Appendix A.1

1. Background

1.1. When agreeing the Preschool Reform Agreement (PRA) parties agreed the following parameters to guide the development of Appendix A.1.

Appendix A.1 – Enrolment and Attendance Measures

The purpose of this appendix will be to agree the details of the new enrolment and attendance measures. This will include, but not be limited to, consideration of:

- Definition of 'attendance', including a reasonable proportion of 600 hours, and considering reasons for non-attendance and attendance levels in comparable settings
- Definition of 'disadvantaged'
- A set of high-level principles that will guide the setting of bilateral enrolment and attendance targets, including but not limited to:
 - Negotiated in good faith
 - Targets will be set at achievable rates, cognisant of baseline data and States' circumstances
 - Will take into account contemporary data collection methods and good practice
- High level methodology to measure enrolment and attendance with detailed data definitions and calculation to be included in Appendix B – Performance Indicator Specifications
- How data will be provided (method, frequency)
- Data storage and usage arrangements

Appendix A.1 will be presented to Education Ministers for their signature, reflecting a decision-point and agreement, by Education Ministers in the first quarter of 2023.

2. Definition of Attendance

- 2.1. Attendance under the PRA is defined as participation in a preschool education program compliant with the Early Years Learning Framework¹ and the National Quality Framework (NQF)¹ delivered by an early childhood teacher (ECT).
- 2.2. For the purposes of reporting attendance under the PRA, compliance with the ECT requirements under the NQF will be taken to meet the requirement for 'delivery by' an ECT during the lifetime of the agreement. The Australian Government will explore the feasibility and merits of options for more direct measurement under future agreements.

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¹ Or state equivalent.

3. Definition of 'disadvantaged'

- 3.1. The definition of disadvantaged is defined as students residing in SEIFA relative disadvantage Quintile 1 as measured "by the SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD) with potential for a more granular measure of socio-economic disadvantage to be adopted as data improvements are implemented, if agreed by parties to the Agreement. States² may use different measures for their performance reporting as agreed bilaterally with the Australian Government in Implementation Plans."
 - 3.1.1. As per Appendix B a child's SEIFA status will be determined by the residential address of the child.
- 3.2. Early Childhood Policy Group (ECPG) will collectively develop and agree a workplan to guide this work over the life of the agreement (noting this work is broader than the PRA). EMM agreement will need to be sought before implementing a new measure.

4. High-level enrolment and attendance measurement methodology

Measurement of Enrolment

- 4.1. The measure of enrolment will be counted as children enrolled in a preschool program(s) offering 600 (or more) *program hours* at the relevant enrolment reference point or period.
- 4.2. Where children are in a preschool program in CBDC, they will be considered enrolled if they were charged for care during the week of the relevant enrolment reference point or period. *Program hours* will be calculated based on charged hours across the full week. Enrolment in a CBDC program will be assumed to be 12 weeks each term.
- 4.3. The State of the child's service address for the relevant enrolment reference point or period will be the child's 'Home-State' for performance assessment.
 - 4.3.1. Where a child is enrolled in multiple services across more than one state for the relevant enrolment reference point or period, the ABS will use statistical linkage to identify and aggregate program hours. These will be credited to the Home-State.
 - 4.3.2. The State with the greater number of *program hours* will be taken as the *Home-State*. If *program hours* are equal, for the purpose of attendance performance indicators the state with the greater number of attendance hours will be taken as the *Home-State*.

Measurement of Enrolment for enrolment performance indicators

4.4. The enrolment numerator will be derived from enrolment data collected for the *enrolment reference period in August*.

² In this appendix all parties apart from the Commonwealth are referred to as 'States'. References to 'jurisdictions' denotes inclusively the Commonwealth, States and Territories. The Commonwealth will be referred to as the Australian Government.

Measurement of Enrolment for attendance performance indicators

- 4.5. The attendance denominator will be derived from enrolment data collected for the *enrolment reference point in Term 2*.
 - 4.5.1. Enrolment data will include child specific start and end dates, and total *program* weeks for each term in the attendance reference period (program specific).

