



## Attendance by external support professionals at early childhood education and care (ECEC) services

Families of children with disability and/or significant developmental delay may request access to a range of additional supports while attending early childhood education and care, including early intervention and therapies delivered by support professionals.

These arrangements can occur through inclusion support services, private providers or under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

### Things to consider

Requests for attendance at your service should be considered in collaboration with the child's family and the external support professional to ensure the needs of the child are met while also maintaining a compliant, safe and inclusive program.

When considering a request, it is recommended you establish the purpose and benefits of the external support professional assessing and observing the child while they are attending your service.

You should also consider the following:

- How frequently will the external support professional visits occur?
- Will the level of additional support impact on the delivery of the program, in terms of education and care of other children?
- Will the attendance of an external support professional impact on the delivery of the program, in terms of the presence of an additional adult in the space?
- Will the external support professional need to interact with other children at the service while observing the child with disability? (Parental consent for the other children will be required before the activity commences).
- Will the dignity, rights and cultural values of all children and families be maintained?

Approved providers of an ECEC service have an overriding responsibility to operate in a way that ensures the safety, health and wellbeing of children at all times while they are attending an education and care service. You should review your legislative requirements and seek independent legal advice if you have any concerns regarding your obligations.



## Blue Card requirements

The Approved Provider operating an ECEC service should ensure the service is complying with the relevant working with children check requirements under the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*.

Prior to their attendance at the service the external support professional should be referred to Blue Card Services for advice about whether they are required to hold a Blue Card or Positive Exemption Notice.

Regardless of whether the external support professional is required to hold a Blue Card (or Positive Exemption Notice) the Approved Provider has an obligation to ensure that all children being educated and cared for by the service are adequately supervised at all times.

In cases where the external support professional is not required to hold a Blue Card or Positive Exemption Notice, there is an additional obligation on the Approved Provider to ensure that the person is under the direct supervision of an educator or other staff at the service whilst they remain at the service.

Meeting these requirements may mean an additional educator is required by the ECEC service.

## Your policies and procedures

Granting access to an external support professional can be supported under your current visitor access policies and procedures. You may however consider updating your service's policies and procedures to outline the circumstances under which external support professionals may be allowed access and what procedures educators should follow during their attendance.

All services must maintain adequate supervision of external support professionals. You should review your legislative requirements and service procedures to ensure you meet your obligations.

If your service is a family day care service, you must also ensure the 'Register of Visitors' includes details of visits by an external support professional and that the external support professional is not left alone with the child/children.

An approved provider should update their Risk Management Plan to address any risks associated with allowing external support professionals to enter the premises including the requirement for parental consent.

## Information sharing

Before sharing any information with an external support professional, such as providing documentation regarding a particular child's learning, you should consider your duty to maintain confidentiality and seek parental consent.



## More information

### National Disability Insurance Scheme

For more information about the NDIS visit:  
[www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)

For more information on obligations of approved providers under the National Quality Framework, refer to the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority website at [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au) to access the legislation and other resources. For approved providers of Queensland Education and Care services, review the [Education and Care Services Act 2013](#).

### Attendance by external support professionals

The information contained in this document is provided as a guide only. If you have any questions regarding your obligations in these circumstances, you may wish to obtain independent legal advice.

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