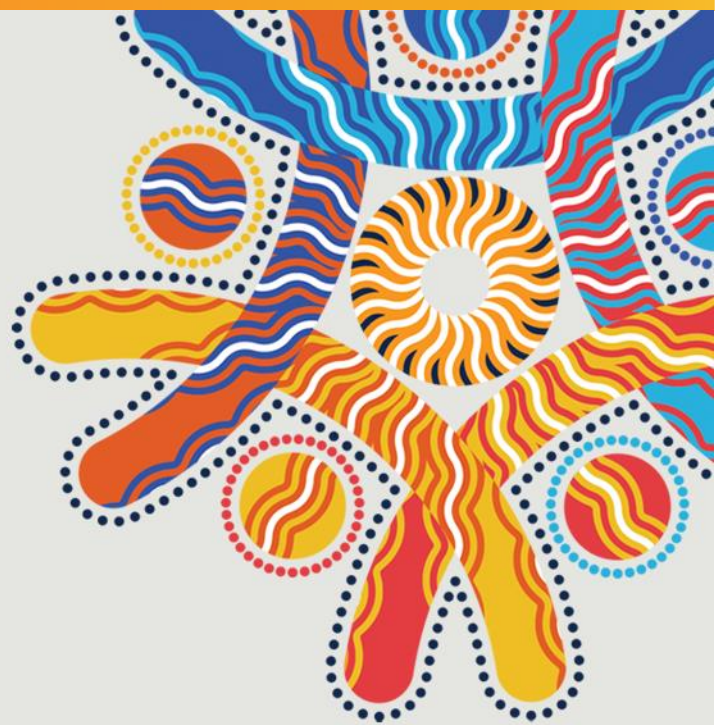


NT Preschool Review – Discussion Paper

Northern Territory Department of Education

April 2023





Nous Group acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging, who maintain their culture, country and spiritual connection to the land, sea and community.

This artwork was developed by Marcus Lee Design to reflect Nous Group's Reconciliation Action Plan and our aspirations for respectful and productive engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

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This Discussion Paper

The Northern Territory (NT) Department of Education is partnering with Nous and Victoria University to review preschool as part of the broader early childhood system in the NT. The NT Preschool Review (the Review) started in October 2022 and is scheduled to deliver its final report to the NT Government in June 2023. The Review is intended to shape the future of preschool in the NT.

The Review has already heard from many families, service providers, staff, experts and community organisations from across the NT. The Review team has visited more than 20 preschool sites across every region of the Territory including urban, remote and very remote settings. These consultations were designed to understand how preschool currently operates and to hear people's aspirations for the future. We have reviewed the available literature and data about preschool in the NT and drawn on evidence, experience and lessons from across Australia and internationally.

We acknowledge and thank the many people that have contributed their time and insights to the Review process so far.

This Discussion Paper summarises what we have heard and learned from this work to date, and provides an overview of:

- **Why are we reviewing preschool?** The context and rationale for the review.
- **How does preschool currently operate in the NT?** A summary of available evidence about the nature, structure, and outcomes of preschool in the NT, including key strengths and challenges.
- **A vision for preschool in the NT.** A draft vision for preschool and the key issues being considered by the Review.
- **How can you contribute to the Review?** A guide to how you can provide your input to the Review.

A range of consultation questions are highlighted throughout the Discussion Paper. The Review would like to hear your insights on any or all of these questions.

The Review invites parents, carers, early childhood educators and staff, service providers, early learning experts, schools, community members, community organisations and others to share their voice on this important topic. Insights from this stage of consultation will feed inform the Review report to be delivered to the NT Government later in 2023.

For more information visit haveyoursay.nt.gov.au

1 Why are we reviewing preschool?



1.1 Preschool matters and is a fundamental part of the broader early childhood system

The benefits of the early childhood system in boosting a child's development in the crucial first five years of life are well known and recognised.¹ During this time, children build the foundations for learning by finding new ways to play and interact with others. Research shows that children who participate in quality early learning programs are more likely to arrive at school equipped with the social, cognitive and emotional skills that they need to help them continue learning. These benefits have life-long impacts.²

Preschool is a play-based learning program delivered by a qualified teacher and aimed at children in the year or two before they start full time schooling. All early childhood services, including preschool, are regularly assessed against the same National Quality Standard (NQS). The evidence shows that preschool can:

- enrich child identity and belonging;³
- develop important habits around school and education and support a smooth transition to school;⁴
- provide an access point for other services including health and family supports;⁵
- enhance family capacity to support child development in the home environment;⁶ and
- enable families to realise their preferences around work and raising children, creating greater opportunities to work, especially for women.⁷

We also know that education and care for children under five are not separate things. Early childhood care services such as long day care and out of school hours care provide important educational input by enabling children to learn through play and interaction. Preschool services are grounded in safe and caring environments and can enable parents, especially women, to participate in the workforce.

