


## Health and Development Checks in ECE – Q&A


Question	Answer
<b>Why bring health and development checks into ECEC services?</b>	<p>We know many children in NSW are not getting their 4-year health and development check and about 2 in 5 children are starting school developmentally off track. Offering checks in ECEC services will ensure more children receive this important check and are supported if they require further care.</p> <p>The 4-year check is still available through <a href="#">local child and family health services</a> and doctors.</p>
<b>Which ECEC services are eligible for the program?</b>	<p>All Community Preschools, Department of Education Preschools and Long Day Care Services are eligible for health and development checks.</p>
<b>Are Family Day Care services included?</b>	<p>Family Day Care services are currently not included in the Health and Development Check in ECE program. However, as the program is refined, we will continue to consider how Family Day Care services can access these important checks.</p> <p>Family Day Care services can encourage families to access these important checks through their local doctor or child and family health centre.</p>
<b>What will health and development checks look like in ECEC?</b>	<p>The program is a partnership between the Department of Education and NSW Health to provide free health and developmental checks to children in early childhood education and care settings.</p>

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	<p>Health professionals will check children’s health and development, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• their listening and talking skills</li> <li>• their social skills and behaviour</li> <li>• their gross and fine motor skills</li> <li>• their learning, thinking and problem-solving skills</li> <li>• how their bodies are growing</li> </ul> <p>No vaccinations are given.</p>
<p><b>Is the health and development check free?</b></p>	<p>Yes, the health and development check is free for all ECEC Services and families.</p>
<p><b>What age will these checks cover?</b></p>	<p>The checks will focus on 4-year-olds.</p>
<p><b>What if children have already received their 4-year health and development check?</b></p>	<p>Children who have already received their 4-year health and development check from their doctor or child and family health service do not need to repeat the check at an ECEC service.</p>
<p><b>What is the Health and Development Checks service model?</b></p>	<p>The delivery of health checks will include essential elements alongside a flexible approach that can be tailored to suit specific circumstances.</p> <p>There are several models already operating across the state. Different communities have different needs, and each early childhood education environment offers unique opportunities for providing health checks. A single model is not going to work for all education and health settings</p>

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	<p>across NSW. Testing and refining of local models as part of implementation will be required along with ongoing stakeholder engagement to ensure that the program is delivered in a way that meets local community needs.</p>
<p><b>Will these new developmental checks place further burden on the ECEC workforce?</b></p>	<p>We have heard from the ECEC sector that a key concern in delivering this program is workforce shortages and ECEC capacity. By working together with the sector and local health districts, we will explore how the checks can be delivered effectively, while minimising the burden for ECEC.</p> <p>It is important to note that this program will not be a one-size-fits-all approach and that services can work with their local health district to determine what might be the best environment, roles and responsibilities to most accurately observe the development of the child.</p> <p>We have allocated funding to develop additional support for ECEC services, such as teacher and educator training, resources for families and grants. We will continue to work with the sector in developing this support to ensure it is fit for purpose. The program will continue to be opt-in for ECEC services.</p>
<p><b>What kind of funding will be available for ECEC Services to help assist with roll out?</b></p>	<p>In 2024, ECEC services will be able to apply for funding to support engagement with the health and development checks. Funding will be available through a grant application, and possible uses for funding will include staffing to support the health and development checks program, suitable space for health and development checks, building capacity to support children’s developmental needs. Further detail will be provided to the sector in early 2024.</p>
<p><b>Where will the health checks physically happen in services? What kinds of spaces do we need to</b></p>	<p>The availability of space for the checks to occur in a private and secure way is an issue that has come up through consultations. We are working on addressing this in partnership with NSW Health and ECEC services. Local health districts are starting to reach out to their local early childhood education partners as part of their implementation to discuss a range of implementation questions, including the questions of space, privacy and</p>

