

OFFICIAL

# Flying Start

Preschool Webinar Series



Government of  
South Australia

# 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.



## By the end of today's session...



### ...you should:

- understand the workforce and quality initiatives that are or will be available
- have a deeper knowledge of the Preschool Toolkit; and
- understand the early childhood teacher requirements.



# Workforce Strategy Overview



- The Workforce Strategy outlines a range of initiatives to **attract, train and retain** early childhood educators and teachers.
- It also includes **cross-cutting initiatives** for the Aboriginal workforce and multi-disciplinary workforce.
- We encourage you to engage with these initiatives to **grow and support your own workforce.**

# Workforce Strategy Overview



Key initiatives for services	
QualifySA scholarships	support your staff to upskill
Pathways Program	supporting training pathways for diverse learners
Workforce grants	local solutions to workforce challenges
Location incentives	*support to attract teachers in targeted locations
Preschool Toolkit	*resources and professional learning
Career support	*support for educators and teachers and leaders throughout their careers
Professional Networks	local networks connecting early childhood professionals
Leaders Forum	professional learning and connection for service leaders (Forum 2: 26 Nov)

# Preschool Toolkit Overview

- About the Preschool Toolkit
- How it was designed
- The structure of the Toolkit
- What to expect
- What next...



# About the Preschool Toolkit



## Supporting high-quality preschool for 3- and 4-year-old South Australian children

The Preschool Toolkit is a **new initiative** designed to support early childhood educators to deliver high-quality preschool programs for 3- and 4-year-old children across South Australia.

The Toolkit is part of **sector-wide reforms**, led by the Office for Early Childhood Development (OECDE), to reduce developmental vulnerability and improve outcomes for every South Australian child.

The Toolkit includes **physical and online resources**, complemented by **professional learning**, to strengthen understanding and increase knowledge, confidence and capability of educators and teachers.

# Preschool Toolkit

## Designing the Toolkit



Gowrie SA was contracted by OECD to deliver the Preschool Toolkit following a competitive tender process. In March 2025, Gowrie SA led an engagement session for developing the content areas for the Toolkit.

Preschool teachers and leaders were involved in the engagement process with representation from:

- public preschools
- private long day care services
- not-for-profit long day care services
- children's centres
- the OECD
- the Australian Council for Educational Research; and
- the Department for Education
  - Preschool and Early Childhood Services
  - Curriculum and Learning



# Preschool Toolkit

## Designing the Toolkit



### Literature Review

A **systematic literature review** was undertaken on 3-year-old preschool for evidence-informed practice.

**Thirteen potential resources** varying in scope, readability and approach **were provided for participants to review** to decide criteria for the toolkit.

### Key Concepts

To investigate whether the topics proposed were on track, and to be open to other potential topics that built from the literature review, participants were then asked to **brainstorm key concepts** that could be considered **for the toolkit**.

### Topic Areas And Content

Finally, participants were asked to **review the initial topic areas and content** suggestions and recommendations.



# Preschool Toolkit

## Structure and contents



The Toolkit includes:

- practical advice and examples to translate theory into practice
- scaffolding for differentiated and personalised learning
- reflective questions for individual and team use
- resources for leaders to facilitate team professional development
- materials aligned with the EYLF and based on current research; and
- online and face-to-face professional learning.



# Preschool Toolkit

6 themes, 6 booklets, 18 reflection on practice cards and additional resources



**Leadership:** Strong leadership sets the tone and creates opportunities to develop inclusive, high-quality environments where children, families and educators can thrive together.



**Curriculum design:** Designing curriculum in early childhood settings is a dynamic, relational process. It is grounded in purposeful play, careful observation, and meaningful documentation.



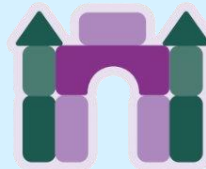
**Relationships:** Engaging families in preschool as genuine partners through meaningful, shared communication that is strengths-based and welcoming.



**Inclusion, diversity and cultural responsiveness:** Inclusive early childhood education and care recognises the right of every young child to be welcomed and valued, and to actively participate in everyday learning and play.



**'Being Me' – Learning and development:** Exploring how preschoolers learn through play, relationships and exploration, with a focus on child development.



**Environments for learning:** High-quality, language rich environments promote children's security, engagement and sense of belonging.



