PROSPECTUS

For early childhood education and care services

2020-21
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Version 1.0 – 20/09/2019

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FOREWORD

All children deserve a great start in life.

Thank you for considering becoming a service partner with Working Together (WT).

This initiative truly shows the significant innovation that Tasmania is demonstrating in Early Years education, providing opportunities for all children to get the support they need early in life in order to learn, grow and thrive.

Our commitment to children stands out in our leadership, policy, investment and on-the ground practice. Through WT, Tasmania is leading the way in providing targeted early learning with additional support to help our children in a more holistic way.

The WT initiative also supports the vision of Tasmania’s Strategy for Children – Pregnancy to Eight Years 2018-2021, by promoting Quality, Equity and Partnerships – three key elements identified to significantly improve opportunities for our children.

While all children benefit from high quality early learning, research shows that children experiencing higher levels of disadvantage benefit the most.¹

Having sat alongside participating children in a range of early learning spaces, I have seen the joy they experience when discovering new ways of understanding, communicating, playing and learning together with their peers; it very special to see these children making new friends and building a strong sense of identity.

WT takes action to bring about these positive outcomes for all children, regardless of their background or circumstances. More and more children are now beginning to benefit from participating in quality early learning, which is directly helping them to have their best start in life.

Jeremy Rockliff MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for education and Training

¹ Duncan & Sojourner, 2013; Yazejian, Bryant, Freel, & Burchinal, 2015
OVERVIEW

Purpose of this Prospectus

This prospectus has been prepared to provide early childhood education and care services with detailed information about Working Together – supporting early learning (WT) to assist with the preparation and submission of an expression of interest (EOI) to become a WT service partner for the 2020 – 2021 (two year) period.

WT was formerly known as Working Together for 3 year Olds (WT3).

The EOI process involves submitting an online form by 11.55pm on Thursday 31 October 2019. This online form is linked from the Working Together website: www.education.tas.gov.au/wt

What is ‘Working Together’?

“Our shared purpose is to develop confident and creative children, who thrive in strong, connected communities.”

Working Together (WT) is a Tasmanian Government initiative which is opening up opportunities for eligible children to participate in free, quality early learning in the year before they start kindergarten. This is done by:

- Funding places in quality early learning centres (up to 400 hours per year for each child); and
- Working in partnership with families, early childhood educators and community services to support the child strengths and needs; and
- Investing in professional learning for the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector so they can best assist children and their families; and
- Enabling capacity building to achieve our shared purpose.

WT is addressing barriers to participation and creating opportunities for children to learn, make friends and build confidence to set them up for a great start in life. It also fosters supportive connections to help parents and carers through the transition from home into early childhood education and care and then into kindergarten.

“It excites me to see that people are willing to do what they need to do to help my child. It makes you go, ‘they do care’. They’re not just faking it, you know what I mean?” - Parent, WT3 participant

Outcomes

WT takes action to bring about these outcomes:

- Children have their best start in life
- Families are resilient and resourceful
- Communities support children to thrive

And longer term

- Ending cycles of intergenerational poverty and inequality

The foundations for success

The foundations for success embedded in the WT model are:

1. Partnership – working together for shared purpose
2. Quality – investing in ECEC capability development and system-wide capacity building to design and deliver quality early learning in the year before kindergarten
3. Quantity – managing growth over time to support viable supply of early learning places in high need areas
4. Participation – addressing barriers to participation to make early learning an option for all
5. **Integrated funding** – leveraging available sources

**Staged growth**
The staged growth plan for WT will ensure we embed the foundations for success and look to balance demand and supply over time.

Years One and Two will open up 120 places per year (240 in total) across approximately 20 ECEC sites. The expression of interest (EOI) process will identify up to 20 specific ECEC sites in these locations. The opportunity will initially be offered in locations with higher numbers of eligible 0-4 year olds of no less than 100 (based on community modelling data). Every two years thereafter more places will be opened up in a targeted way. Updated data will be sourced in 2021 to guide selection of recommended suburbs for Years Three and Four.

