

# Functional job requirements for the position of Lower Primary Teacher Aide (Years 1-3)

## Department of Education

This document was developed for the following purposes: assisting in the development of rehabilitation programs for injured or ill employees, and providing detailed information about job demands to medical practitioners and allied health professionals undertaking medical reviews of departmental employees.

This report identifies those activities which are essential to successful performance in this role. In determining whether a work activity is a 'critical activity', the following questions are considered:

- Does the worker spend greater than 33% of designated work time performing this activity?
- Is specialised training/experience required to complete this activity? Has this been completed by only a small proportion of staff in this geographical region?
- Is this activity performed in an environment where no other workers are readily available to assist with its completion?
- Does this activity occur without prior notice and require immediate attention leaving no time to seek assistance to complete it?
- Is this activity core to the development of stakeholder relationships, which are essential to achieving successful outcomes?
- Would an inability to perform this activity result in an increased health and safety risk to co-workers, students, and/or members of the public?

The development process included: site observation of Lower Primary Teacher Aide work environments, staff interviews, staff feedback on draft documents and consideration of benchmark publications for the analysis and description of work activities and job demands specific to particular positions (the *Revised Handbook for Analysing Jobs*, the *Occupational Information Network* and the *Australian Job Guide, 2006*).

This report indicates the average time spent across a working week on each work activity, and also on each physical demand of work. In order to make this information meaningful to the various users of this report, in some instances the time spent is expressed as a single word, as a percentage of total time, or as an actual amount of time (i.e. hours and minutes). The timeframes used are based on the benchmark descriptions (from the publications above) for expressing frequency of performance of work tasks.

| Descriptor  | Percentage of time | Amount of time based on 25 hours per week |
|-------------|--------------------|---|
| Not present | 0%                 | 0 minutes                                 |
| Rare        | 1% – 7%            | 2 minutes – 2 hours 40 minutes            |
| Occasional  | 8% – 33%           | 3 hours 2 minutes – 12 hours 34 minutes   |
| Frequent    | 34% – 66%          | 12 hours 55 minutes – 25 hours 5 minutes  |
| Constant    | 67% - 100%         | 25 hours 28 minutes – 38 hours            |



## Description of Lower Primary Teacher Aide role

It is the role of a Lower Primary Teacher Aide to assist the Lower Primary Teacher teach a class of up to 25 students in years 1 to 3. Students in years 1 to 3 will range in age from 5 to 8 years old. Lower Primary Teacher Aides are responsible for assisting with all aspects of the planning, preparation and delivery of effective learning and teaching programs across the key learning areas for every student in the allocated classes, as directed. In addition, all teacher aides have a duty of care to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students within their care.

## Hours of work and scheduled breaks

**Hours of work:** The ordinary hours of work for full time Lower Primary Teacher Aides is 38 hours per week. Permanent part-time Lower Primary Teacher Aides hours of work vary e.g. 30 hours per week. The ordinary spread of hours of work, exclusive of meal times, is between 6.00am and 6.00pm. Lower Primary Teacher Aides may work across a number of classrooms based on number of teacher aide hours allocated to each teacher.

**Meal breaks:** All employees (including part-time and casual employees) who work for more than 5 continuous ordinary hours on any day shall be allowed a minimum of 30 minutes for a meal break to be taken between the third and sixth hour from commencement of duty.

**Rest pauses:** Where practicable, all employees (including part-time and casual) who work at least 6 continuous ordinary hours shall be entitled to a pause(s) totalling 20 minutes per day to be taken at times to suit operational requirements as determined by the employer, where at least 4 continuous ordinary hours are worked the entitlement shall be 10 minutes.

**ADO:** Aides are to work and accumulate additional ADO hours each week (at ordinary wage rates) in order to access days off during those vacation periods when their attendance at the education facility is not required. Additional ADO time may be accumulated so that Lower Primary Teacher Aides can access up to 3 days per annum (non-cumulative) from ADO entitlements for compassionate grounds or emergent reasons (note that a Lower Primary Teacher aide may go into ADO debit to access compassionate or emergent leave).

**Non-contact time:** of students, in eating areas, playgrounds, computer rooms or libraries during the morning recess or lunch breaks; bus supervision and in some cases classrooms. Bus supervision refers to the supervision of students from the time of arrival of the buses in the morning and the beginning of classes, and from the cessation of classes to the departure of buses in the afternoon. Supervision duties are to be clearly indicated to Lower Primary Teacher Aides after appropriate consultation. Teachers may still be required to undertake bus and playground duties, the appropriate mix of teachers and Lower Primary Teacher Aides will be determined by the Principal of the school, having regard to local circumstances and in accordance with relevant consultative arrangements.

The extent to which Lower Primary Teacher Aides can be timetabled to provide supervision of students for bus and playground duty must not exceed the Lower Primary Teacher Aide's equivalent weekly ADO hours.



