

# Supporting Children in ECEC WA

## Grant Guidelines

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## Guidelines

### **These guidelines contain information for the Supporting children in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) settings Grant Program.**

You must read these guidelines before completing an application.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant program/grant opportunity.
- the eligibility and assessment criteria.
- how grant applications are considered and selected.
- how grantees are notified and receive grant payments.
- how grantees will be monitored and evaluated.
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

Please refer to [Child Australia Home - Child Australia](#) to access the online application form.

Should you require any further clarifications before completing the application form. Contact can be made with Carren Ford, Executive Director, Child Australia, on Tel: 1300 661164, All applications must be submitted online and received by Child Australia by the closing date to be eligible for assessment. No late applications will be accepted.

Please allow up to 6 weeks from the closing date for your application to be processed.

**Closing date and time: 16:00pm AWST. Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> of August 2024.**

## 1. Background

### Preschool Reform Agreement (PRA)

The Australian Government and all states and territories have agreed to the Preschool Reform Agreement, a national reform agreement to strengthen the delivery of preschool and better prepare children for the first year of school. One of the key reforms of the PRA is for funding to flow to the Early Childhood Sector in which preschool programs are delivered.

The Department of Education distributes the PRA funding to the school sector and this grants program has been established to distribute funding to the **ECEC sector only**.

### Preschool in Western Australia

Preschool in Western Australia is most commonly known as kindergarten and is offered to children in the year before full-time school.

## 2. About the Grants Program

This Grants Program provides PRA funding for registered Providers with a Service Approval offering preschool programs in line with the objectives of the Preschool Reform Agreement to facilitate children's early learning and development, and transition to school by:

- maintaining universal access to affordable, quality preschool programs for all children
- improving participation in preschool programs
- maximising the benefit of the preschool year by improving outcomes for children

The Preschool Reform Agreement has a focus on improving preschool participation and outcomes including for:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children; and
- disadvantaged children<sup>1</sup>

If all funding is not allocated under this grants application process, further rounds of funding will be launched and advertised to ensure all funding is allocated to the ECEC sector.

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<sup>1</sup> As defined by the Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) measure of relative disadvantage. A more granular measure of socio-economic disadvantage may be adopted as data improvements are implemented, if agreed by parties to the Agreement. States may use different measures for their performance reporting as agreed bilaterally with the Commonwealth in Implementation Plans.

Applicants who are unsuccessful during the first round of funding are encouraged to reapply if further funding is available.

In line with the PRA, this grant programs will run in 2023, 2024 and 2025.

Organisations who are successful and are awarded grant funding will be eligible to apply for a further round of funding after a 12-month period, provided the previous grant activity has been finalised and acquitted.

### **3. Purpose of the Grants Program**

The Grants Program will fund programs and initiatives that develop and maintain preschool program quality, prepare children for preschool and promote children's enrolment and regular attendance in preschool programs in Approved ECEC services within the age group of 3 to 4.

Grant funding from \$20,000 to \$100,000 is available for registered Providers with a Service Approval to:

- facilitate children's early learning and development, and transition to compulsory schooling, through maintaining universal access to, and maximising participation in, affordable, high quality early childhood education programs in the year before fulltime school, delivered by degree-qualified early childhood teachers.
  - facilitate children's enrolment, attendance, and preparation for preschool, particularly amongst:
    - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
    - children living in regional, remote and very remote communities,
    - children experiencing significant disadvantage,
    - children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
    - children in the care of the CEO, Department of Communities.
  - support and enhance the professional capability of the early childhood workforce, and their provision of quality preschool programs, regardless of the delivery location
- Programs to support children currently enrolled may include:
- fee relief for families, where it is not available through other sources.
  - provision of qualified early childhood teachers to deliver preschool programs.
  - quality improvements, including teacher recruitment and retention.
  - program subsidies.

Programs for children who are not yet enrolled in preschool may include:

- communication, outreach and community engagement with targeted cohorts.
- enrolment and attendance strategies, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children, disadvantaged children, and children living in regional, remote and very remote areas, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children in the care of the CEO, Department of Communities.
- specialised programs, without which children would have no access to preschools, or programs that meet their individual needs.

Professional development programs may also be provided to support professional capability and ensure contemporary practices are utilised by the early childhood workforce.

#### **4. Grant funding may be used for:**

A range of items associated with providing a program or initiative directly related to the delivery of the project such as:

- professional development for staff.
- Early Childhood Teacher staff wages and salaries for time limited positions. employed as part of the project including backfill arrangements.
- recruitment and/or retention of ECT staff.
- transport (specifically for the transport of children to preschool and/or specialised programs under this Grants Program).
- equipment/venue hire.
- minor administration costs such as postage, phone.
- purchase of minor capital equipment.
- resource materials and consumables.
- publicity, communications, and marketing costs.

