



Australian Government
Department of Education

In Home Care National Guidelines

New Guidelines Effective 1 July 2025

Version 1.2





With the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, the Department's logo, any material protected by a trade mark and where otherwise noted all material presented in this document is provided under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) licence.

The details of the relevant licence conditions are available on the Creative Commons website (accessible using the links provided) as is the full legal code for the [CC BY 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode) (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode)

The document must be attributed as the In Home Care National Guidelines.

Version control

Date of change (Published)	Version	Description of Changes
31 January 2025	1.0	Initial Draft for sector consultation.
1 July 2025	1.1	Feedback from the sector consultation incorporated: • CCS changes from January 2026 • reference to fee structure removed • management of safe transportation Clarification on: • CCS IHC family rate • IHC sessions outside non-standard hours • workers compensation insurance • CCS eligibility during IHC session • educator qualifications • travel reimbursements • support for educators • conflicts of interest
15 October 2025	1.2	Clarification on: • travel reimbursement • first aid qualifications • complaints process • legislative authority • regulation of IHC; and • minor editing revisions made.

Contents

Version control.....	3
1. Purpose of the guidelines	7
1.1. Notice and disclaimer	7
1.2. Legislative authority	8
1.3 Regulation of IHC	8
2. About the IHC program	8
2.1 Eligibility	8
2.1.1. Child Care Subsidy for IHC	9
2.1.2. Gap fees	9
2.1.3. No other approved care type is available or suitable	10
2.1.4. Working non-standard or variable hours	10
2.1.5. Geographically isolated from other types of child care	10
2.1.6. Complex or challenging needs	10
3. Applying for IHC	11
3.1. Family intake and referral	11
3.2. Families' responsibilities	11
3.2.1. Waitlist	12
3.2.2. Family check in	12
3.3. Location of care	12
3.3.1. Alternate location	13
3.3.2. Relocation of families	13
4. Scope of IHC	13
4.1. Other support services	14
4.2. Distance education and home schooling	14
4.3. Educator cannot be a family member	14
4.3.1. Exemption in limited circumstances	14
4.4. Educators cannot bring own children	15
5. IHC places	15
5.1. IHC place allocation	15
5.1.1. Requests to increase or reduce IHC places	15
6. IHC session reports	15
6.1. Nominated child	16
6.2. Child CCS eligibility at time session is delivered	16
7. Approved providers	16
7.1. Operating in Tasmania or South Australia	17
7.2. Registering with IHC Support Agencies	17

7.3. Responsibilities of approved providers of IHC Services	17
7.3.1. Home Safety Assessments	18
7.3.2. Alternate care locations	18
7.3.3. Safe transportation and excursions	18
7.3.4. Serious incidents	18
7.3.5. Mandatory reporting	18
7.3.6. Taking images	19
8. IHC Educators.....	19
8.1. Qualification requirements	19
8.1.2. Qualification exemption for educators working in remote and very remote areas	20
8.2. Educator to child ratio	22
8.3. Provide a tailored education program	22
8.4. Travel reimbursements	23
8.4.1. Eligibility criteria	23
8.4.2. Eligible travel expenses	23
8.4.3. Motor vehicle arrangements	24
8.4.4. Travel by air, rail or ferry	25
8.4.5. Documented evidence required	26
8.4.6. Other considerations	27
9. IHC Support Agency Role	28
9.1. Support for families	28
9.2. Support for approved providers and IHC Services	28
9.2.1. National community of practice for approved providers and IHC Services	29
9.2.2. Engaging with approved providers and IHC Services	29
10. The Australian Government.....	30
10.1. Department of Education	30
10.2. Other legislative requirements and quality standards	30
10.2.1. Legislative requirements	30
10.2.2. Conflicts of interest	30
10.2.3. Privacy	30
10.2.4. Confidential Information	31
10.2.5. Fraud	31
10.2.6. Discrimination	32
10.2.7. Complaint process	32
10.3. Useful links	33
10.3.1. Australian Government Child Care Subsidy	33
10.3.2. Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)	33
11. Glossary / Acronyms	34

12. Appendix A – Overview of the IHC program delivery 2025	36
13. Appendix B – Serious Incidents	37

1. Purpose of the guidelines

The In Home Care National Guidelines provide information on the In Home Care (IHC) program and the eligibility criteria for families to access the program. The guidelines also provide information and guidance to support approved providers and IHC Services. They also provide information about the IHC Support Agencies who support delivery of the program.

The guidelines are structured to assist IHC stakeholders to understand:

- program objectives and delivery model
- eligibility criteria and requirements
- application process and program scope
- place allocation
- roles and responsibilities
- legislative and regulatory framework
- other relevant information.

Approved providers and IHC Services must comply with these guidelines as a condition of their continued approval. IHC Support Agencies must comply with these guidelines as per the terms and conditions of their contract with the department.

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the [Family Assistance Law](#), and any information relating to the administration of the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) provided by the department, including the **Child Care Provider Handbook**, and Services Australia.

A glossary of defined terms is available at the end of the guidelines.

Any questions about these guidelines should be emailed to: inhomecare@education.gov.au

1.1. Notice and disclaimer

These guidelines are not a substitute for reading and understanding Family Assistance Law. Providers and other users accept any risk involved in relying on the guidelines without having regard to Family Assistance Law.

Family Assistance Law has the same meaning as in section 3 of the *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999* and includes the law as stated in: that Act; the *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*; and legislative instruments made under those Acts, including the *Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017* and the *Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017*.

If there is a conflict or discrepancy between the material in these guidelines and Family Assistance Law, Family Assistance Law will prevail. Providers and others who use these guidelines should refer to Family Assistance Law for the laws that apply to child care payments, the approval of child care providers and services, and delivery of the IHC program.

Approved providers must also know and comply with the conditions of their approval and any relevant terms and conditions in any contractual funding agreements they have entered with the Commonwealth. If there is conflict between material contained in these guidelines and conditions of approval or terms in funding agreements, then the conditions and terms prevail.

1.2. Legislative authority

Authority for the IHC program is provided by section 85GA of the *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*.

Family Assistance Law (FAL) sets the rules for providers that administer the Child Care Subsidy (CCS). Family Assistance Law includes:

- Family Assistance Law
- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999
- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999
- Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017
- Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Cheaper Child Care) Act 2022
- Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017
- Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017

Refer to the Australian Government [Federal Register of Legislation](#) website for the latest in force versions.

1.3 Regulation of IHC

The department regulates safety and quality in IHC Services which operate under *Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017* (Minister's Rules) and are out of scope of the National Quality Framework (NQF) and/or state and territory residual legislation.

In South Australia and Tasmania, the department works in partnership with the relevant State and Territory Regulatory Authority to regulate IHC Services operating in these jurisdictions under the *Child Care Act 2001* in Tasmania, and the *Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011* in South Australia.

2. About the IHC program

IHC is a flexible form of early childhood education and care (ECEC) that supports families' workforce participation and early childhood education and care requirements. The program provides access to Government subsidised child care in the family home and is targeted to assist parents or carers who are unable to access other subsidised child care options such as those who work non-standard hours, are geographically isolated or have families with challenging and complex needs. The program is a capped place program.

IHC program delivery is supported through a network of IHC Support Agencies who assess families' eligibility and refer them to approved IHC Services. IHC Support Agencies ensure that eligibility criteria are consistently applied across all families in their jurisdiction.

IHC Support Agencies work with approved providers and IHC Services and other IHC Support Agencies to support a nationally consistent approach to IHC and promote best practice in service delivery.

2.1 Eligibility

Research shows that children benefit most from education and care settings where they can interact with their peers. Children's relationships with their peers play a major role in their overall development, helping them to master social skills, emotional understanding and regulation.

IHC is for families who cannot access other approved forms of early childhood education and care.

Families must meet the eligibility criteria to access subsidised IHC. They must:

- be eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS); and
- demonstrate that no other approved care type is available or suitable.

Families must also meet at least one of the following:

- the parents or carers work non-standard or variable hours
- the family is geographically isolated from other approved care types
- the family has complex or challenging needs.

