**Early Childhood CoOrdination PILOT**

FUNDING INFORMATION PAPER

2024



**Acknowledgement of Country**

We pay our respects to Elders past and present who guide us with their knowledge, memories, traditions and culture, and help us to achieve the best educational, wellbeing and life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, children and students.

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| Snapshot of the Funding  |
| **Type of funding round** | Negotiated  |
| **Purpose of funding** | The purpose of the grant is to build an Early Childhood Coordination (ECC) approach for supporting children and families, living in vulnerable circumstances, to connect and engage with early childhood services, health and development services and community-based programs and their community. |
| **Funding category** | Family Support |
| **Location** | Caloundra SA3 (Meridan Plains - Little Mountain North SA2)[[1]](#footnote-1) |
| **Target Group** | Families with children up to school age |
| **Funding available** | Total funding $155,000 (GST exclusive) per SA 3 location is available from 1 September 2024 to 30 June 2026  |
| **Who can Apply?** | Not for profit including community-controlled organisations and/or local government entities |
| **Opening date** | 29 July 2024 |
| **Closing date** | 19 August 2024 |
| **Expected service delivery commencement date** | October 2024. |

# Purpose

The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring that every child in Queensland has the opportunity to develop to their full potential so they have a smooth transition to school and become successful lifelong learners.

The basic principles of neuroscience indicate that early preventative intervention will be more efficient and produce more favourable outcomes than remediation later in a child’s life. A balanced approach to emotional, social, cognitive, and language development will best prepare all children for success in school and later in the workplace and community. [[2]](#footnote-2) By adopting child-centred approaches and bringing together services, families and communities there is an opportunity to collectively create a better future for our next generation of Queenslanders.

The ECC initiative aims to improve pathways and connections for families experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage to access early childhood education, health, and development services.

Funding will be provided under the [Family Support Funding Category](https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/grants-and-funding/early-years-services-funding/category-resources) which aims to achieve the following outcomes:

* Increased parents’/carers’ awareness of and engagement with their child/children’s learning, wellbeing and development;
* Increased secure attachment between children and their parents/carers;
* Increased parental capabilities and confidence in parenting and parenting self-efficacy;
* Improvement in the rate of children developmentally on track;
* Increased community connection and families, parents and children accessing the right services at the right time, including playgroup and kindergarten; and
* Increased local access to a range of family and early years programs that reflect the current contexts of Queensland families and are available in a range of formats to support differing needs and requirements.

ECCs will take an active role in identifying vulnerable children and families not currently accessing early childhood services and programs, and connect them to maintain engagement and support successful transitions to school. This will be achieved through working with other services and agencies in a priority location to deliver appropriate service responses to support an increase in children developmentally on track prior to school.

These services and activities provided will aim to promote the child’s development, family and child wellbeing, and a sense of belonging as the child takes part in their community.

Additionally Early childhood coordination will provide practical assistance to support children and families experiencing vulnerability to:

* Increase access to health checks and immunisations;
* Increase participation in playgroups;
* Increase access and participation in EYPs;
* Increase attendance at Kindy;
* Increase number of families accessing supports;
* Receive early identification and diagnosis of learning and development needs;
* Strengthen networks and referrals between services and schools; and
* Successfully transition from home to early childhood settings, and on to school.

Priority locations have been selected based on a range of indicators of need, at a Statistical Area 3 level. Within these large geographic areas smaller communities have been identified for additional focus for service delivery at the SA2 level.

Links to other initiatives

The proposed services will link with a range of other Putting Queensland Kids First initiatives being delivered across Queensland including:

* **Introduction of extended hours Kindergarten in Discrete Communities**

Building on the positive impact of Free Kindy, especially for children experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage, we will provide access to a full time Kindergarten program in discrete communities.

* **Family Support Coordinators**

In-school Family Support Coordinators supporting vulnerable children transition to Prep and through to school, establishing good patterns of attendance, behaviour and engagement.

* **Enhanced Child and Family Health Services and developmental checks**

Child and Family Health Services will be expanded to provide children and their families with timely child health and developmental checks and enhanced supports that may include building parenting capacity, brief interventions, and advice to support on-track development.

