



NEW SOUTH WALES
CHILDREN'S
SERVICES FORUM

NSW Children's Services Forum

Communiqué

February 2017

The **NSW Children's Services Forum** is comprised of state-wide, not-for-profit, community-based children's service organisations and their representatives. The Forum aims to facilitate a coordinated advocacy and communication towards improving the quality, range and provision of children's services in NSW. The Terms of Reference and a list of members is available on the [NCOSS website](#).

The Forum meets bi-monthly. This communiqué is intended to communicate issues discussed at Forum meetings to a broader audience.

At the February 2017 NSW Children's Services Forum meeting, representatives from the Department of Education – Suzette Joachim (Policy Manager, Policy, Insight and Engagement) and Valarie Gutenev-Hale (Senior Policy Officer, Policy, Insight and Engagement) provided an overview of current initiatives within the Early Childhood Education Directorate. These included:

- An update on the [Transition to School Statement](#) which was launched in 2014, and has since been simplified, streamlined and is now available online. The department is developing a communication campaign to expand the reach of the tool, and its take up by schools.
- The [Regional and Remote Early Childhood Education Strategy](#), is now open for consultation, and the department is welcoming submissions. Submissions are due by **31 March 2017** and the department will be hosting open workshops across NSW over the next few months.
 - NCOSS will coordinate a joint submission into the strategy on behalf of the NSW Children Services Forum.
- The Department is developing an Aboriginal Early Childhood Education Strategy, which will act as a high level strategic document to guide culturally appropriate programs.
- The Department is expecting to finalise both the Regional and Remote Early Childhood Education Strategy and the Aboriginal Early Childhood Education Strategy by mid-year, 2017.
- The [\\$16 Million Local Partnerships Initiative](#), to enhance preschool participation by Aboriginal and low income families, will be developed following the finalisation of these strategies.
 - According to the [NSW Implementation Plan](#) this initiative is to: "support innovative programmes, promotes high expectations and quality preschool programmes for Indigenous and low income children in the year before full-time school for 600 hours per year..."
- An update on [Start strong Policy](#), which commenced on 1 January 2017. The new funding model will be completely in place by 1 July 2017, and communication materials will be available soon.



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The Department has launched the [Inner West Virtual Community of Practice Forum](#). This is a pilot project that aims to support access to early childhood education and effective transition to school in Sydney's Inner West. The Department encourages practitioners to register, log on and participate in the forum.

NSW Children's Services Forum business:

[The Working Together Agreement](#) is being launched in early March 2017, and promotes a coordinated approach between families, early childhood intervention (ECI) practitioners, early childhood education and care (ECEC) educators to provide early childhood inclusion for children with disability and/or developmental delay.

On 15 February 2017, Playgroup NSW launched [Play Baby](#), an initiative that offers a one-year free Playgroup NSW membership to families with a baby under 12 months old.

- During the week of 6 March 2017, Playgroup NSW is conducting a census to capture the extent of playgroup participation throughout NSW. Click [here](#) to participate in, and or share the census.

Early Childhood Intervention Australia, NSW, will host a number of free [Inclusion Forums](#) across NSW and the ACT. Click [here](#) to find a forum near you.

The forum is looking for case studies of preschools and early childhood services doing amazing and innovative things. Please email Caroline Dimond, Policy Officer at caroline@ncoss.org.au with your nominations.

The June 2017 meeting of the NSW Child Services Forum will be an open meeting, and we welcome expressions of interest to attend. Please email Caroline Dimond, Policy Officer at caroline@ncoss.org.au.

For more information about the NSW Children's Services Forum, contact Caroline Dimond, Policy Officer, NCOSS, on caroline@ncoss.org.au or phone (02) 8960 7922. To receive future communiqués from the NSW Children's Services Forum, [subscribe here](#).