Families must provide suitable evidence to demonstrate they meet the eligibility requirements.

2.1.1. Child Care Subsidy for IHC

To access IHC families must be eligible for the Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

CCS eligible families can receive up to 100 hours of CCS per child per fortnight, depending on their Activity Test Result (ATR) hours. The hours of care must be within scope of IHC (see the subheading 'Scope of IHC' below).

The CCS applies uniquely to IHC in that CCS payments are made per family rather than per child, based on a family hourly rate cap. While the CCS for IHC is paid per family, all children in a session of IHC have their CCS hours reduced by the number of hours in the session. This helps make sure the hours of IHC are correctly counted toward each child's CCS entitlement when families use other approved care types.

Families may also be eligible for Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS), which provides additional fee assistance to support vulnerable or disadvantaged families and children.

From January 2026, the 3 Day Guarantee will replace the current CCS Activity Test. All CCS eligible families will be with guaranteed a minimum entitlement of days a week (72 hours a fortnight) of subsidised ECEC, for children who need it. From January 2026, all families will be eligible for at least 72 hours of subsidised ECEC per fortnight (3 days per week), regardless of their activity levels. Families can still get 100 hours of subsidised ECEC per fortnight if they meet activity requirements or have a valid exemption. Families caring for a First Nations child will be eligible for 100 hours of subsidised ECEC per fortnight.

2.1.2. Gap fees

Generally, CCS is paid to approved providers of IHC Services who pass it on to families as a fee reduction. Families must make a co-contribution by paying the gap fee. Approved providers must report fee information to the department when required.

IHC Services can provide information to families about their service's fee structure and gap fees.

More information about how CCS applies to IHC is available on the department's website at [In Home Care](#).

2.1.3. No other approved care type is available or suitable

Families must demonstrate that no other approved care type is available or suitable to them. For example, this may be the case where there are no vacancies at the times care is required and/or that there are no services that can reasonably meet the needs of the family, even with support from the Inclusion Support Program.

The needs of the family as a whole must be considered when determining eligibility for IHC. For example, IHC may be determined to be the most suitable care available for both children in a family where one child has complex needs, but their sibling does not. It may be unreasonable to expect the family to go to the expense and inconvenience of sending the child who does not have complex needs to a different approved care type, while there is capacity for the child to receive care under the IHC arrangements in place for their sibling.

Families may have only submitted evidence to demonstrate one of the criteria needed to meet IHC eligibility, but more than one criterion could apply in their circumstances. Families should advise their IHC Support Agency if this applies in their circumstance.

2.1.4. Working non-standard or variable hours

To access IHC during non-standard child care opening hours (between 6pm and 6am), families would generally be expected to demonstrate that all adult members of the household are working non-standard or variable hours at the time that IHC is required.

Considerations relating to for families that require IHC during non-standard child care hours resulting from challenging or complex needs or relating to geographical isolation, should be made in regard to families' individual circumstances. The primary purpose of IHC sessions of care must be to provide education and care.

2.1.5. Geographically isolated from other types of child care

Families must demonstrate that they are geographically isolated from other approved care types. This may be because they live in rural or remote locations or live a significant distance from other approved child care.

IHC Support Agencies will use the Accessibility and Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA+) as one measure to guide the consideration of remoteness and isolation from other approved child care services. Families will be considered on an individual basis with consideration of proximity to the nearest approved ECEC Service. A significant distance is generally considered to be 30 km or more.

2.1.6. Complex or challenging needs

Families with complex or challenging needs are assessed on each family's unique circumstances.

Challenging or complex needs may include, but are not limited to, circumstances such as the following:

- a child who is unable to attend another approved care type, even with reasonable adjustments due to their unique needs
- the child or a family member is immunocompromised to an extent that prohibits the child/ren from accessing other approved care types
- other complex family situations that prevent families from accessing other approved care types.

Complex and challenging needs may present as multiple barriers to accessing other approved care types.

Further information about IHC eligibility and evidence requirements can be found on the department's website and the In Home Care Eligibility Assessment Procedures.

3. Applying for IHC

Families interested in accessing IHC are encouraged to firstly contact their IHC Support Agency to discuss their education and care needs, the eligibility requirements, and general program information.

Families who consider they meet eligibility criteria and have obtained evidence demonstrating meeting relevant criteria, submit a completed application form to their IHC Support Agency for assessment. The IHC Support Agency assess applications in line with the [IHC Eligibility Assessment Procedures](#) and provide families a written outcome of the assessment.

The IHC eligibility application form, examples of evidence required to support eligibility, and contact details of IHC Support Agencies in each jurisdiction is on the department's website at [In Home Care](#).

3.1. Family intake and referral

Families must engage with IHC Support Agencies as part of the intake and referral process. This includes the IHC Support Agency assessing if families' education and care needs are within scope of IHC. IHC eligible families with education and care needs in scope will be referred to approved IHC Services.

IHC Support Agencies detail the circumstances of each family, including their education and care needs to enable services to decide their capacity to deliver suitable care. They engage with IHC Services to understand their capacity to meet families' needs, including Educator availability.

IHC Support Agencies support families to select and connect with IHC Services operating in their region. They provide families with guiding questions they may wish to ask services, helping families to navigate choosing a service. IHC Support Agencies publish all jurisdictional IHC Services' contact details on their websites, including areas where services operate in.

IHC Support Agencies may provide families contact details of other support services, if appropriate.

3.2. Families' responsibilities

Families must:

- update their details with Services Australia (via their MyGov account), where there is a change in the family's circumstances
- advise the IHC Support Agency and the IHC Service when:
 - there is a change in family circumstances, or
 - the family has concerns in relation to the education and care being provided
- take all the necessary steps to ensure the physical environment is safe for the provision of care, both for the children and the educator

- give the IHC Service access to the family home to facilitate safety assessments of the home before care commences, and ongoing as required.

3.2.1. Waitlist

IHC Support Agencies manage a waitlist of IHC eligible families with education and care needs assessed as in scope of IHC but who have not yet commenced care. This may include families who are still to choose an IHC Service, or who have chosen and been referred to a service but are waiting to commence care. IHC Support Agencies and IHC Services share information about families who commence care and are then taken off the waitlist.

IHC Support Agencies must actively manage the waitlist to ensure families have every opportunity to receive IHC.

3.2.2. Family check in

IHC Support Agencies should check in with IHC families regularly. IHC Support Agencies will determine timing and requirement of check in. For families whose circumstance are unlikely to change, family check in can occur when their eligibility period ends and a new eligibility period assessed, if required. For families whose circumstances are likely to change, family check in should occur no less than every six months.

The purpose of the check-in is to confirm with families if:

- their education and care needs are being met and remain within scope of the program
- they have any change in circumstances relevant to IHC eligibility.

If education and care needs are no longer within scope of the program or IHC eligibility ended, IHC Support Agencies will work with families and IHC Services to support appropriate transition out of the program.

Families must notify IHC Support Agencies of any change to their circumstances and update their details with Services Australia via their MyGov account, if necessary.

A change in a family's circumstances could affect:

- the CCS the family receives, and/or
- their eligibility for IHC.

3.3. Location of care

IHC must be provided at the family home of the individual eligible for CCS. The family home is the address provided to Services Australia.

CCS eligible individuals have a responsibility to notify Services Australia of changes to their circumstances, including a change of address. Services Australia advise families to report a change of address through a Centrelink online account or myGov within 14 days.

IHC must not be provided at an institution. An institution is an organisation founded for an educational, professional, or social purpose such as a hospital, prison, detention facility, or school.

3.3.1. Alternate location

Where exceptional circumstances exist, the department may approve an alternate location.

Exceptional circumstances are considered by the department on a case-by-case basis and include circumstances such as relocation to temporary accommodation for reasons such as, but not limited to:

- natural disasters
- family violence
- medical or work related.

IHC Services must seek approval from the department in writing prior to IHC occurring at an alternate location.

The request to the department should include:

- Provider CRN, Service CRN
- Parent and child/ren names and CRNs
- the exceptional circumstances
- details of the alternate location
- the period IHC will take place at the alternate location
- confirmation that the alternate location is appropriate i.e. satisfactory home safety assessment.