# Booklets

**Environments for Learning**

## Flying Start

Preschool Toolkit

### Transitions and routines in preschool

Government of South Australia

#### Exploring routines

Routines should be predictable but responsive to individual needs. As **Relational Pedagogies and Learning in Early Childhood** highlights, connection is co-constructed in the everyday—through shared mealtimes, toileting, and play. These are the moments where children learn to ‘fit’ with others and develop a sense of themselves in their community.

As with most adults, understanding **what** happens and **when** can provide comfort and predictability. There will be certain routines, such as eating, group work and home time that will have consistency and support children to manage the day with more confidence.

There are other nuanced routines such as personal care and toileting that also need to be considered. Preschoolers have varying abilities and are developing at different rates and as such educators should be

#### Environments for learning

For 3-year-olds, environments for learning are not just physical spaces; they are emotional, social, and relational landscapes that shape how children **feel, connect and grow**. The environment becomes a crucial foundation for security and engagement.

Thoughtful consideration must be applied to the whole space, including interactions, to ensure children feel a sense of connection and belonging.

Drawing on **The Circle of Security**, educators are encouraged to be emotionally available and predictably responsive. When educators provide predictable routines and consistent responses, children feel secure to explore their world, knowing they can return to trusted adults for connection and reassurance.

This secure base supports each child to confidently move out to learn and come back for emotional check-ins throughout the day. The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) reinforces the importance of consistent routines and daily rituals in children's lives that support the development of essential skills like self-regulation and social understanding needed for positive interactions.<sup>2</sup>

When children feel seen, safe, and supported, they are more able to **explore their world**.

Page 4 Environments for Learning

#### Support transitions

Environments play a role in how children develop relationships. A relational approach helps make transitions smoother and reassuring for children. Thoughtful consideration of routines, relationships and rituals thoughtfully woven together to respect each child's home and family rituals, the preschool is a place where children feel confident and ready to learn.

Environments for Learning

# Reflection on Practice cards

## Being Me (Learning and Development)

#### Exploring characteristics of 3-year-olds and identifying developmental milestones and strengths

Developmental milestones are helpful indicators of young children's growth and progress.

**Recognising** each child's unique strengths builds their confidence and engagement, while **understanding** milestones supports developmentally appropriate practice that nurtures holistic learning and wellbeing.

It is important to remember that developmental milestones are guides to typical stages of development, not prescriptive checklists; they should inform and support each child's individual learning journey.

#### Key Messages

- Children's learning is ongoing, and **every child develops at their own pace** and in their own unique way. Learning does not always follow a set path.
- Plan for individual children, small groups, and the whole group** using developmental milestones, the Early Years Learning Framework and your deep knowledge of each child to enhance your planning.
- Offer children **multiple opportunities to demonstrate their strengths** and abilities in developmentally appropriate, authentic, play-based contexts.
- Developmental milestones can be used to recognise and build on children's strengths and interests, while also guiding **thoughtful conversations** with families and colleagues.

**Flying Start**

---

#### Reflection

- In what ways can we use developmental milestones together with the EYLF principles and practices to guide our decisions and support each child's learning and development?
- How can understanding developmental milestones support us to plan and provide differentiated learning experiences that meet each child's unique strengths and needs?
- Would every educator describe a child's skills and development in the same way? How can deeper collaboration with families and colleagues help us recognise and build on each child's strengths and capabilities?

#### Other resources

Developmental milestones and the EYLFNSQ

#### Applying to practice

- Partner with a colleague and compare the developmental milestones for children aged 2 to 3 years (pages 12-18) with the milestones for those aged 3 to 5 years (pages 14-18). Think about the key differences and how you can differentiate your service's approach to supporting preschoolers' development.
- Discuss your observations of key milestones for children in your service. Map these against the **Developmental Milestones** and discuss strengths and suggestions for extending children's development. Consider the different ways in which children can achieve developmental milestones.
- The EYLF states "Children's learning is ongoing, and each child will progress towards the outcomes in different and equally meaningful ways" (EYLF, p. 18). Discuss in your teams how your planning, environment and teaching strategies reflect this statement. How could you strengthen these practices?

