Early Years Initiative
Questions and Answers

What is the Early Years Initiative?
The unprecedented 10-year partnership will see community leaders, all levels of government, researchers, business and philanthropic organisations come together - to look at ways to better design and deliver services for children aged 0-4 years.

Why is it taking place?
In recent years, despite significant effort, there has been little or no improvement in key developmental indicators for young children in many high needs communities. Contributing factors include:

- poor service coordination and duplication
- limited community involvement in designing initiatives that support young children and their families
- a lack of access at a community level to evidence about “what works” to improve early childhood outcomes.

The Early Years Initiative is a response to these factors. It will ensure that children in participating communities are starting school on an even playing field with their peers across the State. It will do so by supporting communities to implement a range of evidence-based changes to make better use of existing services and supports for families with young children.

Who is paying for this initiative and how much will it cost?
The Early Years Initiative is a $49.3 million investment over 10 years. Costs and resources will be shared between the State Government and partners Telethon Kids Institute and Minderoo Foundation.

Who are the main partners in this initiative?
The Initiative is a partnership between the State Government, Minderoo Foundation and Telethon Kids Institute. The Early Years Initiative board will be made up of representatives from these organisations and Chaired by an independent expert.
At a State Government level, the key agencies are the Departments of Communities, Education and Health.

Each selected community will be a critical participant in the initiative, include a range of people and organisations in those communities – from the community health nurse to the local government to education and training providers in that area.

**Where is the Early Years Initiative being implemented?**

Four communities across metropolitan, regional and remote Western Australia will be invited to take part in the Initiative. What we learn from the Initiative will be shared and used to improve early childhood practices across the State.

We are yet to confirm these locations.

**How will you select the locations?**

A small set of communities have been identified as potentially appropriate sites, based on data that shows a clear need to improve early childhood outcomes.

We are using data from the Australian Early Development Census and community-level data held by the State Health Department and other key agencies.

Final community selection will be influenced by local interest in participating in the Initiative, and the potential to establish or make use of existing strong local governance.

**What exactly will the Initiative be looking at with children and families?**

In Australia, the development of young children is monitored and measured via the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC).

The five domains of the AEDC that will be examined in the Early Years Initiative for young children are:

- physical health and well-being
- social competence
- emotional maturity
- language and cognitive skills; and
- communication skills and general knowledge.

The Initiative will consider the range of factors that influence these domains, including employment, family and domestic violence, housing and social isolation.
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Isn’t this the role of government – to fund initiatives in the early years?
The Initiative is a place-based approach that will leverage current significant government investment, activities and services in four communities to identify those practices that can best improve children’s development and learning.

Participation by Minderoo and Telethon Kids Institute enables us to better incorporate world-leading research about “what works” into every day practice, and provide additional resources to implement and evaluate innovative changes.

How much is the State Government investing into the Early Years Initiative, and where is the funding coming from?
The State Government is investing $24.6m over 10 years in the Early Years Initiative.

This is not new money – we are repurposing or redesigning existing expenditure.

How will EYI be governed?
The Early Years Initiative will be governed as follows:

- The Early Years Initiative Board will be responsible for governing the Initiative in accordance with plans and agreements.
- Community boards will be established in each selected community. They will be responsible for consulting with, and making decisions on behalf of, their respective communities.
- A team will coordinate the Initiative and support the community boards.
- A research and evidence group will provide research and evidence advice to communities, partners and other stakeholders.
- The State Government, Minderoo Foundation and the Telethon Kids Institute will meet biennially to consider its progress.

How will the community be involved?
The State Government recognises that local communities know their children and what they need.

Each community will have a community board made up of key members of the community to combine local insights with global best practice.