



Quality Schools

Commitment to quality preschool education

The Australian Government is continuing to support preschool in 2018

To support states and territories in maintaining universal access to a quality preschool education in the year before school, we will invest an additional \$428 million to extend the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education in 2018.

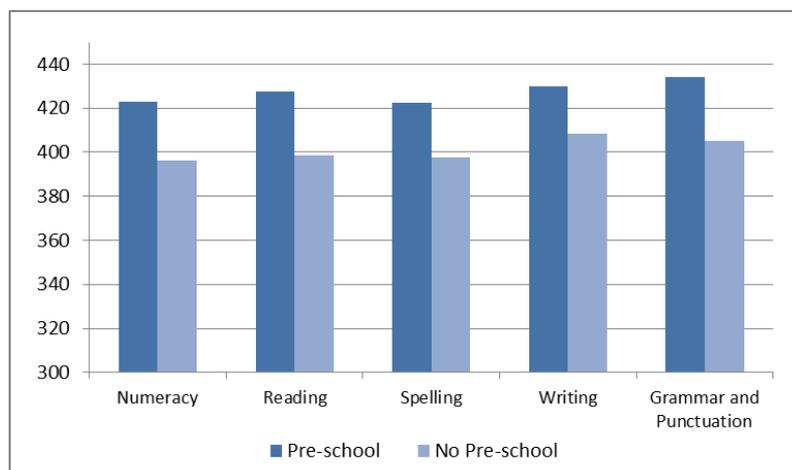
This investment will benefit around 346,000 children across all preschool settings and will take the level of Commonwealth investment in preschool to over \$3.2 billion since the first National Partnership was agreed in 2008. Importantly, it will provide funding certainty for preschools and long day care centres as the government implements school and child care reforms next year.

High quality preschool supports school readiness

Children who attend a quality preschool program in the year before school do better when they get there, and these benefits have been shown to persist over time.

The benefits can be seen across all elements of national assessment results for Year 3 students, where those that attended preschool outperform others in numeracy, reading, spelling, writing and grammar (see figure).

Average NAPLAN Scores in Year 3, by preschool attendance



Source: Warren and Haisken-DeNew (2013), *Early bird catches the worm: The casual impact of pre-school participation and teacher qualifications on Year 3 national NAPLAN cognitive tests*, Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research

High quality preschool will help close the gap for Indigenous children

In December 2015, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) renewed the Closing the Gap target for Early Childhood Education, for 95 per cent of all Indigenous four year-olds to be enrolled in early childhood education by 2025.

This target recognises that preschool can reduce the education gap between children, and therefore plays a role in reducing inequalities.

National Partnership arrangements

While states and territories are responsible for preschool delivery, since 2008 the Commonwealth has provided a funding contribution through a series of National Partnership Agreements to ensure families have nationally consistent access to 15 hours per week, or 600 hours per year in the year before school.

Since 2008 the number of children enrolled in preschool has grown significantly from an estimated 206,000 in 2008 to nearly 345,000 in 2016.