding children’s behaviour, including supervision of children, managing challenging behaviours, and working with diverse family expectations.
- Health, safety and nutrition.

### ***Mandatory requirements***

All training materials and other resources developed by the IPSUs must reflect the requirements of the relevant children’s services regulatory and other legislative requirements, which impact on the delivery of services for young children.

Where appropriate, all training and support should support Indigenous focused BBF services to meet their contractual requirements under the BBF Funding Agreements.

### ***National Quality Framework***

All training and support provided to Indigenous focused BBF services should reflect the intent of nationally agreed frameworks, including the National Quality Framework, the Early Years Learning Framework, and Framework for School Age Care.

## **E6. Support for mainstream ECEC services**

When requested by DEEWR or other IPSP Grant Recipients, IPSUs will work in collaboration with PSCs and ISAs to assist eligible mainstream ECEC services to become more culturally competent, and inclusive and supportive of Indigenous children and their families and Indigenous educators.

Requests for assistance from PSCs or ISAs may include:

- advice on culturally appropriate service delivery to meet the needs of Indigenous children attending mainstream ECEC services;
- advice on the needs of Indigenous children and Indigenous educators in mainstream ECEC services, and strategies for meeting their needs;
- advice for PSCs on strategies to ensure the IPSP Resource Library contains resources to support the social inclusion of Indigenous children and families, and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and identities; and
- consultancy services for PSCs and ISAs when required.

## **E7. IPSU Fee Structure**

For minor requests of assistance from ISAs, PSCs and eligible mainstream ECEC services, for example, those that can be addressed by phone or within a short period of time (up to half a day), the IPSU will provide support free of charge. When requests are for more significant assistance, IPSUs will charge for their services in line with the IPSU Fee Structure agreed by DEEWR.

## **E8. Planning and coordination**

### **E8.1 Needs analysis**

The IPSUs will undertake a standardised needs analysis process that draws on data sources, such as surveys (including those undertaken by DEEWR), in planning and reviewing how they deliver support to Indigenous focused BBF services. The IPSUs will contribute to the development of a standardised approach to the national needs analysis.

IPSUs will share the findings of their needs analysis at IPSP Forums (as appropriate and respecting confidentiality and/or privacy), and with PSCs and ISAs. This information may be used by the PSCs to identify current and future professional support needs of the ECEC sector and help them plan for their activities.

### **E8.2 IPSU Region Plan**

The IPSUs will develop a Region Plan as specified in the Funding Agreement for the funding period. The plan will document how professional development and support will be promoted and delivered across the region to meet the needs identified through the needs analysis.

IPSUs will review the plan as part of their processes for reporting to DEEWR. This twice yearly review provides an opportunity to ensure activities are on track and seek approval from DEEWR to make adjustments so that the plans remain relevant to the needs of the region.

The Region Plan will include:

- activities to be undertaken and areas of need identified as priorities to be addressed within the Region;
- proposed approaches to delivering and or facilitating professional development to Indigenous focused BBF services in the Region;
- a marketing strategy to ensure Indigenous focused BBF services in the Region and relevant stakeholders are aware of the services available through the IPSUs;
- stakeholder management strategies to ensure effective partnerships are built and maintained with all stakeholders, including other IPSP Grant Recipients in the Region;
- a client satisfaction strategy for receiving feedback from Indigenous focused BBF services on the quality of IPSU support provided;
- a complaints-handling strategy, which ensures complaints are effectively managed and resolved;
- a continuous improvement strategy, which identifies and addresses opportunities to build on and improve the service being delivered;
- communication and referral processes to access other IPSP services, including from the ISAs and PSCs; and
- a risk management strategy.

## **E9. Networking and collaboration**

The IPSUs are jointly responsible for establishing effective partnerships with all stakeholders, including the ISAs, PSCs and other IPSUs. IPSUs are required to encourage better service

integration and collaboration between IPSP Grant Recipients. IPSUs also work closely with their respective state/territory ISAs and PSCs to share knowledge and resources. Where appropriate, IPSUs collaborate with IPSP Grant Recipients in other states/territories.

In the case of tailored intensive support, IPSUs may refer Indigenous focused BBF services to PSCs for additional support. The PSCs and IPSUs will collaborate in determining the level of tailored intensive support required and the most appropriate provider of the support.

## **E10. Participation in IPSP Forums and the IPSU Alliance**

The IPSUs will participate in the:

- IPSU Alliance;
- National IPSP Conference; and
- State and Territory IPSP Forums.

### **E10.1 IPSU Alliance**

The IPSU Alliance is a national forum of the IPSUs. It aims to:

- offer opportunities to share information and respond to issues experienced by Indigenous focused BBF services;
- ensure professional development and support provided by the IPSUs is nationally consistent;
- look for opportunities for innovation;
- identify strategies for collaboration and information sharing between IPSP Grant Recipients, including through invitations to the PSC and ISA Alliances to have representation at IPSU Alliance meetings;
- review referral processes and pathways;
- develop and/or review and agree:
  - a professional support fee structure for DEEWR's approval (see section E7 of these Guidelines);
  - the terms of reference for the IPSU Alliance;
  - a roster for hosting and chairing IPSU Alliance meetings; and
  - progress towards IPSU objectives.

In rotation, each state/territory IPSU will be invited to host a meeting of the IPSU Alliance. DEEWR will provide separate funding for two IPSU Alliance meetings each year to cover the costs, including, for example, economy class flights and accommodation for participants. One of these meetings will align with the National IPSP Forum (see section A6 of these Guidelines).

### **D10.2 National IPSP Conferences**

The IPSU Alliance members participate in the annual National IPSP Conference.