When considering whether an alternate location is appropriate prior to seeking approval from the department, the IHC Service must consider the risks unique to the proposed care environment and whether appropriate mitigations can be implemented to control the risk and ensure the safety of the children in care.

3.3.2. Relocation of families

Families relocating to another jurisdiction need to contact the appropriate IHC Support Agency in the new region for intake and referral. IHC Support Agencies in the new region will consider if families continue to meet IHC eligibility and if the education and care needs remain within scope. IHC Support Agencies will work together to support families by sharing relevant information.

4. Scope of IHC

IHC is an approved child care type eligible for Child Care Subsidy. Qualified educators, engaged by approved providers of IHC Services, deliver high quality education and care in the family home to children from the same family where other approved child care options are not available or appropriate due to families' unique circumstances.

Approved providers are obligated to ensure sessions of care remain within the scope of these guidelines.

The IHC Support Agency will consult with the family and service, where appropriate, when reviewing care requirements to ensure care is within scope.

The intent of the program is to subsidise early education and care.

The following activities are outside the scope of the program:

- Household chores such as cleaning, shopping, and meal preparation, unless incidental to caring for the child/children in the session of IHC.
- Multi-care (i.e. where care is provided for children from more than one family).
- Where the primary purpose is to provide other support services, including parental support, disability support, allied health, or respite care.
- Supervision of formal schooling, including distance education and home schooling.
- Education and care provided by a family member, except where exemptions apply.
- Education and care provided by unqualified educators, except where exemptions apply.
- Transport only (i.e. the session of care cannot be only for the purposes of transporting children)
- Any other activities unrelated to education and care.

4.1. Other support services

The primary purpose of IHC sessions of care must be to provide education and care. An IHC session of care may include some level of other supports, such as disability support, parental support, respite care, or allied health but these must be incidental to the session and not the primary focus of the session of care.

4.2. Distance education and home schooling

There is no eligibility to CCS during the time a child is engaged in, or taking part in a formal schooling program, including distance education or home schooling. This is a legislative provision that applies to all approved care types.

CCS is payable for school aged children who are absent from school for any reason, as long as no formal schooling takes place during the IHC session of care and IHC eligibility requirements are met.

Children can complete homework during a session of IHC.

4.3. Educator cannot be a family member

There is no eligibility to CCS when a family member of the child is the IHC Educator. See glossary for the definition of family member.

4.3.1. Exemption in limited circumstances

There is a limited exemption available on application where the IHC Service is unable to recruit a suitable educator to deliver IHC in very remote areas. Where these circumstances exist, IHC Services can discuss the circumstances with their IHC Support Agency providing details of the family member they propose to engage as the IHC Educator.

The exemption can only apply where the child is:

- the grandchild, great-grandchild, nephew, niece or cousin of the IHC Educator or the educator's partner; or
- the foster grandchild, foster great-grandchild, foster nephew, foster niece or foster cousin of the IHC Educator or the educator's partner.

IHC Support Agencies will consider the application and make a recommendation to the department within 5 business days. Agreement is required in writing from the department prior to the family member commencing as the IHC Educator.

4.4. Educators cannot bring own children

Educators are not permitted to bring their own children to the care environment during a session of IHC.

Also, an educator's own child/ren cannot receive CCS for IHC on the same day the educator provides IHC.

5. IHC places

The number of places available under the IHC program is capped at 3200 places nationally.

An IHC place is equivalent to 35 hours of subsidised care per week, per child.

A family may access more than one IHC place, or part thereof, up to the total number of hours per fortnight of subsidised care for each child, as determined by the family's ATR.

Where more than one child in the family is receiving IHC, the IHC places required by the family is determined by the combined number of IHC hours accessed by each child. For example, a family with two children accessing 35 hours each per week of IHC will be provided with two IHC places.

5.1. IHC place allocation

IHC places are allocated by the department to enable an equitable distribution across states and territories. The department will review the distribution as required.

The department will allocate or reduce places to IHC Services under the Family Assistance Law and will notify approved providers of any changes to their IHC Service allocation of places.

Where the department makes a decision about the allocation of places, the department will take into account any recommendations provided by an IHC Support Agency.

5.1.1. Requests to increase or reduce IHC places

Approved providers may request that the department adjust the number of places that have been allocated to their IHC Service to reflect their current needs. The provider must submit a business case to the department that provides a justification to change the number of IHC places that have been allocated, justification is only required when requesting an increase.

The department will consider the following when adjusting places:

- Utilisation of places currently allocated to the IHC Service
- A buffer to allow for school holidays, ad hoc emergency situations and IHC Service growth
- Any recommendation that may be received from the IHC Support Agencies.

Information on requesting an IHC place increase or reduction is available on the department's website at [In Home Care](#).

6. IHC session reports

Approved providers submit session reports in the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS) for each child who attends a session of care. These session reports are used to calculate and process CCS payments.

Typically, providers report the fee charged against each child in session reports.

However, approved providers of IHC Services must only report the fee charged against a nominated child in the family. This is because CCS is paid per family, rather than per child.

6.1. Nominated child

The nominated child can be any child participating in the session of IHC. Where between one and five children receive care provided by an IHC Service during the same session of care, only one of those children can be the 'nominated child'. Where between six and ten children receive care by an IHC Service during the same session of care, two children will be "nominated children".

When an IHC Service submits a session report, the hourly fee charged must be reported in full against the nominated child, with a \$0 rate reported against the other children attending the session.

Where a family is using multiple approved ECEC Services, the family can allocate CCS hours across Services. It is the family's choice how this happens. The family should inform the IHC Service which child is to be the nominated child for each session of care when agreeing on IHC enrolments with the IHC Service.

More information on how to report sessions of IHC with examples of common scenarios is available on the department's website at [In Home Care](#).

6.2. Child CCS eligibility at time session is delivered

The Child Care Subsidy System requires that all children have the same start and end times reported an IHC session.

If a child becomes not eligible for CCS during the session or leaves the session, providers must report the session as ended for all children. Providers must then report a new session starting for children continuing to receive IHC. Providers must report separate sessions when any child leaves or returns to the family home and care under the IHC program. This typically occurs when a child attends school during the day while another, younger child remains at home.

7. Approved providers

Providers of IHC Services must be approved to administer the CCS under the Family Assistance Law. They must comply with all conditions for continued approval as set out in the Family Assistance Law.

Approved providers of IHC Services must also comply with additional conditions for continued approval as set out in the *Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017*.

Approved providers of IHC Services must:

- be equipped to provide high quality child care appropriate to the needs of families, and are required to:
 - provide a tailored, individual education program based on each child's knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests
 - develop a program that acknowledges and strengthens the cultural identity of children to whom care is provided
 - ensure children are adequately supervised at all times

- ensure reasonable precautions are taken to protect children from harm or injury and any hazard likely to cause harm or injury
- ensure that at least one IHC Educator who is caring for children at residential premises holds a current first aid qualification.
- at all times, have in place:
 - workers compensation insurance, as required by law
 - public liability insurance with a minimum cover of \$10,000,000
- engage with IHC Support Agencies
 - only enrol a child for IHC after receiving a referral from an IHC Support Agency
 - inform the IHC Support Agency within 7 days of a child ceasing to be enrolled
 - provide reasonable assistance to and cooperate with an IHC Support Agency
 - comply with any reasonable requests for information from the IHC Support Agency
- comply with these guidelines
- submit accurate session and attendance reports in the CCSS.

7.1. Operating in Tasmania or South Australia

Providers who wish to operate in Tasmania and/or South Australia will need two types of approval:

- approval from the state government to operate an IHC service under applicable state laws to operate – some providers refer to this as their licence
- approval from the Australian Government to administer the CCS – this is known as CCS approval or Family Assistance Law approval.

7.2. Registering with IHC Support Agencies

IHC Services need to be registered with the IHC Support Agencies in the jurisdictions in which they operate. They work with IHC Support Agencies to help families choose a service that can meet their needs and accept referrals of families from IHC Support Agencies.

