Government of South Australia

Office for Early Childhood Development



Expression of Interest: Thriving Kids General Supports

November 2026

Contents

Acknowledgement of Country **3**
Key information **4**
Thriving Kids, Flying Start, and South Australia's reform context **5**
General supports under Thriving Kids 5
South Australia's enhancement approach for general supports 6
General Supports commissioning context 7
A two-stage commissioning approach for general supports 7
Expression of Interest **8**
Service categories 8
Specific group-based provision (service categories 1-3) 9
Discretion to not progress a service category 9
Service activities (service categories 1-3) 9
Service activities (service category 4) 9
Service activities that are out of scope 9
Forthcoming grant process 10
Eligibility for organisations applying to the expression of interest **10**
Eligible organisations 10
Partnership arrangements 10
Preschool Boost Suppliers 11
Eligibility requirements for lead applicant organisations 11
Compliance 11
Suitability criteria for the EOI process **12**
Proposals with multiple components 12
Engagement with the OECD 12
Participation in research and evaluation 12
Service model and organisation requirements **13**
Requirements for service categories 1-3 13
Requirements for service category 4 13
Service model requirements – general supports 13
Service model requirements (additional) – group-based supports for 5-8 years 14

Organisation requirements 14
Guidance on service enhancement, price, frequency, and duration 15
Service enhancements 15
Accessibility enhancement 16
Price guidance 16
Frequency and duration guidance 17
How to apply 18
How to submit your application 18
Support to prepare your application 18
Confidential information 18
Questions or feedback 19

Acknowledgement of Country

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.

Key information

Program name:	Expression of Interest: Thriving Kids General Supports
Open date:	Thursday 19 November 2026
Closing date:	12:00pm Friday 29 January 2027
Eligible organisations:	Stand-alone responses will be accepted from: ○ not-for-profit organisations, ○ Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, or ○ local government authorities. Partnership arrangements may be submitted between any of the three eligible organisation types, or between one of those organisation types and the following organisations: ○ for-profit organisations, and/or ○ unincorporated groups who apply through an auspicing arrangement, with a not-for-profit, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation, or local government authority.
Commissioning process for Thriving Kids general supports	• This expression of interest process forms part of a two-stage commissioning approach for Thriving Kids general supports and will be followed by a competitive grant process. • Organisations must submit an expression of interest response and meet the eligibility requirements and suitability criteria to be eligible for consideration in the grant process. • In exceptional circumstances only, the OECD may consider proposals in the competitive grant process from organisations that did not respond to the expression of interest. • The grant process is expected to take place in early 2027.
Public webinars (online) and communications for the expression of interest	The OECD strongly encourages all prospective applicants to attend one of the public webinars, which will provide an overview of the commissioning process and an opportunity to ask questions directly. We also encourage applicants to stay up to date with key information about the expression of interest and grant process. You can register for a webinar and to receive ongoing updates using the following link: Thriving Kids Webinar Registration and Updates *Dates of public webinars* • Friday 4 December (1.00pm-2.00pm) • Monday 14 December (2.00pm-3.00pm)

Thriving Kids, Flying Start, and South Australia's reform context

Thriving Kids is for families and their children aged 8 years and under who may need extra support with their development. It is a national early childhood intervention approach, with both the South Australian and the Australian Government responsible for delivering additional supports for families and children.

Thriving Kids will strengthen the range and quality of supports where kids live, learn and play in the settings where families already spend time and feel comfortable, while also offering extra support where it is needed.

Thriving Kids is underpinned by the National Best Practice Framework for Early Childhood Intervention (the Framework) based on evidence of early childhood intervention approaches. The early years are crucial for a child's growth and development. Getting the right help early can change life trajectories, and improve health, learning and wellbeing. In recent years, the Framework has evolved to place a stronger focus on helping families and caregivers support children to grow and thrive, because available evidence shows this works best.

Thriving Kids is part of South Australia's focus on early childhood development. Our Flying Start reforms have the vision that all young South Australian children thrive. This will be achieved through a landmark, sustained investment in early childhood to build out the universal early childhood service system (including introducing universal 3-year-old preschool), lift preschool program quality, create a connected system, and embed Closing the Gap reforms in early childhood.