The National Conference provides an opportunity to review program activities and the extent to which they are meeting the IPSP objectives. The National Conference also provides the opportunity to network with other IPSP Grant Recipients and key stakeholders, and to promote nationally consistent and collaborative approaches to inclusion and professional development and support for the ECEC sector (see section A6 of these Guidelines).

### **E10.1 State/Territory IPSP Forums**

Each state and territory IPSU will be required to participate in the relevant State/Territory IPSP forums. Any costs for this participation are to be covered within the IPSU administration budget. The State/Territory IPSP Forums provide an opportunity for networking and sharing best practice with other IPSUs, PSCs and ISAs (see section A6 of these Guidelines).

## **E11. Professional development for IPSU staff**

The IPSUs are responsible for ensuring their staff have the relevant skills and experience to effectively carry out their roles. Where staff do not have these skills, IPSUs should provide access to a range of professional development opportunities to support their staff in enhancing their knowledge and skill level.

IPSU staff should be skilled in the following areas:

- reflective practice and capacity building;
- communication skills;
- family centred approaches;
- cross-cultural competence and cross-cultural child development;
- interdisciplinary team work and interagency collaboration;
- inclusive practices and the use of natural learning environments;
- innovation and change in child care theory and practice; and
- PSC product knowledge.

The IPSUs may participate in PSC professional development activities as appropriate and must fund their participation within the IPSU administration budget or through their own resources.

## **E12. Budget and performance monitoring**

The IPSUs are required to manage and monitor their budget in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement, this includes providing detailed expenditure reports on the budget on a 6-monthly basis and an annual audited financial report.

IPSUs will also be required to provide a detailed budget to DEEWR at the start of each financial year of the funding period.

### **E12.1 Use of funding**

The majority of the funding each financial year (at least 75 per cent) is for direct service delivery. The IPSU is able to retain up to 25 per cent of the total funding each financial year for administration and coordination costs. IPSUs may only spend funding for administration and coordination purposes as proposed in the budget items they specify and which have been approved by DEEWR each year.

As an indication, administration and coordination costs include costs associated with (but not limited to):

- recruitment and professional development for IPSU staff;
- maintaining an office, including insurance, rent, signage, and general office equipment;
- operating the toll free phone line;
- developing and maintaining a website;
- reporting to DEEWR;
- undertaking needs analyses of Indigenous focused BBF services within the region and revisions of service delivery;
- developing and distributing promotional and marketing material to Indigenous focused BBF services;
- liaison and stakeholder management;
- participating in the State/Territory IPSP Forums; and
- participating in the IPSP evaluation process.

Funding cannot be used for overseas travel, outright purchase of a vehicle, or major office renovation or building construction (capital works).

On occasion, when an IPSU is to host the IPSU Alliance meeting, a separate funding agreement or variation will be arranged between DEEWR and the relevant IPSU.

All income generated from the activities funded under the IPSU, including fees for service, consultancy services, training, resources and bank interest, must be clearly identified in financial reports. This funding will be considered part of the IPSU operating budget and must be used for the purpose of delivering professional support as per the Funding Agreement with DEEWR.

## **E12.2 Professional support fee structure**

The IPSUs will not charge fees to Indigenous focused BBF services for the provision of professional development and support.

Indigenous ECEC services that do not meet eligibility requirements, as outlined in section A8 of these Guidelines, may be supported on a fee-for-service basis. Fees will be determined by the IPSUs and will reflect the capacity of the ECEC service to pay.

## **E13. Progress reporting and monitoring**

### **E13.1 Reporting**

In accordance with the Funding Agreement, IPSUs are required to submit 6-monthly and annual reports using the templates provide by DEEWR. IPSUs may also, from time to time, be required to provide ad-hoc reports to DEEWR.

The 6-monthly reports include: an exception report against the priorities and activities detailed in the Region Plan that have not been undertaken as planned, along with a strategy or proposal to address the issue; a data report; and an expenditure report. IPSP Grant Recipients must also provide an annual progress report and an annual audited financial report.

### **E13.2 Monitoring visits**

DEEWR will undertake monitoring visits with IPSUs to meet with staff, and discuss their progress reports and any issues or questions arising from the reports or other monitoring activities.

## **E14. How to access the Indigenous Professional Support Units**

IPSUs must widely promote their services and contact details to Indigenous focused BBF services within the state or territory and other IPSP Grant Recipients. This information must be provided regularly and in a variety of formats, including visits, websites and flyers as set out in the Funding Agreement. All promotional materials must be provided to DEEWR for approval prior to distribution.

## SECTION F – IPSP RESOURCES

---

### F1. Service Support Plans

#### F1.1 Description

The Service Support Plan is an assessment and planning tool used in the Inclusion Support Facilitator consultation process to systematically explore the ECEC service's needs and identify strategies to build the capacity of the service to successfully include children with additional needs from the IPSP priority groups. Additional information regarding the Service Support Plan can be found on the DEEWR website.

#### F1.2 Why a Service Support Plan is needed

The development of a Service Support Plan is a prerequisite to applying for Inclusion Support Subsidy, Flexible Support Funding or Bicultural Support funding, and accessing Specialist Equipment.

In the case of Flexible Support Funding, Bicultural Support and Specialist Equipment, the completion of a Service Support Plan should not unnecessarily delay the provision of needed assistance. An eligible ECEC service that is unable to complete an Service Support Plan in time to accompany an application for support, may contact the ISA and commence the development of a Service Support Plan over the phone. The Service Support Plan can be completed once support is in place at the ECEC service.

In the case of the Inclusion Support Subsidy, a Service Support Plan must be completed before the ECEC service is able to apply for the subsidy. The Service Support Plan must accompany the application for Inclusion Support Subsidy.

