



Australian Government

Department of Education and Training

Ministerial Advisory Council Child Care and Early Learning

Inclusion Support Programme Update

18 November 2015

Introduction

This presentation outlines the Department of Education and Training's **current thinking** about the Inclusion Support Programme's (ISP) design.

- This design will **continue to be refined**.
- It has been informed by the Productivity Commission's recommendations and feedback from the Regulation Impact Statement consultations.

Overview

ISP will commence 1 July 2016.

ISP objectives are to:

- support mainstream child care services improve their capacity and capability to include children with additional needs
- provide parents and carers with access to appropriate child care to assist them participate in the workforce.

Proposed ISP key features

We are thinking of a programme with three main elements:

- Inclusion Consultants
- Inclusion Development Fund
- Inclusion Development Fund Manager.

Inclusion Consultants – coverage

We are looking at one Inclusion Consultant (IC) to be contracted in each state and territory (one for NSW/ACT) to establish a network of inclusion specialists across their jurisdiction.

The department expects ICs to provide full geographic coverage within their jurisdiction—this will be one of the selection criteria—and it will be monitored in implementation.

Inclusion Consultants

IC functions proposed include:

- assisting services to build inclusion capacity and capability
- helping services develop an inclusion plan with short and long term strategies
- managing a library of specialist equipment for loan to services
- establishing collaborative partnerships with other relevant service providers (e.g. NDIS, settlement services, regulators).

Inclusion Development Fund

The Inclusion Development Fund (IDF) will provide funding to address inclusion barriers which cannot be addressed through IC support and improve flexibility.

Use of funding includes:

- subsidising the employment of an additional educator
- ‘top-up’ fee for Family Day Care
- innovative and flexible solutions to inclusion barriers including bicultural support.

Subsidy – Additional educator

- Children with disability, including undergoing assessment for disability, with high support needs.
- Centre based services and mobiles \$23 per hour for up to 25 hours per week.
- Up to 52 weeks per year.
- No daily cap.

Subsidy – Immediate/Time Limited (similar to IPSP Flexible Support)

- Provides an interim or short-term arrangement to engage an additional educator while longer term solutions (if needed) are determined and put in place.
- Children with disability, including undergoing assessment for disability, with high support needs.
- Centre based services and mobiles \$23 per hour for 25 hours per week.
- Up to 4 weeks per child per year.
- No daily cap.

Subsidy – Family Day Care (FDC) Top Up

- Children with disability, including undergoing assessment for disability, with high support needs.
- FDC services.
- \$10.20 per hour in 2016-17.
- Up to 50 hours per week.
- Up to 52 weeks per year.
- No daily cap.

Given low and sharply declining uptake of the current FDC excursion subsidy, it is proposed this component is no longer funded.

Innovative Solutions – New Element

- All eligible services can apply but subject to available funds.
- Supports services fund innovative and flexible solutions to inclusion barriers other than by engaging an additional educator.
- Empowers services to consider their inclusion challenges and take an active role in finding appropriate solutions.
- Includes the ‘bicultural support’ function in IPSP and potential new solutions.

Inclusion Development Fund Manager

Proposed IDF Manager role includes:

- providing a nationally consistent approach to assessing and approving IDF applications from services
- advising on IDF eligibility requirements, application processes, funding levels, queries and complaints
- compliance checking to confirm IDF funding is used in accordance with the service’s approved application.

Proposed transition and IT

- The department is thinking about how it should transition IPSP cases with an orderly assessment into the new ISP programme from July 2016.
- Specialist equipment will also be transitioned.
- A new IT system is being built to provide both better functionality and a better user experience for both providers and services.

Next steps

- Request for Tender (RFT) expected in early 2016
- Industry briefing/information sessions following RFT release
- Assessment completed in March/April 2016
- Successful applicants notified in April 2016
- Contracts executed in May 2016.