As part of these efforts, we are focused on making sure that families can:

- access an expanded number (7) of free Child Health and Development Checks to identify developmental concerns early and then connect with other health and development supports if needed
- connect with local preschool programs in both long day care and sessional services, in recognition that preschool is known to be significant to a child's development and can be a protective factor for vulnerable children
- benefit from the range of programs and resources available across our state, such as Thriving Kids, Preschool Boost, playgroups and other community connections that support preschool participation, and Parenting SA resources.

Thriving Kids providers will actively contribute to South Australia's overall early childhood vision. This means being part of a connected approach that links efforts together to deliver better outcomes for children and families across South Australia.

The OECD is the steward of the early childhood system in South Australia, which now includes the Thriving Kids approach for families and children aged 8 and under with development delay and/or autism and low to moderate support needs. We are committed to supporting delivery of high-quality and integrated programs for families and continuing to learn from feedback and evaluations to refine our approach as we go.

General supports under Thriving Kids

General supports are the foundation of Thriving Kids and the main way that many families will access support. General Supports are lower-intensity, community-based services, delivered in everyday settings where families already spend time and feel comfortable. They will be widely available, straightforward to access and will not require a diagnosis.

General supports will help families and carers and children from birth to early primary school years to:

- learn more about child development and identify developmental concerns earlier
- further build their confidence and practical knowledge to support their child's development
- connect with quality information and advice, as well as services such as preschools, general practitioners and child and family health nurses, and with each other to promote inclusion and wellbeing.

In a lot of cases, general supports will look like services that already exist in the community but adapted to better meet the needs of families and children who need extra help with their development. This includes playgroups, parenting programs and peer support groups and other group-based supports. In other instances, they might be new services, aligned to early childhood intervention best practice.

General supports will start to rollout in 2027 and be in place by early 2028.

South Australia's enhancement approach for general supports

South Australia is seeking to maximise the delivery of general supports across the State to serve many families and children, as well as to fill geographic and cohort service gaps.

Our approach to this expression of interest is to understand the mix of potential packages of services across the state that could achieve this. We will do this through our **enhancement approach for Thriving Kids**, which will:

- first enhance what is already available in communities, so it reflects best practice in early childhood intervention and works well for families and children who need extra support with their development
- then support additional capacity and/or new services to fill gaps where it is needed most.

Under Thriving Kids, enhancement refers to the uplift of an existing service to better meets the needs of families and children who need extra help with their development (the Thriving Kids cohort, namely families and children with developmental delay and/or autism with low to moderate support needs).

Our enhancement approach will first prioritise the enhancement of existing services in areas where they are needed and seek to balance the coverage of general supports across different areas. This means we may shift service investment towards areas of relatively lower service provision given population and need.

Where funding is provided to enhance an existing service, the investment will generally only fund the enhanced component of the service rather than the costs of the ongoing business-as-usual service delivery.

Learning Together Communities Playgroups

The first phase of general supports to roll out under Thriving Kids will be the strengthening of South Australia's Learning Together Communities facilitated playgroups in partnership with the Department for Education.

Around $4 million in additional Thriving Kids funding will give qualified facilitators more time to work with families who need additional support, strengthen their professional development and provide families with access to early childhood intervention/allied health practitioners at playgroups.

Services and programs commissioned through the forthcoming grants process will complement this work and build on South Australia's strong suite of government platforms that support early childhood development. They will also sit alongside Australian Government initiatives, including a national phoneline for all families with expert advice on child development and behaviour, the Thriving Kids Autism Helpline, and the Thriving Kids Information Resources Hub, as well as the availability of Preschool Boost-funded support at over 440 early learning services from 2027 and growing.