#### F1.3 What the Service Support Plan includes

There are three key sections to the Service Support Plan:

- Service Information – includes ECEC service and ISA details;
- Service Review – includes issues and dynamics that impact on the ECEC service; and
- Staff Capacity Building Plan – includes Staff Need, Team Goals, Resources available to support goal implementation, Action Plan, Progress and Future Directions.

In developing the Service Support Plan, the ECEC service examines the care environment and the staff capacity to include a child or children with additional or high support needs. The Service Support Plan identifies:

- the impact on the environment, and what educators will need to change to enable them to support a child's or children's access to the service and engagement in all aspects of the program;
- modifications educators may have to make to policy, pedagogy, planning, activities and the physical environment, including social play;
- how the educators will engage with the family and any relevant organisations;
- new knowledge, training or supports educators require in the area of inclusion;
- goals that will guide all educators in the environment;

- internal and external capacity building opportunities, including other IPSP supports, such as Bicultural Support, and family and professional learning experiences; and
- actions the service will implement to meet the goals, including policies and practices the ECEC service might adopt to support future inclusion.

To support the active use of the Service Support Plan in the environment, the information should be organised so that the staff can track issues across each column from the Service Need to the related Action.

Through the Service Support Plan, the ECEC service will identify goals to achieve inclusion. These can include professional development or access to resources, such as specialist equipment and general resources. The ECEC service may determine that, with the support of the ISA, the strategies identified in the Service Support Plan can be implemented within the service's current capacity to successfully include a child with additional needs.

Where there is a need for additional resources, these can be provided from within the IPSP, through Flexible Support Funding, the Inclusion Support Subsidy or Bicultural Support, or from external providers, such as health or education providers.

#### **F1.4 Evaluation of the Service Support Plan and the development of a new one**

The ECEC service, together with the ISA, should plan and engage in an evaluation of the Service Support Plan. Evaluation is a tool to guide and support the capacity building of educators, and is part of a reflective professional learning cycle. Comments should be inserted in the Service Support Plan template in Section C under the heading "Progress and Future Directions". The Progress and Future Directions is part of the Inclusion Support Subsidy review process.

The evaluation process identifies:

- actions that have been successfully implemented;
- actions that were unsuccessful and why;
- new issues or needs; and
- the reason for continuing goals.

The outcomes of this process will inform the development of the new Service Support Plan.

An evaluation may occur at a time that the educator and/or Inclusion Support Facilitator deem it would support and progress inclusion in the environment or when needs change. An evaluation may also occur when a child is leaving an environment so educators in the new environment have current information to inform the development of the Service Support Plan for their environment.

It is expected that a new Service Support Plan would be completed at least every 12 months.

## **F2. Flexible Support Funding**

### **F2.1 Description**

Flexible Support Funding is a subsidy administered by ISAs and paid to eligible ECEC services. It enables ECEC services to be more responsive to families and children with additional needs, such as those with disability, from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, a child from a refugee or humanitarian intervention background, or an Indigenous child.

To be eligible for Flexible Support Funding, the ECEC service must have already enrolled a child with additional needs.

If the Service Support Plan has identified the need for Flexible Support Funding, a Flexible Support Funding Application must be completed and submitted to the ISA.

## **F2.2 Approved purposes for Flexible Support Funding**

The ISAs may approve Flexible Support Funding to assist the ECEC service to employ an additional educator to increase the staff-to-child ratio above licensing requirements. However, it can also be used as a financial contribution to Family Day Care educators and In Home Care carers to attend specialist training after hours.

Approved purposes for Flexible Support Funding include:

- assisting ECEC services to include a child with ongoing high support needs in circumstances where it is unclear whether the Inclusion Support Subsidy is required on an ongoing basis;
- enabling release time for permanent educators to settle a child with ongoing high support needs into the child care environment (for example, a child who is transferring to a new care environment or type (such as from Long Day Care to Outside School Hours Care));
- enabling release time for permanent educators to attend specialist training that is relevant to the inclusion of a child with additional needs;
- enabling release time for permanent educators to prepare a Service Support Plan to support the inclusion of a child with additional needs;
- providing a financial contribution to Family Day Care educators and In Home Care carers unable to attend specialist training during business hours. Specialist training must relate specifically to the additional needs of the child in care;
- providing home based educators with an additional carer so that a child or children with additional needs who attends on an irregular basis can participate in out-of-home excursions or other special activities (for example, playgroups or vacation care excursions);
- assisting services to include a child with additional needs in circumstances where attendance may be irregular and an application for the Inclusion Support Subsidy may not be appropriate (for example, in occasional care, Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services, flexible/innovative services or mobile services); and
- assisting services in circumstances where the Inclusion Support Subsidy has already been approved, but an emergency situation has resulted in the child requiring additional hours of care for a time-limited period.

## **F2.3 Types of support for which Flexible Support Funding cannot be used**

The ISAs will ensure Flexible Support Funding is not used to provide assistance for the following purposes:

- augmenting staffing levels to meet local licensing requirements;
- as an interim or alternative source of funding while an application for the Inclusion Support Subsidy is being processed;
- purchasing specialist equipment or resources;
- transport costs;
- medical and therapeutic interventions;

- settlement services for immigrants;
- support more appropriately funded through the Inclusion Support Subsidy or Bicultural Support; and
- support more appropriately funded by state/territory governments or other agencies.

#### **F2.4 Flexible Support Funding application and approval processes**

ECEC services wishing to apply for Flexible Support Funding will contact their local ISA. An ISA will then help identify the support needs of the ECEC service and assist with the development of a Service Support Plan.

