Flying Start for kids

Policy and Funding Guide

Flying Start 3- and 4-year-old preschool programs

2027 delivery | Version 2.0

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.

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.

We also acknowledge that Torres Strait Islanders may refer to themselves as Zenadth Kes, which is an amalgamation of Torres Strait language names for the 4 winds that pass through the region.

The terms 'Culture' and 'Community' are capitalised in this document when referring to Aboriginal peoples to respectfully acknowledge the deep spiritual, Cultural and social significance of Culture and Community. In doing so, we seek to emphasise the profound and holistic interconnectedness between Country, Culture and Community.

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Overview

Purpose of the Guide

This Policy and Funding Guide Version 2.0 (Guide) sets out the policy and funding arrangements for the 3- and 4-year-old Flying Start preschool program. It details:

- Provider and Service requirements for Flying Start Partner Providers
- Funded Programs and associated requirements
- additional supports available.

This document forms Attachment 3 of the Flying Start Funding Agreement (Funding Agreement).

Changes to the Guide

This Guide will be updated periodically. Where changes are proposed, Partner Providers will be notified and, if changes are material, consultation will occur with sector representatives before updated versions are finalised.

All updates will be published on the Office for Early Childhood Development's (OECD) website.

Terminology

Terminology throughout the Guide:

- **'Partner Provider**' and **'Provider'** is the Recipient of the funding as set out in the Funding Agreement
- **'Partner Service(s)'** and **'Service(s)'** means the approved service(s) at which Funded Programs are delivered
- **'3-year-old preschool'** refers to children who are in a preschool program in their two years before full-time schooling (2YBFS) i.e. 2 years before starting Reception
- **'4-year-old preschool'** refers to children who are in a preschool program in their year before full-time schooling (YBFS) i.e. one year before starting Reception.

Introduction

The preschool offer for South Australian children

As part of the South Australian Government's early childhood reform package, children will be eligible to receive up to 15 hours per week of 3-year-old preschool. The program will be rolled out between 2026 and 2032.

By 2032, all South Australian children can benefit from taking part in 2 years of quality preschool in the years before school. This will build on and strengthen the existing universal preschool program for 4-year-olds. We know the importance of teacher-led programs, however, the new preschool model – as defined through the Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care – is much more than this.

The new model enables differentiated levels of embedded supports for children and their families. Practice and leadership supports, along with funding for planning time and professional development, are included in the model.

Preschool Boost will also deliver services, programs, and supports to build a service's capacity to respond to children's developmental needs. Ready Set Preschool will address barriers to preschool participation through outreach funding and programs to engage and help retain children and families in areas of greatest need.

Extra support for children who need it most

All children benefit from 2 years of quality preschool, but children who need more support benefit more – and are likely to gain more – from extra hours of preschool.

Between 2026 and 2032, the government is putting in place measures so that up to 2,000 3- and 4-year-old children at risk of developmental vulnerability can access more preschool hours (up to 30 hours per week, or up to 1,200 hours per year) in each of the 2 years before school, alongside additional supports.

Some of these places will be delivered by a mix of quality government and non-government Partner Services, and others will be through Integrated Hubs.

Integrated Hubs bring preschool together with other health, wellbeing and education services so families and children can be supported to access the services they need in one place.

Partnership priorities

The role of the OECD is to help Partner Providers, and their dedicated teams, to make the biggest possible positive difference to children's lives.

This requires Partner Providers to:

- have strong foundations through their commitment to meeting their legal, ethical, financial and operational obligations, and
- align their provider and service operations to OECD's service delivery priorities.

Service delivery priorities

Based on the research and sector expertise, we know that a service needs to prioritise 3 things to make this big positive difference.

Services need to be:

Warm and welcoming	A place that families, caregivers and children from all backgrounds want to be in and can be in – actively inclusive, trustworthy, and Culturally responsive. → **You cannot be a great service for a child if they are not there.**
Committed to Quality	A place that provides a quality service under the *Education and Care Services National Law (South Australia)* (National Law) and National Quality Standards (NQS), including warm and responsive relationships and intentional play-based practice. → **Being a good service is good, being a great service is better.**
Acting early, with others	A place that reliably spots and actively addresses children's specific developmental vulnerabilities, working with other professionals (e.g. allied health) and parents/carers. → **Some children need better connected support to thrive.**

It is an obligation on Partner Providers to create the conditions in their Services and with their skilled workforce to deliver against these priorities and maintain that consistently. This reinforces, extends and helps to fund obligations that providers and services have under the National Law.

Flying Start Partnership Plan

The OECD supports Partner Providers and their Services to consistently integrate best practice across the 3 service delivery priorities into everyday work with children, families and staff. In turn, there is an expectation that Partner Providers and their Services will leverage this support to strengthen practice and outcomes over time.

For some of the funding outlined in this Guide, a service-level 'Flying Start Partnership Plan' (Partnership Plan), which details how this funding will be used, will need to be submitted for approval by the OECD. The Partnership Plan is one plan that will cover applicable Funded Programs. Where this is relevant, it is referenced in the Funded Program stream requirements. Planning for these programs is a partnership requirement.

The Partnership Plan is a way of anchoring the service delivery priorities for an individual Partner Service. It is structured to help Partner Services, with support from Partner Providers, think strategically about *what you want to focus on in using these specific Funded Program streams, and how you will go about that* – i.e. what your goals are, and what actions will drive those goals.

Partner Services must submit their Partnership Plan for OECD approval before 1 November to allow sufficient time to book the approved supports/programs ready for the start of preschool in January each year. The OECD's Local Teams will support Services with planning and will manage endorsement and final approval of plans.

Local Teams will meet with Services throughout the year to assess how planned supports are being implemented. A program report against the Partnership Plan will be required annually.

Section A:

Organisational requirements

There are a set of organisational requirements that focus on ensuring Partner Providers and their Services are committed to meeting their legal, ethical, financial and operational obligations.

Snapshot of your requirements

- **Australian Business number (ABN) and Goods and Services Tax (GST)** - Providers are required to have an ABN and be registered for GST
- **Financial viability** - Providers are required to demonstrate ongoing financial viability and declare to the OECD any legal or financial misconduct
- **Child safe environments** - Providers must ensure all Partner Services have relevant policies and procedures relating to child safe environments, as required under the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*, National Law and *Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011* (National Regulations)
- **Insurance** - Providers must hold $20m Public Liability Insurance, including coverage for allegations of historic or current child abuse for all Partner Services
- **Approved Provider and service approval for a South Australian-based service** - Providers must be an Approved Provider under the National Law and maintain a centre-based care service approval under the National Law and National Regulations, for all Partner Services[1]
- **Preschool delivery** - Providers must commit to delivering 3-year-old preschool as a minimum to be a Partner Service. With the exception of Integrated Hubs and Services delivering Preschool Plus, Partner Services are not required to offer 4-year-old preschool but are encouraged to offer both 3- and 4-year-old preschool. Note, mixed-age rooms are allowable
- **Funding and program administration** - Providers are required to complete accurate and timely service-level data submissions, program reporting and funding acquittals within prescribed timelines as articulated in **Section C** of this Guide
- **Participation in research and evaluation** - Providers and their Partner Services may be required to capture and submit additional data as part of evaluation participation. Additional data requirements for evaluation will be part of an OECD-approved evaluation design, developed in consultation with sector representatives where appropriate
- **Information sharing consent** - Providers must ensure consent is obtained from parents or guardians to share their and their child's information with the OECD to administer the Flying Start preschool programs and comply with early childhood reporting obligations. Providers must also issue families with a Flying Start preschool confirmation notice 6 months before their child's eligible 3-year-old preschool commencement
- **Provider and Service accountability** - Providers are required to ensure funding associated with a Partner Service is attributed to that service, and that there is transparency in funding information between Providers and Services. Providers are required to support Partner Services in meeting the partnership requirements
- **Transparency in funding and fees** - Providers are required to ensure Partner Services communicate clearly to families that the South Australian Government is providing funding to cover the additional costs associated with provision of a preschool program. Partner Services are not permitted to increase fees for families enrolling in a preschool program
- **Displaying preschool program information -** Providers and Partner Services are required to display Flying Start partner preschool signage, preschool operating days and times, and the name and qualifications of the Early Childhood Teacher (ECT) or other qualified position delivering the preschool program at all times
- **Record keeping** - Providers and Partner Services must keep records that support evidence of applying spending rules. For example, receipts, tax invoices, financial statements in line with Australian Accounting Standards. Providers should also maintain records of consent for information sharing, evidence of ECT non-contact time, and involvement in professional development activities for audit purposes
- **Provider or Service changes** - Providers are required to provide 90 days' notice of the intent to cease operating a Service, withdraw from the program, or change provider.

[1] The OECD may consider the eligibility of providers that meet the preschool program objectives but are not currently Approved Providers under the National Law and National Regulations. In particular, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation-operated Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services not currently regulated under the National Law. The OECD has absolute discretion to determine provider and service eligibility.

Organisational requirements

For Partner Providers to be eligible and remain eligible, they must continue to meet the following organisational requirements.

Provider and Service governance

Partner Providers must:

- have an ABN and be registered for GST
- demonstrate ongoing financial viability and declare to the OECD any previous or current legal or financial misconduct
- have relevant policies and procedures relating to child safe environments, as required under the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* and the National Law and National Regulations for all Partner Services
- hold and provide evidence of $20m Public Liability Insurance, including coverage for allegations of historic or current child abuse for all Partner Services
- be an Approved Provider under National Law and maintain a centre-based care service approval under the National Law, and the National Regulations for all Partner Services*
- ensure all Partner Services from which the preschool program is delivered are in South Australia
- ensure all Partner Services deliver 3-year-old preschool as a minimum and can also deliver 4-year-old preschool. Provision can be in mixed age rooms.

* The OECD may consider the eligibility of providers that meet the preschool program objectives but are not currently Approved Providers under the National Law and National Regulations. In particular, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation-operated Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services not currently regulated under the National Law. The OECD has absolute discretion to determine provider and service eligibility.

Funding and program administration

Partner Providers and their Services must provide data (which includes personal information – see below) to the OECD for the duration of their Funding Agreement as detailed in **Section C**.

Participation in research and evaluation

The OECD may request that Partner Providers and their Services capture and submit additional data as part of evaluation participation. This may involve, for example:

- capturing additional data
- extracting data from internal systems
- facilitating on-site data collection
- facilitating staff or family participation in data collection (such as interviews, focus groups, or surveys).

Additional data requirements for evaluation will be part of an OECD-approved evaluation design, developed in consultation with sector representatives where appropriate.

New approach to information sharing with the OECD

From January 2027, there will be a new approach to gaining consent for information sharing from parent/guardians that responds to feedback received from Partner Providers and Services, making it clearer and easier for families/guardians.

This process will start in early 2027 for children commencing Flying Start preschool mid-2027. For enrolments commencing preschool prior to this, the 2026 process will remain in place as per the 2026 Policy and Funding Guide (declaration and consent forms required for universal 3- and 4-year-old preschool, as well as for Preschool Plus). This transition time is proposed to provide Partner Providers and Services time to embed this approach into their processes.

Consent requirements

Consent is required from families to share personal information with the OECD across universal and Preschool Plus 3- and 4-year-old preschool programs.

The data that Partner Providers and their Services must provide to the OECD includes the personal information of children enrolled at the service and their families.

When dealing with personal information, Partner Providers and their Services must comply with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and the Australian Privacy Principles.

As part of those obligations, Partner Providers and their Services **must ensure that parents/guardians**:

- know that the Service is collecting their personal information
- understand that the Service will share this information with the OECD each year that the child is enrolled at the service, commencing from the year before the child turns 3 (or immediately upon enrolment if the child enrols at the service after turning 3)
- are notified or made aware of how the OECD will use the information and who it shares it with, as set out in the OECD's Privacy Notice – Flying Start preschool programs, and
- consent to the Service sharing this information with the OECD.

If parents/guardians do not consent to their information being shared, the OECD will not be able to provide funding to a Partner Provider or the Service in relation to the relevant child.

Partner Providers and their Services are responsible for ensuring they comply with their privacy obligations when collecting and sharing personal information and should seek their own legal advice as required.

Information sharing consent requirements

Subject to Partner Providers legal advice, Partner Providers and their Services may include the following statement (however they must provide a link to the OECD's privacy notice) in their enrolment information/forms to obtain consent from parents/guardians to share information with the OECD:

> *"If your child is enrolled at this service when they are aged 2 and above, we will share certain personal information that we have collected about you and your child with the South Australian Office for Early Childhood Development (OECD), which administers the Flying Start preschool program for 3- and 4-year-olds and the Preschool Plus program.*

The information the OECD collects, how it uses it and who it discloses it to is explained in the OECD's Privacy Notice – Flying Start preschool programs.

[tick box for parent/guardian] I consent to the service sharing this personal information with the OECD in the year before my child turns 3 (or immediately upon enrolment if my child enrols after turning 3) and each year thereafter until my child leaves the service."

If Partner Providers and their Services obtain parental/guardian consent as described above, the relevant Partner Service does not also need to require families to sign a separate consent form, which was the previous method for recording the consent of families for their information to be shared with the OECD.

If preferred, an OECD consent form will remain available to Partner Providers and their Services on the OECD website and can be printed and provided to parents/guardians to complete and return to the service.

Partner Providers must retain the signed consent together with the child's enrolment records and provide it to the OECD upon request for the purpose of reporting or funding compliance reviews. This consent should therefore be classified as a child enrolment record as set out in regulation 160 of the National Regulations.

Confirming universal 3-year-old preschool enrolments

For use from January 2027 to support mid 2027 enrolments, Partner Providers and their Services will be provided with a Flying Start 3-year-old preschool confirmation notice.

This notice must be supplied to parent/guardians of children who are attending the service and who, based on their age, are eligible to commence 3-year-old preschool in the following 12 months.

Partner Services must provide this to eligible families in July for the start of the next calendar year commencement, and January for a mid-year commencement. This notice should also be provided to any new enrolments for the service that meet the same age eligibility, after these periods, either at the same time or after they have consented to information sharing with the OECD, through the above-mentioned process.

This notice will advise parents/guardians that their child is eligible to commence 3-year-old preschool the following year and that the Partner Service will receive funding to support their child's Flying Start 3-year-old preschool program if the child remains enrolled at the service. The notice only requires parents/guardians to notify the Service if any of the following circumstances apply:

- they are seeking to defer the commencement of their preschool funding based on their child's intended school start date
- they are electing to notify the Partner Service that their child will be leaving this Partner Service entirely before they will start 3-year-old preschool – including if they intend to enrol at another service
- their child is enrolled in two long day care services and both are partnered to offer 3-year-old preschool, and they want their child to receive their 3-year-old preschool program at the other long day care service
- their child is Aboriginal and the parent/guardian is seeking to take up their entitlement to preschool in a government service
- their child is in care and the parent/guardian is seeking to take up their entitlement to preschool in a government service.

The notice will include a section for parents/guardians to complete only if any of the above circumstances apply. If these circumstances do not apply, the parent/guardian does not need to take any action.

If any of these circumstances are identified through the notice, Partner Services should confirm the parent/guardian understands the eligibility policy and remove the relevant child's information from any data requested by the OECD, as per the data collection requirements in Section C.

