

Australian Capital Territory's Implementation Plan

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ON UNIVERSAL ACCESS
TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION - 2015

PART 1: PRELIMINARIES

1. This Implementation Plan is a schedule to the extended National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education (NP UAECE or National Partnership) – 2015 and should be read in conjunction with that Agreement.
2. The objective of the NP UAECE is to reaffirm the commitment to universal access to quality early childhood education programme(s), with a focus on improved participation of vulnerable and disadvantaged children, and in a manner that meets the needs of children, parents and communities and ensures that cost is not a barrier to participation.

PART 2: TERMS OF THIS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

3. This Implementation Plan will commence as soon as it is agreed between the Commonwealth of Australia, represented by the Assistant Minister for Education, and the Australian Capital Territory, represented by the Minister for Education and Training.
4. As a schedule to the NP UAECE, 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 the Australian Capital Territory's capacity to achieve the outcomes of the NP UAECE by the expiry of the National Partnership.
5. This Implementation Plan supports the national approach to the regulation and quality assessment of education and care services consistent with the National Quality Framework.
6. This Implementation Plan will cease on completion or termination of the NP UAECE, including the processing of final payments against performance benchmarks.
7. This Implementation Plan may be varied by written agreement between the Commonwealth and State Ministers with responsibility for Early Childhood Education under the overarching NP UAECE.
8. 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.

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PART 3: STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Project information

9. The NP UAECE reaffirms the commitment to provide universal access to, and improved participation by, children in quality early childhood education in the year before full-time school, with a focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged children and in a manner that meets the needs of children, parents and communities and ensures that cost is not a barrier to participation.

10. Commonwealth, state and territory governments will collaborate to develop a nationally agreed definition of vulnerable and disadvantaged children over time. This should be progressed through the Early Childhood Policy Group. In the Australian Capital Territory, vulnerable and disadvantaged children are provisionally defined as:
 - those residing in communities identified in the 2012 Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) as having above the national average rates of vulnerability in two or more domains.

11. The project elements planned are as follows:
 - (a) *Maintain 600 hours of preschool education per year for ACT children in the year before full-time schooling;*
 - (b) *Strengthening Program Quality and Consistency;*
 - (c) *Teacher Qualifications;*
 - (d) *Access to and participation in Preschool Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children;*
 - (e) *Access to and participation in Preschool Education for Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Children; and*
 - (f) *Support participation in preschool programs through maximisation of preschool places across service delivery providers.*

Table 1: Project elements

No.	Short description	Planned start date	Planned end date	Dependent on projects
1	<i>Maintain 600 hours of preschool education per year for ACT children in the year before full-time schooling</i>	<i>1 January 2015</i>	<i>31 Dec 2015</i>	-
2	<i>Strengthening Program Quality and Consistency</i>	<i>1 January 2015</i>	<i>31 Dec 2015</i>	2
3	<i>Teacher Qualifications</i>	<i>1 January 2015</i>	<i>31 Dec 2015</i>	3
4	<i>Access to and participation in Preschool Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children</i>	<i>1 January 2015</i>	<i>31 Dec 2015</i>	4

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5	<i>Access to and participation in Preschool Education for Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Children</i>	<i>1 January 2015</i>	<i>31 Dec 2015</i>	5
6.	<i>Support participation in preschool programs through maximisation of preschool places across service delivery providers</i>	<i>1 January 2015</i>	<i>31 Dec 2015</i>	6

12. As required by clause 21 (b) of the NP UAECE, address critical gaps in support as identified in the Review of the previous NP UAECE, as follows:
- (a) Promotion of preschool participation to all ACT children including vulnerable and disadvantaged children, through the Preschool Matters Program, print materials, website and Preschool Matters Grants Program .
13. As required by clause 21 (e), the following strategies are to ensure that funding is directed to support participation in all preschool programmes, regardless of whether programmes are delivered through schools (government and non-government), standalone preschools or Long Day Care centres.
- (g) Capital grants to non-government schools to upgrade preschool infrastructure supporting maximisation of preschool places;
 - (h) Capital upgrades to long day care centres supporting maximisation of preschool placements;
 - (i) Scholarship programs for staff in long day care services and government preschools to maximise participation in preschool programs delivered by qualified teachers ;
 - (j) Provision of rental subsidies to non-government providers contributing to the prevention of cost as a barrier to participation in preschool programs; and
 - (k) Promotion of preschool participation through the Preschool Matters Program, print materials, website and Preschool Matters Grants Program.

Estimated costs

14. The maximum financial contribution to be provided by the Commonwealth for the project to the Australian Capital Territory is \$6,741,509 payable in accordance with the performance milestones and benchmarks set out in the National Partnership. All payments are exclusive of GST.
15. The estimated overall budget (exclusive of GST) is set out in Table 2. The budget is indicative only and the Australian Capital Territory 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.

