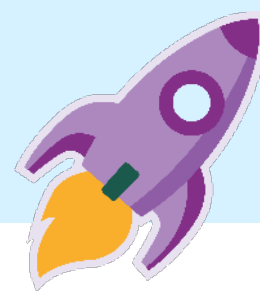


Ready Set Preschool - Planning and Implementation Guide



Purpose

This guide explains how Ready Set Preschool funding can be used to improve preschool participation by supporting both enrolment and attendance outcomes. It should be read alongside the:

- [Ready Set Preschool fact sheet](#)
- [Policy and Funding Guide](#)
- [Ready Set Preschool funding categories](#)

The fact sheet provides an overview of Ready Set Preschool. This guide details how funding can be used to support enrolment and attendance outcomes.

Understanding Ready Set Preschool funding

Ready Set Preschool funding is designed to help services reduce barriers for children and families to participate in preschool. Services have flexibility to determine how funding is used based on the needs of the children and families in their service.

When making decisions about funding, services should consider:

- what barriers are affecting attendance
- which children and families may need additional support
- what barriers may be preventing families from enrolling
- what outcomes they are trying to achieve
- how funding can best support those outcomes.

A majority proportion of funding should be directed towards providing families with practical supports such as take-home meals, spare clothing, or assistance with transport, to reduce barriers to preschool participation. These supports are described as 'Indirect Cost Reduction' supports.

Understanding funding streams and categories

Ready Set Preschool funding is organised into funding streams and categories.

- **Funding streams** describe the purpose of the expenditure.
- **Funding categories** describe the types of activities that may be used to achieve that purpose.



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Indirect Cost Reduction

Indirect Cost Reduction funding helps address practical barriers that make it harder for children and families to attend preschool. It is not intended to be a substitute for family income, but to provide practical support for low-cost items that enable preschool participation. The following categories sit within the Indirect Cost Reduction funding stream:

- **Nutrition:** Supports that assist with food security for children and families.
- **Transport:** Supports that help children and families to get to preschool.
- **Clothing and Essential Items:** Supports that provide children with access to essential items required to participate in preschool.
- **Urgent Family Needs:** Supports that respond to crisis situations or unexpected barriers affecting preschool attendance.

Community Connection

The Community Connection funding stream is focused on engagement, to achieve enrolment and attendance outcomes. Community Connection activities help services:

- build trust with families
- strengthen family engagement
- support enrolment and attendance of priority cohorts
- promote the benefits of preschool
- strengthen community connections.

Services are encouraged to use Community Connection funding flexibly to respond to local priorities and test approaches that strengthen preschool enrolment and attendance, outcomes.

Some activities may contribute to both enrolment and attendance outcomes. When planning, services should consider the primary purpose of the activity.

Further guidance and examples are available in the [Ready Set Preschool funding categories](#).

Maintaining flexibility

Ready Set Preschool funding is intended to support both planned activities and to respond to emerging child and family needs. Services are encouraged to identify planned activities through their Flying Start Partnership Plan while retaining flexibility to respond to barriers that arise throughout the year.

Not all expenditure can be planned in advance. Services may reserve a portion of funding to respond to emerging needs as they are identified. Examples may include:



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- urgent family needs/ crisis support
- emergency transport assistance
- support for families experiencing unexpected hardship
- barriers identified during the year that affect attendance, or enrolment.

Using data to inform planning

Good planning starts with understanding the needs of your children, families and community. Useful information may include:

- AEDC data
- attendance data
- enrolment data
- family feedback
- community feedback
- local knowledge
- service observations.

Data should be used to identify barriers, understand participation patterns and determine where funding can have the greatest impact. Effective Ready Set Preschool planning combines:

- local data
- community knowledge
- family voice
- identified barriers
- available funding.

Planning should focus on the outcomes you are seeking to achieve and the strategies that are most likely to support children and families in your community.

Ready Set Preschool Goal setting guidance

- Services may develop goals for attendance, enrolment of priority cohorts or both, depending on their identified need.



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- Use current attendance and enrolment data to identify opportunities for improvement and consider any barriers consistently experienced by children and families.
- Consider the mix of children in your service and whether this is representative of your local area. Consider whether particular cohorts of children have lower attendance, delayed enrolment or face barriers to accessing preschool.
- Consider other sources of evidence, such as AEDC data, community demographics and local service knowledge, to better understand the strengths and needs of your community.
- Goals should describe the change the service is seeking to achieve, rather than the activities you will undertake.
- Discuss how progress will be measured using existing service data where possible (for example attendance, enrolment or family feedback).

Planning for attendance

Attendance planning focuses on helping children attend preschool regularly.