If the Service Support Plan identifies the need for Flexible Support Funding, the ISA will assist the service to complete a Flexible Support Funding application. If a Service Support Plan has been completed, it must accompany the Flexible Support Funding application. If the need for Flexible Support Funding is urgent, an ECEC service can commence a Service Support Plan over the phone and complete it once support is in place.

Once an ISA has received a Flexible Support Funding application, the ISA must:

- notify the ECEC service within 4 business days of the outcome of the Flexible Support Funding application and, if approved, provide the service with a Flexible Support Funding approval letter;
- provide a follow-up call or visit to the ECEC service within 10 business days of Flexible Support Funding approval to assess the appropriateness of the support provided; and
- process claims for Flexible Support Funding within 30 days of receipt of a correctly rendered invoice.

The ISAs are responsible for assessing applications in line with these Guidelines. Once the ECEC service has been notified that the Flexible Support Funding application has been approved, the ECEC service can proceed with the employment of an additional educator/carer.

By signing and submitting a Flexible Support Funding application, the ECEC service accepts that it will be entering into an agreement with the ISA with regard to the conditions for use and receipt of Flexible Support Funding. Flexible Support Funding must be expended in line with these procedures, and for the hours and purposes approved.

#### **F2.5 Flexible Support Funding claims**

ECEC services will be required to submit a Flexible Support Funding Claim Form, available from ISAs, to the local ISA within 60 days of the support end date. Claims submitted after this time will be invalid unless the ECEC service has applied for and received written approval from the ISA for an extension to the 60 days.

The claim for Flexible Support Funding must be for the actual hours for which the additional staff member was employed, up to the approved Flexible Support Funding hours. The claim should be accompanied by evidence such as time sheets. Only expenses incurred following the approval by the ISA can be claimed through Flexible Support Funding. Claims for retrospective funding will not be accepted.

For Family Day Care schemes or In Home Care carers that are submitting a Flexible Support Funding claim on behalf of an educator/carer for out-of-hours training, the claim must be submitted within 60 days of the training being completed.

Flexible Support Funding is paid in arrears by the ISA direct to the ECEC service or the coordinating service/scheme for Family Day Care and In Home Care. Flexible Support Funding cannot be claimed when the ECEC service is closed (for example, on public holidays), or when the child does not attend child care on the days that Flexible Support Funding has been approved.

## **F2.6 Flexible Support Funding subsidy rate and limits**

The Flexible Support Funding subsidy is a flat hourly rate that is indexed on 1 July each year. The rate is aligned with the Inclusion Support Subsidy rate and is consistent across all states and territories.

Actual staffing costs may vary from one area to another according to the state or award level, the contract of the additional employee, and the basis on which they are employed. Flexible Support Funding is not intended to cover all employee costs, but does provide a significant contribution to meeting these costs.

Limits apply to the number of daily and annual hours of Flexible Support Funding an ECEC service can access. These limits vary according to service type and activity.

The table below provides the current Flexible Support Funding subsidy rates and limits that apply across the different ECEC service types.

<b>Service Type</b>	<b>Funding limit as at 1 July 2011<sup>11</sup> (indexed annually)</b>
All eligible service types (excluding Vacation Care, Family Day Care and In Home Care)	Services are eligible for a \$16.43 hourly contribution, with a daily cap of 5 hours, for a maximum of 100 hours each year (that is, 12 months from date of approval) in respect of each eligible child enrolled.
Vacation Care	Services are eligible for a \$16.43 hourly contribution, with a daily cap of 8 hours, for a maximum of 80 hours each year (that is, 12 months from date of approval) in respect of each eligible child enrolled.
Family Day Care and In Home Care	Services are eligible for a \$16.43 hourly contribution, with a weekly cap of 5 hours, for a maximum of 5 weeks (or 25 hours) each year (that is, 12 months from date of approval) in respect of each eligible child enrolled.  Flexible Support Funding can be used to employ an additional carer to increase the staff-to-child ratio above licensing requirements on out-of-home excursions, such as playgroups or vacation care excursions.

<sup>11</sup> Indexed amounts for each financial year will be available in May of the previous financial year.

Service Type	Funding limit as at 1 July 2011 <sup>11</sup> (indexed annually)
Family Day Care and In Home Care (continued)	<p>Flexible Support Funding can also be used to provide a financial contribution for educators who are unable to attend specialist training during business hours. Training must relate specifically to the additional needs of a child in care. Educators are eligible for a \$16.43 hourly contribution, for a maximum of 15 hours each year or 12 month period.</p> <p>Flexible Support Funding cannot be used to employ an additional carer within the Family Day Care or In Home Care home environment.</p>
All service types	<p>Services are eligible to apply for Flexible Support Funding to allow release time for permanent educators to attend specialist training and/or prepare Service Support Plans in respect of a child with ongoing high support needs. There is a combined 15-hour limit per service each year, or 12 month period, for these activities.</p> <p>Applications for exemption from the 15-hour limit will be considered by ISAs on a case-by-case basis. ISAs can approve above the 15-hour limit, up to a maximum of 45 hours of Flexible Support Funding per 12 month period (see sub-section F2.8 of these Guidelines).</p> <p>Note: Services are advised to apply for funding for these activities as required, not as a lump sum.</p>

The Flexible Support Funding limits apply to the service, not the child. In other words, a service enrolling a child with additional needs is eligible for the maximum Flexible Support Funding, regardless of whether the child has already been supported by Flexible Support Funding at another service. Equally, if a child has moved from one ECEC environment to another within the same service, and additional assistance is needed to settle the child, the service may be eligible for additional Flexible Support Funding up to the maximum annual limit.

