

South Australia'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 Minister for Education, and the state of South Australia, represented by the Minister for Education and Child Development.
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 South Australia'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.

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 South Australia, vulnerable and disadvantaged children are provisionally 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 (SEIFA), Australia, 2011 – Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD).
11. The project elements planned are as follows:

Element 1: Providing access to 600 hours of preschool

Provide access to 600 hours of preschool to children in their year before full time school delivered by a degree qualified early childhood teacher who meets the National Quality Framework requirements, as follows:

- 1(a) maintain access to 600 hours of preschool in all state provided or funded preschool (up from a base of 480 hours for state funded programs in 2008).
- 1(b) child care centres, non-government schools and preschools with an approved Funding and Service Agreement for the Provision of Universal Access to Early Childhood Education to continue to provide access to 600 hours of preschool to children in their year before full time school.

Element 2: Providing access to 600 hours of affordable preschool for Aboriginal children, vulnerable and disadvantaged children

Provide additional funding to service providers to facilitate the provision of access to 600 hours of affordable preschool to 95 % of the population of Aboriginal children, vulnerable and disadvantaged children in their year before full time school delivered by a degree qualified early childhood teacher who meets the National Quality Framework requirement. Strategies will include, but are not limited to the following:

- all preschool programs to continue to provide access to Aboriginal children from four years of age to 600 hours of affordable preschool in the year before full-time schooling, including all Aboriginal four year old children residing in remote communities.
- continue to provide targeted child subsidies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children holding the following cards: Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Temporary Protection/Humanitarian, asylum seeker on bridging visa and Department of Veteran Affairs Gold Card to service providers with an approved Funding and Service Agreement for the Provision of Universal Access to Early Childhood Education to support access for these children to preschool in the year before full-time schooling.

- continue to provide access to 600 hours of supported preschool programs for children with additional needs including children with disabilities and children from a non-English speaking background. Provision of preschool access will also include specialist programs such as Inclusive Preschool Programs and the Hospital Based Preschool Program that provide up to 600 hours of individually tailored preschool programs.
- Funding a dedicated early childhood leadership position in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands to develop and implement early years strategy aimed at strengthening teaching and learning in the 9 APY land communities.

Element 3: Develop and implement strategies for improving regular attendance at preschool for all children

Aim to improve attendance for Aboriginal children, children with a disability, children living in low socio economic communities, children living in areas identified with high population of vulnerability, children from recently arrived families and children living in remote communities. Strategies may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Funding a dedicated early childhood leadership position in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands to develop and implement early years strategy aimed at strengthening teaching and learning in the 9 APY land communities.
- Funding attendance improvement initiatives that are specifically targeted to address preschool programs with low attendance rates.

Table 1: Project elements

No.	Short description	Planned start date	Planned end date	Dependent on projects
1	Providing access to 600 hours of preschool	27 January 2015	18 Dec 2015	
2	Providing access to 600 hours of affordable preschool for Aboriginal children, vulnerable and disadvantaged children	27 January 2015	18 Dec 2015	1
3	Develop and implement strategies for improving regular attendance at preschool for all children	27 January 2015	18 Dec 2015	1,2

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) Continue to support families to maximise children's participation in preschool by encouraging and supporting service providers to implement flexible service delivery models.

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:

- (a) Continue to administer, promote and accept applications for funding through the non-government Universal Access to Early Childhood Education initiative to facilitate the provision of 600 hours of preschool in non-government schools, preschool and long day care centres as per project element 1 (b).

Estimated costs

14. The maximum financial contribution to be provided by the Commonwealth for the project to South Australia is \$27,005,115 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 South Australia 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)	2014–15	2015–16	Total
Element 1	\$7,681,026	\$17,922,392	\$25,603,418
Element 2	\$293,185	\$684,098	\$977,283
Element 3	\$127,324	\$297,090	\$424,414
Total estimated budget	\$8,101,535	\$18,903,580	\$27,005,115
less estimated Commonwealth contribution equals estimated balance of non-Commonwealth contributions	\$8,101,535	\$18,903,580	\$27,005,115
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*Total Commonwealth contribution	\$8,101,535	\$18,903,580	\$27,005,115