Approved providers are responsible for ensuring IHC Services deliver IHC, engage and supervise educators.

7.3. Responsibilities of approved providers of IHC Services

Approved providers of IHC Services must ensure:

- Services engage educators who meet all requirements including having, as a minimum, a relevant Certificate III qualification or are working towards a relevant qualification
- Services undertake home safety assessments to ensure the physical environment is safe for the children receiving care and the educators
- the service makes certain the safety of children is always taken into consideration, including consideration of:
 - safe transportation and excursions
 - water safety
 - emergency preparedness
- the service and educators implement the policies and procedures developed to protect children from harm or injury
- the service makes certain excursions are not the primary purpose of a session of care and are incidental occurrences to the overall delivery of a child's educational development program
- the service supports educators by providing the necessary resources and guidance for working in a family environment, in particular with families experiencing complex situations

- the service monitors the quality of care provided by the educator
- the service maintains a register of educators including details of the necessary checks, expiry dates and dates the checks have been verified
- the service adheres to the requirements set out in these guidelines.

7.3.1. Home Safety Assessments

Approved providers of IHC Services must ensure the service has established that the environment for the delivery of IHC is safe for children and the educator.

Home safety assessments must be completed before service delivery begins and should be reviewed regularly. The frequency of the review should reflect the unique risks of the care environment and individual circumstances. Best practice is for a home safety assessment to be conducted prior to every session of IHC occurring.

Home Safety Assessments must be provided to the department upon request.

Safety concerns must be raised with families and recommendations provided to address any safety issues. Services must monitor the situation and reassess families' homes once the situation has been resolved.

If safety concerns continue, services must, in consultation with IHC Support Agencies, explore further options to address these concerns including suspending IHC until the home environment is safe for children and the educators.

7.3.2. Alternate care locations

Where an alternate care location is approved by the department, a safety assessment of the alternate location must be completed before IHC is provided at that location.

7.3.3. Safe transportation and excursions

Approved providers of IHC Services must ensure that services have reasonable precautions in place to protect children and educators during transportation and excursions. Policies and procedures should be in place to manage safety.

7.3.4. Serious incidents

Appropriate arrangements must be implemented to manage serious incidents. The department must be notified in writing within 24 hours of a serious incident occurring, or a circumstance that could have resulted in the occurrence of a serious incident. Serious incidents are reported via the IHC Serious Incident Report available on the department's website [In Home Care](#). A person with management and control of the approved provider is required to complete the report.

Further detail on what are considered serious incidents is on Appendix B, noting that circumstances that *could have resulted* in the occurrence of a serious incident must also be reported.

7.3.5. Mandatory reporting

Approved providers of IHC Services must follow any reporting obligations in the state or territory where IHC occurs. This is commonly referred to as mandatory reporting.

Mandatory reporting obligations differ between states and territories. Stay up to date with the [latest advice from your state or territory government](#).

7.3.6. Taking images

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), in partnership with all governments, developed the [National Model Code](#) and [Guidelines](#) to promote a child safe culture when it comes to taking, sharing and storing images or videos of children in early childhood education and care.

Approved providers and their services are encouraged to adopt the voluntary National Model Code. While they have been developed for use in centre-based services, approved providers of IHC Services are encouraged to apply them to their service context as appropriate.

The National Model Code and Guidelines are intended to support early childhood educators, as champions of child safety, and complement relevant child safety activities and strategies already in place across the early childhood education and care sector.

8. IHC Educators

There are minimum requirements for IHC Educators to be engaged to provide IHC:

Approved providers must ensure that IHC Educators meet the following requirements:

- be at least 18 years old
- be engaged by an approved IHC Service
- hold a current Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Check and Working with Children Check acceptable in the state or territory in which they intend to work
- hold a current nationally approved first aid qualification that includes training in emergency asthma management and anaphylaxis
- be an Australian citizen or a permanent resident or have a relevant visa to allow employment on a continuous basis for 12 months or more.

IHC Educators are required to:

- comply with the IHC Service's policies and procedures
- support the approved provider to report serious incidents to the Secretary within 24 hours
- seek the necessary support from the IHC Service, particularly where working conditions are not satisfactory or there are concerns about child safety and personal safety.

8.1. Qualification requirements

All Educators engaged by approved providers of IHC Services are required to have a minimum Certificate III level qualification in a relevant course or be actively working towards a relevant qualification and provide documentary evidence. This requirement reflects the IHC program focus on high quality education and care. A certificate III, a diploma or a degree in Early Childhood Education or equivalent qualifications that have a major focus on Early Childhood Education are accepted qualifications.

ACECQA maintains a [current list of qualifications](#) approved for educators working in children's education and care services under the National Quality Framework (NQF) on its website.

The qualifications approved under the NQF are accepted qualifications for IHC Educators.

ACECQA also maintains a separate list of qualifications approved for educators working in Outside School Hour Care (OSHC) settings on its website. These qualifications do not meet the qualification requirements for IHC Educators.

The ACECQA website lists approved first aid, emergency asthma and anaphylaxis qualifications, which are mandatory requirements for IHC Educators.

Primary school teaching qualifications of educators registered with the state and territory education boards / state-based Teacher Regulatory Authorities are also accepted qualifications for IHC Educators.

IHC Educators can be considered as 'actively working towards' meeting the certificate III level qualification if they are:

- enrolled in a ACECQA approved qualification and have started study
- making satisfactory progress towards completing the course
- meeting the requirements to maintain the enrolment.

Requirements to be considered 'actively working towards' a diploma or degree qualification are listed on the ACECQA website.

8.1.1. The ACECQA IHC Quality and Safety Project eLearning modules

Approved providers of IHC Services are encouraged to ensure all IHC Educators complete the IHC Quality and Safety free eLearning modules developed by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). The eLearning modules build awareness of quality and safety for the delivery of IHC and can be accessed anytime. Approved providers should retain records confirming the eLearning modules have been completed by IHC Educators.

There are two ways to register for the eLearning modules:

- Approved providers can contact ACECQA by email at IHCqualityandsafety@acecqa.gov.au and request a Microsoft Excel form to request registration of multiple Educators.
- Educators can contact ACECQA individually via email at IHCqualityandsafety@acecqa.gov.au and request registration.

Upon acceptance of registration, ACECQA will notify each Educator via email with instructions on how to access the eLearning modules.

8.1.2. Qualification exemption for educators working in remote and very remote areas

From 1 January 2025, approved providers of IHC Services may engage Educators who do not meet minimum qualification requirements to work in remote and very remote areas if an exemption criterion is met. This approach recognises that IHC Educators working in these areas may experience difficulties in meeting the minimum Certificate III level qualification requirements for IHC.

There are no exemptions for first aid or other required qualifications.

Approved providers wishing to access the exemption must complete the In Home Care Exemption to Qualification Declaration and Information Form and submit to the department. The form and more information about the exemption is available at [In Home Care - Department of Education, Australian Government](#).

Approved providers must complete and submit the form the department before engaging an unqualified educator.

Please note, the form requires approved providers to declare they have:

- advised the IHC Educator about the matters included in the form's Privacy Statement; and
- obtained the IHC Educator's consent to the department's collection of their personal information disclosed in the form.

The exemption to qualifications for IHC Educators working in remote and very remote areas is independent to the exemption for engaging a family member as an IHC Educator in remote and very remote areas. For clarity, where an exemption to engage a family member as an IHC Educator is in place, an exemption to qualifications would not be accepted.

Criteria for engagement of IHC Educators without minimum Certificate III qualifications

Approved providers of IHC Services may engage an IHC Educator who does not meet the minimum Certificate III requirements (an unqualified educator) to work in a remote or very remote area, if they meet one of the following criterion:

1. The unqualified educator has access to and utilises the expertise of a qualified educator (an educator who holds a Certificate III in early childhood education and care, at a minimum) for at least 20 per cent of the time that IHC is provided by the unqualified educator. This may be by face-to-face or virtual.
2. The educator has been continuously employed in an early childhood education and care service located in a remote or very remote area for a period of at least 15 years.

