

Queensland's Implementation Plan

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ON UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION – 2016 AND 2017

PART 1: PRELIMINARIES

1. This Implementation Plan is a schedule to the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education – 2016 and 2017 (the National Partnership) and should be read in conjunction with that Agreement.
2. The objective of the National Partnership is to facilitate children's early learning and development and transition to school, by maintaining universal access to, and improving participation in, affordable, quality early childhood education programmes for all children.
3. This objective is to be achieved through universal access to quality early childhood education programmes for all children enrolled in the year before full-time school for 600 hours per year, delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher who meets National Quality Framework (NQF) requirements, and with a focus on participation by Indigenous, vulnerable and disadvantaged children, regardless of the setting in which programmes are delivered.
4. Children living in remote Indigenous communities remain a focus for universal access.

PART 2: TERMS OF THIS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

5. This Implementation Plan will commence as soon as it is agreed between the Commonwealth of Australia, represented by the Minister for Education and Training, and the State of Queensland, represented by the Minister for Education.
6. As a schedule to the National Partnership, the purpose of this Implementation Plan is to provide the public with an indication of how universal access is intended to be delivered and demonstrate Queensland's capacity to achieve the outcomes of the National Partnership.
7. This Implementation Plan supports the national approach to the regulation and quality assessment of education and care services consistent with the NQF.
8. This Implementation Plan will cease on completion or termination of the National Partnership, including final performance reporting and processing of final payments against performance benchmarks or milestones.
9. This Implementation Plan may be varied by written agreement between the Commonwealth and State Ministers responsible for it under the overarching National Partnership.

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10. The Parties to this Implementation Plan do not intend any of the provisions to be legally enforceable. However, that does not lessen the Parties' commitment to the plan and its full implementation.

PART 3: STRATEGY FOR QUEENSLAND IMPLEMENTATION

Project information

11. The National Partnership reaffirms the commitment to provide universal access to, and improved participation by, children in quality early childhood education programmes in the year before full-time school, with a focus on Indigenous and vulnerable and disadvantaged children and in a manner that meets the needs of children, parents and communities at a cost which does not present a barrier to participation.
12. For the purposes of reporting, Queensland will continue to use the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) measure (in particular the bottom quintile of statistical local areas) as a proxy measure of vulnerable and disadvantaged children. This will be supplemented by programme level information, for example, provision of subsidies to low income families in more socio-economically advantaged areas (see Part 4 for further information on supplementary data).
13. Queensland's strategy under the National Partnership is to continue the successful formulae employed under preceding agreements that have delivered significant increases in access and participation and to continue to focus efforts to improve participation by Indigenous and vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
14. Increasing Indigenous participation is a priority for Queensland and is reflected in the Queensland Government's Advancing Education: Action Plan for Education in Queensland.
15. Queensland's implementation approach for 2016 and 2017 will particularly focus on supporting every Indigenous and vulnerable and disadvantaged child to participate in kindergarten through a range of strategies and initiatives across the domains of equity, affordability, continuity, accessibility and quality.
16. The project elements planned are detailed in Table 1: Project elements.

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Table 1: Project elements

No.	Title	Short description	Planned start date	Planned end date	Dependent on projects
1	Access and Affordability	<p>This element will maximise kindergarten participation by meeting current and emerging demands. Key elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide subsidies for approved kindergarten programmes across a range of settings through the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme (QKFS), which in response to demand, allows for an increase in the number of approved kindergarten programme places • fund Kindergarten Central Governing Bodies to support eligible standalone and volunteer-managed kindergarten services • incorporate state-wide marketing and communications strategies, including a new phase of the Kindy Counts! Campaign, that will promote the value of early childhood education kindergarten programmes, careers in teaching and drive demand for kindergarten participation • support families to easily identify approved kindergarten providers • provide information and advice regarding early childhood education programmes to families, educators and the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector • provide an ECEC Services Census - annual collection of information from the sector to inform planning and reporting • continue the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) – children from non-English speaking backgrounds have access to TIS to support their participation • assist with transition to school - connecting the schooling sector with local ECEC services to encourage and strengthen the transition from early childhood education to school 	1 Jan 2016	31 Dec 2017	nil
2	Inclusion and Equity	<p>This element will maximise kindergarten participation by providing additional supports for target groups and facilitating inclusive early learning experiences across Queensland. Key elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide QKFS and QKFS Plus subsidies for approved kindergarten programmes in low socio-economic areas; remote and very remote communities; families/children with Health Care Cards; families with multiple births; and families/children who identify as Indigenous • pilot the delivery of kindergarten programmes in 11 remote state schools • continue Pre-Prep in Schools to support delivery of the Early Years Learning Framework and quality kindergarten programmes across 35 discrete Indigenous communities 	1 Jan 2016	31 Dec 2017	1

