



## FACT SHEET: Recognition of Prior Learning Initiative

The Australian Government understands that an early childhood workforce that is well trained, qualified and dedicated is essential to delivering high quality early childhood care and achieving the best possible outcomes for children.

The Government has allocated more than \$190 million for a package of measures to train and retain a quality early childhood workforce.

The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) initiative has been identified as a key measure to assist early childhood education and care services achieve the minimum qualification requirements set out in the National Quality Framework.

### What is RPL?

RPL refers to an assessment process that assesses an individual's informal learning to ensure that an individual has achieved the required learning outcomes, competency outcomes, or standards for entry to, and/or partial or total completion of, a vocational education and training (VET) qualification.

### What is the RPL initiative?

In the 2011—12 Budget the Australian Government committed \$9.2 million over four years (2011—12 to 2014—15) for a RPL initiative to improve the quality and uptake of RPL assessments for early childhood professionals.

Early childhood educators located in rural and remote Australia face additional barriers accessing RPL. To help, the RPL initiative will provide additional assistance to existing early childhood educators in inner regional, outer regional, remote and very remote locations who wish to obtain or upgrade their qualifications.

The initiative includes:

- development of a new national RPL assessment tool kit, for Certificate III, Diploma and Advanced Diploma in Children's Services, which will be available from March 2012.

- training 600 existing RPL assessors in good practice RPL and the use of the new national RPL tool kit. Training of the RPL Assessors commenced in March 2012 to coincide with the release of the new tool kit.
- RPL Assessment Grants of up to \$1125 for existing rural and remote early childhood educators to contribute to out-of-pocket expenses associated with accessing RPL assessments.

## Training for RPL assessors

Existing RPL assessors with a proven capacity to delivery high quality RPL assessments have been selected to undertake training in the use of the new national RPL assessment tool kit and become DEEWR Registered RPL Assessors.

Training of selected assessors commenced in March 2012 and each of the successful RPL assessors will receive two days of training in the use of the new national RPL assessment tool kit.

## RPL Assessments

Under the RPL initiative, early childhood services wishing to access RPL have the option of arranging for a registered RPL assessor to come to their service or for individual educators to travel to their assessment. The registered RPL assessor will complete the assessment using the process promoted in the new national assessment tool kit.

The RPL initiative focuses on the following qualifications:

- CHC30708 Certificate III in Children's Services
- CHC50908 Diploma of Children's Services (Early childhood education and care)
- CHC60208 Advanced Diploma in Children's Services

A list of DEEWR Registered RPL Assessors is available on the Department's website at [www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood](http://www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood)

## RPL Assessment Grants

The RPL assessment grant provides services and educators with up to \$1125, per eligible early childhood educator, to assist with their out of pocket expenses when attending a RPL assessment.

When applying for a RPL assessment grant services may claim for the costs associated with arranging for a registered RPL assessor to travels to a service to conduct a RPL assessment ('service' claim) and educators may claim, through their service, for their costs incurred to travel to an assessment ('individual' claims).

Payments will only be made once the costs of accessing an RPL assessment have been incurred and supporting documentation has been provided to DEEWR. The direct cost of undertaking RPL is not provided under this initiative.

All grant funding for individual claims will be paid to the service who will need to pass the funds on to the early childhood educators

RPL assessment grant funding is only available to the following early childhood service types:

- Long Day Care
- Family Day Care
- Outside School Hours Care (includes Before and After School Care and Vacation Care)
- Preschools
- Budget Based Funded Services.

### **Applying for a RPL Assessment Grants?**

Grants will be available from March 2012 with applications made using the electronic application form available on the DEEWR website at [www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood](http://www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood)

Guidelines for the RPL Assessment Grant Program are also available on the Department's website at [www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood](http://www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood)

### **How will this initiative support the early childhood education and care profession to meet the requirements of the National Quality Framework?**

The RPL initiative will make it easier for experienced early childhood educators to obtain or upgrade their qualifications through a national assessment process.

Promoting the use of RPL will reduce the overall time cost to educators and services in upgrading staff qualifications to meet the minimum qualification requirements set out in the National Quality Framework. RPL assessments are also a means of building the capacity of the workforce by encouraging individuals to identify and address knowledge gaps through recognised education and training.

### **Are there any other government initiatives that could assist with the costs of undertaking RPL?**

Early childhood services and educators may be eligible to receive other financial assistance. Information about the range of Commonwealth, state and territory government funding available to assist early childhood educators attain a Children's Services qualification is available on the DEEWR website.

Early Childhood services and educators are also encouraged to check with their RTO, state or territory government about what assistance is available in their state or territory.

## What else is the Australian Government doing to support the early childhood workforce?

The Government has provided funding for a package of measures to train and retain a quality early childhood workforce. This includes the following:

- Removal of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) fees for diploma and advanced diploma child care course
- Additional early childhood education university places
- Higher Education Contribution Scheme- Higher Education Loan Program (HECS-HELP) Benefit for Early Childhood Education Teachers. This initiative will be expanded for 2011-12 so more early childhood teachers are eligible to apply
- HECS-HELP Benefit for nursing and education graduates.

The Government also announced the Building Australia's Future Workforce package in the 2011–12 Budget. It provides a \$3.02 billion investment over six years for a new approach to deliver the skilled workers the economy needs and ensure more Australians have the opportunity to share in the nation's prosperity. This is in addition to new funding of more than \$2 billion over the next four years for Australia's university sector.

The National Workforce Development Fund is a key component of the Australian Government's Building Australia's Future Workforce package. Through the Fund the Government will provide \$558 million over four years to support training and workforce development in areas of current and future skills need. Government funding will be supplemented by a co-contribution from industry with the government contributing at higher levels for small businesses.

Further information about the National Workforce Development Fund is available on [www.deewr.gov.au/Skills/Programs/SkillTraining/nwdf/](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Skills/Programs/SkillTraining/nwdf/).

On 1 December 2011, the Government announced it would commit up to \$10 million from the Fund to support existing and new workers in the early childhood sector enhance their skill levels through formal training. More information on this initiative will be available in early 2012.

## How can I find further information?

Visit [www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood](http://www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood) for more information or email your questions to [ECECWorkforceInitiatives@deewr.gov.au](mailto:ECECWorkforceInitiatives@deewr.gov.au).

More information on the RPL Tool Kit is contained in an additional information sheet, which is available on the DEEWR website at [http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy\\_Agenda/EarlyChildhoodWorkforce/Pages/InformationforRTOsandRPLassessors.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy_Agenda/EarlyChildhoodWorkforce/Pages/InformationforRTOsandRPLassessors.aspx)