* **Enhanced Child Development Services**

In priority locations, enhancing Child Development Services to connect families with allied health clinicians to support the diagnosis of complex child development concerns.

* **Improved children’s hearing screening and diagnosis**

Expanded Community Hearing Screening Services to increase access to screening and diagnostic audiology services for children.

* **Expanding Connecting2u to support every Queensland family**

The Connecting2u program provides weekly text messages with prompts and strategies to support healthy development, parental wellbeing, community connection and information about where to access more support, if needed.

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| Funding Details |

The Department of Education (the department) will provide grant funding to organisation/s in receipt of funding to deliver an Early Years’ Service in Queensland. Where the department does not yet have a funding relationship, organisations that are locally recognised, respected and culturally responsive in providing early childhood and health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities will be identified and invited to apply.

Funding will assist the organisation/s to leverage existing community connections and service relationships to support children and their families to engage with and participate in early childhood learning and development activities, and deliver in priority locations in a satellite or outreach approach, meeting families where they are living or already meeting together. Funding for Caloundra SA3 (Meridan Plains - Little Mountain North SA2) is available for the ECC initiative until 30 June 2026.

Total funding $155,000 (GST exclusive) is available from 1 September 2024 to 30 June 2026.

Grant funding may be expended on:

* Staffing, for example engagement of an ECC either through existing staffing structures, contracting of services or creation of a new position (i.e., either to enhance or expand an existing service connection function);
* Operational or programming costs including for expanding the local footprint of supported playgroups; and
* Organisational costs including management fees and business planning costs. Note, that this item is to be no more than 10% of the total funding amount.

Grant payments

Payments will be made in six monthly instalments, paid upon finalisation of the Service Agreement and completion of ongoing reporting requirements.

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| Service Model |

Early Childhood Coordination will leverage existing early years service provision to support positive and confident transitions and increasing engagement in early childhood learning and settings, particularly for children experiencing vulnerability and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

Early Childhood Coordination will include the following key activities:

* Identifying and reducing barriers (e.g., language/cultural barriers) for children and their families in engaging with and accessing early childhood and child and allied health services;
* Identifying and collaborating with early childhood and health services and other relevant programs in the local community, to support children and their families;
* Working with families to make active referrals to appropriate targeted or specialist services, as they transition to relevant early childhood and/or health services and programs;
* Working seamlessly with government agencies and service providers to facilitate pathways and access for families to the services they need;
* Supporting the transition to and engagement with formal high quality and culturally appropriate early childhood education and care services (such as kindergarten and supported playgroups), as appropriate; and
* Working with local schools and Family Support Coordinators to support positive transitions across early years learning programs and into school.

Community engagement and capacity building

* Collaboration with local community members, including Elders and organisations delivering to the target group, to ensure that the design and delivery of services and activities responds to the needs of the community and informs continuous improvement in service delivery.
* Engaging with local place-based planning initiatives to support kindy participation and other early childhood transitions for children and their families.

Induction, Training and Community of Practice

* An induction meeting will be conducted with all funded ECC services regarding implementation. In addition, EYSs already operating across the state will be encouraged to continue to provide coordination activities as part of their current funding. An ECC Collaborative Learning Community or state-wide network will be funded by the department, to support implementation including additional training and support made available to support the success of the ECC funded services.

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| Eligibility Requirements  |

Organisations are eligible to apply if they meet the following eligibility requirements:

1. Hold appropriate insurance (or provide plans to obtain insurance) including a minimum of $10 million in Public Liability Insurance and a minimum of $5 million Professional Indemnity Insurance and Workers’ Compensation Insurance; and
2. Are either a not-for-profit organisation, including community-controlled organisations or a local government entity; and
3. Have an existing Service Agreement with the department for the provision of early childhood services; or where the department does not yet have a funding relationship, eligible organisations will be locally recognised, respected and culturally responsive in providing services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities and
4. Continue to, or able to meet all requirements specified under either the *Early Years Services Funding Category Guidelines 2023* and/or Family Support Funding Category, where applicable.

Organisations may develop an individual proposal or partner with a consortium to submit a proposal. Where a partnership or consortium arrangement is developed, a single funding application must be submitted by the ‘lead’ or ‘primary’ organisation, and reflect the partnership arrangement with other organisations.