General Supports commissioning context

We think it is important that potential providers understand our aspirations for general supports, as well as the key factors shaping our commissioning approach. The following are particularly important:

- South Australia is seeking to maximise the delivery of general supports so as many families and children with low to moderate support needs can benefit from support.
- services need to be anchored in evidence about early childhood development and early childhood intervention best practice, so they are aligned to the Thriving Kids approach.
- the national Thriving Kids program is being delivered within a fixed funding envelope, and our investment approach is to prioritise enhancement of existing services/programs and leverage existing platforms for delivery – to maximise inclusiveness and cost-effectiveness – before supporting new programs and services.
- given the above, we will need to carefully balance quality, value for money and coverage and consider different packages of proposals to determine the best mix of supports for South Australian families.

We know Thriving Kids is a new approach for government, providers and families, and recognise there is still some uncertainty for organisations about the types of support required by Thriving Kids, how supports will be delivered, what an appropriate cost for services should be, and how the program will roll out in different parts of Australia.

The OECD is seeking to build a more complete understanding of the service landscape that could help deliver general supports and contribute to our aspirations for Thriving Kids. This will help us make better decisions about where best to direct grant funding and to what level.

A two-stage commissioning approach for general supports

Given the newness of Thriving Kids and our desire to better understand the service landscape, we are undertaking a two-stage commissioning approach for general supports.

- We are starting with an **expression of interest process** to identify interested providers, seek responses that meet the eligibility and suitability criteria (see p. 10-12) and invite them to take part in the grant process.
- We will then undertake a **competitive grant process** to identify the optimal package of proposals that will deliver a range of general supports across South Australia, within the available budget.

Organisations will be required to submit an expression of interest to be considered for the competitive grant process. In exceptional circumstances only, the OECD may consider proposals in the competitive grant process from organisations that did not respond to the expression of interest.

We acknowledge the amount of time and effort it takes to submit a detailed grant proposal. Commencing with an expression of interest process will allow organisations to conduct a first stage, lighter-touch

response which will indicate eligibility and suitability to progress to a grants process without requiring a full grant proposal at the first stage.

The expression of interest will also help us better understand the service landscape and enable us to clarify expectations for the delivery of Thriving Kids general supports in South Australia. It will also give us the opportunity to engage directly with some providers to clarify their responses where this may be necessary.

The insights we gain through the expression of interest process will ultimately help us better understand the potential packages of services that could maximise the delivery of general supports in South Australia, within the available budget, as we progress with the grant process and grant decision-making.

Expression of Interest

The process is intended to support two-way learning between the market and the OECD. It will give organisations a clearer understanding of South Australia's vision for general supports, while helping the OECD to better understand the service landscape.

Through this process, we are seeking to identify suitable responses for consideration in a forthcoming grants process for general supports.

Service categories

We are seeking expression of interests across 4 service categories:

1. Supported playgroups

Supported playgroups use evidence-informed, inclusive strategies within everyday play activities to build connections between parents to support children's communication, motor skills, social interaction, and emotional regulation. These groups provide opportunities for children 0-8 with developmental delay or developing differently to learn, explore and participate alongside their peers.

2. Parenting programs and peer support groups

Parenting programs and peer support groups provide families with information, self-advocacy support, connection, and capacity building and may be delivered through face to face and virtual services. They are designed to equip caregivers with the knowledge, tools, and confidence to support their child's development, wellbeing, and inclusion.

Programs include information about child development, developmentally-appropriate strategies, and skills to support children's development. They offer families opportunities to share experiences, build peer connections, and learn from one another. Models in this category may include online delivery options.

3. Group-based supports for children 5-8 years

This category is intended to help the OECD understand age-appropriate ways to delivering early childhood intervention support to children 5-8 years old (or a subset of this age range). We are looking for engaging approaches that build child development into the way the service is delivered. We acknowledge that services for children and families in this age group are less established than services such as supported playgroups. The OECD will fund evaluations for successful grant recipients, as part of learning what supports works best for families and children in this cohort.

In most cases we expect that general supports will be delivered not to children alone, but to children and families. However, for children in the 5-8 age group, we are open to considering proposals that may not directly include families in the activity, reflecting that for some children and families, this will be a suitable approach, while acknowledging that for others, it may not be.