QUESTION: How can preschool contribute to a contemporary early childhood system in the NT? How does this differ from care and/or schooling?

1.2 The early childhood system is in the spotlight nationally

National Cabinet has asked education and early years ministers to develop a national vision for the early childhood system.⁸ This will outline how Australian governments and the sector will work together to deliver better outcomes for young children, parents and the economy. This builds on:

¹ Early Education, 'Child Development', *Birth to 5 Matters* (2022) < <https://birthto5matters.org.uk/child-development> >.

² NSW Department of Education. 2022. *Benefits of Early Childhood Education*. Available from: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/information-for-parents-and-carers/every-child-benefits>

³ Department of Education and Training, *Belonging, Being & Becoming - The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*, Commonwealth (2009).

⁴ Centre for Policy Development, *Starting Better: A Guarantee for Young Children and Families* (2021).

⁵ Sarah Pilcher, Kate Noble & Peter Hurley, *Stepping Up: Securing the future of quality preschool in Australia*, Mitchell Institute for Education and Health Policy, Victoria University (2021).

⁶ Centre for Policy Development, *Starting Better: A Guarantee for Young Children and Families* (2021).

⁷ Ibid.

- The national Preschool Reform Funding Agreement (PRFA), under which all states and territories provide 600 hours per year of preschool services to all children in their year before school, and commit to improving preschool enrolment, attendance and outcomes;
- The Australian Government’s development of a national Early Years Strategy⁹
- The Productivity Commission’s current inquiry into the early childhood services sector;¹⁰ and
- The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood Strategy, developed in partnership between the National Indigenous Australians Agency and SNAICC – National Voice for our Children.¹¹

Most states and territories are expanding access to preschool, to 30 hours for children in their year before fulltime school (New South Wales, Victoria) and to three-year-olds (to all children in New South Wales and Victoria, and targeted groups of children in Queensland, Australia Capital Territory, South Australia, Northern Territory and Western Australia). South Australia has also established a Royal Commission into early childhood services.¹²

Internationally, countries such as Norway, Ireland, New Zealand, United States of America, and France provide, or have pledged, universal access to preschool from the age of three.

The timing is right to reimagine preschool in the NT

Through *Kids Safe, Family Together, Community Strong: 10-Year Generational Strategy for Children and Families in the Northern Territory*,¹³ the NT and Australian Governments, along with the community sector, have committed to better outcomes for children, young people and families. The Education NT Strategy 2021-25, commits the Department of Education to build the foundations for learning through three key strategic actions:

- Design and implement a contemporary early childhood system for Territory families, to provide equitable access to quality services.
- Extend access to quality early learning to ensure all children can access two years of quality early learning in the years before school, following the Early Years Learning Framework and delivered by qualified staff in partnership with families.
- Strengthen transitions to school through early identification of children with additional needs, and collaboration with other NT Government agencies, to provide timely wrap around support.

The Review is exploring how changes to the way preschool works can better respond to early learning needs of children and families across the NT and can contribute to a contemporary early childhood services system.

⁸ Department of Education, *National vision for early childhood education and care*, Commonwealth of Australia (2023). Available at: <https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-package/strategy-and-evaluation/national-vision-early-childhood-education-and-care>

⁹ Department of Social Services, ‘Early Years Strategy’, *Families and Children*, Commonwealth of Australia (2023).

¹⁰ Productivity Commission, ‘Current Enquiries’ *Early Childhood Education and Care*, Commonwealth of Australia (2023). Available at: <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/childhood#issues>

¹¹ National Indigenous Australians Agency, *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood Strategy (2021)*. Available at: <https://www.niaa.gov.au/resource-centre/indigenous-affairs/national-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-early-childhood-strategy>

¹² *Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education & Care*, South Australia (2023). Available at: <https://www.royalcommissionecec.sa.gov.au/>

¹³ Commonwealth of Australia (Department of Social Services and National Indigenous Australians Agency), Northern Territory Government (Reform Management Office and Department of Chief Minister and Cabinet), Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory, North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency and Northern Territory Council of Social Service, *Kids Safe, Family Together, Community Strong: 10-Year Generational Strategy for Children and Families in the Northern Territory* (2023)

2 How does preschool currently operate in the NT?



2.1 Preschool in the NT is predominantly delivered through government schools

In the NT, preschool provides education and care for children in their year or two before school and has done so since the 1950s. All children can attend preschool at the age of four, and children in very remote areas can attend at the age of three.¹⁴ There is also a trial of three-year-old preschool underway in targeted locations.¹⁵ The NT currently has almost 7,000 children aged three and four.