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| Selection Criteria  |

All applicants will be required to submit an application for funding. The department will convene an Assessment Panel to consider application/s, submitted through QGrants, based on responses to the following selection criteria. Brief supporting evidence may be attached to the application, as additional information.

Where assessment does not produce a conclusive outcome, organisations may be required to present their application and responses to selection criteria at a meeting (using TEAMS or in person) with the Assessment Panel.

| **Selection criteria** | **Indicators and supporting evidence**  |
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| Service model is appropriate and meets the needs of children and their families in the identified community  | * Demonstrated understanding of the needs of the target group/s and the broad communities within the SA3 and more specifically within the identified SA2 community.
* How would the ECC model connect children and families experiencing vulnerability, to services, either to enhance or expand an existing service connection?
* Clear and concise description of the proposed service model including but not limited to:
	+ design and operationalisation of the ECC model operating across the identified location;
	+ staffing/service approach including recruitment strategies, where relevant;
	+ strategies and actions to promote engagement with local Elders and community leaders, families, service providers and schools;
	+ partnerships which may be required to deliver or support the delivery of the proposed ECC model; and
	+ potential location/s for service delivery.
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| Service Delivery | * Demonstrated understanding of early childhood development and education in the context of children and families experiencing multiple and/or complex issues, in this location.
* Demonstrated cultural capability in delivering early childhood programs and services to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander families and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
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| Organisational capacity and experience  | * Clearly identified governance arrangements, including key roles, management structures and financial management to deliver the required service elements.
* Detailed budget for the provision of the ECC program.
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| Coordination and collaboration to create effective partnerships  | * Evidence of existing or demonstrated ability to cultivate collaborative arrangements and service coordination across government agencies, family and parenting support services, health, early childhood education and care and the transition to school.
* Capacity to develop/contribute to local networks of service providers to support an effective and efficient early childhood service system to support early childhood transitions.
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The Periodic Financial Report template may provide additional information regarding appropriate line items for the proposed budget and can be found at <https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/grants-and-funding/grants-management/early-years-services-grants-management/how-to-use-qgrants>

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| Funding Process |

Assessment of applications will be undertaken by an Assessment Panel who will consider responses to the selection criteria in Section 6. to deliver early years services, compliance with performance and financial reporting requirements will also be considered.

The following assessment process will be used to determine the successful organisation to operate the Early Childhood Co-ordinator role in your community*.*

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| **Step 1** | Lodge a completed Application form in QGrants *(refer to Section 9 for further detail).*  | 19 August 2024 |
| **Step 2** | Assessment of applications  | August 2024 |
| **Step 3** | Funding decision recommended  | August 2024 |
| **Step 4** | Successful and unsuccessful organisations notified | August/September 2024 |
| **Step 5** | Service agreement between the department and the successful organisation negotiated and finalised. | Effective from 1 October 2024 |
| **Step 6** | Service delivery commencement (phased start-up) supported by an Implementation Plan  | 1 November/December 2024 |
| **Step 7** | Progress Report submitted to the department | 28 February 2025 |

During the assessment process, organisations may be asked to provide further information to clarify information provided in the Application. These requests will be made in writing to the organisation’s nominated contact officer and written responses will be required within the timeframe specified in the request.

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| Conditions of funding  |

Funding is provided under the *Community Services Act 2007*.

To receive funding, the successful applicants will be required to enter into a Service Agreement (or variation to an existing Service Agreement) with the department and will be legally responsible for complying with the requirements and conditions of the service agreement.

Service Agreement – Standard Terms and Conditions are available at: <https://www.forgov.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0028/452782/updatedserviceagreementstandardterms.pdf>

The successful organisation will also be required to report on performance measures using the department’s outcomes framework, which will support clear reporting about the outcomes for families with children aged birth to eight years. Performance and Financial Reporting will align with standard reporting to the department for the Family Support Funding Category, with an additional requirement to submit a Progress Report on **28 February 2025**.

Further information including supporting guidelines, templates and forms, is available at:

<https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/grants-and-funding/early-years-services-funding/category-resources>.

