

# Early Years Framework - a step forward for Australia's children



**Early childhood is currently under the spotlight both in Australia and around the world. The importance of the early years of life is becoming increasingly evident and of concern to most developed countries.**

The Queensland and New South Wales Commissions for Children and Young People, with the support of the National Investment for the Early Years (NIFTeY), recently collaborated to produce a document which focuses on what needs to be done to achieve positive outcomes for Australia's children.

Called *A Head Start for Australia: An Early Years Framework*, it provides a framework to support positive outcomes in a range of priority areas, including health, welfare and education, and in other areas often neglected such as social and economic policy.

The nine priorities identified are:

1. Supporting the wellbeing of women of child-bearing age.
2. Promoting child wellbeing.
3. Supporting the choices of families in their parental and working roles.

4. Enriching, safe and supportive environments for children.
5. Improving economic security for families and reducing child poverty.
6. Achieving success in learning and social development.
7. Protecting the safety of children.
8. Promoting connections across generations, families, cultures and communities.
9. Increasing children's participation: policy action, awareness raising and advocacy.

The early years framework goes beyond the usual siloed approach to policy and includes strategies which are essential to improve the wellbeing of Australia's children.

It provides a tool for all levels of government, non-government stakeholders and community members to use when they consider how they can contribute to children's wellbeing.

It also draws attention to the need for national indicators of child wellbeing to act as a warning system and to monitor the effects of policy change and new programs.

The successful implementation of this framework will require cooperation at all levels of government and in the private sector, the not-for-profit sector, industrial organisations, professions and communities.

We hope that by developing and discussing this framework we can assist the process of moving forward to benefit children, families and our whole society.

A copy of the document can be downloaded from: [www.childcomm.qld.gov.au/commission/whatsnew.htm](http://www.childcomm.qld.gov.au/commission/whatsnew.htm).

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