Early Years Service Category Guidelines

Integrated Service Delivery

Contents

1. Integrated Service Delivery Funding Category

The ISD funding category is one of five funding categories delivered under the Department of Education (the Department) Early Years Services (EYS) program. The Department provides grants to both small local services and state-wide organisations to deliver a range of early years programs and services in priority communities. The Queensland Government funding is allocated to support services across Queensland, including rural, remote and high-growth communities. The five funding categories are:

- Child-Focused Activities and Groups;
- Early Childhood Education and Care;
- Family Support;
- Sector Support; and
- Integrated Service Delivery.

Integrated Service Delivery joins together a range of services and disciplines to create a comprehensive and coherent service delivery system for the benefit of families with young children. The purpose of the Integrated Service Delivery funding category is to provide comprehensive, locally responsive and connected services that support child and parent/carer wellbeing, enhance positive child learning and development and build parenting capacity.

The Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) Funding Category aims to achieve the following outcomes, including:

- Increased parents'/carers' awareness of and engagement with their child/children's learning, wellbeing and development;
- Increased secure attachment between children and their parent/carer;
- Increased parental capabilities and confidence in parenting and parenting self-efficacy;
- Improvement in the rate of children developmentally on track;
- Increased community connection and families, parents, children accessing the right services at the right time, including kindergarten; and
- Increased local access to a range of family and early years programs that reflect the current context of Queensland families and are available in a range of formats to support differing needs and requirements.

Funding is provided to deliver and/or support services and activities grounded in evidence-based practice, such as:

- early childhood education and care (e.g., kindy and school transition programs, kindergarten or adjunct care);
- family support (e.g., parent support programs, home visits, music play and therapy, counselling services);
- parent/carer and child engagement programs (e.g., playgroups, Families as First Teachers, Circle of Security, Parents as Teachers); and
- child and maternal health (e.g., child health screening and checks, immunisation, advice and advocacy, allied health support such as speech therapy).

Services under the ISD funding category, known by the common name Early Years Places (EYP), are 'one-stop shops' where families can access multiple services, or referrals to specialist services, for their children and themselves. They support families with children aged from birth to eight years of age and respond to the changing needs of their local communities.

Some examples of ISD strategies and activities in an Early Years Place may include but are not limited to:

- universal and targeted service activities delivered by early childhood educators, child health nurses and family support staff working collaboratively for families with young children in the community;
- established and effective referral pathways and holistic service delivery initiatives;
- locally responsive and culturally appropriate programs, services and environments;
- services being co-located or in close proximity to other community services; and
- cooperative, coordinated or collaborative relationships with neighbouring service providers.

2. Management and governance requirements

To ensure services delivered are aligned to community need, and services are managed appropriately and funding is used effectively, efficiently and economically, the organisation must have:

- clearly defined governance and management arrangements which are appropriate to the size of the organisation and the amount of funding being provided;

- financial management systems which are appropriate to the size and complexity of the organisation;

- reporting systems to be able to track expenditure of funding, and performance requirements to ensure compliance with reporting requirements;

- a management committee or board of management with members having appropriate professional qualifications or relevant skills;

- clearly articulated and documented, child safety, privacy and human resource management systems and associated policies and procedures covering issues such as delegations, reporting and conflicts of interest within the organisation; and

- mechanisms for user participation in planning, delivery and evaluation of services received.

3. Record keeping

The organisation must:

- have and use information and record management systems (or standard ways of operating) to support records being created, stored, maintained, accessed, and ultimately destroyed (in accordance with appropriate policies and procedures); and

- ensure that any personal information is collected, kept and used in a way that meets the requirements of privacy legislation.

4. Partnerships

The organisation must develop the Early Years Place profile as an integral component of the local early childhood service system. This will require a collaborative and cooperative approach aimed at developing ongoing partnerships with existing and new service providers.