# Flying Start

# Preschool Toolkit

## Professional learning



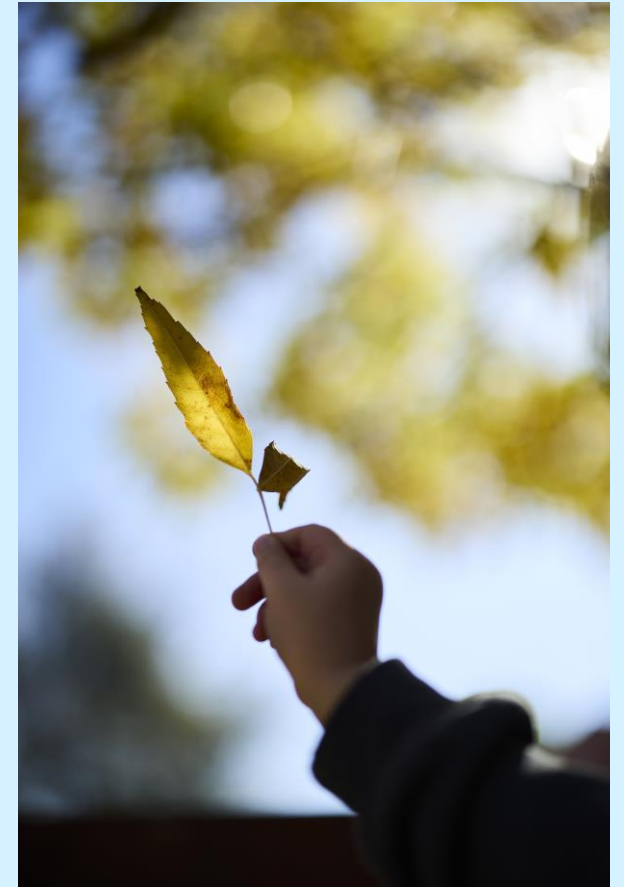
- Introduction to Preschool Toolkit **webinar**, hosted by the OECD.
- In-person **professional learning days**, facilitated by experienced early childhood practitioners, will be available across South Australia. These will be designed and delivered by Gowrie SA.
- **Online professional learning** session will be hosted by Gowrie SA, for people unable to attend in-person professional learning sessions.
- Self-paced **online learning modules** for all educators, teachers and leaders will be developed by Gowrie SA and hosted on the OECD Plink (Learner Management System) portal.

# Preschool Toolkit

## Next steps...



- A physical Toolkit will be **delivered** to all partner services.
- **Emails** with information about professional learning and registration process.
- Plink portal - live, free access. Services will need to register an account.
- Non-partnered services will have access to online toolkit and professional learning.
- **Tranche 2** engagement will begin in September 2025 and be released in term 1, 2026.



# Questions



# ECT Requirements



- A qualified ECT must deliver the preschool program for the full program hours.
- An ECT delivering the preschool program means ‘the individual/s responsible for the development, implementation, and delivery of the funded preschool program or programs’.
- An ECT is considered qualified if they:
  - are registered with the TRB, and hold a degree that meets National Quality Framework qualification requirements; or
  - are completing, or have completed, a qualification approved by ACEQA and hold an ECT SAT from the TRB. In these circumstances, services must confirm with the OECD Local Teams that there is another registered ECT available to provide coaching and support.
- Where a waiver is in place, **funding will not be affected**, providing the service can still meet the requirement for a qualified ECT to deliver the preschool program.

## ECT Requirements



- Where an ECT or ECT SAT are absent due to illness, leave or resignation, a diploma-qualified educator, or person who holds a qualification in primary teaching, may replace them for a period of up to, but not exceeding, 60 days in a 12-month period, providing there is another registered ECT to coach and support during this period.
- Partner Providers must notify the OECD within 10 business days if:
  - an ECT or ECT SAT will not be delivering the program for a period of more than 60 days in any 12-month period; and/or
  - the ECT resigns or is no longer delivering the preschool program and, at the end of the 60-day period, the service will no longer meet preschool funding eligibility requirements, unless another ECT is engaged.
- Once notified, OECD Local Teams can assist the service with access and information on the workforce initiatives outlined earlier in the session.



## What's next?

- **September: Preschool Toolkit released**
- **October: Location incentives commence**
- **November: Leaders Forum 2**



## Connect with us

Email:

Flying Start Preschool Toolkit: [OECD.ecworkforcesupport@sa.gov.au](mailto:OECD.ecworkforcesupport@sa.gov.au)

ECT Requirements: [OECD.PreschoolFunding@sa.gov.au](mailto:OECD.PreschoolFunding@sa.gov.au)

Website: [www.earlychildhood.sa.edu.au](http://www.earlychildhood.sa.edu.au)

Sign up to the OECD newsletter:

