



Enabling families of children  
with health and disability  
needs since 1949

# INCLUSIVE CHILDCARE: Support to include children with High Intensity needs

Information for Services





## What is inclusive ECEC?

Genuinely inclusive Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) environments value and facilitate the full participation and belonging of everyone in all aspects of the learning environment. This is an immense responsibility. Often, services receive prospective enrolments for children who require additional supports to be safe at the service. It can be challenging to figure out what those supports are and to ensure that they can be provided prior to the attendance of the child at the service. The following has a focus on the inclusion of children with High Intensity needs and will serve as a guide to support you to ensure that you can provide the safest space possible.

### What is Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)?

For the purpose of this factsheet ECEC includes:

- Childcare
- Early Learning Centre
- Outside School Hours Care
- Vacation Care
- Kindergarten
- Family Day Care
- In-Home Care

## How do we find out what supports are required?

It is important to have a thorough information gathering process at the enrolment stage to ensure that you are finding out all the pertinent information prior to starting enrolment. You may request further documentation from the family and ask questions that will help you gain a greater understanding of the needs of the child. If the family provides any documentation that even briefly mentions any of the descriptors of High Intensity needs (more information below), it is important to follow up on this.

## What does High Intensity mean?

Children who require support with the following are regarded as requiring High Intensity Daily Supports:

- enteral nutrition, especially naso-gastric feeding
- tracheostomy
- urinary catheter
- emergency post seizure medication
- mealtime management plans
- other specific health-related requirements

It can also include management for diabetes, epilepsy, pressure wound and stoma care where there are other related risk factors involved.

## What are the necessary supports for a child with high intensity needs?

High Intensity Daily Supports are regarded as high risk and therefore those who support these needs must have the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver high quality and safe supports.

A child who requires High Intensity Daily Supports must be assessed by a Health Care Practitioner who will complete a health care assessment and plan.

The Health Care Practitioner will provide a Support Worker with individual training relating to the specific needs of the child and provide ongoing coaching and monitoring in each specific area.

ECEC providers must not place a child at risk by attempting to provide care without the necessary supports in place.

## What is the role of the Support Worker (SW) at a service?

The role of the SW is to ensure that high intensity health requirements are met appropriately. It is not the role of the SW to educate or facilitate inclusion within the setting. The SW may attend for 1:1 support for the duration that the child is at the ECEC, for part of the time (eg. mealtimes) or may provide support on a 1:2 or 1:3 ratio depending on whether other children who attend have high intensity support requirements and it is safe to do so.

## Does the service access a Support Worker?

No. When a child requires High Intensity Daily Supports, they are eligible through their NDIS package to access funding for a Support Worker to accompany the child for some or all periods of their day at the service to facilitate their health and safety needs. NDIS funding plans generally last for 12 months. If funds are not sufficient, families are able to request a review and request additional funding to meet their goal of having their child access ECEC. Families may also elect to pay for the Support Worker out of pocket.

An ECEC with good inclusive practices will manage the process of ensuring that this can be provided in a safe and collaborative environment not attempt to provide High Intensity supports within the service.

## What is the role of the service?

The service is responsible for following all of the usual protocols required for enrolling a child with a medical condition. These might include completing a risk minimisation, undertaking environmental and organisational risk assessments, ensuring that any medications can be stored legally and safely and ensuring that holistic care can be provided to the child's health and educational needs.

In addition some consideration should be given to undertaking appropriate induction practices for a Support Worker to work safely onsite. Remember that the role of the Support Worker is to meet the health and wellbeing needs for the child's high intensity condition, the education and care of the child remains the responsibility of the service.

## Can we still access Inclusion Support?

Yes. Inclusion support will not fund the kind of high intensity supports provided by a Support Worker, however they can help facilitate the working relationship between the Support Worker and the service as well as provide any learning supports and other environmental supports that may be required to provide a holistic education and care environment for the children at the service.

An inclusive service will work with the family to provide a combination of supports facilitated by Educators who are capable of ensuring that the child is genuinely included in all aspects of the learning environment.



## Further Information

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