Staff employed by an EYP will develop strong partnerships with parents, community organisations and health and early childhood education and care services. Staff must develop a comprehensive understanding of the local early years' service system and be able to establish effective networks and linkages with relevant service providers.

Community development activities should be adopted to focus on developing collaborative and cooperative approaches to enhance service delivery and create more child and family friendly communities to meet specific community needs.

Relevant practice standards and service delivery requirements include:

- encouraging parents/carers and community members to take an active role in the planning, delivery and evaluation of the services they receive;

- developing, maintaining and implementing active engagement policies, strategies and practices for families and children, including culturally specific strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, culturally and linguistically diverse families and parents/carers and children with disability.

Staff will work with relevant agencies and organisations to establish, maintain and streamline referral protocols and procedures to ensure clients are able to access required services in an effective and efficient

manner. The Department may be able to assist the develop formal mechanisms to support relationships between other early years service providers to ensure efficient and seamless service delivery.

5. Information sharing

Integrated service delivery requires the sharing of information at a number of levels. Staff at the EYP, will at times, need to share families' personal information and demographic data to determine service eligibility and types of services required. Sharing of information about referrals and service delivery is also required to manage casework effectively and to ensure service continuity.

Protocols and procedures relating to information sharing between service partners must be developed. Informed parental consent must be obtained and documented prior to information being exchanged.

At times, more general information will also be shared between service providers (for example, information relating to organisational capacity, staffing, goals and philosophy). This type of information exchange is important in building relationships and partnerships with other service providers and developing a shared understanding to support a holistic service delivery across the early childhood service system.

6. Risk management

The organisation is required to develop risk management plans and to be vigilant in implementing the identified risk mitigation strategies. This includes strategies to ensure worker and client safety and relationships/partnerships across the early childhood system in the local area as well as:

- a statement of commitment outlining the organisation's commitment to maintaining the safety and wellbeing of children and young people;

- a code of conduct which outlines the organisation's values and provides clear expectations for all stakeholders;

- key policies and procedures for the employment, education, training, and management of volunteers, employees and trainees;

- policies and procedures for the organisation's general compliance with Working with Children requirements including the Blue Card System, including maintaining a staff register and review of the risk management strategy;

- effective fraud and corruption controls to prevent, detect and respond to actual or perceived issues; and

- a detailed plan for managing breaches of the risk management strategy and which sets out the consequences if policies and procedures are not followed.

Organisations should also be proactive in business continuity planning related to disruptive events which may be natural or caused by human acts or omissions. Business continuity management includes planning and activities that assist in preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering from the impacts of events that disrupt the service.

7. Working with children and creating child safe environments

Organisations funded under the ISD funding category will create and maintain child safe environments using the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, which are designed to build capacity and deliver child safety and wellbeing in organisations, families and communities and prevent future harm.

The National Principles collectively show that a child safe organisation is one that creates a culture, adopts strategies and acts to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children. A child safe organisation consciously and systematically:

- creates an environment where children's safety and wellbeing are the centre of thought, values and actions;
- places emphasis on genuine engagement with, and valuing of children;
- creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people;
- creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying any harm; and
- responds to any concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions.

The National Principles are available from the Child Safe Organisations website at:
https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/

Organisations will also ensure that staff who are mandatory reporters are aware of their reporting obligations under the *Child Protection Act 1999*, which includes the requirement to notify the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services if they have formed a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection.

Organisations that work with children must also ensure they have the appropriate blue card requirements in place. Information about the blue card system requirements is available at the Queensland Government's Blue Card Services website at https://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au

8. EYP Staff

Organisations must ensure EYP services are delivered by staff with training and/or experience in working with children, families and communities. Staff working directly with parents/carers and children at an EYP must be able to:

- work within an ethical framework, for example the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) *Code of Ethics);*

- recognise the uniqueness of each family and their particular circumstances;

- treat children and families with respect and dignity, provide choices and enable participatory decision making;

- work with children up to eight years of age and have a sound understanding of early childhood development and practice;

- engage appropriately with children and parents/carers from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and be willing to undertake cultural capability training;

- develop partnerships, provide universal and targeted support, to parents/carers and children;

- share skills and lessons learned that can improve performance and service delivery; and

- work from a strengths-based perspective.

