

New South Wales

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 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 New South Wales (NSW), represented by the Minister for Early Childhood 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 NSWs' 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 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 bench-marks 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 NEW SOUTH WALES 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. In NSW, where feasible, calculation of the number of vulnerable and disadvantaged children will draw on Health Care Card and Child Care Benefit data, acknowledging that these family-level measures are a closer proxy of disadvantage than area-level Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas data.
13. 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	Preschool Funding Model and new initiatives	<p>The Preschool Funding Model – applies to community preschools and facilitates all children’s participation; children aged three years from Indigenous and vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds are funded to attend early start preschool</p> <p>Community Preschools Outreach Grants programme – aims to increase the number of four and five-year-old children enrolled in quality preschool programmes for 600 hours per year, with a focus on Indigenous and low income families</p> <p>Community Preschool 600 Hours Incentive Scheme – additional funding for community preschools to increase their enrolment of children in quality preschool programmes for 600 hours per year (or 15 hours per week) in 2016</p>	1 Jan 2016	31 Dec 2017	N/A

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No	Title	Short description	Planned start date	Planned end date	Dependent on projects
		<p>Grants to Long Day Care (Long Day Care National Partnership Grants Program and Long Day Care Grants Program) – designed to support participation in quality preschool programmes for children in their year before full-time school</p> <p>Local Partnerships (Indigenous and Low Income Families) – supports innovative programmes, promotes high expectations and quality preschool programmes for Indigenous and low income children in the year before full-time school for 600 hours per year</p> <p>Preschool Disability Support Program – supports the inclusion of children with disability or additional needs in community preschools</p> <p>Preschools for Sustainable Communities – provides viability funding for services operating in thin markets, to ensure that children in rural and remote areas can access a quality preschool programme in the year before full-time school for 600 hours per year</p>			

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No	Title	Short description	Planned start date	Planned end date	Dependent on projects
2	Model Support Initiatives	<p>Affordability for parents Increase in the Preschool Funding Model base funding and loadings; an increased funding for the most disadvantaged, so that preschool fees more fairly match parents' capacity to pay</p> <p>Infrastructure Capital Works Grant aimed at not-for-profit community and mobile preschools; for providers proposing to build new preschools, extend existing preschool facilities, or deliver innovative solutions to increase the number of preschool places available, in areas where there is a shortage and where the market has not responded.</p> <p>Up to 500 new community and mobile preschool places for four and five-year-old children enrolled in quality preschool programmes for 600 hours per year, with a focus on Indigenous and low income families.</p> <p>Data collection Enhancements to State-level data including, where feasible and appropriate, direct collection of enrolment and workforce data; greater ongoing collaboration between NSW and Commonwealth agencies on data accuracy to improve the National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection (National Collection)</p>	1 Jan 2016	31 Dec 2017	N/A

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No	Title	Short description	Planned start date	Planned end date	Dependent on projects
		<p>Qualified early childhood workforce Diploma-qualified early childhood educators in rural and remote NSW services who want to upgrade their qualification to that of a four year qualified teacher can apply for a Rural and Remote Early Childhood Teaching Scholarship worth up to \$10,000</p> <p>Operational Support Program Operational Support Program to support community preschools and mobile services to more closely align their businesses to the Preschool Funding Model and to enable sustainability over the longer term. From July 2016, the programme will be extended to include support in developing strategies to increase the number of children enrolled in quality preschool programmes</p> <p>Transition to school Enhanced arrangements to support transition to school. This will include a transition to school statement to assist children and their families with transition from preschool to full-time school</p>			

14. 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 all 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.
15. 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) There have been long-standing concerns about under-reporting of preschool enrolments in the Child Care Management System (CCMS). In 2015, the State and Commonwealth Education Departments took steps to increase service response rates through making long day care centres aware of their reporting obligations, emphasising the importance of accurate CCMS data capture, and explaining how to complete the preschool indicator.

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- (b) NSW will continue to work with the Commonwealth and the long day care sector to improve the accuracy and reliability of long day care data capture including, where appropriate, direct collection.
- (c) The primary focus for enhanced data accuracy will be through improvements to the National Collection. As part of that collection in 2015, NSW provided service-level data to the Commonwealth on preschool programme provision. It is agreed that the data provided in 2015 will also inform estimates of preschool programme provision at the service level in 2016 and 2017.
- (d) Data accuracy for Indigenous sub-indicators will require careful consideration, given the volatility of Indigenous cohort level population used to calculate performance against these indicators.

