

ROLE OF A KIS FUNDED ADDITIONAL ASSISTANT

The Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS) package program contributes to the provision of a quality kindergarten program in line with the National Quality Framework and the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework.

The KIS Program focuses on enhancing a kindergarten's capacity to provide a program that is responsive to the individual abilities, interests and needs of children with a disability and ongoing high support needs in an inclusive kindergarten environment. Services meeting the eligibility criteria for this program are able to apply for minor building modifications, specialist training and consultancy, and additional staffing support.

WHAT IS A KIS FUNDED ADDITIONAL ASSISTANT?

The additional staffing support available through the KIS package program is the provision of an additional assistant.

While KIS funded additional assistants are employed by the KIS auspice agencies and are not employees of the kindergarten, they are considered as staff members under the National Quality Framework as they have been appointed or engaged to work in or as part of an education and care service (e.g. a cook or other personnel engaged by the service are also considered as staff members).

KIS funded additional assistants should not be considered as part of meeting the minimum educator to child ratios; they are in excess of the regulated minimum staff to child ratios.

An additional assistant funded from a KIS package works as a member of the team

delivering a kindergarten program that is inclusive of all children in the group.

This supports the early childhood teacher to build the capacity of the team to respond to the needs of all children in the program.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A KIS FUNDED ADDITIONAL ASSISTANT?

KIS funded additional assistants take direction from the early childhood teacher. They are intended to support the needs of the whole group during the kindergarten year.

They share the everyday team responsibilities to ensure that all children can have the opportunity to engage with the range of learning and development experiences provided within the kindergarten program.

Responsibility for one-on-one support for any children in the program should be shared between all educators in the kindergarten team. The KIS funded additional assistant should not work exclusively with the child identified in the KIS package application.

KIS funded additional assistants should not be supervising a child or a group of children without another educator, employed by the kindergarten, present in the room or in the outdoor area. This is also relevant when running an indoor/outdoor program and in single early childhood teacher programs.

SUPPORTING A KIS FUNDED ADDITIONAL ASSISTANT

It is important that all staff in the kindergarten environment feel part of the team; this supports their wellbeing, the participation and engagement of children, and a team approach to inclusion (*see Fact sheet – A team approach to inclusion*).

Some strategies that may assist early childhood teachers to support the KIS funded additional assistant to become an active member of the team include:

- providing an orientation for the additional assistant that includes:
 - introducing the physical layout of the kindergarten and any safety procedures
 - introducing them to other staff
 - discussion of the program and dynamics of the group
- discussing the roles and responsibilities of the additional assistant and other educators in the team, discussing how they will work as a team to support all children in the program
- ensuring that the additional assistant has the opportunity to contribute to discussions and be a part of ongoing communication about the program

BENEFITS OF THIS APPROACH

All members of the team in the kindergarten environment contribute to the education of all children in the group.

KIS funded additional assistants feel valued and have a sense of belonging as a participating member of the kindergarten team.

The early childhood teacher has increased capacity to provide a flexible program that responds to the needs of each child in the group.

The kindergarten promotes understanding of and respect for diversity to children and families.*

All children are supported to develop trusting relationships with all staff members, as they are able to work closely with each member throughout the day.

The relationships support children to develop a sense of belonging to the group and the broader community and feel that they are

contributing to their world; becoming confident and involved learners with a strong sense of self.

Families feel confident that the whole team has the knowledge and understanding of every child's interests, strengths and abilities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE KIS PROGRAM VISIT

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/needs/Pages/kinderinclusion.aspx>

* In the context of this fact sheet, family may refer to biological, adoptive or step parents, siblings, grandparents or other extended family members, foster carers or other legal guardians of the child with a disability or developmental delay.