

QKindy

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Features

- 01 | Welcome
- 02 | Kindy kids set for school
- 03 | Jay in tune with early learning
- 04 | 'Kindy tick' drives enrolments
- 05 | Translating support for families
- 06 | Program helps more kids participate in kindy
- 07 | Support for children with disability
- 08 | eKindy now online
- 09 | Rating the assessment experience
- 10 | Improving quality a team effort
- 11 | Contact your National Quality Framework support team
- 12 | Support for kindergarten program providers



Visit us at www.qld.gov.au/kindy

Welcome



Thanks to the continuing reforms in early childhood education the numbers of 'kindy kids' in Queensland are increasing all the time.

Five years ago Queensland had fewer than 30 per cent of our four-year-olds in an approved kindergarten program. According to the latest census data (2011) Queensland is making significant progress towards achieving 95 per cent participation with 68 per cent of kindy-aged children enrolled in a kindergarten program in 2011. This year the target is to reach 86 per cent participation with the aim of universal access in 2014.

Kindergarten services have a long and proud history in Queensland, dating back to the first 'day nurseries' in 1907 and including the relatively recent introduction of kindergarten programs to long day care services. Now more than 1050 long day care services deliver approved kindergarten programs to approximately 29,000 children - a significant section of the state's overall kindergarten population.

The rollout of the National Quality Framework (NQF) has passed the one-year mark, bringing a streamlined approach to regulation and quality assessment and positive changes across the sector. Services delivering approved kindergarten programs were well prepared having adopted a range of measures, such as engaging qualified early childhood teachers and delivering learning guidelines aligned with the national *Early Years Learning Framework*. Early feedback on the assessment and rating process has been positive and encouraging in the initial stages of implementation. A national independent evaluation has also found the process to be valid and reliable.

Keeping the focus on quality, early childhood education and care services will share in grants worth close to \$60 million in 2012-13. Directed at new equipment, resources, capital upgrades and new programs, the funding injection supports services to

nurture our youngest learners. Kindergarten services have used the funds to buy new outdoor play equipment, bikes, iPads, laptops, books and games and even to pay for the construction of a chicken coop.

At the heart of these ambitious reforms and initiatives is the removal of barriers so all children can benefit from a quality kindergarten program and get the best start to their education.

Together with kindergarten and long day care services educators and teachers, we are addressing issues such as accessibility, cost, distance and language.

We are implementing a range of transport solutions such as bus services and transport allowances to overcome travel issues which are potential barriers to access. Kindy children with disability are benefitting from the Specialised Equipment and Resources Program which allows kindergarten services to purchase dedicated materials.

In an Australian first, the innovative distance education program eKindy will bring the benefits of kindergarten into the homes of children isolated by distance or a medical condition.

Also looking ahead, this year we're opening 19 new kindergarten services statewide from Mareeba to Mt Gravatt to Mt Isa benefiting more than 800 children and their families.

In 2014, 25 new kindergarten services are planned to open, with 15 being built on state school sites and 10 on other sites such as non-state schools, long day care and existing kindergarten services.

This issue of QKindy provides a snapshot of achievements over the past 12 months and what is ahead. I invite you to share it with your community of parents, educators and staff.

John-Paul Langbroek MP
Minister for Education, Training and Employment

Kindy kids set for school

Queensland children starting Prep hit their new school grounds ‘running’ thanks to kindy.

These children all enjoyed a head start to their education by participating in an approved kindergarten program last year – enjoying a range of learning opportunities and experiences.

No one sees the impact of kindergarten programs more clearly than Prep teachers welcoming children on their first day of school.

Stretton State College Head of Early Childhood Maryanne Gosling said children who had participated in kindergarten programs were well prepared for the new challenges of Prep.

“Prep today requires children to be achieving more in a shorter time,” Ms Gosling said.

“Children who have participated in kindergarten programs are more likely to have the foundations they need to transition to Prep easily and quickly.

