



ACT Council of P&C Associations
 Early Learning Committee Meeting
Minute summary April 29, 2021, 7.00 pm
 Online via zoom

Announcements:

Online Training Jun–Oct

Register for Council’s live [online training](#) (Updating the P&C constitution and grant writing)
 P&C Constitution workshop 7pm, Tuesday 15 June via Zoom
[All about allergens](#) Free Training for children’s education and care volunteers and staff

EVENTS

JULY

26-30 Early Learning Matters Week [Home - Early Learning Matters](#)
 Raise awareness and understanding of the importance of early learning.
 Simple ideas to get involved [here](#)

<p>Council’s Early Learning Committee (ELC) and the ELO role were established in 2018 when the <i>Canberra Preschool Society</i> (1943-2018) wound up after significant consultation with the preschool and parent community. ACT Council of Parents and Citizens website EL Early Learning Officer email and online Resources for parent associations and representatives</p>	<p>Committee background</p>
<p>1. Meeting open Acknowledgement of Country</p> <p>2. ACT Early Childhood Strategy, report ‘Set up for success’ Aug 2020.</p> <p>This 10 year plan began implementation in 2020, with Phases 1 and 2, 2020-21 and 2022-24. MS met with staff from the Education Directorate (EC strategy and policy) regarding the implementation. The ELC continues to monitor the strategy and the impact on families and early years education.</p> <p>Strategy elements of phase one - p12:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partnering with playgroups, • recognising early childhood education through ACT legislation, • sharing of expertise – EC teachers across schools and services, • developing a cross sector Workforce Strategy, • more effective transitions, • increasing support for parents as first teachers <p>Preschool for 3 year olds, progress: targeted access was offered from 2020 to targeted children (up to 500 places). The phase 1 evaluation report is due 2021.</p> <p>Trial of Preschool OSH (out-of-school-hours care): As part of the ACT Government’s election commitment, the trial is being conducted at four preschools with OSH educators. The model is designed to integrate with the local</p>	<p>7.03pm</p>

<p>primary school through settings and relationships that can provide support for children transitioning to school.</p> <p>Initial parent reports to EDU indicate the trials have been well-received.</p> <p>Opportunities for government funded preschool services to provide a full day of education and care for children are also being explored.</p> <p>Feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will 3YO preschool be expanded from targeted to universal in the ACT before 2024? • will the reports from 3yo preschool and the OSH trial be publicly available? • Re the steps being taken to increase support for parents as first teachers, has the early childhood educational component for expecting parents been completed/implemented? • will the EL amendment to the Education Act be submitted this year? 	<p>Question for: J. Batt S. Meeth Re Strategy</p>
<p>3. Preschool capacity</p> <p>ACT School capacity has been in the media and discussed at Council GM's.</p> <p>The Education Directorate has also listed the high demand preschools on their website (32 of 77).</p> <p>Council Facebook post re <i>enrolling in preschool</i> received significant interest again. Will out-of-area preschool offers be increased this year?</p> <p>Parents have said that when preschool children are enrolled in out-of-area preschools, the child and their family are separated from their local school community. This can create transition obstacles, and families may be less able, or less inclined, to network with their out-of-area community.</p> <p>Preschool confirmation and OSH bookings</p> <p>Parents receive confirmation of a preschool place in July, with less than four months to complete the process of contesting/accepting/confirming the preschool place or days and times (up to 15 hrs per wk). Personal documentation requirements such as proof of residency, location and relationship status can create further delays particularly for parents under stress.</p> <p>Parents seeking to book OSH care are required to provide advanced notice to service providers to secure the hours required. This may involve a booking deposit to reserve a place. Where preschool confirmation is delayed, this can become a significant burden for parents.</p> <p>Feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are increases in out-of-area preschool offers predicted and will Council have access to this information? • Where this occurs, can we improve support and information available for these families (ie through school P&C events prior to transition, extra support to connect with OofA parents, primary school connections, and transition activities) 	<p>July follow up re children excluded from their PEA preschool.</p> <p>EDU</p>

4. ELC Feedback from parents:

First-time parents and barriers to preschool enrolment and participation

We've heard repeatedly about preschool enrolment difficulties for first time parents: Enrolment cut-off dates can be missed where new parents (and their networks) are outside of the EC information loops. Parents may not even be thinking about, or looking for, preschool information. It can also be challenging to find the right information.

There's broad acknowledgement of the barriers to enrolling but action is not always taken - the sort of action that can be taken to overcome those barriers especially if you have no experience of them.

It's different at a school level to the system level. Human to human interactions are more effective. At the system level it's much more difficult.

A review of communication for this target group is recommended.

