

Ready Set Preschool

Ready Set Preschool (formerly Outreach) is a targeted funding program designed to support services to improve preschool participation for children in areas of socio-economic disadvantage. Preschool participation includes enrolment and regular attendance.

The program provides flexible funding to help services reduce barriers to enrolling in preschool and attending regularly through practical supports, family engagement and community connection activities.

Scope

From 2027 Ready Set Preschool funding is available to all SEIFA 1 and SEIFA 2 partner services, in addition to all Preschool Plus partner services.

Funding is provided at the service level, is fixed for the calendar year and is not adjusted based on changes in enrolments during the year.

All eligible Partner Services are required to complete a Flying Start Partnership Plan outlining how funding will support preschool participation outcomes. Ready Set Preschool is planned within Priority Area 1: *Warm and Welcoming*, with a focus on increasing enrolment of children who are considered a high priority under the Priority of Access criteria **and** supporting sustained preschool attendance for all preschool children.

Types of support / eligibility / funding requirements

Ready Set Preschool supports equitable preschool participation by helping services identify and address barriers that may prevent children and families from enrolling in or attending preschool.

Ready Set Preschool funding is discretionary and must be used in accordance with the spending rules outlined in the [Policy and Funding Guide](#). Allowable expenses include:

1. Reducing indirect costs for families

Partner services can provide practical assistance to families to reduce barriers associated with food security, transport, or access to essential items (e.g. spare clothing), alleviating some of the associated indirect costs of preschool. In addition, services may allocate a portion of their funding for flexible spending to respond to urgent or changing family circumstances that impact preschool attendance (eg domestic violence, homelessness) as outlined in the [Policy and Funding Guide](#) (see [Ready Set Preschool funding categories](#) for further examples).

2. Community connection

Partners Services can also build engagement and connection with families and communities through investing in community activities that respond to local needs and barriers affecting enrolment, attendance, and participation. These activities help build trust and connection with families, raise awareness of the



benefits of preschool and promote enrolment for those families not yet connected to preschool as outlined in the Policy and Funding Guide (see [Ready Set Preschool funding categories](#) for further examples).

3. Contribution to staffing associated with delivering 1 and 2 above

A contribution towards staffing costs, including coordination, administration and staff time required to plan and deliver Ready Set Preschool activities, is an allowable expense where it supports delivery of 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.

Services are encouraged to set aside a portion of their Ready Set Preschool funding to respond to urgent or changing family circumstances as they arise, which should be indicated in the Partnership Plan.

Larger providers have the option to pool a portion of the allocated funds (excluding Ready Set Preschool allocations for Preschool Plus) to support coordinated delivery, purchasing efficiencies and administration in its' services. Where providers choose to pool funding, this must be clearly indicated on each services' Partnership Plan, including the contribution to the pool (not more than 50% of total service allocation) and how the pooled funding will be spent aligned to program purpose and approved spend rules.

Providers have a legal obligation to ensure their services adhere to the required spending rules.

Refer to the [Flying Start Policy and Funding Guide](#) for funding requirements, spending rules and funding restrictions.

Additional information

Preschool Plus

All Preschool Plus enrolments attract an allocation of Ready Set Preschool funding, to support sustained program participation for children and families enrolled in 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. Refer to the [Ready Set Preschool Planning and Implementation Guide](#) and [Policy and Funding Guide](#) for further information.

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 spending parameters outlined in the Policy and Funding Guide.

Integrated hubs

Integrated hubs operate under the same spending rules as all other Flying Start Partner services. However, in recognition of their broader community role, integrated hubs are expected to undertake place-based activities that strengthen participation, engagement and community connection beyond families engaged in Preschool Plus.



Engagement supports

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 preschools, supporting early engagement and participation where additional assistance is needed.

Refer to the [Ready Set Preschool Planning and Implementation Guide](#) and [Policy and Funding Guide](#) for further information.

How to fill out the Flying Start Partnership Plan

Planning for Ready, Set, Preschool occurs within Priority 1: *Warm and Welcoming*. Services should first consider what the data is telling them about attendance patterns of enrolled children to identify an attendance goal they are seeking to achieve.

Services that have already commenced delivery of funded 3-year-old preschool must provide estimated attendance patterns to inform both the goal and the planned activities (expenditure). Services are required to consider the percentage of children currently attending the teacher-led preschool program.

New services are required to consider what percentage of their enrolled/expected children they estimate will regularly attend the planned preschool sessions.

Services must also review their enrolment data to determine if a portion of the funding should be used towards activities to engage children and families that fall under category 1 or 2 of the Priority of Access Criteria (refer to Policy and Funding Guide) otherwise described as priority cohorts.

For the Flying Start Partnership Plan, services are required to estimate the percentage of enrolments in their preschool cohort who meet category 1 or 2 of the Priority of Access criteria.

This data should be used to inform planned activities that support the services' goals and focus on:

- attendance of all (or a subset of) preschool children
- enrolment of priority cohorts
- addressing barriers affecting enrolment and/ or attendance
- opportunities to strengthen family engagement and connection
- the outcomes the service is seeking to improve

Services should start by thinking about participation outcomes they are seeking to achieve rather than the individual items they intend to purchase.

Detailed planning guidance is available in the [Ready Set Preschool Planning and Implementation Guide](#).



What do these words mean?

Preschool participation means children enrolling in preschool and attending regularly so they can benefit from the program.

Attendance means how often an enrolled child attends Flying Start preschool and participates in the program.

Enrolment means a child being registered to attend a Flying Start preschool program.

Priority cohorts are children and families who may experience additional barriers to participation and who may benefit from targeted engagement and support (see [Policy and Funding Guide](#)).

SEIFA Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) are national measures of relative socio-economic disadvantage used to determine eligibility for Ready Set Preschool service-level funding.

Preschool Plus is a targeted early intervention program providing 30 hours of preschool and additional funding to support children experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage to participate in preschool.

Integrated hub: Flying Start partner services bring the Preschool Plus program together with other health, wellbeing and education offerings so families and children can be supported to access the services they need in one place. Hubs are expected to deliver place-based approaches that strengthen family engagement, community connection and preschool participation.

Where to go for more information

- [Policy and Funding Guide](#)
- [Ready Set Preschool Planning and Implementation Guide](#)
- [Funding categories and examples](#)

