Preschool Disability Support Program
Using the Universal Disability Loading

In December 2014, community preschools received their first Universal Disability Loading (UDL) payment under the Preschool Disability Support Program (PDSP). Preschools can use the UDL in a variety of ways to support the educational needs of children with disability attending their service. These include:

- arranging for professionals to provide advice about the preschool’s facilities or programs, or conduct an information session about a particular disability
- purchasing additional resources for children
- purchasing relevant material to develop the capacity of all staff employed by the preschool to work with and include children with disability in the program.

Northcott (the Program Manager for the PDSP) has developed a range of support materials and can provide preschools with further advice about using the UDL. Preschools can contact Northcott by phone on 1800 455 522 or by email at pdsp@northcott.com.au. Information is also available on Northcott’s PDSP website.

The PDSP Guidelines were recently updated to clearly set out the requirements relating to the use of the UDL. All community preschools were notified of the update to the guidelines on 12 February 2015.

Operational Support Program update

The Operational Support Program has been developed to assist eligible community preschools and mobile services to adjust to the Preschool Funding Model and develop business and other capabilities necessary to operate as a sustainable service over the longer term.

There are two stages to the program, the first involving the provision of general business advice to eligible services. Under this stage, eligible Small Biz Connect advisors provide up to four free face-to-face sessions with participating services, providing assistance with financial planning, cash flow management, marketing and strategic planning.

Under the second stage, eligible services will have access to early childhood-specific advice and mentoring support, delivered by sector specialists.

Since the program started in September 2014, 80% of eligible services have agreed to participate, and 40% of eligible services have commenced working with Small Biz Connect.

Small Biz Connect is funded by the NSW Government and is a quality, personalised and highly subsidised business advisory program. Any small business can access the program through a network of over 60 local business advisors based across NSW. Even if you are not part of Stage 1 of the Operational Support Program, Small Biz Connect can provide you with business advisory services (no charge for the first consultation).

More information is available from the NSW Small Business Commissioner’s website or by phoning 1300 134 359.

Mandatory reporting and child protection training reminders

The start of the year is a good time to ensure that all staff members in your service are fully aware of their responsibilities as mandatory reporters. If a staff member working in any type of service has reason to believe that a child is at risk of significant harm, this must be reported to the Child Protection Helpline on 133 627 as soon as practicable. The Keep Them Safe website provides information about what constitutes significant harm.

Providers also have a legal requirement to ensure that the nominated supervisor of a service and any certified supervisor in day to day charge of a service has successfully completed a course in child protection that has been approved by NSW DEC.

The following links can help you understand these requirements:

- Keep them safe
- Child protection courses approved by DEC
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/ecce
- phoning us on 1800 664 231 (general) or 1300 755 426 (funding)
- emailing us on ececd@det.nsw.edu.au (general), ecec.funding@det.nsw.edu.au (funding) or ecextra@det.nsw.edu.au (EC Extra editor)

New preschool places in Dubbo

Dubbo West Preschool has been able to increase its number of preschool places by a third (from 66 to 88) as a result of a $248,000 injection of funds delivered under the NSW Government’s Community Preschool Capital Works Grants Program.

Director of Dubbo West Preschool, Cathryn Albert said that “the ‘Kookaburra’ room has been a valuable addition to the preschool and has allowed the preschool to target its waiting list”.

The Deputy Premier and Member for Dubbo, Troy Grant, attended the official opening of the new room on 2 February and stated that “early childhood education through preschools is a crucial foundation to lifelong education and offers children a smoother transition into school”.

Family day care legislative changes

In December 2014, the Commonwealth government introduced changes to its Family Assistance legislation which will have an impact on family day care services. The changes are summarised in a fact sheet. In brief, services must now:

- comply with any conditions on their approval
- provide the Service Provider Personnel ID for the educator that provided sessions of care, when submitting session reports through the Child Care Management System
- from 3 June 2015, only provide care in the state or territory where service approval has been granted.

On 3 February, the Commonwealth minister announced that a further amendment, that would have prevented family day care educators from using family day care for their own children in some circumstances, would not be going ahead at this time.

Please note that Family Assistance legislation and the Child Care Benefit are now administered by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services.

Anyone who is aware of Child Care Benefit practices that could be incorrect, illegal or non-compliant should contact the Commonwealth department on 1800 664 231 or send an email to tipoffline@education.gov.au

Helping family day care services understand the Law and Regulation

Children’s Services Central, one of the NSW Professional Support Coordinators funded by the Commonwealth Government, is delivering training to help family day care services understand their essential obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

The training is being delivered in the form of a webinar from 2-4pm on 2 March 2015 and again on 22 May. For more details and to make a booking, visit Children’s Services Central.

You can buy or download your own copies of the Law and Regulation from the ACECQA website.

Two new Excellent-rated services in northern NSW

Congratulations to Jumbunna Community Preschool in Casino and UnitingCare Jack and Jill Preschool in Grafton. Both services recently received Excellent ratings from the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority. Jumbunna is a NSW DEC-funded preschool. More information is contained in the following links:

- Excellent rating awarded to Jumbunna Community Preschool on its outstanding achievement and commitment to delivering excellent practice
- UnitingCare Jack and Jill recognised for its exceptional programs, practices and partnerships.

The two preschools are the fifth and sixth early childhood education and care services in NSW to achieve this rating. They join Amarina Early Learning Centre in Airds, Warrawee Care Centre (an OSHC service), Kindamindi Preschool in Inverell, and Albury Preschool.

Premier’s Teacher Scholarships

Applications are now invited for 2015 Premier’s Teacher Scholarships to undertake a five week study tour in one of a number of scholarship categories.

Five of these scholarships are open to preschool teachers. More information is available on the DEC website.