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Supporting reconciliation

## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands, seas, skies and waterways from across Queensland. We pay our respect to the Elders, past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



# Foreword

## A message from the Minister



The *Queensland Early Childhood Workforce Strategy 2025-28* (the strategy) has been developed to ensure that all Queensland children – regardless of their location or life

circumstances – have access to high-quality early childhood education and care.

The first few years of a child's life are critical for growth and development. The quality of early education received during this time plays a significant role in shaping their future.

Every interaction matters. We know educators have a considerable influence on children's development and wellbeing and support successful transitions from home to early years and into school.

Each day, educators across our vast and diverse state open doors to more than 300,000 children. We recognise the warm welcome educators, teachers and staff provide fills a family with confidence, knowing their child is safe, happy and nurtured.

A skilled, supported and engaged workforce has a profound impact on setting critical foundations for learning and wellbeing of Queensland's youngest minds, while also enabling families to participate in the workforce and contribute to the economic growth of the state.

This strategy outlines actions to attract, retain and elevate early childhood professionals across the state. It recognises the need to build a pipeline of qualified educators through stronger career pathways, practical training opportunities, and strategies to support workforce development.

Our goal, for you, the early childhood educator, is to ensure you feel valued, recognised and empowered. We also want to inspire school leavers, welcome back experienced educators and invite career changers to join our incredible early childhood family.

By working together, we can continue to build a capable and sustainable early childhood workforce that gives all children a strong start.

**The Honourable John-Paul Langbroek MP**  
Minister for Education and the Arts





‘What I love most about my job is that I get to help children understand that they belong to this world and create memorable moments with them.’

Shanyce - educator

## Overview

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Our vision is one of a sustainable, qualified early childhood workforce who are recognised for their contribution to improving outcomes for children.

This strategy focuses on growing and retaining a high-quality workforce, strengthening support systems, and modernising workforce approaches. It is guided by robust data and ongoing consultation to ensure educators’ voices are heard.

Professional development and locally tailored solutions are central, ensuring communities’ evolving needs are met.

Educators are at the heart of this strategy—whether you’re casual, part-time, or full-time; working in centre-based care, family day care, or outside school hours care, this strategy is for you.

With strong commitments from both the Australian and Queensland governments, there has never been a better time to join the early childhood sector.

The strategy aims to attract new educators, build clear career pathways, strengthen support, and improve access to professional learning—aligning with national efforts to build a respected, high-quality workforce.

# Queensland's early childhood sector

## Our dynamic and diverse workforce



**333,015**

children enrolled in an early childhood service



**3,344**

early childhood services in Queensland



**54,150** staff in the workforce

The number of staff working in early childhood services in Queensland continues to grow:

**7.2%**  
growth  
since 2023



- **1,869** long day care
- **799** outside school hours care
- **491** kindergarten
- **102** family day care



### The workforce

**54,150** All staff

Educators, Early Childhood Teachers (ECTs) and staff not working with children

- eKindy - 11
- Family day care - **2,099**
- Kindergarten service - **2,888**
- Long day care - **40,543**
- Occasional care / limited hours care - **52**
- Outside school hours care - **8,070**
- State Delivered Kindy - **487**

Source: 2024 ECEC Census

**48,479** Educators

Educators working with children

- eKindy - 8
- Family day care - **2,099**
- Kindergarten service - **2,448**
- Long day care - **35,891**
- Occasional care / limited hours care - **45**
- Outside school hours care - **7,604**
- State Delivered Kindy - **384**

**4,402** Qualified ECTs

Person who is a qualified ECT working in a service, regardless of position held

- eKindy - 8
- Family day care\* - **27**
- Kindergarten service - **966**
- Long day care - **3,207**
- Occasional care / limited hours care - **4**
- Outside school hours care - **84**
- State Delivered Kindy - **106**

\*Only includes FDC coordinators who are ECTs.

# Shaping the 2025–2028 Workforce Strategy

The department has worked closely with the early childhood sector to shape the strategy. The comprehensive suite of initiatives being rolled out are based on the voices and feedback from teachers, educators, approved providers and peak sector organisations about the challenges facing the workforce and how we can address them together.

## Key themes of what we heard



### Educators' needs



Develop professional career pathways and leadership programs.

Build workforce capability by promoting collaborative leadership and teamwork, aligned to the National Learning Frameworks.

Promote workforce recognition and develop attraction strategies.



### Supporting children



Provide access to programs that support inclusive practices and strategies to build meaningful relationships with children.

Enhanced ability to support families of non-English speaking backgrounds.