9. Reporting on Outcomes

An outcomes framework including performance measures, outlined below, is used to assist the Department and EYS to focus on positive outcomes for children and parents/carers. Monitoring is undertaken through data collection requirements as listed here, and financial accountability requirements as specified in the service agreement. The data is also supported by a qualitative or narrative report provided through the 'story behind the data' and case studies.

Funded services are required to seek feedback from a cross section of parent/carers to inform reporting and continuous improvement strategies. Throughout the qualitative reporting template, this feedback is identified as 'parent/carers surveyed'. This term is inclusive of: written, conversational, focus groups or any method or methods appropriate to seek specific feedback which represents the voice of families and service users.

On requests, services must be able to demonstrate and provide documentary evidence of service user feedback.

10.   Quantitative reporting

Type of measure	Measure	Counting Rules

Quantity
 	
i.e., how much?
	Total number of all children:
	
	• Total number of all children
	
	• Total number of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
	
	• Total number of children who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
	
	• Total number of children with disability
	
	• Total number of children aged 4 years
	
	• Total number of children aged 4 years who are enrolled in kindergarten
	
	• Total number of children aged 3 years
	
	• Total number of children aged 3 years whose parents/carers intend to enrol them in kindergarten
		Count each child who participated in activities during the 6-month **reporting period once only.**
		
		• **Do not** count attendees at an 'event' e.g., Family Fun Day (this information should be included in the Additional Information section of the Service Delivery - Story Behind the Data in the Narrative report.
		
		For example: a child participated in an activity (such as a playgroup) twice a week during the reporting period. **Count = 1**.
		
		• Count each child in the **following demographics** who participated in activities during the reporting period **once only**:
		   o count each child who identified as from a culturally and linguistically divers background and participated in activities during the 6-month reporting period **once only.**
		   o count each child who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and participated in activities during the 6-month reporting period **once only**.
		   o count each child with disability who participated in activities during the 6-month reporting period **once only.**
		
		For example: a child who identified as from a culturally and linguistically diverse background and participated in an activity (such as a playgroup) twice a week during the reporting period. **Count = 1 child** - culturally and linguistically diverse background.
		
		   o Count each child who participated in targeted activities*, and who will be 4 years old by 30 June of this year, **once only**.

Type of measure	Measure	Counting Rules
		o Count each 4-year-old child who participated in targeted activities, who is enrolled in kindergarten, **once only** o Count each child who participated in targeted activities*, and who will be 3 years old by 30 June of this year, **once only**. o Count each 3-year-old child who participated in targeted activities*, whose parents/carers intend to enrol them in kindergarten, **once only.** *Targeted activities include the following: ✓ Facilitated or supported Playgroups attended by 3-year-old children ✓ Pre-kindy / pre-prep / kindy readiness programs such as 'Get Set for Kindy' ✓ Family and parenting support activities which require registration or enrolment with regular attendance (e.g., weekly or fortnightly) For example: a child whose 4th birthday is on 29 June participated in a targeted activity (such as a 3-year-old playgroup) twice a week during the reporting period. Count = 1
	Total number of all parents/carers: • Total number of parents/carers • Total number that are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds • Total number who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	Count each individual parent/carer who participated in activities during the 6-month **reporting period once only.** • **Do not count** attendees at an 'event' e.g., Family Fun Day (this information should be included in the Additional Information section of the Service Delivery-Story Behind the Data). For example: a parent participated in an activity (such as a playgroup) twice a week during the reporting period. Count = 1.

