

South Australia's Implementation Plan

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ON UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION – 2018

PART 1: PRELIMINARIES

1. This Implementation Plan is a schedule to the National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education – 2018 (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 programs for all children.
3. This objective is to be achieved through universal access to quality early childhood education program(s) 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 requirements, and with a focus on participation by Indigenous, vulnerable and disadvantaged children, regardless of the setting in which programs 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 South Australia (SA), 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 SA's capacity to achieve the outcomes of the National Partnership.
7. This Implementation Plan supports the national approach to the regulation and quality assurance of early childhood education programs consistent with the National Quality Framework.
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.

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 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 programs in the year before full-time school, with a focus on Indigenous¹ and vulnerable and disadvantaged children² 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. The project elements planned are detailed in Table 1: Project elements.

Table 1: Project elements

No	Title	Short description	Planned start date	Planned end date	Dependent on projects
1	Universal access to 600 hours of preschool	<p><u>Funding allocations to government and non-government preschool program providers</u></p> <p>Continue provision of additional funding to government preschools</p> <p>Continue to administer funding grant payments to approved child care centres, non-government schools and preschools</p>	1 Jan 2018	31 Dec 2018	N/A
2	Access for Indigenous children and vulnerable and disadvantaged children	<p><u>Programs and projects to improve participation in early childhood education</u></p> <p>Preschool subsidies (targeted to Indigenous children, concession card holders, and children with a disability) that will facilitate access to preschool in approved child care centres, non-government schools and preschools</p>	1 Jan 2018	31 Dec 2018	1

¹ Within this plan the word 'Indigenous' has been used to be consistent with the National Partnership. Agencies of the SA Government have a preference to refer to the first Australians in SA as Aboriginal, particularly in targeted services and programs as well as in official reporting.

² In SA, vulnerable and disadvantaged children are defined as children who reside in a location assessed as being in the lowest quintile of the ABS Census of Population and Housing: Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas, Australia 2011 – Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage.

No	Title	Short description	Planned start date	Planned end date	Dependent on projects
		<p>Preschool Support Program and Speech and Language Program – supporting access to Department of Education and Child Development (“the department”) preschools for children with additional needs and disabilities</p> <p>Inclusive Preschool Programs – supporting access to the department’s preschools for children with a disability</p> <p>Indigenous Children with Impaired Hearing Preschool Program – supporting access to the department’s preschools for Indigenous children</p> <p>Preschool Bilingual Program – supporting access to the department’s preschools for children from non-English speaking backgrounds</p> <p>Attendance Improvement Project – improving regular attendance at preschool for all children enrolled in the department’s preschools, primarily targeting Indigenous children and vulnerable and disadvantaged children</p> <p>Hospital Based Preschool Program – individually tailored preschool programs for children confined to hospital</p>			
3	Maintaining attendance at 90% for children enrolled in preschool	<p><u>Strengthening teaching and learning in the APY Lands</u></p> <p>Dedicated early childhood leadership position to support the department’s preschools in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands to implement the National Quality Standards and Early Childhood Development Plan, and to improve Indigenous participation</p>	1 Jan 2018	31 Dec 2018	N/A

13. As required by clause 21(d) of the National Partnership, the following strategies are in place to ensure funding is directed to support participation by all children in all quality early childhood education programs, regardless of whether programs are delivered through government or non-government services including schools, standalone preschools or long day care centres. These strategies are included as project elements throughout this plan.
14. 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.
 - (a) The decision by the Catholic Education Office of South Australia (CESA) that Catholic schools could commence offering a mid-year school intake from 2016, if they opt to do so, may impact children who commence preschool at the beginning of 2018. Children commencing school in a mid-year intake will only receive six months of preschool provision. The department will continue to work with CESA to minimise the impact of the mid-year intake on children's access to 600 hours of preschool in the year before full-time school.

Estimated costs

15. The maximum financial contribution to be provided by the Commonwealth for the project to SA is **\$28,110,001** payable in accordance with the milestones and performance benchmarks set out in the National Partnership. All payments are exclusive of GST.
16. The estimated overall budget (exclusive of GST) is set out in Table 2. The budget is indicative only and SA retains the flexibility to move SA contributions 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)	2017-18	2018-19	Total
Element 1	13.5	13.3	26.8
Element 2	0.5	0.5	1.1
Element 3	0.1	0.1	0.2
Total estimated budget	14.1	14.0	28.1
less estimated Commonwealth contribution equals estimated balance of non-Commonwealth contributions **	8.4	19.7	28.1
Total Commonwealth contribution	8.4	19.7	28.1

*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 SA allocates its own source funding accordingly.

Program logic

17. 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.
18. 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.

Table 3: Program logic

Project elements	Outputs	Outcomes	Project Objectives	Responsibilities
<p>Element 1 – Affordable access for all children to 600 hours of preschool</p>	<p>Implementing accessible quality early childhood education programs 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>Supporting all children’s quality early childhood education participation, regardless of whether quality early childhood education programs are delivered through government or non-government services including schools, standalone preschools or long day care centres.</p>	<p>All children, including vulnerable and disadvantaged children, have access to, and participate in, an affordable, quality early childhood education program.</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 programs for all children.</p>	<p>SA</p>