“These foundations include fine and gross motor skills, including being able to hold a pencil, use scissors, and doing things like hopping on one leg and balancing.

“Children who have participated in a kindergarten program are also more likely to be able to sit and listen to a story and be able to recall the characters and the story elements in order.

“They also learn early numeracy concepts such as what numbers are and sequencing.

“Importantly, kindergarten programs help children’s personal development, encouraging them to develop their social skills and confidence when speaking.

“All of these things add up to give children the skills they need for school.”

Ms Gosling said Stretton State College worked with kindergarten teachers in the local area to create opportunities for children participating in their kindergarten programs to visit the school.

“Being comfortable in the school environment helps children starting Prep to be confident from day one,” Ms Gosling said.

Stretton C&K Kindergarten is co-located with Stretton State College, and was the first new kindergarten service to be established under the Queensland Government’s commitment to establish extra kindergarten services in areas of need by 2014.

Stretton C&K Kindergarten Director Danielle Geary said working closely with Stretton State College offered enormous benefits.

“By visiting the school throughout the year, our children get to know what school facilities look like and what resources schools have,” Ms Geary said.

“The children can enjoy an early taste of school life through visits to the school library where we borrow a book to read together at kindy.

“We visit the Prep rooms where children may complete a worksheet with the Prep teacher or do some rotational activities.

“These activities are different from what the children would normally enjoy at kindy, and the kids love the excitement of it all.

Ms Geary said the kindergarten had also been invited to participate in special school events, including Under 8’s day and the junior sports day.

“What I love about kindergarten is that it provides children with their first formal educational experience, and helps them develop a love of learning.

“By working closely with the school we can show children that school is a welcoming place where the fun and exciting process of learning continues.”



Jay in tune with early learning

Children’s entertainer Jay Laga’aia is supporting the Queensland Government’s commitment to ensuring all four year olds across the state have access to a government-approved kindergarten program.

As a proud father of eight children and *Playschool* presenter, Jay said he strongly believed in the value of play-based learning — an integral part of a quality early childhood education.

“I’ve experienced, first-hand through my own children, the importance of a kindergarten program,” Jay said.

“Kindy allowed them to express themselves in different ways, whether it be through song, dance or pictures.”

“It is an incredibly valuable experience for both parents and children.

“For children, the benefits are huge. It helps them learn at their own pace, and control fine motor skills such as writing and drawing. It also enables them to express themselves in a safe and caring environment which is very important to a growing individual.

“For parents, kindy provides a great opportunity to bond with your child, to create stimulating activities that not only challenge your child but also allows them to have fun.”

One essential aspect of a Queensland Government-approved kindergarten program, Jay said, was the qualifications of the teachers.

“Qualified early childhood teachers understand that early interaction and play with a purpose enables a child to develop the skills they will need for school and life in general, without the pressures of always getting it ‘right’.

“A young child needs the tactile interaction, as well as the verbal stimuli, in order to develop a sense of self. From there they learn through play and activities how the world around them works and how they can apply themselves in order to accomplish their goals in life.”

As a ‘kindy dad’ for nearly three decades, Jay has experienced many issues that kindy parents face.

“When we put our first child into kindy, he would stand at the door and cry every time we tried to sneak out. It didn’t matter how much we prepared him in the car. He just cried.



“I’ve experienced first-hand through my own children, the importance of a kindergarten program.”

“So one day, after a particularly hard goodbye at the door, I decided to go back. I tried to wait until lunchtime but I couldn’t wait anymore. I crept up to the front door and decided to peek in the window.

“To my surprise, I saw my son playing with the other children on the floor and laughing. He looked happy and interested. Apparently the crying was for my benefit, so that I didn’t feel left out.

“We never looked back. My first child attended kindergarten 26 years ago, and my daughter, who is the last of my eight children started kindergarten this year and is loving it.”



‘Kindy tick’ drives enrolments

The ‘kindy tick’ continues to grow as a powerful marketing tool for services delivering approved kindergarten programs.

