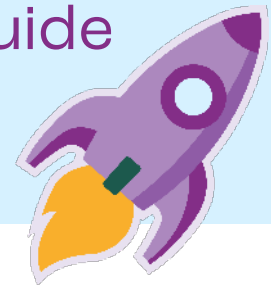


Preschool Plus - Implementation Guide

Delivering Preschool Plus



Purpose

This guide provides practical guidance to support Flying Start services with the implementation of Preschool Plus. It should be read alongside the Flying Start Policy and Funding Guide, which outlines program policy, funding arrangements, eligibility requirements and provider and service obligations.

Delivering Preschool Plus

Preschool Plus offers eligible children up to 1,200 teacher-led preschool hours each year in the two years before school, alongside additional funding and supports that reduce barriers to participation and strengthen children's learning and development.

Delivering Preschool Plus extends beyond providing additional preschool hours. Children participating in Preschool Plus are more likely to experience barriers that affect their ability to enrol, attend and participate consistently in preschool. Partner Services and integrated hubs play an important role in working with families, referring practitioners and other professionals to support children to access and benefit from preschool.

Every child and family will have different experiences, strengths and support needs. Some families may require very little additional support, while others may benefit from coordinated assistance before or throughout their Preschool Plus journey. Services are not expected to respond to every challenge a family may experience. Rather, Preschool Plus provides additional funding, supports and professional partnerships to help services respond to barriers affecting participation.

To be eligible for Preschool Plus a child must be enrolled for a minimum of 1,000 hours of teacher-led preschool over the year, with all endeavours made by the service to encourage the family to enrol and attend for the full 1,200 hours for both years of preschool.

Preparing to deliver Preschool Plus

Before accepting Preschool Plus placements, services should ensure they are ready to deliver the program in accordance with the Flying Start Policy and Funding guide.

For children entering through the Referral pathway, Local Teams will contact services to confirm Preschool Plus capacity before a place is offered to a family. Before confirming capacity, services should consider whether they can deliver the required preschool hours to meet the Preschool Plus participation model within their existing preschool program.



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This includes:

- providing a preschool program that can support children to access 1,200 teacher-led preschool hours each year (see the [Policy and Funding Guide](#) for options on model/hours to meet the minimum requirement)
- structuring enrolments so children can access the intended teacher-led preschool hours across 3 or 4 days a week
- building strong partnerships with families and referring practitioners
- embedding inclusive and trauma-informed practice
- understanding how to access and use the additional Preschool Plus supports.

When planning for Preschool Plus enrolments, services must ensure children can access 1,200 hours of a teacher-led preschool program each year. As a guide:

- Preschool Plus can be delivered across 3 or 4 days each week.
- Teacher-led preschool participation must not exceed 8 hours in a single day.
- Services have to enrol and support children and families to participate in **at least** 1,000 teacher-led preschool hours each year, with Preschool Plus designed to support engagement and attendance of up to 1,200 teacher-led preschool hours.
- Children commencing later in the year may participate on a pro-rata basis.

For long day care services, teacher-led preschool hours are not the same as a child's total hours of attendance. A child may attend the service for 1000 hours across the year but still receive fewer than the intended teacher-led preschool hours. The only hours that can contribute to the minimum 1,000 hours are the teacher-led preschool hours.

Different service operating models may determine whether Preschool Plus participation requirements can be accommodated.

The examples below demonstrate how operating weeks, enrolment days, and session length affect overall Preschool Plus participation capacity.

Service structure	Annual hours available	Suitable for Preschool Plus
4 days x 6 hours x 40 weeks	960 hours	No
4 days x 7.5 hours x 40 weeks	1,200 hours	Yes
3 days x 8 hours x 50 weeks	1,200 hours	Yes
4 days x 6 hours x 50 weeks	1,200 hours	Yes
5 days x 6 hours x 40 weeks	1,200 hours	No

Where a service cannot provide the offer to meet the required Preschool Plus participation, it is not eligible



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to be a Preschool Plus partner service and it should advise the Local Team when advice is sought on confirming capacity for a Preschool Plus placement.

