

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND**  
**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO**  
**2012-13 Additional Estimates Hearings**

**Outcome Number:** 7

**Question No:** 153

**Topic:** Closing the Gap: remote communities childhood education/ preschool programs

**Hansard Page:** 15/02/2013 CA10

**Senator Scullion** asked:

"What is the difference between a preschool program and childhood education? What is the sort of range of activities that would fall within the definition of a preschool program? Are they set? What range of activities fall within a preschool program? Can you provide attendance figures for the preschool programs? Do you measure them?"

**Answer:**

The term 'early childhood education and care' (ECEC) is accepted by the Australian Government and the State and Territory governments, to incorporate all early childhood education (including preschool programs) and child care programs. ECEC programs may be delivered in a variety of service provider delivery settings such as stand-alone preschools, preschool within schools or in Long Day Care (LDC) centres, family day care, outside school hours care, vacation care, in-home care and occasional care services. Child care services may or may not offer additional preschool programs within their services.

Measurement of progress against the access to early childhood education target is based on the National Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Collection which is compiled by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Under this collection a preschool program is defined as a structured, play-based learning program, delivered by a degree qualified teacher, aimed at children in the year before they commence full-time schooling, irrespective of the type of institution that provides it or whether it is government funded or privately provided. Programs may be delivered in a variety of service settings including separate preschools or kindergartens (both government and non-government), long day care centres, in association with a school etc and separate to general child care. Terminology and age entry requirements to preschool programs differ across states and territories and these differences are summarised in Table 1 below.

More information about the NCEC is available in [National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection: Concepts, Sources and Methods, 2011](#) (ABS Cat. no 4240.0.55.001)

Through the new national collection reporting on attendance and enrolment is planned. Some data on attendance is already published and more will be published as the data across States and Territories becomes more consistent.

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Enrolment and attendance data from the 2011 ECEC is provided in the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, *Report on Government Services 2013* which is available on the Productivity Commission's website. The report shows that:

- In 2011, the proportion of Indigenous children enrolled in a preschool program in remote and very remote areas in the year before full-time schooling was 91%.
- 82% of Indigenous children in remote and very remote areas, were attending preschool for at least one hour per week in 2011.

**Table 1: Preschool programs in Australia**

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Program name</i>	<i>Age of entry - preschool</i>	<i>Age of entry - school</i>
NSW	Preschool	Generally aged 3 and 4	5 by 31 July
Vic	Kindergarten	4 by 30 April	5 by 30 April
Qld	Kindergarten and Pre-Preparatory	4 by 30 June	5 by 30 June
WA	Kindergarten	4 by 30 June	5 by 30 June
SA	Preschool and Kindergarten	Entry after 4th birthday	Entry after 5th birthday
Tas	Kindergarten	4 by 1 January	5 by 1 January
ACT	Preschool	4 by 30 April	5 by 30 April
NT	Preschool	4 by 30 June or 3 for Indigenous children in remote areas	5 by 30 June

<sup>a</sup> Preschool programs are also provided in some long day care centres which are classified as childcare services in this Report. These programs are not included in preschool data, resulting in an undercount of children enrolled in preschool.

As published in Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, *Report on Government Services 2013*