Type of measure	Measure	Counting Rules

	• Total number with disability	• Count each individual parent/carer in the following demographics who participated in activities during the reporting period **once only**:
		    ○ count each parent/carer who identified as from a culturally and linguistically diverse background and participated in activities during the 6-month reporting period **once only**.
		    ○ count each parent/carer who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and participated in activities during the 6-month reporting period **once only**.
		    ○ count each parent/carer with disability who participated in activities during the 6-month reporting period **once only**.
		
		For example: an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander parent/carer participated in activities twice a week (such as a playgroup) during the 6-month reporting period. **Count = 1** Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander parent/carer.

Quality i.e., How well?	Total number of parents/carers who are satisfied with the activity.	Count the total number of parents/carers surveyed who are satisfied with the activity. Were parents/carers satisfied with the activities at the EYP? For example, were they satisfied with the following aspects of the activities: • timeliness (e.g., delivered on time and within expected timeframes); • accessibility (e.g., easily accessible for everyone, welcoming and safe environment); • quality (e.g., delivered by well-trained staff); • meeting their expectations; • helping them to achieve their desired outcomes; and • all the above (overall satisfaction)? Would the parent/carer *recommend the EYP* to a friend?

Type of measure	Measure	Counting Rules
		This information may be collected by EYP workers through surveys, conversations with parents/carers, and specific program evaluation.
	Number of individual parents/carers who received intensive support.	Count the total number of individual parents/carers who receive intensive support in activities during the 6-month reporting period. *Intensive support* means activities and/or support to assist in addressing the multiple and/or complex needs of parents/carers and their children presenting with behaviours or circumstances that are having negative consequences. Examples of activities include home visits and referrals and follow up actions to specialist services, to address complex issues or needs such as: • domestic and family violence; • mental illness; • substance misuse; • homelessness and poverty; and • developmental delays. *Note: Children may be included in the family groups but are not included in the count above.*
Effectiveness i.e., is anyone better off?	Total number of parents/carers surveyed.	Count the total number of parents/carers surveyed during the reporting period **once only**.
	Number of parents/carers who were connected to and accessed the right services at the right time.	Count the total number of parents/carers who were assisted by the funded service to connect to and access the support services they needed, when they needed it.

Type of measure	Measure	Counting Rules
		The EYP identifies parents/carers who need to be *referred to specialist services*, and *helps them access these services*, for example: • parents/carers were provided referrals to specialist support services such as DV support services, financial support and emergency relief; • a parent/carer was able to access a child and maternal health nurse for a developmental check-up for their child, following observation of the child by the nurse during a playgroup; or • a child with speech development delays was referred to a speech therapist who worked with the child over a number of sessions, and provided feedback to the EYP about the child's progress.
	Number of parents/carers improving their engagement with their child/children.	Count the total number of parents/carers who demonstrated improved, positive engagement with their child. *Positive parental engagement* between a parent/carer and their child can be demonstrated through *secure attachment*, for example: • the parent/carer is sensitive, attuned and responsive to the child; • the child is distressed when separated from the carer and joyful when parent/carer returns; • the child uses the parent/carer as a safe base to explore the environment; and Parents/carers may also demonstrate engagement with their children through *increased knowledge and awareness* about their child's development, and increased confidence in their parenting skills, for example the parent/carer: • is aware of age-appropriate child development in cognitive, language and literacy, social-emotional and motor domains; • has interactions with their child that enhances age-appropriate development, and reinforces cultural values; • has a feeling of competence and confidence in parenting practices;

