

Early Childhood Data Subgroup Terms of Reference

Under the auspices of the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA), and accountable through the Early Childhood Development Working Group (ECDWG) to the Australian Education, Early Childhood and Youth Affairs Systems Officials Committee (AEEYSOC), the Early Childhood Data Subgroup (ECDSG) will carry out work on data improvement in the area of early childhood outcomes, policy, programs and services.

Authority and Scope

1. In consultation with other relevant portfolios, the ECDSG will make recommendations for the endorsement of ECDWG, and, where required, on-forwarding for consideration by AEEYSOC and/or MCEECDYA.
2. Members of ECDSG represent their respective jurisdictions and speak at the ECDSG on behalf of their jurisdictions on early childhood data matters.
3. Members endorse, as appropriate, a National Minimum Data Set for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), make arrangements for its implementation, and promote development of related standards, definitions, classifications and protocols across the scope of the National ECEC Information Agreement.
4. Where specific matters arise that require expertise or insights from outside ECDSG, relevant officials and agencies may be asked to participate in the ECDSG's meetings and deliberations, as appropriate.

Aims

1. Development of good quality performance information to meet reporting needs under the COAG Inter Governmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations (IGA), the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education, and other related Agreements.
2. Development of an ongoing and accessible evidence base, which allows more transparent reporting and mechanisms for enhanced public accountability.
3. Contribution to better information and a solid evidence base for national monitoring, researching and evaluating outcomes related to children, families and early childhood development services in Australia, under the Early Childhood Development Strategy.

Priorities

1. Developing and implementing a National ECEC Information Agreement to improve and extend early childhood education and child care data as an integral step towards meeting quality, reliable and defensible performance information required under the IGA.
2. Managing the Agreement and related structures, processes, and functions outlined in the Agreement, including endorsing and implementing a National Minimum Data Set for ECEC.
3. Developing and reviewing, on an annual basis, a work program based on agreed short-term national priorities.
4. Developing a longer term Work Plan of broader information development priorities and

activities over the next 5 years, and reviewing and revising the Work Plan, after a period of two years.

5. Coordinating and developing a National Early Childhood Development Information Strategy to provide the framework for cooperation for high quality information on early childhood development, to enable provision of data to monitor both early childhood progress and outcomes, and to support a child-centred, integrated early childhood reform agenda.

The ECDSG will report to and advise the ECDWG on these matters as appropriate, and will report to the Strategic Cross Sectoral Data Committee (SCDC), through ECDWG, on cross-sectoral issues.

Membership

- Membership of the ECDSG will comprise:
 - Nominees of each of the States and Territories who are signatories to the Agreement. Jurisdictions may at any time elect to nominate one or more nominees to represent all the signatories from that jurisdiction.
 - A nominee of the Australian Government from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) who is also the chair of the committee.
 - A nominee of the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
 - A Nominee of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.
 - A nominee of the Secretariat for the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Services provision.
- The Group will consult and communicate with key stakeholders, including other Commonwealth and state/territory agencies, other data collection agencies, providers and the non-government sector.