Most NT children are enrolled in preschool at a government school. Of the 2,884 four-year-olds enrolled in preschool:

- 80 per cent are enrolled at one of 141 preschools at a government school.¹⁶ Of these, 30 per cent are also enrolled in a non-government preschool program.
- 20 per cent are enrolled solely at a preschool program within a long day care setting or non-government schools. This includes Catholic and Independent Early Learning Centres.

Many settings outside formal preschool and early childhood services across the Territory also provide important learning for children, such as cultural ceremonies, exploring and playing on Country and through learning with families and kinship systems.

Through recent stakeholder consultation, it is clear that the NT's emphasis on preschool delivery through government schools is deeply ingrained (in community attitudes, funding models and delivery models). Nationally, there is a clear divide in the structure of preschool settings across states and territories:

- In the NT, Western Australia, South Australia, and Tasmania and the ACT, government schools are the dominant setting.
- In New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, long day care and stand-alone non-government preschools (or "kindergartens") are the dominant settings.¹⁷

2.2 There are important strengths to build on

To date, the Review has identified many strengths of preschool in the NT:

¹⁴ NT Government, 'Age your child goes to child care and preschool', *Early childhood* (2016).

¹⁵ Freya Lucas, Three-year-old preschool trial kicking goals in the Northern Territory', *The Sector* (2022). Available at: <https://thesector.com.au/2022/03/29/three-year-old-preschool-trial-kicking-goals-in-the-northern-territory/>

¹⁶ Four of these services are funded by the Department of Education but provided through non-government schools in remote areas.

¹⁷ Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services 2022*, Table 3A.17, Commonwealth of Australia (2022).

- A *passionate, dedicated and skilled preschool workforce* across the NT.
- A *range of innovations in preschool delivery models* to respond to local barriers to engagement, including flexible hours, transport arrangements, and outreach services that engage with families and children where they live to increase understanding of preschool and its value.
- Examples of *adaptation of preschool to reflect Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing*, in both remote communities and urban schools with a high proportion of Aboriginal students. In some cases, this includes bi-lingual teaching and a genuine two-way learning approach, involving the local community.
- *High quality delivery supported by the National Quality Framework (NQF)*. The NQF provides demanding but achievable standards that underpin quality and community confidence. In the NT, there are 223 early childhood services, of which 213 have a quality rating and 175 are meeting or exceeding the National Quality Standard.¹⁸

The Review has also identified strengths of the broader NT early childhood system:

- *Complementary programs that support outcomes* by providing accessible and culturally safe introduction to formal learning or other services. These include Families as First Teachers (FaFT), Indy Kindy, and playgroups. Some of these involve access to allied health services that support early identification and intervention of additional supports that may be required.
- Examples of *place-based integration of early childhood services*. In a range of communities, specific programs are funded to integrate early years services (e.g. health, NDIS and family support services) around local community needs. These include Connected Beginnings and Child and Family Centres. These programs make it easier for families to access and navigate the services. In some cases, educational leaders and the local community achieve this without additional program funding.

The Review will seek to understand and build on these strengths.

QUESTION: What are the biggest strengths of preschool in the NT?

2.3 The Review has also identified significant challenges

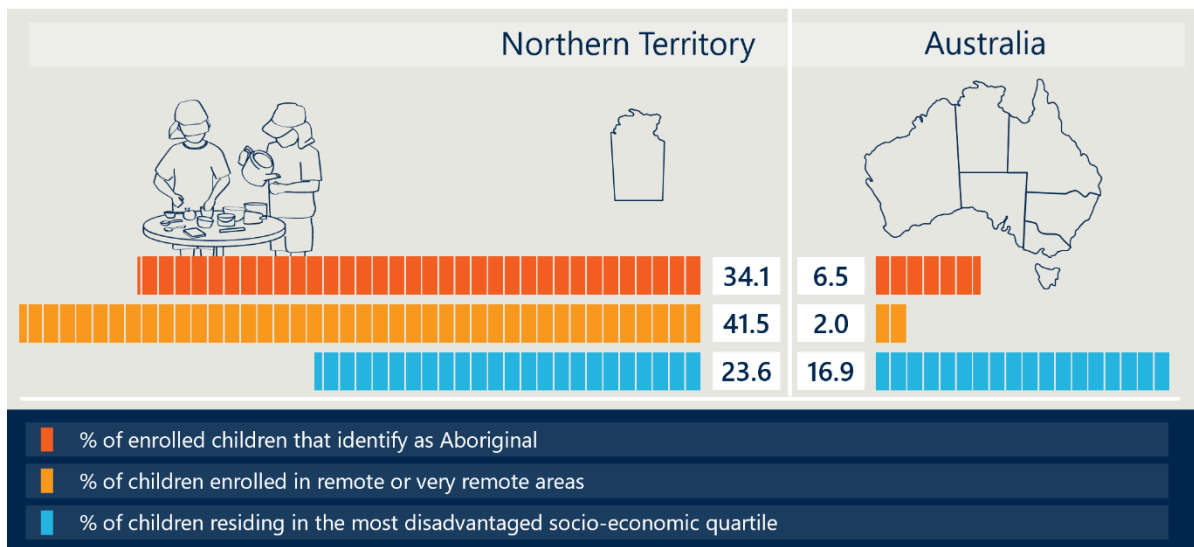
Through analysis and consultation, the Review has identified the following major challenges in the way that preschool currently works in the NT.