Type of measure	Measure	Counting Rules
		• is involved in the child's care and education; and • has a stable home environment (e.g., established regular routines, hygiene practices, healthy eating, sleeping patterns)? This information may be collected by EYP workers through observation, surveys, conversations with parents/carers, and specific program evaluation.
	Number of parents/carers whose child/children was/were identified (or demonstrated) a positive change in behaviour, attitude, skills, knowledge and/or circumstances are benefiting from participating in the activity.	Count the total number of parents/carers whose child/children benefited from participating in an activity. A child may demonstrate that they have **benefited from an activity** when they show an **improvement** in any of the following areas (BACKS): • B - behaviour • A - attitude/opinion • C - circumstances • KS - knowledge/skills For example, the child may demonstrate the following improvements: • developing as expected across 5 developmental domains (communication, fine motor, gross motor, personal social, problem solving); • demonstrating improved secure attachment with parent/carer; • developing a sense of identity; • more resilient, confident to explore their environment, developing effective social skills, building trusting relationships • communicating needs, wants and feelings to others.

Type of measure	Measure	Counting Rules
		The improvements may be observed by staff (documented during activities or in reflection afterwards), confirmed by parents during discussion with staff, or reported by parents in a survey.
	Number of parents/carers who identified (or demonstrated) a positive change in behaviour, attitude, skills, knowledge and/or circumstances from participating in an activity.	Count the total number of parents/carers who have benefited from participating in an activity. The parent/carer may demonstrate that they have ***benefited from an activity*** when they show an improvement in any of the following areas (BACKS): • B - behaviour • A - attitude/opinion • C - circumstances • KS - knowledge/skills For example, the parent/carer may demonstrate the following improvements: • increased knowledge about child development milestones; • increased confidence in their parenting skills; • improved ability to positively guide children's behaviour; • home circumstances have changed – established regular routines / stable housing / financial stability; or • taking an active role in their child's development. The improvements may be observed by staff (documented during activities or in reflection afterwards), confirmed by parents during discussion with staff, or reported by parents in a survey.

10.2. Qualitative (Narrative) reporting

10.2.1 Story behind the data

The department values the narrative information from EYS providers as well as the performance data and will collect this information through case studies (minimum of two each reporting period) and a summary report (minimum two pages each reporting period).

To continuously improve the service delivery and achievement of outcomes through early years funding it is important for services to analyse the data and identify issues that impact or influence client outcomes through the data collection summary report and case studies.

10.2.2 Summary Report

EYS providers should focus on the following when telling their story in the summary report:

- service delivery performance
- activities delivered and future activities planned
- evidence based practice principles
- partners and partnerships in the community
- benefits and challenges during the reporting period
- areas and strategies for improvement
- staff qualifications and or training undertaken during the reporting period.

10.2.3   Case studies

EYS providers will submit one case study (focused on a group or program). Information provided through the case study should be non-identifying and include consideration of the following:

- background
- support activities provided to improve the client's circumstances
- how the activities contributed to achieving the expected outcomes
- barriers or activities which did not work in the specific circumstances.

10.2.4 Applying through QGrants

QGrants is the department's grants management system that operates as a single online portal for organisations to apply for and manage Early Years Services grants.

To apply for Queensland Government funding and submit claims/reporting, please access the online QGrants portal via https://qgrants.osr.qld.gov.au/portal.

10.2.5 Submitting claims through QGrants

Organisations with an executed funding agreement will lodge a QGrants 'claim' on or by the due date named in the funding agreement, to submit the required performance and financial reporting.

Direct data entry into a QGrants survey, will be required for the quantitative performance measures. The completed template of both the Financial Accountability Form and the Periodic Performance Report containing the summary report and case study is submitted as two attachments within the QGrants claims processes

Following completed assessment of the reports by Department of Education officers, payments will be released in accordance with the funding agreement. Further information is available at https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/funding-and-support/grants-tenders-and-funding/grants-management/grants-management

11. Resource Links

All Early Years Services Funding Category Resources

https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/funding-and-support/grants-tenders-and-funding/early-years-services-funding/category-resources

Integrated Service Delivery Funding Category Resources

https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/funding-and-support/grants-tenders-and-funding/early-years-services-funding/category-resources/integrated-service-delivery

Glossary of terms

https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/fundingAndSupport/Documents/eysf-glossary.docx