

South Australia's Implementation Plan

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ON UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION – 2018 AND 2019

PART 1: PRELIMINARIES

1. This Implementation Plan is a schedule to the National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education – 2018 and 2019 (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 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 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 will cease on completion or termination of the National Partnership, including final performance reporting and processing of final payments against performance benchmarks or milestones.
8. This Implementation Plan may be varied by written agreement between the Commonwealth and State Ministers responsible for it under the overarching National Partnership.
9. 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

10. 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.
11. 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	Affordable access for all children 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 2019	NA
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> <p>Preschool Support Program and</p>	1 Jan 2018	31 Dec 2019	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 2016 – Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage).

No	Title	Short description	Planned start date	Planned end date	Dependent on projects
		<p>Speech and Language Program – supporting access to Department of Education (department) preschools for children with additional needs and disabilities</p> <p>Inclusive Preschool Programs – supporting access to department preschools for children with a disability</p> <p>Indigenous Children with Impaired Hearing Preschool Program – supporting access to department preschools for Indigenous children</p> <p>Preschool Bilingual Program – supporting access to department preschools for children from non-English speaking backgrounds</p> <p>Attendance Improvement Project – improving regular attendance at preschool for all children enrolled in department 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 initiatives to support department preschools in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands to improve Indigenous participation</p>	1 Jan 2018	31 Dec 2019	NA

12. 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.
13. 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 on children who commence preschool at the beginning of 2019. If the families accept the offer of a mid-year placement at one of these schools, this will result in these children only receiving six months of preschool provision. Under the current funding and service agreement between the Minister and the SA Commission for Catholic Schools Inc, CESA must provide 600 hours per child per annum to children in their year before full-time school. The department will continue to monitor CESA's mid-year intake and any impact on this obligation to provide 600 hours.

Estimated costs

14. The maximum financial contribution to be provided by the Commonwealth for the project to SA is **\$56.5 million** payable in accordance with the milestones and performance 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 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	2019-20	Total
Element 1	13.5	26.1	13.1	52.7
Element 2	0.5	1.5	0.8	2.8
Element 3	0.1	0.6	0.3	1.0
Total estimated budget	14.1	28.2	14.2	56.5
<i>less estimated Commonwealth contribution</i>	<i>8.4</i>	<i>28.2</i>	<i>19.9</i>	<i>56.5</i>
<i>equals estimated balance of non-Commonwealth contributions **</i>	<i>5.7</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>-5.7</i>	<i>-</i>
Total Commonwealth contribution	8.4	28.2	19.9	56.5

*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

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 and Indigenous 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	Outcomes	Project Objectives	Responsibilities
Element 1 – Affordable access for all children to 600 hours of preschool	<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>	All children, including vulnerable and disadvantaged children, have access to, and participate in, an affordable, quality early childhood education program	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	SA

Project elements	Outputs	Outcomes	Project Objectives	Responsibilities
Element 2 – Access for Indigenous children and vulnerable and disadvantaged children	<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>	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	SA
Element 3 – Maintaining attendance at 90% for children enrolled in preschool	<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 initiatives to support department 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>	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	SA

Risk management

18. The South Australian Department for 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.

South Australian Context

19. The South Australian Department for Education 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 and preschools to provide access to 600 hours of preschool to children not accessing, or unable to access, SA Government funded preschools (including 19 non-government services and a Preschool of the Air service provider).

- 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 2018 was \$422.
- 19.2 Preschool is funded by the SA Government. Under the current departmental preschool enrolment policy, four and five-year-old children, three-year-old Indigenous children and 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 2018, 89 per cent of children enrolled in preschool programs received their access to 600 hours from one of 405 SA Government funded service providers (including 19 non-government services and a Preschool of the Air service provider), with 85 per cent of the Commonwealth's funding contribution to SA allocated in the budget plan to support this strategy. The remaining 11 per cent of all children enrolled in preschool programs were receiving their access to 600 hours of early childhood education funded preschool programs from one of 144 non-government service providers, with 15 per cent of the Commonwealth's funding contribution to SA allocated in the budget plan 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) range from \$1,210 to \$2,430 as an annual allocation in 2019 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 \$1,810 per enrolment if the child is Indigenous or a concession card holder and a further \$3,020 if the child has a disability. Indexation of the per capita subsidies of 2 per cent has been included in 2019.

- 19.5 In terms of progress on early childhood development, the 2015 Australian Early Development Census, 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 findings 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. Research shows that children who attended preschool are less likely to be developmentally vulnerable across all five developmental domains assessed by the AEDC.
- 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 47 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 targets for 2018 and 2019 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

2017 Performance	2018 Target	2019 Target	Performance Benchmark/Target
98 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 program for a minimum of one hour during the collection period.

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:

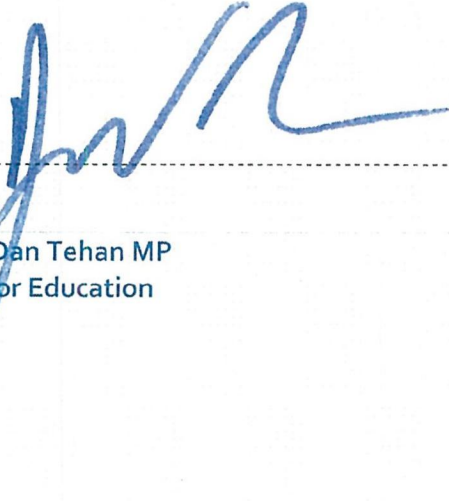


6/4/19

Signature

Date

The Hon John Gardner MP
South Australian Minister for Education



29/3/19

Signature

Date

The Hon Dan Tehan MP
Minister for Education