



# Preschool Consultation Feedback for carers

## What this consultation was about

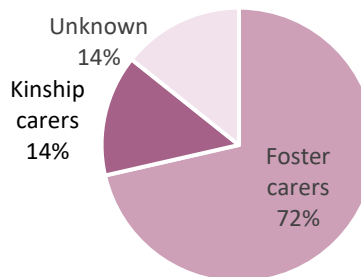
The Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care made a number of recommendations regarding early childhood education in South Australia, including supporting and expanding access to preschool for children in care.

To increase the enrolment and engagement of children in care in childcare and/or preschool, the Office for Early Childhood Development has been working with DCP and carers to better understand the barriers and challenges that children in care face in relation to early childhood education.

## Who we spoke to

To understand a range of perspectives on this topic, we sought feedback from a variety of family-based carers including:

- Foster carers
- Kinship carers
- Long term guardians
- Carers of Aboriginal children
- Carers of children with disability






## What we asked

The consultation focused on answering the following questions:

- What do you think are the benefits of children in care attending preschool?
- What would make you hesitate considering taking your child to preschool?
- Did you feel informed about the preschool options available to you (either through a government preschool or childcare)?
- What have been your experiences of the process of enrolling children/children being enrolled in preschool?
- How do you think this process could be improved to support carers enrolling and engaging/attending preschool?
- What things would help children to attend preschool and feel included?

## Our approach

In February-May 2025, OECD and DCP used the following approaches to hear from family-based carers:

-  1 in-person small group discussion
-  4 in-depth phone consultations
-  1 email containing feedback



## What you told us

### Supports for children with disability and/or experiences of trauma

- Children with disability may need additional supports to attend preschool
- Some preschools are unable to support children with complex needs
- Carers of children with disability are concerned that their behaviour at preschool could result in notifications
- It is important that preschools are trauma-informed

### Preschool needs to meet the needs of the carer and child

- Limited preschool hours may be incompatible with a carer's work and other commitments
- Carers may wish to wait until their child is 4 to enrol them in preschool so that they can work on strengthening their relationship and best support the child's developmental needs
- Preschool may not be the best option for every child

### Financial barriers to preschool

- Preschool fees can be a barrier for children in care accessing preschool
- The School Card scheme does not include preschool
- The Additional Child Care Subsidy does not include preschool

### Information sharing

- Liaising with DCP and compiling relevant documentation to enrol a child in preschool can be time consuming
- DCP case workers do not always have knowledge of local preschools, programs and enrolment processes

## What happens next?

Feedback provided by carers will be used by the Office for Early Childhood Development to increase opportunities for children in care to access early childhood education and inform the development of a formalised pathway into preschool and/or long day care.



DCP sincerely thanks all who took the time to participate in these consultations and provide feedback.

**We appreciate you.**

**We hear you.**

**We're working on improvements.**