

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

Early
Childhood
Education
and Care

INITIATIVES



At the core of the Centre is a suite of key initiatives carefully designed to address critical challenges in the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector. These initiatives have been aligned with the recommendations outlined in the Jobs and Skills Australia Capacity Study and the Productivity Commission Report on ECEC. The scope and priority of the initiatives has been informed by consultation with industry stakeholders.

Currently, the first 10 initiatives are underway, with more in development to further support and strengthen the sector. Moreover, these initiatives are dynamic and adaptable, with the flexibility to evolve and respond to the changing needs, challenges, and opportunities within the ECEC landscape over time.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PRODUCT: AUTISM

Sector engagement and feedback has identified a need for educators to have increased awareness and understanding of Autism to support children and families and build a culture of inclusion. Children in early childhood education and care settings are aged birth to 5 years and may not have had an autism diagnosis. This initiative will see the development of a training product for students within the Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care (CHC30121) and provide recommendations to HumanAbility on inclusion in a unit of competency.

APY LANDS METHODOLOGY AND TRANSLATION

The Anangu people of the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands may speak up to six Aboriginal languages in addition to English. Historically, the delivery of Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care (CHC30121) has been delivered in English. This initiative will investigate and implement alternate approaches to delivering the certificate in the APY Lands. A central focus will be the translation of key concepts into Pitjantjatjara in a unit of competency.

DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP INITIATIVE

Australia is in the midst of a national teacher shortage, which extends to the early childhood setting. The minimum qualification for teaching is a bachelor degree. A degree apprenticeship in early childhood education (focused on children aged 0-5) represents one way to address the workforce shortage by encouraging existing workers to upskill and access additional career pathways while also enticing prospective students to undertake workplace-based training. This provides employers with both short-term and long-term staffing solutions. This initiative will assess a range of apprenticeship models and delivery options, establish the required curriculum and develop learning and assessment resources.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PRODUCT: MENTORING FOR LEADERSHIP

The current skills shortage in the ECEC sector has resulted in educators being promoted into leadership roles early in their careers, often creating a knowledge gap for these emerging leaders. This initiative will respond to the need for skills development in the early childhood sector by proposing and developing sector specific training courses and resources to build leadership and mentoring skills. These professional learning products will support the retention and upskilling of educators in leadership roles, and those aspiring to leadership roles in the sector.



DIPLOMA TRAINEESHIP UPTAKE ENQUIRY

This initiative is designed to increase the uptake of diploma-level qualifications among early childhood educators by researching and reporting on barriers and providing recommendations. It will investigate national uptake of diploma traineeships along with alternate delivery methods to support the sector. A key outcome will be the design of a model emphasising workplace-based learning and assessment.

ENTRY REQUIREMENT REVIEW: DIPLOMA OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE (CHC50121)

HumanAbility, the newly established Jobs and Skills Council (JSC) overseeing the early childhood education and care sector, has proposed changes to the entry requirements for the Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care. The current requirements have been identified as barriers for career advancement for many early childhood educators. This review will support the development of new resources to help educators apply for recognition of prior learning (RPL) for the Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care bridging skill set, facilitating their entry into the diploma qualification.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PRODUCT: SUPPORTING BEHAVIOUR

One of the most overwhelming concerns faced by ECEC educators, is managing and responding to the challenging behaviours of children within their care. These behaviours may stem from a range of neurodivergent conditions or developmental factors and can pose risk of injury to workers and other children. The Centre will collaborate with the sector to develop stackable training courses and resources to support understanding and skills development in relation to the 'behaviour language' that children use to express themselves and the role of educators to provide quality, best practice care.

CAREER INFORMATION FOR PRIORITY COHORTS

As a national priority sector, ECEC is experiencing acute workforce challenges and skills shortages and must significantly expand by attracting new entrants. Currently the sector is predominantly female, with men attributing to just 3% of the national workforce. This initiative will explore and develop strategies and resources to increase participation among priority cohorts—men, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) persons – by reviewing career information and enhancing communication and engagement.

ESTABLISHMENT OF DEMONSTRATOR SITES (LINK TO MENTORING AND LEADERSHIP INITIATIVES)

To complement the various initiatives, resources and training courses developed by the Centre, in collaboration with the sector, demonstrator sites will be established nationwide, allowing stakeholders to observe, assess, trial initiatives, and provide valuable feedback. Sites will be selected based on their relevance and alignment with a specific initiative, resource or training course. Potential demonstrator sites will be invited to participate in pilot programs, where feedback will be collected, and reporting metrics will be compiled to document the trial's findings.

DEGREE PATHWAYS AND ARTICULATION

This initiative aims to strengthen collaboration between universities and vocational education and training (VET) institutions to maximise the transition of students from VET qualifications into higher education pathways. It will investigate models where higher education providers are granting high levels of articulation for VET diploma of ECEC graduates entering Bachelors of ECEC (0 – 5), evaluate elective content and learner success in higher education, including models of support applied. By showcasing successful models and best practices, the initiative seeks to provide valuable examples to the National TAFE Network for application across various jurisdictions.

The Centre of Excellence in Early Childhood Education and Care is a joint initiative between the Australian Government and South Australian Government.

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