

17213 - New submission from Early Years Strategy - Public Submissions

(I) Proposed Structure of the Early Years Strategy

The Strategy including a vision, outcomes, policy priorities and indicators to identify priority reforms and with an Outcomes and Evaluation Framework to have assess resulting Implementation Plans sounds appropriate.

The information covered in the discussion paper is comprehensive

(II) The Vision

That the rights identified in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, are respected and promoted so that all children in this country:

experience a childhood free from discrimination, fear, violence, and the impact of poverty flourish, receiving all the support and early intervention they need, to reach their full potential live in communities where they are valued, feel welcomed, and in environments that engage them grow into responsible, tolerant, wise, and compassionate citizens who are confident about their future on this planet and their place in it

(iii) Outcomes of the Strategy

First Nation children who have a unique connection and care for country are acknowledged as the emerging future leaders of the oldest continuous culture; have the connection to culture and pride in identity to continue this custodianship for future generations and their communities have the resources to redress the ongoing impact of colonisation

Children's wellbeing (physical emotional mental and social) is embedded into the heart of culture so that decisions at all levels can support the flourishing of all children in this country as they grow in their communities and environments that surround them

That the primary carers of children in their early years (including parents, early childhood educators teachers) have the conditions including livelihood, resources, housing, access to health and early intervention to ensure appropriate care and support of children as they grow

Policy Priorities

I support the current priority of policy, indicated in the draft Strategy, to improve co ordination, cohesion and integration in the planning, delivery, and measurement of the impacts from resources allocated to outcomes for the early years. In order to - improve service delivery from integrated policy and planning and evidence based knowledge

- identify gaps to be addressed,
- address access and equity in provision of important services and supports including early intervention
- be fiscally responsible and accountable,
- and communicate effectively to families and those involved in supporting families.

And in addition priorities relating to:

(i) First Nations children:

Address appropriate responses as identified through engagement with First Nation early years and family peaks, and communities, to support outcomes for First Nations children's ^{[1][1][1]}_{[SEP][SEP]} Access to early learning needs to be culturally appropriate and culturally safe for families.

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Access to quality early learning providers with good foundations in understanding childhood development and navigating early intervention to support parents.

Quality educators have good educational qualifications, sound knowledge and expertise in early childhood development. However, this is not met with suitable remuneration for this skill knowledge experience and responsibility for the important formative years of a child's life that one could expect elsewhere.

Local anecdotal experience is that early childhood services experience difficulty attracting staff, and staff with sound grounding in early childhood development. Some staff are unable to complete qualifications with private colleges that cease operation.

In areas that rely on privately owned early childhood learning provision, demand for places cannot be guaranteed, particularly for 0-2 year olds. A diverse market of provision including Family Day Care and community managed not for profit services need to be sustained to provide choices for families.

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Quality early childhood educators can be crucial links alerting parents and families to potential developmental issues to be checked. Access to local providers who can provide this early attention and are, more likely, not available locally. Out of area services have long waiting lists. ^{[1][1][1]}_{[SEP][SEP]} Addressing the issue of early intervention and understanding the pathways to support identified potential concerns from the child, parent/carer and provider point of view needs to be addressed

Principles

Addresses access and equity in delivery of responses.

Responses are adapted and appropriate to the communities in which they are placed

Quality informed and evidence based responses that are also culturally appropriate

Wholistic from a child focused perspective including family and community

Evidence based approaches

The evidence based frameworks seem appropriate to me as a non Indigenous person. I would support including frameworks that First Nation representatives consider appropriate.