NEW LDC NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS GRANTS PROGRAM

The Minister for Early Childhood Education, Leslie Williams MP, recently announced a $20 million fund for long day care services to support the delivery of preschool programs for children in the year before school.

The Long Day Care National Partnership Grants Program is being implemented across NSW as part of the State Government’s commitment to universal access to early childhood education.

Payment to services will be calculated according to the number of children aged 4 or 5 in their year before school who are participating in an approved early childhood education program.

Services will be able to use the funding to purchase resources, support the delivery of a preschool program based on the Early Years Learning Framework and to develop educators including upgrading qualifications.

Payments will be equal to approximately $300 per four or five year old child enrolled in a preschool program that does not currently receive grants from the Directorate. Funding will primarily be targeted to long day care services not currently funded under historic grant arrangements.

For more information about the Grants, and to apply, please visit http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/what-we-offer/regulation-and-accreditation/early-childhood-education-care/funding/ldc-national-partnerships or contact the Partnerships and Programs unit on 1300 770 962.

LONG DAY CARE PRESCHOOL ACCESS: BETTER DATA THE KEY

The Early Childhood Education and Care Collection is a nationally coordinated collection focusing on preschool participation. Data are collected from a range of service settings including, in NSW, community preschools and long day care services.

The Commonwealth will collect data from long day care services in the week commencing 3 August 2015. We know from previous collections that many long day care services which provide a preschool program do not report this in the Child Care Management System (CCMS) by completing the Preschool Indicator for enrolled children who participate in a preschool program at the service.

This has meant that we do not have a clear picture on preschool program access across the State, and the resulting misreporting data has put Commonwealth funding to the State at risk. The new LDC Preschool Grants Program draws on that funding, and so any future funding programs will be highly reliant on accurate data.

Services are urged to complete the preschool module in CCMS where they do provide a preschool program for these children. Since the funding under programs such as the Long Day Care National Partnership Grants Program need to focus on preschool program delivery, and where possible draw on existing data sources to minimise impact on the sector, it is likely that any future extension of this Program will draw on data collected through CCMS. This makes it even more important that services complete the preschool module in CCMS — both to build an accurate picture of preschool access, and to enable future payments to services, in support of universal access.

More information on completing the Preschool Indicator can be found on Page 143 of the Australian Government’s Child Care Service Handbook (the 2013 – 2014 version is the most recent available).
ECEC PRESCHOOL CENSUS

All ECEC funded community preschool services are required to participate in the Annual Preschool Census as part of their Funding Agreements. The representative fortnight for this year's collection runs from Monday 3 August 2015 to Friday 14 August 2015.

The Annual Preschool Census will again be managed by the Department’s Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE). As in previous years, funded community preschool services will complete the preschool census online.

All funded community preschool services should have now received an email from CESE containing instructions on how to register for the 2015 census.

Services that have not yet registered should do so as soon as possible. If your service has not received the registration email, or is experiencing problems with the registration process, please contact CESE:

- By email at ececcollection@det.nsw.edu.au
- via the data collection hotline on 1300 951 381.

Please note that calls from mobile telephone services will incur a charge.

SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN – LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY OF APPROVED PROVIDER

An approved provider and the nominated supervisor of a centre based education and care service were recently convicted and fined for failing to ensure that children were adequately supervised at all times. The provider was fined a total of $16,000 and the supervisor was fined $11,250 plus costs.

The convictions stemmed from an incident where three children under five were able to leave the premises of the service undetected. Fortunately, all three children were later found by a member of the public and returned to the service unharmed.

At the sentencing, the magistrate observed that there is a chain of responsibility for this type of incident that includes the approved provider. The very clear message from the judgement is that approved providers will be held accountable for serious incidents at their service and must ensure that staff know and follow service procedures to ensure the health, safety and well-being of children.

SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OFFERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN AUGUST 2015

Secure your place now for professional development opportunities for early childhood education and care professionals in August 2015.

The opportunities are being offered as part of the Sector Development Program funded by the Department of Education and are free of charge or at minimal cost for Department of Education funded services.

Opportunities include training on child protection, the Preschool Funding Model and the Early Years Learning Framework.

For more information and to secure your place, please contact each of the providers directly:

- Community Connections Solutions Australia
- Community Child Care Co-operative
- Gowrie NSW
- KU Children’s Services
- Mobile Children’s Services Association
- Network of Community Activities

ASSESSMENT AND RATING VISIT SURVEY

The Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate has developed a satisfaction survey which seeks feedback from providers about the assessment and rating visit to their service.

The survey will be sent via email to approved providers immediately after the completion of an assessment and rating visit. The survey is completed online and should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

Participation is entirely voluntary, but should be seen as a valuable opportunity to give us feedback that will help us refine and improve our process.

Completing this survey will have no impact on rights to a review of a final rating nor will individual responses be released to assessing officers.

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 eced@det.nsw.edu.au (general), ecec.funding@det.nsw.edu.au (funding) or eceextra@det.nsw.edu.au (EC Extra editor)