### Cultural safety



Foster and promote diversity in early childhood settings to include qualified and experienced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators to support families in engaging with early childhood education and care.

### Achieving better outcomes for all children

The strategy is designed to equip educators with the tools and resources needed to create inclusive, supportive learning environments for every child.

## Our strategic priorities to help shape and evolve the workforce



Attract  
and retain



Professional  
recognition



Qualifications,  
skills and pathways



Strong  
leadership



Wellbeing  
and resilience



Quality



# Strategic priorities and initiatives

The strategy is centred around six strategic priorities designed to address workforce challenges collaboratively, while fostering new opportunities for growth, stability, and support within the sector. These priorities provide a structured approach to addressing key issues, ensuring a sustainable and adaptable workforce for the future.



## Attract and retain

Promote early childhood as a rewarding career, including the range of benefits, supports and experiences on offer to advance a career in early childhood.



## Professional recognition

Acknowledge the expertise of the early childhood workforce and elevate the status of the profession.



## Qualifications, skills and pathways

Build skills and capability of the early childhood sector through targeted support, high-quality and contemporary training and flexible career pathways.

### Our initiatives

- Provide incentives to attract and retain early childhood teachers in kindergarten programs in regional, remote and very remote areas.
- Improve conditions, through subsidies, for early childhood teachers delivering approved kindergarten programs in long day care services.
- Promote a career in early childhood to school students and career changers to support the growth and sustainability of the workforce.
- Explore the development of an induction framework to support consistent induction practices in the sector.

- Expand teacher registration pathways to all early childhood teachers.
- Raise the profile of early childhood as a rewarding career at events across Queensland.
- Promote the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership standards to support early childhood teachers.

- Provide scholarships for early childhood professionals to attain or upgrade early childhood qualifications.
- Provide financial support to eligible students completing their final work placement through the department's Early Childhood Practicum Placement Grant.
- Support the delivery of qualifications on Country, including continuing the Remote Area Teacher Education Program.
- Support professional development programs to build capability and support inclusion and strengthen the cultural responsiveness of services.
- Partner with QCAN\* to deliver the OSHC Educator Microcredential.
- Work with the sector on a range of microcredentials to support the career development of all early childhood professionals.

### Performance measures

- Increase in the total number of staff working in early childhood education and care.
- Increase in the number of school leavers choosing early childhood as a career.
- Increase in the number and proportion of educators who hold a relevant early childhood qualification.

- Increase the number of early childhood teachers registered with the Queensland College of Teachers.

- Increase the proportion of early childhood educators who identify they have improved their skills and knowledge to deliver quality early childhood programs.
- Increase the number of educators receiving an Early Childhood scholarship, subsidy or grant funded by the department.



## Strong leadership



## Wellbeing and resilience



## Quality

Inspire leadership excellence across the diverse workforce through targeted professional development strategies.

Foster wellbeing across the sector, by providing access to programs and guidance to support positive, inclusive and culturally responsive practices.

Drive continuous improvement to support and sustain a skilled and capable workforce to deliver high-quality early childhood services.

- Co-design leadership programs to develop and promote our next generation of cultural leaders in early childhood.
- Implement the leadership and management program to support the development of beginning, intermediate and experienced early childhood leaders.
- Partner with providers to offer mentoring and coaching programs for all early childhood professionals.

- Provide access to a wellbeing support service for educators.
- Continue to support access to inclusion and positive behaviour guidance programs.
- Continue to support access to protective behaviour training programs.
- Connect educators with support organisations across their community and the sector to promote wellbeing and inclusion.

- Work with universities, registered training organisations and partners to ensure qualifications are continuously improved, remain relevant and respond to contemporary skill demands.
- Extend uplift programs to family day care and outside school hours care services to drive quality improvement.
- Implement the Positive Behaviour Guidance Coaching Program to enhance positive behaviour support practices supporting educator and child wellbeing.
- Partner with ACECQA\* to deliver the Targeting Quality Program.
- Strengthen educator capability in using the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Progression Tool.
- Develop a suite of child safety training materials to support consistent practices in the sector.

Our Initiatives

- Increase access and participation to leadership and development programs and initiatives.
- Number of services with improvements reported in Quality Area 7 under the National Quality Framework.

- Number of services and educators accessing funded programs including wellbeing support, Early Childhood Guidance programs and Positive Behaviour coaching.
- Reduction in breaches of inappropriate interactions with children under the National Law and National Regulations.

- Increased educator capability to identify and respond positively to support children's social and emotional wellbeing.
- Number of services with improvements reported in Quality Area 1, 4 and 5 under the National Quality Framework.
- Number of services Meeting the National Quality Standard or above.