4. Organisations that focus on early childhood development

EOI responses are sought from well-established organisations that are committed to early childhood development and improving child outcomes through a range of services or programs. Organisations should have strong existing connections to communities and/or community-based organisations that help them understand and respond quickly to local needs and should be willing and able to work in partnership with different communities as needs emerge.

Specific group-based provision (service categories 1-3)

As part of better understanding and delivering public value through the commissioning of general supports, the OECD is open to exploring group-specific provision across supported playgroups, parenting programs and peer support groups and group-based supports for 5-8 years. For example, we have heard from some autistic parents that they might value a peer support group with other autistic parents, while some supported playgroups have been specifically adapted for parents and children to better respond to their needs.

The OECD welcomes EOI responses from Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and groups supporting multicultural families.

Discretion to not progress a service category

The OECD may choose not to consider any of the above service categories as part of the forthcoming grant process where it is deemed that the needs of family and children and the public value of that category would be better met through other service delivery arrangements.

Service activities (service categories 1-3)

For supported playgroups, parenting programs and peer support groups and group-based supports for children 5-8 years, we will consider proposals that seek to do one or more of the following activities:

- enhance an existing service offer
- expand delivery of an existing service offer (for example, operating an additional group to serve more families in an existing or nearby location, or by delivering the service in a new location)
- establish a new service offer that fills a service gap for a specific cohort or geographic area.

In line with South Australia's enhancement approach for Thriving Kids, we will first prioritise the enhancement of existing services in areas where they are needed, before establishing new services to fill service gaps.

Service activities (service category 4)

Organisations may wish to submit responses that will enhance their ability to meet the needs of families and children who need extra help with their development.

Service activities that are out of scope

Inclusion support, including funding for individual inclusion support workers, and personal care are not eligible for funding via this process.

Forthcoming grant process

Submitting a response to the expression of interest process does not guarantee a proposal will be successful or funded via the grant process.

The OECD may choose not to consider any of the above service categories as part of the forthcoming grant process where it is deemed that the needs of families and children and the public value of that category would be better met through other service delivery arrangements.

Eligibility for organisations applying to the expression of interest

Eligible organisations

The OECD will accept stand-alone responses from the following organisational entities:

- not-for-profit organisations,
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, or
- local government authorities.

Partnership arrangements

The OECD strongly encourages partnership arrangements between organisations to leverage expertise in early childhood intervention, connections to communities, community spaces where families already go and feel comfortable.

The OECD will accept partnership arrangements between any of the three eligible organisation types above, or between one of those organisation types and the following organisations:

- for-profit organisations,
- unincorporated groups who apply through an auspicing arrangement, with a not-for-profit, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, or local government organisation.

In these instances, the lead applicant must be the not-for-profit, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, or local government partner.

Supporting evidence is required to demonstrate the partnership arrangement. This must include a signed joint statement from all parties which outlines the purpose, scope, duration, and roles and responsibilities of the partnership (no more than 1 page).

Government schools, preschools, and children's centres

The OECD is working directly with the Department for Education on opportunities to support the delivery of Thriving Kids in South Australia, including the enhancement of Learning Together Communities playgroups. For this reason, government schools, preschools, and children's centres are not eligible to apply as service providers through this commissioning process.

Out of School Hours Care programs offered by public school governing councils or non-for-profit organisations can apply to this expression of interest process via the Group-based supports for 5-8 years category for enhancement funding only to better support early childhood intervention. Note inclusion funding is not in scope of Thriving Kids.

Preschool Boost Suppliers

The Preschool Boost initiative is a significant contribution to the Thriving Kids approach. It provides funding to early childhood education and care providers who are delivering Flying Start 3-5-year-old preschool programs to support children with developmental vulnerability, through small group programs and capacity building of parents and educators.

There are programs on the Preschool Boost Menu that fit the scope of general supports and this commissioning process. These programs may be included in this expression of interest by eligible organisations. However, the setting or group in which programs are proposed to be delivered must be different from Preschool Boost settings/groups (either the setting or group being different is sufficient). This is to avoid duplication of funding and support options for children beyond those in Flying Start preschool programs.