Participation in preschool is low for Aboriginal children, children experiencing disadvantage and children in remote locations

The NT has a richly diverse population, with high proportions of Aboriginal children, children with English as an additional language, children living in remote locations and families that are transient across different locations. As shown below, this is reflected in preschool enrolments.¹⁹

¹⁸ Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, *NQF Quarterly Snapshot Q4 2022*. Available at https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-02/NQF_Snapshot_Q4_2022.pdf.

¹⁹ "Enrolment", "attendance" and "attendance 600 hours per year" are based on the definitions used by the ABS in its Preschool Education Statistics. See <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/preschool-education/latest-release>

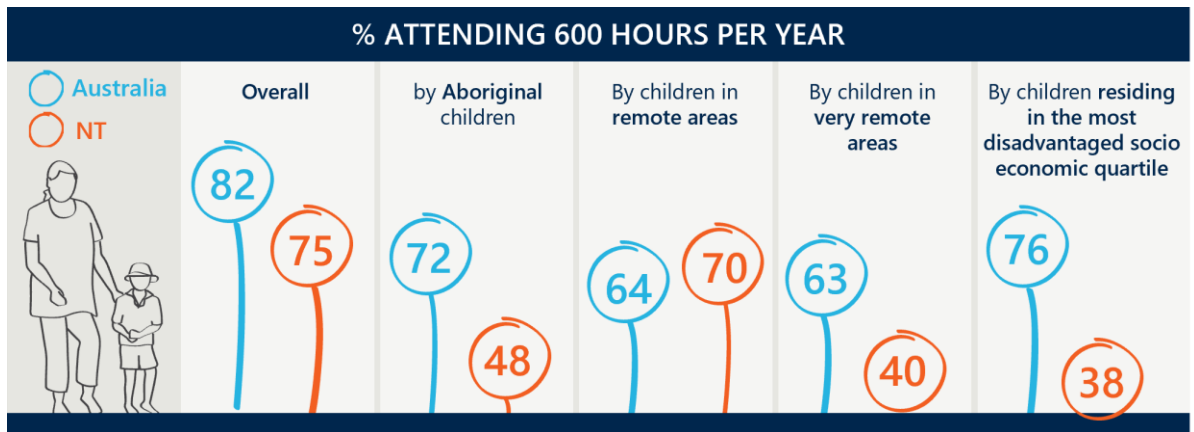


- Attendance rates for these priority groups are relatively low. The ABS uses two definitions of attendance:
- "Attendance" means that a child attended preschool at least one hour during the four-week reference period.
 - "600 hours attendance" means that a child attended preschool for at least the pro rata equivalent of 600 hours per year in the four-week reference period (i.e. is attending consistent with the 600 hours commitment in the PRFA).

In both versions of attendance, the data highlights lower attendance in the NT than the national average especially for Aboriginal children and children residing in the most disadvantaged socio-economic quartile.

By the first definition, attendance, in the NT (87 percent overall) is lower than the national average of 96 percent, and attendance for Aboriginal children (70 percent) and children in the most disadvantaged quintile (64 percent) are also lower in the NT than nationally.

By the second definition for attendance of children for the full 600 hours, these disparities are more pronounced, as shown below.²⁰

