

Assisted Inclusion Readiness Plans

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) explains Assisted Inclusion Readiness (AIR) Plans - what are they, how can they be used, and how they link to Quality Assurance.

AIR Plans – What are they?

Assisted Inclusion Readiness Plans (generally known as AIR Plans) are tools to assist services reflect on how they might improve their child care practices so that they can provide a more inclusive child care environment for all children, particularly those with additional needs, such as children with a disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and Indigenous children. As the name suggests, they are 'plans' that identify a course of action, including the steps and opportunities a service may need to take in becoming 'inclusion ready'.

AIR Plans are one of the supports available to child care services through the Inclusion and Professional Support Program (IPSP) which is funded by the Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). The IPSP provides support to child care services by helping them build their capacity to deliver quality care to all children. It does so through a range of service providers including Professional Support Coordinators (PSCs), Indigenous Professional Support Units (IPSUs), Inclusion Support Agencies (ISAs) and Inclusion Support Subsidy (ISS) Providers.

Developing an AIR Plan

To develop an AIR Plan, child care services need to contact their local ISA. ISAs are responsible for managing a network of skilled workers called Inclusion Support Facilitators (ISFs) who provide child care services with expert advice on inclusive practice. ISFs can help services develop an AIR Plan. They can also help services develop a Service Support Plan (SSP) which is very similar to an AIR Plan except a SSP is specific to a particular setting or child care environment, whereas an AIR Plan relates to the child care service as a whole.

Both SSPs and AIR Plans focus on building the capacity of the service to provide inclusive care. A SSP is a prerequisite to an application for funding for the Inclusion Support Subsidy which provides a financial contribution to child care services to help them with the costs of including a child with high ongoing support needs.

Using your AIR Plan

Child care services can benefit from developing an AIR Plan. An AIR Plan identifies practical strategies that child care services can use to create quality environments. It addresses 'whole of service' issues relating to policies and procedures that inform daily practice.

An AIR Plan is commonly used when a service is developing or reviewing its policies and procedures. It addresses, for example, how to better include CALD and Indigenous perspectives in programming, ensuring enrolment procedures are a positive experience for children and families from CALD backgrounds, or helping services plan more confidently for children with a disability.

Assistance with developing an AIR Plan is provided free of charge through a local Inclusion Support Agency.

How are AIR Plans and Quality Assurance linked?

Both the IPSP and CCQA are nationally coordinated approaches to promoting and maintaining quality outcomes for children. The IPSP complements the QA framework by providing professional development and support to assist child care services through the accreditation process and to help them maintain a high level of quality care.

An AIR Plan is an example of a continuous improvement tool and may be used as one form of evidence in the CCQA process. Validators are encouraged to ask child care services if they have developed an AIR Plan and, if appropriate, to view the plans as a form of evidence towards Accreditation ■

To contact your local ISA, go to:
www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/childcare/services-ipsp.htm