



Government of  
South Australia

# QualifySA in Early Childhood

## Financial support guidelines for aspiring preschool teachers

Office for  
Early Childhood  
Development



## From the heart

We acknowledge the Aboriginal peoples as the First peoples of South Australia and as custodians of the lands, waters, skies and communities where we live, learn and raise children.

We recognise Aboriginal peoples as having the longest living culture, raising children safe and strong in their identity, community, culture, and connection to country.

We pay our deep respects to Elders past and present, and their role as the first knowledge sharers for children. We follow in their footsteps.

Aboriginal peoples, working with and for children, are central in shaping our work. Their wisdom, advice, and guidance enrich our practices, creating a more inclusive and culturally safe environment for children and families.

We respect Aboriginal peoples' ways of being, doing and wise practices guiding our continual learning. Together we walk and build stronger, more supportive communities for all children.

## QualifySA in Early Childhood

Financial support for individuals undertaking qualifications in early childhood education and care aims to reduce barriers, enabling individuals from diverse backgrounds to pursue rewarding careers.

This program seeks to amplify opportunities for individuals to enter and thrive in the early childhood education and care field, fostering equality, building our workforce and enhancing the quality of care and education provided to children.

## About the program

The QualifySA in Early Childhood program offers financial support to South Australian residents who have received a letter of offer or an enrolment confirmation to an eligible birth to 5 (B-5) early childhood teaching qualification. \* Eligible financial support recipients can use the funding to offset living expenses while they study and work. Expenses may include course fees, study materials, or accommodation costs required to facilitate studies.

The following financial support is available under this program:

- up to **\$25,000** for recipients studying a B-5 bachelor degree
- up to **\$17,000** for recipients studying a B-5 master degree\*\*
- up to **\$14,500** for recipients studying a B-5 graduate diploma\*\*\*.

All qualifications must be recognised by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) on [the approved qualifications list](#).

All amounts listed are before tax.

All applicants should intend to work in a South Australian early childhood service specifically working with 3-year-old children upon completion of their qualification. Early childhood services include long day care services providing a preschool program, and non-government and government run sessional preschools.

Funding is not available for teachers who intend or continue to work at a primary or secondary school.

Applicants must complete their qualification by **31 December 2032**.

Successful applicants will be required to contractually commit to working in a preschool program as a teacher South Australia's early childhood sector after graduation for a minimum of 2 years.

*\*Further eligibility requirements apply as outlined under the Eligibility heading.*

*\*\*Students studying a research master degree are not eligible for this financial support program.*

*\*\*Eligible master degree students must not already have an early childhood career qualification recognised by ACECQA.*

*\*\*\*Graduate diploma students must possess an existing primary or secondary degree that is not recognised by ACECQA as an approved early childhood education and care qualification.*

## Eligibility

To be eligible for QualifySA in Early Childhood funding support, an applicant must be a South Australian resident AND:

- a citizen of Australian or New Zealand or hold a [permanent resident](#) of Australia visa AND
- have an offer to study an [eligible birth to 5 \(B-5\) early childhood teaching qualification recognised by ACECQA](#).

If the program receives more applications than it can accommodate, preference will be given to specific cohorts such as:

- educators in rural and regional areas
- those in metropolitan services with a significant number of vulnerable or disadvantaged children
- educators who have not yet benefited from financial support or incentives provided by the Office for Early Childhood Development or another funding source.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – financial support

Financial support of up to **\$34,000** is being offered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who have received a letter of offer or enrolled in eligible early childhood birth to 5 teaching qualifications. Eligibility criteria and conditions apply.

For more information, refer to [Guidelines for financial support – Aboriginal pathways](#)

## Regional and remote students – additional financial support

Students in regional and remote areas who face additional barriers to accessing higher education can apply for the Grow Your Own (GYO) allowance. This GYO financial support program provides up to \$10,000 over the course of a recipient's studies to help them pursue their education, and to build a career in their local region. This funding is in addition to the support offered through the QualifySA in Early Childhood financial support program.

To be eligible for GYO funding, students must:

- be recipients of financial support through the QualifySA in Early Childhood financial support program
- reside in, and intend to work within a local regional or remote community, specifically in locations classified as very remote, remote, or outer regional in South Australia according to the [Australian Statistical Geography Standard – Remoteness Area classification](#).

Eligibility will be determined by the administrator based on your residential address.