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No.	Title	Short description	Planned start date	Planned end date	Dependent on projects
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide Disability Inclusion Support for Queensland Kindergartens Scheme • provide the Transport Solutions scheme –local transport solutions to increase kindergarten participation in areas of need • provide support for children in out of home care • continue the Specialised Equipment and Resources Scheme – provision of specialised equipment and professional resources for kindergarten services to support children with disability • continue the social marketing campaign with Elders and Indigenous organisations • deliver a new Deadly Choices programme with Institute of Indigenous Urban Health to promote the importance of kindergarten and early childhood education • continue the Remote Indigenous Professional Development Project to build the capacity of Indigenous educators working in early childhood services • continue the e-Kindy programme (distance education) for isolated children that cannot easily access a centre-based programme due to distance, medical condition or itinerant family lifestyles • continue the TIS – children from non-English speaking backgrounds have access to TIS to support their participation • maintain accredited kindergarten programme guidelines, with amendments progressed as required to ensure alignment with the Early Years Learning Framework and the Australian Curriculum • assist with transition to school - connecting the schooling sector with local ECEC services to encourage and strengthen the transition from early childhood education to school • provide governance through regular meetings with stakeholders • continue to provide data to inform planning and reporting and participate in national data strategy work to improve data quality 			

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17. As required by clause 21(d) of the National Partnership, strategies are in place to ensure that funding is directed to support participation by all children in quality early childhood education programmes, regardless of whether programmes are delivered through schools (government and non-government), standalone preschools or long day care centres. These strategies are included as Project Elements throughout this Plan.
18. As required by clause 21(e) of the National Partnership, state specific data and implementation issues are identified below. Each of the identified issues includes strategies to overcome or address them.

Data Issues	
Issue	Strategy
(a) Performance indicators affected by significant <i>Not Stated</i> responses (e.g. self-declaring Indigeneity).	Assume that proportions calculated from observable data also apply to <i>Not Stated</i> responses.
(b) Distortions to calculations of '600-hour' performance indicators, which arise after the addition of Child Care Management System (CCMS) data. The distortion arises from known issues with data collected through the CCMS.	<p>There are known data issues with identifying kindergarten participation in the Commonwealth's CCMS, which the Commonwealth has acknowledged and all jurisdictions have committed to working together to address.</p> <p>These issues will be overcome by the use of proportions calculated directly from Queensland's ECEC census data.</p>
Implementation Issues	
Issue	Strategy
(c) Addressing barriers to effectively engage and support vulnerable, disadvantaged, non-English speaking background and Indigenous families to access and participate in kindergarten.	<p>Adopt a sustained approach to build trust and gain acceptance by families and communities regarding the value of participating in kindergarten programmes.</p> <p>Ongoing investment in a range of proven strategies and the implementation of further initiatives across key areas as outlined below to drive increased enrolment and participation by Indigenous families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote benefits of participation - Build service and workforce capability - Provide culturally appropriate kindergarten models - Support families and communities - Provide integrated services - Reduce costs for families

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Estimated costs

19. The maximum financial contribution to be provided by the Commonwealth for the project to Queensland is \$175,807,334 payable in accordance with the milestones and performance benchmarks set out in the National Partnership. All payments are exclusive of GST.
20. The estimated overall budget (exclusive of GST) is set out in Table 2. The budget is indicative only and Queensland retains the flexibility to move funds between components and/or years, as long as outcomes are not affected. The Commonwealth contribution can only be moved between years with the agreement of the Commonwealth.