Eligibility requirements for lead applicant organisations

Lead applicants in a partnership must provide supporting evidence to demonstrate they are:

- an incorporated legal entity and/or a proprietary limited company (except where an organisation is applying through an acceptable auspicing arrangement)
- have a current Australian Business Number (ABN) matching the organisations name in the application
- have at least $1 million in public liability insurance
- be operating within South Australia
- where relevant for existing business operations, be an approved ECEC provider under the:

  Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011 (and maintain this approval)

  OR

  Early childhood education and care services funded under the Community Child Care Fund Restricted (CCCFR) Grant

Compliance

You are responsible to comply with relevant State and National laws that in any way affect or are applicable to the delivery of your service. This includes but is not limited to:

- all staff delivering programs and supports have a current Working with Children Check as required under the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA).
- maintaining professional registration and professional memberships with the right authority to practice if applicable.
- maintaining current certificate of currency for Public Liability and Professional Indemnity insurances.
- meeting any other child safety requirements relevant to the setting proposed for the service delivery.

Suitability criteria for the EOI process

The expression of interest process is designed to screen the suitability of proposals, and the following requirements must be met to be invited to the grant process stage:

- the proposal is for a relevant service offer/program (per service categories on page 8)
- the organisation is eligible or is in a partnership with an eligible organisation, (per page 10)
- the service is delivered by child development professionals, and the proposal is from a provider with a track-record of delivering supports/programs informed by evidence-based approaches to early childhood development
- the proposal is aligned to relevant service model and organisation requirements and price guidance for general supports (per page 13-17)
- the proposal can be in full or at least substantive delivery mode by January 2028, per required delivery timeframes for general supports.

The OECD may consider proposals in the competitive grant process from organisations that would need to uplift delivery to meet service model requirements for general supports in exceptional circumstances, especially if the proposal seeks to meet the needs of a specific cohort of families and children or families and children in a particular location that would otherwise not have access to general supports.

The OECD may request additional information from applicants following the submission of their proposal to confirm and clarify proposal details.

Proposals with multiple components

Where a proposal contains multiple components, such as several program enhancements and/or activities to expand delivery of an existing service, the OECD reserves the right to consider eligible components separately, rather than all components of the proposal as a collective.

This will allow the OECD to consider the eligibility of each component and (in stage 2) opportunities to maximise public value from component proposals.

This may result in an organisation being invited to submit a grant application for a component of their initial expression of interest response.

Engagement with the OECD

Following the suitability screening process, the OECD may invite some organisations to discuss their proposal in further detail. The main purpose of this will be to further clarify the proposed service offering and how it could meet the needs of the specific cohort of families and children or families and children in a particular location that would otherwise not have access to general supports.

Should any information be discussed during the engagements that may be relevant to all prospective grant applicants, the OECD will share this information to all prospective applicants via external communications.

Participation in research and evaluation

The OECD may request that funded organisations participate in evaluation activities, which may include capturing and submitting relevant data to inform an evaluation of a given service/program. The OECD will work collaboratively with organisations on the approach and details of any evaluation.

Service model and organisation requirements

To help providers understand what we are intending to deliver through Thriving Kids general supports, we have established service model and organisations requirements that existing/new services must meet through this expression of interest.

Requirements for service categories 1-3

Existing/new services must align to the relevant service model requirements.

- **Table 1**: applicable to supported playgroups, parenting programs and peer support groups and group-based supports for children aged 5–8 years.
- **Table 2**: additional service model requirement applicable to group-based programs for children aged 5–8 years only.

Requirements for service category 4

Organisations that focus on early childhood development must meet the organisation requirements set out in **Table 3**.

Service model requirements – general supports

Proposals for supported playgroups, parenting programs and peer support groups and group-based supports for children 5-8 years must meet the requirements below as part of a suitability screening.

For the 'alignment with early childhood intervention' requirement below, the OECD has identified the most relevant aspects of the National Best Practice Framework for Early Childhood Intervention to guide the information being sought through this expression of interest.