Support requirements under criterion 1

The following demonstrates the support requirements under criterion 1:

- Staff engaged by the IHC Service to support unqualified educators must have the required qualification (a Certificate III in early childhood education and care, at a minimum) and support the unqualified educator to develop a tailored, individual education program based on each child's knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities, and interests.
- The qualified educator must review the progress of each of these children with respect to the individual educational program.
- The qualified educator must be interacting with the unqualified educator and the children at least twenty percent of the time IHC is provided. For example, if a family receives IHC for five days a week, this interaction will need to occur for one day a week on average (however, any such interaction must occur at least monthly).
- The interaction between the qualified educator and the unqualified IHC Educator (and the children cared for) may be face-to-face or virtual. As the IHC Educator has access to and utilises a supervisor who is a qualified staff member who is involved in the education and care of the children receiving IHC, the educator would have met the qualification requirements for IHC.
- Approved providers are required to keep a record of the interactions and support provided to unqualified educators.

Induction and training

Approved providers of IHC Services should ensure IHC Educators complete a full induction program, including training in the approved provider and IHC Service's policies and procedures. It is expected this will include risk and hazard identification and management, educational programming, and should reflect the family's circumstances. For example, safe sleep training should be provided by an appropriate organisation if the educator delivers a session of care which incorporates children's sleep routines.

The ACECQA IHC Quality and Safety Project eLearning modules

Approved providers of IHC Services must ensure unqualified educators complete the IHC Quality and Safety free eLearning modules developed by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) within the first four weeks of providing IHC to a family.

Recordkeeping

Approved providers should retain records to demonstrate:

- how and when unqualified IHC Educators are supported
- how IHC Educators meet the requirements of an exemption criterion
- all training undertaken by unqualified IHC Educators.

The department may request these records at any time.

Notification obligations

Approved providers are required to notify the department in writing within seven days of an IHC Educator engaged under the exemption ceasing to be employed by the IHC Service or ceasing to provide IHC to a family located in a remote or very remote location.

8.2. Educator to child ratio

One IHC Educator can care for a maximum of five children in a session of IHC, with no more than four children preschool age or under (within the meaning of the Education and Care Services National Regulations).

The CCSS requires a second session to be created with an additional educator where the educator to child ratio exceeds this amount. Families are eligible to receive CCS for both sessions. All children in both sessions must be enrolled in IHC and be from the same family.

8.3. Provide a tailored education program

Approved providers are required to ensure IHC Educators deliver an individual, tailored education program based on the child's knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests and which acknowledges and strengthens the cultural identity of each child.

Educators should base the tailored education program on an approved learning framework.

There are two national approved learning frameworks in operation. These are:

- Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia
- My Time Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia

Both learning frameworks outline principles, practices and learning outcomes that guide educational leaders and educators in their curriculum decision-making, and assist them in planning, delivering and evaluating quality program in early childhood and school age settings.

The frameworks and educational resources are available from the website at [ACECQA](#). IHC Educators develop and deliver individual education and care programs and are responsible for working with approved providers and IHC Services to ensure they are delivering high quality early education and care programs. IHC Educators are encouraged to utilise any professional development support offered where possible.

IHC Educators are not expected to undertake household chores such as cleaning, shopping, meal preparation or other household duties for the family unless they are undertaken as part of child care, and during the agreed hours for which they are being paid to provide subsidised child care. Should there be any dispute about the nature of services requested by the family, educators must consult with their IHC Service.

8.4. Travel reimbursements

Approved providers of IHC Services may request reimbursement from jurisdictional IHC Support Agencies for eligible travel expenses incurred when visiting family homes in designated areas. Each IHC Support Agency has an annual budget limit for managing travel reimbursements within their jurisdiction.

8.4.1. Eligibility criteria

To qualify, travel must:

- be undertaken by a staff member of the IHC Service; and
- be to a family home located in Inner Regional, Outer Regional, Remote, or Very Remote areas; and
- be solely for IHC purposes, such as:
 - assessing home safety for children and educators; or
 - supporting educators in program delivery; or
 - identifying resource needs.

To determine the classification of a location using the most recent ARIA+ measure on the Australian Bureau of Statistics website at [Remoteness Areas | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#).

8.4.2. Eligible travel expenses

Reimbursement may be claimed for reasonable travel costs incurred. The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) publishes travel allowance expense amounts considered reasonable for each relevant financial year. IHC Support Agencies will apply the [ATO travel allowance expense amounts](#) and any other relevant ATO guidance when considering a reimbursement request. Travel allowance expense amounts are subject to change, particularly at the beginning of each financial year.

Generally, eligible travel expenses may include:

- private motor vehicle or commercial vehicle hire
- air travel
- rail transportation
- ferry transportation
- overnight accommodation.

Accompanied travel

On occasion, accompanied travel may be undertaken by two IHC Service staff members where it is required for service delivery or operational purposes. Claims must include justification, for dual attendance.

IHC Service staff are not entitled to claim accompanied travel for any other persons, e.g. a spouse, a friend or dependents.

8.4.3. Motor vehicle arrangements

Travel undertaken by a motor vehicle must be via the shortest practicable route and be cost-effective. Cost-effectiveness must be determined through comparisons such as, commercial vehicle hire/rental or private motor vehicle use, versus airfare, with accommodation costs included for each option where relevant. Motor vehicle travel can only be claimed by either 'cents per kilometre' or commercial vehicle hire/rental. Travellers undertaking long-distance trips by vehicle must ensure that they take rest breaks and other precautions to avoid driver fatigue.

A logbook must be kept and provided with the claim for all travel undertaken by car. For guidance on how to keep a logbook refer to the [Australian Taxation Office website](#).

Use of private vehicle

A private vehicle (such as a car) that is owned and used by an individual for personal transportation may be used for travel. This vehicle must not be used for commercial purposes. This vehicle must not be attached to any other unpowered vehicle, including but not limited to a trailer, caravan or camper trailer when used for IHC travel.

Reimbursement is calculated using the 'cents per kilometre' method published by the [ATO](#) which may be updated from time to time. All drivers must hold a current driver's licence. The vehicle must be registered and have current comprehensive and third-party insurance.

Use of commercial vehicle hire/rental

The use of commercial vehicle hire (such as a rental car), will be considered when one or more of the following criteria is met:

- the cost is less than other forms of transport, taking into account costs associated with travel time
- travel is for more than one IHC Service staff member
- it is not reasonable for the IHC Service staff member to use their own private vehicle.

The IHC Service must keep a copy of the signed formal car hire rental agreement between the person engaged by the IHC Service (the IHC Service staff member) and the commercial vehicle hire company.

Reimbursement for commercial vehicle hire will only be considered where:

- the commercial vehicle hire company holds a valid ABN.
- the commercial vehicle hire is available for hire to the public.
- there is no known personal or professional connection to the commercial vehicle hire company used for car hire services.
- the vehicle must not be hired from any individual who is employed or otherwise involved with the IHC Provider or IHC Service, or relatives of the individual. This includes but is not limited to, educators, persons with management or control or control of the provider,

providers staff, including company directors, any IHC Service staff, or any friends, immediate or extended family members, such as partners, de facto, siblings, children (including an adopted child, a foster child, or a kinship child), parents or grandparents.

- reimbursement is limited up to the cost of vehicle hire.
- the selected vehicle is no bigger than a sedan and be the most cost-effective vehicle for hire.
- pre-approval from the department is required for the use of a larger vehicle e.g. SUV/4X4.
- a business case including cost, justification and reason for the request must be submitted to inhomecare@education.gov.au and approval obtained before booking.

Exclusions for motor vehicle arrangements

The following costs are not eligible for reimbursement:

- taxis and ridesharing
- chauffeur driven hire vehicles
- tolls
- late fees for return of hire vehicle as part of any rental/hire car agreement
- parking fines or driving offences
- rental car excess insurance
- driver licence fees
- any damage to a vehicle
- comprehensive and third-party insurance
- fuel.

For clarification on unlisted expenses or exclusions, contact your IHC Support Agency.