First introduced in 2011, the Queensland Government-approved kindergarten program identifier, or ‘kindy tick’, is now being used by kindergarten and long day care services across Queensland to promote their kindergarten program.

Goodstart Early Learning Marketing Manager Alison Green said including the ‘kindy tick’ in their local marketing activities was driving enrolments.

“The Queensland Government’s active promotion of kindergarten programs and the ‘kindy tick’ has generated a lot of interest from our current and new families,” Ms Green said.

“Parents contacting Goodstart are asking to be referred to services that have the ‘kindy tick’ as they know these services offer a kindergarten program delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher.

“We include the ‘kindy tick’ in all our local area marketing activities for approved services, including brochures, posters, banners, digital and print ads, as well as our telephone directory listings.

“The inclusion of the ‘kindy tick’ has definitely added value to our marketing activities.”

Does your long day care service have the kindy tick?

Services that do not yet have the ‘kindy tick’ can apply to become an approved kindergarten program provider and receive funding for each child enrolled in their kindergarten program.

For more information and free help, services can phone the Kindergarten Advisory and Support Service on 1300 4 KINDY (1300 454 639).

“The inclusion of the ‘kindy tick’ has definitely added value to our marketing activities.”





Translating support for families

Knowing where to put her child's lunchbox each day is no longer an issue for Vi Bich Thanh.

When her daughter Isabella first started at the Inala Kindergarten and Community Preschool, Vi was not sure of the drop-off routine or other aspects of the kindergarten program. Having recently moved to Australia from Vietnam and unable to speak English, she couldn't ask for help.

Kindergarten Director Michelle Hallesy quickly recognised the issue and called the Translating and Interpreting Service.

The Queensland Government is providing kindergarten services with free access to the service which is operated by the federal Department of Immigration and Citizenship and employs interpreters who speak more than 170 languages and dialects.

"We booked a translator to come and meet with us and Vi," Ms Hallesy said.

"The translator enabled us to easily share information about our program with Vi and answer all her questions, including simple things like where to put Isabella's lunchbox."

"It was wonderful to be able to provide Vi with the information she needed so quickly and easily."

Ms Hallesy said she also had the Translating and Interpreting Service translate their service's parent handbook and other important documents into Vietnamese and Korean.

"We have a significant number of families from Vietnam and Korea living in Inala and wanted to ensure we could offer them information about the benefits of kindergarten and our program in their own language, as well as English," she said.

"We also use the translated promotional materials from the [Queensland Government website](#) to promote our kindergarten program to Vietnamese families through local support groups, including the local Vietnamese playgroup."

"Many families are unsure about kindergarten programs so providing translated information is a positive way we promote our kindy and encourage them to enrol their child."

Translation support for services and families

Free on-site or telephone interpreters

Kindergarten services:

Phone your central governing body about how to make a booking.

Long day care services:

Phone your Professional Support Coordinator on 1800 112 585.

Families:

Phone the Kindy Hotline on 1800 4 KINDY (1800 454 639) to organise an interpreter.

Translated kindergarten resources

A range of promotional and resource materials on kindergarten programs, translated into more than 30 languages, is available on the department's website.

Translate kindergarten web content

Use the translation function to translate all content on kindergarten programs in the Families section of the [department website](#).



Program helps more kids participate in kindy

Kindergarten services can draw on a wealth of resources to help children with disability or additional needs participate in their kindergarten program.

Under the Specialised Equipment and Resources Program, eligible kindergarten services across the state will have free, on-loan access to specialised equipment and professional resources from Noah's Ark.

Established in 1976, Noah's Ark is a not-for-profit organisation committed to providing professional and developmental support for children with disability or additional needs.

Noah's Ark Chief Executive Officer Debbie Hardy said she was thrilled to be working with Queensland kindergarten services.

"Our organisation supports educators by providing access to resources that facilitate and encourage inclusive learning environments," Ms Hardy said.

"Our qualified therapists and educators can help service providers determine what resources they need to best support the inclusion of a child with disability or additional needs in their program.