Confirming universal 4-year-old preschool enrolments

For use from 2027, Partner Providers and their Services will be provided with a Flying Start preschool confirmation notice that they must supply to parent/guardians of children who are attending the service and who, based on their age, are eligible to commence 4-year-old preschool at the next intake.

This notice will seek to confirm where a child will be accessing their 4-year-old preschool program, including if they attend more than one service and are accessing part of their preschool entitlement at another service.

A consent and enrolment confirmation guide for the new process, and relevant forms will be available on the OECD Partner Portal from late 2026.

Provider and Service accountability and transparency

Partner Providers are required to:

- ensure funding associated with a Partner Service is attributed to that service (unless allowable pooling of funds specified in spending rules), and that there is transparency between Providers and Services in funding information, and
- support Partner Services in meeting the partnership requirements.

Transparency for families

Funding and fees

Partner Providers are required to ensure that Partner Services clearly communicate to families that the South Australian Government is providing funding to cover the additional costs associated with delivering a teacher-led program.

This funding is intended to meet those additional costs. Therefore, Services are not permitted to increase fees for families enrolling in a preschool program.

Displaying preschool program information

At all times, Partner Services must have the following physically on display at the service:

- preschool program operating days and times
- name and qualifications of the ECT or other qualified position delivering the program
- Flying Start partner preschool signage.

Record keeping

The OECD may conduct a compliance review of a Partner Provider and/or their Service in relation to preschool funding and policies, and request that supporting documentation is provided, such as:

- proof of expenditure in line with spending rules

- statements to families showing fee reduction and attributing fee relief to the South Australian Government (including but not limited to Fee Relief for Aboriginal children and Preschool Plus Fee Relief)
- priority of access policies
- evidence of meeting consent requirements (forms, confirmation letter or general enrolment forms).

Partner Service changes

Partner Providers must notify the OECD if there are any changes to its Partner Service(s) that may affect the application or conditions of the Funding Agreement, such as a:

- change of ownership
- change of service approval details
- service closure
- withdrawal from preschool program provision

Change of ownership or service approval

Partner Service status does not transfer with a change of service details, either through:

- the transfer of a service approval to another Approved Provider, or
- an application for a new service approval with the Education Standards Board of South Australia (ESB).

The OECD requires 90 days' notice for a change in Approved Provider. Where the new Approved Provider is not an existing Partner Provider, they must request to become one by submitting required documentation and being assessed as meeting the organisational requirements.

Service ceases to operate

If a Partner Service closes or ceases trading, the Partner Provider must:

- give 90 days' notice in writing prior to ceasing delivery/intending to close by contacting the OECD via email OECD.PreschoolFunding@sa.gov.au
- agree to distribution of local service information, prepared in partnership with the OECD to support families consider their options
- complete all outstanding financial acquittals (including where applicable, a programmatic and financial acquittal against the Service's Partnership Plan)
- stop spending funds after the date of closure/cessation
- return all unexpended and unaccounted funds to the OECD no later than 30 days after the service closure/cessation date, or as agreed by the OECD
- comply with any direction by the OECD in accordance with the Funding Agreement.

The OECD may act if a Partner Provider has advised that it proposes that a Partner Service will close or cease trading, including withholding funding for the service where it relates to a period after the proposed date of closure.

No funding will be provided by the OECD for a service that has closed or ceased trading, for any period after the date of closure/cessation.

Note: Approved Providers must follow steps to comply with regulatory requirements under the National Law and National Regulations, including notifying the ESB within 7 days of ceasing to operate the education and care service. [2]

Withdrawing from provision of preschool program

Where a Partner Provider notifies the OECD that a Partner Service will not deliver a funded preschool program, the provider:

- must give 90 days' notice in writing prior to ceasing delivery by contacting the OECD via email OECD.PreschoolFunding@sa.gov.au
- will not be eligible for preschool funding from the point at which they cease delivery
- will be removed from all future data collections
- complete all outstanding financial acquittals (including where applicable, a programmatic and financial acquittal against the Service's Partnership Plan)
- return all unexpended and unaccounted funds to the OECD no later than 30 days after the last day of delivery, or as agreed by the OECD
- comply with any direction by the OECD in accordance with the Funding Agreement, and
- will need to reapply if seeking funding for that service to become a Partner Service again.

Please note there are different requirements for Partner Services operating as an Integrated Hub, covered in the Funding Agreement.

Temporary closures

If a Partner Service is temporarily closed and cannot offer a preschool program, the Partner Provider must contact the OECD in writing via OECD.PreschoolFunding@sa.gov.au and provide the following information in relation to the service:

- the circumstances for the temporary closure
- how long the service will be or was closed
- when the service will reopen.

If the temporary closure is planned, the OECD requires a minimum of 90 days' notice in writing.

Additional supports

Local Teams

The OECD has a statewide network of Local Teams. These teams will support early childhood services – both Partner Services and those seeking to become Partner Services – to navigate and implement the early childhood reforms.

There are 8 Local Teams dedicated to regions across South Australia with expertise to help guide the implementation of Flying Start preschool. Some key activities include:

- sharing resources to build understanding of the early childhood reforms among services, families and communities, including through educator and family information sessions
- supporting services to understand partnership requirements and help them implement these to a high standard. This includes helping services to understand Australian Early

[2] Refer section 173(2)(d) of the National Law.

Development Census (AEDC) data[3] and to develop Flying Start Partnership Plans that are meaningful to their communities

- supporting services to problem solve, sharing practical examples of solutions to issues or helping address barriers they are experiencing in implementing the reforms
- connecting service providers with other services and community organisations in their region, through Professional Networks and informal opportunities
- listening to services and sharing feedback on local community needs to central policy and program areas to inform and refine policy and program decisions.

There is more information about the Local Teams on the OECD website. Contact the Local Teams via email at OECD.LocalTeams@sa.gov.au.

Partnership monitoring

The OECD's approach to monitoring partnerships seeks to maximise the ability of Partner Providers and their Services to meet the requirements of the Funding Agreement, recognising the need to build the model in a way that reflects the phases of implementation and roll-out.

This approach is guided by the principles to place children at the centre, support the sector, and maintain consistent, transparent and proportionate oversight.

The OECD will conduct routine monitoring activities across the year, focusing on the Partner Provider and Partner Services' compliance with the partnership requirements.

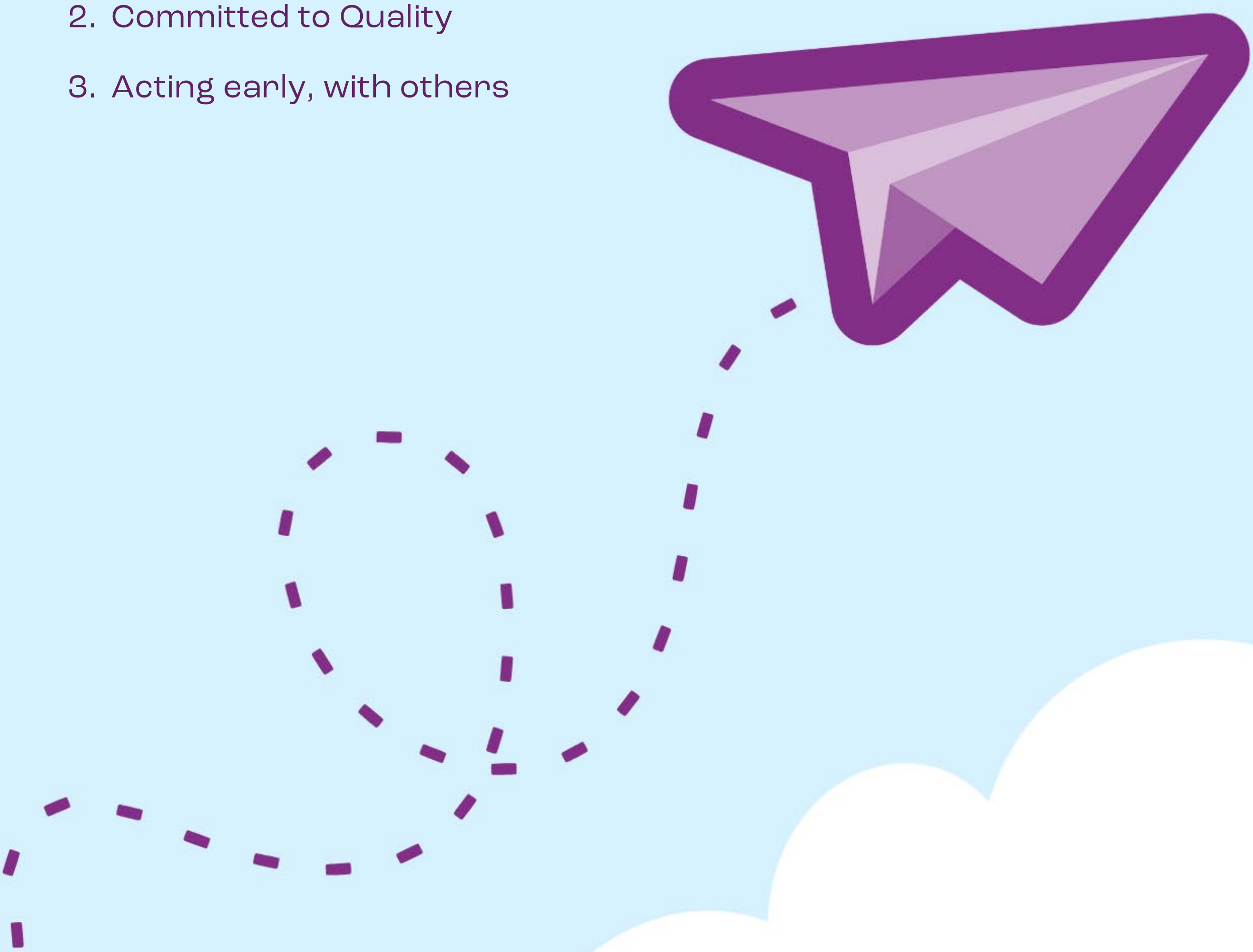
[3] The AEDC is a nationwide census of early childhood development. To learn more about the AEDC, please review the Guide to find and use Australian Early Development Census community data.

Section B:

Service delivery priorities

Based on the research and sector expertise, we know that a service needs to prioritise 3 things to make the biggest possible positive difference in a child's life:

1. Warm and welcoming
2. Committed to Quality
3. Acting early, with others



1. Warm and welcoming

Flying Start Partner Services are a place that families and children from all backgrounds want to be in and can be in – actively inclusive, trustworthy, and Culturally responsive.

Snapshot of your partnership requirements

→ **Child eligibility** – Providers are required to ensure Partner Services adhere to child eligibility requirements for 3- and 4-year-old preschool

→ **Priority of access** – Providers are required to ensure Partner Service enrolment processes align with priority of access requirements for 3-year-old preschool

→ **Inclusion** – Providers and Partner Services are required to ensure environments are genuinely inclusive, where every child is seen as a capable learner and a valued participant

→ **Aboriginal inclusion** – Providers and Partner Services are required to provide a welcoming and Culturally responsive preschool program for Aboriginal children and families. Educators working in the funded preschool room/s and other staff in direct contact with families are required to undertake foundational Aboriginal Cultural Safety training

→ **Trauma-informed practice** – Providers and Partner Services are required to ensure that educators working in the funded preschool room/s and other staff in direct contact with families undertake foundational Trauma-informed Practice training

→ **Ready Set Preschool program planning** – Providers and Partner Services in receipt of Ready Set Preschool funding are required to plan for the use of funding aligned to strategic goals identified through the Partnership Plan and implement funded activities in accordance with the Partnership Plan

Partnership requirements

Child eligibility

All children who attend a South Australian early childhood education and care service that is a Partner Service, are eligible for preschool funding.

Funded preschool

Children will be eligible to access up to 8 terms[4] or 2 years of a funded preschool program in the 2 years before they start school.

Aboriginal children continue to be entitled to access a 15-hour government preschool program any time after their third birthday.

This entitlement also extends to children in care.

All children continue to be entitled to access 4 terms (1 year) of government preschool in the year before they start school (4-year-old preschool).

If a child has reached compulsory school age (6-years-old), they are not eligible for preschool funding.

Age eligibility

3-year-old preschool

To be eligible to enrol in a 3-year-old preschool program, a child must:

- be aged 3 by 30 April (for term 1 enrolment) or 3 by 31 October (for mid-year enrolment) of the year in which they are to be enrolled in the preschool program
- not be attending another funded preschool program or not yet in compulsory schooling.

Some children will not yet have turned 3 within the 2-year period before they plan to start school – with the youngest such child being 2 years and 9 months old. Services are not required to start these children in the preschool program if they cannot accommodate them, given National Law ratio requirements.

Services are required, at a minimum, to offer families the option for these children to either start during the term, or at the next start or mid-year intake point. The goal is that children should receive as much of their 2 years of preschool as possible, considering intended school starting age.

4-year-old preschool

To be eligible to enrol in a 4-year-old preschool program, a child must:

- be aged 4 by 30 April (for term 1 enrolment) or 4 by 31 October (for mid-year enrolment) of the year in which they are to be enrolled in the preschool program
- if attending another funded preschool program, not for more than total of 15 hours per week across all funded preschool programs
- not yet be in compulsory schooling.

[4] Reference to terms should be read as quarters, and enrolment timeframes should align on that basis.

Where children are eligible to access a preschool program – service-type eligibility

3-year-old preschool

Partner Services must inform parents/guardians that their child can only access a funded 3-year-old preschool program **at one service at any given time**, and make sure that families asking about 3-year-old preschool understand their eligibility, as outlined below:

- **Children enrolled in long day care** receive their 3-year-old preschool program there, if it is a Partner Service. During the phased roll-out of 3-year-old preschool, this applies regardless of the number of days per week a child attends.
- **Children in a long day care service that is not a Partner Service**, have the option to apply for a 3-year-old preschool program within a government or non-government sessional preschool, or another long day care service that is a Partner Service. This is based on family preferences and services available within their local area. Available options will grow as the roll-out progresses between 2026 and 2032.

Criteria for accessing 3-year-old preschool	
Child currently enrolled/attending a long day care that **is** a Partner Service	Child is eligible to receive 3-year-old preschool at that service. If attending 2 partner long day care services, the parent must elect which one is the 3-year-old preschool funded service.
Child currently enrolled/attending a long day care that **is not** a Partner Service	Family has the option to apply for a 3-year-old preschool program within a government or non-government sessional service, or another long day care that is a Partner Service. Places are subject to roll-out and availability.
Child is **not enrolled/attending** a long day care service	Family has the option to apply for a 3-year-old preschool program within a government or non-government sessional service, or a long day care that is a Partner Service. Places subject to roll-out and availability.
Aboriginal children	Continue to be entitled to a government preschool place from their third birthday.
Children in care	Continue to be entitled to a government preschool place from their third birthday.

NOTE:

- If a family is in a long day care Partner Service and decides to fully cease their child's long day care enrolment before the start of the next preschool program intake period (January or mid-year), they will be eligible to apply for preschool within a government or non-government sessional preschool. The family would need to formally notify the Partner Service by 31 October before the start of the following year, or by 30 April before a mid-year intake. If they choose to move to another long day care Partner Service, they can do this at any time.
- The intent of this policy is to support families where their circumstances change, such that they no longer require long day care at the Partner Service. Services should not facilitate short term dis-enrolment and enrolment for the purposes of supporting families to be eligible to enrol at a different preschool service. This is not consistent with the intent of the eligibility policy.