8.4.4. Travel by air, rail or ferry

Air, rail, or ferry travel is permitted only when it is the most cost-effective and practical option. To determine cost-effectiveness, IHC Services must compare the total fare against estimated road travel costs based on distance. This includes comparisons such as airfare versus commercial vehicle hire, or airfare versus private motor vehicle use, with accommodation costs included for each option where relevant. Travel claims must include documentation demonstrating that the chosen mode was more economical than road travel.

Domestic air travel

All domestic air travel should be at the lowest practical fare, in economy class of major carriers. To determine the lowest practical fare, IHC Services must compare fare classes and types across airlines servicing the route required. Where not included in the fare, a baggage allowance can be added up to 25 kilograms.

When assessing the lowest practical fare, it is not appropriate to consider:

- a preference for a particular airline
- a preference for jets or full-service airlines
- access to airline lounges
- accumulating airline benefits, such as reward or loyalty points.

Exclusions - domestic air travel

The following costs are not eligible for reimbursement:

- travel agent booking fees

- private charter
- booking price guarantee fee
- upgrades i.e., seat selection, extra leg room, meals
- airline membership
- airline lounge access
- luggage allowance over 25 kilograms
- travel insurance.

For clarification on unlisted expenses or exclusions, contact your IHC Support Agency.

Commercial overnight accommodation

All travel involving an overnight stay, accommodation costs must in line with the department's travel policy; it does not exceed the indicative daily cap for employees which is dependent on the travel destination. For further clarification, please contact your relevant IHC Support Agency.

The ATO publishes the income tax: reasonable travel and overtime meal allowance expense amounts on their [website](#). This information is subject to change and should be considered against the relevant financial year.

Exclusions for accommodation

The following costs are not eligible for reimbursement:

- travel to family homes in Major Cities (ARIA+ locations)
- meal allowances or other travel incidentals
- IHC educator travel to provide care in the family home
- non-commercial accommodation – where IHC Service personal choose to stay in non-commercial/private accommodation, such as with family or friends
- caravan site fees.

8.4.5. Documented evidence required

When submitting a travel claim the following documentation must be provided where applicable:

- completed Travel Reimbursement Claim form
- travel itinerary – detailed schedule including dates, destinations and modes of transport
- cost comparison – a comparison of total costs for the most economical and efficient mode(s) of transport
- signed car hire rental agreement
- car hire invoice and proof of payment
- logbook
- evidence of lowest practical fare – documentation demonstrating fare comparisons across major carriers servicing the route
- airfare invoice and proof of payment
- airline boarding pass
- rail invoice and proof of payment
- ferry invoice and proof of payment
- accommodation invoice and proof of payment
- any other relevant tax invoices or receipts.

Submission requirements

IHC Services should complete and submit the IHC Travel Reimbursement Claim form to their IHC Support Agency by the 15th day of the month (or next business day if this date falls on a weekend or public holiday), following the end of each quarter in which the travel was undertaken. The department may approve retrospective travel claims in exceptional circumstances.

Where prior approval is required for exceptional circumstances or larger vehicle by the department justification and support documentation must be submitted to inhomecare@education.gov.au.

For guidance on expenses or exclusions not specified in this policy, please contact the IHC Support Agency in your jurisdiction.

8.4.6. Other considerations

Inner regional, outer regional, remote, or very remote areas

In recognition of the remoteness of many Australian locations, the significant travel distances involved, and the limited availability of suitable accommodation, alternative travel arrangements may be considered. Where such arrangements are deemed more cost-effective, a business case for approval must be submitted prior to booking to inhomecare@education.gov.au outlining the rationale, cost and expected benefits.

Adverse weather conditions

Travel must not proceed if severe or unusual weather conditions render the planned itinerary unsafe. Any changes to travel arrangements due to adverse weather must comply with section 8.4 of the In Home Care National Guidelines.

Cancellations of travel

Where travel is cancelled due to circumstances beyond the control of the IHC Service, and refunds or rescheduling are not available from the relevant transport or accommodation provider, the IHC Service may claim the associated costs. Documentation must be provided with the Travel Reimbursement Claim form including the reason for the cancellation, evidence that travel could not be refunded or rescheduled.

Exceptional circumstances

If a more cost-effective and practical travel option is available, you must request prior approval for any arrangements not covered by these guidelines. Please submit a business case including context, costings, justification for the chosen transport mode, and any associated risk to inhomecare@education.gov.au.

Retrospective claims

Retrospective claims may be approved only in exceptional circumstances and at the department's discretion.

Further guidance

For clarification on expenses or exclusions not specified in these guidelines, contact your IHC Support Agency.

The IHC Service Travel Reimbursement Claim form is on the department's website at [In Home Care](#).

9. IHC Support Agency Role

IHC Support Agencies play a key role in delivering the IHC program in each state and territory. They are responsible for assessing eligibility for the program, including assessing the education and care needs of the family. They connect eligible families with IHC Services, work with approved providers and IHC Services to support a nationally consistent approach to IHC and promote best practice in service delivery.

IHC Support Agencies also develop and maintain relationships with IHC sector stakeholders. They work with the Australian Government, other IHC Support Agencies, approved providers, IHC Services, and families.

IHC Support Agencies host an IHC Support Agency website for their jurisdiction. The website provides information, including:

- to assist families understanding of IHC eligibility and the application process
- contact details and areas of operation for IHC Services operating in the jurisdiction
- a complaint handling policy
- privacy and information management policy
- data breach policy.

IHC Support Agencies also:

- promote IHC to potential educators, families and services as appropriate to the unique circumstances of the jurisdiction
- provide recommendations to support the management of IHC places
- actively manage IHC waitlists
- advise the department of any compliance issues within 3 days, if identified.

9.1. Support for families

IHC Support Agencies are the first point of contact for families. They provide families information about the program and support with the application process.

IHC Support Agencies support families by:

- assessing the family's eligibility for the program as outlined in the [IHC Eligibility Assessment Procedures](#)
- conducting and recording intake and referral discussions with eligible families, including assessing the education and care needs of the family are within scope of the program
- referring eligible families with education and care need within scope to approved IHC Services operating in their area
- supporting families transition to a different IHC Service if required, including when a service is closed, or families choose to change services
- considering appropriate transition periods to other approved care types, when IHC eligibility ends
- providing ineligible families information about other support services, if appropriate.

9.2. Support for approved providers and IHC Services

IHC Support Agencies work with and support approved providers and IHC Services by:

- facilitating a national community of practice for approved providers and IHC Services, including supporting new Services
- assisting with interpretation of the program guidelines
- engaging with IHC Services to understand their capacity to meet families' needs, including availability of educators and operating area
- reimbursing eligible travel claims from approved providers of IHC Services
- working with IHC Services to establish appropriate transition plans for families moving to other care types
- providing intake and referral information to IHC Services for eligible families, supporting services to decide their capacity to deliver suitable care
- working with approved providers and IHC Services to transition families and educators when an approved provider closes an IHC Service.

9.2.1. National community of practice for approved providers and IHC Services

IHC Support Agencies facilitate a national community of practice for approved providers and IHC Services. The forum provides opportunity to promote best practice and consistency in service delivery. This includes sharing of appropriate resources.

9.2.2. Engaging with approved providers and IHC Services

IHC Support Agencies are the first point of contact for approved providers and IHC Services about operation of IHC and interpretation of these guidelines. IHC Support Agencies work with services to ensure families are referred to services who can best meet the families' needs. IHC Support Agencies engage with services to ensure sufficient information is provided of each families' circumstances and education and care needs to enable services to decide their capacity to deliver appropriate care, including the availability of suitable educators.

New approved providers and IHC Services

IHC Support Agencies work with new approved providers and IHC Services entering the sector. They provide support understanding program requirements. They engage with new services to understand their capacity to deliver IHC in accordance with families' needs and refer families accordingly. They include new services on their register and update their website with new services' details.

Closing approved providers and IHC Services

IHC Support Agencies will work together with the department to ensure IHC Service closures cause a minimum of disruption. IHC Support Agencies will support families and educators impacted by the closure to smoothly transition to new services where alternative arrangements are available.

