Mobile preschool ‘opt in’ contracts

The Brennan Review of NSW Government Funding for Early Childhood Education recommended that mobile preschools be funded on fixed term contracts to improve service delivery and universal access in remote areas. The NSW Government supported this recommendation. Recently, the Minister for Education, the Hon Adrian Piccoli MP, approved an approach to transition mobile preschools to ‘opt in’ fixed term contracts.

Previously, there has been no definition for a mobile preschool. As a result some services that historically operated as mobiles may now be centre based. ECECD will be working closely with the Mobile Children’s Services Association to identify mobile preschools that meet the definition of a mobile preschool. That is, the preschool:

1. operates from multiple venues that are not purpose-built centre based preschools, or operates as a ‘pack away’ service at one venue
2. delivers a preschool program designed by an early childhood teacher
3. has at least five children enrolled at each venue
4. operates in areas where centre based preschools are not readily available (e.g. rural/remote areas where no other preschool service provision exists)
5. has the required service and provider approvals.

To assist with the move to fixed term contracts in 2016, mobile preschools that meet the criteria set out above will be required to participate in the Operational Support Program. This program helps preschools to build capacity and ensure sustainability for the future. Mobile preschools can only be offered a fixed term contract if they complete the program.

Fixed term contracts will be for three years based on outputs, and will include a loading to help cover the unique costs of mobile service delivery. Mobile preschools will also need to have a yearly business plan, and participate in the annual preschool census.

Have your say in the review of the National Quality Framework

Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments are seeking sector views on a range of options for improving the operation of the National Quality Framework.

The options are part of the ongoing Review of the National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care.

Feedback provided through the public consultation process earlier this year has been incorporated into a Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) that has now been released for public consultation.

We recently sent an email to all providers, services and Early Childhood Extra subscribers, advising of RIS consultation sessions in Newcastle, Sydney CBD, Parramatta, Penrith, Albury and Wollongong between 12 and 21 November.

If you have been unable to attend any of the sessions, you can also have your say by making a written submission or an online comment, or by participating in an online survey.

Further information is available on the NQF Review microsite. This is an important opportunity to provide input on issues for quality education and care and outcomes for children. We look forward to and value your input.
Globe Wilkins Excellent rating

Congratulations to Globe Wilkins Preschool in Marrickville which is the latest service to receive an Excellent rating from the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). The rating recognises Globe Wilkins' outstanding work in the community and ongoing commitment to improving quality outcomes for children. This includes the preschool's work with community groups, such as Multi Mix Mob Indigenous focused Playgroup and the Wunanbiri Aboriginal preschool. Globe Wilkins was also recognised for its transition to school program and the support it provides for educators from other services.

NSW Kidsafe Playspace Awards

Congratulations also to Little Jarjums Preschool in Casino West. Little Jarjums' new outdoor playspace recently won the 2014 Kidsafe National Playspace Design Award in the Education and Care Services category. Judges described Little Jarjums' Riverfarm Project as 'a really engaging playspace that reflects collaboration with the local Indigenous community'. Particular mention was also made of the project's excellent provision of shade in a hot climate, the natural grass mound and its fantastic play value.

SDN Beranga in Rooty Hill also received a ‘highly commended’ award for its work in creating an innovative play space that is specifically designed for children on the autism spectrum.

Release of inaugural State of Education in NSW report

The Minister for Education, the Hon Adrian Piccoli MP, has formally launched the inaugural edition of the biennial State of Education in NSW report. The report is a major initiative of the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE). This new report brings together a wealth of data, information and commentary about the state of the education sector – from early childhood right through to school, vocational and higher education. Some notable outcomes for the NSW Early Childhood Education and Care sector include:

- increases in participation, particularly among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from low income families
- increases in the number of hours children are enrolled in preschool programs
- decreases in fees in the community preschool sector, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- decreases in developmental vulnerability on the Australian Early Development Index.

Cluster Management update

In July we announced details of the new Preschool Cluster Management Trial. On 10 October 2014, the Minister for Education announced that three organisations had been selected as cluster managers after a call for expressions of interest. The three cluster managers are:

- Community Child Care Cooperative – providing cluster management services in both the Sydney metropolitan and New England areas
- The Samaritans Foundation – providing cluster management services in the Newcastle metropolitan area
- CareWest Limited – providing cluster management services in the central west of NSW.

Cluster managers are now at the stage of recruiting preschools to participate in the trial. In participating, preschools can choose the areas of operation they would like the cluster manager to support. To participate, it is a requirement that preschools and cluster managers commit to the trial and its ongoing evaluation for two full years.

Preschools should contact the cluster manager responsible for their area to opt in to the trial.

Transition to School Statement

The new Transition to School Statement and accompanying Information Sheet for Families is now available in 11 community languages - Arabic, Chinese (traditional), Croatian, Farsi, Khmer, Korean, Serbian, Spanish, Thai, Turkish, and Vietnamese.

A video on the use of the Statement is also now available for viewing on our website.

Keeping in touch

Update your contact details by logging onto the NQAITS portal and/or for funded services by logging onto ECCMS. You can also get in touch with us by:

- visiting our website - www.dec.nsw.gov.au/ecec
- phoning us on 1800 619 113 (general) or 1300 755 426 (funding)
- emailing us on ececd@det.nsw.edu.au (general), ecec.funding@det.nsw.edu.au (funding) or eceextra@det.nsw.edu.au (EC Extra editor)