

# Early Years Strategy 2024-2034

Department of Social Services



Australian Government

## Early Years Strategy

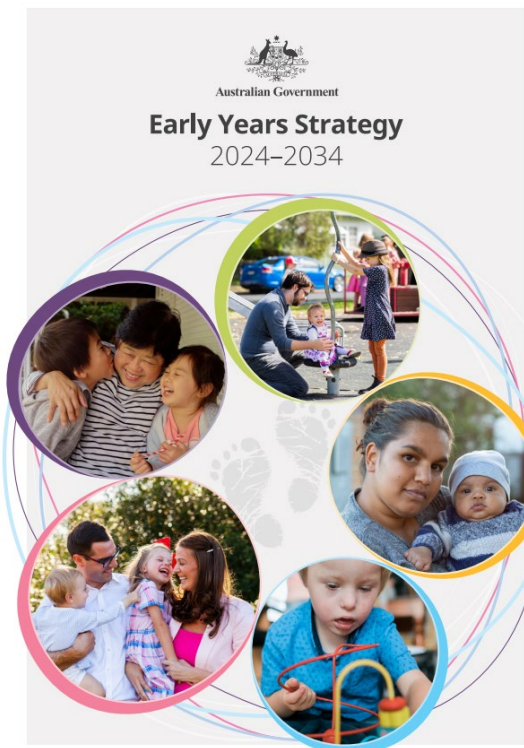
2024-2034

# Strategy overview

The Minister for Social Services, Hon Amanda Rishworth MP, and the Minister for Early Childhood Education and Minister for Youth, the Hon Dr Anne Aly MP, launched the *Early Years Strategy 2024-2034* on **Tuesday 7 May 2024**.

*All children in Australia thrive in their early years. They have the opportunity to reach their full potential when nurtured by empowered and connected families who are supported by strong communities.*

The Strategy can be viewed by scanning the QR code below:





Australian Government

# Early Years Strategy

2024–2034

# Strategy at a glance

## Strategy Snapshot

### vision

*That all children in Australia thrive in their early years. They have the opportunity to reach their full potential when nurtured by empowered and connected families who are supported by strong communities.*

### principles



1. Child- and family-centred



2. Strengths-based



3. Respect for families and communities



4. Equitable, inclusive and respectful of diversity



5. Evidence-informed

### outcomes

1. Children are nurtured and safe
2. Children are socially, emotionally, physically and mentally healthy
3. Children are learning
4. Children have strong identities and connections to culture
5. Children have opportunities to play and imagine
6. Basic needs are met
7. Families are empowered, connected and supported
8. Communities are strong and inclusive places for children and their parents or caregivers to live, grow, play and connect

### priority focus areas

#### **Value the early years**

- ▶ Raise awareness about why early childhood matters
- ▶ Embed the voices of children and their families

#### **Empower parents, caregivers and families**

- ▶ Empower parents, caregivers and families with skills, resources and capabilities
- ▶ Support parents to connect with other parents and their local community
- ▶ Make supports and services responsive and inclusive to children and their parents
- ▶ Move towards universal access to early childhood education and care

#### **Support and work with communities**

- ▶ Support local solutions to local problems
- ▶ Foster shared decision making

#### **Strengthen accountability and coordination**

- ▶ Better integration, collaboration and coordination of policy, programs and services
- ▶ Stronger data, research and evaluation



Australian Government

## Early Years Strategy

2024–2034

# Strategy Consultation



Consultation to inform the development of the Strategy commenced in 2023 and included the following:

- a National Early Years Summit with more than 100 attendees
- a pulse survey, with more than 2,240 responses
- a discussion paper with more than 350 public submissions
- 39 roundtables across Australia held in person and online, with more than 750 participants
- conversations young children about what matters most to them
- targeted consultations and survey on the draft Strategy



Australian Government

## Early Years Strategy

2024–2034

# Children consultations – July to August 2023

- 115 children aged 3 to 5 years old
- 9 early childhood education and care services across Australia

### ***Methods for data collection:***

- Community painting/artwork
- Loose materials landscape creation
- Semi-structured discussion – happiest moment/memory



**Figure above left** *“I made a boat and a beach.”*  
(Landscape creation activity)

**Figure above right** *“Diving board.”* (Landscape creation activity)



Australian Government

## Early Years Strategy

2024–2034

# Key consultation themes



**Figure above left** *“I made a rainbow and a box and a slide in the park.”* (Landscape creation activity)

**Figure above right** *“I’m at the park and this is me and this is my Daddy and I was skipping and these are the things I was climbing on.”* (Community painting activity)

1. Connections and relationships with their families (immediate and extended), and their friends and educators.
2. Children are deeply attuned to the environments and settings around them.
3. Imagination and creativity are central to children’s lives, both inspiring and shaping children’s experiences.
4. Opportunities to engage in physical activity are deeply important to children.



Australian Government

## Early Years Strategy

2024–2034

# Strategy implementation

- **3 Action Plans** over 10 years to set out the practical actions the Government is taking.
  - Parents and Carers Reference Group
  - National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People
  - Voice of the Child Framework
- An **Outcomes Framework** to measure progress against the Strategy's outcomes and vision.





Australian Government

**Early Years Strategy**

2024–2034

# Voice of Children Framework

- A Framework to help guide government officials to effectively **reflect the voice of children**
- Guidance on how to **meaningfully draw on the lived experiences of children**, with a focus on diverse cohorts and those experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage
- **Similar principles** to Voice of the Child Toolkit, but a **different audience** and higher level guidance
- Anticipated to be **finalised later this year**





Australian Government

**Early Years Strategy**

2024–2034

# Continued commitment to embed children's voices

- Actively **consulting** with children, families, caregivers and communities
- Including the **perspectives of children and families** throughout the policy cycle
- Ensuring **data collection and evaluation** involves listening to children and families





# Thank you

**Janaya Cox, A/g Branch Manager**  
**Early Childhood and Parenting Wellbeing Branch**  
Department of Social Services  
[earlyyears@dss.gov.au](mailto:earlyyears@dss.gov.au)