Table 1: Service model requirements

General supports should:	Key elements to be operationalised through general supports for families and children
Align to early childhood intervention best practice	• Focus on supporting child development through everyday environments, routines, and relationships around the child. • Be family and child-centred and inclusive.
Professionally facilitated	• The service is facilitated by someone with relevant training (e.g. early childhood worker/early childhood teacher, social worker or other trained facilitator).
Focus on building family capacity, confidence, and connection	• Building the capacities and confidence of parent, carers, and kin to respond to a child's developmental needs as part of daily routines. • Building the family's capacity to connect to others in the community and community-based supports.

	• Not delivering services based on a medicalised model.
Connect to ecosystem of early childhood development services	• Support families to develop an understanding of and connect with other early childhood development services, such as preschool, child and family health nurses and general practitioners.
The mode of delivery is in a group	• Groups may vary in size (e.g. between 10-20 participants in metro settings, noting there may be lower numbers in regional and remote communities). • Not delivering services that are based on 1:1 delivery.
Delivered in a community-based setting	• Where families already go and feel comfortable. E.g. libraries, community centres, sport venues, parks, shopping centre, early childhood settings and schools. • Not in clinical settings/private practice, or other commercial venues, noting if such a venue is the only available space to host a group in a regional and remote area that should be specified in the EOI. • For parenting programs and peer support groups we will consider an online service offer.

Service model requirements (additional) – group-based supports for 5-8 years

Table 2: Service model requirement (additional) – group-based supports for 5-8 years	
Respond to one or more of the developmental domains in the Australian Early Development Census	• Physical health and wellbeing • Social competence • Emotional maturity • Language and cognitive skills • Communication skills and general knowledge

Organisation requirements

Table 3: Organisations that focus on early childhood development	
The organisation has an existing platform and service model to support early childhood development through a range of services or programs	• Existing workforce with knowledge of early childhood development. • Existing programs and resources related to early childhood development. • Support communities with help-seeking to access the broader ecosystem of early childhood supports (e.g. connect to local playgroups and preschools).

The organisation has a track record of working with communities to identify evolving needs and/or service gaps and adapting its service model to better meet those needs	• Existing connections into communities or community-based organisations. • Experienced in leveraging community connections to identify local needs, respond effectively and fill gaps where needed. • Willingness to partner with community in ways that best meet their needs and support the delivery of supports for early childhood development and intervention consistent with the objectives of Thriving Kids and Flying Start.

Guidance on service enhancement, price, frequency, and duration

The OECD has described the types of service activities that an enhanced supported playgroup, parenting program/peer support group, and group-based program for children aged 5-8 years programs could look like under Thriving Kids.

These service enhancements are outlined in **Table 4a**. This is intended to provide clarity about the types of services and service features we are seeking to fund through the grant process. **Table 4b** also includes accessibility enhancements that we will potentially fund through the grant process to promote service access.

The enhancements activities should form the basis of proposals that seek to enhance an existing service. Organisations may wish to choose any combination of the service enhancements in **Table 4a and 4b** as part of their expression of interest response.

Service enhancements

Table 4a: Service enhancements	
Visits from Early Childhood Intervention Practitioners	• Early Childhood Intervention Practitioners are available to families attending the service and for some period of time (e.g. 2-3 visits per term) to share advice with families and be available to work with the facilitator.
And/or	
Facilitator professional development	• Deepen the understanding of evidence-based early child development knowledge where children are developmentally delay or developing differently. • Early Childhood Intervention Practitioners work with facilitators to upskill in coaching and having difficult conversations with parents, carers, and kin.
And/or	

Additional time for facilitators	• To enable time to follow-up on developmental concerns with parents, carers and kin, as well as support connections to other services.

Accessibility enhancement

Table 4b: Accessibility enhancement	
Efforts to reduce barriers to attendance/ participation in general support services	• Active outreach and practical supports to families where they are unlikely to otherwise access a service.

Price guidance

The OECD acknowledges that there are various levels of understanding across the sector about how enhancements to existing services and group-based provision for Thriving Kids general supports should be priced.