- A child cannot be in receipt of a funded 3-year-old preschool program at 2 services.
- If a child is enrolled in more than one long day care service where each is a Partner Service (such as shared care arrangements), only one of those services can receive 3-year-old preschool funding. This is based on the parents' decision or, in its absence, the first service to enrol the child in any capacity.

4-year-old preschool

Before enrolling a child in 4-year-old preschool, the Partner Service must find out from the parent/guardians whether the child is already enrolled to access a place in another government-funded preschool program.

Under the Australian Government's Preschool Reform Agreement, a child can access an average of 15 hours per week or 600 hours over a 12-month period across multiple preschool service providers. Families can choose to receive their funded 4-year-old preschool at a long day care service and/or sessional preschool service.

If a child is enrolled in 2 4-year-old government funded preschool programs, funding is allocated based on the service type. For example:

- If a child is enrolled in more than one long day care delivering a funded 4-year-old preschool program (such as shared care arrangements), the maximum entitlement of 15 hours per week can be funded across both services and is determined by the parents' choice.
- If a child is enrolled in a sessional preschool program as well as a long day care that is a Partner Service, the sessional preschool will receive the funding for up to 15 hours per week.
- If the child is not enrolled in the sessional preschool for the full 15 hours, the long day care service can claim the remaining hours to bring the total to the maximum entitlement of 15 hours per week.

Managing enrolments

Partner Services are responsible for ensuring reasonable steps are taken to minimise claims for funding for children who may be enrolled in more than one funded preschool program. This responsibility includes clearly communicating to parents verbally and in writing about eligibility rules for 3-year-old preschool and how they differ from 4-year-old preschool.

The OECD will conduct ongoing checks for duplicate enrolments. If there is a duplication, the service-type eligibility policy will be applied to determine where funding will be allocated.

If a Partner Service makes a claim for a child who is not eligible, or where there has been a duplicate enrolment, the OECD will recover the funds for that child and take appropriate action under the Funding Agreement.

Priority of access (applicable for 3-year-old preschool offers only)

The enrolment policies of Partner Services must:

- promote fair, equitable access to preschool programs
- support all eligible children to access a preschool program, including those who face barriers to participation, especially for those experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage
- align with the priority of access requirement
- communicate priority of access policies to families at or before enrolment.

A priority of access policy for 3-year-old preschool supports greater access for children at risk of developmental vulnerability who would benefit the most. This becomes particularly important during the roll-out of 3-year-old preschool where, in the short term, there may be more demand than available supply.

Evidence suggests child or family characteristics shown in the table below *increase* the risk of developmental vulnerability. Children within these priority groups should therefore be prioritised for access to a service that best meets their needs. For some children and families in these priority groups, access to 3-year-old preschool will be an important protective factor.

Partner Services can continue to prioritise 3-year-old preschool places for children under 3-years-old currently in their service. There is also the requirement for new places or additional days available to be prioritised to children applying for 3-year-old preschool at their service that fit within the below priority groups. This will be over and above other children applying for a place or seeking additional hours.

Children and their families that meet **category 1** criteria should be prioritised over those who meet category 2 criteria.

- Partner Providers must make sure their application and enrolment policies reflect this prioritisation requirement, including ensuring that enrolment forms allow for the identification of children that meet category 1, 2 or both.
- Partner Providers can include other factors they may wish to prioritise, as a secondary consideration, once they have prioritised children who meet the priority of access criteria (in category 1 and category 2).
- Partner Services must make sure families enquiring about 3-year-old preschool at their service are aware of the priority of access categories.

Category	Criteria
1	Aboriginal children
	Children in care
	Children referred to the Preschool Plus program
2	Children with active child protection involvement or active involvement with the child and family support system
	Children with a recognised disability
	Asylum seeker and refugee children
	Children who do not speak English
	Children of families experiencing or at risk of domestic, family violence
	Children of healthcare card, concession card or Veteran Gold Card holder
	Other extenuating factors that increase a child’s developmental vulnerability as determined through site level leadership discretion

Inclusion

All Partner Services must ensure their environments are genuinely inclusive, where every child is seen as a capable learner and a valued participant. ***Inclusion***, in this context, is not about fitting the child into the existing structure but about adapting the care and education environment to meet the unique needs of every child, so they can fully engage and succeed. Inclusive practices benefit all children.

To fulfill this commitment, Partner Services must have appropriate policies, practices and guides to support inclusion. These measures should ensure that regardless of their learning needs, cultural background, language, abilities or family circumstances all children can:

- access services
- participate meaningfully
- have positive experiences.

The requirement to prioritise inclusion is not only a fundamental principle of quality education but also a legal obligation under the NQS and the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

Aboriginal inclusion

Partner Services must provide a welcoming and Culturally responsive preschool program for Aboriginal children and families.

Partner Services must have initiatives in place that demonstrate their commitment to supporting Aboriginal Cultural Safety of the children, families, and staff in their services. These should be reflective of their size and community.

This commitment must be visible to the local Aboriginal Community and for the broader community on the Service's website as well as on site. It could include actions such as:

- developing a Reconciliation Action Plan, or alternative commitments relative to the size of the service
- active engagement with local Aboriginal Elders and the local Aboriginal Community
- policies and practices promoting diversity and anti-racism
- employing Aboriginal teachers, educators and support staff
- special Community days or events
- visible indicators to welcome Aboriginal children and families, such as displaying Aboriginal flags, Aboriginal resources and/or artwork by Aboriginal artists
- engagement with the local Aboriginal Community members to guide, advise and support Aboriginal ways of knowing, doing and being and language priorities, and/or
- celebrating Culturally significant times such as NAIDOC, Reconciliation Week and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day.

Funded Program streams

Fee Relief for Aboriginal children

The Fee Relief for Aboriginal children program (Fee Relief) is designed to promote equitable access to preschool for Aboriginal children by reducing financial barriers that may impact participation.

This Funded Program stream is an allowable third-party payment under Australian Government funding rules for the Child Care Subsidy (CCS). This means that it does not impact a family's CCS entitlement, so Partner Services must apply Fee Relief to each eligible family's fees after CCS has been applied. Partner Services must apply the funding to the families' fees in a timely and regular way, to ensure that fees are not a barrier to preschool participation.

Eligibility

Aboriginal children are eligible for Fee Relief where they are enrolled in either a 3- or 4-year-old preschool program.

If a child is eligible for both Fee Relief and Preschool Plus Fee Relief as a Preschool Plus program enrolment, they will not receive both subsidies; the OECD will provide the Partner Service with the fee relief that is the higher value to spend in alignment with the spending rules.

Partnership Plan inclusion

Not applicable.

Spending rules

Allowable expenditure

Fee Relief is to directly advantage the child to which the subsidy applies through a reduction in fees for the family. This funding must be used to reduce any out-of-pocket fees for families with eligible children.

Funding restrictions

Fee Relief funding cannot be used to provide cash directly to families.

Discretionary use of funding

If a Service has unspent funds (this includes where there are no out-of-pocket costs for the family), the Service can use this funding to support:

- quality and participation initiatives for Aboriginal children in the service
- activities that further the Aboriginal Inclusion objectives.

There is no further discretionary use of funding for this Funded Program stream. All funding must be spent in accordance with the above.

Program reporting

If a parent/guardian identifies a child as being of Aboriginal origin, this must be recorded on the child's enrolment and the Partner Provider and/or Partner Service must retain the enrolment document for audit purposes.

Fee Relief will also need to be accounted for in the service-level annual financial acquittal.

Ready Set Preschool – Targeted Funding

Ready Set Preschool (formerly Outreach) is a targeted funding program designed to support Partner Services to reduce barriers to preschool enrolment and attendance for children in areas of socio-economic disadvantage. Reducing barriers to enrolment should be focused on priority cohorts as outlined in the priority of access categories 1 and 2.

As part of the Ready Set Preschool program, additional centrally commissioned engagement supports will be introduced to help children and families who are not currently connected to early childhood education and care, enrol in and attend preschool.

These supports are designed to work alongside services by strengthening pathways into preschool, supporting early engagement and participation where additional assistance is needed.

Eligibility

From 2027, all SEIFA 1 and 2 Services will receive an allocation of Ready Set Preschool funding to support cohort-level planning and to deliver supports and activities that strengthen family engagement and connection to preschool and reduce practical barriers that prevent children from enrolling in and attending preschool.

All SEIFA 1 and 2 Partner Services will be notified of their following years' annual Ready Set Preschool funding allocation in advance, giving them up to 6 months to plan how they will use their Ready Set Preschool funding.

Partnership Plan inclusion

SEIFA 1 and 2 Partner Services are required to plan for how they will use Ready Set Preschool funding (including Preschool Plus Ready Set Preschool funding) aligned to strategic goals identified through the Partnership Plan.

SEIFA 3 – 5 Services with Preschool Plus enrolments are **not** required to plan how Preschool Plus Ready Set Preschool funding will be used via the Partnership Plan.

Spending rules

A majority of Ready Set Preschool funding should be directed towards **Indirect Cost Reduction** activities that provide practical supports to reduce barriers to preschool enrolment and attendance. Funding may also be used for **Community Connection** activities that strengthen family engagement, support the enrolment of priority cohorts and encourage regular preschool attendance.

Supports may be universal, targeted to a priority cohort, or provided to an individual family where they are reasonably intended to remove barriers to preschool enrolment or attendance and align with the approved Partnership Plan. In some circumstances, supports may be provided universally to support discreet access and reduce stigma.

Services are encouraged to set aside a portion of their allocation to respond to urgent or changing family circumstances as they arise. This should be indicated in the Partnership Plan as a flexible allocation of funds.

Where Services are part of a larger provider organisation, up to 50% of total funding allocation may be pooled across services within the same Provider to support coordinated delivery and purchasing efficiencies and reduce administrative burden on its services (excluding Ready Set Preschool allocations for Preschool Plus).

A contribution towards staffing cost, including coordination of services, administration and staff time required to plan and deliver Ready Set Preschool activities is an allowable expense where it supports delivery of approved indirect cost reduction and community connection activities, including supporting children and families to enrol in and attend preschool. However, expenditure must not compromise the primary intent of the funding, which is to prioritise activities that reduce attendance barriers and directly benefit children and families.

Allowable expenditure

Ready Set Preschool funding can only be spent on:

- Indirect Cost Reduction activities that provide practical supports to reduce barriers to preschool enrolment and attendance.
- Community Connection activities that strengthen family engagement, enrolment of priority cohorts and ongoing attendance

Indirect Cost Reduction

Indirect Cost Reduction provides practical supports that reduce barriers to preschool enrolment and attendance. Supports may be universal, targeted to a priority cohort or provided to an individual family where they are reasonably intended to remove identified participation barriers. It is not intended to be a substitute for family income, but to provide practical support for low-cost items that enable preschool participation. Refer to the Ready Set Preschool Funding Categories for further spending rules and examples.

Category	Spending rules
Nutrition Transport Clothing and essential items Urgent family needs	→ Practical food supports that reduce barriers to preschool enrolment and attendance. → Practical transport supports where transport is a barrier to preschool enrolment or attendance. → Essential preschool items that support children to enrol and attend preschool. → One-off practical assistance to address immediate barriers to preschool enrolment or attendance.

Community Connection

Funding can also be used to deliver community connection activities that strengthen family engagement, support the enrolment of priority cohorts and encourage regular preschool attendance. Refer to the Ready Set Preschool Funding Categories for further spending rules and examples.

Program reporting

Partner Services that receive Ready Set Preschool funding will be required to participate in reporting processes as determined by the OECD. Reporting may include information on how funding has been used and how activities have supported goals identified in the Partnership Plan in relation to preschool participation for children who may have otherwise encountered barriers to enrolment/attendance.

Partner Providers and Services must maintain records, including receipts for all related purchases, to support reporting and acquittal requirements.

Expenditure should be recorded in a register that captures the expenditure item, category, who it benefited (e.g. all children or a particular child/family), amount and date. This register can be in any form, at the discretion of the Partner Provider. Records must be retained for a minimum of 7 years.

Ready Set Preschool funding will need to be accounted for in the service-level annual financial acquittal.

Aboriginal Cultural Safety training and associated backfill – *first year of partnership only*

Partner Services must commit to ensuring that ECTs and educators working in the funded preschool room(s) and other staff in direct contact with families participating in the funded preschool program, such as administration staff, undertake OECD approved foundational Aboriginal Cultural Safety training delivered by an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation or Aboriginal Business Supplier.

In the first year of partnering, Services can access a funding contribution of $45 per hour (for up to 2 hours per person) to backfill staff attending mandatory Aboriginal Cultural Safety training.

Foundation training will focus on building knowledge aligned with the ‘knowing’ level of the Knowing, Being, Doing Cultural Safety Framework. This training, funded by the OECD, is being progressively rolled out across all Partner Services and will include options for both face-to-face and online formats.

Access to training and confirmation of attendance will be managed through the Preschool Boost program and Partnership Plan. Prior training aligned to the ‘knowing level’ may be recognised, depending on its timeframe and alignment with the scope of training available for Partner Services. Services seeking to apply for Recognition of Training (RoT) must request this at the time of submitting their Partnership Plan.

Eligibility

All educators working in the funded preschool room(s) and other staff in direct contact with families participating in the funded preschool program (such as administration staff), must complete foundational Aboriginal Cultural Safety training.

This backfill contribution is only payable in the first year of a service’s partnership with the OECD. New staff hired by the service must complete the training as part of their standard induction process.

Partnership Plan inclusion

Applicable where a Service is a new Partner Service (first year of service delivery) and is seeking RoT.

Spending rules

Backfill for Aboriginal Cultural Safety training can only be allocated toward backfill of relevant staff participation in training.

Program reporting

Backfill for Aboriginal Cultural Safety training will need to be accounted for in the service-level annual financial acquittal.

Trauma-informed Practice training and associated backfill – *first year of partnership only*

The OECD has developed a Trauma-informed Practice professional development package, to build the capability of the workforce to respond to the increasingly complex needs of children and families.

Partner Services must commit to ensuring all ECTs and educators working in the funded preschool program room/s and other staff in direct contact with families from these rooms, such as administration staff, complete at a minimum, Foundational Trauma-informed Practice training. The 2-part online Foundational Trauma-informed Practice training module is freely available via the plink online learning platform.

In the first year of partnering, Services can access a funding contribution of $45 per hour (for up to 2 hours per person) as a backfill contribution to support attendance at mandatory Trauma-informed Practice training for relevant staff.

Access to training and confirmation of attendance will be managed through the Preschool Boost program and Partnership Plan. Prior training may be recognised, depending on its timeframe and alignment with the scope of training available for Partner Services. Services seeking Recognition of Training (RoT) must request this at the time of submitting their Partnership Plan.

Eligibility

All educators working in the funded preschool room(s) and other staff in direct contact with families participating in the funded preschool program (such as administration staff), must complete Trauma-informed Practice training.

This backfill contribution is only payable in the first year of a Service's partnership with the OECD. New staff hired by the Service must complete the training as part of their standard induction process.