The Activity Frequencies below have been calculated based on a 38 hour week. Rare = 2mins - 2 hrs 40 mins per week, Occasional = 3 hrs 2 mins - 12 hrs 34 mins per week, Frequent = 12 hrs 55 mins - 25 hrs 5 mins per week, Constant = 25 hrs 28 mins - 38 hours (times are exclusive of scheduled breaks).

|  | <b>Job activity</b>   | <b>Average time</b>   | <b>Critical job demand</b> |
|--|---|---|----------------------------|
| 1  | Room setup involving moving chairs, climbing ladders, furniture and equipment for learning activities, as well as packing up previous activities (such as art trolleys and outdoor play equipment).   | Up to 12 hrs 34 mins per week   | Yes                        |
| 2  | Preparation of resources for learning activities e.g. administration tasks for teacher and self, library-based work, photocopying, development of resources etc.  | Up to 25 hrs 5 mins per week  | Yes                        |
| 3  | Classroom-based support and direction of students involving standing or seated presentation of information to students, monitoring verbal and non-verbal responses of students, providing answers to questions and supervision of group and individual learning activities. In some instances, staff may be required to provide First Aid.<br><br>N.B. Aides may also be required to provide medical assistance to certain students e.g. to those students requiring blood glucose testing to monitor diabetes, to provide assistance to empty/change colostomy bags etc. Prior to providing this assistance, aides will generally receive education and training from an appropriate health practitioner e.g. diabetes or stomal therapies nurses. The average time spent in performance of this activity will depend on the school and class in question. | Up to 25 hrs 5 mins per week  | Yes                        |
| 4  | Supervision during meal breaks (including playground, library and bus duty): involving mobilising around a pre-determined area and completing visual and auditory monitoring of students' activities and school premises, providing assistance to students as required.   | Up to 2 hrs 40 mins per week  | Yes                        |
| 5  | Excursion-based support of students; involving supervision of small or large groups of students outside the school premises, conducting tours of destinations, monitoring student completion of excursion-related learning activities, constant surveillance of surroundings to ensure student safety etc.  | During day of excursion up to 5 hrs. Usually up to 2 hrs 40 mins per week | Yes                        |
| 6  | Parent liaison involving face-to-face contact with parents and requiring recollection of sourcing of specific information related to current students.  | Up to 12 hrs 34 mins per week   | Yes                        |
| <b>In support of the above activities performed during rostered duty time, the activities below are performed by most Lower Primary Teacher Aides:</b>   |   |   |                            |
| 7  | Staff meetings/liaison with teachers: involving face to face or (depending upon distance) teleconferenced meetings at which day to day operational issues, short term and long term strategic planning for the school occur.  | Up to 2 hrs 40 mins per week  | Yes                        |
| 8  | Committee meetings: involving a variety of activities dependent upon the nature of the committee and the number of committees of which the staff member is involved. Most committee-based tasks are of a voluntary nature.  | Up to 2 hrs 40 mins per week  | No                         |
| Lower Primary Teacher Aides may also participate in extra-curricular activities most of which are of a voluntary nature. These include:  |   |   | No                         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overnight camps</li> <li>• Coordination of student function days and competitions</li> <li>• Intra-school sport and/or</li> <li>• After school student elective activities</li> </ul> |   |   |                            |

Frequency of physical job demands (average % of shift)

| Demands                            | Not present | Rare (0-7%) | Occasional (8-33%) | Frequent (34-66%) | Constant (67-100%) | Demands                  | Not present | Rare (0-7%) | Occasional (8-33%) | Frequent (34-66%) | Constant (67-100%) |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Sitting                            |             |             |                    |                   | ✓                  | Reaching                 |             |             | ✓                  |                   |                    |
| Standing – static                  |             | ✓           |                    |                   |                    | Handling                 |             |             |                    | ✓                 |                    |
| Standing – dynamic                 |             |             |                    | ✓                 |                    | Pushing                  |             |             | ✓                  |                   |                    |
| Walking – flat terrain             |             |             | ✓                  |                   |                    | Pulling                  |             |             | ✓                  |                   |                    |
| Walking – slippery/ gravel terrain |             | ✓           |                    |                   |                    | Lifting                  |             |             | ✓                  |                   |                    |
| Climbing – step stools/ladders     |             |             | ✓                  |                   |                    | Carrying                 |             |             | ✓                  |                   |                    |
| Climbing – stairs                  |             | ✓           |                    |                   |                    | Balancing – above ground |             | ✓           |                    |                   |                    |
| Stooping                           |             | ✓           |                    |                   |                    | Fine motor               |             |             |                    | ✓                 |                    |
| Kneeling                           |             |             | ✓                  |                   |                    | Control operation        |             |             | ✓                  |                   |                    |
| Crouching – one off                |             |             | ✓                  |                   |                    | Arm – hand steadiness    |             |             | ✓                  |                   |                    |
| Crawling                           |             | ✓           |                    |                   |                    | Driving                  |             | ✓           |                    |                   |                    |
| Auditory function                  |             |             |                    |                   | ✓                  | Visual function          |             |             |                    |                   | ✓                  |