**The WT Model**
The WT model incorporates four inter-connected elements to embed the foundations of success in the initiative and deliver the desired outcomes.

1. **Opening up access to opportunity** – free early learning places in integrated learning spaces
   - Early learning program designed and delivered by an Early Childhood Educator (Bachelor or Diploma qualified) in ECEC long day care (LDC) where available in targeted locations.
   - Up to 400 hours per child per year subsidised.
   - Children in WT funded places are fully integrated with their peers

2. **Addressing barriers** – funding the provision of additional holistic supports for the child and family
   - Base and flexible top up funding for ECECs

3. **Investing in the ECEC sector** – capability building
• Delivery of professional learning WT3 pre-requisite, core and elective units and access to coaching from an early learning consultant to enhance the early learning practice at each service

4. Enabling supports – capacity building resources to address barriers to participation
• The Department of Education’s WT project team collaborating with ECECs – this includes local engagement workers supported by a senior social worker facilitating practical approaches between government and non-government agencies and community members to address barriers to participation
• Early Childhood Intervention Service (ECIS) working alongside ECEC educators offering tailored on-site practice support
• Child and Family Centres collaborating with ECECs where suitable.

Values of the Working Together initiative
The values of WT that all partners are invited to demonstrate are:

Create a respectful, accessible and friendly environment
We create play-based learning environments that are free of judgment, where all children feel they belong, and families are welcomed.

Provide culturally appropriate and safe experiences
We value the cultural and social contexts of children and their families. We particularly strive to acknowledge and learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. We foster experiences that are spiritually, emotionally, physically and socially safe, and celebrate diversity.

Facilitate strong partnerships and collaborations with families and communities
We build on and strengthen participation with families and utilise the Family Partnership Model to develop trusting, responsive relationships with children and families.

Celebrate and enable child participation
We build on the strengths of families and work through barriers together to make engagement accessible. By providing continuity in experiences we help children to have successful transitions into early education.

Stay flexible and adaptive to children’s needs
We are responsive to children and intentional about meeting families where they are. We learn with families what a good early learning experience means for their children and work towards creating that.

Eligible children
The target cohort for the WT initiative face a range of barriers to engagement, attendance and learning. Providing additional support to the child and family that builds their capacity to overcome these barriers will be critical to their ongoing participation in quality early learning.

The eligibility criteria is children:
• Who are three years old at January 1 in the year of enrolment (the year before kindergarten) and
• Who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and/or
• Who receive support or interventions from the Child Safety Service and/or
• Whose parent/primary carers hold a Health Care Card and/or
• Who meet two or more criteria under Parental Evaluation of Development Status (PEDs).

The PEDS screening tool will enable services to identify the eligibility of some children who may not meet the alternative criteria, therefore it is vital that the PEDS screening tool is used early with potential families to support them to access the WT initiative.

**Prioritisation**
Children will be prioritised based on:

• Child has no prior ECEC experience or access has previously not been able to access due to barriers of disadvantage
• Single parent family
• Family/child is socially isolated

Services will be supported to meet, engage and prioritise children and families by the WT engagement worker collaborating with their service.
HOLISTIC SUPPORT

WT is a holistic support delivery model that integrates an ecological approach to early learning with the child at the centre. This is designed to specifically address barriers to participation.

Through the co-design and pilot phase it emerged that a number of fundamental elements need to be in place for children, families and guardians to engage with ECEC services. These include demonstrating the initiative’s values outlined in this document along with at times providing assistance such as advice and delivery of transport, food security and utilising a range of communication channels that work for diverse families including meeting families off-site, where they are.

Ecological approach
PARTNERSHIP

WT is a collaborative endeavour driven by shared purpose. This involves working in partnership with families, early childhood educators, community members, services and all levels of government.