In cases where the Flexible Support Funding allocation has been expended and funds are not available, the ISA may be required to implement a 'waitlist'. In these circumstances, approved Flexible Support Funding applications will be processed according to the date on which they were received.

If an ISA receives more than one Flexible Support Funding application from an ECEC service for the same care environment, the ISA will be required to assess the total amount of Flexible Support Funding that can be approved. For example, a long day care centre that has applied for Flexible Support Funding for three children with additional needs, all of whom attend the same ECEC service on the same day, will not necessarily be eligible for 300 hours.

## **F2.7 Use of Flexible Support Funding for specialist training and/or Service Support Plans**

ECEC services may be eligible for Flexible Support Funding as a contribution towards engaging relief educators while permanent educators attend specialist training and/or prepare Service Support Plans in respect of a child with additional needs.

For Family Day Care and In-Home Care, Flexible Support Funding can also be used to provide a financial contribution for educators who are unable to attend specialist training during business hours. Specialist training must be identified in a Service Support Plan, and must relate specifically to the inclusion of an identified child with ongoing high support needs. It must be relevant to building the service's capacity to include these children.

For Flexible Support Funding applications that seek funding to allow release time for permanent educators to develop a Service Support Plan, a Service Support Plan is not required. However, a Flexible Support Funding Application Form must be completed stating the reason for the request and the number of hours of funding being sought.

## **F2.8 Exceptional circumstances over the 15 hour limit**

Where it can be demonstrated that exceptional circumstances exist in respect of attending specialist training and/or for the preparation of Service Support Plans, and the ECEC service requests additional hours to attend training and/or prepare Service Support Plans, an exemption from the 15-hour limit may be granted by the ISA. The details of the additional need must be stated in the Flexible Support Funding – Exemption – Approval Form, and included in the Flexible Support Funding application submitted to the ISA.

Exceptional circumstances will be considered by the ISA on a case-by-case basis.

ISAs can approve above the maximum of 15 hours per 12 month period of Flexible Support Funding, up to a cap of 30 additional hours of Flexible Support Funding for training and/or to prepare Service Support Plans in respect of a child with ongoing high support needs. This will allow services, under exceptional circumstances, to access a maximum of 45 hours of Flexible Support Funding per 12 month period.

## **F2.9 Role and employment conditions of educators**

The primary role of educators employed with Flexible Support Funding is to increase the staff-to-child ratio in the ECEC service for a time limited period when the child with additional needs is in care. Educators funded by the Flexible Support Funding cannot be used to meet state or territory licensing or regulatory requirements. Any educator funded by Flexible Support Funding must be in addition to the number of educators required by licensing or regulatory requirements.

Educators support all children in the service, and all educators in the service may be involved in providing support to the child with additional needs. However, educators who have been employed with Flexible Support Funding funds will not:

- assist the child with additional needs on a one-to-one basis;
- provide specialist assistance (for example, medical assistance or physiotherapy); or
- provide support that would otherwise be provided by the ISA.

The requirements of relevant workplace relations laws must be considered when employing additional educators.

When a child is absent from the ECEC service, the educator employed under Flexible Support Funding should receive appropriate notice in line with award provisions. If employed on a casual basis, stand down provisions apply.

Flexible Support Funding may not be claimed for public holidays, when services are closed, or when the child is not attending care.

The educator employed by Flexible Support Funding is the employee of the ECEC service. In the case of Family Day Care and In Home Care, the scheme or coordinator is responsible for employing the additional carer to accompany the educator on excursion-based activities.

### **F3. Bicultural Support**

#### **F3.1 Description**

Bicultural Support provides eligible ECEC services with access to an interpreter or other bilingual/bicultural person to support the service to enrol and settle a child/children from culturally and linguistically diverse, Indigenous, or refugee or humanitarian intervention backgrounds.

#### **F3.2 What Bicultural Support provides**

Bicultural support provides up to 8 hours of support, either on or off-site or a combination of on-site and off-site, from an appropriately experienced interpreter, or other persons able to provide specific language and cultural assistance to eligible ECEC services.

This support is provided when a child/children from a culturally and linguistically diverse, Indigenous, or refugee or humanitarian intervention background is being enrolled at the ECEC service, and the ECEC service needs additional support to help the child enrol, adjust and settle into the new environment.

The PSCs are responsible for ensuring eligible ECEC services are able to access Bicultural Support free of charge.

When support is required for the enrolment and settlement of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children, the PSC should contact the IPSU to either: directly provide the bilingual/bicultural advice or support required (on a fee for service basis); or advise of alternate appropriate bilingual/bicultural support in the local area that may be able to meet the specific need of the eligible ECEC service.

Where an appropriately skilled interpreter, bilingual or bicultural person is not available to visit in person, this support can be provided via phone or other technologies, such as Skype.

Assistance provided by the interpreter, bilingual or bicultural person under Bicultural Support funding may include:

- facilitating communication between eligible ECEC services and families by:
  - assisting educators in communicating with culturally diverse families and children (for example, interpreting meetings between parents and educators, providing verbal translation of enrolment documents, and providing educators with key words and phrases that can be used to communicate with the child);
- facilitating cultural awareness by:
  - assisting eligible ECEC services to better understand particular ethnic backgrounds, cultural experiences, and child rearing practices of the children and families;
  - enabling the exchange and sharing of information between educators and parents about the child and family life; and
  - providing educators with an understanding of relevant cultural issues;
- supporting curricula or programming by:
  - advising on culturally and linguistically appropriate practices and culturally inclusive curriculum;
  - advising on programs or resources that support the development of English as a second language; and
  - advising on resources and programs that assist newly arrived children and families from refugee backgrounds; and
- supporting resources and linkages by:
  - providing educators with information, where available, about relevant community resources and services to support the inclusion of culturally diverse children and families; and
  - providing bicultural advice and support to ISAs.

