

Preschool Boost

Preschool Boost is a funding program designed to help Flying Start partner services to do more to address developmental vulnerability and improve outcomes for 3-and 4-year-old children, their families and communities.

About the program

Preschool Boost is a universal program to address developmental vulnerability aligned to the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) domains.

Preschool Boost funding can be used to purchase pre-approved allied health and other quality, evidence-informed programs from the Preschool Boost menu. Preschool Boost is designed to support groups of children and enhance the capability of services, educators, and parents. It must not be spent on individual child supports, including individual assessments.

All partner services are required to meet the Acting early, with others partnership obligations, by planning in the Flying Start Partnership Plan how they will use their Preschool Boost funding to address developmental vulnerabilities identified within their community.

See the [Preschool Boost menu fact sheet](#) for more information about how to use the menu.

Key outcomes

Preschool Boost aims to improve outcomes for children through the purchase of evidence-informed programs and supports from the Preschool Boost menu that address community identified developmental vulnerabilities and service priorities.

Eligibility and funding requirements

All Partner Services receive Preschool Boost funding, recognising that developmental vulnerability exists in every area of South Australia.

Refer to the [Policy and Funding Guide](#) for funding rates and detailed spending rules for Preschool Boost, including spending parameters.

Pooling arrangements

Services may choose to pool Preschool Boost funds with other services to share costs. These arrangements must be managed by the services involved. If pooling, services need to:

- clearly indicate pooling in their Flying Start Partnership Plan
- ensure services and programs are either listed on the Preschool Boost menu or meet the off-menu approval guidelines (see below)



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- manage pooled funds collaboratively and transparently
- use pooling strategically – for example, to reduce travel costs, consolidate training, or enable suppliers to deliver supports efficiently across services

Exceptions / special circumstances

Off-menu spend

Flexibility is available to support service innovation or if menu gaps exist. Requests to purchase programs or supports that are not listed on the Preschool Boost menu (off-menu) must:

- be capped at 20% of the total Preschool Boost funding allocation unless otherwise approved
- be requested via a formal application for OECD Local Team approval
- align with the intent of addressing developmental vulnerability and inclusion, not individual one-on-one supports

In some circumstances services may apply to exceed the 20% cap, provided total spending remains within the funding allocation. See the [Policy and Funding Guide](#) for more information about when off-menu programs or supports may be approved.

To apply for off-menu spending, services need to complete the [application form](#) and submit it to their OECD Local Team for approval via email.

How to fill out the Flying Start Partnership Plan

Preschool Boost spending is planned within the Acting early, with others priority area of the Flying Start Partnership Plan. Planning is based on the unique needs of each service's children and community and helps align spending with these needs.

Plans should be informed by local evidence of need, including AEDC data. AEDC data provides insights across 5 key developmental areas (domains), showing where early support can have the most impact. Services should use their AEDC data to identify:

- the percentage of children who are developmentally vulnerable in each of the 5 AEDC domains for the region where their service is located
- strengths and developmental vulnerabilities for their community across the 5 AEDC domains
- where extra support is needed
- what outcomes the service is trying to achieve
- the training, programs or supports that will help



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For more information about using AEDC data in planning, see the [Preschool Boost and AEDC data fact sheet](#).

Once services have explored local data, they can use this to support completion of the Acting early, with others priority area of the Flying Start Partnership plan by:

- choosing an AEDC domain (up to 3) where service data indicates vulnerability and developing a goal about what the service wants to achieve that is grounded in that domain or subdomain
- using the Preschool Boost menu to choose actions that support the service's goal
- contacting Preschool Boost menu suppliers early to discuss needs, get a quote, check availability and provisionally book
- awaiting approval of their Flying Start Partnership Plan before confirming bookings with suppliers

Services are encouraged to purchase complementary supports for each of the goals in the Acting early, with others priority, rather than selecting a large number of different support types across multiple areas.

To ensure a focused and coordinated approach, services should access a maximum of 4 supports per goal. For example, a service with a goal targeting the emotional regulation AEDC sub domain may combine a group program for children, educator upskill and a parent program as actions to support this goal.

Services should balance educator upskilling with direct delivery supports for children and families to build capability and support the sustainable implementation of strategies and practices within the service over time.

Backfill

Backfill to release staff to participate in an approved planning, implementation or evaluation activity can be fully covered if the cost does not exceed 25% of the total Preschool Boost funding allocation. See the [Policy and Funding Guide](#) for more information about how backfill can be used to support implementation of the Preschool Boost program.

In the Flying Start Partnership Plan, services are asked to estimate the amount of backfill required for each of the supports/ programs that the services plan to purchase. This helps guide planning and supports services to remain within their 25% backfill spending cap. If substantial backfill is anticipated, services are encouraged to explore alternative supports, such as small group programs and in-room coaching, to reduce the need for educator release time.

Tips and hints for using this data

Services use local data and community insights to guide planning. This helps target spending and improve outcomes for children. AEDC data should be considered alongside the service's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and other data sources to build a more complete picture of local needs.



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For more information about linking the AEDC domains to the National Quality Standard (NQS) and identifying quality improvement strategies see the [Preschool Boost and QIP fact sheet](#).

For more information about using AEDC data in planning, see the [Preschool Boost and AEDC data fact sheet](#).

What do these words mean?

AEDC: Australian Early Development Census

Services: Flying Start partner services

Supplier: the organisation delivering the Preschool Boost program or support

Supports: programs or allied health supports that can be purchased by a service to address developmental vulnerability

Where to go for more information

- OECD website: [Preschool Boost for early childhood services](#)
- [OECD Partner Portal](#)
- [Policy and Funding Guide](#)
- Your OECD Local Team