Measuring Attendance in hours

- 4.6. States will submit attendance hours for all children who attend at any time during the state specific *attendance reference period* (see section 4.10).
 - 4.6.1. The attendance denominator will be derived from a count of all children enrolled at the enrolment reference point in Term 2.
- 4.7. The count of attendance hours for children in dedicated preschool (sessional) programs will be based on the length of a session for each child reported as attending, not arrival and departure times.
 - 4.7.1. For this count actual session hours will be reported (e.g. duration calculated from session start and end time). Where this is not feasible States will have the option to report an estimate of hours if the estimation methodology is explained and is sound.
 - 4.7.2. For example, States or Territories with school-based delivery may wish to provide attendance data that is consistent with national school attendance reporting business rules.
- 4.8. Attendance hours in CBDC contexts will be calculated on the basis of arrival and departure times recorded in the CCSS for individual children.
- 4.9. Where children attend multiple services, the ABS will use statistical linkage to identify children in State and Australian Government datasets and aggregate their hours of attendance.
 - 4.9.1. Where children have consecutive enrolment(s) interstate that are not recorded against the *enrolment reference point in Term 2*, attendance hours will be counted for Term 2 only.

Method to extrapolate reported hours to estimate annual hours

4.10. The hours of attendance reported across the *attendance reference period* will be divided by the number of *program weeks* in the term(s) in the *attendance reference period*, to calculate a weekly average. This will be multiplied by the number of *program weeks* across the year.

For dedicated preschool (sessional) services, the number of *program weeks* in the term(s) will be used, noting these may vary from state to state and year to year. For CBDC services there are assumed to be 12 *program weeks* each term (refer to 4.2).

4.10.1. Where children are enrolled simultaneously in multiple services across more than one state for the *enrolment reference point in Term 2*, attendance in each

- state will be extrapolated according to the state-specific *attendance reference period* (specified terms and term dates). Extrapolated hours will be added together and assigned to the *Home-State*.
- 4.10.2. Where children are enrolled consecutively in multiple services across more than one state during Term 2, attendance hours for Term 2 will be aggregated for all states, extrapolated from Term 2 only (see section 4.9.1) and assigned to the *Home-State*. Periods of interstate attendance during consecutive enrolments outside of Term 2 will not be counted.

Reporting attendance

- 4.11. Aggregate hours will be reported **for each** Term in the State's *attendance reference period* to allow matching of attendance hours for children who move interstate (see section 4.9.1). This data can be provided to the ABS as a single submission. States may use alternative methods to those outlined in 4.7 and 4.8.
- 4.12. Estimation methodologies (see section 4.7.1) will be outlined in the State's data quality statement.
- 4.13. Information reported for all children in a state's nominated *attendance reference period* should include:
 - 4.13.1. all child-level data
 - 4.13.2. a child's hours-attended aggregated for each Term where more than one Term is provided
 - 4.13.3. data regarding operationally unavailable hours; and
 - 4.13.4. a child's enrolment start and enrolment end dates
- 4.14. Full details will be defined in Appendix B for 2024, 2025, 2026 and 2027.
- 4.15. States can provide supplementary explanatory material and additional information to contextualise their attendance data. Supplementary data must be provided in a timely manner to assist in assessing performance. Once agreed by the Australian Government, the supplementary data and/or contextual information will be used to inform assessment of State's performance benchmarks.

Reasons for non-attendance

4.16. Reasons for non-attendance will not be provided as part of the national minimum data collection but may be collected by States and Territories and provided as part of supplementary data for reporting against the performance indicators (PIs).

Identification of children in the Year Before Fulltime Schooling (YBFS)

- 4.17. For the purposes of performance assessment (numerators to calculate enrolment rates; numerators and denominators to calculate attendance rates), a child will be counted as being in the YBFS if, according to state rules, their birthdate means they are:
 - 4.17.1. eligible for preschool, and it is the year before they become eligible for school, or

- 4.17.2. eligible for either preschool or school, and school is compulsory the following year; and they were not reported as enrolled in preschool in the previous year. This will be established by linking unit level data across the two years.
- 4.18. States can work with the ABS to refine the YBFS calculation in their state.
- 4.19. See Part 9 below for treatment of children who enrol in both years.

5. Guiding principles for setting enrolment and attendance targets

High-level principles to guide the setting of targets

- 5.1. The following high-level principles provide an approach guiding the bilateral setting of enrolment and attendance targets.
 - **Principle 1.** Targets will be set using a nationally consistent formula.
 - **Principle 2.** The target variables will be negotiated bilaterally.
 - **Principle 3.** Targets will be negotiated in good faith and will be set at achievable rates taking into account:
 - i. the reasonable proportion of 600 hours that can be attended in consideration of typical levels of absenteeism
 - ii. baseline data
 - iii. that preschool is non-compulsory
 - iv. a states' circumstances
 - v. school attendance rates in the *foundation year* of school
 - vi. variations in collection maturity
 - vii. state's efforts in implementation initiatives or strategies to support improved participation
 - viii. existing high levels of performance
 - ix. confidence intervals associated with the data.