To help with this, we are sharing indicative pricing based on our work done to date to cost similar service enhancements (per **Table 4a** above) and benchmark the cost of group-based supports for Thriving Kids general supports. We hope this gives organisations a clearer idea of the price range we are working within, while also helping us understand what service enhancements and provision of group-based supports may be possible within that range.

In sharing our price guidance, it is important to note that this:

- is indicative only and does not represent a floor or cap for proposals
- only relates to general support services only and not to more intensive targeted supports (which are not covered by this expression of interest process)
- assumes an existing organisation with existing enabling/administration resourcing, noting that if additional resourcing is required (especially for new programs or sites) a reasonable marginal cost should be included in proposals
- assumes that suitable space is available at low or no cost to support the delivery of the proposal, in early childhood services, schools, local government or community facilities. Note that information would be sought on venues for proposals that progress to the grants process.

Price guidance: service enhancement

This guidance is related to **Table 4a** and the service activity of “enhance an existing service”.

Our working assumption, drawn on costing the kind of service enhancements in **Table 4a**, is that the cost of the program enhancements associated with Thriving Kids general supports is around **$7,500 – $11,000 per group per annum**, based on a group size of 20 families attending for 1.5-2 hours per week over 40 weeks (equivalent of four school terms).

It is important to note that this price range reflects the cost of enhancing an existing service only, not the full cost of delivering the service itself. In other words, the price reflects the cost of a “Thriving Kids enhancement” to a service that would already be running without this funding. It also reflects the efficiencies of group-based delivery at scale.

The OECD recognises that service delivery costs for regional and remote area are structurally higher, and this will be taken into consideration during the expression of interest and competitive grant process.

Price guidance: group-based provision

This guidance is related to the service activity of "expanding the delivery of an existing service" and "establishing a new service" to fill a service gap for a specific cohort or geographic area

We have undertaken benchmarking for playgroups that indicates an indicative group cost of around **$25,000 – $35,000 per annum** for models where parents and children participate together. These figures are based on groups of up to 20 families operating over 40 weeks (equivalent of four school terms).

For supports that are targeted to parents and carers (e.g. peer support programs), proposals are asked to indicate program costs only, with the cost of creche or other care for children only to be considered in exceptional circumstances where other care options are not available and it would support parents experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage to engage who would not otherwise be engaged with the support.

We are also open to proposals that support fewer families than assumed here, or that run for less than a full calendar year (see below). The indicative pricing is provided as a guide and normed against a 40-week program, so providers can put forward different proposal options.

Price guidance: Organisations that focus on early childhood development

We have not provided a price guide for proposals in this category as we do not have appropriate benchmarks. Through this expression of interest process, we are interested in understanding what activities organisations could deliver to support South Australian communities and the funding needed to support this over a 3-year period.

Frequency and duration guidance

For supported playgroups, parenting programs and peer support groups and group-based supports for children aged 5–8 years we expect to see proposals with a range of service frequencies and duration. Price indications will also reflect these variations.

As with the price guidance in this document, the guidance on service frequency and duration is indicative only. This guidance may not apply to organisations that focus on early childhood development, noting that meeting community need might involve a wider range of provision. Service 'dosage' is an area where we will seek to learn more about impact and effectiveness over time.

Delivery over a shorter duration 10-20 hours per annum	Delivery over a medium duration 20-40 hours per annum	Delivery over a longer duration 40-60 hours per annum
For example: • 2 hours per week over 6-8 weeks	For example: • 1 hour to 2 hours per fortnight over 4 school terms • School holiday programs	For example: • 1.5 hours per week over 4 school terms

How to apply

How to submit your application

Please submit via an online form through SmartyGrants

Support to prepare your application

Various resources are available via the OECD website to help you prepare your expression of interest response including:

- answers to frequently asked questions
- the EOI application checklist
- public webinars - Thriving Kids Webinar Registration and Updates – Fill in form

For help and advice please contact: OECD.ThrivingKids@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 requirements, 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 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.

Questions or feedback

If you have suggestions or comments, we would like to hear them.

Please contact us at OECD.ThrivingKids@sa.gov.au.