



## THE PRESCHOOL GROWTH PROGRAM

The Preschool Growth Program is the third stage of the NSW Government's Preschool Investment and Reform Plan (PIRP). PIRP is the NSW Government's plan for investing more money in preschools. There have been three distinct funding rounds:

- 1. Emergency funding** – funds from the Department of Community Services (DoCS) given to services which the Department felt needed urgent funds;
- 2. Viability funding** – services had to complete submissions to receive funding under this program;
- 3. The Preschool Places Growth Phase** – aims to create new preschool places, enabling additional children to attend preschool for two days per week in the year before they go to school.

Two organisations have been funded by the NSW Government to provide services across the state with development and support services, and enable them to create additional preschool places.

These organisations are:

### Community Child Care Co-operative (NSW)

Responsible for 14 network areas in NSW.  
Email: [preschoolgrowth@cccnsw.org.au](mailto:preschoolgrowth@cccnsw.org.au)  
Phone: (02) 8922 6444

### CareWest Inc

Responsible for Central West and Orana/Far West network areas.  
Contact: Jenny Nalder  
Email: [jennyn@cw.org.au](mailto:jennyn@cw.org.au)  
Phone: (02) 6362 6784

Community Child Care has named its part of the program the Preschool Growth Program (PGP). Community Child Care has a long history of working with and supporting preschools in NSW. We are pleased that DoCS has recognised this by awarding us the contract to provide development and support to preschools in growing new places.

### Preschool Growth Program

A project of Community Child Care Co-operative

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# YOUR FUNDING IS RECURRENT

**Community Child Care is aware that some services are worried about whether their funding will decrease next year.**

Services have received notification of funding from DoCS and this funding consists of two amounts – **recurrent funding** and an additional **one-off payment**. Services will not receive the one-off payment again next year. However, unless enrolments drop dramatically during this period, services should receive the same amount of recurrent funding next year.

Calculations of funding for 2010/11 are based upon the data that services reported during the week of 17–21 August 2009. If the funding is calculated to be more than the 2009/10 funding, services will receive an increase in funding next year.

If the calculation indicates a reduction in funding of **less than 15 per cent** of the level received in 2009/10, funding for 2010/11 will remain the same.

If the calculation indicates a reduction that is **more than 15 per cent**, funding will be reduced accordingly. If your service knows its enrolments have fallen and wants to understand what its future funding might be, contact a Preschool Growth Program Project Officer at Community Child Care.

## NSW PRESCHOOLS: WHERE ARE THEY?

### NSW Regional

Far North Coast	67
Mid North Coast	48
New England	46
Central Coast	14
Hunter	73
Illawarra	35
Southern Highlands	43
Riverina Murray	63
Central West	34
Orana/Far West	29

### NSW Metropolitan

Northern Sydney	91
South East Sydney	63
Macarthur	25
South West Sydney	28
Nepean	32
Blacktown/Baulkham Hills	32
Cumberland	15
Inner West	31

## YOU CAN REQUEST A REVIEW

If services have concerns about the ongoing sustainability of their preschool under RAM funding, they are entitled to request a funding review from DoCS. The review process is designed to give services with exceptional circumstances an opportunity to have their funding levels reassessed, based on their individual situation.

Funding reviews will only be conducted for those eligible services with exceptional circumstances. For example, services in remote areas or services affected by factors that were not taken into account when the funding allocation was calculated.

Eligible services are those who:

- did not receive a funding increase in 2009/10 under the new model; and
- have difficulty balancing their budget within existing income, or are in deficit, despite good financial management.

The DoCS Partnerships and Planning Team (P&P) will consider your request and review your individual case, based on knowledge of the local service system. The P&P Team will make recommendations to the DoCS Head Office, who will make the final assessment on whether to grant additional funding.

## ELIGIBILITY FOR PRESCHOOL GROWTH PROGRAM FUNDING

**Early childhood services offering a preschool program are eligible for Preschool Growth Program funding if they meet the program's criteria.**

# FUNDING UNDER GROWTH PLACES

The way to receive additional funding from the Preschool Growth Program is to 'grow' places.

Unlike the other phases of the Preschool Investment and Reform Plan, DoCS won't be funding services directly under the Growth Phase. Community Child Care Co-operative (and CareWest) is responsible for distributing funding.

**How will it work?** When Community Child Care confirms that a service has created a new preschool place, subject to DoCS approving our funding recommendations, the service will immediately receive 50 per cent of RAM funding for that place.

After a further six months, if the service still has a child in that place, it will receive another six months of RAM funding for that place. Funding will continue until the financial year that occurs after the next reporting period, where DoCS will fund the place, alongside the normal RAM funding.

