

Supporting Children in ECEC WA

Grant Guidelines 2026

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 Child Australia, on Tel: 1300 661 164. All applications must be submitted online and received by Child Australia by the closing date to be eligible for assessment. No late applications, or amendments will be accepted after the closing date.

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

Closing date and time: COB: Friday 25th September

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 Education and Care 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 children¹

¹ 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.

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.

Applicants who were unsuccessful during previous rounds of funding are encouraged to reapply.

In line with the PRA, this grant program has run in 2023, 2024, 2025 and has been extended to 2026 and 2027.

Applicants who were successful in previous rounds of funding and are yet to acquit funding, are eligible to apply for additional grants, however, preference will be given to applicants who have not received funding previously. Applicants who are re applying need to ensure the grant application is **significantly different to previous submissions**. If you require further clarification, please reach out to Child Australia.

3. Purpose of the Grants Program

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

Grant funding from \$20,000 to \$200,000 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
- 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. The salary of an ECT can be paid during the life of the project.
- 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

Pre-Requisites

To be eligible to apply for a grant through this Grants Program applicants must also meet the below pre-requisite quality standards:

- **For metropolitan-based services**, the service must be rated either provisional, or meeting, or exceeding National Quality Standards

• **For regional-based services**, services must be rated either provisional, or working towards, meeting, or exceeding National Quality Standards. As well as rated as meeting in quality area 2.

Applications from providers that do not meet the above pre-requisites will not proceed to qualitative assessment against the advertised Assessment Criteria.

Each application will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Registered Providers with Provider and Service Approval offering preschool programs (not primary schools).
- The projects proposal aligns with the objective of the Preschool Reform Agreement and meets the purpose of the Grants Program.
- Project proposal 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 proposed project, number of children who will benefit and expected outcomes (value for money).
- Ability of the project proposal to meet the grant timelines.
- The project proposal has considered how activities and/or outcomes will be sustained beyond the project period.
- The proposed project budget provides enough detail and is realistic.

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

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children.
- Disadvantaged¹ 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.

To ensure that the allocation of resources and opportunities aligns with objectives, a comprehensive evaluation process for all 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.

In a commitment to maintain transparency and accountability throughout the evaluation process, the bellow scoring and weighting system will be used.

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

Primary locations and regions:

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

Primary target groups:

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 5 weeks
Approval of outcomes of selection process	Up to 4 weeks
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	Up to 2 weeks
Notification to unsuccessful grant applicants	Up to 2 weeks post successful announcement
Earliest start date of grant activity	January 2027
End date of grant activity/ agreement	End of November 2027

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, assessment will have regard to:

- The overall objectives to be achieved with the with the approved funding.
- The relative value of the grant sought in conjunction with number of children who will benefit.
- How the grant activities will benefit the identified priority target 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 and objectives of the PRA.
- The Project 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 \$200,000. 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 primary target groups;

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children.
- disadvantaged¹ 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.

Providers with multiple Approved Provider numbers are eligible to apply for PRA grants across their registered entities. However, the maximum total grant funding allocated per provider, regardless of the number of Approved Provider numbers, is capped at \$200K per round

Total 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 \$200,000

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 grant funds.

For example, attendance data and/or demographic data generated from CCS Software reporting (eg; Qikkids, Xplor)

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 funding, as stipulated in clause 6

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 because of the grant funding, the grant application would be referred to the external 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 an external Review Panel that includes senior leaders from the Departments of Education and Communities and the WA Council of Social Services.
- The external 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 external 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 in Western Australia.

Services who can apply:

- **Pre-kindy 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.
- **Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services** that offer regular care and have a minimum of 10 children 4 years of age enrolled and regularly attending.

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) services** are **not eligible** unless they can demonstrate that they have at least 10 **4-year-old children enrolled and attending** their service.

14. Eligible Locations:

- Your project proposal 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 \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/remoteness-areas)

Major City (Perth) /Metropolitan 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 26th November 2027 with acquittals submitted by the 17th December 2027

16. How to apply

1. Carefully read the Guidelines in this document.
2. Create a log in to the grant application portal
3. 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.
4. Attach required supporting documentation were prompted by the application form.
5. Ensure the application is signed by the authorised delegate of the Organisation.
6. Submit the signed application online through the online application process. [ECEC Grant Application Form - Child Australia](#)

NO LATE APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED

All applications will be acknowledged via email within five business days of receipt. No late applications or amendments to existing applications, will be accepted after the closing date. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure they submit their application; incomplete or partial applications will not be accepted.

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 application.

Successful applicants

Successful applicants will be required to;

- Report on the activities undertaken,
- Participants and partners of the project,
- Lessons learned and evaluation of effectiveness,
- Outcomes achieved or not 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 upon approval.

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 provided acquittal report when your activity has finished. The acquittal report template will be issued to successful applicants upon notification of outcome.

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

- Your acquittal report must be submitted within 30 days of the activity completion date.
- You will be required to attach relevant supporting documents such as, 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, 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 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.

Change of Ownership During the Project

1. Where the Approved Provider [**First Provider**] of the Service Approval intends to transfer the Service Approval to another Approved Provider [**Second Provider**], the First Provider must before giving notice of the transfer to the Regulatory Authority (under National Law s 59) negotiate with the Second Provider as to whether the Project will be terminated at the time of transfer, or not.
2. Where the Project is to be terminated at the time of transfer of the Service Approval, the First Provider must, at the time of transfer, cease carrying out the Project and must:
 - Return to Child Australia any part of the Grant Funding that has not been expended
 - Complete an acquittal that details all Project activity and expenditure up to the date of transfer, the acquittal to be written and provided to Child Australia within 30 days of the transfer.
3. Where the Project is to be continued by the Second Provider from the date of transfer, the First and Second Providers must:
 - Prior to the transfer engage in consultation with Child Australia to clarify roles and responsibilities for the continuation and full acquittal of the Project and any further expenditure of Grant Funding
 - Execute a written agreement with Child Australia to Child Australia's satisfaction, the agreement to be signed by all parties and provided to Child Australia before the date of transfer
 - Act in good faith and collaborate to ensure the Project delivery and acquittal remains transparent and complete.
 - Provide written notice to Child Australia of the final date the transfer takes effect.

4. Where a Service Approval is transferred without clause 3 being satisfied, clause 2 applies.

Unsuccessful applicants

If you are unsuccessful, you may ask for feedback via email to 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 external Review Panel. Child Australia will explain the external 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 external Review Panel along with the required grant documentation.

The external 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 external 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: Child Australia through email via ececgrants@childaustralia.org.au or by phone on 1300 66 11 64.