## Funding information

- Applicants should have already been accepted into an eligible course, and all funding is contingent on the student submitting satisfactory evidence of enrolment and study completion for each year of their study.
- Students receive payments per academic year, adjusted for recognition of prior learning (RPL), other reductions in course duration, or completed subjects/units of study prior to being approved to receive financial support.
- For the purposes of the funding application, a part-time student must be studying a minimum 0.5 load. This is half of what is considered to be a full-time load by your institution. To calculate this, you will need to confirm the number of units or points your institution deems as full-time and halve that number.
- If your study extends beyond the standard duration of time for expected completion due to circumstances such as studying part-time, not passing subjects, withdrawing, or other considerations (such as completing a 3-year course over 5 years), the timing of your scheduled payments will be adjusted.
- Applicants must complete the qualification by 31 December 2032.
- Applicants should intend to work in a South Australian early childhood service specifically working with 3-year-old children upon completion of their qualifications. This includes working in long day care services providing a preschool program, and non-government and government run sessional preschools.
- A funding recipient will be required to contractually commit to working in a preschool program as a teacher in the South Australian early childhood sector after graduation for a minimum of 2 years.
- Eligibility for employment retention payments extends to both fixed-term and ongoing roles in the South Australian early childhood sector.

## Considerations before applying

- Applicants must assess their financial situation, as they are responsible for additional expenses beyond the awarded amount.
- Funding amounts are pre-tax, and recipients must seek independent advice on potential impacts on taxation and government benefit schemes.

## Applications, assessment, and funding recipient obligations

- Applications for this program are submitted online.
- Applications are assessed by an external administrator, in accordance with the eligibility criteria.
- Upon approval, successful candidates sign a legally binding funding agreement outlining their rights and responsibilities.
- Financial support is disbursed based on milestone conditions to be met by the recipient, with potential repayment obligations for non-compliance.

To provide feedback, or to raise concerns about the financial support program, please contact the Workforce team directly at [OECD.ECWorkforceSupport@sa.gov.au](mailto:OECD.ECWorkforceSupport@sa.gov.au)

## Employment retention payments and milestone non-compliance

- After completing their approved course, a financial support recipient may qualify for retention payments upon commencing employment in the South Australian early childhood sector.
- Employment should begin within 6 months of graduation, whether in a fixed term or ongoing role.
- A recipient is required to maintain continuous employment working in a preschool program that meets the specified criteria outlined in the financial support agreement to retain eligibility for payments.
- Financial support recipients must promptly report changes in employment status, conditions, or location to the administrator to continue receiving retention milestone payments. This includes when circumstances change due to a variation in employment contract, or in the case of periods of parental leave.

It is the funding recipient's responsibility to find employment in South Australia to meet the program milestones. The Office for Early Childhood Development does not guarantee employment in the early childhood sector.

If a financial support recipient fails to meet prescribed milestones, they may be required to repay some funding. In exceptional circumstances, the Office for Early Childhood Development may consider waiving repayment obligations, subject to individual evaluation and supporting documentation.

## Guideline revisions

The guidelines, which cover program specifications and eligibility criteria, are subject to potential change. Any modifications will be made available on this website.

## QualifySA in Early Childhood – financial support payment milestones

The tables below show the financial support payment milestones. Recipients will receive these payments after they provide the evidence needed for each milestone. The evidence needed is described in the financial support agreement and is checked by the administrator.

### Initial teacher education financial support (bachelor degree)

Payment schedule by year of study and employment retention	3-year degree payment amount	4-year degree payment amount
Year 1	\$4000	\$3000
Year 2	\$4000	\$3000
Year 3	\$5000	\$3000
Year 4	nil	\$4000
Employment retention 1 paid 6 months into first year in sector employment after graduation	\$5000	\$5000
Employment retention 2 paid 2.5 years into third year in sector employment after graduation	\$7000	\$7000
<b>Total value</b>	<b>Up to \$25,000</b>	<b>Up to \$25,000</b>

### Initial teacher education financial support (master degree)

Payment schedule by year of study and employment retention	Payment amount
Year 1 following Census date	\$2500
Year 2 following course completion	\$2500
Employment retention 1, paid 6 months into first year in sector after graduation	\$5000
Employment retention 2, paid 2.5 years into third year in sector employment after graduation	\$7000
<b>Total value</b>	<b>Up to \$17,000</b>

## Initial teacher education financial support (graduate diploma)

Payment schedule by year of study and employment retention	Payment amount
Year 1 following Census date	\$1,250
Year 2 following course completion	\$1,250
Employment retention 1, paid 6 months into first year in sector after graduation	\$5000
Employment retention 2, paid 2.5 years into third year in sector employment after graduation	\$7000
<b>Total value</b>	<b>Up to \$14,500</b>

## Contact

Email: [OECD.ECWorkforceSupport@sa.gov.au](mailto:OECD.ECWorkforceSupport@sa.gov.au)

Phone: 1300 050 509