Table 2: Estimated financial contributions*

(\$ million)	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Total
Element 1 (Access and Affordability)	15.7	52.5	37.4	105.6
Element 2 (Inclusion and Equity)	10.4	35.0	24.9	70.3
Total estimated budget	**	**	**	**
less estimated Commonwealth contribution equals estimated balance of non-Commonwealth contributions	26.1	87.5	62.3	175.8
	**	**	**	**
Total Commonwealth contribution	26.1	87.5	62.3	175.8

*Figures may not add due to rounding. All figures are estimates, including estimated allocations by element.

** States and territories are responsible for the provision of early childhood education and Queensland allocates its own source funding accordingly.

Programme logic

21. The project elements detailed in this Implementation Plan will achieve the outcomes and objectives stated in the National Partnership, including for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and Indigenous children.
22. The way in which these project elements will achieve the outcomes and objectives set out in the National Partnership is detailed in Table 3 below.

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Table 3: Programme logic

Summary of projects to be continued or implemented during the 2016 and 2017 calendar years:

Project elements	Outputs	Outcomes	Project Objectives	Responsibilities
1. Access and Affordability	<p>Implementing accessible quality early childhood education programmes which meet the needs of parents and communities at a cost which does not present a barrier to participation, particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged children</p> <p>Delivering strategies and actions targeting the participation of Indigenous children, including in remote areas</p> <p>Delivering strategies and actions targeting the participation of vulnerable and disadvantaged children</p> <p>Supporting all children's quality early childhood education participation, regardless of whether quality early childhood education programmes are delivered through schools (non-government and government),</p>	<p>All children, including vulnerable and disadvantaged children, have access to, and participate in, an affordable, quality early childhood education programme</p> <p>All Indigenous children have access to, and participate in, an affordable, quality early childhood education programme</p> <p>All Indigenous four year-olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education</p>	<p>To facilitate children's early learning and development and transition to school, by maintaining universal access to, and improving participation in, affordable, quality early childhood education programmes for all children</p>	<p>Queensland Government/ ECEC Sector</p>

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Project elements	Outputs	Outcomes	Project Objectives	Responsibilities
	standalone preschools or long day care centres			
2. Inclusion and Equity	<p>Delivering strategies and actions targeting the participation of Indigenous children, including in remote areas</p> <p>Delivering strategies and actions targeting the participation of vulnerable and disadvantaged children</p>	<p>All children, including vulnerable and disadvantaged children, have access to, and participate in, an affordable, quality early childhood education programme</p> <p>All Indigenous children have access to, and participate in, an affordable, quality early childhood education programme</p> <p>All Indigenous four year-olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education</p>	<p>To facilitate children’s early learning and development and transition to school, by maintaining universal access to, and improving participation in, affordable, quality early childhood education programmes for all children</p>	<p>Queensland Government/ ECEC Sector</p>

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Risk management

23. The Queensland Department of Education and Training has a risk management plan in place. Risks have been actively identified, entered into a risk log and categorised in terms of impact and likelihood.

Queensland Context

24. In developing this Implementation Plan consideration has been given to the current context in Queensland.
- a) Queensland has made substantial progress towards universal access to kindergarten, improving from the lowest baseline nationally of 29 per cent in 2008 to exceeding its overall participation target of 95 per cent since 2013. There were 66,511 children enrolled in kindergarten in 2015. This included 4,231 indigenous children and 11,421 children residing in low SES areas.
 - b) The Commonwealth's assessment of Queensland's performance in 2014 under the previous National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education – 2015 showed that Queensland met or exceeded all of its targets except participation by Indigenous children (over 77 per cent in 2014, which has risen to 85.6 per cent in 2015).
 - c) Unlike other jurisdictions, the Queensland Government only delivers kindergarten programmes in areas of market failure, including across 35 remote Indigenous communities and for isolated children through distance education (eKindy). Provision of kindergarten programmes is predominantly through a mixed-market approach with the private sector primarily responsible for the delivery of programmes through for profit and not-for-profit long day care centres, community-managed standalone kindergarten services, and some non-State schools.
 - d) The Queensland model of kindergarten provision has been found to be lower cost compared to other jurisdictions, mainly reflecting greater delivery in Queensland through the long day care sector (Deloitte Review of National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education, 2014).
 - e) The cost of the provision of kindergarten programmes in Queensland is shared between families (through fees), funding under the National Partnership Agreement, funding from the Queensland Government and, for programmes delivered in long day care services, child care subsidies from the Commonwealth. The Queensland Government provides subsidies to approved kindergarten programme providers, through the QKFS, to ensure that families, including Indigenous, vulnerable and disadvantaged families, can access an affordable programme.
 - f) Services offering an approved early childhood education programme (i.e. compliant to the requirements of universal access and regulated under the National Quality Framework) can apply for funding under the QKFS regardless of delivery setting.