6. Performance Indicators

Operationally unavailable hours

- 6.1. Operationally unavailable hours may be reported.
- 6.2. Operationally unavailable hours are defined by the three following categories.
 - 6.2.1. Safety where there is a safety risk to attendees at the service provider location or in relation to access to the location, whether declared as an emergency or not.
 - 6.2.2. Planning and pupil-free days where early childhood education program staff, including teachers, are required to undertake forward planning activities for the ongoing provision of service.
 - 6.2.3. Public holidays jurisdictional accepted public holidays.

- 6.3. If operationally unavailable hours are reported, they will be reported as actual where possible or may be estimated where this data is not collected.
- 6.4. Where estimates are provided, jurisdictions will provide an explanation of the estimation method.
 - 6.4.1. For example, States with school-based delivery may wish to provide attendance data that is consistent with national school attendance reporting business rules.
- 6.5. No further breakdown of operationally unavailable hours (e.g. which hours were foreseeable) will be provided in the data collection.
- 6.6. Unanticipated events that cause significant service closures, for example during the pandemic, can be taken into account through the provision for unanticipated events as outlined in PRA Appendix A, clause 21.

Attendance performance indicators

6.7. The original Performance Indicator 'Proportion of children in the year before full-time school who are attending a preschool program(s) for 600 hours', will be operationalised as the 'Proportion of children in the year before full-time school who are enrolled in a preschool program(s) offering 600 program hours, who attend for a reasonable proportion of 600 hours (where operationally unavailable hours may be counted as if they were attended)'. This can also be expressed as a nationally consistent formula:

'at least x% of children attend at least y% of 600 hours'³, where target levels for 'x' and 'y' are negotiated bilaterally.

- 6.8. This appendix agrees the denominator for the indicator will be limited to children enrolled in apreschool program(s) offering 600 program hours, at the enrolment reference point in Term 2.
- 6.9. Given most children enrolled for only 600 hours are unlikely to attend 100% of the time, the indicator will be operationalised to allow for targets to be set at a reasonable proportion of 600 hours, or 'y% of 600 hours'.
 - 6.9.1. The target value for 'y' will be negotiated bilaterally, taking into account the factors set out in the high-level target-setting principles outlined in section 5.1.
 - 6.9.2. For example, if it were agreed that it was reasonable for children to attend 75% of 600 hours, the target attendance level for each child would be 75% of 600 hours or 450 hours.
- 6.10. A target would also be set for the proportion of children expected to achieve that attendance level, for example 'x% of children attending for 450 hours'.
 - 6.10.1. The target for 'x' will also be negotiated bilaterally, taking into account the factors set out in the high-level target-setting principles in outlined in section 5.1.

³ All references to x% and y% are taken to be minimums.

- 6.10.2. For example, if baseline data shows that in the previous year 90% of children attended 450 hours, the value for 'x' might be higher than if it showed only 60% attended 450 hours (noting the target will also depend on other factors).
- 6.11. Operationally unavailable hours (see section 6.1 to 6.6), where reported, these hours will be added to the count of hours attended by each child, as if they had been attended. This ensures States and Territories do not suffer a penalty for supply side constraints over which they have no influence.

Enrolment and attendance - denominator and numerator (Performance Indicators)

6.12. All children

- 6.12.1. Proportion (x%) of children **attending** a quality preschool program(s) for **y**% of 600 hours per year, in the year before full time school (*Performance Indicator 1*).
 - **Numerator**: the number of children enrolled at the *enrolment reference* point in Term 2 attending greater than or equal to y% of 600 hours.
 - **Denominator**: number of YBFS children enrolled in a 600 hour program, at the *enrolment reference point in Term 2*.
- 6.13. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
 - 6.13.1. Proportion (x%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children **enrolled** in quality preschool program(s) for 600 hours per year, in the year before full time school (*Performance Indicator 2.1*).
 - **Numerator**: the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in a 600 hour program during the *enrolment reference period in August*.
 - Denominator: Estimated YBFS children for Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander population noting the confidence intervals for using this population estimate.
 - 6.13.2. Proportion (x%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children **attending** a quality preschool program(s) for **y**% of 600 hours per year, in the year before full time school (*Performance Indicator 2.2*).
 - **Numerator**: the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled at the *enrolment reference point in Term 2* attending greater than or equal to **y**% of 600 hours.
 - **Denominator**: number of YBFS Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in a 600 hour program, at the *enrolment reference point in Term 2*.