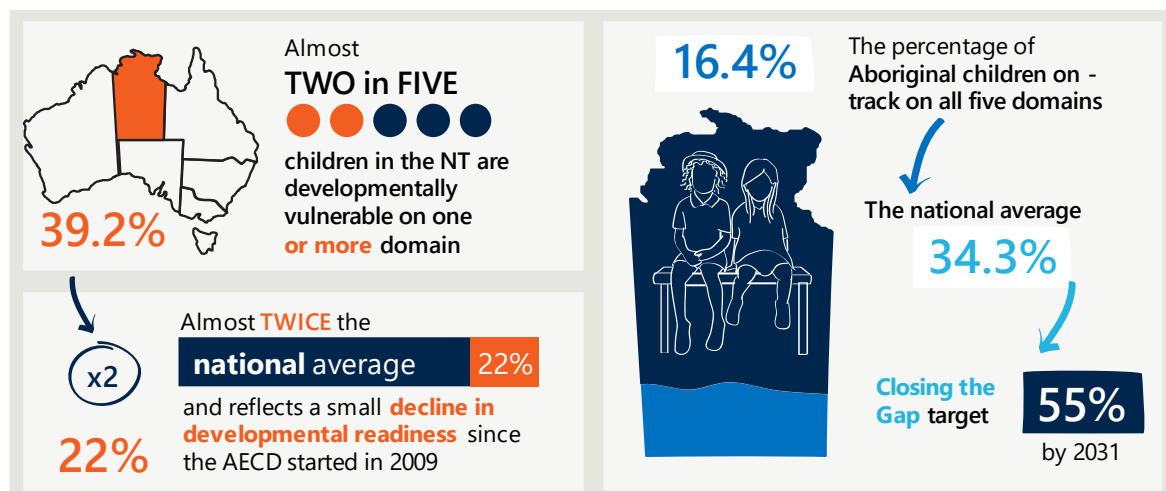


Outcomes for NT children in their first year of school are behind national averages

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) is a national survey held every three years for children in their first year of school across five domains: physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional

²⁰ It is noted that the reference period during which attendance is recorded occurs during the dry season in the NT. In remote communities, this is the time of the lowest attendance due to cultural and other commitments.

maturity, language and cognitive skills, communication skills and general knowledge. Key results from the 2021 AEDC for the NT are shown below.²¹



This means that more needs to be done across early years services to support these children and their families. Preschool in the NT must be designed to respond to the developmental vulnerabilities of many NT children.

Fixed hours can create challenges

Current legislative and policy settings provide for 15 hours per week (600 hours per year) of preschool, on a non-compulsory basis. Preschool providers structure these hours in many different ways, generally limited to school hours and school terms. Some provide fixed hours for a limited number of days per week. Other provide more flexibility, particularly to priority groups.

Often these hours are split across shorter days (known as “sessional” preschool) and do not provide the flexibility to balance work and family commitments. We have heard that this can result in a disjointed learning experience for children, families and providers. Many children attend both a care focussed setting (e.g. long day care, out of school hours care) and a government school-based preschool on the same day, requiring transport by providers or parents between settings. Some providers co-locate preschool and long day care services on the same site, removing the need for transport.

The current funding model creates fragmentation

Funding for preschool delivery in the NT comes through three main channels:

- **Government-school based preschool** is funded through the NT Department of Education’s School Resourcing Model;
- **Preschool in long day care services and Early Learning Centres at non-government schools** is funded through a combination of parent fees that are subsidised through the Child Care Subsidy and NT Government contributions; and
- **Targeted programs** (e.g. FAFT, Connected Beginnings, Child and Family Centres, Indy Kindy) are funded through the Australian and NT Governments and a number of philanthropic funders.

Australian Government funding through the Preschool Reform Funding Agreement is a minor contributor to preschool funding, accounting for less than 10 per cent of total funding.

The way that preschool in the NT is funded creates several challenges:

- **Funding arrangements for early childhood services are complex, making them hard for providers and parents to navigate and creating incentives for a fragmented system.** Australia’s unique federal

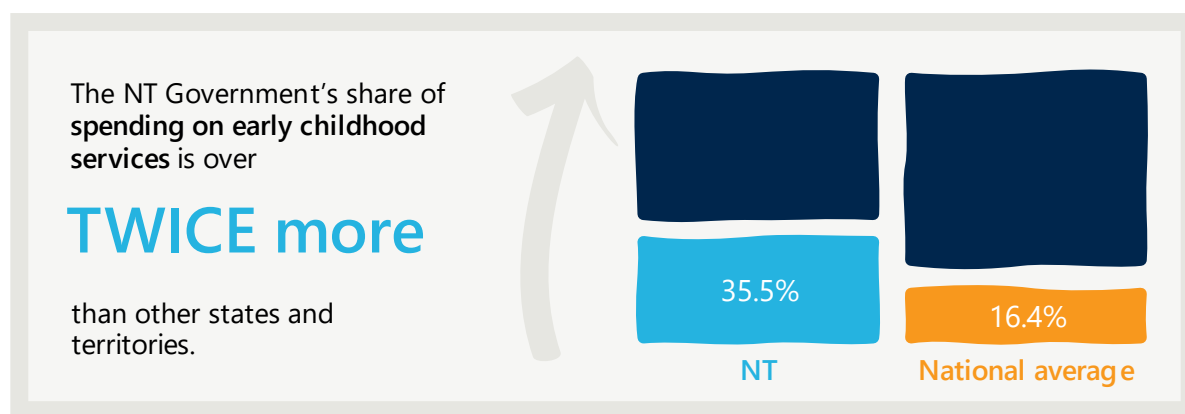
²¹Australian Early Development Census National Report 2021: Early Childhood Development in Australia, Commonwealth of Australia (2022).

system splits funding for early childhood care (largely funded by the Australian Government) and early childhood education (largely preschool funded by States and Territories). This makes it harder to provide integrated early childhood services. Short-term grant funding creates uncertainty for schools and other service providers and makes workforces challenges harder to manage.

