

Note: It is recommended that this Policy be read in conjunction with other ICPA Qld Policy documents.



EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICY

POLICY: THAT AN APPROPRIATE RANGE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS BE AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WHO LIVE IN RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Ensure the viability of rural and remote kindergartens continues.
2. Ensure all Queensland children have access to a quality kindergarten program, including eKindy whereby the social, emotional and intellectual needs of all children are met. (2012:A31,32) (2018:S6)
3. Curriculum requirements for children attending kindergarten to be implemented by all providers in all types of Early Childhood centres. (2012:A34)

KINDERGARTEN

4. State Schools to be the Kindergarten service provider in communities where no other provider exists. (2015:S5)
5. Kindergarten is not to be a compulsory school year.
6. Kindergarten's situated on DoE sites will not adversely affect staffing and funding for rural and remote schools.
7. Funding for eKindy implementation to continue. (2012:F4)
8. Ensure that small schools who are not eligible for the State Delivered Kindergarten program be given the opportunity to provide e-Kindy to their community. (2019:S7)
9. DOE to allow the usage of infrastructure where possible for the delivery of kindergarten programs in rural and remote areas where services are not available. (2014:A27,A28)
10. State Based Kindergarten programs provide relevant learning support and resources as needed for children with verified learning needs. (2022:A23)
11. That the e-Kindy program planning materials be made available to all staff in Rural and Remote schools offering the SDE program. (2023:S4)

CHILDCARE

12. Provide a balance between Centre based and In-home childcare along with a model for families who have no access to any childcare. (2017:S11)
13. Nationally agreed data collection be used to identify and plan for the needs of rural and remote communities.
14. Priority be given to Rural Areas where there is currently no Childcare when accessing In-Home Childcare placements.

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15. To improve and increase the funding model for In-Home Care Service Providers who service rural and remote clients. (2013:A35) (2023:A10)
16. Raising the profile of the Home Tutor/Governess as a legitimate career option. (2018:A48)

FUNDING

17. DoE fully cover the cost of employing teaching staff in schools that are offering SDK. (2019:S10)
18. Alignment of the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Services guidelines with the Education and Care Services National Regulations in regard to funding. (2019:S12)
19. To provide increased operational funding for small rural and remote Kindergarten centers.
20. Funding be available to kindergartens on a pro-rata basis for children with special needs and country casual positions.
21. That funding be increased for Limited Hours Child Care Centres to reflect actual running costs.
22. That funding be available for suitably trained support staff for children with additional needs attending kindergarten.
23. To provide funding for facilitators for cluster eKindy programs in towns with no kindergarten access. (2014:A24)
24. To ensure that no funding is lost as a result of a Centre's application for a waiver due to the inability to recruit a qualified Early Childhood teacher. (2018:S7) (2019:S12)
25. Continue to prioritise re-establishing Early Childhood educational programs in recognised highly vulnerable rural and remote areas. (2021:F1) (2022:S8)
26. To standardize payment rates and methodology made to all Rural and Remote kindergarten providers to ensure equity. (2023:S2,S3)

FACILITIES

27. When establishing and maintaining facilities:
 - a. Ensure appropriate Infrastructure provided on all school sites offering State Delivered Kindergarten taking into consideration projected enrolment figures and multi age classrooms. (2019:A16,S8) (2023:A7)
 - b. Ensure efficient use of existing infrastructure to ensure childcare can be delivered at an affordable cost.
 - c. Ensure flexible regulations and guidelines, including licensing requirements, are available to geographically isolated communities wishing to establish and maintain Early Childhood Centres and Mobile Children's Services.
 - d. Ensure communication between all relevant bodies to meet guidelines and regulations at an affordable cost for rural and remote Early Childhood Centres.

STAFFING

28. When allocating staff that;

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- a. there be a commitment to establishing support networks and ongoing professional development for early childhood teachers and child carers in rural and remote areas.
 - b. Emphasis be placed on the identification and recognition of learning problems during the pre-service training of Early Childhood teachers.
 - c. Encouragement and assistance be given to rural and remote Kindergartens who cannot source staff. (2018:A14,S8)
 - d. Teacher transfer points are recognized in attracting teachers to rural and remote Early Childhood Centre's. (2020:S4)
 - e. That all small schools delivering SDK employ two teachers on kindy days regardless of enrolments and that at least one of these teachers is EC trained. (2019:S9)
 - f. That a full-time early childhood teacher be appointed at small schools where kindergarten enrolments exceed 5 students in schools with total enrolments of greater than 18 and less than 25 students. (2023:A8)
 - g. That all teachers in schools offering SDK are remunerated to reflect additional requirements in implementing the kindergarten program. (2023:A9)
29. That Early Years Coaches continue to be provided by DoE to support State Delivered Kindergarten services. (2020:A12)
30. That the student:educator ratio in eKindy cluster centres be increased to 1:8. (2014:A26)
31. That the processing of Blue Cards is expedient. (2013:A38) (2016:A50)
32. Increase training opportunities and employment incentives in order to enable local childcare providers in rural and remote areas to attract and retain staff members to subsequently increase capacity for children to attend. (2021:F2)