

# DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES



## EARLY YEARS

### **COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS MEETING 2 JULY 2009**

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to a wide-ranging package of reforms for early childhood building on initial investment in universal access to early childhood education.

COAG endorsed:

- **Investing in the Early Years – A National Early Childhood Development Strategy**
- **The Regulation Impact Statement for Early Childhood Education and Care for consultation**
- **The Early Years Learning Framework**

The National Early Childhood Development Strategy is a landmark document, providing for a shared vision for the development of young children in Australia. This strategy will guide consideration of investment in future reforms to support around two million children under eight years of age and their families. The strategy aims to facilitate an effective and better coordinated national early childhood development system to improve the health, safety, early learning and wellbeing of all children and better support disadvantaged children to reduce inequalities.

A key plank of the National Early Childhood Development Strategy is the **National Quality Agenda**. The National Quality Agenda has four key components:

- a National Quality Standard
- enhanced regulatory arrangements
- a quality rating system
- an Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).

COAG has agreed to commence a formal consultation process in July on quality reforms to early childhood education and care that represent a major step towards a genuinely national system. COAG has agreed to a jointly governed unified national system to replace current licensing and quality assurance processes.



Under the proposed approach, individual services will need to deal with only one organisation for quality assessment, reducing the regulatory burden on over 10 000 services.

The Regulation Impact Statement for Early Childhood Education and Care Quality Reforms for the public consultation proposes:

- lower staff to child ratios (three of the four options in relation to ratios would have no impact on child care services in Western Australia)
- higher staff qualification requirements
- a rating system that will provide better information about service quality to help parents to choose a service and promote quality improvements amongst services
- a single set of improved national quality standards that integrate education and care that will promote good developmental outcomes for more than one million children attending child care and preschool. (In Western Australia pre-school is the kindergarten year, that is, the year before full-time schooling).

It is anticipated that **public consultations** will be held in Perth in the morning and evening of **Wednesday 22 July 2009** with a Westlink session on **Thursday 23 July 2009**. Times and venues for these sessions will be advertised in the press.

The EYLF will guide educators in developing quality programs across a range of early childhood education and care settings. Consultation on the EYLF occurred earlier and the EYLF and Families Guide will be launched in July 2009. A range of supports, including an Educators' Guide, will follow.

Further information on the above and links to relevant documents can be found at: [www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Pages/EarlyChildhoodReforms.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Pages/EarlyChildhoodReforms.aspx) and [www.coag.gov.au](http://www.coag.gov.au).

Please forward this information to others interested in early childhood matters.

Department for Communities (head office)  
Level 7 Dumas House  
2 Havelock Street  
WEST PERTH WA 6005  
t: (08) 6217 8700  
w: [www.communities.wa.gov.au](http://www.communities.wa.gov.au)