IHC Support Agencies follow an agreed process when an approved provider closes an IHC Service. This includes notifying all other IHC Services operating in the jurisdiction, seeking expressions of interest to be included in the transition process of families and educators to new services.

IHC Support Agencies also ensure approved providers closing an IHC Service are aware of the approved providers' obligation to notify the department at least 42 days before the intended closure date.

10. The Australian Government

10.1. Department of Education

The department is responsible for administering the IHC program and ensuring its public accountability, by:

- providing these guidelines to focus the care type on the Government's policy intent for IHC, review these guidelines periodically and publish updated guidelines as required
- engaging IHC Support Agencies to support the delivery of the program in each state and territory, and manage the contractual arrangements
- establishing a community of practice amongst the IHC Support Agencies to assist sharing of information about good practices and ensuring national consistency in the assessment of families' eligibility for IHC and their requirements
- managing the national allocation of places to IHC Services, taking into account recommendations made by IHC Support Agencies
- monitoring providers' overall compliance with the legislative requirements and In Home Care National Guidelines
- providing support and information to IHC Support Agencies, and monitoring their performance
- monitoring compliance of individual services within the respective state or territory and undertaking site visits where required.

Appendix A provides an overview of the IHC program.

10.2. Other legislative requirements and quality standards

10.2.1. Legislative requirements

IHC Support Agencies, approved providers, IHC Services and IHC Educators must meet the legislative requirements of the states and territories in which they are located and where they provide services.

10.2.2. Conflicts of interest

All parties involved in or associated with IHC have an obligation to disclose potential, perceived or actual conflict of interest related to service delivery. All parties have an obligation to have appropriate mechanisms in place for identifying and managing potential, perceived or actual conflicts of interest.

10.2.3. Privacy

All parties involved in delivering IHC are bound by the provisions of the *Privacy Act 1988* ("the Privacy Act"). The Privacy Act contains the Australian Information Privacy Principles (APPs) which regulate the handling of personal information of individuals by government agencies and certain private sector organisations, including the collection, storage, use and disclosure of that information.

For further information about the department's privacy policy, including how to access or correct personal information held by the department or how to make a privacy complaint, please go to our website: [Department of Education Privacy](#).

Or write to:

Privacy Officer
Legal Services
Department of Education
LOC: C50MA1
GPO Box 9880
Canberra ACT 2601

Or email: privacy@education.gov.au

Privacy complaints may be made directly to the Federal Privacy Commissioner but will only be actioned where the complaint was made to the department in the first instance but was not dealt with to the complainant's satisfaction.

10.2.4. Confidential Information

Any personal information provided by families is protected under the Privacy Act. It can only be disclosed to other parties (including those not involved in the delivery of IHC):

- for the purposes of the delivery of IHC
- if the family has been given reasonable notice of the disclosure
- where disclosure is authorised by the family or required by law or is reasonably necessary for the enforcement of the criminal law
- if it will prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to a person's life or health, or
- if the person has consented to the disclosure.

Questions or concerns about how personal information is handled should be directed to the Privacy Officer of the Department of Education.

Information about individuals or providers may also be protected information under the family assistance law. Unauthorised use, disclosure, obtaining or making a record of protected information is an offence.

10.2.5. Fraud

The department is committed to preventing fraud in all aspects of its business. The department's Fraud Strategy Statement provides a framework for how to prevent fraud, detect incidents of fraud and respond to these incidents promptly and appropriately. A copy of the Fraud Strategy Statement can be provided upon request.

IHC Support Agencies, approved providers and IHC Services must take all reasonable steps to prevent fraud upon the Commonwealth in relation to services or funding. Any suspicion or evidence of fraud will be dealt with as per the department's fraud procedures and fully investigated. Further information can be found on the [department's website](#).

If you think a service or an individual is doing the wrong thing or is trying to get an unfair advantage, please contact the department on:

- Email: fraud@education.gov.au or
- Phone: [02 6121 5450](tel:0261215450) (where you can leave a detailed voicemail message and contact details)

- To report fraud relating to the Child Care Subsidy, you can contact us by submitting the [online tip-off form](#).

10.2.6. Discrimination

IHC must be administered in a way that supports the principle of non-discrimination. Under the [National Disability Strategy 2010-2020](#), barriers which prevent people with disabilities having access to programs and services must be removed.

IHC must be delivered in a way where discriminatory practices are avoided, and must comply with the requirements of:

- *the Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

10.2.7. Complaint process

Any complaints about quality and safety issues should be immediately raised with the department by emailing inhomecare@education.gov.au.

All other complaints should be managed so they are resolved at the lowest level possible and only escalated to the next level if the complaint is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction. Based on this principle the hierarchy of complaints would be as follows:

- Complaints about IHC Educators, should be raised first with the educator.
 - If the complaint is not resolved satisfactorily, it should be raised with the IHC Service.
 - If the complaint is not resolved satisfactorily, it should be raised with the department by emailing inhomecare@education.gov.au.
- Complaints about an IHC Service, should be raised first with the Service by following the Service's complaints process.
 - If the complaint is not resolved satisfactorily, it should be raised with the department by emailing inhomecare@education.gov.au.
 - If a complaint raised with the department is about an IHC Service operating in South Australia or Tasmania, the department will work the relevant regulatory authority.
- Complaints about an IHC Support Agency should be raised first with the IHC Support Agency by following its complaints process.
 - IHC Support Agencies have complaints handling processes published on their websites.
 - If the complaint is not resolved satisfactorily, it should be raised with the department by emailing inhomecare@education.gov.au.

Families, IHC Educators and IHC Services can contact the department with any concerns or unresolved issues by emailing inhomecare@education.gov.au.

The department is unable to assist Educators with employment disputes. Educators can contact the Australian Taxation Office [Home | Australian Taxation Office \(ato.gov.au\)](#) and the Fair Work Ombudsman at [Fair Work Ombudsman](#) for assistance with employment disputes

Any complaints relating to potential breaches of Family Assistance Law must be lodged in writing with the department by completing the [online complaint form](#).

If you do not agree with the way the department has handled your complaint, you may contact the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will not usually investigate a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the department.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (toll free): 1300 362 072

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

10.3. Useful links

10.3.1. Australian Government Child Care Subsidy

The Australian Government, through the Department of Education and Services Australia, administers the Child Care Subsidy (CCS). Information on the CCS can be found on the [department's website](#).

Further information about the requirements and responsibilities of child care providers and services that are approved under Family Assistance Law can be found in the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#).

10.3.2. Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)

[ACECQA](#) is an independent national body which manages the NQF and sets a high, national benchmark for early childhood education and care, and outside school hours care services in Australia. IHC is out of scope for the NQF. Information can be found at [National Quality Framework](#).

10.3.3. Australian Home Child Care Association (AHCA)

The [Australian Home Childcare Association](#) is the national peak body for the Commonwealth funded In home child care program in Australia. We are a volunteer representative organisation that provides advocacy and representation for our members. Previously known as the National In Home Childcare Association Inc the association was first established in 2004 and changed the name in 2014.

10.3.4. Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA)

[ICPA \(Aust\)](#) is a voluntary, non-profit, apolitical parent body dedicated to ensuring all geographically isolated children's educational needs and aspirations are not disadvantaged because of where they live.

The Association was established in 1971 and represents over 2500 families and individual members. Members include a cross section of Australia's rural communities, primary producers, small business owners, schools, national and state based organisations and individuals who support equity of access to education for geographically isolated students.