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Table 2: Estimated financial contributions

(\$ million)	2014–15	2015–16	Total
Element 1	-	-	-
Element 2	-	-	-
Element 3	-	-	-
Element 4	-	-	-
Element 5	-	-	-
Total estimated budget	-	-	-
less estimated Commonwealth contribution	-	-	-
equals estimated balance of non-Commonwealth contributions	-	-	-
*Total Commonwealth contribution	\$2,022,453	\$4,719,056	\$6,741,509

* The Commonwealth is using \$1.5 million of the allocated \$406 million under the NP UAECE for national data development activities.

Program logic

16. 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.
17. 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 (services delivered)	Outcomes	Reform/Project Objectives	Responsibility
<i>Element 1</i> <i>Maintain 600 hours of preschool education in the year before full-time schooling</i>	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.	All children have access to 600 hours of preschool education in the year before full-time schooling at a cost which does not present a barrier to participation.	Provide preschool programs across the ACT that maintain access to 600 hours of quality early childhood education in the year before full-time schooling.	Australian Capital Territory

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<p><i>Element 2</i></p> <p><i>Strengthening Program Quality and Consistency</i></p>	<p>Quality early childhood education is delivered utilising the Early Years Learning Framework.</p> <p>Continuation of cross-service Preschool Matters Consultative Committee to oversee jurisdictional information about preschool service delivery to families, print materials, website and Preschool Matters Grants Program.</p>	<p>All children have access to and participate in an affordable, quality early childhood education program.</p> <p>Print resources, website and Grants Program to enhance participation in preschool programs.</p>	<p>Improve the quality of preschool education programs through implementation of the National Quality Framework.</p> <p>Increase participation and to highlight service provision options for parents.</p>	<p>Australian Capital Territory</p>
<p><i>Element 3</i></p> <p><i>Teacher Qualifications</i></p>	<p>Implementation of accessible, quality early childhood education programs, delivered by a degree qualified early childhood teacher, in accordance with the National Quality Framework.</p> <p>Continuation of teacher scholarship programs available to staff in long day care and government preschools.</p>	<p>All preschool programs are delivered to ACT children in the year before full-time schooling by a degree qualified early childhood teacher who meets the National Quality Framework requirements.</p>	<p>All children have access to a quality early childhood education program by a suitably qualified teacher.</p>	<p>Australian Capital Territory</p>

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<p><i>Element 4</i></p> <p><i>Access to and participation in Preschool Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children</i></p>	<p>Promote, access and participation in preschool programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.</p> <p>Delivery of Preschool matters print materials, website and Preschool Matters grants program across all service providers.</p>	<p>Participation rates meet National Partnership performance targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.</p>	<p>Equitable preschool participation rates by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.</p>	<p>Australian Capital Territory</p>
<p><i>Element 5</i></p> <p><i>Access to and participation in Preschool Education for Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Children</i></p>	<p>Promote access and participation in preschool programs for vulnerable and disadvantaged children.</p> <p>Delivery of Preschool matters print materials, website and Preschool Matters grants program across all service providers.</p>	<p>Participation rates meet National Partnership performance targets for vulnerable and disadvantaged children.</p>	<p>Equitable preschool participation rates by vulnerable and disadvantaged children.</p>	<p>Australian Capital Territory</p>

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<p><i>Element 6</i></p> <p><i>Support participation in preschool programs through maximisation of preschool places across service delivery providers</i></p>	<p>Support to long day care, government preschools and non-government preschools through facilities rental subsidies, capital upgrades to child care centres, grants through the Preschool Matters program, scholarships to gain early childhood teacher qualifications and capital grants to non-government schools to establish and upgrade preschool infrastructure.</p>	<p>Maximise preschool participation and places across service providers through infrastructure support.</p> <p>Increase teacher qualifications to deliver preschool programs.</p> <p>Contribute to prevention of cost being a barrier to participation through rental subsidies.</p>	<p>Increase participation in quality preschool programs.</p>	<p>Australian Capital Territory</p>
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Risk management

18. The Australian Capital Territory 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.

Australian Capital Territory Context

19. In developing this Implementation Plan, consideration has been given to relevant contextual information to aid interpretation.
20. The ACT Government has a strong commitment to early childhood education and this is evident in its investment in preschools over the last 50 years.
21. In 2015 all 79 ACT public preschools will continue to offer universal access to quality early childhood education preschool program to children in the ACT in the 12 months prior to full-time schooling. There is no fee for the public preschool program. ACT public preschool programs are delivered by degree qualified early childhood teachers, aligned with the National Quality Framework, for 600 hours per annum.
22. The current and previous National Partnership Agreements on Universal Access contributed to an increase from 12 to 15 hours per week (600 hours per year) in the government preschool sector.
23. Implementation targetted increased government preschool service delivery to schools in suburbs with higher numbers of disadvantaged or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

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populations or both of these criteria. In addition, AEDI data was used to inform the selection of increased provision in areas of need.