Partner Services in their first 12 months of delivering Preschool Plus also have access to additional free coaching and implementation supports to build educator confidence and capability to embed trauma-informed strategies into practice.

Partnership Plan inclusion

Applicable where a Service is a new Partner Service (first year of service delivery) and is seeking RoT.

Spending rules

Backfill for Trauma-informed Practice training can only be allocated toward backfill of relevant staff participation in training.

Program reporting

Backfill for Trauma-informed Practice training will need to be accounted for in the service-level annual financial acquittal.

Additional supports

Aboriginal Workforce Grants

The Flying Start Aboriginal Workforce Grants program provides grants to services to embed Aboriginal Cultural safety and support the professional development of Aboriginal staff. These grants have been established as part of the Aboriginal Workforce Strategy.

Grants of up to $20,000 are available under this program.

Find out more in the Flying Start Aboriginal Workforce Grants Application Guidelines.

Infrastructure grants

The South Australian Government is investing in early learning infrastructure through the Flying Start Infrastructure Grants program, supporting the roll-out of 3-year-old preschool, as outlined in the Preschool Infrastructure Strategy.

The Flying Start Infrastructure Grants program provides co-investment to support building new facilities or the expansion of existing facilities where additional preschool capacity is needed.

For further information, visit the Flying Start Infrastructure Grants page on the OECD website or email OECD.Infrastructure@sa.gov.au.

2. Committed to Quality

Flying Start services provide a quality service under the National Law and NQS, including warm and responsive relationships and intentional play-based practice

Snapshot of your Partnership requirements

- → **Quality and safety commitment** – Providers and Partner Services are required to commit to quality and safety in education and care in their services as evidenced through information shared from the ESB to the OECD
- → **Teacher-led program** – The preschool program must be developed, implemented and delivered by a qualified ECT registered with the Teachers Registration Board (TRB). Where a qualified ECT is not available, a person holding a Special Authority to Teach as an ECT (ECT SAT) granted by the TRB will be accepted. Where the program is being led by a person with an ECT SAT, a registered ECT must be made available to coach and support programming and practice
- → **Additional non-contact time** – ECTs delivering the preschool program must receive an additional 2 hours of non-contact time per week over and above the current relevant industrial award (currently, this means a total minimum of 4 hours per week), and 2 days of paid professional development per year over and above the current relevant industrial award
- → **Commitment to workforce development** – Providers and Partner Services are required to demonstrate a commitment to workforce development, including through traineeships, hosting student placements or supporting educators to upskill to become ECTs. ECT SATs and diploma-qualified educators are required to be supported to access professional development, curriculum resources and tools – including those offered at no cost by the OECD to support high-quality teaching and learning
- → **Professional Networks** – Providers are required to ensure Partner Services participate in Flying Start Professional Networks
- → **Professional learning** – Providers and Partner Services are required to support professional learning for their ECTs through planning for and supporting engagement in professional learning, including through OECD Funded Programs and use of available backfill funding
- → **Quality Uplift program** – Services rated as Working Towards the NQS before formal preschool provision begins or during their agreement, must participate in the Quality Uplift program. If their rating falls, the provider must ensure the OECD is notified
- → **Enhancing Quality program planning** – Providers and Partner Services are required to undertake service-level learning and development planning that aligns to their strategic quality objectives identified through the Partnership Plan and implement funded activities in accordance with the Partnership Plan

Partnership requirements

Commitment to quality and safety

Providers and Partner Services are required to commit to quality and safety in education and care in their services. Periodically, the OECD will receive information from the ESB that seeks to identify if there are Provider or Service-level quality and/or safety issues that are systemic in nature and therefore could impact a Provider or Partner Service's ability to demonstrate their commitment.

Teacher-led program

All Partner Services must have a qualified ECT to deliver the preschool program for the full preschool program hours.

An ECT delivering the preschool program means 'the individual or individuals responsible for the development, implementation, and delivery of the funded preschool program or programs'.

An individual will be considered a qualified ECT if they:

- are registered with the Teachers Registration Board (TRB), and hold a degree that at a minimum, meets National Quality Framework qualification requirements, **or**
- are completing or have completed a qualification approved by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority and hold a Special Authority to Teach as an ECT SAT from the TRB.[5] In these circumstances, Services must confirm with OECD Local Teams that there is another registered ECT available to coach and support programming and practice where the program is being led by a person with an ECT SAT.

ECT absences

Where the teacher delivering a funded preschool program is absent due to planned or unplanned leave, resignation or termination, 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 business days in a 12-month period (calendar year from January to December)**, provided there is **another registered teacher** identified to coach and support programming and practice during this period.

This provision **applies to the delivery of both 3- and 4-year-old preschool programs**.

This 60-day 'supportive period' is calculated **per preschool room** and applies regardless of the number of days, hours or weeks the preschool program is delivered. The 60 business days do not need to be consecutive and may include multiple periods of absences throughout the year e.g. to cover annual leave. Periods of absence of 5 or less consecutive business days do not need to be counted in the 60-days.

Partner Providers must notify their OECD Local Team when delivery of the program is impacted as a result of teacher absences.

[5] For more information, see Specific Authorities | Teachers Registration Board of South Australia (trb.sa.edu.au).

Additional non-contact time

Partner Providers and Partner Services must provide ECTs delivering the preschool program with:

- an additional 2 hours of non-contact time per week over and above the current relevant industrial award (currently, this means a total minimum of 4 hours per week)
- 2 days of paid professional development per year over and above the current relevant industrial award.

The OECD reserves the right to increase this non-contact time or the number of professional development days in future, in response to changed industrial arrangements or market conditions, after consultation with the sector.

Non-contact time and professional development days are to be allocated to all teachers delivering a preschool program. The allocation can be pro-rata based on the fraction of time the teacher is employed to deliver the program.

Workforce development

Partner Providers and Services must demonstrate a commitment to workforce development, including through traineeships, hosting student placements or supporting educators to upskill. For more information, see the OECD website.

Flying Start Professional Networks

Professional Networks are aimed at bringing together, at the local level, professionals across the ECEC sector, allied health and community services involved in the delivery of Flying Start preschool.

Providers and Partner Services will be referred to a local Professional Network and must ensure that a minimum of one educator per Partner Service attends each session, with a strong preference that the ECT delivering the 3-year-old preschool program participate as the regular member.

Professional learning

Partner Providers and Services are required to support professional learning for their preschool ECTs, to help them effectively use best practice resources to support their teaching practice and children's learning.

In their first year of operation, this is facilitated through backfill funding to participate in free face-to-face and online professional learning offered via the Preschool Toolkit. Partner Services have the option to support an alternate professional learning program for their ECT.

Partner Services operating an Integrated Hub will be provided with additional professional development and network support over the course of the roll-out of 3-year-old preschool.

Quality Uplift program

Partner Services rated as Working Towards the NQS:

- during the Integrated Hub pre-commencement phase
- before formal preschool provision begins, and/or
- throughout the period of being a Partner Service

must participate in the Quality Uplift program, if requested by OECD. The type and intensity will be determined by the OECD.

Some Partner Services referred into the Quality Uplift program will need to complete the program before starting preschool provision and being eligible for funding. Others may begin preschool operations provided they complete the Quality Uplift program when it can be offered to the Service, within a timeframe determined by the OECD.

This decision will consider factors such as the nature and timing of the Working Towards rating, and the practicalities of accessing the Quality Uplift program before preschool provision is due to begin.

Funded Program streams

Teaching and Learning

Teaching and Learning funding is the base, per-capita funding for the preschool program and supports the delivery of a teacher-led program by:

- enabling Services to uplift an existing program to become a preschool program led by an ECT, **and**
- allowing an additional 2 hours of non-contact time per week and 2 days of professional development per year above current award requirements.

Teaching and Learning funding incorporates these additional requirements so that Services are financially supported to meet these obligations.

Eligibility

All Partner Services.

Partnership Plan inclusion

Not applicable.

Delivery requirements

3-year-old preschool

By 2032, the standard offer will be 15 hours per enrolment per week, but during the roll-out of 3-year-old preschool, Services **may offer between 6 and 15 hours per enrolment per week, across a minimum of 40 weeks per year**, to maximise the number of children able to receive a 3-year-old preschool program.

Where there is greater demand than capacity in a Partner Service, the Service must **prioritise the participation of children** in a funded preschool program over the number of weekly program hours offered.

4-year-old preschool

Partner Services **must offer 15 hours per enrolment per week across a minimum of 40 weeks per year**, or 600 hours per year, for children attending the 4-year-old preschool program.

Summary

The universal preschool program can be delivered in a range of ways based on operational preferences of a Partner Service, provided they meet the following requirements for their funded preschool programs.

- Each eligible child can be enrolled for a universal funded preschool program between:
    - 6 to 15 hours per week for 3-year-old preschool, and

    - up to 15 hours per week for 4-year-old preschool.
- The Partner Service will be **funded pro-rata on that basis**.
- Per universal funded preschool program enrolment, for each child the:
    - maximum hours offered per day is 8 hours
    - maximum hours per week offered is 15 hours
    - weeks of preschool offer per year are between 40 – 50
    - maximum number of hours per year is 600 hours.

It is acknowledged that in a long day care service, children may receive more than 600 hours of a preschool program depending on the overall number of days per week they are enrolled in the Service.

- There is no minimum number of enrolled children required at a service to be eligible for funding.
- Public holidays are included in the annual provision of 600 hours.

Spending rules

Allowable expenditure

Teaching and Learning funding must be spent in accordance with the purposes explained in this Guide. It cannot be used for other purposes, unless the Service is authorised in writing by the OECD to do so.

Teaching and Learning funding can **only** be applied to the marginal costs of teaching and learning in the funded preschool programs. This funding cannot be used for the costs of other rooms or the underlying costs of operating a National Law-compliant long day care service. (It is assumed these costs are covered by Australian Government funding and parent fees.) Therefore, funding must only be spent on the additional costs of delivering a quality preschool program that are above the costs of operating a long day care program.

Those **additional costs** may include:

- the differential between the wages and conditions of an ECT-led program and a program led by a diploma-qualified staff member
- for ECTs delivering the funded preschool program, the provision of an additional 2 hours of non-contact time per week above and beyond the relevant industrial award, plus 2 working days off the floor per year (pro-rata where required) for professional development. This includes costs for backfilling of staff
- additional teaching and learning professional development programs plus release time for ECTs and VET-qualified staff working in the funded preschool program. This supports quality programming, including a focus on preventing and responding to developmental vulnerability
- improved wages and conditions for ECTs and/or VET-qualified staff working in the funded preschool program. This includes attraction and/or retention payments necessary to establish and maintain the program
- release time for staff who are upskilling to their next level of qualification to take on a higher-level role in the funded preschool program

- additional enrichment experiences such as incursions and excursions, and quality age-appropriate learning resources specifically for funded preschool children to support preschool program delivery.

Funding can only be allocated and used at a Service-level, unless authorised in writing by the OECD (this means Partner Providers cannot 'pool funding' if they have multiple Partner Services).

Funding restrictions

Teaching and Learning funding **cannot be used**:

- for base operational costs of long day care services or non-preschool-related expenses
- for wages for staff not supporting delivery of the funded preschool program (meaning other service staff wages)
- for "under the roof" ratio provisions where the ECT is in another area of the service and not delivering the program
- for the costs of other rooms or the underlying costs of operating a National Law-compliant long day care service (it is assumed these costs are covered by Australian Government funding and parent fees)
- to fund allowable expenditure of other Funded Program streams supported by the OECD, if the budget for that stream has been exceeded.

Discretionary use of funding

The Teaching and Learning funding can only be applied to the costs of delivering a quality preschool program as above, over and above the costs of the delivery of a standard long day care program. All funding must be spent in accordance with that overarching principle.

If a Partner Service can meet the teaching and learning requirements of the funded preschool program and has Teaching and Learning funds uncommitted, the Partner Provider **can use** their funds for additional activities including:

- additional workforce development
- mentorship, practice-sharing and network-building activities with other services
- quality or capability building in staff
- equity and inclusion activities that benefit the service and its families as well as the broader local community, particular cohorts, or the early childhood system as a whole
- providing fee relief for preschool to families that meet the priority of access criteria
- providing additional fee relief for Preschool Plus enrolments
- providing additional fee relief for Aboriginal children.

Program reporting

Evidence of ECT non-contact and professional development periods must be kept, documented and available, as this is an essential part of record-keeping. Other evidence may also be needed to confirm this non-contact requirement, when requested by the OECD.

Partner Services will need to retain supporting documentation and evidence to demonstrate expenditure in line with spending rules. Teaching and Learning funding will also need to be accounted for in the service-level annual financial acquittal.

Any unspent Teaching and Learning funding at the end of the calendar year will be offset against any future payment. Where no next payment exists, the provider must repay the unexpended amount within 30 days of written notification by the OECD to do so.

Backfill for Professional Networks

Networks are offered at no cost and generally meet 4 times a year for 2 to 3 hours each time to support building professional relationships and connections between local early childhood professionals.

Backfill funding is provided to remove barriers to participation in Professional Networks.

Eligibility

All Partner Services will receive backfill funding to support attendance.

Partnership Plan inclusion

Not applicable.

Spending rules

Backfill funding must pay for backfill to support attendance at Networks.

Program reporting

Backfill for Professional Networks will need to be accounted for in the service-level annual financial acquittal.

Backfill for Professional Learning

A contribution towards staff backfill funding is allocated per Service to participate in Professional Learning aligned to Flying Start priorities for 3-year-old preschool delivery.

Eligibility

This backfill contribution is only payable in the first year of the service's partnership with the OECD.

Partnership Plan inclusion

Not applicable.

Spending rules

Backfill funding must pay for backfill for teachers or educators to support professional learning aligned to Flying Start priorities for 3-year-old preschool delivery.

Program reporting

Backfill for Professional Learning will need to be accounted for in the service-level annual financial acquittal including details of what professional learning was undertaken. Partners will need to retain evidence to demonstrate compliance with the spending rules.

Enhancing Quality program

Providers and their Services are required to undertake service-level learning and development planning that aligns to their strategic quality objectives identified through the Partnership Plan.

The Enhancing Quality program provides access to funding for Partner Services to undertake this learning and development that aligns to their strategic quality objectives. This will support retention of the early childhood workforce, lifting service quality and improving developmental outcomes for children across language, cognitive, social, emotional, and physical domains.

There are 3 key focus areas for the Enhancing Quality program, based on the NQS:

- Quality Area 1 – Educational program and practice
- Quality Area 5 – Relationships with children
- Quality Area 7 – Governance and leadership.

The Enhancing Quality program is a trial pilot for the 2027 calendar year. Further information can be found in the Enhancing Quality Professional Learning and Development Framework.

The Framework has been developed to provide guidance for early childhood leaders, teachers, educators and teams, to make informed and effective decisions when selecting and embedding high-quality professional development.

Eligibility

All Partner Services.

Partnership Plan inclusion

All Partner Services are required to plan how they will use Enhancing Quality program funding in the Flying Start Partnership Plan.

Spending rules

All spending needs to be approved through the Partnership Plan and be aligned with the Framework.

