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Flying Start

Early Years Assessment and Learning Tool (EYALT) Trial 2026-27 Grants



Government of South Australia

Flying Start

Acknowledgement of Country

From the heart:

We acknowledge the Aboriginal peoples as the First peoples of South Australia and as custodians of the lands, waters, skies and communities where we live, learn and raise children.

We recognise Aboriginal peoples as having the longest living culture, raising children safe and strong in their identity, Community, Culture, and Connection to Country.

We pay our deep respects to Elders past and present, and their role as the first knowledge sharers for children. We follow in their footsteps.

Aboriginal peoples, working with and for children, are central in shaping our work. Their wisdom, advice, and guidance enriches our practices, creating a more inclusive and culturally safe environment for children and families.

We respect Aboriginal peoples' ways of being, doing and wise practices guiding our continual learning.

Together we walk and build stronger, more supportive communities for all children.

Terminology

In South Australia, we acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands on which the staff of the Government of South Australia works. We respect preference to use the term 'Aboriginal peoples' to acknowledge in written and spoken language both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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These guidelines set out the funding requirements for the Early Years Assessment and Learning Tool (EYALT) Trial 2026-27 Grants program. The Office for Early Childhood Development (OECD) is responsible for administering the program.

Key information

Program name:	Office of Early Childhood Development Early Years Assessment and Learning Tool (EYALT) Trial Grants
Grant opening date:	Wednesday, 19 August 2026
Grant closing date:	Friday, 9 April 2027
Type of funding:	One-off funding, paid in two instalments
Eligibility:	Services with Early Childhood Teachers who undertake and complete necessary training and agreed number of assessments using the EYALT. These guidelines are for non-government preschools. Government preschool services are eligible for funding via the Department for Education.

Key dates

Activity	Anticipated dates
Applications open	Friday, 4 September 2026
Applications close	Friday, 9 April 2027
Applications assessed	Applications will be assessed on a rolling basis
Notification of outcomes	Services will be notified and grant agreements offered on a rolling basis once assessed.
Contract execution	Grant agreements will need to be signed within 2 weeks of receipt by the service
Initial payments made	30 October 2026 and 21 May 2027
Final payment made	31 August 2027
End of grant funding	31 December 2027

*Anticipated dates listed in the table above may change.

Background

In response to the Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care, the OECD was created as the system steward. Its task is to elevate South Australia as a national leader in the early childhood development sector and improve the lives of South Australian children, reducing vulnerability and improving outcomes.

The *Education and Care Services National Law* requires Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services to assess and document children's learning and development. Historically the ECEC sector has not had access to a high-quality, validated formative assessment tool to support teachers and educators to understand and support children's learning progress.

Under the Preschool Reform Agreement (PRA), states have agreed to work collaboratively with the Commonwealth to implement a new national Preschool Outcomes Measure. Funding paid under the Agreement is tied to South Australia's participation in activities that continue to support outcomes measurement.

The Department for Education led South Australia's POM trial in 2025. The trial tested the University of Melbourne's Early Years Assessment and Learning Tool (EYALT) as the aligned tool to complete the POM. South Australia will continue to test the EYALT in 2026 and 2027 allowing services to undertake assessments at multiple points to allow for a more complete understanding of learning progressions, and to examine how the EYALT can be used to inform learning transition statements.

As part of the trial, the EYALT tools and resources will be contextualised to the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and supporting resources developed.

Purpose of the grants

The Government of South Australia is providing one-off grants to approved services of 3-year and 4-year-old preschool to support them participating in training on the use of the EYALT and trialling the EYALT to support everyday teaching practices. Services will have relative discretion over how funds are used to support the use of EYALT at their service.

The trial will be run across two cohorts:

- Cohort 1 will involve ECTs who participated in the 2025 trial and who have already completed introductory training on use of the EYALT. Cohort 1 will be required to complete a half-day, online refresher training workshop in Term 3 of 2026 before completing assessments in Terms 4, 2026 and Terms 2 and 4, 2027 for a minimum of 4 children per term and a trial evaluation.
- Cohort 2 will be open to ECTs who have not previously trialled the EYALT. Introductory training to the EYALT will be delivered in Term 1, 2027 to enable this cohort to complete assessments in Terms 2 and 4, 2027 for a minimum of 4 children per term and a trial evaluation.

Available funding

Participating services will be able to apply for a one-off grant of:

- $3,500 for one Early Childhood Teacher
- $5,000 for two or more Early Childhood Teachers

The grant will be paid in two instalments, each comprising 50% of the total funding. The first instalment will be paid after the Early Childhood Teacher(s) has completed the required EYALT training workshops. The final instalment of the grant payment will be paid after completion of the assessment in Term 2, 2027.