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- g) Under the QKFS, kindergarten programme providers (e.g. standalone kindergarten services) that are not eligible for Australian Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Rebate (CCR) can receive:
- i. a base subsidy per eligible child of \$2,670 per annum
 - ii. an additional per child subsidy of up to \$1,201, if located in the lowest socio-economic areas
 - iii. an additional \$1,335 per child subsidy, if located in remote or very remote areas.
- h) Under the QKFS, kindergarten programme providers (e.g. long day care services) that are eligible for CCB and CCR can receive:
- i. a base subsidy per eligible child of \$1,575 per annum
 - ii. an additional per child subsidy of \$393, if located in the lowest socio-economic areas
 - iii. an additional \$787 per child subsidy, if located in remote or very remote areas.
- i) Additional per child subsidies are provided to kindergarten programme providers for children eligible for the QKFS Plus subsidy. This subsidy is available for families / children with a Health Care Card, children who identify as Indigenous and for families with more than two children of the same age attending at the same time. QKFS Plus subsidies are up to \$2,954.60 per child per year for families attending standalone kindergarten services or up to \$1,186.15 per child per year for families attending long day care services. Further information regarding the QKFS can be found at:
<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industry/service-industries/child-care/qld-kindergarten-funding-scheme/subsidies>
- j) Queensland has experienced continuing strong population growth with the second highest natural population increase in the nation (year to November 2015) and second highest level of interstate migration. This coupled with Queensland's largely decentralised population adds to the challenge of achieving and maintaining universal access to kindergarten.
- k) There are challenges in the planning, implementation and measuring the success or otherwise of initiatives targeting kindergarten participation rates. Difficulty in obtaining accurate population estimates and projections of Indigenous families is acknowledged by the Australian Bureau of Statistics where figures are based on self-identification of Indigeneity by a population.
- l) The number of Indigenous four-year-olds in Queensland is expected to grow by 17 per cent over the next eight years.
- m) Queensland's approach to maintaining universal access to early childhood education has been developed in the context of other Queensland Government services and existing reforms detailed in Table 4.

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Table 4: Links with existing reforms or projects

Existing reforms or projects	Links to project elements	Complementary nature of activities
Advancing Education	1 & 2	An action plan for the next phase of education reforms in Queensland. The plan aims to give Queensland children a confident start by supporting learning and development in the early years, with a particular focus on supporting positive transitions to school, children with disability to actively engage in early learning and investing in integrated early years services in areas of need.
Families as First Teachers	2	A programme that builds the capacity of families and community members to engage with their children in positive early learning experiences leading to successful transitions from home to early childhood education.
ECEC Workforce Action Plan 2016-2019	1 & 2	A plan to improve the capacity of Queensland's ECEC workforce, delivering a range of initiatives responding to priorities identified by the sector, including supporting educators to work effectively with the most vulnerable children and families; a new careers campaign to increase the number of early childhood educators and reduce vacancy rates in the sector; and subsidising a range of priority qualifications and programmes to provide effective pathways with a focus on Indigenous educators.
Investing for Success	2	A needs-based funding initiative directing funds to Queensland state schools to maximise outcomes for all students, particularly those most in need of support (and including the early years).
Early years support services for Queensland families	2	The Queensland Government funds organisations throughout the state to deliver community services and programmes focusing on the needs of local families with young children. These community services and programmes may include ECEC, child and maternal health and family support. Targeted services are delivered and/or brokered for vulnerable children and families, and referrals are made to specialist or intensive support services when required.
Step up into education	2	Under the Step up into education initiative, 24 Queensland schools from areas of disadvantage are receiving funding to deliver school readiness and transition initiatives to suit the needs of their local community. Resources have been developed to assist schools, families, educators and teachers (school, kindergarten, child care and Prep) to support children to make successful transitions into Queensland schools.
First 5 Forever	2	First 5 Forever is a universal family literacy initiative in Queensland aimed at supporting stronger language and literacy environments for young children from 0-5 years and their families. 320 public libraries will receive additional resources to deliver First 5 in partnership with the State Library of Queensland and local government councils.