## The example of Preschool 1:

In November 2009, Preschool 1 creates one new preschool place over the number reported in the 2008 reporting document. The preschool was underutilised but a new family places their child at the service.

Preschool 1 informs Community Child Care about this additional place, and receives 50 per cent of its RAM funding for this place.

In May 2010, the created place is still occupied (now by another child) at Preschool 1 and the service receives another 50 per cent of RAM funding from Community Child Care.

## How can your service grow places?

How each preschool creates places under the Preschool Growth Program will differ from service to service. Some preschools are underutilised – that is, they are licensed for places they can't fill. The following examples suggest ways for preschools to increase places:

**Example A:** Preschool 2 chose to drop two places because filling these places would require employing an extra staff member. Under the Preschool Growth Program, they realised that if they could fill these places again, they would receive extra fees and extra funding – meaning that they could afford the extra staff member.

**Example B:** Preschool 3 had 10 children on its waiting list and sufficient space to increase their licenced numbers but never really had the reason to do it before. Because of the Preschool Growth Program, more spaces equals more funding. The preschool now has a very good reason to increase their licenced numbers.

**Example C:** Preschool 4 created more spaces by maximising two-and-a-half day attendances. They were only open for two days a week, but decided to open for an extra day each week. This increased their RAM funding and they received 50 per cent of the funding for the extra places.

**Example D:** Preschool 5 had a problem where not all of the children in their community could access their service because of transport difficulties. They decided to create a mobile outreach service in another part of the town for two days per week.

One of the great things about the Preschool Growth Program is that preschools don't have to provide a submission to justify how the additional funding will be spent – if your preschool believes it can grow places, contact a Preschool Growth Program Project Officer at Community Child Care to discuss your options.

**Have you already grown new places?** Some preschools have already grown places. Those preschools who have enrolled more children in 2009, compared to the representative week in 2008, have already grown places and may be eligible to have these places funded.

Preschools may be eligible for funding for these places from Community Child Care Co-operative.

If they haven't already been in touch, Community Child Care's Project Officers will soon contact your service to see if you are in this situation!

## YOUR PRESCHOOL GROWTH PROGRAM PROJECT OFFICER

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Some of the preschool experts Community Child Care has called upon as a Reference Group.

## THE BEST MINDS ARE ON THE JOB!

When Community Child Care took on the Preschool Growth Program, we knew we would need the support and assistance of some of our most esteemed early childhood professionals. So we set up a Reference Group to provide advice and feedback and to ensure the project has a thorough understanding of the possible impact of the program on various preschool types.

The Reference Group is made up of representatives of:

- Australian Community Children's Services (ACCS) NSW;
- CareWest Inc – Early Childhood Access Support Service;
- Children's Choice Preschool Group;
- Children's Services Central;
- Community Connections Solutions Australia;
- Contact Inc.;
- Council of Social Service of NSW;
- Early Childhood Australia (ECA) NSW Branch;
- Ethnic Child Care Family & Community Services Co-operative;
- Fairfield City Council;
- Indigenous Professional Support Unit of NSW;
- KU Children's Services;
- LHMU NSW Branch;
- Mobile Children's Services Association of NSW Inc;
- New South Wales Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood Sector Advisory Group Incorporated (ATSIECSAG);
- NSW/ACT Independent Education Union (IEU);
- Penrith City Council;
- SDN Children's Services;
- Tonia Godhard;
- UnitingCare Children's Service; and of course
- Community Child Care Co-operative Ltd. (NSW).

Community Child Care is pleased to be receiving input from people with a wealth of preschool understanding and experience.

## TO INCREASE YOUR FUNDING, INCREASE YOUR HOURS...

Did you know that your RAM funding is calculated on the average number of hours your preschool is open per day? It appears that preschools opening for less than an average of six hours per day are disadvantaged in the RAM funding formula. It may be worthwhile checking how your funding could change if your preschool increases its hours above six hours per day.

Community Child Care has been working with a service which has discovered that if they open for another four hours per week, they would receive an extra \$14,000 per year! This service is licensed for 20 places and is open for five days per week. They have 44 children during the week: two children are Aboriginal and 14 children come from families eligible for a low-income health card.

The service has been opening for 26 hours per week but, by increasing their hours to 30 a week, or an average of six hours per day, their funding jumps from \$91,426 per year to \$105,492.

Community Child Care urges all services who are operating

for less than an average of six hours per day to calculate what the effect of increased hours will be on their service with the DoCS RAM calculator: [www.community.nsw.gov.au](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au)  
Services that may be in this situation are services open for half-day sessions or services that are only open for five hours on one day of the week.

To check what your average hours per day are, add the hours your service is open per week and divide it by the number of days your service opens. If the figure is less than six – run your figures through the calculator or contact a Preschool Growth Program Project Officer and we will do it for you!