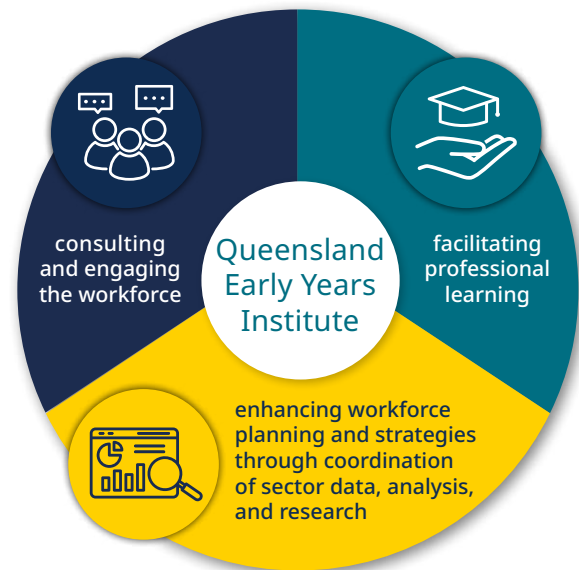
Performance measures

# Queensland Early Years Institute

The Queensland Early Years Institute (the Institute) is a key initiative of the strategy and the first of its kind in Australia. The early childhood education and care workforce experiences unique challenges. The department has commenced broad consultation with the sector on the design and focus of the Institute, which will aim to support educators across the state, no matter where they live, or their background.

The Institute will play an important role in facilitating a voice for the early childhood education and care workforce, work to improve workforce capability, and enhance sector-wide workforce planning and strategies.

The Institute will have three main functions:



## New programs

### Investing in programs that support inclusion and positive behaviour practices

The department is introducing additional support programs that foster inclusion and positive relationships to support the wellbeing of children and their families, teachers and educators.

These programs are designed to enhance the skills and capabilities of early childhood teachers and educators, providing necessary resources and practice supports, to engage children in learning, and to develop their self-expression, and self-reliance skills, while respecting their dignity and rights.

Additionally, the programs support services to meet their obligations under the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations by promoting positive communication, considerations towards family and cultural values, and fostering respectful relationships among children, families, educators, staff, and volunteers.

### The leadership and management program

Leadership in the early childhood sector is integral to the growth, development, and wellbeing of educators and children alike. Effective leadership can positively impact educators' professional satisfaction, personal growth, wellbeing and mental health, and overall workplace morale.

The leadership and management program aims to empower educators with the skills and knowledge needed, to lead with confidence, and drive positive transformation within the sector, benefiting both educators and the children they serve.

# Qualifications Pathways Program in action

## Anna's journey

From local government to an early childhood teacher



The Qualifications Pathways Program (QPP) is transforming the early childhood education and care (ECEC) workforce across the state, especially in rural and remote communities.

This game-changing initiative helps individuals access rewarding careers in early learning, creating lasting impacts on both families and local economies.

### Choosing a career in early childhood education

Anna's inspiring journey is one such success story. Pivoting from a career in local government, she decided to change her bachelor degree from policy and procedure to pursue her passion for working with children in the early childhood sector.

In the small town of Surat, Anna faced challenges finding career development opportunities, but thanks to the QPP, was able to take the first step towards becoming an early childhood teacher (ECT) without leaving her community.

The program provided Anna with:

- financial support and incentives to study while working in ECEC
- access to training and professional development
- guidance and mentorship from ECEC leaders
- a direct pathway to an ECT qualification, addressing educator shortages in rural areas.

### A brighter future

Anna's personal success story extends beyond her own career growth—it's about strengthening her community. With a dedicated ECT in town, young children now have access to Free Kindy, setting them up for a lifelong love of learning.

Families benefit too as quality early education allows working parents to stay in the community and contribute to its growth.

### Local impacts

This program has created a ripple effect in Surat:

- A thriving local economy with young families sustaining the town.
- A stronger, more skilled ECEC workforce for the long term.
- Improved access to quality early education for children, no matter their postcode.

Anna's journey is a shining example of how workforce initiatives can transform rural communities.

Her determination shows that with the right support, anyone can make a meaningful career change and contribute to building a brighter future for early childhood education.

### Looking ahead

As more passionate people like Anna step up, the Qualifications Pathways Program will continue to ensure every community has access to skilled educators shaping the next generation.