- Funding arrangements **do not provide transparency or equity across settings**. Different funding channels for government school-based preschool and in non-government services preschool make it hard to create and monitor equity. Tracking the use of preschool funding is not currently possible in both government school-based preschool and other services.

The NT Government bears more of the funding burden for early childhood services than other States and Territories

The overall funding model for early childhood services creates a disproportionate burden on the NT Government, which provides 35.5 per cent of total government funding for early childhood services, compared to an average of 16.4 per cent for other States and Territories as shown below.



Higher spending in the NT is a result of a greater emphasis on government school-based preschooling, lower availability of alternate early childhood services and contextual factors such as the cost to deliver services in areas of lower population density in regional and remote NT.

Preschool educators and staff are key, but are in short supply

The Review has heard that workforce constraints are a significant challenge for preschool providers. This includes both the general challenge of attracting and retaining sufficient qualified staff, and the more specific challenges of employing local Aboriginal staff. Some providers are innovating in workforce models, such as employing family liaison officers where possible and increasing local Aboriginal employment by creating hybrid roles. Research also indicates that the NT has the lowest rate of long-term retained staff across all states and territories with only 20.3 per cent of the workforce holding 10 or more years of early childhood services experience.²²

QUESTION: What are the biggest barriers for children and families to participate in preschool in the NT?

QUESTION: What are the biggest challenges for preschool delivery?

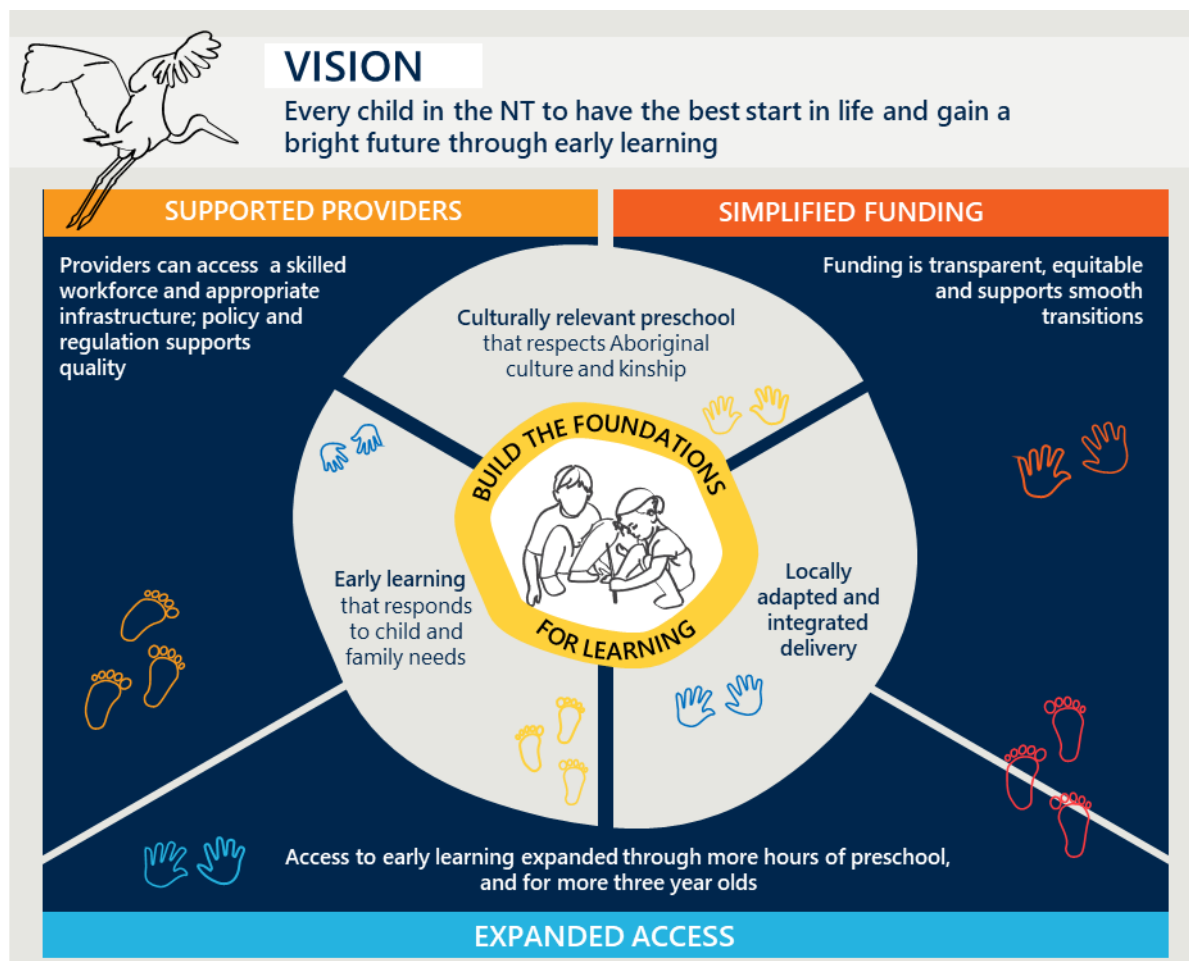
²² Department of Education, 2021 *Early Childhood Education and Care National Workforce Census*, Australian Government (2021).