Issues:

- Accessing new-parent contacts
- Volunteers managing social media
- Preschool enrollment messaging
- Communicating with daycare services
- Centrelink, rebates and other communication avenues available

Transitioning experiences differ for children enrolled in local preschool to those coming from further away, or without daycare. Will resources be available to address this?

Early Learning Committee participation

It's acknowledged that parents with young children have multiple demands on their time which impacts committee participation. The ELC continues to seek feedback on ways to strengthen the network, provide resources, and collect the voices of EL parents. Feedback is compiled and used to inform the ELC's activities.

Suggestions:

A later start time for ELC meetings to be trialled (7.30-8.30pm) from July 29.

Invite new parents. EL parents can feel they're still learning about school systems and may not think they have anything to contribute. See Draft parent invitation poster (attached).

Council have received feedback on a range of topics including:

- Enrolment procedure and practice
- School information and communication to parents
- The early years learning framework EYLF information for parents
- Inclusion support for families
- Community engagement and P&C's
- Collaboration and relationships.

Parents with 3-7yr olds in public education are invited to add their feedback.

Council ELC &
Executive

EDU

Parents networking with parents

Preschool parents have said that when they are able to come together to discuss engagement in their children's learning, children strengthen friendships and parents can get together to support learning. For organised networking, there can be [privacy issues](#) to manage.

before preschool, at playschool, there was the list that you completed for your phone number to be shared. You got the sheet with everybody's first name, whose mom or dad they were and a mobile number. it just let you reach out to people more authentically... The carpark conversations have been sabotaged by COVID.

I once wrote a note for my son's friend and put it in their bag. For the first school holidays, 'do you want to have a playdate?' if you don't do that you can lose being in on those networks early.

one of the things my school did this year was year level based, because we couldn't have our traditional welcome barbecue, particularly for preschool and kindy. Called 'the really big play date', they just stayed back on the Friday afternoon with the P&C executive to watch the kids so parents could chat. It was just from 3-5pm to stay for an ice block and a play and meet some other parents... they had a sheet where people could sign up to share contact details. It was very successful, and easy - the teachers could pop out and say hello, but it wasn't asking them to stay late.

5. New preschool/school parent concerns – sharing expertise

Council supports Parent associations to share expertise when supporting new families. See [what other P&Cs are doing](#) and please share your story if you have a great example.

Parents of preschool children have told us they worry about:

- managing work hours with school hours and holidays
- Navigating (and forgetting) school information

They ask,.. will my child

- make new friends, be happy? be ready?
- like their teacher?

How can I

- support my child's learning?
- communicate with my child's school, teacher or other parents?
- get information if I have a problem?

Who can nominate for the Early Learning Committee

Parents of 3-7yr old children in public education are invited to [nominate](#) to represent parents of early learners at their local ACT school.

- 6) Wellbeing Resources:** BeYou (BeyondBlue) for educators
[SMILING MINDS](#) Wellbeing app and resources. With target age groups.
 For families [App – Smiling Mind](#).
 Wellbeing [Books](#) for ages 3-7 years
[Digital Care packs](#) for supporting kids’ mental health throughout the pandemic and beyond.
[Self-care packs](#) for parents.
[Curriculum Areas - Early Education - ABC Kids](#)
[Reflective Journal - Early Education - ABC Kids](#)

The P&C community engagement grants have been a great opportunity for school communities to do something like talking about wellbeing and raising the profile of the school in the local community... parents sometimes need more support for their own wellbeing.

Any further recommendations for Parent and family resources you can share to the network?

7) Preschool data

This term Kindy teachers responded to the **Australian Early Development Census** [AEDC](#)

Conducted every three years by kindergarten teachers who complete the Instrument for each child based on their observations. AEDC results are not used as an individual diagnostic tool, they are an aggregate measure. The 2021 data collection (the fifth collection) is currently being compiled.

TABLE: Number and percentage of children on track in 2018 [Domains explained](#)

Geography	Physical	Social	Emotional	Language	Communication	Attended a pre-school program(%)
Australia	229,542 (78.1)	222,771 (75.8)	225,739 (77.1)	247,870 (84.4)	227,163 (77.3)	85
ACT	3,840 (70.0)	3,969 (72.4)	4,173 (76.1)	4,613 (84.2)	3,974 (72.5)	89.9

ACT Schools Census - conducted annually in August. Enrolments from preschool.

Preschool Enrolments	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
ACT Public preschool	4,603	4,677	4,679	4,716	4,679

National Census 2021

Conducted every five years, the next National [Census](#) collection is August 10. Data is used to inform a range of decisions including planning for schools and services.

UANP

The Commonwealth wants to work with states to develop and trial a preschool outcomes measure. To support this reform, the Commonwealth will provide funding to:

- *improve the quality and transparency of preschool data that is available nationally, and*
- *develop a new Preschool Performance Framework.*