#### **5. Grant funding cannot be used for:**

- ongoing operational costs, such as insurance, power and water.
- interstate and overseas travel.
- ongoing ECT staff wages and salaries.
- projects that duplicate an existing or similar project or service within the community.
- projects that are typically funded through other sources, such as school activities, sports and cultural events.
- projects that could be delivered as part of the agreed services under another agreement the organisation has with another entity.
- purchase of land or any construction/capital expenditure and works.

- purchase of prizes or gifts.
- retrospective costs that are already funded by the organisation.
- Audit costs.

## 6. Assessment criteria

Each application will be assessed against the following criteria:

- registered Providers with a Service Approval offering preschool programs.
- the project aligns with the objective of the Preschool Reform Agreement and meets the purpose of the Grants Program.
- project outcomes are clearly defined and achievable.
- evidence of sound planning and demonstrated ability to manage the project.
- the requested grant amount is reasonable given the aim of the project, number of participants and expected outcomes (value for money).
- ability of the project to meet the grant timelines.
- the proposal has considered how activities and/or outcomes will be sustained beyond the project period.
- the project budget provides enough detail and is realistic.

In addition, successful applications will support vulnerable or disadvantaged children in the community, including:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children.
- disadvantaged<sup>1</sup> children experiencing significant disadvantages.
- children located in regional areas, particularly remote and very remote areas.
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- children in the care of the CEO, Department of Communities.

In order to ensure that the allocation of resources and opportunities aligns with objectives, a comprehensive evaluation process for incoming applications has been established. This process involves systematic scoring and the application of weightings to different factors, with a particular focus on prioritising specific locations and target groups, as outlined below.

Applications will undergo a rigorous scoring process, wherein each application is assessed against predefined criteria. The scoring system allows for a quantitative evaluation of each application's quality and potential.

A commitment to maintaining transparency and accountability throughout the evaluation process. Applicants will be informed of the scoring and weighting system, ensuring that they have a clear understanding of how their application will be assessed.

Applications will be scored, and weightings will be applied for the priority locations and target groups as listed below.

0 = the project will run in the Perth metropolitan area

- 1 = the project will run in an inner area
- 2 = the project will run in an outer regional area
- 3 = the project will run in a remote area
- 4 = the project will run in a very remote area

0 = the project will not benefit any of the primary target groups

3 = the project will benefit a primary target group (add an extra 3 points if the project will benefit more than one primary target group (e.g. Aboriginal and disadvantaged = 6 points))

## 7. Expected Timelines for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframes
Assessment of applications	Up to 6 weeks
Approval of outcomes of selection process	Up to 6 weeks
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	Up to 2 weeks
Notification to unsuccessful grant applicants	Up to 2 weeks
Earliest start date of grant activity	01 October 2024 (project funds to be used within 12 months)
End date of grant activity/ agreement	16th February 2025

## 8. Assessment of Grant Applications

Grant applications will be selected as per the following process:

- eligibility checks of applications against the eligibility criteria. Any applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not proceed for further assessment.
- eligible applications will then be assessed against the assessment criteria. An application will be assessed based on:
  - how well it meets the criteria
  - how it compares to other applications
  - whether it provides value for money

When assessing the extent to which the application represents value for money, we will have regard to:

- **the overall objectives to be achieved in providing the grant**
- **the relative value of the grant sought**
- **how the grant activities will benefit the identified priority groups and the extent to which the geographic location of the application matches identified priorities**
- **the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates that it will contribute to meeting the outcomes/ objectives**
- **the proposal has considered how activities and/or outcomes will be sustained beyond the project period**

## 9. How much can I apply for?

Grants are available from \$20,000 to \$100,000. The amount that can be applied for is dependent on the number of children who will directly benefit from the grant program, specifically from the following cohorts:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children.
- disadvantaged<sup>1</sup> children.
- children living in regional areas, particularly remote and very remote areas.
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- children in the care of the CEO, Department of Communities.

**Please note that the table below should be treated as a guide only and depending on the locality and type of grant activity, more or less funding may be appropriate. All grant applications will be assessed on a value for money basis as per *Clause 8 - Assessment of Grant Applications*.**

Number of children who will benefit from the Grant Program	Recommended amount of funding that can be applied for
Up to 20	Up to \$20,000
21 > 40	Up to \$40,000
41 > 60	Up to \$60,000
61 >80	Up to \$80,000



>81	Up to \$100,000
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Evidence of enrolment and attendance data is required in your application to substantiate the level of funding applied for along with the value average per child that will be impacted from receiving the grants funds.

## 11. Who will assess applications?

Child Australia will assess each application on its merit and compare it to other eligible applications before endorsing which applicants should be awarded a grant.

### 11. Conflict of interest

If a Conflict of Interest (whether actual, potential or perceived) is identified by the applicant or Child Australia, the application may be referred to an external Review Panel for assessment. Child Australia will be responsible for managing any perceived conflicts of interest and referring applications to the Review Panel where it is considered necessary.

For example, this may occur if an organisation applies for funding for staff professional development to be delivered by Child Australia. As Child Australia would benefit financially as a result of the grant funding, the grant application would be referred to the Review Panel for assessment.

