UNIVERSAL EARLY LEARNING FOR THREE-YEAR-OLDS CO-DESIGN PLANNING GROUP

COMMUNIQUE 1

In August 2022 the Premier of Tasmania announced the intention to provide universal access to early learning in the year before kindergarten, for every three-year-old child. Research and evidence tells us this age is a vital time in a child's life and an important foundation for their physical, social, emotional, language and cognitive development.

The Government's approach to designing and implementing universal access will be co-designed with a number of stakeholders including the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector, families and the community. Establishing the Co-Design Planning Group is the Government's first step in this approach.

The Universal Early Learning for Three-Year Olds Co-Design Planning Group (the Planning Group) held its first meeting on 11 January 2023 where it affirmed its purpose to provide strategic guidance on how to develop and implement the co-design process with key stakeholders for the universal access to early learning for three-year-olds in Tasmania. This might include:

- providing advice on who needs to be involved in the co-design process
- advising on the important issues stakeholders may have in relation to universal access
- recommending how to best engage with the various stakeholders, particularly ECEC providers, families and children
- sharing knowledge, experience and information to support establishment of co-design with stakeholders, and
- recommendations for the governance model for the initiative.

Members of the Planning Group are:

- Ros Cornish, consultant, (Co-Chair)
- Jenny Burgess, Association Secretary, DECYP (Co-Chair)
- Suzanne Purdon, Principal Leader Early Years Partnerships and Projects, DECYP
- Vidhya Chelliah, Manager, Education and Care Unit, DECYP
- Anita Griffin, Director, Strategic Policy and Projects, DECYP

- Annette Barwick – Early Childhood Australia, Tasmania Branch
- Anita Cunningham, Director, Learning and Teaching, Catholic Education Tasmania *(apology, Donna Bucher attended as proxy)*
- Angela Stanley-Gasparin, Family Day Care
- Mel Reid, Australian Childcare Alliance
- Mark Seager, Early Years Consultant, Independent Schools Tasmania *(apology)*
- Secretariat Support: Tim Denby, Assistant Director, Strategic Policy and Projects, DECYP (*apology)*

Role of Co-Chairs

The Planning Group noted Ros Cornish had been invited by the Minister for Education, Children and Youth to co-chair the Design Group together with Jenny Burgess and the role of the co-chairs is to lead and facilitate the Group's meetings and to provide advice to the Minister on the co-design process.

Purpose of First Meeting

The purpose of the Planning Group's first meeting was to set the scene for the Group's work, clarify any questions and begin to plan for the co-design process.

Background and Context

The Planning Group noted the approach to developing and implementing universal access to early learning for three-year-olds will:

- be co-designed with the ECEC sector and other stakeholders
- not be a one-size-fits-all approach and will be responsive to the needs of local communities
- not legislate changes to school starting ages
- expand access through ECEC settings as the preferred provider wherever possible.

Working Together Agreement

The Planning Group noted that they are here to do what is in the best interests of children and agreed to work together in the following ways to achieve this aim:

- be respectful of each other and other people's views and opinions
- use our diverse skills, knowledge and information to support the work of the group
- be mindful members are not representing or lobbying for their organisation
- engage in open, honest, and timely communication with group members
- respond to requests for input or advice in a timely manner

Planning Group members are also encouraged to consult broadly with their membership and stakeholder Groups to inform their input in the Group's work.

Opportunities and Challenges

The Planning Group discussed the following opportunities and challenges:

- how do we reach those who we don't normally hear from and remove the barriers they experience to engage in early learning, particularly for children with a disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and their families and communities

- the importance of taking a broad approach to engaging with stakeholders to understand opportunities, barriers, risks

What is Co-Design?

The Planning Group discussed the definition of co-design as:

> *"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 following principles common to co-design were noted:

- inclusive
- respectful
- participative
- iterative
- outcomes focused.

The Planning Group referred to following resource to better understand co-design:

UNPACKING CO-DESIGN – TACSI

Next Steps

The Planning Group agreed their next meetings would unpack in more detail the co-design process and would be informed by available data. Additional meetings will/have occurred on:

- 24 January 2023
- 6 February 2023

ECEC sector information sessions

At the 24 January 2023 meeting the Planning Group supported the provision of information sessions for ECEC services to outline universal early learning for three-year-olds and the co-design approach.

Two information sessions will be provided via Teams at the below dates/times. Please click on the below link to join at the time of the meeting….there is no requirement to RSVP.

- 6pm-7pm – Thursday 9th February 2023 – CLICK HERE TO JOIN THE MEETING
- 10am-11am – Friday 10th February 2023 – CLICK HERE TO JOIN THE MEETING

Further information or queries

Further Communiques will be shared after the Planning Group meetings. If you have any queries, please contact spp.admin@decyp.tas.gov.au