Following the success of the pilot, a streamlined co-design and ‘learn and adapt as we go’ evaluation approach will continue to be integrated over 2020-21 to further refine a high-quality, scalable WT model.

The definition of co-design adopted by WT is:

“Increasing impact by working with people, families, and stakeholders, enabling outcomes that matter to them” - Dr Penny Hagan, Co-design Lead, Auckland Co-design Lab.
The WT Project Team employed by the Department of Education (the Department) works closely with ECEC service partners. On the ground this includes local engagement workers, a senior social worker and an early learning consultant. More broadly, system and service co-design facilitation, marketing, data analysis and reporting and project management is integrated.

ECEC service partners may also benefit from collaborating with a suite of early childhood services including the Department’s Child and Family Centres and the Early Childhood Intervention Service.

**Child and Family Centres (CFC)**
Child and Family Centres are places for families with children birth to five to access a range of services. In partnership with families, CFCs provide support in the areas of early learning, care and the health and wellbeing of our very young children.

The purpose of Child and Family Centres is to improve the health and well-being, education and care of Tasmania’s very young children by supporting parents and enhancing accessibility of services in the local community.

WT services partners may collaborate closely with the CFC depending on what is available locally.

Find out more

**Early Childhood Intervention Service (ECIS)**
Due to the collaborative, holistic nature of the WT opportunity, participating children may be referred to ECIS and children from ECIS may be referred to WT.

ECIS partners are trained and experienced in the provision of inclusive experiences and equitable access and offer ECECs collaborative, educational support by working alongside the ECEC team in the three year old space. The ECEC and ECIS Partner will work together to identify any areas for support and practice development in relation to educational adjustments for children enrolled in both ECIS and WT.
# ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

In order to successfully engage in the early learning component, children and their carers may need support to overcome a number of barriers to participation.

In the independent evaluation of the *Working Together for Three Year Olds* pilot, families across the board reported that they really value education but making early learning free isn’t enough for the children who most need it – additional supports and system level changes such as transport, referrals and access to the right services, food and clothing support are necessary.

Some of the barriers identified through the co-design process and pilot program evaluation:

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<tr>
<th>Cost of participation</th>
<th>Cost or availability of transport</th>
<th>Ability to provide food or suitable clothing</th>
<th>Parent or guardian anxiety or mental health challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical health or disability</td>
<td>Children’s complex behaviours</td>
<td>Commitment or capability to complete forms</td>
<td>Distrust of authority or institutions</td>
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<td>Cultural view that does not see early learning or formal environments as beneficial for children</td>
<td>Fear of judgement</td>
<td>Separation anxiety</td>
<td>Lack of trust in unknown adults caring for children</td>
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The supports required to overcome these barriers must be responsive and targeted to individual needs. This element of WT is innovative in its approach and so there is no template for the provision of this service. The pilot program and co-design process has identified various supports that are effective, how these might be provided and by whom.
QUALITY EARLY LEARNING

Children who have participated in high-quality child care perform better academically than their peers, and children who are socially disadvantaged show the most benefit. ECEC therefore has great potential to close academic performance and attainment gaps between children from different socioeconomic backgrounds (Elliott 2006; Moore et al. 2012; Moore 2006).

However, quality is critical, as low-quality services may have the effect of increasing developmental vulnerability. (CCCH 2006)

Each ECEC Service Partner will have up to three team members as part of the ‘WT team’ at their service, responsible for both the quality early learning and the holistic support and reporting components of the WT initiative. This provides consistency for the family and enables children and families to build strong, secure relationships with the ECEC service. ECEC services will ensure at least one member of that team is an Early Childhood Teacher or Diploma-qualified educator and is designing and delivering the early learning program. These team members will be included in all WT communications and participate in the professional learning opportunities.