Allowable expenditure

Professional learning must focus on the identified goals of the service towards quality improvement. It does not mean that all staff need to participate in the purchased professional learning. At a minimum the professional learning must benefit the preschool program. This could include a focus on upskilling for a teaching team or teams, leadership team, or pedagogical leadership and implementation.

Professional learning should be consistent with the Early Years Learning Framework.

Funding restrictions

Funding cannot be used as a substitute for a Service's existing professional learning program and must be planned **in addition to** a service's standard professional development. Services will be required to declare that the Enhancing Quality funding will be used for activities beyond their existing commitment to professional learning.

Funding cannot be spent on:

- activities not approved in the Partnership Plan, or approved as a variation to the Partnership Plan, without the prior approval of the OECD

- activities that do not represent good value for money, given the cost of the item and how the item will benefit the service
- subscriptions, conference registrations, or professional memberships
- mandatory training, such as First Aid, Child Safety Training
- physical or digital resources, except where they are delivered as a part of an active learning option.

Spending parameters

Professional learning and development must be delivered by a suitably qualified person/organisation. The person/organisation providing the professional development must have an ABN and provide professional development services that can be purchased commercially, whether the specific learning that is purchased is commercially available or not.

The person/organisation providing the professional learning must not be employed by or have a real or perceived conflict of interest with the service or provider.

OECD Local Teams will support Partner Services to ensure funds are effectively planned and spent and any variance to these rules, may be sought under exceptional circumstances and should be discussed during the planning process.

Category	Definition / Purpose	Notes	Allocation
Administration support	Covers costs related to planning, booking, and administering programs or supports.	This may include backfill where staff are released to complete these administration tasks. A teacher is not required to perform the administration work.	**Up to 5%**
Professional Learning and Development	Programs and services	Costs may include supplier travel and accommodation, as part of the negotiated delivery price.	**>0%**
Staff backfill	Covers the cost of temporary relief ECTs/staff to cover service staff attending programs or training.	Services may utilise their funding allocation to enable staff to participate in professional learning and development, including participating in post-learning implementation and reflective practice. This may include backfill to replace a staff member during service hours, or to pay a staff member beyond their ordinary hours. While there is not a cap on the proportion of a service's allocation that can be used to pay backfill, any use of backfill arrangements must be undertaken in conjunction with professional learning and be proportionate to the professional learning undertaken.	**No cap**

Program reporting

Partner Services will be required to participate in Enhancing Quality reporting processes as part of the Partnership Plan annual program reporting. Reporting will include information on how funding has been used and how activities have aligned to their goals in the Partnership Plan.

Partner Services will need to retain evidence to demonstrate compliance with spending rules which may include copies of financial reports, receipts or invoices.

Enhancing Quality funding will also need to be accounted for in the service-level annual financial acquittal.

Provisionally Registered Teacher Mentoring Program

The Provisionally Registered Teacher (PRT) Mentoring Program will provide opt-in, tailored support aimed at increasing the number of PRTs moving to full registration, building a highly skilled, fully qualified and registered ECT workforce, supporting retention and enhancing children's developmental outcomes.

Suitably qualified, fully registered and highly experienced ECTs can participate in the program as ECT mentors. PRTs participating in the program will have access to tailored streams of mentoring support through group sessions or 1:1 mentoring.

ECT mentors will be matched with a PRT mentee outside of their service or provider and will undertake professional development to grow as leaders and contribute to the development of high-quality teaching across the sector, supported through peer learning connections.

Partner Services with a staff member participating in the program will receive PRT Mentoring Program funding. Funding amounts are based on the role the staff member is undertaking in the program, the associated program activities and any travel involved in their participation in the program.

Participation in the PRT Mentoring Program will be subject to supplier capacity, assessment and triaging. More detailed information about the PRT Mentoring Program is provided in the Program Guidelines.

Eligibility

Partner Services with a PRT mentee or ECT mentor participating in the program will be provided with funding via the Funding Agreement to support their participation.

Partnership Plan inclusion

Not applicable.

Spending rules

Funding for the PRT Mentoring Program must be used to support the release of the PRT mentee or ECT Mentor to participate in the program.

Program reporting

Funding provided for the PRT Mentoring Program will need to be accounted for in the service-level annual financial acquittal.

Additional supports

QualifySA

The QualifySA in Early Childhood program (QualifySA) provides financial support for South Australian residents undertaking qualifications in early childhood education to offset costs related to their study.

Flying Start Workforce Grants

The Flying Start Workforce Grants program provides early childhood workforce attraction and retention grants for regional, rural, and hard-to-staff communities in South Australia.

Funding is available for projects that foster collaboration between early childhood services, provide development and training opportunities and/or to conduct local workforce attraction and retention campaigns.

Early Childhood Leaders Forum

To support sector readiness and the implementation of 3-year-old preschool, the OECD will deliver two half-day Leaders Forums each year for Partner Services.

The forums provide an opportunity for leaders from Partner Services to collaborate, build leadership capability, and support the implementation of reform objectives. They will also strengthen the governance, leadership, and operational practices required to deliver high-quality Flying Start preschool programs.

Teacher Incentives

The South Australian Government offers financial incentives to attract and retain ECTs to work in Partner Services. Two types of incentives are available - Individual Incentives and Location Incentives. For more information, visit Flying Start Teacher Incentives.

Early Years Assessment and Learning Tool (EYALT)

Under the National Law, ECEC services must 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 each child's unique strengths, interests and abilities against national learning progressions.

Under the Preschool Reform Agreement, states and territories have agreed to work collaboratively with the Commonwealth to implement a new national Preschool Outcomes Measure. In South Australia we have elected to use the EYALT for this trial.

In 2026 and 2027, the trial will involve up to 250 ECTs to complete assessments for participating children. This will deepen and support a more complete understanding of children's learning progressions and strengthen transition statements. For more information, visit the OECD website.

3a. Acting early, with others

Flying Start Services are places that reliably spot and actively address children's specific developmental vulnerabilities, working with other professionals (e.g. allied health) and parents/carers

Partnership requirements

→ **Preschool Boost planning** – Providers and their Services are required to undertake Preschool Boost planning that aligns to their strategic objectives for responding to children's developmental needs as identified through the Partnership Plan and implement funded activities in accordance with the Partnership Plan

Funded Program streams

Preschool Boost

Preschool Boost is a universal funding stream to support early childhood education services to do more to address developmental vulnerability. Preschool Boost funding can be used to purchase allied health services and other quality programs from the Preschool Boost menu, enhancing the capability of services, educators, and parents.

Preschool Boost will also provide all Partner Services with a range of centrally funded programs free of charge including Aboriginal Cultural Safety training and Trauma-informed Practice training, inclusive of backfill funding.

Partner Providers and Services in receipt of Preschool Boost funding are required to plan for the use of all Preschool Boost funding and associated backfill aligned to strategic goals identified through the Partnership Plan and implement funded activities in accordance with the Partnership Plan. Preschool Boost funding is distributed through direct funding and/or vouchers bi-annually.

Partner Services will be notified of their following years' Preschool Boost funding allocation in advance, giving them up to 6 months to plan how they will use their Preschool Boost funding.

Professional development as part of Preschool Boost

Preschool Boost provides Partner Services with additional funding to purchase high-quality supports, including professional development specific to addressing areas of developmental concern, via the Preschool Boost menu. Although Preschool Boost funding is allocated based on funded preschool enrolments, educator professional development is expected to have flow on benefits for all children in the Service.

Eligibility

All Partner Services will receive Preschool Boost funding, recognising that developmental vulnerability exists in every area of South Australia.

Partnership Plan inclusion

All Partner Services are required to plan how they will use Preschool Boost funding.

Spending rules

Allowable expenditure

Preschool Boost funding can be used to purchase allied health and other evidence informed programs that support groups of children and enhance the capability of services, educators, and parents. It must not be spent on individual child supports including individual assessments.

Funds are to be used primarily to purchase allied health services and other quality programs from the Preschool Boost Menu, with some exceptions (see spending parameters below).

All Partner Services must detail how the funding will be allocated to support children's outcomes via the Partnership Plan. This Partnership Plan ensures compliance with funding rules and will be subject to approvals.

Funding restrictions

Preschool Boost funding **cannot be**:

- used for off-menu purchases, administration support or backfill greater than the percentages noted in the spending parameters
- spent on resources, supports and training not aligned to AEDC developmental domains or products outside the prescribed Preschool Boost menu other than those specified in the spending parameters
- spent on services/programs/resources not approved in the Partnership Plan, or approved as a variation to the Partnership Plan, without the prior approval of the OECD.

Discretionary use of funding

The Preschool Boost Funded Program stream is, by its design, discretionary but it can only be allocated and spent in accordance with the spending rules and parameters.

For further guidance, including pooling arrangements, refer to the Preschool Boost Fact Sheet available on the OECD Partner Portal.

Spending parameters

Local Teams will support Partner Services to ensure funds are effectively planned and spent.

Category	Definition / Purpose	Notes	Allocation
Administration support	Covers costs related to planning, booking, and administering programs or supports.	This may include backfill where staff are released to complete these administration tasks. A teacher is not required to perform the administration work.	**Up to 5%**

Government of South Australia

Flying Start for kids

Category	Definition / Purpose	Notes	Allocation
Staff backfill	Covers the cost of temporary relief ECTs/staff to cover service staff attending programs or training.	Backfill to release staff to participate in an approved planning, implementation or evaluation activity (e.g. professional development, meeting with an allied health practitioner, supporting a parent information session etc.) can be fully covered as long as total backfill expenditure does not exceed 25% of the total Preschool Boost funding allocation. Partner Services may, at their discretion, use backfill funding to pay staff for approved OECD-related activities which occur outside their usual working hours, recognising the operational complexity of the early childhood sector and the challenges in releasing staff from directly working with children. For mandated programs (e.g. Trauma-informed Practice, Aboriginal Cultural safety), a separate allowance is provided on top of the Preschool Boost funding in a service's first year of contracting and does not count towards the 25% backfill limit.	**Up to 25%**
Menu Programs	Programs and services listed on the Preschool Boost menu.	Selection of allied health services and other quality programs. Costs may include supplier travel and accommodation, as part of the negotiated delivery price, or delivery/operation of a creche to support parent/carer attendance at a parenting program.	**At least 50%**
Off Menu	Programs or services not listed on the Preschool Boost Menu.	Off Menu items may be approved if a program or allied health professional listed on the Preschool Boost Menu: • does not have availability to support a request within a reasonable period (life span of the approved Partnership Plan) • cost exceeds a Partner Services' total years' 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 • other scenarios approved by the OECD. The Off Menu allocation can also be utilised: • to 'top up' access to existing part time allied health professionals at the service. • to purchase programs that are locally innovative or part of site-based research projects contributing to the evidence base for inclusion on the Preschool Boost Menu.	**Up to 20%**

Approval for expenditure of Preschool Boost funding, for both menu and Off Menu purchases, will be managed through the Partnership Plan process to ensure expenditure aligns with program intent.

Program reporting

Partner Services will be required to participate in Preschool Boost reporting processes as determined by the OECD.

Reporting may include information on how funding has been used, including the target AEDC domains (or sub domains), types of supports purchased and whether the intended outcomes were achieved. Services may also be asked to report on how Preschool Boost suppliers met their expectations.

Partner Services will need to retain evidence to demonstrate compliance with spending rules which may include copies of financial reports, receipts or invoices.

Preschool Boost funding will also need to be accounted for in the service-level annual financial acquittal.

Additional supports

Child health and development checks

Information about how families can access free child health and development checks for children from birth to five years is available on the OECD website.

These checks can help children grow, learn and thrive, and can link families to support if needed. Partner services should encourage families to access their preferred provider for all milestone checks.

Multi-disciplinary workforce

Resources for multi-disciplinary workforce, including toolkit and e-learning modules that support interdisciplinary practice can be found on the OECD website.

3b. Acting early, with others – selected services

Flying Start Services deliver additional and coordinated supports for children at risk of developmental vulnerability.

Snapshot of your Partnership requirements

- **Preschool Plus** – Preschool Plus Partner Services are required to meet program requirements including prioritisation of children referred to the program, minimum enrolment of 1,000 hours, application of fee relief policy, and targeted use of additional Ready Set Preschool and Preschool Boost funding to support children in the Preschool Plus program
- **Integrated Hubs (additional to Preschool Plus)** – Integrated Hub Services are required to provide the core offering of child and family health services, parenting and family support programs, and undertake place-based engagement to deliver a site-specific service model and offer
- **Integrated Hub training** – Providers are required to ensure that all staff working in the Integrated Hub participate and maintain training currency in ‘Trauma-informed Practice – Advanced Training’ and Aboriginal Cultural Safety training that builds on the foundational training at the ‘Being’ level

Partnership requirements

Preschool Plus Services are required to comply with the following program requirements.

Program requirements – Preschool Plus

The Preschool Plus program is a targeted early intervention program funding up to 30 hours per week, or 1,200 hours per year, of high-quality, teacher-led preschool for children most at risk of developmental vulnerability for the two years before full-time school. Preschool Plus enrolments attract higher allocations of Ready Set Preschool and Preschool Boost funding than universal preschool program places, together with Preschool Plus fee relief for eligible families, to amplify the Services' response to developmental vulnerability.

The state government is using the best available data to identify children who would benefit most from Preschool Plus, and referral pathways will continue to expand and evolve over the life of the reforms. Refer to the Preschool Plus Implementation Guide for further information regarding referral pathways, intake processes and program administration.

Preschool Plus Partner Services play an important role in supporting access, participation and continuity of preschool enrolment for eligible children. Partner Services are expected to work collaboratively with the OECD to support coordinated access to Preschool Plus places for eligible children, including through approved referral and identification pathways.

Final approval of Services to deliver Preschool Plus rests with the OECD, based on assessment of eligibility, local need and system capacity.

Service eligibility

Partner Providers may be eligible to deliver Preschool Plus in their Service(s) if the:

- Provider meets the partnership requirements under the universal preschool program
- Provider is a Partner Provider approved to deliver the 3- and 4-year-old universal preschool program and receive associated funding
- relevant Service holds a rating of at least Meeting the NQS
- Service can provide 1,200 hours of a teacher-led preschool program per year.

To maintain eligibility to be a Preschool Plus Partner Service, the Partner Service must commit to and deliver on the organisational requirements and the partnership requirements as detailed in service priorities 1 – 3a, as well as maintain a rating of at least Meeting the NQS. A Preschool Plus Partner Service that receives a rating of Working Towards the NQS after partnering to deliver Preschool Plus will be prioritised to participate in the Quality Uplift program.

As each Preschool Plus place utilises 2 universal 15-hour preschool places, Preschool Plus Partner Services may be asked to confirm available preschool capacity to support local planning and placement processes.

Minimum service offer

Preschool Plus Partner Services must offer eligible children a total of 1,200 hours per year of teacher-led programming. As with universal preschool, the teacher must be delivering the program in the room for these hours (except for required breaks).

Program hours can be delivered flexibly across days and weeks of the year, however with a maximum of 8 hours per day and 4 days per week of funded preschool programming, for example (including, but not limited to):

- 8 hours per day x 3 days per week x 50 weeks per year = 1,200 hours per year
- 7.5 hours per day x 4 days per week x 40 weeks per year = 1,200 hours per year

Preschool Plus can be delivered over 50 weeks per year.