6.14. Disadvantaged children⁴

- 6.14.1. Proportion (x%) of disadvantaged children **enrolled** in quality preschool program(s) for 600 hours per year, in the year before full time school (*Performance Indicator 3.1*).
 - **Numerator**: the number of National Quintile 1 children resident in a Socio-Economic Index for Area (IRSD) enrolled in a 600 hour program during the *enrolment reference period in August*.
 - **Denominator**: Estimated number of YBFS children of the National Quintile 1 population resident in a Socio-Economic Index for Areas (Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage) noting the confidence intervals for using this population estimate.
- 6.14.2. Proportion (x%) of disadvantaged children **attending** a quality preschool program(s) for y% of 600 hours per year, in the year before full time school (*Performance Indicator 3.2*).
 - **Numerator**: the number of National Quintile 1 children resident in a Socio-Economic Index for Area (IRSD) enrolled at the *enrolment reference* point in Term 2 attending greater than or equal to **y**% of 600 hours.
 - **Denominator**: Number of National Quintile 1 children resident in a Socio-Economic Index for Area (IRSD) enrolled in a 600 hour program at the *enrolment reference point in Term 2*.
- 6.15. YBFS population estimates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and disadvantaged children are undergoing refinement and will only be used if recommended by the ABS and agreed by all parties ahead of baselining in 2024.
 - 6.15.1. Where they are not suitable, alternatives will be considered multilaterally and agreed through Appendix B.
 - 6.15.2. Data confidence intervals for YBFS estimates will be taken into consideration when setting targets.

Detailed data definitions and calculations to be included in Appendix B

- 6.16. Detailed data specifications will be agreed through Appendix B.
- 6.17. Appendix B may include amendments to the National Minimum Data Set (NMDS) and related METeOR data elements.

⁴ States may use an alternative to Socio-Economic Index for Areas (Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage) for their performance reporting where agreed bilaterally with the Australian Government in Implementation Plans as per 3.1.

7. How data will be provided (method, frequency)

Reference period for performance assessment

- 7.1. States will provide an annual submission of attendance data for Term 2, with an option to submit an additional term of data for Term 1 or Term 3 as per bilateral agreement.
- 7.2. If a State intends to provide attendance data for an additional term, the State will nominate their preferred additional academic block (Term 1 or Term 3) in their Implementation Plan for bilateral agreement.
- 7.3. Any additional term of data will be submitted appended with Term 2 data to allow for timely processing by the ABS.
- 7.4. Attendance data submitted against the *attendance reference period* will be supplied as aggregated data. Child-level attendance data prepared for submission is to be aggregated by term.
- 7.5. The Australian Government will provide CCSS data to allow the ABS to match the school term(s) of data provided by States, including an additional two weeks to cover school holidays (that is, 12 weeks of data per term).
- 7.6. Attendance data is provided for the purpose of reporting on attendance. No additional data will be provided for other monitoring purposes.

8. Data storage and usage arrangements

Ongoing data management arrangements

8.1. The ABS will continue to manage the data for the life of the current PRA. This includes receiving data from relevant data custodians, supporting cleaning/validation, data linkage, confirming analysis outcomes with states, and reporting final outcomes to the Australian Government.

9. Treatment of children who enrol in a year before full time school preschool program two years in a row

Funding

- 9.1. The Australian government has agreed to offer an additional year of per child funding to States, commencing 2023 for the life of the current PRA, where:
 - a child has accessed preschool in the year that is the year they become eligible for preschool and the year before they become eligible for school according to state rules, and then accesses a further year of preschool before starting school; and
 - the state:
 - o provides an additional year of funding for the child in that further year;
 - advises the Australian Government of the conditions for that funding; and
 - o collects and submits data each program year on:
 - the number of children and aggregate state funding provided; and

- unit record data with best-practice statistical linkage keys for accurate linkage to the National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection.
- 9.2. Australian Government funding will:
 - be paid retrospectively;
 - not exceed the total state funding provided for children who access a further year of preschool before starting school as per paragraph 9.1;
 - be added to the base PRA funding allocation before the top-up to 2021 funding level is calculated; and
 - be capped at 6 per cent of the state's estimated YBFS population multiplied by the per child amount.