The educator responsible for the design and delivery of the early learning program will plan, evaluate and implement opportunities for children’s learning in collaboration with the WT team at the service, and the ECIS Partner in instances where a child attends both WT and ECIS. In instances where the service is supported by the local Child and Family Centre in the provision of holistic support, the WT team may involve them in the collaborative planning of the early learning program.
FUNDING TO ECEC SERVICE PARTNERS

The funding reflects the WT model and includes:

A) Early learning places

The early learning program is funded through ECEC providers at an equitable per capita rate analysed against state and national funding levels, enabling a child to participate in 400 hours per year. Further detail regarding the funding model will be discussed with service partners upon their successful EOI, prior to confirmation of the grant deed.

B) Holistic support

Additional support comprises components for ongoing base and top-up funding which services can use flexibly to meet the participation needs of children.

Needs-based funding will be achieved during 2020 and 2021 through the provision of sufficient additional support funding to services. Funding paid at the award rate for an Early Childhood Teacher (ECT).

Base funding: 5 hours per week, per site (paid up-front to ECEC service partners, quarterly).

Top up funding: Up to 24 hours per child per year (paid to ECEC service partners on receipt of quarterly outcomes reporting).

C) Capability development

Professional learning supports to build the capability of the ECEC workforce and services to effectively deliver a high-quality early learning program and holistic support to the WT3 cohort.

Funding for relief staffing for up to three staff at each service.

D) Administration

Service reporting requirements: averaged at 1 hour per week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUNDING MODEL for 2020 and 2021</th>
<th>Year One (Up front each calendar year)</th>
<th>Year Two (Up front each calendar year)</th>
<th>Paid on quarterly reporting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Learning Places</td>
<td>Q1 25%</td>
<td>Q1 25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Up to 400 hours per year per child will be subsidised.</td>
<td>Q2 12.5%</td>
<td>Q2 12.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total funding depends on confirmed places per site.</td>
<td>Q3 12.5%</td>
<td>Q3 12.5%</td>
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<td>The subsidy amount is calculated with an expenditure-based approach reflecting the anticipated staff and operational costs. The amount compares to the rates used by Victoria for their Early Start Kindergarten Grant. To be indexed at 2% per year.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holistic Supports</td>
<td>5 hours x 48 weeks per site</td>
<td>Up to 24 hours per child per year</td>
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<td>Paid at ECT Award rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Learning</td>
<td></td>
<td>Existing service partners – 54 hours plus 20 hours for electives New Service partners – 160 hours plus 20 hours for electives</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delivery at no cost to ECEC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Backfill funding to ECEC for up to 3 staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paid at ECT Award rate</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Administration (reporting)</td>
<td>1 hr per week x 48 weeks per site</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paid at ECT Award rate</td>
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SERVICE PARTNER ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to be considered for this 2020-21 EOI, a service must meet the following requirements:

Locations

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<th>Services must be located in one of the following suburbs:</th>
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<td>North</td>
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<td>North West**</td>
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<tr>
<td>South</td>
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** Services located in Burnie may apply, however must specify in the EOI how your service could support families from the following locations to enrol and attend (i.e. transport support):

- Somerset
- Acton
- Shorewell Park
Minimum Quality Criteria

<table>
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<tr>
<th>The service has the capacity to deliver the Working Together model</th>
<th>At least one educators involved in the design and delivery of the early learning program holds early childhood teaching and/or diploma-level qualifications</th>
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<tr>
<td>The service is Meeting or Exceeding the National Quality Standard (NQS)*</td>
<td>Services licensed under the Child Care Act have submitted a self-assessment against the NQS and provided their licensing action plan</td>
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*Services rated as Working Towards NQS may submit an EOI and provide additional information relating to their capacity to deliver the WT model and their commitment to ongoing quality improvement at the service. Services rated as Working Towards NQS must be Meeting in Quality Areas 1, 2, 5 and 7.

Enabling access to early learning

WT is committed to enabling access to quality early learning for eligible children. In some locations in Tasmania there may not be ECEC setting to deliver WT, and this may mean working with other services to provide a suitable early learning program.