### **F3.3 Funding for Bicultural Support**

The funding allocations for Bicultural Support will be determined before the commencement of each financial year and paid to the PSCs.

Funding for Bicultural Support may be used to:

- to engage an interpreter, or bilingual/bicultural support for up to 8 hours support for each child to work with the staff of the eligible ECEC service; and
- for resource materials that will support the inclusion of the new child (up to 5 per cent of the Bicultural Support allocation).

Bicultural Support funding cannot be used for:

- regular interpreting and translating assistance for families or eligible ECEC services;
- supervision of a child or group of children;
- providing settlement and community support services to families and children; or
- providing support that is available through existing programs (for example, clients of the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) using child care while they are attending English language tuition. The cost of AMEP related child care is the responsibility of the AMEP service provider).

### **F3.4 The role of the PSC in providing Bicultural Support**

The PSC is responsible for:

- ensuring eligible ECEC services in metropolitan, regional and remote areas have timely access to bilingual or bicultural support to assist them to enrol and settle a child from a culturally and linguistically diverse, Indigenous, refugee or humanitarian intervention background when requested by an ISA;
- responding and actioning requests supported by a Service Support Plan (or verbal recommendations by the ISA when the Service Support Plan is still under development) for Bicultural Support within 5 business days. This includes notifying the ECEC service and ISA of the arrangements (time and details of person who will provide the support);
- establishing networks in the region to source suitable agencies or persons able to provide the type of support required;
- developing, maintaining and promoting a list of appropriately skilled contacts to facilitate or provide Bicultural Support across the region;
- ensuring the provision of services is in accordance with these Guidelines; and
- ensuring Bicultural Support funding is expended in accordance with these Guidelines and the terms of the Funding Agreement.

### **F3.5 How Bicultural Support operates**

Eligible ECEC services can make requests for Bicultural Support through the ISA, PSC or IPSU. The request must be accompanied by a Service Support Plan (see section F1 of these Guidelines) approved by an ISA.

However, as Bicultural Support must be responsive, and to avoid delays, the ISA may recommend the request to the PSC before the completion of a Service Support Plan. For example, the development of a Service Support Plan could commence between the ISA and the ECEC service over the phone. The decision to approve Bicultural Support can proceed before the PSC receives the completed Service Support Plan.

The request for Bicultural Support should include the written or verbal consent of the relevant parent, carer, or ECEC professional (other than the educator).

### **F3.6 Useful contacts for Bicultural Support providers**

The PSC should network with a wide range of agencies and organisations to ensure it is able to develop a useful list of suitable contacts. This may include Migrant Resource Centres, local ethnic community groups, and interpreting services.

Other contacts may include the *National Translating and Interpreting Service*, providers of programs that support the settlement of migrants and/or refugee and humanitarian entrants, such as *Humanitarian Settlement Services*, *Settlement Grant Program*, the *AMEP*, or other programs funded by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC). Contact details for these providers is available from the DIAC website:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/settle-in-australia/find-help/where-to-help/>.

## F4. Specialist Equipment

### F4.1 Description

Specialist equipment is available on loan from the PSC to eligible ECEC services (excluding In-Home Care) to assist the inclusion of a child who has demonstrated ongoing high support needs in a child care environment.

Access to Specialist Equipment is the responsibility of the PSCs.

### F4.2 What is available from the Specialist Equipment?

The specialist equipment includes, but is not limited to:

- portable ramps to create access to the environment;
- standing frames and full support swings to allow a child with high physical support needs to participate in the daily child care program and activities;
- hoists, slings, harnesses, change tables, commodes, toilet seats or steps, potty chairs, mobile stools and seating or posture aids for educators to enable them to lift and transfer children safely when carrying out basic care functions, such as changing and going to the toilet;
- specialised 'basic furniture', such as chairs, tables, desks and sleeping equipment;
- communication cards or charts, and Auslan dictionaries to enable the child and educators to communicate effectively;
- specialised inclusion toys, such as switch sensory mats; and
- individualised equipment, such as foam items, specific to the needs of a child care environment and a child being included.

Specialist Equipment does not include:

- therapeutic equipment (for example, hearing aids and therapist tables);
- equipment that the service would reasonably be expected to supply;
- equipment that the parent or carer would reasonably be expected to supply (for example, wheelchairs, walking frames and body suits); or
- equipment for which there are hygiene issues (for example, padded cots).

Providing specialist equipment is contingent on:

- the completion of a Service Support Plan in which the ECEC service demonstrates the need for the specialist equipment requested to enable the inclusion of a child within the care environment;
- confirmation that the child has disability; and
- recommendation by the child's therapist that the equipment will support the child's inclusion in the ECEC service.

Given the range of potential unique needs of individual children, this guide may not cover all situations. Where the guide does not explicitly address such needs, or a request falls outside the scope but within the principles of the IPSP, a written application from the PSC to DEEWR should be made to seek clarification.

### **F4.3 How ECEC services borrow Specialist Equipment**

If a Service Support Plan (see section F1 of these Guidelines) demonstrates the need for specialist equipment to include a child with disability, the ISA will contact the PSC and the ECEC service will submit the Service Support Plan along with a completed Specialist Equipment Request Form for approval and action.

The Specialist Equipment Request Form will be available from the ISA's or the PSC's website, and must be completed by a qualified professional, such as an occupational therapist or physiotherapist, who is familiar with the biomechanical functioning and needs of the child requiring the specialist equipment for their inclusion in the ECEC service.