3 A future vision for preschool in the NT



The Review has considered how to build on these strengths and address these challenges. The overall vision is: “every child in the NT to have the best start in life and gain a bright future through early learning”, with preschool operating as the core of a diverse but integrated early childhood system.

QUESTION: What is your vision for the future of preschool in the NT?



To bring this vision to life, the Review will design a future approach to preschool that delivers the following outcomes:

- **Build the foundations for learning** through effective preschool delivery models that are culturally relevant, respond to child and family needs, are locally adapted and support integration of early years services;
- **Expand access** to early learning through preschool;
- **Simplify funding** so that the Northern Territory and Australia governments’ funding can more effectively and efficiently support service delivery; and
- **Support providers** to deliver high quality and inclusive preschool services, including through workforce and infrastructure development, policy and regulation.

These are explored in turn below.

3.1 Build the foundations for learning through effective preschool delivery

Through research and consultation to date, the Review has identified characteristics of effective preschool delivery in the NT. These are summarised below.

Culturally relevant preschool that respects Aboriginal culture and kinship

Aboriginal children represent 41 per cent of three-and-four-year-old Territorians. To be effective for the Territory as a whole, future delivery models must be culturally relevant, empowering Aboriginal children to embrace their identity and culture and ensuring that Aboriginal families feel supported to consistently access quality, culturally inclusive services. All children benefit from understanding Aboriginal ways of being, knowing and doing.

This could involve:

- **Targeted approaches that engage with families and children where they live and provide a pathway to preschool attendance.**
- **Preschool delivery that reflects language, mobility and cultural obligations**, including by recognising the educational and developmental value of cultural learning.
- **Deeply embedded cultural connection and local decision making**, recognising that community trust is key to a successful preschool service.
- **Support career pathways for local Aboriginal staff**, recognising the importance of children seeing themselves, their identities and cultures reflected in their environment.

QUESTION: How could preschool be improved to better meet the needs of children, families and communities?

QUESTION: How can preschool be delivered in culturally relevant ways?

Early learning that responds to child and family needs

Preschool is a crucial part of the broader early childhood services system. The Review has heard that preschool should be designed to be more responsive to the needs of children and families. This could take many forms:

- Flexibility of hours so that parents can choose when and where their child attends preschool;
- Schools expanding the availability of other early childhood services provided on-site (e.g. Out of School Hours Care or Long Day Care) so that children can move between settings without disruption or requiring transport;
- Other early childhood services providers (e.g. Early Years Centres, Long Day Care) expanding the availability of preschool services offered as an integrated early childhood services package; and/or
- “One-stop-shop” early childhood hubs (e.g. Child and Family Centres) that co-locate a range of early childhood services and broader early years services (e.g. health, parenting, NDIS).

In most places, a diversity of these approaches will be required to provide choice for families.

QUESTION: What are your views on the various settings for preschool delivery such as in Long Day Care centres or in school settings?

Locally adapted and integrated delivery

It is clear that there is no one-size-fits-all when it comes to preschool delivery. The different needs of families and children and the different contexts across the NT mean that the future preschool system must accommodate a diversity of delivery models. For example, preschool delivery in very remote locations is likely to look different to delivery in urban settings. Key features of future service models include:

- **Effective and sustainable staffing models with a focus on leveraging and building local capacity:** Attracting an early learning workforce is a challenge across all jurisdictions. Building the local and Aboriginal workforce will be crucial.
- **Integration through brokerage and navigation services.** This could take various forms, such as one-stop-shop early childhood hubs, collective impact approaches like Connected Beginnings, and/or partnership and collaboration between preschool and early years providers

QUESTION: How can preschool be more locally responsive and integrated with other services?

3.2 Expand access to early learning through preschool

Most Australian States are expanding funded access to preschool to three-year-olds and four-year-olds. Evidence shows that children attending an additional year of preschool (three-year-old) have an average eight-month developmental advantage compared to three-months for students attending one year. The extra support leads to stronger development in language, pre-reading, early number concepts, independence, concentration, and sociability outcomes.²³ Benefits of preschool for three-year-olds depend on the high quality of the service, with low or medium quality programs not achieving any short or long-term learning impacts for the child.