When planning, consider:

- Which children or groups have lower attendance?
- What barriers may be affecting attendance?
- What practical supports may help reduce those barriers or have helped families in the past?

Examples may include:

- transport barriers
- food-security
- access to essential items
- family crisis or instability
- difficulties engaging with the service.

Services should use attendance data alongside local knowledge and family feedback to understand what is affecting participation.

Planning for enrolment of priority cohorts

Planning should focus on helping children and families with additional barriers or complexities, to connect with preschool and remain engaged. Services may adopt locally designed approaches where they are responsive to identified community needs and participation barriers. When planning, consider:



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- Are there children/ families in the local community not yet registered for preschool?
- Which children and families may benefit from additional support to enrol and participate??
- How can the service strengthen relationships and trust and Cultural responsiveness?
- How can awareness and understanding of Flying Start preschool be increased within the community?

Examples may include:

- enrolment support activities
- family engagement activities
- Culturally responsive engagement approaches
- parent groups and peer support activities
- community events
- outreach activities.

Many strategies will contribute to both enrolment and attendance outcomes. Services should ensure that planned activities clearly support access and participation for priority cohorts and are consistent with the Policy and Funding Guide.

Planning for Preschool Plus

For SEIFA 1 and SEIFA 2 services that have Preschool Plus enrolments, the additional Ready Set Preschool funding should be considered alongside the universal preschool per capita funding allocation when developing your Partnership Plan.

Services should consider the needs of children enrolled in Preschool Plus when identifying:

- attendance barriers
- planned activities.

While planning occurs at a service level, Preschool Plus funding is intended to provide additional support for the children enrolled in Preschool Plus and their families, to support sustained program participation.

SEIFA 3–5 services are **not** required to complete the *Warm and Welcoming* section of the Partnership Plan, for Preschool Plus Ready Set Preschool Funding. Funding should be used in accordance with the Policy and Funding Guide.

Refer to the [Policy and Funding Guide](#) for detailed Preschool Plus requirements.



Staffing

When planning Ready Set Preschool activities, services may choose to allocate a portion of funding towards staffing where it supports delivery of planned activities.

Examples may include:

- coordination activities
- administration support
- community engagement functions
- facilitation of approved activities
- supporting children and families to enrol in and attend preschool
- engagement with families experiencing barriers to preschool enrolment and attendance
- provider-level coordination of pooled activities.

Staffing expenditure should support delivery of Ready Set Preschool outcomes and should not compromise the primary intent of the funding, which is to prioritise activities that reduce attendance barriers and support enrolment of priority cohorts to directly benefit children and families.

Pooling arrangements

Larger providers have the option to pool up to 50% of the allocated funds (excluding Ready Set Preschool allocations for Preschool Plus) to support coordinated delivery, purchasing efficiencies and to reduce administrative burden on its' services.

Examples may include:

- shared purchasing arrangements
- shared staffing arrangements
- coordinated service delivery
- administration and coordination activities.

If funding is pooled, consider how this will be reflected in your Partnership Plan and how pooled activities contribute to your services' Ready Set Preschool outcomes.

Refer to the [Policy and Funding Guide](#) for further information.



Integrated hubs

Integrated hubs operate under the same Ready Set Preschool funding rules as all other services. In addition to Community Connection activities available to all services, integrated hubs are expected to undertake place-based initiatives that respond to identified community needs and enrolment / attendance barriers.

Place-based initiatives should be informed by local data, community knowledge, and identified barriers, and must align with Ready Set Preschool participation outcomes and funding requirements.

Examples may include:

- engagement with families of younger children to support early connection to preschool
- transition activities that support enrolment and continuity of attendance
- community engagement and awareness initiatives
- outreach approaches targeting underrepresented or priority cohorts
- family capacity-building activities
- innovative approaches that strengthen attendance and engagement.

Integrated hub activities should align with local priorities, the service model and local service offer.

Reporting and record keeping

Throughout the year, consider what information you may need to collect to demonstrate how funding has supported attendance and enrolment outcomes. Reporting may include information about:

- activities delivered
- supports provided
- expenditure categories utilised
- priority cohorts supported
- attendance outcomes
- enrolment outcomes
- barriers identified and addressed.

Services must maintain records, including receipts for all related purchases, to support reporting and acquittal requirements. This may be in the form of a register that captures the expenditure category, who it benefited (e.g. all children or a particular child/ family), amount and date, together with receipts.

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Records must be retained for a minimum of seven years, in accordance with the Policy and Funding Guide. How records are maintained is at the discretion of the service.

Where to go for more information

- [Policy and Funding Guide](#)
- [Ready Set Preschool fact sheet](#)
- [Ready Set Preschool funding categories](#)
- Your OECD Local Team

