

# Early Childhood Education and Care DSS 2021

## Identifying and definitional attributes

**Metadata item type:** Data Set Specification

**METEOR identifier:** 746434

**Registration status:**

- [Early Childhood](#), Standard 25/10/2021

**DSS type:** Data Set Specification (DSS)

**Scope:** This data set has been developed to support the collection of data under the National Information Agreement on Early Childhood Education and Care (NIA ECEC). Responsibility for early childhood learning and care is shared between the Australian Government and the state and territory governments, and involves a wide range of service providers including government, local government, community, schools and the private sector.

The NIA ECEC provides a framework for cooperation between the Australian Government, state and territory jurisdictions and information agencies to develop the early childhood education and care (ECEC) information base required for the Council of Australian Government (COAG) early childhood reform agenda.

Data and information in scope of the NIA ECEC include:

- Activity under the National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education (UANP)
- ECEC information required to support the information needs of other National Agreements and National Partnerships, including the National Indigenous Reform Agreement (Closing the Gap)
- Outcomes in relation to the COAG Participation and Productivity Agenda
- Other national reporting purposes, including but not limited to, the Report on Government Services (ROGS), Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage, Report to COAG Reform Council, and Headline Indicators on Children's Health, Development and Wellbeing
- Monitoring, research and evaluation related to children, families and early childhood development services under the Early Childhood Development Strategy (ECDS).

Service provider organisations for the purposes of this collection are agencies directly providing services to children at a specific location. This includes organisations providing [early childhood education programs](#), and other early childhood education and direct care services.

Organisations may provide multiple services, however for the purpose of reporting against the UANP, only early childhood education programs are included.

The scope of the data set is therefore all service providers delivering an early childhood education program to children enrolled aged 3 to 6 (inclusive) during the reference period, noting that coverage of 3 year olds varies across jurisdictions.

Within this scope, an early childhood education program is defined as a structured, play based learning program, delivered by a degree qualified teacher, aimed primarily at children in the year or two before they commence full-time schooling. A preschool program can be delivered in a variety of settings such as stand-alone preschools, preschools co-located as part of a school (both government and non-government), and centre based day care (CBDC) services (formerly known as long day care). A child may attend both a preschool and a separate or adjoined child care facility, such as family day care, outside school hours, vacation care, in-home care and occasional care services. Participation in preschool is not compulsory and is influenced by parental preference and other factors, such as school starting age in the particular jurisdiction.

The terms most commonly used to describe early childhood education programs which are subject to the UANP in states and territories are:

- Kindergarten – Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania
- Kindergarten or Preschool – Victoria, South Australia
- Preschool – New South Wales, Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory.

An early childhood education program may or may not be delivered in such a way that meets the Universal Access goal. The requirements for Universal Access are listed below.

The UANP is a commitment to joint Australian Government, State and Territory action to provide universal access to [quality early childhood education programs](#).

Universal access means that every child, in the year before they commence full-time schooling, has access to, and participates in:

- quality early childhood education program(s)
- delivered for at least 600 hours per year
- in a form that meets the needs of children, parents and community, and
- at a cost that does not present a barrier to participation.

To apply the requirements of the UANP to the data set, a 'quality' early childhood education program is a program which is delivered in the year before full-time schooling by a qualified early childhood teacher, in accordance with the Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Framework (NQF).

Monitoring information is to be maintained for the previous UANP where possible. However, specific data elements, data definitions and terminologies in the data set conform to those used in the UANP.

The information is to be collected within a reference period, which includes the first Friday in August, to enable comparison with schools' data, which is also collected then. In exceptional circumstances a different reference period may be used if agreed to by the Australian Department of Education, Skills and Employment, the jurisdiction and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

## Collection and usage attributes

### Statistical unit:

Child

Service provider organisation

Person (employed)

### Collection methods:

The collection date for the National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection (NECECC) is the first Friday in August of each year, with a reference period of one week in the same week as the collection date. In exceptional circumstances a different reference period may be used if agreed to by the Australian Department of Education, Skills and Employment, the jurisdiction and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Some jurisdictions prefer to incorporate a reference period of two weeks that includes the collection date, to better reflect their preschool program delivery model. A summary of jurisdictional collection reference periods can be found within the ABS' explanatory notes.

### Covid-19

The impacts to the ECEC sector from Covid-19, in particular to the services delivering a 'quality' education program have not changed the underlying concepts of the data collected in the NECECC for 2021. Jurisdictions were provided with clarifying statements to ensure that enrolment and attendance data in an early childhood education program included online or remote learning, in addition to the usual face-to-face delivery.

### Implementation start date:

06/08/2021

**Comments:** The glossary items supporting this data set specification include:

- [Early childhood education and care contact worker](#)
- [Qualified early childhood teacher](#)
- [Early childhood education program](#)
- [Quality early childhood education program](#)

## Source and reference attributes

**Submitting organisation:** Australian Department of Education, Skills and Employment

**Steward:** [Data Strategy Group \(DSG\)](#)

**Origin:** National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education

**Reference documents:** National Information Agreement for Early Childhood Education and Care, 2018-22

## Relational attributes

**Related metadata references:** Supersedes [Early Childhood Education and Care DSS 2020](#)

- [Early Childhood](#), Superseded 25/10/2021

## Metadata items in this Data Set Specification [Show more detail](#)

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	<a href="#">Early Childhood Education and Care: Unit Record Level NMDS 2021</a>	Mandatory	1
-	<a href="#">Person (employed)—hours worked in early childhood education program delivery (per week), total hours NNN</a>	Optional	1
-	<a href="#">Person—person identifier, XXXXXX[X(14)]</a>	Optional	1
-	<a href="#">Record—linkage key, code 581 XXXXXDDMMYYYYN</a>	Optional	1