Significant gains are also being achieved with 30-hours preschool, with children experiencing higher levels of disadvantage benefitting most from an increased access to preschool. However, long hours in low-quality learning environments without positive and consistent relationships between child and educator can be highly detrimental for children's behavioural, social and emotional outcomes.²⁴

In thinking about increased access to preschool, the additional workforce and infrastructure requirements will be considered, as well as potential impacts on existing services.

QUESTION: What is the right age for children to start preschool? How many hours each week do you think should be available?

QUESTION: Do parents want to attend preschool with their child? If yes, under what circumstances are they more likely to want to attend?

3.3 Simplify funding

The future vision for service models and expanded access requires a funding model that:

- Incentivises strong connections between preschool and other early childhood services;

²³ Taggart, B. et. al., *How Pre-School influences children and young people's attainment and developmental outcomes over time, Primary and Secondary Education Project*, Department for Education, London (2015).

²⁴ Centre for Policy Development, *Starting Better: A Guarantee for Young Children and Families* (2021); Taggart, B. et. al., *How Pre-School influences children and young people's attainment and developmental outcomes over time, Primary and Secondary Education Project*, Department for Education, London (2015); Melhuish, E. *Longitudinal research and early years policy development in the UK, International Journal of Childcare and Education Policy* 10(3) (2016); Fox, S. & Geddes, M. *Preschool – Two years are better than one* Mitchell Institute (2016)

- Makes preschool and broader early childhood services affordable and simple to navigate for parents;
- Provides sufficient additional funding to support children with additional needs in preschool, and to proactively engage with developmentally vulnerable children;
- Ensures transparency, sustainability and accountability in the use of preschool funding;
- Reflects the different situations in remote and urban settings;
- Encourages investment by the Australian government and parents that are willing and able to make a financial contribution.

There are a range of potential funding models that could deliver on these principles. For example:

- In remote locations, this could involve pooling early childhood services funding into a single stream that is used to fund a service model co-designed with the local community.
- In urban locations, this could involve providing consistent levels of funding for preschool regardless of setting, with adjustments made to provide additional support for children with additional needs and developmentally vulnerable children.
- In all locations, better transparency around the use of funding for preschool, a consolidation of short-term grant programs.

QUESTION:

How can the approach to funding be simplified to better support delivery – for providers and families?

3.4 Support providers

The NT Department of Education is responsible for a range of supports and settings that guide how preschool works in the NT. The Australian Government Department of Education and the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority also play important roles.²⁵ To realise the future vision for preschool in the NT, changes to these supports and settings will need to be considered:

- **Regulation under the National Quality Framework** will continue to underpin quality including practice linked to the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and National Quality Standards (NQS).
- **Additional support for preschool providers** with a focus on assistance that supports providers in all locations (remote and very remote) to meet regulatory and compliance requirements and embed high quality pedagogy into practice.
- **Changes to key policy settings** could be considered, balancing the need for flexibility to respond to the needs of families and children with the need to attract and retain a qualified workforce.
- **Preschool infrastructure and facility management** particularly if access to preschool is expanded.
- **Strengthening workforce pathways:** The NT must respond to national drivers of early learning workforce shortages (pay and conditions, professional recognition, career development opportunities). Further, the NT’s remote settings create unique challenges for attracting and retaining qualified staff, and unique opportunities to develop the early years workforce in local communities.
- **Linking data systems can reinforce continuity across services and benefit children:** Evaluating the impact of changes to preschool provision requires improvements in data collection and sharing. Enhanced data systems can also enable better support to children and families who move between schools, centre-based care and communities.

QUESTION:

How might the system better support the delivery of quality and more equitable preschool services?

²⁵ In the language increasingly used in the early childhood services sector, these organisations are collectively “system stewards”.

4 How can you contribute to the Review?



The Review wants to hear from families, community organisations, service providers, peak bodies, educators, sector experts and other stakeholders to contribute to shaping the future of preschool in the NT.

This Discussion Paper highlights the strengths and challenges of the current preschool system, and sketches out a future vision for preschool in the NT. We would like to hear about:

- Your experiences with preschool and the broader early childhood system in the NT;
- Your vision for the future of preschool in the NT; and
- What you think are the key issues to address and the most important solutions.

How can you have your say?

The Discussion Paper includes questions to start the conversation about the future of preschool and the broader early childhood system in the NT. You can respond via a short questionnaire accessed via haveyoursay.nt.gov.au or submitted via email to policyreview@education.nt.gov.au.

The survey will be open until **Monday 29 May 2023**

The answers you provide will be kept anonymous and any data used will be de-identified.

Submissions will be considered, along with the extensive research, policy and consultation work done to date, with a final report due to the department in June 2023.

For more information, please email haveyoursay.nt.gov.au