"We have a huge range of equipment available, including standing frames, cut-out tables, toileting equipment, specialised seating, hoists, slings, positioning equipment and swings.

"These items may have been out of reach for many kindergarten services in the past because of the expense, which could have resulted in a child missing out on kindergarten or the service trying to 'make do' with makeshift equipment.

"This new program respects both the needs of children with disability and additional needs and their educators."

The Specialised Equipment and Resources for Kindergarten Services Program is funded under the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education.

Accessing specialised equipment and resources

Kindergarten services:

For information on equipment and resources available, eligibility and how to submit your request phone Noah's Ark on 3255 2082.

Long day care services:

Phone your Professional Support Coordinator on 1800 112 585.



Support for children with disability

Government funding helped ensure six children with disability attending Emerald Preschool and Community Kindergarten last year enjoyed the same learning opportunities as their classmates.

Kindergarten Director Kay Harling, said the children were supported by teacher aides partly funded through the Disability Support Funding Program.

“We used the funding to employ specialist teacher aides with the training and experience needed to meet the needs of each child,” Ms Harling said.

“Without the funding, we would have only been able to employ the teacher aides for a limited number of hours each week.”

“The extra funding from the Disability Support Funding Program meant our children with disability could participate 15 hours each week and enjoy the same educational foundation as our other children.”

The Disability Support Funding Program was introduced in 2011, replacing the Non-School Organisations Program.

Providing funding of between \$2000 and \$6000 per eligible child, the program enables kindergarten services to offer professional development, buy specialised equipment and resources, and employ special needs assistants to help deliver inclusive programs.

In 2012, the Queensland Government increased funding nearly threefold to \$1.7 million, to support children with disability to take part in kindergarten programs.

Ms Harling said applying for funding under the Disability Support Funding Program was easy.

“Applications for the first funding round closed in March, giving us the time we needed to get to know the children and prepare our application,” she said.

“A second round later in the year also gave services another opportunity to apply for funding support for newly enrolled children with disability, or children who were undiagnosed at the beginning of the year.”

Round one for the 2013 Disability Support Funding Program opened in November 2012.

2013 Disability Support Funding

Kindergarten services:

Application form and guidelines are available on the [department's website](#).

Round one applications close: 15 March 2013

Round two applications close: 21 June 2013

Long day care services:

Phone your Professional Support Coordinator on 1800 112 585 for funding support options.

eKindy now online

The introduction of eKindy has opened the door to a new world of opportunity for isolated children – just ask Queensland mum, Ainsley McArthur.

A participant in last year’s pilot of the ‘at home’ kindergarten program, Ms McArthur saw first-hand the positive impact it had on her son Haimish’s development.

“Being geographically isolated from a school, I was already working with the Capricornia School of Distance Education to home school Haimish’s older brothers,” Ms McArthur said.

“When I heard the Brisbane School of Distance Education had developed an eKindy program for isolated children and wanted to trial it with families, I signed up straight away.

“Such is the nature of distance education, Haimish was already in our home classroom with his brothers but I didn’t have a formal program of activity for him.

“eKindy enabled me to work in partnership with a qualified early childhood teacher to create a new structured routine

that provided learning opportunities and experiences specifically for Haimish.

“Part of the program was delivered by his teacher Miss Danielle using web-based technology, while much of the hands-on activities and learning was able to occur in our home with instructions, tips and lesson plans from a Learning Guide, Resource Guide, Audio Resources and e-books.

“He did so much – singing, dancing, painting, cutting, imaginary and real-life play.

“He also had one-on-one web lessons with Miss Danielle, as well as small and larger group sessions with other children in the pilot.

“The group sessions were fantastic as they enabled Haimish to interact and really connect with other children doing eKindy.

“If you ask him about the other children now, he still refers to them as his friends, which is wonderful.”

Ms McArthur said the support she received from the Brisbane School of Distance Education throughout the eKindy trial was valuable.

