

Early Childhood Education and Care: Unit Record Level NMDS 2023

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Identifying and definitional attributes

Metadata item type: Data Set Specification

METEOR identifier: 772443

Registration status: [Early Childhood, Standard 15/08/2023](#)

DSS type: National Minimum Data Set (NMDS)

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 Preschool Reform Agreement (PRA) agenda in early childhood.

Data and information in scope of the NIA ECEC include:

- Activity under the PRA
- ECEC information required to support the information needs of other National Agreements and National Partnerships, including the National Agreement on Closing the Gap
- Other national reporting purposes, including but not limited to, the Report on Government Services (ROGS), Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage, and Australia's Children
- 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 program](#) and other early childhood education and direct care services.

Organisations may provide multiple services, however for the purpose of reporting against the PRA, 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 care, 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 PRA in states and territories are:

- Kindergarten – Queensland, Victoria, Western Australia, Tasmania
- Preschool – New South Wales, South Australia, 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 PRA 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 PRA 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 National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education (UANP) where possible. However, specific data elements, data definitions and terminologies in the data set conform to those used in the PRA.

The unit record level collection supports information to be collected at the child, teacher and service provider organisation level.

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, 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. Some jurisdictions prefer to incorporate a reference period of two weeks that includes the collection date, to better reflect their preschool program delivery model. 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.

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 2022. 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: 01/07/2023

Comments: The glossary items supporting this national minimum data set include:

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

Note. Individual data elements in this Data set specification may refer to the National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education (UANP) these references should be read as the Preschool Reform Agreement (PRA).

Source and reference attributes

Submitting organisation: Department of Education

Steward: [Early Childhood Policy Group \(ECPG\)](#)

Origin: Council on Federal Financial Relations (CFFR) 2021. Preschool Reform Agreement. Canberra: CFFR, viewed 4 August 2022
<https://federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/agreements/preschool-reform-agreement>

Reference documents: Australian Government (2018). National information agreement on early childhood education and care. Canberra: Australian Government

Relational attributes

Related metadata references: Supersedes [Early Childhood Education and Care: Unit Record Level NMDS 2022 Early Childhood](#), Superseded 15/08/2023

Has been superseded by [Early Childhood Education and Care: Unit Record Level NMDS 2024 Early Childhood](#), Recorded 24/05/2024

Implementation in Data Set Specifications: [Early Childhood Education and Care DSS 2023 Early Childhood](#), Standard 15/08/2023
Implementation start date: 01/07/2023

Metadata items in this Data Set Specification

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) (2021 Census, ASGS Edition 3) cluster	Mandatory	1
DSS specific information:			
The ECEC collection uses usual residence, in conjunction with the geographically based SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD).			
For the ECEC URL NMDS 2021 the data element Address—statistical area, level 1 (SA1) code (ASGS 2016) N(11) based on the usual residence of the child's parent or guardian is collected for SEIFA. (Note: Other data elements in the SEIFA cluster are not collected by the ECEC collection for the purposes of SEIFA but may be collected outside of the SEIFA cluster).			
-	Address—Australian postcode, code (Postcode datafile) NNNN	Mandatory	1
-	Address—Australian state/territory identifier, code AA[A]	Mandatory	1
-	Address—statistical area, level 1 (SA1) code (ASGS Edition 3) N(11)	Mandatory	1
-	Address—suburb/town/locality name, text X[X(45)]	Mandatory	1
-	Person—area of usual residence, statistical area level 1 (SA1) code (ASGS Edition 3) N(11)	Optional	1
-	Person—area of usual residence, statistical area level 2 (SA2) code (ASGS Edition 3) N(9)	Optional	1

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	<p>Address—address line, text X[X(179)]</p> <p><i>DSS specific information:</i></p> <p>Should be reported for the physical location at which the early childhood education program is delivered only.</p>	Mandatory	1
-	<p>Address—Australian postcode, code (Postcode datafile) NNNN</p> <p><i>DSS specific information:</i></p> <p>This item should be collected twice: once for the child and once for the early childhood education and care service.</p> <p>Child</p> <p>Should be reported for the usual residence of the child's parent or guardian. Do not report the post office box postcode or other non-residential address of the child's parent or guardian.</p> <p>Early childhood education and care service</p> <p>Should be reported for the physical location at which the early childhood education program is delivered. If the early childhood education program is received in a home-based setting (i.e., via distance education programs such as school of the air or e-Kindy), then the location of the service provider delivering the program should be used as the basis for the address, rather than the home-based setting.</p>	Mandatory	2
-	<p>Address—statistical area, level 1 (SA1) code (ASGS Edition 3) N(11)</p> <p><i>DSS specific information:</i></p> <p>This item should be collected twice: once for the child and once for the early childhood education and care service.</p> <p>Child</p> <p>Should be reported for the usual residence of the child's parent or guardian. Do not report the Statistical Area Level 1 based on/according to post office box, suburb/town/locality or other non-residential address of the child's parent or guardian.</p> <p>Early childhood education and care service</p> <p>Should be reported for the physical location at which the early childhood education program is delivered. If the early childhood education program is received in a home-based setting (i.e., via distance education programs such as school of the air or e-Kindy), then the location of the service provider delivering the program should be used as the basis for the address, rather than the home-based setting.</p>	Mandatory	2