Impact on population estimates

- 9.3. Children who enrol in a year before full time school preschool program two years in a row will not be included in YBFS population estimates.
- 9.4. YBFS population estimates:
 - will continue to be based on enrolment in the foundation year of school (so children
 under this measure will be counted once with respect to YBFS population estimates
 and PRA base allocations); and
 - will be used as the denominator to calculate PRA performance rates for enrolment (with additional specifications as outlined above) noting the confidence intervals for using this population estimate.

Performance measurement

- 9.5. For the purposes of performance assessment, numerators to calculate enrolment rates, and numerators and denominators to calculate attendance rates::
 - will not include children in the further year of preschool under this measure; but
 - will include those children in their first year of preschool (that is, in the year that is the year they become eligible for preschool and the year before they become eligible for school according to state rules).
 - This means there will be a lag before these children are reflected in YBFS population estimates. As long as rates remain relatively stable across years this will not be material.
 - Rates will be monitored so potential impacts on the accuracy of the YBFS population estimates can be taken into account in assessing performance against targets.

Glossary

Attendance reference period — must include the state's second term (Term 2). However, acknowledging state and territory circumstances, the attendance reference period may be augmented through bilateral agreement with the Australian Government (via Implementation Plans), to allow states to append Term 1 or Term 3 attendance information. That is, a state's attendance reference period may submit attendance data for:

- Term 2 only; or
- Term 1 and Term 2; or
- Term 2 and Term 3.

Enrolment reference point Term 2 (attendance PI denominator) – is the Monday in the last week, common to all states, with five school days in Term 2. That is, every day in the week is a school day across all states and territories. A child is counted if they are enrolled in a program as at that day, regardless of which day of the week the child attends.

• For CCS purposes, a child is considered enrolled under a preschool program once the child's participation is charged for at least one hour of care in that week.

Enrolment reference period in August (enrolment PI numerator) — is the week containing the first Friday of August when information for the National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection is gathered.

• For CCS purposes, a child is considered enrolled under a preschool program once the child's participation is charged for at least one hour of care during that week.

Foundation year – the first year of compulsory schooling (noting children may enrol in *foundation year* before they are compulsory school age.)

Home-State — the State of the child's service address for the enrolment reference point or period, where that service records the greatest number of *program hours* for the child. If a child has equal *program hours* across two or more states, for the purposes of the attendance performance indicators the *Home-State* is the State for which the greatest number of attendance hours have been recorded.

Program hours – hours in the program in which a child is enrolled, regardless of child-specific enrolment dates. For example, if a program offers 600 hours in a year, 600 program hours would be reported even if a child enrolled part-way through the year.

Program weeks – the number of weeks in the program in which a child is enrolled (by year or term), regardless of child-specific enrolment dates. For example, if a program runs for 9 weeks in a term, 9 program weeks would be reported, even if a child enrols part-way through the term.

Submission due date – is the latest date the National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection is submitted to the Australian Bureau of Statistics data platform.

Supplementary data — additional information that may be provided by a State to the Australian Government to aid interpretation of the performance data, on which the Australian Government will consult with the relevant State.

Signed for and on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia by Senator The Honourable Dr Jess Walsh Minister for Early Childhood Education _/___/ Signed for and on behalf of the Signed for and on behalf of the State of New South Wales by State of Victoria by The Honourable Courtney Houssos MLC The Honourable Lizzie Blandthorn MLC Acting for and on behalf of the Minister for Children Minister for Education and Early Learning ____/____ 16, 12, 2025 Signed for and on behalf of the Signed for and on behalf of the State of Western Australia by State of Queensland by The Honourable Sabine Winton MLA The Honourable John-Paul Langbroek MP Minister for Education and the Arts Minister for Education, Early Childhood ____/____ Signed for and on behalf of the Signed for and on behalf of the State of South Australia by State of Tasmania by The Honourable Jo Palmer MLC The Honourable Blair Boyer MP Minister for Education, Training and Skills Minister for Education ____/___/____ ____/___/____ Signed for and on behalf of the Australian **Signed** for and on behalf of the Northern Capital Territory by Territory by The Honourable Yvette Berry MLA The Honourable Jo Hersey MLA Minister for Education and Training, Early Education Minister for Education and Early Childhood ____/___/____ ____/____

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