If a conflict of interest is identified with an application, Child Australia will forward the application to the external Review Panel for assessment as per below:

- Child Australia will send all documentation related to the application to a Review Panel that includes senior leaders from the Departments of Education and Communities and the WA Council of Social Services
- the Review Panel will assess the documentation using the same assessment criteria as specified in these guidelines and will make a recommendation on the application
- the Review Panel will communicate its recommendation to Child Australia who will notify the applicant of the outcome

## 12. Who can apply?

- all Education and Care services in Western Australia approved under the National Law and the Child Care Services Act

- to be eligible you must also:
  - have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
  - have an ECEC Service Approval Number
  - be registered for the purposes of GST
  - the service submitting the application must be located in Western Australia.

### Services who can apply:

- **Kindergarten Services** delivery of preschool and better prepare children aged 3-4 for the first year of school.
- **Prekindy services** that are a registered service with a service approval number.
- **Childcare centre** that are a registered service with a service approval number.
- **Family Day Care Centres** that are a registered service with a service approval number.

### 13. Who cannot apply:

Any organisation that is not an Education and Care service in Western Australia approved under the Education and Care Services National Law (WA).

### Services who cannot apply:

- **Primary schools** are not eligible for funding as they have already received funding from the Preschool Reform Agreement through the Department of Education.
- **Outside School Hours Care (OSHC)**

### 14. Eligible Locations:

- your grant must include activities at the same location as the application within Western Australia
- preference will be given to grant activities that are delivered in regional, remote and very remote areas

Please refer to the following link to assess level of remoteness [Remoteness Areas | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#)

- major City (Perth)
- inner Regional Western Australia
- outer Regional Western Australia
- remote Western Australia
- very Remote Western Australia

## 15. Grant Timelines

Grant activities must be completed by 16<sup>th</sup> February 2025, with acquittals submitted by the 31 March 2025.

## 16. How to apply

1. carefully read the Guidelines in this document.
2. complete the application form online and ensure completion of all sections, including the Checklist at the end of the document. For applications including multiple centres where the project is streamlined across all centres, one application will suffice. However, if the project differs among centres, an application must be submitted per centre/project.
3. attach any supporting documents, if required.
4. ensure the application is signed by the authorised delegate of the Organisation.
5. submit the signed application online through the [Child Australia website](#).

## **NO LATE APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED**

All applications will be acknowledged via email within five business days of receipt.

## 17. Assessment and notification

Please allow up to six weeks from the closing date for advice regarding the outcome of an application.

All applications will be reviewed against the eligibility and assessment criteria outlined in these Guidelines. All organisations that apply for funding will be notified in writing of the outcome of the submission.

## Successful applicants

Successful applicants will be required to report on the activities undertaken, participants and partners, lessons learned, evaluation of effectiveness, outcomes achieved, and a certified statement of income and expenditure for the funded project. Once the project is completed, the acquittal report must be submitted to meet the requirements, which will be specified once the grant is approved.

Any unspent grant funds, or grant funds not expended in accordance with the Grant Program, must be returned to Child Australia.

## Project Funding Acquittal Overview

This information provides an overview of the requirements for project funding acquittal.

If your project funding application is successful, you will be required to complete the online acquittal report when your activity has finished.

An acquittal report details your activity and how you spent the grant.

- your acquittal report must be submitted within 30 days of the activity completion date.
- you will need to attach relevant documents, images and videos that substantiate the delivery of the activity and that may demonstrate the impact and outcomes achieved.
- refer to your activity outcomes for guidance in selecting suitable support material.
- if possible, please provide your support material in one PDF document (for text). Audio, images and video material to be supplied separately as applicable.
- the report will also include your activity budget and you will be required to enter all the actual figures against each budget item.
- variations between budget and actual figures are acceptable; however, you must provide an explanation for large variations in the Notes for that item.
- the funding acquittal report also includes the option to provide feedback to help us to continually review and improve the service we provide.

Contact us if you require assistance.

## Unsuccessful applicants

If you are unsuccessful, you may ask for feedback via email to [ECECGrants@childaustralia.org.au](mailto:ECECGrants@childaustralia.org.au) within 14 days of being advised of the outcome.

## Request for Secondary Review

If an unsuccessful applicant is not satisfied with the feedback from Child Australia, they can request a further assessment review by the Review Panel. Child Australia will explain the Review Panel process to the applicant as per below:

The applicant must apply in writing for a second assessment including a rationale and justification for the request.

Child Australia will review the request and submit it to the Review Panel along with the required grant documentation.

The Review Panel will assess the documentation using the same assessment criteria as Child Australia and will make a final decision on the application providing the relevant justification.

The Review Panel will communicate its final decision to Child Australia who will notify the applicant of the outcome of the review.

For further information about the Supporting children in Early Childhood Education and *Care Sector settings* Grants Program, or assistance completing the application form, please contact: Carren Ford, Child Australia on 1300 66 11 64