



Adjunct Care

under the *Education and Care Services Act 2013*

The *Education and Care Services Act 2013* (ECS Act) commenced on 1 January 2014. The ECS Act replaced the Child Care Act 2002 and applies to a small number of Queensland services previously licensed under the Child Care Act.

The ECS Act aims to support quality outcomes for children, especially those in rural and remote areas.

This fact sheet outlines some considerations when establishing an adjunct care service.

What is adjunct care?

Adjunct care is defined in Schedule 1 of the Queensland *Education and Care Services Act 2013* (ECS Act) as education and care provided to a child:

- in conjunction with a meeting, function or other activity involving a relative or guardian of the child other than the paid employment of the relative or guardian
- and on the premises in which the meeting, function or other activity is taking place
- and for not more than three hours on each occasion the care is provided.

These services are usually provided at venues such as shopping centres or gyms and require at least one parent/guardian to remain on the premises.

Adjunct care is excluded from the National Quality Framework and is not required to be approved under the ECS Act.

Check with your Local Government Authority to see whether adjunct care is permitted to be established in the area being considered.

Outlined below are some of the matters that you may need to consider when providing adjunct care.



Insurance

Seek advice about the appropriate types of insurance you may need for the provision of adjunct care.

Health and safety

To ensure the building is suitable for the service being proposed, it is best to hold discussions with your Local Government Authority in order to resolve any issues or problems that may need to be addressed for example you may need to consider:

- whether there is appropriate space and ventilation
- the location of the premises - away from heavy traffic, pollution, harmful chemicals, gases and offensive odours
- that children should not be exposed to smoking, gambling or consumption of alcohol
- the premises should be secure so that children should not be able to leave the premises, except in accordance with the policy and procedures of the adjunct care service
- the appropriate toilet and hygiene facilities
- the safety of the equipment to be used and the potential for falls and injuries
- whether the toilet facilities are for the exclusive use of the children in adjunct care, or whether they are to be used by others
- that adequate emergency procedures are in place.

Staffing

The *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* (Qld) requires people seeking to work with children up to the age of 18 years, in a paid, voluntary or self-employed capacity, to undergo a Working with Children Check (blue card check).

Penalties are imposed for those deemed 'not suitable' that apply for, engage in, or continue to work in child related employment.

In order to commence or continue paid work with children up to the age of 18 years, a person must have a current blue card stating they are suitable for child related employment.

A volunteer cannot commence working with children until they hold a current blue card.

It is the responsibility of the employer to apply to Blue Card Services for a blue card for a prospective employee. For more information contact Blue Card Services on 07 3211 6999 or 1800 113 611, or refer to the Blue Card Services website at www.bluecard.qld.gov.au.

Qualifications

At a minimum, it is recommended that at least one staff member providing care to children holds a first aid qualification, including emergency anaphylaxis and asthma management training.



Staff with child-related training are better able to understand the needs and behaviours of children, especially in short term care situations where there is little time to get to know them.

Staff contact levels

It is recommended that adequate staff be engaged to ensure that children using the adjunct care service are adequately supervised.

It is suggested that in adjunct care the ratios accord with the minimum ratios of educators to children for centre-based services where there are 21 or fewer children in the group. That is a ratio of one educator for every seven children.

Depending on the ages of children, qualifications of staff and other factors, additional educators may be required to ensure adequate supervision.

Policies and procedures

Before offering an adjunct care, it is recommended you document your organisation's policies and procedures on all aspects of the service. Consideration should be given, for instance, to what steps must be taken in the event of sickness, accidents and emergency evacuations.

Considerations

If you intend to provide adjunct care, it is recommended you consider the following:

Attendance records	You will need some form of register for parents/guardians to sign their children in and out of the program.
Adhesive labels	Useful as name tags so staff can identify children.
Cushions	Useful if children want to sit quietly or have a rest.
Equipment	All equipment should be carefully selected to suit the ages of the children and comply with relevant Australian Standards. Cots, sleeping mats and child sized tables and chairs should be supplied. You may also need to provide stable portable dividers to separate play areas for younger and older children.
Facilities	Refrigerators, sinks and heating equipment (for babies' bottles) should be available. Hot taps, hot water pipes, hot water and heating equipment, such as microwave ovens, must be inaccessible to children.
Fire extinguishers	Fire extinguishers should be handy within the area and in perfect working condition. All staff should know how to use the extinguishers and be aware of emergency evacuation procedures.
First aid kit	A well-stocked first aid kit must be kept on hand in the child care area. The kit should be locked and the key inaccessible to children.
Nappy change	Arrange an area specifically for nappy changing, which includes a bench and easy access to a hand basin and toilet. This should be well away from food preparation areas.
Quiet areas	Quiet areas should be available for children to rest or read quietly, or for mothers to breastfeed in private.
Refreshments	Drinking water must be available with separate cups for each child.
Telephones	Telephones should be easily accessible with a list of emergency contact numbers and evacuation procedures close by.
Toilets	Toilets should be easily accessible for children and staff.
Toys and books	Toys and books need to be safe, clean and suitable for children - no rust, splinters, sharp edges, toxic materials or parts that can be swallowed or inhaled. They should also be age appropriate.



Refreshments

While parents may be responsible for providing food and drink for their children, fresh water for re-filling drink bottles must be available at the service. Children should be encouraged to wash hands before and after eating.

Regardless of whether you intend to supply food or allow children to bring their own, consideration needs to be given to managing and ensuring any children with allergies are adequately protected. This includes obtaining any relevant information about a child's allergies from their parents/ carer (see below).

Information from parents/guardians

It is important that certain information is kept in relation to each child.

This should include:

- name, age and address
- contact details of the parents or caregivers in case of emergency. The definition of adjunct care requires that relatives or guardians of the child remain on the premises where the care is provided. In that case they must be able to be immediately contacted and available in an emergency
- details of any medical or health concerns, food allergies or other special requirements and how to manage these
- documented parental permission to allow medical treatment in an emergency. If this becomes necessary, ensure the nature of the emergency and action taken by staff are always documented as it may be needed for insurance or other purposes.

Further information

The above information is provided as a guide only. Before commencing operation of any education and care service, you should seek legal advice to ensure you are aware of your legal responsibilities.

For more information about the ECS Act visit <https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/legislation-and-guidelines/national-quality-framework-and-queensland-legislation>.

For more information about blue cards, visit the Blue Card Services website at www.bluecard.qld.gov.au