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| Lodging Applications – QGrants |

To apply for funding, please complete the Application Form for *Early Childhood Coordination*.

When applying, choose Family Support from the list of grant programs.

All completed Application Forms, including any attached supporting documentation, must be lodged by **19 August 2024** via the department’s grants management system, QGrants <https://qgrants.osr.qld.gov.au/portal/>.

For more information on QGrants, including a step-by-step process for how to register and lodge a grant application, please refer to: <https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/grants-and-funding/grants-management>

If your organisation is having problems accessing or using QGrants please call the department’s Kindy Hotline 3035 2244 for assistance.

# Information and Assistance

A funding information session will be held via TEAMS on:

**2.00 pm: 6 August 2024**

This session will provide an overview of the funding criteria and process your organisation will need to undertake to lodge an application. Please call the department on 07 3328 6677 to register your attendance.

For further information, please send your initial email request to eccegrantsadministration@qed.qld.gov.au and an officer from the department will contact you within one working day.

# Glossary of Terms

| Term | Explanation | Comments, examples and references |
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| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander | A person who identifies (or their parents/carers identify) as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent. |  |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled services  | Clause 44 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap sets the definition of an ACCO:“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community control is an act of self-determination. Under this Agreement, an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Organisation delivers services, including land and resource management that builds the strength and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and people and is:1. incorporated under relevant legislation and not-for-profit
2. controlled and operated by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people
3. connected to the community, or communities, in which they deliver the services
4. governed by a majority Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander governing body.”

[(Closing the Gap, Pg. 8)](https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-09/ctg-national-agreement_apr-21-comm-infra-targets-updated-24-august-2022_0.pdf) | Australian Government - Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) - <https://www.oric.gov.au/> National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) – *represent 145 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs)*<https://www.naccho.org.au/> |
| Brokerage | Brokerage refers to the purchase of a good or service that will support children and families to meet the goals which have been identified in joint assessment and planning with service staff.  |  |
| Community | A group of individuals who live in the same geographic area, or the area in which they live; and/orA group of people with a common background or with shared interests/values. | For example: Geographic area - Acacia Ridge or Barcaldine.For example: Group of people with a common background – Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Community. |
| Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) | Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CALD) refers to those individuals who identify as having a specific cultural or linguistic affiliation by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry, ethnic origin, religion, preferred language, language(s) spoken at home, or because of their parents’ identification on a similar basis.  | This term encompasses other commonly used terms such as non-English speaking background.If a client has identified as being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, they should not be included in the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse target group. |
| Department | Department of Education, Queensland State Government. |  |
| Discrete community | “A discrete community is a geographic location, bounded by physical or legal boundaries, which is inhabited or intended to be inhabited predominantly (i.e., greater than 50% of usual residents) by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples, with housing or infrastructure (power, water, sewerage) that is managed on a community basis. Discrete communities have populations of (but not limited to) 50 or more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.” ([Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census Dictionary](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs%40.nsf/Lookup/2901.0Chapter29552016#:~:text=A%20discrete%20community%20is%20a%20geographic%20location%2C%20bounded,sewerage%29%20that%20is%20managed%20on%20a%20community%20basis.)) | Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts - [Map of Queensland discrete communities](https://www.dsdsatsip.qld.gov.au/resources/dsdsatsip/about/contact/qld-regional-map.pdf)  |
| Early Childhood Coordination (ECC) | The ECC role will support vulnerable children and families to connect and engage with early childhood services, programs and their community. |  |
| Early childhood development | Early childhood is defined as the period from prenatal development to eight years of age. Early child development (ECD), including health, physical, social/emotional and language /cognitive domains strongly influence basic learning, school success, economic participation, social citizenry and health. |  |
| Early years service (EYS) funding | Grant funding provided under the five funding categories to delivery activities to achieve results/ outcomes. | Funding categories are Child Focused Activities and Groups (CFAG), Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), Family Support (FS) Integrated Service Delivery (ISD), Sector Support (SS). <https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/grants-and-funding/early-years-services-funding/category-resources>  |
| Early years service (EYS) providers | Organisations funded by the department to deliver a service to support children and their families.  | Refer to funding category.  |
| Family Support Coordinators in Primary Schools | A new role for a Primary school-based family support coordinator that will work with the Early Childhood Coordinator to ensure continuity for children as they transition to formal school. |  |
| Grant | Funding provided to a third-party recipient as a contribution to the cost of delivering an activity which is intended to:* + assist the recipient to achieve its goals;
	+ promote one or more of the department’s policy objectives