Preschool Plus Partner Services should structure their preschool program hours in a way that supports the greatest participation by children and families. Services must notify the OECD of the structure of their preschool program.

Eligible families may choose not to take up the full 1,200 hours offered by a Service. However, a family must enrol in enough days to receive a reasonable proportion (minimum 1,000 hours) of the total 1,200 hours per year to be an eligible Preschool Plus enrolment. This means they must be enrolled in a minimum of 3 days per week, for example (including but not limited to):

- 7 hours per day x 3 days per week x 50 weeks per year = 1,050 hours per year

Where families have chosen to be enrolled in less than 1,200 hours, Services should work with them to encourage and offer uptake of extra hours to maximise their child's opportunity to receive 1,200 hours per year as appropriate to the family and subject to availability of additional hours at the service. Additional hours could be regularly scheduled or ad hoc days through the year.

If the family wishes to be enrolled in fewer than 1,000 hours per year, they will not be part of the Preschool Plus program and should be offered a universal 3- or 4-year-old preschool place.

Children commencing Preschool Plus after the start of the year may access a reduced number of eligible hours (pro-rated) reflecting the remaining period of enrolment. While up to 1,200 hours remains the full-year benchmark, children will not be excluded from Preschool Plus where this cannot reasonably be achieved due to late commencement.

All eligible Preschool Plus enrolments attract the full Preschool Plus funding allocation, based on a 1,200-hour program, regardless of the child's enrolled hours.

Managing participation and attendance

Preschool Plus Partner Services should make every effort to support families and children to establish consistent attendance. This includes identifying and minimising any practical and structural barriers that prevent families from accessing preschool.

Preschool Plus Partner Services are expected to support enrolments and proactively engage with families where:

- a child has not commenced, or their attendance is below what is expected
- attendance concerns arise at any time during the 2-year enrolment period.

In these cases, Partner Services should implement appropriate strategies to support ongoing participation and engagement in preschool.

All Preschool Plus enrolments attract Ready Set Preschool funding for outreach to support these activities.

Continued enrolment in Preschool Plus is intended to support children who are actively participating in the program. Where appropriate, Services should work collaboratively with referral agencies, who will also have a role in supporting families to maintain regular participation.

In cases where families unexpectedly do not show up for preschool:

- Preschool Plus Partner Services should attempt to contact the family
- Preschool Plus Partner Services should engage with the referring agency where relevant to contact the family and identify barriers to their participation
- Services experiencing difficulties contacting families or referring agencies can seek support from their Local Teams. Non-attendance and withdrawals from enrolment will be reported through quarterly reference period data reporting.

Preschool Plus Partner Services should consider the following regarding allowable absences:

- Preschool Plus Partner Services should monitor the number of CCS allowable absences a family has incurred
- Proactive conversations should occur between the Preschool Plus Partner Service and the family to make sure they are aware of the impact of exceeding allowable absences
- Families should be notified when they are close to exceeding their allowable absences
- Preschool Plus Partner Services are responsible for notifying their Local Team if a family exceeds their allowable absences.

Child leaves or moves services

Preschool Plus is a 2-year program. To allow for consistency and continuity of learning, it is expected that children in Preschool Plus remain in the same service for both of their preschool years wherever possible. Where a child moves services, continued Preschool Plus participation is subject to availability and cannot be guaranteed.

If a child exits a Preschool Plus Partner Service or enrolment arrangements change, the service must notify the OECD through relevant processes (refer to the Preschool Plus Implementation Guide) and update reference period data accordingly, including where a child:

- exits the Preschool Plus program but remains enrolled at the Service
- transfers to another preschool service
- stops attending preschool
- relocates interstate
- otherwise changes enrolment status in line with data collection requirements.

The Preschool Plus Partner Service will continue receiving funding for that child until the end of the last quarter in which they were in the reference data.

Targeted referral pathways (non-Integrated Hubs)

Preschool Plus is delivered in Preschool Plus Partner Services through targeted referral and identification pathways including via:

- Department of Human Services – Child Family Support System
- Department for Child Protection – children and families with current or recent involvement with child protection and related support services
- Additional identification pathways that allow a limited number of Partner Services to refer children into Preschool Plus.

Preschool Plus Partner Services are required to prioritise enrolment of eligible children through approved referral and identification pathways as outlined in Preschool Plus Implementation Guide.

Priority of access (Integrated Hubs)

The same priority of access criteria as universal 3-year-old preschool is applied in Integrated Hubs for new enrolments in the Preschool Plus program.

In circumstances where a child identified through the referral process lives in an area where an Integrated Hub has been established, and it is the family's preferred service, they will be prioritised for access among new enrolments in the Integrated Hub (as per the priority of access criteria).

Where capacity remains after priority of access has been applied, Integrated Hubs may offer Preschool Plus places to other children.

Preschool Plus child eligibility exemptions

Preschool Plus has clear requirements relating to child eligibility, participation, service delivery and funding, as set out in this Guide. These requirements are designed to ensure equitable access, program integrity and consistent delivery across Services.

In exceptional circumstances, strict application of these requirements may not meet the needs of a child and a time-bound exemption (or variation) may be approved.

Services seeking an exemption should first seek guidance from their Local Team. Exemptions are not guaranteed and are considered on a case-by-case basis. All exemption decisions are made under delegated authority, are time-limited and documented, and do not establish precedent.

Additional training

In addition to mandatory training requirements for all Partner Services, Services in their first 12 months of delivering Preschool Plus also have access to additional free coaching and implementation supports to build educator confidence and capability to embed trauma-informed strategies into practice.

Included in the package is a backfill contribution of 10 hours.

Participation in the coaching program is optional; however services are strongly encouraged to take part to support improved outcomes for children and families. Services who do not wish to participate may opt out when contacted about this program.

Additional requirements (specific to Integrated Hubs)

Service Model

Integrated Hubs bring preschool together with other health, wellbeing and education offerings so families and children can be supported to access the services they need in one place. Integrated Hubs deliver Preschool Plus, a preschool program of up to 30 hours per week for 3- and 4-year-olds, to improve their learning and development outcomes.

See the Integrated Hubs service model.

Service Offer

All Integrated Hubs are expected to provide a core offering of family and child health and development services and family support. Other services will be determined through place-based engagement with local communities.

In conjunction with their Local Enabling Group (LEG), Integrated Hubs will develop a summary of all their service and support offerings, referred to as its Service Offer. This includes services and supports offered through local partnerships, Preschool Boost programs and supports, and those developed with Ready Set Preschool funding to increase the enrolment, attendance and participation of children in the preschool program.

Integrated Hubs are expected to use their Ready Set Preschool funding for to deliver additional place-based and innovative approaches that support increased engagement of children and families into ECEC or programs and services that strengthen parenting capacity and family functioning – as aligned with approved local planning arrangements.

Development and regular review of the Service Offer will be coordinated by the integration role, with the support of the site leader and through input from the LEG to ensure they are meeting the needs of children and families. The Service Offer will also inform the Integrated Hubs' Flying Start Partnership Plan.

Service eligibility

Individual Integrated Hubs are being identified through a commissioning process, detailed in the Integrated Hubs Partnership Guide. Partner Services operating an Integrated Hub site will have the individual Integrated Hub location and Funded Programs detailed in their Funding Agreement.

Minimum requirements

Partners operating an Integrated Hub must ensure:

- place-based programs and services are being delivered on site or at a location approved by OECD in writing
- the Service Offer is regularly reviewed and published to ensure they are meeting the needs of children and families.

Partner Services must deliver Preschool Plus to the minimum number of children as agreed in their Funding Agreement. Existing Services commencing as an Integrated Hub and delivering a preschool program to 3- and/or 4-year-old children, including as a Flying Start Partner Service, will be provided with an 18-month transition period to reach their agreed minimum number of Preschool Plus places.

The transition period allows for promotion of the hub and the Preschool Plus program and outreach activities to the community, as well as allowing any existing universal 15-hour enrolments of 4-year-old children to complete their program and transition to school, and their place to be filled with a 30-hour Preschool Plus placement, should those families not wish to take up a Preschool Place offer.

The exact transition arrangement, including identifying existing 15-hour enrolments and those that may be appropriate to transition to a Preschool Plus place, will be confirmed and documented by the Integrated Hub and the OECD in the year prior to commencing as an Integrated Hub.

Additional Trauma-informed Practice training

Partner Services operating an Integrated Hub are required to ensure all staff working in the Service participate and maintain training currency in 'Trauma-informed Practice – Advanced Training'. This training will involve a face-to-face commitment and will be provided free of charge to Partner Services operating an Integrated Hub.

Additional Cultural Safety training

Partner Services operating an Integrated Hub are required to ensure all staff working in the Service participate and maintain training currency in Aboriginal Cultural Safety training. This must be delivered by an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation or an Aboriginal Business Supplier. The level of training for hubs is aligned to the 'Doing' level and builds on the foundational training.

Reports and additional information

Partner Services operating an Integrated Hub are expected to capture attendance and referral data on children and families accessing supports and services through their Service Offer, outside of the requirements of their data collection requirements for preschool enrolments. This data is expected to be used to inform review activities on the Integrated Hub's Service Offer.

Partnership Plan inclusion

Integrated Hubs, as all other Partner Services, must complete a Partnership Plan for the relevant Funded Program streams.

Funded Program streams

Preschool Plus Teaching and Learning

Each Preschool Plus enrolment will receive double the universal preschool Teaching and Learning allocation, at the SEIFA 1 rate, and any applicable regional loading for the Service.

Spending rules

The universal preschool Teaching and Learning spending rules apply for Preschool Plus enrolments.

Discretionary use of funding

Where Preschool Plus Partner Services and Integrated Hubs Services have uncommitted funds, potentially due to Preschool Plus children initially being enrolled in less than the full number of hours per week (see Minimum service offer for preschool hours), Teaching and Learning funds can be spent in line with Teaching and learning – Spending rules: Discretionary use of funding.

Program reporting

Preschool Plus Teaching and Learning funding will need to be accounted for in the service-level annual financial acquittal.

Preschool Plus Preschool Boost

Eligibility

Each Preschool Plus enrolment will receive double the universal Preschool Boost allocation at the SEIFA 1 rate and double the regional loading for services in Outer Regional, Remote or Very Remote Australia.

The Preschool Boost maximum funding cap (refer Preschool Boost Program) does not apply to additional Preschool Boost funding for Preschool Plus.

Spending rules

The universal Preschool Boost spending rules apply for Preschool Plus Preschool Boost funding (refer to Preschool Boost – Spending rules).

Program reporting

The universal Preschool Boost program reporting rules apply for Preschool Plus enrolments (refer to Preschool Boost).

Preschool Plus Preschool Boost funding will need to be accounted for in the service-level annual financial acquittal.

Preschool Plus Ready Set Preschool

Eligibility

Each Preschool Plus enrolment will receive an additional allocation of Ready Set Preschool funding per enrolment. The Ready Set Preschool maximum funding cap (refer Ready Set Preschool) does not apply to additional Ready Set Preschool funding for Preschool Plus.

Spending rules

The universal Ready Set Preschool spending rules apply for Preschool Plus enrolments (refer to Ready Set Preschool – Spending rules).

Preschool Plus Ready Set Preschool funding must only be used to support children enrolled in Preschool Plus and their families. It cannot be used to support other individual children's needs. Spending must be aligned to activities that seek to support sustained program participation.

Program reporting

Preschool Plus Ready Set Preschool funding will need to be accounted for in the service-level annual financial acquittal.

Preschool Plus Fee Relief

Preschool Plus Fee Relief funding supports program affordability for eligible families by providing a reduction in their out-of-pocket costs.

It is an allowable third-party payment under Australian Government funding rules for the Child Care Subsidy (CCS). This means that Preschool Plus Fee Relief does not impact a family’s CCS entitlement, and that long day care Services must apply the Preschool Plus Fee Relief to eligible family’s fees after CCS has been applied.

Partner Services must apply Preschool Plus Fee Relief to the families' fees in a timely and regular way, to ensure that fees are not a barrier to participation for eligible children enrolled in the Preschool Plus program.

Charging of fees for children enrolled in Preschool Plus

Fees for families engaged in the Preschool Plus program cannot be set at a higher rate than for other families. Services may continue to operate any local fee relief programs in conjunction with the Preschool Plus Fee Relief program.

Eligibility

Eligibility for Preschool Plus Fee Relief is dependent on:

- having a place and maintaining eligibility in the Preschool Plus program

- being eligible for CCS and having a family income that is below the income cap (80% CCS subsidy rate)
- not having out-of-pocket costs already covered by the Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) or other funding.

Family income will be assessed periodically (quarterly) throughout the year.

If a child is eligible for both Aboriginal Fee Relief and Preschool Plus Fee Relief as a Preschool Plus enrolment, the OECD will provide the Partner Service with whichever fee relief is the higher value. They cannot receive both.

The OECD provides a calculator to assist Services to provide accurate information to families and to the OECD for purposes of funding.

Partnership Plan inclusion

Not applicable.

Transparency of Preschool Plus Fee Relief

Services must demonstrate and communicate with families the fee reduction due to the Preschool Plus Fee Relief. This should be done verbally as well as via fee statements.

Verbally, the service should tell the family how much Preschool Plus Fee Relief (as a dollar figure) they will receive off their invoices in the upcoming quarter and share that this may be subject to change in future quarters depending on their circumstances.

Fee statements/invoices to families generated by the services’ software should display this information:

- daily fee
- CCS deduction
- fee relief / additional Preschool Plus subsidy payment from the SA Government
- out-of-pocket fee to be paid by the family
- any other standard information already contained.

Services’ software should be able to produce invoices/statements with the above information. A manual process will be required for services that do not use software.

Spending rules

Allowable expenditure

Preschool Plus Fee Relief must be spent reducing the out-of-pocket fees for families with eligible children in the Preschool Plus program, in line with the outlined fee relief approach for each family. Services can apply for a funding adjustment during the quarter by contacting OECD.PreschoolFunding@sa.gov.au if, at any point during the year:

- a child in a 4-day program loses CCS eligibility for the fourth day due to the activity test
- a child loses access to ACCS, or
- a Service has a new child enrolled in the Preschool Plus program after the reference period.

If the opposite to the above scenarios occurs and a Service is overpaid, they will need to offset any under-payments with over-payments, and only seek an adjustment within the quarter if there is a net under-payment.

Funding restrictions

Preschool Plus fee relief cannot be used:

- to offset higher long day care fees for participating Preschool Plus children
- to offset the fees of non-Preschool Plus children enrolled in the service
- to provide cash directly to families.

Discretionary use of funding

If a Service is over-paid for a given quarter, they can use this funding to support quality and participation initiatives for Preschool Plus children.

There is no other discretionary use of funding for this Funded Program stream. All funding must be spent in accordance with the above.

Cessation of Preschool Plus Fee Relief

If a Preschool Plus enrolment ceases, Preschool Plus Fee Relief will also cease.

Preschool Plus Fee Relief is complementary to the CCS/3 Day Guarantee. If a child is not eligible for CCS or ceases to be paid CCS due to allowable absences rules being breached, the Preschool Plus Fee Relief will not be expanded to cover the 3 Day Guarantee.