* 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 as provisionally defined in Clause 10 by South Australia.
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
<p><i>Providing access to 600 hours of preschool</i></p> <p>AND</p> <p><i>Providing access to 600 hours of affordable preschool for Aboriginal children, vulnerable and disadvantaged children</i></p>	<p><i>South Australian will implement strategies and actions that provide access to 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 through the provision of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>600 hours of preschool in DECD preschool services</i> • <i>600 hours of preschool in child care centres and non-government schools and preschools</i> 	<p><i>i) Vulnerable and disadvantaged children will have access to affordable, quality early childhood education program.</i></p> <p><i>ii) Aboriginal children will have access to an affordable, quality early childhood education program.</i></p>	<p><i>Access to 600 hours of preschool to children in their year before full time school is maintained</i></p>	<p>South Australia</p>
Project elements	Outputs (services delivered)	Outcomes	Reform/ Project Objectives	Responsibility
<p><i>Develop and implement strategies for improving regular attendance at preschool for all children</i></p>	<p><i>South Australian will develop and implement strategies aimed at improving attendance, with a particular focus on:</i></p> <p><i>i) vulnerable and disadvantaged children</i></p> <p><i>ii) Aboriginal children</i></p>	<p><i>i) Participation in early childhood education programs for vulnerable and disadvantaged children will be maintained or improved</i></p> <p><i>ii) Participation in early childhood education programs for Aboriginal children will be maintained or improved</i></p>	<p><i>Maintain or improve participation in preschool programs</i></p>	<p>South Australia</p>

Risk management

18. The South Australian Department for Education and Child Development 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

The Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) is the agency responsible for leading the implementation of the Universal Access to Early Childhood Education strategies in South Australia.

South Australia is using the following approaches to maintain the Universal Access initiative:

- 1) 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.
 - 2) 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 early childhood education to children not accessing, or unable to access, State funded preschools.
19. In developing this Implementation Plan consideration has been given to relevant context. Preschool in South Australia is funded by the State Government. Under the current DECD preschool enrolment policy, four and five year old children, three year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children under the guardianship of the Minister for Education and Child Development (children in care) may access an annual provision of up to 480 hours of preschool. Providing that a DECD preschool has the capacity to do so, early entry preschool programs is also provided to children with additional needs including children with a disability and newly arrived children from a non-English speaking background.
 20. In terms of progress on early childhood development, the latest AEDI survey conducted in 2012 when compared to the results in 2009 indicated an increase in the proportion of children determined to be developmentally vulnerable in South Australia (from 22.8% in 2009 to 23.7% in 2012). This result defied the national trend where every other State and Territory recorded a decrease in the proportion of developmentally vulnerable children between 2009 and 2012. Increased participation in preschool is seen as one method of lowering the proportion of children who enter school who are developmentally vulnerable.
 21. 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 1	Quality improvement reforms required as part of the National Quality Framework	Improvements to the quality of preschool providers facilities, processes & staff
Element 2	State funded preschool to continue to provide access to 480 hours of preschool to Aboriginal children and children under the guardianship of the Minister from three years of age	Provides quality preschool programs to this cohort of children with the aim of improving preschool participation in the year before full time school.

Proposed project elements	Existing reforms or projects	Complementary nature of activities
Element 2	Maintain the DECD policy that ensures that children are not excluded from DECD preschools due to parents inability to pay preschool fees (State funded initiative)	Ensures that cost is not a barrier for families who choose to access a state government preschool service for their children.
Element 2	New preschool facilities are now built to accommodate child care programs and since 2005 South Australia has embarked on a program to develop Children's Centres for Early Childhood Development and Parenting (Children's Centres) that provide an integrated approach to service delivery for families.	Provide a range of care, education and health services for families and their young children from birth to eight years of age.

PART 4: PERFORMANCE AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

Performance indicators, benchmarks and targets

22. Key indicators, data sources and benchmarks for assessing and monitoring performance are set out in Part 4 and Schedule A of the NP UAECE.
23. With regard to reporting on attendance, South Australia 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
98.8 per cent ¹	90 per cent	90 per cent	90 per cent of enrolled children attending an early childhood education programme to be achieved over time

¹ ABS 2013 Preschool Education Australia. Calculation of target is attendance divided by enrolment. Attendance is the number of children aged 4 and 5 years old as at 1 July of the collection year who are attending a preschool program in the year before full-time schooling. Enrolment is the number of children aged 4 and 5 years old as at 1 July of the collection year who are enrolled in a preschool program in the year before full-time schooling.

Monitoring and reporting

24. 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.

25. These data and performance specifications will be used to report South Australia's performance, except for the supplementary data agreed by the Parties to this Plan in Schedule F.1 of this Plan.
26. 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
 - 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:

Signature

Date

The Hon Susan Close MP
Minister for Education and Child Development

Signature

Date

The Hon Christopher Pyne MP
Minister for Education

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Sign off

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

Signature 

Date 5/2/15

The Hon Susan Close MP
Minister for Education and Child Development

Signature 

Date 25/4/15

The Hon Christopher Pyne MP
Minister for Education