# Children's voices

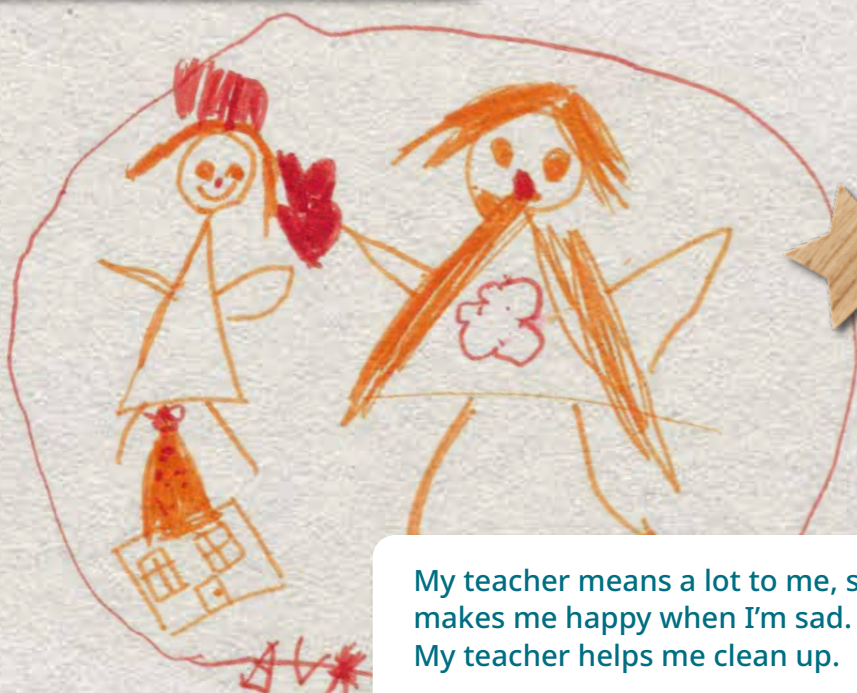
## What my educator means to me...

Educators shape hearts, minds and futures—one little voice at a time.



I love that my teachers take us to Bush Kindy. My teachers always take care of us and give us stuff.

Bernie, 4 years  
*Artwork created by Bernie*



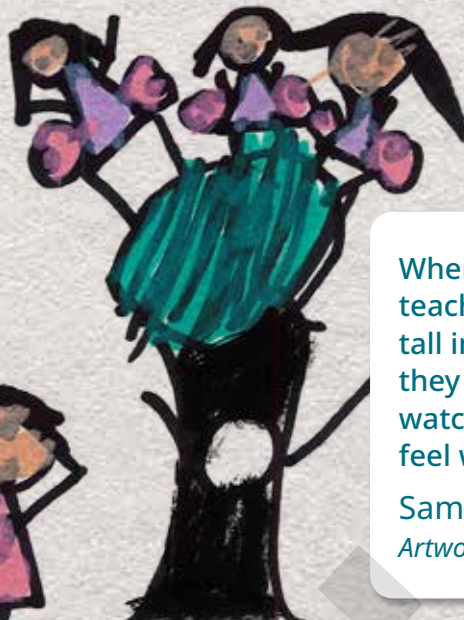
My teacher means a lot to me, she makes me happy when I'm sad. My teacher helps me clean up.

Ava, 5 years  
*Artwork created by Ava*



If you are a teacher, you have to know how to protect people.

Jessica, 5 years  
*Artwork created by Jessica*



When we play outside, my teachers help me to climb tall in the trees but I know they are always there to watch me and help me if I feel worried or scared.

Sam, 5 years  
*Artwork created by Sam*



I love my teacher. She teaches me about the sun.

Victoria, 3 years

Artwork created by Victoria



My teachers always talk to me about dancing and we always dance together. When we dance I feel happy and loved.

Nancy, 3 years

Artwork created by Nancy



I love playing doctors with my teachers and friends at kindy. When we play doctors, we talk about helping people and when I grow up I want to be a nurse.

Charlotte, 4 years

Artwork created by Charlotte



I love when my teachers tell us stories, they are the funniest stories I have ever heard and I laugh and I laugh.

Kim, 5 years

Artwork created by Kim



I like to play with my teachers, draw with them, read books and go into the playground.

Bob, 5 years

Artwork created by Bob



My teachers always find treasure and share the treasure with all the children in the playground. We play with the treasure and make tents, home, hiding spots, jumping spots, it is a lot of fun. I say thank you to my teachers for bringing me treasure.

Rodney, 5 years

Artwork created by Rodney



My kindy teacher makes me feel happy like a rainbow.

William, 4 years

Artwork created by William



# Our workforce is stronger together



[Learn more about our workforce initiatives](#)