Program supports

Service structure	Annual hours available
Teaching and Learning	Additional teaching and learning funding to support the delivery of increased teacher-led preschool participation.
Preschool Boost	Additional Preschool Boost funding to strengthen children's learning and development by providing access to programs, and allied health services delivered in accordance with the Preschool Boost spending rules. While the needs of Preschool Plus children should inform planning, Preschool Boost is service funding and is not an individual funding allocation for each child.
Ready Set Preschool	Individual Ready Set Preschool funding to reduce barriers to the child's enrolment, attendance in accordance with the Flying Start Partner Policy and Funding Guide.
Preschool Plus Fee Relief	Fee relief for eligible families to reduce the out of pocket cost of preschool participation (see the Flying Start Partner Policy and Funding Guide for details on fee relief for Aboriginal Children where applicable).
Trauma-informed Practice	Mandatory Foundational Trauma-informed Practice training for Partner Services in their first year of partnership under Flying Start, with optional free coaching and implementation support available to Preschool Plus Partner Services in their first year of delivering Preschool Plus.

Preschool Plus Access Pathways

Children may access Preschool Plus through different approved access pathways. The pathway determines how a child is identified and offered a Preschool Plus place. Once a Preschool Plus place has been confirmed, the implementation process is consistent regardless of how the child entered the program.

Current access pathways

Preschool Plus currently includes the following access pathways:



Pathway	How children access Preschool Plus	Provider and their Service role
Referral pathway	Children are identified by approved referral partners and offered a Preschool Plus place through OECD Preschool Plus team.	Accept Preschool Plus placements offered through the OECD and prepare for the child's enrolment and commencement.
Integrated hub pathway	Eligible children are enrolled directly in accordance with Priority of Access requirements.	Identify and enrol eligible children through the integrated hub enrolment process.
Service Self-Selection pathway <i>(where approved by OECD as a self-selection site)</i>	Participating Preschool Plus Partner Services identify eligible children already enrolled (or seeking enrolment) at their service using the approved Preschool Plus Self-Selection process.	Identify and prioritise eligible children within the service's capped allocation of Preschool Plus places and prepare for enrolment and commencement.

Children entering Preschool Plus through the Referral pathway have already been identified and prioritised through the Preschool Plus referral process.

Children entering Preschool Plus through an integrated hub or the Service Self-Selection pathway (where the site has been approved by OECD as a self-selection site) should be enrolled in accordance with the approved program requirements for those pathways as outlined in supporting implementation resources.

The following sections of this guide provide practical guidance to support providers and their services from enrolment and commencement through to ongoing participation in Preschool Plus. Detailed guidance on access pathways and placement processes is available via the Partner Portal.

From Placement to Preschool Plus program commencement

Regardless of the pathway into Preschool Plus, the period between a Preschool Plus offer being confirmed and the child's first day provides an opportunity to prepare the child and family for successful participation. For some children this may be only a few days, while others may have a Preschool Plus program commencement date several weeks or months after accepting their Preschool Plus place.

Children already enrolled

Where a child is already attending your service, review their existing enrolment (e.g., hours and days enrolled) to ensure it meets Preschool Plus participation requirements.

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This may include:

- increasing teacher-led preschool hours where required
- reviewing enrolment hours and days, including attendance patterns
- discussing Preschool Plus Fee Relief with the family including Fee Relief for Aboriginal children where relevant
- identifying and discussing Ready Set Preschool supports for the child and family
- confirming Preschool Plus commencement date, considering the child's intended school start date, to maximise enrolment in full 2 years of Preschool Plus.

Children not yet enrolled

Where a child is not already enrolled at your service, support the family to enrol as early as possible, even where the child's Preschool Plus commencement date is some time away.

For long day care services, early enrolment provides an opportunity for children and families to become familiar with the service, educators and routines before their Preschool Plus program engagement begins. Where appropriate, children may attend the long day care program prior to commencing Preschool Plus, helping to build relationships, support a gradual transition into the service and reduce barriers before the increased teacher-led preschool program begins. The Service should support families to access Additional Child Care Subsidy where eligible.

This approach may be particularly beneficial where children are:

- new to early childhood education and care
- commencing Preschool Plus later in the year
- experiencing barriers or anxiety about starting preschool
- likely to benefit from additional time to build relationships with educators and the service environment.

Where Preschool Plus commencement will occur at a later date, services should continue to engage with the family by:

- maintaining regular contact
- inviting families to orientation and service activities where appropriate
- supporting gradual transition into the service
- identifying and responding to barriers that may impact commencement.

Further practice guidance around transition will be available in 2027.

Working with referring practitioners

For children entering through the Referral pathway, referring practitioners have already introduced Preschool Plus and supported the family to accept the placement.



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Services should work collaboratively with referring practitioners to understand:

- information already shared with the family
- any barriers that may affect commencement
- supports already in place
- any additional support that may assist before the child starts preschool.