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<p><b>make available to ensure child protection and safety?</b></p>	<p>child safety.</p> <p>It is important to note that this program will not be a one size fits all approach, and that services can work out what might be the best environment, roles and responsibilities to most accurately observe the development of the child.</p>
<p><b>What are you doing about the affordability and accessibility of allied health care?</b></p>	<p>It will be very important to ensure that there are local pathways into services for children who need it, and that parents and carers are assisted to get access to the services their children need. Referral and service access pathways will be developed locally, to reflect local service systems. This program is aligned with further work being done by NSW Health.</p> <p>For children who need additional support to reach their developmental milestones, the program will include access to a range of resources and activities that parents, carers and educators can use to support these children. These supports are currently being developed and collated based on ongoing consultation with stakeholders.</p>
<p><b>Do teachers and educators have an opportunity to provide input about the health and development of children within their ECEC service?</b></p>	<p>Where families have given consent, teachers and educators can share information on the child's development with the visiting health professional. Given the time they spend with children in their ECEC service, teachers and educators are in a unique position to observe the health and development of these children and their input may contribute to successfully identifying children with health or development concerns.</p>
<p><b>Who liaises with the families on the outcome of the check?</b></p>	<p>Families will receive feedback directly from the health providers following the checks, with ECEC support where appropriate, and where consent allows. The partnership with health professionals will be designed to build on each other's strengths and support conversations with families, as well as share learnings and knowledge across health and early childhood disciplines.</p>

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<p><b>Does the centre receive feedback on children’s development and ways to support them within the service?</b></p>	<p>ECEC services will receive de-identified feedback from the health providers following the checks. Families can choose to share child specific information with their ECEC Service. Professional development will be available to assist teachers and educators with supporting families and children in their services following the checks.</p>
<p><b>How do ECEC services get involved in the program?</b></p>	<p>We are aiming for this program to be available in all LHDs by the end of 2024. The progressive roll-out will be informed by health and education sector readiness. This will be an opt in program.</p> <p>Local health district teams will contact ECEC Services when they are ready to offer the health and development check program for booking up to the end of 2024.</p> <p>If you would like to opt-in please contact <a href="mailto:earlychildhooddevelopment@det.nsw.edu.au">earlychildhooddevelopment@det.nsw.edu.au</a> or your local health district contact from our website <a href="https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/ECECchecks">https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/ECECchecks</a> (or scan the QR code below).</p> <p>Please be aware that while your Local health district may be offering checks during the initial stages of roll-out, there is strong demand for the program. It may take some time for your LHD to contact you about bringing the program to your service, but be assured that your LHD will be in touch.</p> <p>Where families have expressed interest but the program is not yet available in your LHD, services can direct families to their doctor or a local child and family health service. See our website for further information.</p> 

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<p><b>How will we reach families and communities in rural and remote locations?</b></p>	<p>We continue to work with ECEC and health services in rural and remote areas to determine ways to support program delivery in these locations. We understand from our engagement to date that building trust and relationships in these areas is key and will continue to seek opportunities to work with services and families.</p>
<p><b>How will the program be delivered in a safe and respectful way for all families?</b></p>	<p>When children and families feel safe and respected, they are more likely to feel they can trust and be open with their education and healthcare providers. Cultural safety is important because it can help improve the quality of care that children and their families receive. We are consulting with numerous families, communities and other stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the needs for CALD, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families, and communities, ensuring that a culturally safe approach is at the heart of HDC project delivery.</p>
<p><b>How will our service know when will we be able to offer health and development checks?</b></p>	<p>Local health district teams will contact ECEC Services when they are ready to offer the health and development check program. The number of ECEC Services engaged in the program will increase as rollout progresses. We are aiming for this program to be available in all LHDs by the end of 2024.</p> <p>If you would like to opt-in please contact <a href="mailto:earlychildhooddevelopment@det.nsw.edu.au">earlychildhooddevelopment@det.nsw.edu.au</a> or your local health district contact from our website <a href="https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/ECECchecks">https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/ECECchecks</a> (or scan the QR code below).</p> 

For more information visit <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/ECECchecks>.

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