A catalogue of Specialist Equipment items will also be available from the PSC's website. Eligible ECEC services and therapists are encouraged to check the catalogue before completing the request form. The PSC may be contacted for advice on the availability or suitability of Specialist Equipment.

The Specialist Equipment will be loaned for as long as it is required and remains appropriate to the needs of the child. From time to time, the ISA or IPSU will monitor the continued appropriateness and good working order of specialist equipment on loan to an ECEC service.

When the equipment is no longer needed, the ECEC service will notify the PSC to arrange the return of the equipment.

### **F4.4 Fitting Specialist Equipment**

It is the responsibility of the ECEC service to ensure that specialist equipment is prescribed and fitted by an appropriate professional, such as an occupational therapist or physiotherapist who has knowledge of the child's biomechanical functioning and needs.

### **F4.5 Non eligible services accessing Specialist Equipment**

Non-eligible ECEC services may, where equipment is available, access the specialist equipment. In these instances, equipment will be loaned on a full cost recovery basis.

### **F4.6 Role of the PSC in relation to Specialist Equipment**

The role of the PSC includes:

- ensuring eligible ECEC services have access to the loan of Specialist Equipment that is suitable for purpose and in good working order;
- ensuring requests are assessed and actioned within 5 business days of a request being received. This includes notifying the ECEC service of any delays or issues in the provision or availability of the equipment;
- notifying the ISA or IPSU, in writing, that the Specialist Equipment has been supplied to the ECEC service;
- maintaining and promoting an online, up-to-date catalogue of Specialist Equipment items that are available;
- purchasing new equipment in line with the provisions of these Guidelines and the IPSP Funding Agreements;
- seeking prior agreement from DEEWR for the purchase of equipment costing \$2,000 or more; and
- providing advice on the availability and suitability of Specialist Equipment to eligible ECEC services and other IPSP Grant Recipients.

## **F5. IPSP Resource Library**

### **F5.1 Description and access**

The IPSP Resource Library will provide up-to-date online information and resources on child care practice and research findings to assist in meeting the inclusion and professional support needs of ECEC services. The resources will be freely available and may include:

- in-service training materials (manuals, training materials, online modules, workbooks, visual aids, audio-visual material);
- fact sheets, pamphlets and newsletters;
- journals and professional literature; and
- resources that support quality programs, and that enable cultural inclusion and bilingual education for educators and children.

Under the 2009-2012 Program Guidelines, each PSC was responsible for managing a General Resources Library. During the first year of new funding agreement period, PSCs, in consultation with DEEWR, will be required to consolidate resources currently available within each library into a single collection, and, as appropriate, make these available from a single, on-line repository on a website managed by the PSC Alliance.

PSCs will be responsible for ensuring the resources available are: appropriate, up-to-date, of high quality, and in a format that will be easily used by ECEC services.

### **F5.2 Role of the PSC in relation to the IPSP Resource Library**

The role of the PSCs includes:

- ensuring ECEC service can access the resources throughout the period of the Funding Agreement, including through the transition to a single library;
- working collaboratively to ensure the smooth transition and operation of the new library;
- consulting with DEEWR on issues arising from the transition to or operation of the new library;
- contributing new information and resources to the library; and
- ensuring materials are appropriate, current and in useful formats.

## APPENDIX A - GLOSSARY

Word/Phrase	Definition
Additional Payment	An Inclusion Support Subsidy payment made to In-Home Care carers in recognition of the additional care and attention required by children with ongoing high support needs in their care and the impact of this on the carer.
Alliances	Collective of representatives for each of three of the Program Elements and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National ISA Alliance;</li> <li>• state/territory based ISA Alliances (in states/territories with a high number of ISA Regions);</li> <li>• PSC Alliance; and</li> <li>• IPSU Alliance.</li> </ul>
Bicultural Support Program	Provides time limited support to ECEC services to assist in including children from cultural and linguistically diverse and Indigenous backgrounds, including language assistance.
Budget Based Funding program	Funding provided under the Child Care Services Support Program to several types of non-mainstream ECEC services, and provided by not-for-profit organizations, mainly in rural, remote or Indigenous communities. The aim of the funding is to provide access to early childhood learning and child care where the market would otherwise fail to deliver these services. These services are generally not approved for the purposes of administering the Child Care Benefit (CCB), and parents using these services are not eligible to receive CCB or Child Care Rebate. The cost to families for using these services, however, is minimal as the Australian Government meets the majority of the costs involved in providing these services.
Budget Based Funded ECEC services	Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• flexible/innovative services;</li> <li>• mobile ECEC services;</li> <li>• Multifunctional Aboriginal Children’s Services;</li> <li>• Indigenous playgroups;</li> <li>• Indigenous outside school hours care and enrichment programs;</li> <li>• Crèches; and</li> <li>• innovative ECEC service centres.</li> </ul>
Care Environment	A specific setting, room or grouping of children in care (for example, a 0-2 years room in Long Day Care, or an educator’s home in Family Day Care).
Capacity Building	An approach that develops and strengthens the skills, abilities, processes and resources that ECEC services need to respond to challenges and change.
Capacity Payment	An Inclusion Support Subsidy payment made to Family Day Care educators in recognition of the additional care and attention required by children with ongoing high support needs in their care and the impact of this on the educator.