This helps ensure families receive consistent information and coordinated support throughout the commencement process.

Planning before commencement

Before a child starts Preschool Plus, work with the family to ensure:

- enrolment and attendance arrangements support children to participate in the intended teacher-led preschool program and achieve the **minimum** 1,000 hours of preschool.
- Preschool Plus Fee Relief has been discussed, where applicable
- Ready Set Preschool supports have been considered
- any barriers affecting commencement have been identified and addressed where possible.

Some families may require additional support before their child is ready to commence. Early planning provides an opportunity to address barriers before they affect attendance.

Supporting ongoing attendance

Preschool Plus is designed to support children to participate regularly in quality, teacher-led preschool for each of the two years before school. Maintaining attendance requires ongoing collaboration between providers, services, families, referring practitioners and Local Teams.

Children's circumstances may change throughout their Preschool Plus journey. Providers and their services should continue to work proactively with families to identify and respond to barriers before they affect attendance.

Supporting attendance

Services should:

- support children to commence Preschool Plus as soon as practical following confirmation of their place
- monitor attendance throughout the child's enrolment to identify emerging barriers early
- maintain regular communication with families
- use Ready Set Preschool funding proactively to reduce barriers affecting attendance
- review whether supports are addressing current barriers to attendance and review supports as children's and families' circumstances change
- work collaboratively with referring practitioners, where applicable
- seek support from Local Teams where additional assistance is required.



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Early identification of emerging barriers, together with timely conversations and support can often prevent short-term attendance concerns from becoming ongoing issues.

Further guidance on supporting attendance, engaging families and responding to attendance barriers will be available in the Supporting Attendance implementation resource in 2027.

When attendance concerns continue

Where a child has not commenced in Preschool Plus, or attendance remains significantly below the minimum required hours despite reasonable efforts to engage the family and address barriers, services should work collaboratively with the family, referring practitioner (where applicable) and Local Team to determine the most appropriate way forward.

This may include reviewing the child's attendance arrangements, considering additional supports or discussing whether Preschool Plus remains the most appropriate option for the child and family.

Services should not wait until the allowable absence limit has been reached before seeking support. Where ongoing absences mean a child may approach the maximum allowable 42 absence days, services should contact their Local Team as early as possible to discuss available options and avoid unnecessary out-of-pocket costs.

Changes to Preschool Plus attendance

A child's Preschool Plus enrolment and attendance may change during the two-year program. Where this occurs, providers and their services should work with families, referring practitioners (where applicable) and Local Teams to support the child while ensuring Preschool Plus places and enrolment information remain current.

When a child withdraws

Where a child withdraws from the Preschool Plus program (including where they leave the service):

- continue to support the family where appropriate
- where a referring practitioner remains involved, it is best practice to advise them of the child's withdrawal so they can continue supporting the family
- where there is no referring practitioner involved, notify your Local Team to support local monitoring of Preschool Plus places
- report the child's withdrawal and reason for withdrawal through the next quarterly enrolment data submission process – this should include date Preschool Plus enrolment ended.

Services remain entitled to Preschool Plus funding for the full funding quarter in which a child withdraws. Funding will cease from the beginning of the next quarter



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Where a Preschool Plus place becomes available due to a withdrawal, contact your Local Team to discuss available placement options. Depending on local arrangements, this may include offering the place through an approved Preschool Plus access pathway, such as the Service Self-Selection pathway where implemented.

When a child moves to another service

Preschool Plus places are allocated to approved Preschool Plus Partner Services and do not automatically transfer when a child changes services.

Where a family is considering changing services, encourage them to discuss this with your service before withdrawing, as this may affect the child's ongoing access to Preschool Plus.

Where a child transfers to another Flying Start service, the OECD will consider opportunities for the child to continue participating in Preschool Plus. Continued attendance will depend on local service capacity and available places.

The child's change of enrolment should be reflected through your existing quarterly enrolment reporting process.

Reporting

Providers and their services need to meet quarterly enrolment and program reporting requirements. This includes:

- identifying which preschool enrolments are Preschool Plus children through existing quarterly data submissions
- recording changes to hours enrolled in the Preschool Plus program via quarterly enrolment data submissions
- Recording withdrawals and the reason for withdrawal via quarterly enrolment data submissions
- completing Preschool Boost reporting
- completing Ready Set Preschool reporting.

Refer to the [Ready Set Preschool Planning and Implementation Guide](#) and [Preschool Boost guidance](#) for further information on reporting requirements.

There are no additional reporting requirements for Preschool Plus enrolments.