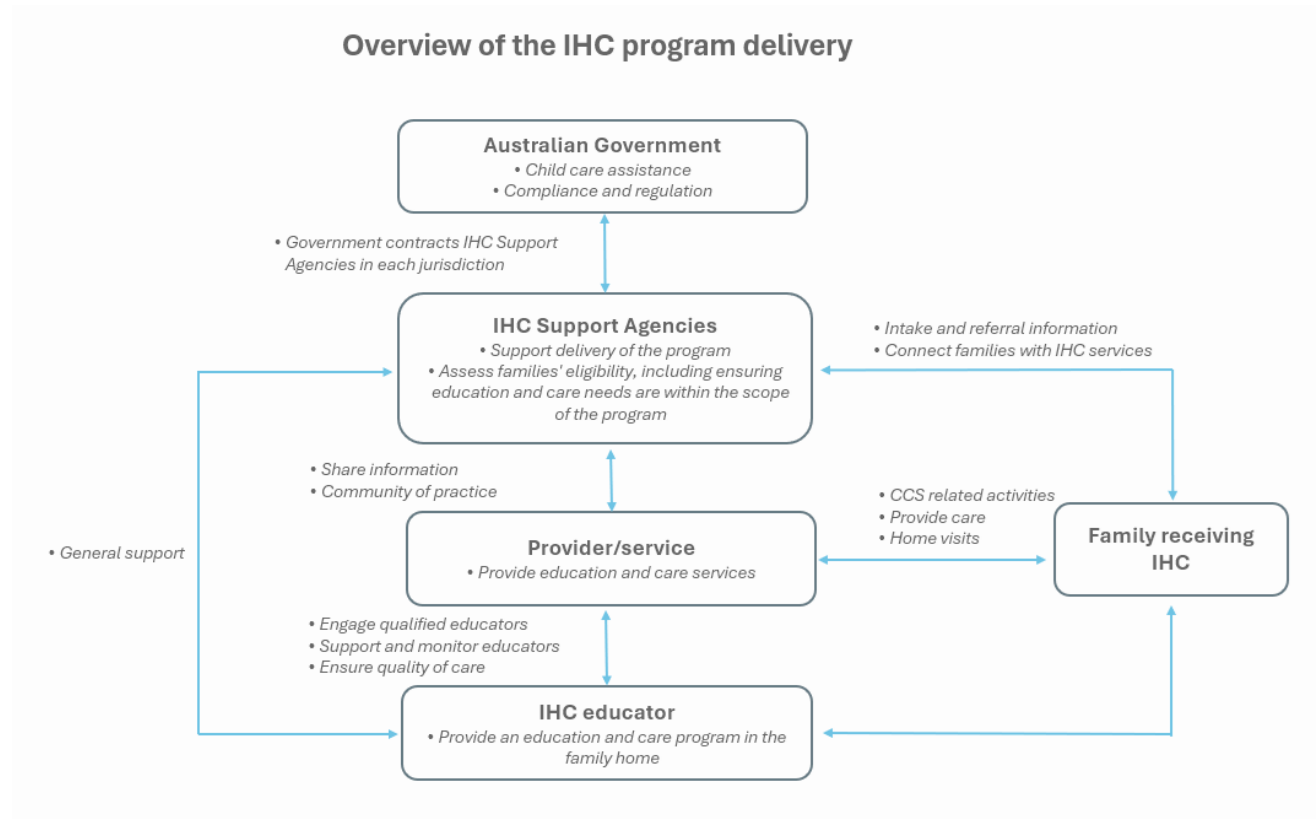
11. Glossary / Acronyms

Table 1: In these guidelines, the following definitions apply.

Term	Definition
Activity Test Result (ATR)	The result of a test to determine the number of hours of subsidised care a Child Care Subsidy eligible family will be entitled to. A broad range of activities will meet the activity test requirements, including paid work, being self-employed, doing unpaid work in a family business, looking for work, volunteering or studying. This term is defined in the Family Assistance Law.
Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS)	A payment that provides targeted fee assistance to families and children facing barriers in accessing affordable child care in certain circumstances. This term is defined in the Family Assistance Law.
Approved Care	Care provided by Centre-based Day Care (CBDC), Family Day Care (FDC), In Home Care (IHC) and Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services approved under Family Assistance Law.
Approved provider of IHC Services	A provider of child care that has been approved under Family Assistance Law to receive and pass on CCS on behalf of the Australian Government. This term is defined in the Family Assistance Law.
Approved IHC Service	A service of an approved provider that delivers care for children in their family home and for which families can receive Child Care Subsidies. An IHC Service is a type of approved child care service, which is a term defined in the Family Assistance Law.
Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS)	The technical platform through which providers and families interact with Australian Government in relation to child care subsidies.
Child Care Subsidy (CCS)	A single means-tested subsidy paid as a fee reduction for the benefit of CCS eligible individuals to an approved provider. This term is defined in the Family Assistance Law.
CCS Eligible Family	A family in which a parent or guardian is eligible for the CCS in respect of one or more children.
Educator	A suitably qualified person who provides care for someone else's child or children at a child care service, in their own home or, in the case of In Home Care, in the child's own home.
Family Assistance Law	Has the same meaning as in section 3 of the <i>A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999</i> and includes the law as stated in: that Act; the <i>A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999</i> ; and legislative instruments made under those Acts, including the <i>Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017</i> and the <i>Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017</i> .
Family Member	In relation to the IHC Educator or the partner of the IHC Educator, a family member is one (or more) of the following: Family Tax Benefit child, regular care child, foster care child, biological or adopted child, child for whom the Educator or partner has a legal responsibility as described in the Family Assistance Law, brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, step-brother, step-sister, niece, nephew, cousin, grandchild or great grandchild.
IHC Support Agency	The In Home Care Support Agencies contracted by the department to support the delivery of IHC in each state and territory.
In Home Care (IHC)	A flexible form of early childhood education and care where a suitably qualified educator provides care in the child's home. It is restricted to families who are unable to access other forms of approved early childhood education and care.

IHC Place	A child care place for an approved IHC Service for which a full time place is 35 hours of IHC provided to a child per week, or a place in which a number of hours making up a fraction of one or more full-time places provided to a child per week.
National Quality Framework (NQF)	A jointly governed uniform national approach to the regulation and quality assessment of education and care services, including a national legislative framework that consists of the National Law and National Regulations; a National Quality Standard; and an assessment and rating system.
Place	A child care place allocated to an approved child care service under section 198B of the <i>A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999</i> .
Services Australia	The Australian Government executive agency that administers child care payments for families.
The department	The Australian government department responsible for early childhood education.
Standard hours and non-standard hours	Standard hours are between the hours of 6:00am and 6:00pm and non-standard hours are from 6:00pm to 6:00am.

12. Appendix A – Overview of the IHC program delivery 2025



13. Appendix B – Serious Incidents

Under section 48A of the Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017 (the CCS Minister's Rules) approved providers of In Home Care (IHC) Services must implement appropriate arrangements to manage serious incidents, including by notifying the Secretary in writing within 24 hours after a serious incident occurs or a circumstance occurs that could have resulted in a serious incident.

Depending on the nature of the serious incident, the approved provider may have other obligations to ensure that all appropriate measures have been implemented to manage the incident.

Families and educators who observe or experience a serious incident (or a circumstance that could have resulted in a serious incident) should report the matter to the appropriate emergency services and, where appropriate, to the approved provider of the IHC Service.

Apart from their obligations under section 48A of the CCS Minister's Rules, approved providers of IHC Services must comply with state-based Child Protection Laws and mandatory reporting requirements under the Commonwealth, State and Territory legislation.

The following incidents are “serious incidents” that must be reported to the Department of Education:

- the death of a child while being cared for by the IHC Service or as a result of an incident that occurred while being cared for by the service, or any incident involving injury, harm, trauma to, or illness of, a child while being cared for, where:
 - the attention of a medical practitioner was sought, or ought reasonably to have been sought, or
 - the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital
- any incident for which the attendance of emergency services at premises where care is usually provided is sought, or ought reasonably to have been sought
- a child being cared for:
 - is missing, or cannot be accounted for; or
 - appears to have been taken or removed from the premises in a manner that would contravene the Education and Care Services National Regulations, regardless of whether the regulations apply
 - is accidentally locked in or locked out of the premises where the care is being provided or any part of those premises
- any other incident that would be required to be reported to a regulator under any applicable work health and safety laws (as stated in section 49(6) of the CCS Minister's Rules).

The department may investigate incidents notified by the IHC Services where the incident relates to an approved provider's compliance with a provision that is subject to the department's monitoring powers under section 219UA of the A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999