Word/Phrase	Definition
Change agent	An individual or organisation that supports organisations to build capacity so that they can solve their own problems. The change agent can either be external or internal to the organisation. In the case of the IPSP, the ISAs, PSCs and IPSUs act as change agents to support changes in child care services that result in high quality child care. The approaches used in the IPSP include the development of skills and knowledge, critical thinking and reflection.
Child Care Benefit (CCB) approved ECEC services	Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• long day care services;</li> <li>• outside school hours care (including vacation care);</li> <li>• family day care;</li> <li>• occasional care; and</li> <li>• in home care services.</li> </ul>
Curriculum	A planned course of action leading to certain outcomes for children, and includes what is desirable, how and why it should be learnt, and how it can be evaluated.
DEEWR	The Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
Early learning	Refers to the structured learning experiences for children (from stimulation, experience and play-based activities) from birth to 5 years.
ECEC services	Includes Long Day Care, Preschool/Kindergarten, and Family Day Care and Outside School Hours Care, In Home Care, Occasional Care, Budget Based Funded services in Australia.
Educator	Early childhood practitioners who work directly with children in early childhood settings.
Eligible Indigenous ECEC Services	Non-mainstream, Indigenous focused, child care services funded under the Budget Based Funding Program.
Funding Agreement	The document signed by the successful applicant and the Australian Government in relation to the delivery of the Program Elements.
Grant Recipient	Legal Entity funded to undertake IPSP activities.
Inclusion	Access to and participation of all children, including those with ongoing high support needs, in the child care environment. This includes children with disability, Indigenous children and children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds, including children from a refugee or humanitarian intervention background.
Indigenous Playgroups	Playgroups that give young Indigenous children below school age the opportunity to socialise and interact with other children and adults. While Australian Government Child Care Benefit is not available to playgroups, Australian Government funding helps to establish and support playgroup associations, to produce newsletters, and develop ideas for suitable activities.
IPSP Forums	IPSP Forums bring together IPSP Grant Recipients and other key stakeholders. The forums are held at a national level and at a state/territory level.

Word/Phrase	Definition
IS Portal	The Inclusion Support (IS) Portal is the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations' online system for lodging Inclusion Support applications and claims for payment.
National IPSP Conference	IPSP forum that provides the opportunity to discuss and respond to issues at a national level and bring together all key stakeholders.
National Quality Framework	The overarching framework that includes the regulatory body responsible for ensuring quality in early childhood education and care; the Early Years Learning Framework; the National Quality Standards; and the Quality Rating System.
Needs analysis	The process that is designed to identify the gaps between existing skill levels and desired skill levels for ECEC service educators. The needs analysis is the first step in planning activities.
No wrong door	Any IPSP Grant Recipient will assist ECEC services to receive the IPSP support and information required in a timely manner. This is achieved through effective referrals and collaborative practices between IPSP Grant Recipients.
Professional Development and Support	The advice, support, training and resources to assist educators in providing a high quality service as defined by the National Quality Standards. This support is to assist services in developing strategies that are sustainable in the longer term.
Program Elements	<p>The four elements of the IPSP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion Support Agencies (ISAs);</li> <li>• National Inclusion Support Subsidy Provider (NISSP);</li> <li>• Professional Support Coordinators (PSCs); and</li> <li>• Indigenous Professional Support Units (IPSUs).</li> </ul>
Pupil-free day	A day set by an educational institution where students do not attend school due to teacher training. Also known as multi-purpose day, curriculum day or professional development day.
Quality Improvement Plan	A mandatory requirement under the National Quality Framework. Please refer to the ACECQA website: <a href="http://www.acecqa.gov.au">www.acecqa.gov.au</a> .
Reflective practice	As professionals, early childhood educators examine what happens in their settings and reflect on what they might change to improve outcomes for the children.
Registered Care	Care that is provided by nannies, grandparents, relatives and friends who are registered with the Family Assistance Office. It can also include care provided by private preschools, kindergartens and some outside school hours care services.
Registered Training Organisation (RTO)	An organisation registered by a state or territory recognition authority to deliver training or conduct assessments, and issue nationally recognised qualifications in accordance with the Australian Quality Training Framework.
Regulatory Authorities	State and territory bodies with the primary responsibility for the approval, monitoring and quality assessment of services in their jurisdiction in accordance with the national legislative framework and in relation to the National Quality Standard.

Word/Phrase	Definition
Service development	<p>The activity that aims to improve an organisations' capacity for problem solving and service delivery through the establishment of effective and collaborative management systems and organisational culture, often with the assistance of a change agent and underpinned by theory and good practice.</p> <p>In the case of the IPSP, the change agent function is provided through the ISAs, PSCs and IPSUs, which provide support and professional development to build the capacity of ECEC services to provide quality child care that is inclusive of all children.</p>
Service Support Plan	<p>The plan developed with ECEC services to identify the capacity of the ECEC services to include a child or children with additional needs. Service Support Plans also identify the supports that may be needed by the ECEC service to ensure that successful inclusion is achieved.</p>
Skype	<p>Software application that allows users to make voice and video calls and chat over the internet.</p>
Specialist Equipment	<p>Equipment recommended as necessary for the inclusion of an eligible child with ongoing high support needs. The equipment must be prescribed, fitted and reviewed by an appropriate professional, for example, occupational therapist or physiotherapist, who has knowledge of the child's biomechanical functioning and needs.</p>
Specialist Service	<p>An ECEC services where all of the enrolled children have ongoing high support needs.</p>
State/Territory IPSP Forums	<p>IPSP Forums that meet to focus on issues at the regional, state or territory level.</p>
Strengths-based approach	<p>A capacity building strategy that builds on the strengths and resources of ECEC services. A strengths-based approach operates on the assumption that people have strengths and resources for their own empowerment. In a strengths-based approach, the focus is on the individual, not the content. By focusing on what is working well, informed successful strategies support the adaptive growth of organisations and individuals.</p>