PRESCHOOL DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM UPDATE

Applying for funding through the Preschool Disability Support Program (PDSP) has been made easier for community preschools, following useful feedback to the Directorate from providers and services.

Community preschools can now make PDSP applications at two set periods each year, helping preschools to improve management of their funding over the course of each year.

Main round applications open on 12 October and close on 6 November 2015. Second round applications open on 25 April 2016 and close on 20 May 2016. All applications are made through the PDSP portal.

The PDSP was developed following recommendations made in the Review of NSW Government Funding for Early Childhood Education by Professor Deborah Brennan.

The PDSP comprises two key elements for funding:

1. The Universal Disability Loading (UDL) provides funding to all preschools to support the educational inclusion of all children with disability.

2. Child-Focused Targeted Support provides funding to assist community preschools to support individual children with disability or additional needs.

NEW SCHOLARSHIPS WILL HELP EDUCATORS UPGRADE THEIR QUALIFICATIONS.

Diploma-qualified early childhood educators in rural and remote NSW services who want to upgrade their qualification to that of a four year qualified teacher can apply for a Rural and Remote Early Childhood Teaching Scholarship worth up to $10,000.

To be eligible, scholarship applicants must:

- be currently employed in a rural or remote long day care service, or centre-based or mobile preschool in NSW
- hold an approved Diploma level qualification in early childhood education and care
- intend to enrol in a Bachelor Degree leading to a four year university qualified early childhood teacher qualification recognised by ACECQA
- not already be studying for an early childhood teaching degree or be in receipt of any other scholarship funding related to the course.

For more information about the scholarships and how to apply, click here.

Applications forms are available here and close on Friday 9 October 2015.

E-LEARNING FOR WORKING WITH FAMILIES

Educators can now access a new e-learning course which complemented the Practice Guide for working with families from pre-birth to eight years which was published by the former standing Council of School Education and Early Childhood in 2013.

The focus of the course is to assist people who work with children use a common language and provide consistent messages about the early years of child development. The course enhances the learning experience with key messages, interactive activities, self-reflection questions and multiple choice assessments at the end of each section. You can find out more information and register here.
NEW RATIOS FOR CENTRE-BASED SERVICES FROM 1 JANUARY 2016

Centre-based services should by now have plans in hand for new educator to child ratios that take effect from 1 January next year. From that date, services will need to ensure that there is 1 educator for every 5 children attending the service aged older than 24 months and younger than 36 months. The current ratio for children in this age group in NSW is 1 educator for every 8 children.

The new ratio is an important milestone in implementing the National Quality Framework. The NQF is based on international evidence of the positive outcomes for children’s learning and development associated with high quality early childhood education and care.

Services wanting advice about how to manage introduction to the new ratios should get in touch with their peak body as soon as possible. General information about the ratios and the rationale for the change is available from the ACECQA website here.

2016 BI-ANNUAL PRESCHOOL CENSUS

From early 2016 the census of community preschools will take place twice a year in March and August.

These two collections will be known as the bi-annual preschool census.

Data collection for this bi-annual preschool census will be managed by the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) and the Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate.

A pilot of the new system will commence after the August 2015 annual preschool census. This testing is vital to ensure that the new data collection tool is operationally sound and user-friendly prior to its rollout in March 2016.

For 2016, there is no change to the yearly funding adjustment process. The adjustment will occur as usual in December 2016 based on August 2016 preschool census data.

TRANSITION TO SCHOOL STATEMENT NOW EVALUATED

The Department’s Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) has released the evaluation report on the Transition to School Statement. CESE thanks the 2,500 early childhood services, families and schools who gave their views in the surveys. The Statement is clearly valued by the early childhood services, families and schools who used it.

NEW ASSESSMENT AND RATING SERVICE CONTEXT FORM

As part of the assessment and rating process in New South Wales we will be introducing a standardised Service Context form to help streamline our processes and bring consistency to the information we request before your assessment and rating visit.

The form requests contextual information about your service such as your staffing arrangements, hours of operation and operating context. By collecting this information prior to your visit we will be able to better plan suitable visit times and familiarise ourselves with any unique aspects of your service.

The new Service Context forms will roll out for assessment and rating visiting commencing late October 2015. You will receive your form when we notify you that your service is about to commence its assessment and rating.

The form has been designed with checklists to help you prepare for your assessment and rating visit.