Project elements	Outputs	Outcomes	Project Objectives	Responsibilities
<p>Element 2 – Access for Indigenous children and vulnerable and disadvantaged children</p>	<p>Implementing accessible quality early childhood education programs 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 programs are delivered through schools (non-government and government), standalone preschools or long day care centres.</p>	<p>All children, including vulnerable and disadvantaged children, have access to, and participate in, an affordable, quality early childhood education program.</p> <p>All Indigenous children have access to, and participate in, an affordable, quality early childhood education program.</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 programs for all children.</p>	<p>SA</p>
<p>Element 3 – Maintaining attendance at 90% for children enrolled in preschool</p>	<p>Implementing accessible quality early childhood education programs 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>Dedicated early childhood leadership position to support the department’s preschools in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands to improve Indigenous participation in preschool.</p>	<p>All children, including vulnerable and disadvantaged children, have access to, and participate in, an affordable, quality early childhood education program.</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 programs for all children.</p>	<p>SA</p>

Risk management

19. The SA department 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.

South Australian Context

20. The department is the agency responsible for leading the implementation of the universal access to early childhood education strategies in SA. SA is using the following approaches to maintain the universal access initiative:

(a) Increased service provision in existing preschool services: Children enrolled in State funded preschools have an increased annual provision from 480 hours to 600 hours of preschool for children in their year before full-time school.

(b) Expanded service provision to provide new preschool places: funding and service agreements have been, and will continue to be, entered into with child care operators and non-government schools to provide access to 600 hours of preschool to children not accessing, or unable to access, State funded preschools.

- 19.1 Government preschool service providers set fees. These fees are not compulsory and children are not excluded from attending preschool if their parents/carers cannot afford to pay. The average annual fee charged per child charged by government preschools in 2017 was \$385.
- 19.2 Preschool is funded by the SA Government. Under the department's current preschool enrolment policy, four and five-year-old children, three-year-old Indigenous children and children under the guardianship of the Minister for Education (that is, children in care) may access an annual provision of up to 480 hours of SA Government funded preschool. Provided that a SA Government funded preschool (including 19 non-government services³ and a Preschool of the Air service provider) has the capacity to do so, an early entry preschool program is also provided to children with additional needs including children with a disability and newly arrived children from a non-English speaking background.
- 19.3 As at August 2017, 89 per cent of children enrolled in preschool programs receive their access to 600 hours from one of 406 SA Government funded service providers (including 19 non-government services and a Preschool of the Air service provider), with 83 per cent of the Commonwealth's funding contribution to SA allocated in the universal access budget plan for 2018 to support this strategy. The remaining 11 per cent of all children enrolled in preschool programs were receiving their access to 600 hours in universal access to early childhood education funded preschool programs from one of 146 non-government service providers, with 17 per cent of the Commonwealth's funding contribution to SA allocated in the universal access budget plan for 2018 will be utilised to support this strategy.
- 19.4 Subsidies allocated for approved universal access to preschool program service providers (which includes non-government child care centres, preschools and schools) ranges from \$1,190 to \$2,380 annual allocation in 2018 for each child

³ The 19 non-government preschool services have funding and service agreements that existed prior to the original National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education. These services are funded by the SA Government with funding allocations for preschool staffing comparable to the staffing allocations of department operated preschool services.

enrolled in 600 hours of preschool depending on the socioeconomic area that the service is located. Service providers also attract an additional \$1,770 per enrolment if the child is Indigenous or a concession card holder and a further \$2,960 if the child has a disability. Indexation of the per capita subsidies of 2.5 per cent has been included in 2018.

- 19.5 In terms of progress on early childhood development, the latest Australian Early Development Census conducted in 2015, when compared to the results in 2012, indicated the proportion of children determined to be developmentally vulnerable in SA was about the same (23.7 per cent in 2012 and 23.5 per cent in 2015). One of the positive trends in the results for SA was a notable improvement in the proportion of Indigenous children reported as developmentally vulnerable, with a 4.6 percentage point reduction from 51.4 per cent in 2012 down to 46.8 per cent in 2015. Participation in preschool is seen as one method of lowering the proportion of developmentally vulnerable children who enter school.
- 19.6 Since 2005, SA has embarked on a program to establish Children’s Centres for Early Childhood Development and Parenting (Children’s Centres), which provide an integrated approach to service delivery for children and families. There are currently 44 Children’s Centres in SA, which support children and families to achieve the best possible learning, health and wellbeing outcomes in a universal setting with targeted responses for children and families who may require additional support. Children’s centres bring together care, education, health, community development activities and family services for children from birth to eight years and their families.

PART 4: PERFORMANCE AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

Performance indicators, benchmarks and targets

- 20 Key indicators, data sources and benchmarks for assessing and monitoring performance are set out in Part 4 and Schedule A of the National Partnership.
- 21 With regard to reporting on attendance, SA has agreed a target for 2018 with the Commonwealth, as set out in Table 4 below, and will report on progress towards this target as part of the National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection.

Table 4: Bilaterally agreed attendance targets

2016 performance	2017 Target	2018 Target	Performance Benchmark/Target
98.3%	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.

As per previous agreements, the methodology for calculation of performance related to attendance targets will be where a child has participated in a quality preschool program for a minimum of one hour during the collection period.

*Performance against 2017 Target to be assessed as part of final performance assessment for the previous National Partnership for 2016 and 2017, with data expected in the first half of 2018.

Monitoring and reporting

- 22 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 and benchmarks and targets in the National Partnership, are set out in Part 4 and Schedule A of the National Partnership.
- 23 These data and performance specifications will be used to report SA's performance, except for the supplementary data agreed by the Parties to this Implementation Plan, as identified below.
- 24 Supplementary data reports must contain the following details for each Performance Indicator (PI) where the method is not consistent with the Early Childhood Education and Care Minimal Data Set (NMDS):
 - performance indicator 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).

Sign off

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



8/5/18

Signature

Date

**The Hon John Gardner MP
Minister for Education**



23/5/18

Signature

Date

**Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham
Minister for Education and Training**