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	Address—suburb/town/locality name, text X[X(45)]	Mandatory	2
	DSS specific information:		
	This item should be collected twice: once for the child and once for the early childhood education and care service.		
	Child		
	Should be reported for the usual residence of the child's parent or guardian. Do not report the suburb/town/locality name based on a post office box or other non-residential address of the child's parent or guardian.		
	Early childhood education and care service		
	Should be reported for the physical location at which the early childhood education program is delivered. If the early childhood education program is received in a home-based setting (i.e., via distance education programs such as school of the air or e-Kindy), then the location of the service provider delivering the program should be used as the basis for the address, rather than the home-based setting.		
-	Child—early childhood education program attendance indicator, yes/no code N	Mandatory	1
-	Child—early childhood education program enrolment indicator, yes/no code N	Mandatory	1
-	Child—early childhood education program fees charged per week, total Australian currency N[N(8)]	Mandatory	1
-	Child—early childhood education program hours attended (per week), total hours N[N]	Mandatory	1
-	Child—early childhood education program hours enrolled (per week), total hours N[N]	Mandatory	1
-	Child—early childhood education program received from a qualified teacher indicator, yes/no/not stated/inadequately described code N	Mandatory	1
-	Child—early childhood education program repeater indicator, yes/no/unknown/not stated/inadequately described code N	Mandatory	1
-	Child—Hours of an early childhood education program received from qualified teacher(s), Total hours N[N]	Optional	1
-	Child—maximum early childhood education program hours available, total hours N[N]	Mandatory	1
-	Organisation—organisation name, text X[X(199)]	Mandatory	1
	DSS specific information:		
	This item should be used to report the operating or trading name of the early childhood education and care service which delivers an early childhood education program to children.		
	The registered business name should not be used if it is different from the name of the early childhood education and care service that it manages or owns.		
	A campus name or satellite school name (e.g., where the service provider organisation operates early childhood education programs at multiple geographical locations using the same service provider name) may also be used.		
	Each service provider must have a discrete service provider organisation name to allow identification of each individual location for provision of an early childhood education program.		
	The organisation name type data item is not required.		
-	Person (employed)—education field of highest relevant qualification, in early childhood education and care, code N[N]	Mandatory	1

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	Person (employed)—hours worked in early childhood education program delivery (per week), total hours NNN	Optional	1
-	Person (employed)—level of highest qualification in early childhood education and care, code N[N]	Mandatory	1
-	Person (employed)—role of early childhood education and care worker, code N	Mandatory	1
-	Person (employed)—type of work activity, early childhood education and care, code N	Mandatory	1
-	Person—Australian state/territory identifier, code N	Mandatory	1
	DSS specific information:		
	Should be reported for the usual residence of the child's parent or guardian.		
-	Person—date of birth, DDMMYYYY	Mandatory	1
	DSS specific information:		
	Should be reported for the child.		
	For components of the Date of birth which are unknown, 00 should be recorded, for example if a child was born in July 2007 but the day of birth is unknown record 00072007.		
-	Person—estimated resident population of Australia, total people N[N(7)]	Mandatory	1
-	Person—Indigenous status, code N	Mandatory	1
-	Person—letters of family name, text XXX	Mandatory	1
	DSS specific information:		
	Should be reported for the child only.		
-	Person—letters of given name, text XX	Mandatory	1
	DSS specific information:		
	Should be reported for the child only.		
-	Person—sex, code X	Mandatory	1
	DSS specific information:		
	Should be reported for the child only.		
-	Record—linkage key, code 581 XXXXXDDMMYYYYN	Mandatory	1
	DSS specific information:		
	This is the statistical linkage key of the child.		
-	Service provider organisation—early childhood education program delivered by a qualified teacher indicator, yes/no code N	Mandatory	1
-	Service provider organisation—government funding type, early childhood education and care, code N	Mandatory	1

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	Service provider organisation—management type, early childhood education and care, code N[N]	Mandatory	1
	DSS specific information:		
	The legal or social entity responsible for managing the delivery of early childhood education and care services is the entity responsible for the day to day running of early childhood education and care services, including tasks such as the design and the delivery of the early childhood education program , the hiring and firing of staff, the care of the children, etc.		
-	Service provider organisation—number of early childhood education program service operation weeks (calendar year), total NN	Mandatory	1
-	Service provider organisation—organisation identifier, X[X(14)]	Mandatory	1
-	Service provider organisation—service activity type, early childhood education and care, code N[N]	Mandatory	1
-	Service provider organisation—service delivery setting, early childhood education and care, code N	Mandatory	1