It may be that more applications are received than there are available places. Services should note that grants will be offered as eligible applications are received.

Who can apply

South Australian services providing 3-year and 4-year-old preschool with Early Childhood Teachers who register to participate in the OECD EYALT trial in 2026-27.

Activities that may be funded

The grants will allow services to tailor how they support EYALT implementation based on their individual services and professional learning support needs and goals.

This may include:

- Covering costs associated with setting up access to the EYALT, including time to engage practice and technical supports
- Covering the backfill costs of providing time for teachers and educators to:
    - Participate in the EYALT professional learning sessions
    - Complete the EYALT modules for each child. This is anticipated to take 5-15 minutes for each module for each child, reducing as familiarity with the module increases
- Purchasing or upgrading IT equipment that is to be used for logging on and completing the tool modules (e.g. electronic tablet) and for accessing professional development activities.

Trial commitment

ECTs who volunteer to participate in the EYALT trial will be required to:

- Complete the relevant EYALT training required for their cohort. This will involve either the half-day, online refresher training for Cohort 1, or the introductory EYALT training for Cohort 2.
- For Cohort 1: Trial the EYALT by completing learning assessments using the EYALT with a minimum of four preschool children per term in Term 4, 2026 and Terms 2 and 4, 2027. For Cohort 2: Trial the EYALT by completing learning assessments using the EYALT with a minimum of four preschool children in Terms 2 and 4, 2027.
- Provide their perspectives on their experience of using the EYALT by completing a post-trial online evaluation survey.

Self-paced online modules and other professional development opportunities will be made available throughout the course of the trial. Professional development and support for Early Childhood Teachers are integral factors in ensuring the successful implementation of the EYALT, and Early Learning Teachers are strongly encouraged to complete these where possible.

Funding conditions for applicants

1. You must agree to the requirements outlined in these guidelines.
2. Only apply if you intend to accept a grant.
3. If your application is selected for a grant, you must enter into a formal funding agreement.
4. If your application is selected for a grant, the organisation listed as the applicant will be responsible for receiving and managing the grant funds and all grant reporting and acquittal obligations.
5. Payments will be provided at the times and in the manner specified in the funding agreement and will be subject to meeting all conditions of the funding agreement.
6. You must provide an acquittal form with supporting evidence, as per the funding agreement, after the project is completed.
7. You must return any unspent grant funds, or grant funds not expended in accordance with the funding conditions.
8. You must accept responsibility for any costs exceeding the agreed funding amount or unforeseen expenditure. No additional grant funding will be provided.

How to apply

Grant applications will be submitted and managed through SmartyGrants. Applications should be supported by all information necessary to complete the grant agreement.

The OECD will assess submissions and prepare a grant agreement for successful applicants.

How to submit your application

Please submit via an online form through SmartyGrants.

Support available

Further support is available through:

- Your OECD Local Team
- OECD.EYALT@sa.gov.au

For assistance with the SmartyGrants online application system, please:

- review the SmartyGrants Help Guide and Applicant Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- contact SmartyGrants Support Desk (03) 9320 6888 between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday
- email service@smartygrants.com.au.

Confidential information

If you believe that any information in your application should remain confidential or be regarded as commercial-in-confidence, you must clearly identify which information and the reason for its confidentiality.

Please be aware that the OECD must meet certain legislative, parliamentary and administrative accountability, as well as the transparency requirements of the Australian Government and the Government of South Australia. These responsibilities include public disclosure in accordance with state Department of the Premier and Cabinet policy.

The OECD will treat all information provided by applicants sensitively. Any information contained in or relating to an application, including information that you identify as confidential, may be disclosed by us:

- to our employees, advisers or third parties in order to evaluate and assess an application
- within the Government of South Australia or other entities where this serves OECD's legitimate interest
- in response to a request by a House or Committee of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia or South Australia
- if the application is successful, for promotion of project activities and outcomes
- where information is authorised or permitted by law to be disclosed
- where the information is already in the public domain.

Glossary

Acquittal	The process of reporting on and verifying the use of grant funds, including providing evidence of expenditure and project completion
Applicant	The individual or organisation applying for funding
Application	Documents used to apply for funding
ECEC	Early childhood education and care
Grant funding	Government financial support to eligible applicants for approved projects, subject to specific conditions
OECD	Office for Early Childhood Development – the organisation that manages this grants program, responsible for assessing applications, distributing funds and supporting successful projects