“My contact with Miss Danielle and the parent resources gave me the information and advice I needed to create clear learning opportunities from simple activities like sharing a story,” she said.

“I know eKindy has really helped prepare Haimish for school, and he and I both really enjoyed the program.

“I am signed up for my second year of eKindy this year with Haimish’s younger sister Adelaide, our next eKindy kid.”

eKindy is only for children who can’t regularly access a centre-based kindergarten program because of where they live or a medical condition or itinerant lifestyle.

You can find out more about the program on the Brisbane School of Distance Education website <http://brisbanesde.eq.edu.au> including the full eligibility criteria and how to enrol.

Even if you don’t take part in eKindy, there’s a range of free, fun and educational fact sheets, music videos, e-books and an iPad app, all for parents with kindy-aged children. The resources are especially designed for the eKindy program, and are available on the [department’s website](#).



eKindy enabled me to work in partnership with a qualified early childhood teacher to create a new structured routine.

Rating the assessment experience

A Toowoomba approved kindergarten provider saw the assessment and rating visit as a chance to showcase the unique features of its program.

One of the first services in Queensland to be assessed under the National Quality Framework, C&K Chiselhurst Kindergarten sought suggestions and advice from the Department of Education, Training and Employment to guide its preparations.

Director Rosemarie Dawes said having worked closely with authorised officers from the department's Toowoomba office since the introduction of the national legislation made it easy to pick up the phone and ask for help.

"Officers met with our staff and ran through some steps we could take to ensure our service was ready," Ms Dawes said.

"We followed their suggestions and swung into action, ensuring our Quality Improvement Plan was up to date, copies of it and our policies were printed and ready to view. We even ran through practice reflective questions to make sure staff were comfortable on the day."

Ms Dawes said even though the service was as ready as it could be, there were still some nerves on assessment day.

"We're passionate about the work we do, and we wanted to make sure the authorised officers completing the assessment appreciated the unique features of our service and program," she said.

"During the visit, we were able to show typical practice at pick-up and drop-off times, our interactions with families and each other, the educational program in progress indoors and outside, and meal and rest times.

"When talking about our service's policies, educational program and staffing arrangements, the officers wanted to understand our decision-making, how we reflected on practice, how we collected evidence and even how we noted our own interactions as staff.

"At the end of it, I feel we were really able to showcase our service but also identified other opportunities for improvement."

Authorised officer Rebecca Storck said the National Quality Standard had given services more autonomy.

"The standards are written broadly to reflect that quality in early childhood education and care may look different across services," Ms Storck said.

"This flexibility empowers approved providers and educators to meet standards in ways that genuinely benefit the children and families attending their individual service.



"There are plenty of opportunities for discussion, to provide evidence and to demonstrate quality outcomes for children. We want each service to put their best foot forward.

"The NQF encourages services to engage in critical reflection and improvement planning and it's exciting to see more services seeking out new opportunities to improve practice."

With the assessment now complete, Ms Dawes said staff members at Chiselhurst were putting steps in place to continually improve, taking into account feedback from the assessment and rating report and discussions with Ms Storck.

"The families of Chiselhurst are very supportive of the work we're doing but we know we can do more in Quality Area 6 – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities," Ms Dawes said.

"Providing daily updates to parents via email or in our parent pockets is one way we're doing this.

"Where children are focused on numeracy, we might develop parent tip sheets for conversations at home – 'help mummy put four forks on the table or find five potatoes in the cupboard'.

"The standards set a higher benchmark for quality education and care, we're always asking ourselves how to maintain quality and where improvements can be made."



Improving quality a team effort

When it comes to improving the quality of early childhood education and care, the most effective Quality Improvement Plans are developed as a team effort.

Engaging educators, assistants, families and children in shaping the plan will keep it meaningful and guide the direction of the service.

When updating the Quality Improvement Plan, consider:

- Keeping the plan top of mind as an agenda item for staff meetings.
- Displaying the summary of quality areas, standards and elements of the National Quality Standard on A3 card.
- Encouraging suggestions about areas for improvement, and document outcomes within the plan.
- Committing to realistic actions which motivate people and plan in stages. Considering experience, knowledge, budget and resources.