Program reporting

Partner Services will need to retain evidence to demonstrate compliance with spending rules which may include copies of family and child-level invoices/statements.

Preschool Plus Fee Relief funding will also need to be accounted for in the service-level annual financial acquittal.

Backfill for Trauma-informed Practice coaching program

Backfill funding to participate in the Trauma-informed Practice Coaching Program is available for Partner Services in their first year of having a Preschool Plus enrolment in their service. It will be paid as a lump sum in the quarter following their first scheduled coaching session.

Integrated Hubs Establishment Funding (available from 2028)

Establishment funding is one-off funding to support a Service with activities to establish the Integrated Hub service model and offering, and may include the commencement of a proportion of the funded roles earlier than the Service Offer to undertake preparation activities. Funding is designed to support (with OECD's assistance):

- Leading LEG process
- Leading place-based engagement
- Development of Service Offer
- Identifying children and families who may benefit from Preschool Plus and supporting enrolment

Spending rules

Allowable expenditure

Establishment funding can be used at the Director's discretion for items, activities or resources that contribute to the establishment of the Integrated Hub Service. This may include:

- place-based community consultation activities
- IT equipment, software and installation that supports the provision of community programs for children and families or OECD funded staff
- staffing backfill to release existing staff to undertake Integrated Hub specific duties
- staff training with a focus on community engagement and Integrated Hub approaches
- furnishings for community spaces
- commencement of the Integrated Hubs funded roles.

Funding restrictions

Funding cannot be used for items, activities or resources that contribute to the general service operations. This may include:

- preschool education or play resources (child-related resources such as paint, paper, books, puzzles etc.)
- employment of staff to work directly with children or to undertake preschool related duties
- IT equipment, software and installation that supports the preschool or long day care staff
- to undertake works associated with a NQS Assessment and Rating visit
- capital works to the Recipient's existing premises and general maintenance
- allowable expenditure of other Funded Program streams supported by the OECD, if the budget for that stream has been expended or exceeded.

Any unspent Integrated Hub Establishment funding can be retained by the Service, except if the underspend is the result of the Service withdrawing as an Integrated Hub.

Program reporting

Integrated Hubs Establishment funding will also need to be accounted for in the service-level annual financial acquittal.

Integrated Hubs Staffing

Integrated Hubs Staffing is funding provided to eligible Partner Services to deliver the Integrated Hub model. This funding is for additional staffing roles including:

- administrative support to assist with any additional workload for delivering the Preschool Plus program and coordinating integration activities
- an Integration role to support service integration within the hub and with local services
- an Allied Health or similar allocation to provide support to families and children and to build the capacity of educators.

Alternative roles may be agreed with the OECD, if a Service already has sufficient capacity and capability across one or more of these functions to deliver the Integrated Hub, and requires different expertise. Integrated Hubs Staffing funding must support delivery of the functions as defined in the Integrated hubs staff functions fact sheet**.**

Eligibility

Integrated Hub Partner Services only.

Partnership Plan inclusion

Not applicable.

Spending rules

Allowable expenditure

Integrated Hub Staffing funding can be used only for the salary and oncosts (that is, payroll tax, annual leave loading etc.) of the staff performing functions described above, unless otherwise agreed by the OECD. Integrated Hub Providers may recruit at their discretion to fulfill these roles within the allocated budget, for example multiple part-time people rather than a single full-time person, and may use their Staffing funding to 'top up' access to existing part-time allied health professionals at the service.

Funding restrictions

Integrated Hub Staffing funding cannot be used for:

- costs associated with the recruitment of the additional staffing positions
- other staff located within the Service
- allowable expenditure of other Funded Program streams supported by the OECD, if the budget for that stream has been expended or exceeded.

Discretionary use of funding

There is no discretionary use of funding for this stream. All funding must be spent in accordance with the above. Any variations from the agreed resource allocation must be agreed and approved by the OECD in writing. Where not agreed, any unspent Integrated Hub Staffing funding will be offset against any future payment. Where no next payment exists, the provider must repay the unexpended amount within 30 days of written notification by the OECD to repay.

Program reporting

For both the Integrated Hubs Establishment and Staffing Funded Program streams, the Partner Provider and Service may be required to participate in additional data capture, project reporting and evaluation activities as agreed with the OECD.

Funding provided for Integrated Hubs Staffing will need to be accounted for in the service-level annual financial acquittal.

Additional supports

Central Backbone

Integrated Hub Services will be supported to strengthen their integration culture and undertake professional development relevant to Integrated Hubs through a central Backbone support function, which is currently being developed.

Integrated Hubs will be supported through a central Backbone program to provide consistency in delivering the Service Model and provide access to professional development and networks focussed on working in an integrated way.

An Outcomes Framework and supporting practice guide and tools are under development, informed by the demonstration Integrated Hubs.

Section C:

Program administration

This section outlines the data requirements that Partner Providers must comply with under the Funding Agreement. Partner Providers are required to collect and report the data fields specified below to the OECD.

Data submission

Data submissions must be provided to the OECD periodically in accordance with the reporting timeframes outlined in this Guide, or as otherwise advised by the OECD.

If a Partner Service makes a claim for a child who is not eligible, or where there has been a duplicate enrolment, the OECD will recover the funds for that enrolment and take appropriate action under the Funding Agreement.

While all Services will be required to submit enrolment data during each collection period, a subset of Services will also be required to submit planned enrolment data twice yearly. This additional requirement applies only to Services located in, or in close proximity to, early sessional roll-out areas of 3-year-old preschool provision. The OECD will advise Partner Providers if their Service is located within any of these areas and therefore subject to this additional reporting requirement.

The OECD has introduced this earlier planned enrolment data submissions to support the identification of duplicate enrolments before a child starts a preschool program, so that sessional preschools and long day cares that are Partner Services can make sure that children in their service are eligible.

Data collection requirements

Partner Services must:

- provide confirmed enrolment data to the OECD each quarter within the required timeframes set out by the OECD
- ensure provider, service, teacher, and enrolment information is accurate.

The OECD may at its discretion vary reporting frequency and require additional data related to service delivery.

Funding may be withheld or ceased where required data is not provided or is not submitted by the required due dates.

Data fields

Child-level data

Data	Data fields
Child details	First and last name
	Date of birth
	Gender
	Residential address
	Preschool program start date
	Preschool program end date
	Hours per week enrolled in the preschool program
	Hours attended
	Intended school start date

Data	Data fields
	Priority of access enrolment
	Priority of access category (if applicable)
	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Child
	Disability (if applicable)
	Non-English speaking background (if applicable)
	Child in out of home care (if applicable)
	Enrolled in Preschool Plus program
	Eligible for Preschool Plus Fee Relief
	Parent/Guardian consent to sharing personal information confirmed
Child's Parent, Carer or Legal Guardian	First and last name(s)
	Health Care Card/Concession Pensioner/Veterans Gold Card holder
	Humanitarian and Refugee Visa

Service-level data

Data	Data Fields
ECT and/or ECT SAT details	Number of ECTs/ECT SATs planning and delivering the preschool program
	Name of ECTs/ECT SATs planning and delivering the preschool program
	Qualification of ECT/ECT SAT planning and delivering the preschool program
	Registration Number
	Hours and days of preschool programs delivered per week
	Number of days without an ECT/ECT SAT in place
Preschool program details	Hours and days of preschool programs delivered per week
	Number of teacher-led preschool rooms
	Number of weeks Preschool Program is delivered per year
Integrated Hubs	Programs being offered as part of Service Offer
	Attendance data of children and families attending programs as part of Service Offer, including ages of children

Data collection and payment cycle

Core quarterly enrolment data submission cycle (all Partner Services)

Partner Services follow a quarterly cycle for enrolment reporting and per capita funding payments. Services will receive reminder emails in the lead up to the submission due dates.

Partner Services will be paid per capita funding quarterly, based on enrolment data. For their very first quarter of operation, the funding amount paid will be an upfront estimation that is reconciled to the first quarter's actual enrolments and adjusted in the payment made in April for quarter 2. For every other quarter, funding will be based on actual enrolments as at a reference period in the prior quarter, as outlined below. This is subject to the OECD receiving appropriate and timely enrolment information from the Partner Service.

Quarter	Payment Date	Key data collection point	Reference period	Submission due
1	January	Term 4 confirmed enrolments	Weeks 2–3 of Term 4 (Oct)	End of Week 4 of Term 4
2	April	Term 1 confirmed enrolments	Weeks 2–3 of Term 1 (Feb)	End of Week 4 of Term 1
3	July	Term 2 confirmed enrolments	Weeks 2-3 of Term 2 (May)	End of Week 4 of Term 3
4	October	Term 3 confirmed enrolments	Weeks 2-3 of Term 3 (July-Aug)	End of Week 4 of Term 4

Payments will be made to Providers by the end of each of the payment months.

Additional reporting requirements

Planned enrolment data (priority area Services only)

Partner Providers and their Services are required to provide child and family-level information to the OECD to support planning and delivery of Flying Start preschool. This information must be provided each year for planned enrolments for the following year, including 2-year-old children already attending the service where parents or guardians have consented to share their information with the OECD. Information on actual enrolments must be provided quarterly.

Only Services located in identified priority areas are required to submit additional data, including planned enrolments. Services in priority areas will be notified if they are a priority area and will be supported in their data submissions. Services can contact the OECD via OECD.PreschoolFunding@sa.gov.au for further clarification.

Timing	Requirement
End of Week 4 of Term 3 (Aug)	Planned enrolments intending to start across Terms 1 and/or 2 of the following year
End of Week 4 of Term 1 (Feb)	Planned enrolments intending to start across Terms 3 and/or 4 of the same calendar year

Preschool Plus (eligible Partner Services only)

Applies only to Integrated Hubs and Preschool Plus Partner Services.

Services with Preschool Plus enrolments must include these enrolments in the quarterly data submission alongside all universal preschool enrolments.

Services with enrolments eligible for Preschool Plus Fee Relief must also submit a Fee Relief Calculator for each eligible Preschool Plus enrolment.

Timing	Requirement
Each Quarterly Cycle	Confirmed Preschool Plus Enrolments + Fee Relief Calculator

Annual Reporting requirements (all Partner Services)

Timing	Requirement
Mid-January	Annual Financial Acquittal for the previous calendar year (see Financial Acquittal)
November	Flying Start Partnership Plan

Funding and payments

This section outlines the funding rates, timing of associated payments and funding rules. It provides a summary of how each Funded Program Stream is calculated and distributed on either a quarterly, bi-annual or annual basis.

All funding information is for 3- and 4-year-old provision.

Funding allocations

SEIFA metric (Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas)

Some funding allocations vary based on the SEIFA of a Service. Services will be allocated a SEIFA quintile for funding purposes based on service address, using the South Australian Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD) for the Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2) in which a service is located. Service SEIFA quintiles will be updated every 5 years, based on ABS published indices following each Census.

Regional metric

Services will be allocated to a remoteness category for funding purposes based on service address, using the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) for the Statistical Area Level 1 (SA1) in which a Service is located. Service ARIA will be updated every 5 years, based on ABS remoteness indices following each Census.

Teaching and Learning funding

The Australian Government provides a contribution to funding for 4-year-old preschool (1 year before full-time school) through the Preschool Reform Agreement. This contribution is included in Teaching and Learning rates for 4-year-old preschool.

Funding rules

Funding rates for Teaching and Learning are annual rates, tiered by SEIFA and ARIA, calculated and administered on a quarterly basis.

Funding for the universal program is provided on a pro-rata basis where a child is not enrolled for the full 15 hours, based on the number of hours enrolled.

Each Preschool Plus enrolment receives double the universal preschool, Teaching and Learning allocation, at the SEIFA 1 rate, and any applicable regional loading for the Service. This is administered on a quarterly basis.

Funding for a quarter will not apply to children who are not enrolled as at the reference period in any given quarter (such as children who enrol after the reference period, but who start preschool within the term). Conversely, services will not lose funding in that quarter for children who are enrolled as at the reference period, but who leave the service before the end of the quarter.

Where a Service has received Preschool Plus funding and the enrolled child subsequently leaves the Service, or transitions to a universal preschool enrolment, the funding will be retained at the Service with the cancellation of payments effective from the next quarterly data submission. Any remaining Teaching and Learning funds must be spent in line with universal preschool, Teaching and learning discretionary use of funding rules.

Funding stream	Funding type	Annual rates		Payment cadence
Teaching and Learning	Universal	SEIFA 1 & 2 SEIFA 3, 4 & 5	**$2,665** **$2,050**	Quarterly
	Universal Regional Loading (ARIA)	Major Cities Inner Regional Outer Regional Remote Very Remote	**$0** **$0** **$308** **$718** **$1,179**	Quarterly
	Preschool Plus	All SEIFA	**$5,330**	Quarterly
	Preschool Plus Regional Loading (ARIA)	Major Cities Inner Regional Outer Regional Remote Very Remote	**$0** **$0** **$616** **$1,436** **$2,358**	Quarterly

Preschool Plus Fee Relief

Funding rules			
Preschool Plus Fee Relief is calculated and administered on a quarterly basis. Preschool Plus Fee Relief will pay 10% of fees for days of enrolment supporting participation in Preschool Plus. Preschool Plus Fee Relief will also address any CCS gap in the number of subsidised hours due to the application of the Activity Test (for hours beyond the 3 Day Guarantee). The minimum number of Preschool Plus funded days per week is 3 and the maximum is 4. Preschool Plus Fee Relief payments **apply to full days of long day care enrolment on Preschool Plus delivery days** (3 or 4 days per week), **up to a maximum of 11 hours per day**, **for 52 weeks per year**. This will be **paid up to the CCS fee rate cap** (CCS fee rate caps are adjusted at the commencement of each financial year). Families who may have children enrolled at a Service for additional days will need to be made aware of their fee obligations for these days. Note: Preschool Plus Fee Relief **will not apply to additional days of non-Preschool Plus program enrolment beyond the 3 – 4 days per week required to deliver the Preschool Plus program**. *Calculation* **Part 1**: 10 percentage point uplift on CCS level × hourly fees (up to the CCS fee rate cap) × LDC hours per day of Preschool Plus delivery (up to 11 hours) × days per week delivery of Preschool Plus (3 or 4 days) × weeks of invoice period. **Part 2 (for 4 day programs only)**: For any hours not attracting the CCS subsidy due to the application of the Activity Test, (i.e., non-CCS hours above the 3 Day Guarantee), calculate CCS entitlement equivalent based on family income threshold and add to fee relief (i.e., CCS level × hourly fees up to the CCS fee rate cap × non-CCS subsidised hours × weeks of invoice period) The OECD provides a calculator to assist Services to provide accurate information to families and to the OECD for purposes of funding. Once relevant child and service-level information has been input into the calculator, Services will have available a child's estimated daily out-of-pocket costs, along with fortnightly: • Total fees for the Preschool Plus program • CCS contribution for the Preschool Plus program days • South Australian Government Preschool Plus fee relief contribution, and • Out-of-pocket costs (where applicable) for Preschool Plus program days.			
Funding stream	**Funding type**	**Rates**	**Payment cadence**
Fee Relief	Preschool Plus	Funding allocation calculated based on CCS level, hours per day of Preschool Plus delivery and days of Preschool Plus delivery. A fee relief calculator is available for all Services with Preschool Plus enrolments to determine the funding amount.	Quarterly

Fee Relief for Aboriginal children

Funding rules			
Funding rates for Fee Relief for Aboriginal children are annual rates, **calculated and administered on a quarterly basis**. For **universal enrolments**, funding is provided on a **pro-rata** basis where a child is not enrolled for the full 15 hours, based on the number of hours enrolled. For **Preschool Plus enrolments**, if they are eligible for Aboriginal Fee Relief and Preschool Plus Fee Relief, the OECD will provide the Partner Service with whichever fee relief is the higher value. They cannot receive both.			
Funding stream	**Funding type**	**Annual rates (per enrolment)**	**Payment cadence**
Fee Relief for Aboriginal children	Universal	**$1,890**	Quarterly
	Preschool Plus	**$3,780**	Quarterly

Preschool Boost

Funding rules

Preschool Boost funding is distributed through direct funding and/or vouchers. It is calculated as an annual allocation and paid as bi-annual instalments to all Partner Services.