Estimated costs

- 16. The maximum financial contribution to be provided by the Commonwealth for the project to NSW is \$268,982,328 payable in accordance with the milestones and performance benchmarks set out in the National Partnership. All payments are exclusive of GST.
- 17. The estimated overall budget (exclusive of GST) is set out in Table 2. The budget is indicative only and NSW retains the flexibility to move NSW contributions between components and/or years, as long as outcomes are not affected. However, the Commonwealth's contributions can only be moved between years with the agreement of the Commonwealth.

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Table 2: Estimated financial contributions*

(\$ million)	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Total
Element 1 (Preschool funding model and new initiatives) #	36.6	120.0	80.0	236.6
Element 2 (Model support initiatives)#	3.3	13.9	15.3	32.5
Total estimated budget less estimated Commonwealth contribution	39.9	133.9	95.3	269.0
equals estimated balance of non-Commonwealth contributions	**	**	**	**
Total Commonwealth contribution	39.9	133.9	95.3	269.0

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

The maximum Commonwealth financial contributions have been allocated to each project element on a pro-rata basis and are indicative only.

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

Programme logic

18. 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.
19. 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

Project elements	Outputs	Outcomes	Reform / Project objectives	Responsibilities
<p>Element 1 – Preschool Funding Model and new initiatives</p>	<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), 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 programme</p> <p>All Indigenous children have access to, and participate in, an affordable, quality early childhood education programme</p> <p>All Indigenous four or five-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>NSW</p>

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Project elements	Outputs	Outcomes	Reform / Project objectives	Responsibilities
<p>Element 2 – Model Support Initiatives</p>	<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), 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 programme</p> <p>All Indigenous children have access to, and participate in, an affordable, quality early childhood education programme</p> <p>All Indigenous four or five 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>NSW</p>

Risk management

20. The NSW Department of Education 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.

New South Wales Context

21. In developing this Implementation Plan consideration has been given to the NSW context. Key factors influencing the proposed direction are below:
 - (a) Changes to the funding system and the resultant Preschool Funding Model stemmed from a review by Professor Deborah Brennan, which made recommendations to ensure that funding for early childhood education was simpler, better targeted and easier to understand, to support preschool access, including three-year-old children from disadvantaged backgrounds.
 - (b) Community preschools make up approximately 25 per cent of preschool programme provision in NSW, with a further five per cent located in schools, and the remaining 75 per cent in long day care¹. This is in contrast to other jurisdictions with smaller long day care sectors.
 - (c) The profile of preschool services NSW currently funds using both Commonwealth and NSW government funding are:
 - i. 100 government run preschools;
 - ii. around 750 community preschools; and
 - iii. over 2000 long day care providers
 - (d) The Long Day Care National Partnership Grants Program made \$20 million in funding available to long day care centres in 2015-16. The objective is to increase participation of four and five-year-old children in quality preschool programmes the year before full-time school. The Program will be assessed, and future options will be developed to support access and enrolment targets irrespective of setting.
 - (e) Preschool education has also been supported in not-for-profit long day care centres through a separate NSW initiative, the Long Day Care Grants Program.

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 National Partnership.
23. With regard to reporting on attendance, NSW has agreed targets for 2015, 2016 and 2017 with the Commonwealth, as set out in Table 4 below, and will report on progress towards these targets as part of the National Collection.

¹ Long day care centres account for approximately 65 per cent of enrolments in NSW. The datasets are somewhat duplicated and therefore the total is 105 per cent.

Table 4: Bilaterally agreed attendance targets

2014 performance	2015 Target	2016 Target	2017 Target	Performance Benchmark/Target
96.5 per cent	90 per cent	90 per cent	90 per cent	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 has participated in a quality preschool programme for a minimum of one hour during the collection period.

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 National Partnership, are set out in Part 4 and Schedule A of the National Partnership.
25. These data and performance specifications will be used to report NSWs' performance, except for the supplementary data agreed by the Parties to this Implementation Plan.
26. 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 National Minimum Data Set (NMDS):
 - (a) PI calculation description (numerator, denominator, computation and presentation)
 - (b) numerator information (collection name and population description)
 - (c) denominator information (collection name and population description)
 - (d) calculation notes (including any information about how the PI is calculated)
 - (e) methodology
 - (f) 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 Leslie Williams MP

Minister for Early Childhood 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:



25.5.16

Signature

Date

The Hon Leslie Williams MP

Minister for Early Childhood Education



6 May 2016

Signature

Date

Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham

Minister for Education and Training