- Celebrating achievements, sharing them with families and acknowledging staff contributions.
- Making the plan available on all computers and updating it regularly. Printing out copies for easy access and referral.
- Adding progress notes to show continuous improvement and a reminder of the distance travelled.
- Seeking advice and sharing ideas with content experts, community members, professional development providers and other early childhood services.
- Integrating feedback from the authorised officer and the assessment and rating report.
- Workshopping the plan every six months to reassess the big picture and identify emerging issues.

For more information, download the *Guide to Developing a Quality Improvement Plan* from the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority [website](#).

Contact your National Quality Framework support team

The Department of Education, Training and Employment's authorised officers are here to help all services meet the requirements of the National Quality Framework.

- Need information about maintaining your Quality Improvement Plan?
- Preparing for assessment and rating?
- Looking to establish a new service?
- Have a question about the national requirements?

Contact your nearest regional office for assistance:

Central Queensland

Rockhampton 4938 4232
Mackay 4967 4412

Darling Downs/South West Queensland

Toowoomba 4616 9125

Far North Queensland

Cairns 4042 5301

Metropolitan

Kedron 3350 9127
Ipswich 3280 1940
Mt Gravatt 3422 8363

North Coast

Caboolture 5420 1404
Maroochydore 5459 8610
Maryborough 4190 3871

North Queensland

Townsville 4726 3185

South East Queensland

Gold Coast 5562 4877
Logan 3884 7813

Support for kindergarten program providers

Help is on hand for services working to deliver a high-quality, approved kindergarten program.

Central governing bodies for kindergarten services

Kindergarten services can contact their central governing body for all matters relating to the delivery of their approved kindergarten program, including providing an inclusive program, managing and maximising enrolments, and Queensland Government funding arrangements.

The five organisations approved as central governing bodies for kindergarten services are:

- [Independent Schools Queensland](#)
- [Queensland Catholic Education Commission](#)
- [Queensland Lutheran Early Childhood Services](#)
- [The Creche and Kindergarten Association Limited](#)
- [The Gowrie \(QLD\) Inc.](#)

Changing your central governing body

Your kindergarten service's chosen central governing body should provide the systems and support your service needs to help it meet the requirements of delivering an approved kindergarten program.

If your service is considering changing your central governing body (CGB):

- *Discuss the move with your current CGB*
This will enable the current CGB to notify the department of the change.
- *Work with both the current and new CGB to complete the transfer of membership*
This will ensure your service maintains continuous membership with a CGB which is a requirement under the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme.
- *Aim to make the transfer of membership at the beginning of the semester*
This will enable the department to adjust funding between the CGBs and minimise possible disruption of funding for your service. However, you are still free to change your CGB at any time during the year.



Kindergarten Advisory Support Service for long day care services

All long day care services in Queensland can access free advice and support on delivering an approved kindergarten program through the Kindergarten Advisory Support Service (KASS).

Operated by Childcare Queensland, KASS can assist services with every aspect of their kindergarten program delivery, starting with preparing their application to become an approved kindergarten program provider.

KASS includes a hotline operated by a qualified teacher, and an [online job board](#) where long day care services can list their teaching vacancies. There is also a [teacher register](#) enabling qualified teachers looking for a position to be matched with a suitable long day care service.

Phone the Kindergarten Advisory Support Service on 1300 4 KINDY (1300 454 639), or visit www.kass.net.au.

Universal access to early childhood education is a national initiative being implemented by the Queensland Government in partnership with the Australian Government.

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Page 10 - Ainsley McArthur

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Information in this magazine is correct at the time of publication.

Keep up to date with the latest news in early childhood education and care

A to Z of Early Childhood is the department's monthly electronic newsletter, providing the latest information about early childhood education and care reforms in Queensland, including the implementation of the National Quality Framework. [Subscribe now.](#)