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Continuity of learning	2	To strengthen continuity of learning and transition to school, the Age Appropriate Pedagogies Programme will be extended to a select number of schools in every department region across Queensland. This initiative will support teachers to refocus ways of teaching and learning that respond to children's developmental and learning capabilities, leading to better long-term outcomes for children.
Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)	2	The AEDC is a national collection of information on young children's development in Australia. Data is collected every three years on children in their first year of full-time schooling. The results provide a snapshot at a community level of how children are developing by the time they reach school. The information gathered in the AEDC is used by the Queensland Government to assist in planning for social and community services in the early years.
Playgroup Initiative	2	The Queensland Government is offering families free 12 month memberships of Playgroup Queensland on the birth of their child to encourage greater participation in early childhood services and transition to kindergarten.

PART 4: PERFORMANCE AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

Performance indicators, benchmarks and targets

25. Key indicators, data sources and benchmarks for assessing and monitoring performance are set out in Part 4 and Schedule A of the National Partnership.
26. With regard to reporting on attendance, Queensland has agreed a target for 2015, 2016 and 2017 with the Commonwealth, as set out in Table 5 below, and will report on progress towards this target as part of the National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection.

Table 5: Bilaterally agreed attendance targets

2014 performance	2015 Target	2016 Target	2017 Target	Performance Benchmark/Target
96%	90%	90%	90%	Annual targets agreed in Implementation Plans taking into account a jurisdiction's starting point and moving to 90 per cent over time.

Payments under this agreement are not tied to achievement of attendance targets. The methodology for calculation of performance related to attendance targets will be where a child is enrolled and has participated in a quality preschool programme for a minimum of one hour during the collection period.

Monitoring and reporting

27. Commonwealth and State based collections or data sources and methodologies, agreed by both the Parties to this Plan, to measure progress against the performance milestones

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and benchmarks and targets in the National Partnership, are set out in Part 4 and Schedule A of the National Partnership.

28. These data and performance specifications will be used to report Queensland's performance, except for the supplementary data agreed by the Parties to this Implementation Plan.
29. Supplementary data will be sourced from the Queensland ECEC Services Census and/or other department administrative systems, and relevant Commonwealth data including, but not limited to:
 - a) Proportion of families with kindergarten-age children with Health Care Cards enrolled in quality early childhood education programmes
 - b) Early entry enrolment of children in Prep
 - c) Queensland ECEC Census Enrolment and attendance data
 - d) Queensland ECEC Census Indigenous enrolment data.
30. Supplementary data reports must contain the following details for each Performance Indicator (PI) where the method is not consistent with the ECEC National Minimal Data Set (NMDS):
 - PI calculation description (numerator, denominator, computation and presentation)
 - numerator Information (collection name and population description)
 - denominator Information (collection name and population description)
 - calculation Notes (including any information about how the PI is calculated)
 - methodology
 - rationale for supplementary data and reporting (including any additional information to explain how and why the specifications for the supplementary data differ from the specifications in the NMDS).

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Sign off

The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this agreement as follows:

Signature

Date

The Hon Kate Jones MP
Minister for Education

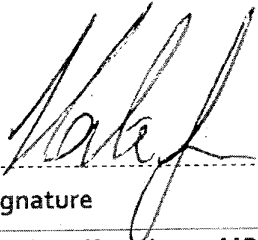
Signature

Date

Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham
Minister for Education and Training

Sign off

The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this agreement as follows:



Signature Date 6/5/2016

The Hon Kate Jones MP
Minister for Education

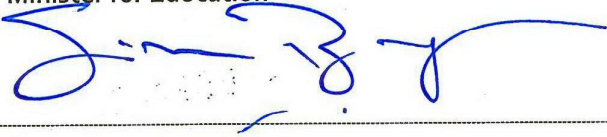
Signature Date

Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham
Minister for Education and Training

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Sign off

The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this agreement as follows:

Signature	Date
The Hon Kate Jones MP Minister for Education 	6 May 2018.
Signature	Date
Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham Minister for Education and Training	