24. Quality early childhood education in the year before full-time school is also delivered in other settings including non-government preschools and long day care centres.
25. Funding to the ACT under the NP UAECE 2015 contributes to the continuation of a 600 hour per year program in ACT public preschools in 2015.
26. Non-government preschools and long day care providers will continue to be assisted through this funding contribution by facilities rental subsidies, capital upgrades to child care centres, grants through the Preschool Matters program, scholarships to gain early childhood teacher qualifications and capital grants to non-government schools to establish and upgrade preschool infrastructure.
27. Key factors that have influenced the proposed direction are set out in Table 4.

Table 4: Links with existing reforms or projects

Proposed project elements	Existing reforms or projects	Complementary nature of activities
Element 3	Aligning teacher qualifications with the National Quality Framework including the delivery of an early childhood program by a suitably qualified teacher.	Ensures a focus on the delivery of a high quality, consistent preschool program.
Element 4	Closing the Gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Cross government collaboration to ensure wrap around service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.	Focus of access, participation and attendance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in quality early childhood programs. Early engagement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
Element 2 and 3	Cross government collaboration to ensure wrap around service delivery for vulnerable and disadvantaged children.	Early identification and intervention for vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

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PART 4: PERFORMANCE AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

Performance indicators, benchmarks and targets

28. Key indicators, data sources and benchmarks for assessing and monitoring performance are set out in Part 4 and Schedule A of the NP UAECE.
29. With regard to reporting on attendance, the Australian Capital Territory has agreed a target for 2015 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 (National Collection).

Table 5: Bilaterally agreed attendance target/s

Baseline data	2014 Target	2015 Target	Nationally Agreed Target
To be established following review of 2014 data set due to new parameters	<i>90 per cent</i>	<i>90 per cent</i>	<i>90 per cent of enrolled children attending an early childhood education programme to be achieved over time.</i>

Monitoring and reporting

30. 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 NP UAECE, are set out in Schedule A of the NP UAECE.
31. These data and performance specifications will be used to report the Australian Capital Territory's performance, except for the supplementary data agreed by the Parties to this Plan in Schedule I.1 of this Plan.
32. Supplementary data reports must contain the following details for each Performance Indicator where the method is not inconsistent 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; and
 - 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

Ms Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Education and Training

Signature

Date

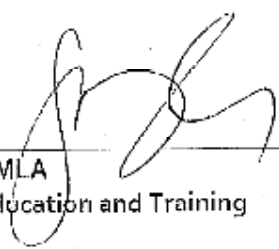
The Hon Sussan Ley MP
Assistant Minister for Education

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Sign off

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

Signature



Date

19.12.14

Ms Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Education and Training

Signature

Date

The Hon Sussan Ley MP
Assistant Minister for Education

SCHEDULE I

Sign off

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

Signature

Date

Ms Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Education and Training



25 April 2015

Signature

Date

The Hon Christopher Pyne MP
Minister for Education and Training

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Schedule I.1

Supplementary Data

Table 1: The Australian Capital Territory's supplementary data specifications

Performance Indicator	Supplementary data specification
<p><i>Identification of vulnerable and disadvantaged children in communities identified in the 2012 Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) as having above the national average rates of vulnerability in two or more domains.</i></p>	<p>Source: Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) data collection, ABS Estimated Resident Population, National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection.</p> <p>Numerator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Enrolments of children enrolled in preschool programs within communities identified by the AEDI results as having a higher proportion of vulnerable children than the national average. (b) Enrolments of children in preschool programs available for 600 hours a year within communities identified by the AEDI results as having a higher proportion of vulnerable children than the national average. <p>These data to be consistent with the specifications in the Early Childhood Education and Care National Minimum Data Set.</p> <p>Denominator: Estimated Resident Population of three and/or four year-olds, calculated as agreed according to its availability by suburb.</p> <p>Computation: Where numerator is greater than denominator (i.e. result is greater than 1) in two or more domains, community (at agreed level) is identified.</p> <p>Methodology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Data from the AEDI will be used to identify ACT communities (suburbs) with a greater proportion of children identified as vulnerable on two or more domains than the national proportion. (b) Data from the NECEC collection will be used to measure the participation rate of children in the suburbs identified in step (a). <p>Key Definitions: As per AEDI data collection.</p> <p>In 2012, 9.8% of ACT children were identified as developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains of the AEDI. The Australian proportion of children developmentally vulnerable on 2 or more domains was 10.8%.</p> <p>In the ACT, there are 32 local communities (suburbs) where children are developmentally vulnerable at a high proportion than their Australia peers.</p>