The initiative provides a significant contribution of funding and support to service partners to build their capacity in developing collaborative partnerships with families and their communities, in developing inclusive learning programs and environments and responsive, respectful relationships with children. Through the provision of these opportunities and the partnerships between the WT project team and service partners, services rated as Working Towards NQS can continue to make improvements in their practice and deliver the WT model.
## SERVICE PARTNER RESPONSIBILITIES

### Provide 5-14 places for eligible children to participate in quality early learning

| Identify 5-14 places in the early learning program that provides education and care to children in the year before school | Ensure the 5-14 places enable integration with peers from a diverse range of backgrounds | Commit to keeping those places available throughout the year |

### Provide base and additional holistic support to eligible children to enable their participation

| Work collaboratively with an Engagement Worker to support families to access the early learning program and build their capacity to engage with their community. | Engage in outreach to meet families where they are and provide additional support to enable their continued participation. | Work collaboratively with an ECIS Partner to enable inclusion of all children |

### Participate in professional learning opportunities

| Participate in face to face professional learning | Engage with online webinars | Participate in peer-to-peer learning opportunities and critical reflection |

### Connect with community services and other agencies to create stronger communities

| Facilitate 2-way referral processes. Refer children from WT to relevant support agencies and support the referral of eligible children from other agencies into the WT-funded places. |

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### Integrated places

Funded service partners will be asked to put forward the number of places they can hold for WT. This may be between 5-14 places for children to attend 10-15 hours per week, spread across a minimum of 2 days per child per week from February–December in both 2020 and 2021. These places will be dispersed across a peer group that enables children participating in the WT opportunity to be integrated with peers from a variety of family circumstances and backgrounds.

### Part-day sessions

WT places will be offered to families as part-day sessions (i.e. sessions between 4-7 hours per day).
Late fees

To support families to overcome the challenges of adjusting to schedules and routines particularly in relation to coordinating transport, participating families will not incur a late collection fee.

Prioritisation of children

In the likely event of demand for places outstripping supply of early learning places, services will need to prioritise children who meet eligibility criteria.

ECEC staff responsible for enrolment will be asked, as part of WT, to apply the following prioritisation weightings, which were developed in consideration of the Commonwealth’s prioritisation guidelines for centre-based care:

- who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (12.5%) and/or
- who receive support or interventions from the Child Safety Service (12.5%) and/or
- whose parent/primary carers holds a Health Care Card (12.5%) and/or
- who meet two or more criteria under PEDs (Parental Evaluation of Development Status) (12.5%)
- Child has no prior ECEC experience or access has been denied for disadvantage reasons (25%)
- Single parent family (12.5%)
- Family/child is socially isolated (12.5%)
INTEGRATED CULTURE OF LEARNING

“WT3 exceeded expectations in the following outcome areas for service partners: participation in the pilot and co-design process; level of engagement with community; improvements to capacity, capability and practice. Additionally, the pilot resulted in significant relationship and trust-building outcomes for service partners with children, families, peers and system partners. Service partners also described how the pilot – in particular the adoption of the FPM approach – led to changes to their services more broadly.” — Evaluation Report: Working Together for 3 Year Olds WT3 Pilot Program, Clear Horizon 2019

WT Service Partners have the opportunity to participate in a comprehensive ‘readiness/on-boarding’ process to support them in their delivery of the initiative. These training and learning opportunities are responsive to the requirements of the service partners to support the range of families and their barriers to accessing quality early learning. The learning sessions are contextualised to the nature of WT and the varying levels of experience within the ECEC sector engaging with families experiencing states of vulnerability and disadvantage.

Professional Learning

The professional learning opportunities available to ECECs engaged in the WT opportunity are divided into three categories:

(a) PRE-REQUISITES - These sessions commence prior to children attending the ECEC service, in preparation for their enrolment.
(b) CORES – These sessions are offered throughout the first year of partnership in WT.
(c) ELECTIVES – These sessions are offered throughout the year for educators by scholarship or for a small number at each service. For example, 1-2 educators at each service who are working with families to undertake PEDS will complete the essential four-hour training.