**Tools/equipment handled**

- Students' chairs and desks – up to approximately 3kgs and 8kgs respectively
- Classroom furniture and soft furnishings e.g. A-frames (approx 17kgs), partitions, cushions, rugs and mats
- Pens/pencils/chalk/whiteboard markers and books
- Sports equipment – including various balls and bats
- Computers, data projectors, TVs, small electrical equipment – for use during information technology-based learning activities with students and administrative tasks
- Art equipment – paints, paintbrushes, cardboard and collage equipment etc.
- Learning Aids – charts, models, posters, overhead projectors and screens
- Event equipment (fetes, dances etc) – e.g. tables, chairs, tents, tarps

**Loads lifted and carried**

|                | Not Present | Rare<br>(0-7%)            | Occasional<br>(8-33%)         | Frequent<br>(34-66%) | Constant<br>(67-100%) |
|----------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>0-5kg</b>   |             |                           | Floor to above shoulder level |                      |                       |
| <b>6-10kg</b>  |             |                           | Floor to chest level          |                      |                       |
| <b>11-15kg</b> |             | Below knee to waist level |                               |                      |                       |
| <b>16-20kg</b> |             | Restraint of child        |                               |                      |                       |
| <b>21-25kg</b> |             |                           |                               |                      |                       |

## Risk based physical environmental considerations

- There may be clutter in the work area, increasing the risk of trip hazards, awkward bending and lifting, and poor storage practices
- Items, furniture and fixtures may be poorly positioned or designed by staff members, requiring the adoption of awkward postures
- There may be limited/confined space for movement during performance of some activities
- There may be limited knee space when seated, resulting in trunk rotation (due to smaller furniture required for this student/age group)
- There may be constant low-level ambient noise (from students, traffic, school activities e.g. music practice etc)
- There may be limited classroom lighting and ventilation in some facilities
- Some work may be performed outdoors or in an area exposed to the elements
- Fine motor work may be performed in temperatures of 16 degrees or lower and above 24 degrees, due to local environmental conditions and capacity to school facilities to control ambient air temperatures

### Psychosocial risks to be considered

Time pressure/high workload- dependent upon school environment and staffing level. Workload can also be high due to multiple demands and unplanned interruptions throughout the day.

Lack of control/autonomy - may exist as the Lower Primary Teacher generally directs the Aide.

Poor worker/team leader relationships - may be a factor in the circumstance where the teacher and aide don't have a good relationship as they are required to work closely together.

Environmental Stress - constant low level ambient noise from students, PA announcements, school bells etc requiring considerable projection of voice to be heard. Some temperature variation during winter and summer.

Insufficient work breaks - shortened breaks may be taken on a voluntary basis due to high workload and time constraints. Breaks may be limited by meal and playground supervision duties, particularly if there is insufficient planning e.g. unplanned wet weather duties. Although break times are stipulated, Teacher Aide's do not always receive an uninterrupted break.

Investigations - participate in reporting, investigation and resolution processes, including mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect and participation as a witness or party to performance, discipline, grievance, WorkCover or other processes.

Policies - comply with departmental policies, procedures, guidelines and the code of conduct, including undertaking risk management processes to ensure the health and safety of students and others under their supervision or direction.

Low use of skills – may occur e.g. if the Aide is allocated mainly resource preparation tasks.

Fear of job loss may be present e.g. Aides are often employed on a casual or contract basis.

### Social/interpersonal demands

- Performing for or working directly with the public – parents and students
- Responsible for others' health and safety
- Establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships – with students, staff and parents
- Resolving conflicts – between students and negotiating with others – students/parents/staff
- Communicating and building effective relationships with supervisors, peers or subordinates
- Guiding, directing and motivating – students
- Coordinating or leading others – students
- Training and teaching – students
- Assisting and caring for others – students (may include first aid)
- Interpreting the meaning of information for others – students
- Dealing with unpleasant, angry or aggressive people – parents (potentially)





## Considerations for assessment of physical job fitness

- Assessment of sustained sitting capacity of 50 minutes, including 15 minutes on small school sized chair and 15 minutes on floor either cross legged, kneeling or crouching (acknowledging ability to regularly vary posture)
- Sufficient flexibility to allow adoption of awkward postures when working with children, particularly at floor level
- Symmetry, range and discomfort with movements of the spinal and peripheral joints, including hips, knees, ankles, shoulders and wrists
- Ability to lift and carry heavy and/or awkward loads with no to minimal assistance (up to 20 kg)
- Assessment of fine motor dexterity (for resource preparation, set up of activities and keying and mouse operation)
- Able to ascend and descend 2 x flights of stairs
- Ability to sustain constant dynamic standing throughout the day with minimal sitting breaks
- Sufficient visual and auditory function to enable interaction and response to students
- Absence of positive signs for brachial plexus neural compromise (for keying and mouse operation and set up of activities)

## Other considerations

- History of neck/shoulder discomfort associated with static postures and sustained repetitive neck flexion postures
- History of upper limb, lower limb or spinal pain with repetitious or static tasks
- History of lower back pain with sustained sitting
- Knowledge of correct manual handling techniques i.e. ability to bend at hips, bend knees and squat with a straight back
- Knowledge of vocal health and techniques to enable safe projection of voice



## Photographs of selected work activities and work environments

