

Supporting skills development for Allied health assistants working with paediatric patient cohorts



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Introduction: Allied health assistant (AHA) training is inconsistent with no requirements for paediatric training (figure 1). This can make finding AHA work in specialty areas like paediatrics challenging, with a tendency towards on-the-job training and a preference for backgrounds in teaching or child care.

With an increasing profile, more AHA graduates are interested in working in paediatric settings.

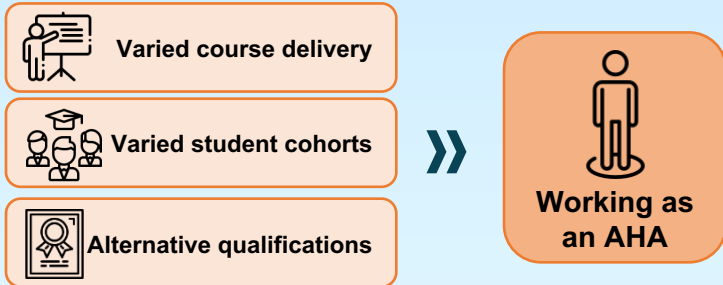


Figure 1: Variability in factors leading to working as an AHA

Allied health assistants at Monash Health:

As the largest public health service in Victorian Monash Health is a leader in the AHA workforce space. Growing service demands requires a greater investment in support workforces such as AHAs.

Monash Health is striving towards this with a credentialing framework for AHAs developed, implemented and continually evaluated over the last six years (figure 2). These evaluations identified gaps in the paediatric patient cohort specific skills.



Figure 2: Monash AHAs completing AHA paediatric competencies

Developing paediatric skills in AHAs:

Monash Health employs over 150 Allied health assistants, several of whom work within Monash Children's Hospital (MCH), Victorian Paediatric Rehabilitation Service (VPRS) and Community Health Child and Family services. This includes specific skills such as:

- Anthropometric data collection to assist dietitians
- School footwear fitting program to assist podiatrists
- Serial casting assistance with Physiotherapists
- Application of splints to address hip dysplasia to assist Physiotherapists.

All of these tasks are performed by AHAs under the supervision and delegation of Allied health professionals at Monash Health.

These skills and many more are now the basis of competency based training packages available within the credentialing framework for AHAs at Monash Health. The formal process supports transferability of skills to different roles and workplaces.

Key messages: Workplace competency-based training and professional development, supported by robust governance, work together to create safe and effective practices for AHAs (figure 3).

Formal paediatric competencies for AHAs has supported Monash Health AHAs to make meaningful contributions to patient care and work as an integral member of the multidisciplinary team.

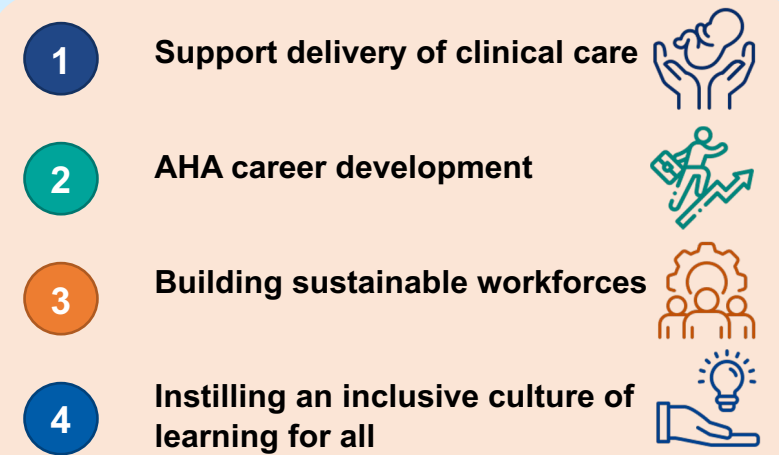


Figure 3: Benefits of completing AHA paediatric competencies

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