



---

# First Nations Playgroups

## Feedback for applicants

---

The Department of Social Services (the department) has provided the following general feedback for applicants of the First Nations Playgroups grant opportunity.

Assessment of applications was in accordance with the procedure detailed in the grant opportunity guidelines (guidelines) and outlined in the selection process below.

## Overview

The application submission period opened on 4 April 2024 and closed on 24 April 2024.

The First Nations Playgroups program provides funding to support Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to deliver playgroups in their communities. The playgroups act as a key engagement activity for First Nations families, improving the early development and wellbeing of First Nations children, improving parent-child relationships and increasing feelings of belonging and connection to family, community, and culture, particularly for children from vulnerable or disadvantaged families. By working closely with other community services, playgroups can contribute to improved effectiveness of service delivery in their respective communities and contribute to achieving improved outcomes for First Nations children and families.

This grant opportunity supports Target 4 of the Commonwealth Government's Closing the Gap Implementation Plan, which is:

- By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all 5 domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) to 55%.

[Closing the Gap targets and outcomes | Closing the Gap<sup>1</sup>](#)

It will also contribute to Priority Reform 2 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reforms, which aims to build the Aboriginal Community-Controlled Sector.

[Priority Reforms | Closing the Gap<sup>2</sup>](#)

The grant will run over 3 years from 2023–24 to 2025–26 financial years.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement/targets>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement/priority-reforms>



## Selection Process

The Community Grants Hub undertook the initial screening for organisation eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the guidelines. This information was provided to the department's grant opportunity delegate for final decisions on whether an application met the eligibility and compliance criteria.

The department assessed and considered all applications through a targeted competitive grant process.

The selection advisory panel (panel) established by the department, comprised of subject matter experts who assessed applications and provided advice to inform the funding recommendations to the Financial Delegate.

When assessing and deliberating on applications the panel took into consideration several factors including the inclusion or exclusion of late applications, the volume of applications received and meeting the identified requirements outlined in the guidelines and the available funding envelope.

The panel's consideration of assessed applications was, based on:

- meeting the compliance requirements outlined in the guidelines
- meeting the eligibility requirements outlined in the guidelines
- how well the responses met the assessment criteria
- the provision and appropriateness of the requested attachments
- whether the project demonstrated value with relevant money
- identified risks and the proposed mitigation strategies for the department and the Commonwealth.

## Selection Results

There was a strong interest in the grant opportunity and applications were of a high standard. The successful applicants demonstrated their ability to meet the grant requirements outlined in the guidelines based on the strength of their responses to the assessment criterion.

This feedback is provided to assist grant applicants to understand what comprised a strong application and what were quality responses to the assessment criteria.



## Criterion 1

**Describe the proposed playgroup and/or toy library activities to be delivered in your community.**

When addressing the criterion applicants:

- demonstrated they understood early childhood learning and development needs of First Nations children and families in their community
- described how the proposed playgroup activities and/or toy library would benefit their community, including how they would measure and evaluate the benefits
- where applicable, explained how their activities would target priority groups and/or activities listed under Intended Outcomes Number 5, which included:
  - promoting and sharing outcomes from pilots to demonstrate the strengths of different cultural ways in which playgroups can be offered in a range of settings, including:
    - i. intergenerational activities supporting the participation of grandparents and elders
    - ii. supported playgroups offering foundation supports to children experiencing developmental delays
    - iii. trauma informed playgroups open to families with experience of family violence
    - iv. playgroups supporting young parents
    - v. playgroups supporting father's and father figures.

Strong applications:

- provided a detailed description of their proposed playgroup and/or toy library activities, displaying an understanding of all subcomponents under criterion 1
- explained in detail how their activities would target priority groups and/or activities listed under Intended Outcomes Number 5.

## Criterion 2

**Demonstrate your organisation's capability to deliver the project.**

When addressing the criterion applicants:

- demonstrated their organisation had existing skills/experience in delivering early childhood education and care (ECEC) activities
- described their organisations previous experience in successfully delivering similar programs, or other services to the community.

Strong applications:

- provided comprehensive detail regarding their organisations existing skills/experience in delivering early childhood education and care (ECEC) activities
- provided a comprehensive description of their organisations previous experience in successfully delivering similar programs, or other services to their community.



### Criterion 3

**Describe how your organisation could establish/utilise relationships with other organisations in your community.**

When addressing the criterion applicants:

- demonstrated how their organisation could establish and/or utilise relationships with other local service providers to achieve enhanced outcomes for First Nations families and children.

Strong applications:

- described a deep knowledge and understanding of the service environment their organisation operated in, including how the organisation would establish new relationships as well as enhancing current relationships within the community
- provided specific details of organisations they were currently working with and/or intended to work with during the course of the grant activity.

### Individual feedback

Individual feedback will not be provided for this grant opportunity.