EXTENSION OF THE OPERATIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR COMMUNITY PRESCHOOLS

Starting in mid-2016, the Operational Support Program will be available to all community preschools. The mentoring support program assists preschools better understand and align with the Preschool Funding Model, enabling sustainability over the longer term.

Support focuses on integrating educational objectives with effective business practice and includes:

- maximising funding under the Preschool Funding Model and implementing a sustainable fee structure
- maximising target cohort enrolments
- demographic modelling to assist preschool planning
- developing staff capacity and efficient staffing arrangements and
- strategies to increase the number of 4 and 5 year old children enrolled in quality preschool programs for 600 hours per year

The three month support program will be available for preschools that have not previously participated in the program.

Preschools that have previously participated in the Operational Support Program will be able to access a two month follow up program.

To date 177 community preschools have participated or are participating in the program. It has been well received and feedback includes:

"The program is helping us focus on our ECE service as a business. It is improving our budgeting, financial management and business planning processes. This will clearly assist our long term viability."

"Overall, the vision for us to remain viable is now clear and seems to be achievable with plans in place."

If you would like more information or register interest in participating in the program please contact the Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate on T: 1300 755 426 or email: ecec.operationalsupport@det.nsw.edu.au.

CHILD SAFE ORGANISATIONS

The Office of the Children’s Guardian runs workshops and seminars for managers, directors and human resources staff in organisations that work with children and young people.

Participants learn about creating a child safe culture, situational prevention and effective risk management, obligations under the Working with Children Check and complaints management techniques.

The seminars and workshops are free, but registration is essential. You can find out more information and register for a workshop here.

$24 MILLION FOR PRESCHOOL EDUCATION IN LONG DAY CARE CENTRES

The Minister for Early Childhood Education, the Hon Leslie Williams MP, has announced that $24 million will be made available to long day care services to support the delivery of preschool programs for four and five-year-old children in their year before school.

Four or five-year-olds will be eligible for a minimum payment of $300 per child, rising to a payment of $450 for children enrolled for 600 hours per year. Four or five year olds from Aboriginal backgrounds or enrolled in services in disadvantaged areas will be eligible for a minimum payment of $450 per child, increasing to $675 for those enrolled for 600 hours.

Services will be able to use the funding for resources, improving the preschool program and developing staff, including upgrading qualifications.

To be eligible, services must:

- be regulated under the National Quality Framework
- deliver a preschool program for children in the year prior to school based on the Early Years Learning Framework
- undertake to fully complete the Preschool Indicator on the Commonwealth Child Care Management System (CCMS) during the national collection window in August each year

Eligible services must apply for the payment by 15 April 2016. Eligible services will be contacted directly with application details.
INAPPROPRIATE CONTACT BETWEEN CHILDREN

It is the responsibility of all early education and care services to provide a safe environment for children. When inappropriate contact is witnessed between children, services must be prepared and ready to respond.

These incidents can provide a context for talking with children about appropriate behaviours and respecting the privacy of others. Children can be taught about boundaries and that everyone has the right to privacy at certain times, such as when they are in the bathroom.

All staff within the services must be aware of what is healthy and appropriate contact between children and how to respond to problematic behavior and report it where necessary. This awareness needs to be provided through policies and procedures, ongoing training and reminders to all staff.

A useful resource to identifying, understanding and responding to sexual behaviours in children and young people has been produced by Family Planning Queensland. A copy can be accessed here.

NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME (NDIS)

The NDIS provides funding for people with disability from birth to 64 years to increase their independence and support their participation in the community.

For children with disability, funding will be provided directly to families to ensure they can choose and control what supports are provided, how they are provided, where they are provided and when they are provided. It’s all about choice and control.

The NDIS does not replace educational programs funded by the NSW Department of Education such as the Preschool Disability Support Program (PDSP) or the Intervention Support Program (ISP). Funding from these two programs will complement the NDIS supports.

NDIS funding is available for therapeutic supports, mobility equipment, transport costs to participate in the community and aids or equipment assessment. Check the NDIS website for more examples. It does not fund educational programs.

The NDIS does replace supports previously provided by NSW Ageing, Disability and Home Care, the Australian Government’s Helping Children with Autism and Better Start funding packages.

In NSW, the NDIS is being trialled in the Hunter as well as being implemented in the Nepean Blue Mountains area.


NSW GOVERNMENT $20 MILLION BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE FUND – APPLY FOR GRANTS IN 2016

The Before and After School Care Fund is providing $20 million to expand existing Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services and establish new ones. As approved schools and councils interested in increasing OSHC in their area may wish to consider applying for a one off grant of up to $30,000 this year.

As approved OSHC providers, schools and councils can apply for these grants to create additional OSHC places within school grounds, or at any alternative location that meets the regulations. They can also work with their communities to arrange for other existing approved OSHC providers to apply.

The Department is accepting applications throughout 2016, by the following closing dates:

- Term 1: 6 April 2016
- Term 2: 29 June 2016
- Term 3: 21 September 2016
- Term 4: 30 November 2016

Staff from the Department, Catholic Education Commission NSW and The Association of Independent Schools of NSW will be members of the panels assessing applications. For more information visit the website.

2016 RECONCILIATION SYMPOSIUM

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) will be hosting its 2016 Reconciliation Symposium at Sydney Showgrounds, Sydney Olympic Park on 13–14 May 2016. ECA says this national event will explore reconciliation within the early childhood sector and provide an authentic experience for educators to discuss reconciliation issues and create new ideas and actions that will make a difference within their educational settings and communities. The Department of Education is offering to sponsor up to six regional participants from the early childhood sector and will pay the participants’ fees and travel costs. If you are interested in applying for sponsorship to attend please email an expression of interest to ecec.funding@dec.nsw.edu.au by 28 April 2016. For further information please contact Lisa Tang on 9244 5645.

DOES YOUR SERVICE MUNCH & MOVE?

The Munch & Move program offers early childhood services a great opportunity to encourage children’s healthy eating and physical activity using a range of fun, play-based learning experiences. The Munch & Move program is an ideal way of addressing the nutrition and physical activity aspects of the National Quality Framework.

Training is available for long day care, preschool and family day care educators and is supported by a range of resources and case studies suited to all service models.

For more information, visit the Healthy Kids website.

ACCREDITATION 2016 - PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION FOR NSW EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS

In February, the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) sent information packs to all NSW early childhood education and care services. The packs contain information for early childhood teachers about what the BOSTES is, what the accreditation requirements are, the registration process and the time frame for transition. Further information is available on the Teacher Accreditation website under the ‘accreditation for NSW early childhood teachers’ link: http://www.nswteachers.nsw.edu.au/