A service agreement will contain terms and conditions about the use of the funds and expected outcomes. | Refer to service agreement. |
| Organisational Costs  | Defined in the *Queensland Government Financial Accountability Form - Periodic Financial Return* as auspicing Fees, Business Planning Costs, Management Fees, Meeting Expenses and Volunteer Costs. | <https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/fundingAndSupport/Documents/financial-accountability-form-periodic-financial-return.pdf> |
| Performance measure | A measure of how well a provider, government agency or service system is working. The most important performance measure identifies whether clients are better off because of the service or program that they used or participated in. | There are 3 types of measures:* how much did we do?
* how well did we do it?
* is anyone better off?

(Friedman 2005, pp 67-81) |
| Putting Queensland Kids First | A plan that aims to strengthen protective factors around children, young people and families through targeted investment in prevention and early interventions. The plan aims to improve the following outcomes1. Access to health wellbeing and development
2. Access to education, training and employment
3. Secure and affordable housing
4. Safety and connection in family and community
5. A reframed relationship and empowered First Nations Peoples.
 | <https://www.qld.gov.au/about/putting-qld-kids-first>  |
| Outcome | The desired condition of wellbeing for families, children and communities that ECCs and playgroup providers aim to achieve. | For example: children are benefiting from participating in activities. For example: parents/carers have greater access to other services they need. |
| SA2 | **Statistical Areas Level 2** (SA2s) are medium-sized general-purpose areas built up from whole Statistical Areas Level 1 (SA1s). Their purpose is to represent a community that interacts together socially and economically.Local Government Areas (LGAs) are considered in the design of SA2s and often adopted if it satisfies certain criteria.  | Sourced from ABS- <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/standards/australian-statistical-geography-standard-asgs-edition-3/jul2021-jun2026/main-structure-and-greater-capital-city-statistical-areas/statistical-area-level-2>  |
| SA3 | **Statistical Areas Level 3** (SA3s) are geographic areas built from whole Statistical Areas Level 2 (SA2s). They are designed for the output of regional data, including 2021 Census of Population and Housing data. SA3s create a standard framework for the analysis of ABS data at the regional level through clustering groups of SA2s that have similar regional characteristics. | Sourced from ABS- <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/standards/australian-statistical-geography-standard-asgs-edition-3/jul2021-jun2026/main-structure-and-greater-capital-city-statistical-areas/statistical-area-level-3>  |
| Service agreement | A legally enforceable agreement between the department and a supplier with enforceable obligations and milestones. The Department uses the Queensland Government’s standard terms and conditions. | <https://www.forgov.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0028/452782/updatedserviceagreementstandardterms.pdf> |
| Service Provider | Refer to Early Years’ Service (EYS) providers. |  |
| Supported playgroups | Supported playgroups use a trained facilitator to engage families, lead the playgroup programs and link families to supports they may need in their community. | <https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/sector-news-and-resources/teaching-and-learning-resources/supported-playgroups>  |
| Target cohort/group | A [person](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/person) or a [particular](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/particular) [group](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/group) of [people](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/people) that funding is [directed](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/direct) at, or that something is [intended](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/intended) for. | Target group/s will be identified within the service agreement.For example: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, children with disability |
| Targeted services | Services that are available or offered to specific population groups or individuals within a specific geographic area.  |  |

1. In general, SA3s are designed to have populations between 30,000 and 130,000 people. However, the creation of meaningful regional areas takes priority over population criteria. As a result, there are some SA3s with populations above 130,000 or below 30,000. SA3s are often the functional areas of regional towns and cities with a population in excess of 20,000 or clusters of related suburbs around urban commercial and transport hubs within the major urban areas.

 Statistical Areas Level 2 (SA2) are medium-sized general purpose areas. Their purpose is to represent a community that interacts together socially and economically. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Centre on the Developing Child (2007). The Science of Early Childhood Development. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)