

Preschool Boost – off-menu spending process

1. Purpose

This document outlines the criteria and process for approving off-menu spending under the Preschool Boost program. Off-menu spending allows Flying Start partner services to respond to local needs where the standard Preschool Boost menu does not offer a suitable or accessible option.

2. Scope

This process applies to:

- all Flying Start partner services participating in the Preschool Boost program
- OECD Local Teams, OECD Local Team Regional Managers, and members of the Preschool Boost approval panel

3. Framework statement

Off-menu spending may be approved under specific conditions to support equitable access and quality outcomes. While the Preschool Boost menu remains the primary resource for selecting programs and services, off-menu flexibility allows for locally responsive, evidence-informed decisions where gaps exist.

4. Process principles

All off-menu spending must:

- be formally applied for and approved by the OECD Local Team
- not exceed 20% of the total funding allocation, unless an exception is approved¹
- align with the intent of Preschool Boost funding by:
 - supporting groups of children (not individual child supports or assessments)
 - promoting high-quality, evidence-informed programs
 - addressing developmental vulnerability aligned to the AEDC domains
 - building service, educator, and family capability

5. Eligibility criteria

Off-menu programs or supports may be approved where a menu item:

- does not have availability to support a request within a reasonable time period (life span of the approved Preschool Boost plan)
- exceeds a partner services' total year 1 budget allocation and a cost-effective alternative is identified
- is not accessible in the region
- is only available online, but a face-to-face local provider is preferred and available.

¹ Services may apply to exceed the 20 per cent cap if total spend remains within their overall allocation



Other eligible uses include:

- topping-up hours for existing part time allied health professionals employed by the partner service
- purchasing programs that are locally innovative or part of site-based research projects contributing to the evidence base for inclusion on the Preschool Boost menu
- exceptional circumstances, for other purposes where a written request has been made and authorised in writing by the OECD.

6. Additional support for regional partner services

Additional support may be available to ensure equity in rural and remote communities, including:

- travel costs for approved suppliers or early-years staff
- additional funds where regional availability is limited

Eligibility will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, considering existing allocations, local needs and service delivery constraints. Rural and remote areas will be classified using OECD-approved criteria.

7. Step-by-step process for off-menu requests

Step	Action and details
Step 1: Service identifies need	<p>Flying Start partner service determines that a menu item is not suitable, unavailable, unaffordable, or inaccessible.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Flying Start partner service preference to top-up existing allied health staff or an exceptional/ innovative service.</p> <p><i>Service checks the eligibility criteria in the off-menu framework (consult your OECD Local Team informally before applying if unsure).</i></p>
Step 2: Submit application	<p>Flying Start partner service sends the relevant off-menu form to the supplier</p> <p>OR</p> <p>completes a form for exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>Completed application forms are emailed by the Flying Start partner service to their OECD Local Team inbox</p> <p>*Note: allied-health top-ups can be included directly in the plan without preapproval</p>



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Step 3: Local Team review	<p>OECD Regional manager assesses the application against the criteria below</p> <p>Application assessment matrix – step 3 detail</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Assessment criteria</th> <th>Outcome</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Missing a tick for cultural responsiveness</td> <td>✗ not approved</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Missing a tick for inclusion</td> <td>✗ not approved</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No tick for ECEC experience or no explanation of implementation in ECEC setting</td> <td>✗ not approved</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All criteria met and program/ support on preapproved list</td> <td>✓ approve</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All criteria met but program / support not on preapproved list</td> <td>refer to approval panel</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Application requests to exceed 20% cap</td> <td>refer to approval panel</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Application requests regional top-up or remote support</td> <td>refer to approval panel</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Exceptional circumstance</td> <td>refer to approval panel</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Assessment criteria	Outcome	Missing a tick for cultural responsiveness	✗ not approved	Missing a tick for inclusion	✗ not approved	No tick for ECEC experience or no explanation of implementation in ECEC setting	✗ not approved	All criteria met and program/ support on preapproved list	✓ approve	All criteria met but program / support not on preapproved list	refer to approval panel	Application requests to exceed 20% cap	refer to approval panel	Application requests regional top-up or remote support	refer to approval panel	Exceptional circumstance	refer to approval panel
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Step 4: Approval panel review (if needed)	Group meets fortnightly via Teams. Outcomes provided to OECD regional managers within 2 weeks.																		
Step 5: Service Procurement	<p>OECD regional manager emails the decision to the Flying Start partner service, who in turn notifies the supplier.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flying Start partner service completes their Preschool Boost plan with off-menu details. Tentative bookings are allowed, but final confirmation must wait until the full plan is approved. 																		
Step 6: Recordkeeping and Reporting	Local Teams save application forms to objective																		

8. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Flying Start Partner services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit formal off-menu spending applications to your OECD Local Team May tentatively book providers prior to approval
OECD Local Team regional managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve applications meeting all criteria and within the 20% cap Approve top up on staff AHP spend within the 20% cap Refer all other applications to the approval panel



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate decisions to services and CC OECD.PreschoolBoost@sa.gov.au
Approval panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review applications that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ exceed the 20% funding cap ○ require regional top-up funding ○ include unlisted or unverified programs ○ exceptional circumstance • Provide quality and evidence-based advice • Meet fortnightly 1 hour (if required) via TEAMS

9. Related Documents

- Preschool Boost off-menu application form AHP and program available on OECD website
- Preschool Boost off-menu application form: Extraordinary provided on request from oecd.preschoolboost@sa.gov.au
- Preschool Boost off-menu application form: Regional Accessibility provided on request from oecd.preschoolboost@sa.gov.au

10. Monitoring and Review

- This process will be monitored by the Preschool Boost team to ensure alignment with funding intent, equity outcomes, and regional service needs.
- The process is subject to review annually or as required based on program changes.

Version	Date	Approved By	Summary of Changes
1.0	20/07/2025	Director, Participation and Inclusion.	Initial framework release