For first year Services, this is based on the estimated number of children likely to be receiving a preschool program, and the Service's SEIFA and ARIA. For second year services and beyond, this funding is based on previous years' enrolments, SEIFA and ARIA.

The annual funding allocation will not be adjusted on changes in enrolments (+/-) during the calendar year. This funding is fixed for the year, ensuring stability despite any fluctuations in child enrolments.

Services will receive a minimum allocation (tiered based on ARIA) to cover Services with low numbers of enrolments and there is a maximum funding cap.

Each Preschool Plus enrolment will receive:

- double the universal Preschool Boost allocation at the SEIFA 1 rate, and
- double the regional loading for services in Outer Regional, Remote or Very Remote Australia.

This additional Preschool Plus Preschool Boost funding is calculated and administered quarterly.

The Preschool Boost maximum funding cap does not apply to additional Preschool Boost funding for Preschool Plus enrolments throughout the calendar year.

Funding stream	Funding type	Annual rates (per enrolment)	Payment cadence
Preschool Boost	Universal	SEIFA 1 **$1,370** SEIFA 2 **$1,140** SEIFA 3 **$940** SEIFA 4 **$675** SEIFA 5 **$360**	Bi-annual
Preschool Boost	Universal Regional Loading (ARIA)	Major Cities **$0** Inner Regional **$0** Outer Regional **$450** Remote **$650** Very Remote **$850**	Bi-annual
Preschool Boost	Preschool Plus	All SEIFA **$2,740**	Quarterly
Preschool Boost	Preschool Plus Regional Loading (ARIA)	Major Cities **$0** Inner Regional **$0** Outer Regional **$900** Remote **$1,300** Very Remote **$1,700**	Quarterly
Funding thresholds	Minimum	Major Cities **$10,000** Inner Regional **$10,000** Outer Regional **$20,000** Remote **$25,000** Very Remote **$30,000**	N/A
Funding thresholds	Maximum	All Services **$150,000**	N/A

Ready Set Preschool

Funding rules
Ready Set Preschool funding is calculated as an annual allocation and paid as bi-annual instalments to eligible Partner Services located in SEIFA 1 and 2 communities. For first year Services, this is based on the estimated number of children likely to be receiving a preschool program, and the Service's SEIFA (1 and 2 only). For second year services and beyond, this funding is based on previous years' enrolments and SEIFA. The annual funding allocation will not be adjusted on changes in enrolments (+/-) during the calendar year. This funding is fixed for the year, ensuring stability despite any fluctuations in child enrolments. Services will receive a minimum allocation (tiered based on SEIFA) to cover Services with low numbers of enrolments and there is a maximum funding cap. Services in all SEIFA with Preschool Plus enrolments will receive the Preschool Plus Ready Set Preschool rate. This is calculated and administered quarterly. The Ready Set Preschool maximum funding cap does not apply to additional Ready Set Preschool funding for Preschool Plus enrolments throughout the calendar year. Where Services are part of a larger provider organisation, up to fifty per cent of total funding allocation may be pooled across Services within the same Provider to support coordinated delivery and purchasing efficiencies.

Funding stream	Funding type	Annual rates (per enrolment)		Payment cadence
Ready Set Preschool	Universal	SEIFA 1 SEIFA 2	**$700** **$350**	Bi-annual
	Preschool Plus	All SEIFA	**$1,743**	Quarterly
Funding thresholds	Minimum	SEIFA 1 SEIFA 2	**$7,500** **$5,000**	N/A
	Maximum	All SEIFA	**$50,000**	N/A

Backfill for mandatory training – first year of partnership only

Funding rules

Backfill funding is available to support participation in the following in a Service's first year of partnering:

- Aboriginal Cultural Safety Training
- Trauma-informed Practice Training

This funding is calculated based on service size and administered as a once-off payment.

Funding stream	Funding type	Rates		Payment cadence
Backfill	Aboriginal Cultural Safety Training	Per hour for each staff member	**$45 per hour**	Annual
	Trauma-informed Practice Training	Per hour for each staff member	**$45 per hour**	Annual

Other Backfill – first year of partnership only

Funding rules			
Backfill funding for Professional Learning is available in a Service's first year of partnering. This is a **set contribution administered as a once-off payment**. Backfill for Trauma-informed Practice Coaching is available in a Service's first year of delivering the Preschool Plus program.			
Funding stream	**Funding type**	**Rates**	**Payment cadence**
Backfill	Professional Learning	$45 per hour 2 days training **$675 per year**	Annual
	Trauma-informed Practice Coaching	$45 per hour x 10 sessions **$450 per year**	Quarterly

Backfill for Professional Networks

Funding rules			
Backfill funding is available to support participation in Professional Networks. This is a **set contribution administered annually.**			
Funding stream	**Funding type**	**Rates**	**Payment cadence**
Backfill	Professional Networks	$45 per hour max 3 hours 4 meetings **$540 per year**	Annual

Enhancing Quality program

Funding rules			
Enhancing Quality program funding is calculated as an annual allocation and paid annually. Rates are tiered by SEIFA, ARIA and number of ECT-led rooms. For first year Services, this is based on the estimated number ECT-led rooms likely to be delivering the preschool program, and the Service's SEIFA and ARIA. For second year services, this funding is based on previous years' ECT-led rooms, SEIFA and ARIA. Annual allocations will not be adjusted on changes in ECT-led rooms (+/-) during the calendar year. Minimum funding thresholds also apply.			
Funding stream	**Funding type**	**Rates**	**Payment cadence**
Enhancing Quality	Enhancing Quality Program	**Funding calculated number of ECT led rooms + SEIFA + ARIA** **Number of ECT-led rooms** Room 1 **$3,500** Room 2 **$3,500** Every subsequent room thereafter **$1,155** **SEIFA – per room (SEIFA x number of ECT-led rooms)** SEIFA 1 **$560** SEIFA 2 **$438** SEIFA 3 **$315** SEIFA 4 **$175** SEIFA 5 **$0** **ARIA+ Rating- Per Room (ARIA x number of ECT-led rooms)** Major Cities **$0** Inner Regional **$0** Outer Regional **$263** Remote **$613** Very Remote **$1,006** Integrated Hubs will receive **$2,000** in addition to the above.	Annual
Funding thresholds	Minimum	Major Cities **$5,000** Inner Regional **$5,000** Outer Regional **$6,000** Remote **$8,000** Very Remote **$10,000**	N/A

Provisionally Registered Teacher Mentoring Program

Please see Provisionally Registered Teacher Mentoring Program Guidelines for details including funding rates and payment cadence.

Integrated Hubs Staffing funding

Funding rules			
Integrated Hubs Staffing funding is **administered annually**.			
Funding stream	**Funding type**	**Rates**	**Payment cadence**
Integrated Hubs	Staffing	Rates **$269,364**	Annual

Integrated Hubs Establishment funding

Funding rules			
Any unspent Establishment funding may be retained by the Service, except where the underspend results from the service withdrawing as an Integrated Hub.			
Funding stream	**Funding type**	**Rates**	**Payment cadence**
Integrated Hubs	Establishment funding	Rates **N/A for 2027 delivery**	January and July prior to commencement as an Integrated Hub

Financial acquittal

Partner Providers must submit an annual financial acquittal for each Partner Service for all funding received under the Funding Agreement.

If requested by the OECD, each Partner Provider must be able to demonstrate to the OECD that:

- all funding received across Funded Program streams has been spent in accordance with the applicable spending rules, and
- evidence has been retained to demonstrate compliance with those spending rules.

Evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- Service fee schedules and fee structures
- family fee statements
- financial reports, receipts, invoices and bank account statements
- employee payslips and employment contracts

Partner Providers and their Services that do not meet their financial obligations may be required to repay unspent funds and may have funding suspended if they are found to be in breach of the Funding Agreement.

Upon review of the annual financial acquittal, the OECD will:

- adjust future funding payments to account for any unexpended funds identified, or
- take no further action where a nil balance of deficit is reported.

Under the Funding Agreement, Partner Providers and their Partner Services may also be required to return any unspent funds to the OECD. The OECD may undertake compliance reviews to assess a Partner Service's use of preschool funding and compliance with program requirements.

Glossary

Term	Definition
2YBFS	Two Years Before Full-Time School, i.e., 3-year-old preschool. Refers to children accessing preschool in the 2 years before commencing Reception.
AEDC	Australian Early Development Census. A national measure of children's development across five domains in their first year of full-time school.
Allied Health Professional	A qualified professional who provides services that support children's health, development, wellbeing and participation, such as speech pathology, occupational therapy and psychology.
ARIA	Accessibility and Remoteness Index of Australia Plus. A measure used to determine a service's remoteness classification.
CCS	Child Care Subsidy. Australian Government assistance that helps eligible families with the cost of approved child care.
Organisational and partnership requirements	The requirements that Partner Providers and Partner Services must meet and maintain to remain eligible for Flying Start funding.
ECT	Early Childhood Teacher. A teacher holding an ACECQA-approved early childhood teaching qualification and registered with the Teachers Registration Board of South Australia.
ECT SAT	An individual holding a Special Authority to Teach from the Teachers Registration Board of South Australia who is approved to deliver a preschool program.
Enhancing Quality program	A funding stream that supports services to undertake learning and development at a service level that aligns to their strategic quality objectives.
Fee Relief	Funding provided to reduce or remove preschool fees for eligible families.
Flying Start Partnership Plan (Partnership Plan)	The planning document used by Partner Services to identify local priorities and seek approval for expenditure under relevant Flying Start Funded Program streams.
Integrated Hub	A Service Model that brings together preschool, health, wellbeing, education and family support services to improve outcomes for children and families.
Local Enabling Group (LEG)	A governance group of community stakeholders formed to support an individual integrated hub with undertaking place-based engagement activities, and designing, implementing and evolving the Service Offer.
Local Team	OECD staff located across South Australia who support services to implement Flying Start programs, funding and partnership requirements.

Term	Definition
NQS	National Quality Standard. The national benchmark for quality in early childhood education and care services.
OECD	Office for Early Childhood Development.
Partner Provider	The organisation that enters into a Funding Agreement with the OECD and receives Flying Start funding.
Partner Service	An approved early childhood education and care service operated by a Partner Provider that delivers funded Flying Start preschool programs.
Preschool Boost	A funding stream that supports services to respond to developmental vulnerability through allied health supports, evidence-informed programs and capability building activities.
Preschool Plus	A program that provides additional preschool hours and supports for eligible children at risk of developmental vulnerability.
PRT	Provisionally Registered Teacher.
Ready Set Preschool	A targeted funding stream designed to support Partner Services to reduce barriers to preschool enrolment and attendance for children in areas of socio-economic disadvantage.
SEIFA	The ‘Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas’, produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. It ranks areas according to their relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage using Census data.
TRB	Teachers Registration Board of South Australia.
Universal preschool	A teacher-led preschool program available to eligible children in each of the years before commencing full-time school.
YBFS	Year Before Full-Time Schooling, i.e., 4-year-old preschool. Refers to children accessing preschool in the year before commencing Reception.

Privacy Notice

– Flying Start preschool programs

South Australia's Office for Early Childhood Development (**OECD**) is the steward of the State's early childhood development system. It runs the Flying Start preschool program (for 3- and 4-year-olds), which includes the Preschool Plus program (for families receiving additional supports), to help deliver access to 3- and 4-year-old preschool across the State (**Programs**).

What personal information do we collect?

To administer these Programs and comply with early childhood reporting obligations, the OECD needs to collect certain personal information about each child who accesses the Programs and their parents/guardians. This information includes:

- the child's full name, gender, date of birth, home address, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status, language background, immunisation status, whether the child is or has been in out of home care and whether they have a disability
- the parent/guardian's full name, relationship to the child, refugee/asylum seeker status and details of any Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card or Veterans Gold Card held, and
- where relevant, information about the family's Child Care Subsidy entitlement, including the family's estimated annual income.

With the consent of parents/guardians, the OECD collects this information directly from the preschool service provider where the child accesses the relevant program (this could be an early learning service, a government or non-government sessional preschool or an Integrated Hub).

The OECD also collects information from the preschool service provider about the child's preschool attendance and any other personal information reasonably required to administer the Programs and report to the Australian Government.

Parents/guardians are not legally required to consent to the above information being shared with the OECD, but if consent is not given, the child will not be able to access a government-funded place in a non-government preschool service.

How do we use the information?

The OECD collects the above information for the purpose of administering the Programs. This includes determining a child's eligibility for the Programs and their eligibility for fee relief, conducting enrolment duplication checks across preschool services, assessing and providing funding entitlements, managing payments to preschool service providers and monitoring and evaluation of the Programs. If the OECD detects a duplicate enrolment, the OECD will disclose this to any preschool service providers (government or non-government) with which the child is enrolled.

For children offered a place in the Preschool Plus program, the OECD also collects the above information for the purpose of supporting the child's participation in the program. This may include discussing the child's preschool attendance with the preschool service and, if the child was referred to the program by another South Australian Government agency, sharing information about the child's participation in the program with that agency.

In the performance of its functions under the *Office for Early Childhood Development Act 2024* (**OECD Act**), the OECD may also use the information collected for research and evaluation in early childhood development. If the OECD engages a third party to assist with research and evaluation, the OECD will require them to use the information only for those purposes and to adhere to strict requirements about the secure storage and management of the information.

Who do we share the information with?

The OECD uses the information collected to meet national early childhood reporting obligations. This includes sharing information with the Australian Government (either directly or through the South Australian Department for Education) for the National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection and the National Preschool Attendance Collection to assess performance under the Preschool Reform Agreement and as part of the Report on Government Services and annual Closing the Gap data compilation.

The OECD shares de-identified enrolment and attendance information with the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The OECD will not otherwise use or disclose the information it collects unless required or authorised by law, including under the OECD Act, or the South Australian Government's Information Privacy Principles Instruction (IPPS).

Storage and security of information collected

The OECD will securely store and manage the personal information it collects in accordance with its record keeping and information privacy obligations under law and under the IPPS.

Privacy obligations of preschool services from which OECD collects information

The preschool service where a child accesses the Programs must separately comply with privacy obligations in relation to the child and their parent/guardian's personal information, including in relation to the storage and security of that information. If you have any questions, please contact the service directly.