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<th>PRE-REQUISITES</th>
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<td>Service Partners</td>
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<td>New Service Partners</td>
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<th>CORE</th>
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<td>New Service Partners</td>
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<td><strong>New Service Partners</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Service Partners</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ELECTIVES – EACH SERVICE CAN NOMINATE 2 ELECTIVES WITH STAFF BACKFILL CAPPED AT 10 HOURS PER STAFF MEMBER X 2 STAFF MEMBERS AND DELIVERY FUNDED</strong></td>
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COMMITMENT TO ONGOING LEARNING AND REVIEW

WT will continue to adapt as we learn and collaborate and respond to the changing needs of each service’s community. Each participating service will have a key role in informing adaptation through:

- Attending bi-monthly Local Enabling Groups alongside participating families
- Reflecting on what is and isn’t working
- Conducting regular reporting activities
- Working with a co-design mindset and approach

Reporting

All services delivering WT will be required to provide data to the Department on each child enrolled in regard to:

- their learner profile (e.g. date of birth, match against the eligibility criteria, PEDS results and ECEC attendance rate)
- the holistic supports provided to the child and their family/carers, including any referral services engaged.

This will be used to track progress, inform adaptations to the service model and contribute to longitudinal data collection.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How long will Working Together go for?

Each Service Partner will participate and be supported in WT for a two year period before they are required to resubmit an EOI. This allows the Service Partners to develop and activate the integrated culture of learning across their networks and to create and maintain trusting and collaborative relationships with families, community services and other stakeholders. The two year period enables Service Partners a prime opportunity to realise the objectives of WT for their family and community context.

WT will scale-up each year over a ten year period to make more and more places available for eligible three year olds.

What are the staffing requirements for Working Together?

WT focuses on removing barriers to accessing quality early learning opportunities for Tasmanian three year old children. The initiative has been developed to incorporate two components; the early learning program to be delivered by an ECT or Diploma-qualified educator, and the holistic supports to support the child and family. These support services may include but are not limited to, supporting families to navigate complex systems such as health, connecting families with relevant support services such as parenting programs and preparing children and families for transition to school.

Within each service, WT will be delivered by:

- an early childhood educator/early years teachers who is an ECT or Diploma-qualified educator and
- suitably qualified staff who have the ability and capacity to deliver holistic supports, in collaboration with the Engagement Workers.

The early learning program must be designed and delivered by an ECT who holds an NQF -approved early childhood teacher qualification or an educator with a minimum qualification of an NQF-approved diploma level education and care qualification.

Individuals can check their qualification status here.

What happens if our service’s overall rating changes during the grant period (two years)?

If the service’s overall rating changes from Meeting or Exceeding the NQS to Working Towards NQS during the period of the grant deed, the service will advise the WT Project Team to enable effective collaboration between the service, Project Team and partners such as ECIS, to continue to support the service in the quality improvement of their practice.

What is PEDS and how is it used?

Parents’ Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS) is an evidence-based method for detecting and addressing developmental and behavioural issues in children aged from birth to seven years and 11 months.

The PEDS tool is designed for use with parents for children from birth to 8 years of age and comprises of eight questions which elicit parental concern about specific domains of learning, development and behaviour and two questions that are about more general concerns.

After the parent completes the questionnaire the practitioner, in partnership with the parent, scores and interprets parent concerns. skilful application of PEDS supports the early detection of developmental and behavioural concerns in babies and children.

The PEDS form can be used across multiple interviews with parents to follow children over time. This is where the PEDS has the ability to be a model for inter-sectorial communication around child development and behaviour.

For more information about the use and research of PEDS, click here.
Further FAQs can be found here on the Working Together website education.tas.gov.au/wt