

# Insights into implementation in early childhood education and care 2025

AERO's learning about implementing evidence-based practices from partnerships with services

November 2025



# **The Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) is Australia's national education evidence body, working to achieve excellence and equity in educational outcomes for all children and young people.**

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## **Acknowledgement of Country**

AERO acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands, waterways, skies, islands and sea Country across Australia. We pay our deepest respects to First Nations cultures and Elders past and present. We endeavour to continually value and learn from First Nations knowledges and educational practices.

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## List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full term
ACECQA	Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority
CFIR	Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research
ECEC	early childhood education and care
EYLF V2.0	Early Years Learning Framework V2.0
SISTER	School Implementation Strategies, Translating ERIC Resources

The Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) acknowledges the need for a deeper understanding of the implementation process in ECEC – that is, a better understanding of the missing link between evidenced-based practices and teacher and educator practice. Implementation is a purposeful sequence of planned activities designed to integrate evidence-based practices into real-world settings. (Albers & Pattuwage, 2017). Effective implementation in early childhood education and care (ECEC), as in other settings, involves more than simply adopting a new idea or the introduction of a new resource. It requires embedding planned meaningful and sustainable change that is responsive to the unique context of each service.

## Background

AERO has been working alongside ECEC services to gain an increased understanding of implementation of evidence-based practices in ECEC. This insights paper shares our learning from the 2023 and 2024 iterations of the ECEC Learning Partner project, led by AERO. AERO partnered with services across New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania to learn about the use of a deliberate and structured approach to implementation to deepen the evidence-based practice of assessment for learning.

Drawing on feedback from teachers, educators, Implementation Coordinators (service leaders) and AERO Implementation Consultants, this paper highlights 5 key insights into the implementation of evidence-based practice in ECEC. They are:

1. Service context influences implementation.
2. Role clarity and purposeful, collaborative leadership support implementation.
3. Finding your 'why' gains buy-in for implementation.
4. Adopting a structured approach helps to sustain implementation.
5. Establishing and facilitating supportive relationships advances implementation.

These insights offer evidence-informed perspectives for leaders seeking to strengthen the implementation of evidence-based practices within their services.



## Evidence-based practices and implementation in ECEC

Despite the increasing emphasis on evidence-based practices, there is limited clarity around how ECEC services access these practices and, once accessed, how they can be effectively implemented (Farley et al., 2017). It has been noted by health sciences research that there is a 17-year lag between what we ‘know’ works (evidence-based practices) and what we ‘do’ (practice) (Morris et al., 2011; Robinson et al., 2020). In ECEC, 17 years could be equivalent to 3 cohorts of children who may not benefit from what we know to be effective teaching practices.

The ECEC sector consists of a diverse workforce. Teachers, educators and service leaders come from a range of backgrounds in terms of qualifications and experience. Additionally, ECEC services vary widely in service philosophy and approach. While the use of evidence-based practices is shown to improve children’s learning and development outcomes, the sector’s diversity can pose challenges in ensuring consistent implementation of evidence-based practices across services and service types (Hadley et al., 2018). For many reasons, implementation is often ad hoc and does not get the attention or support it should (Michie et al., 2009). Service leaders, teachers and educators often describe their enthusiasm for promising new evidence-based practices that come out of research and launch straight into them. However, these may fade or become forgotten as other priorities arise, rather than being embedded and sustained over time. Implementation science provides a useful framework for supporting the successful adoption of evidence-based practices in this context (Moir, 2018).

## AERO’s approach to implementation

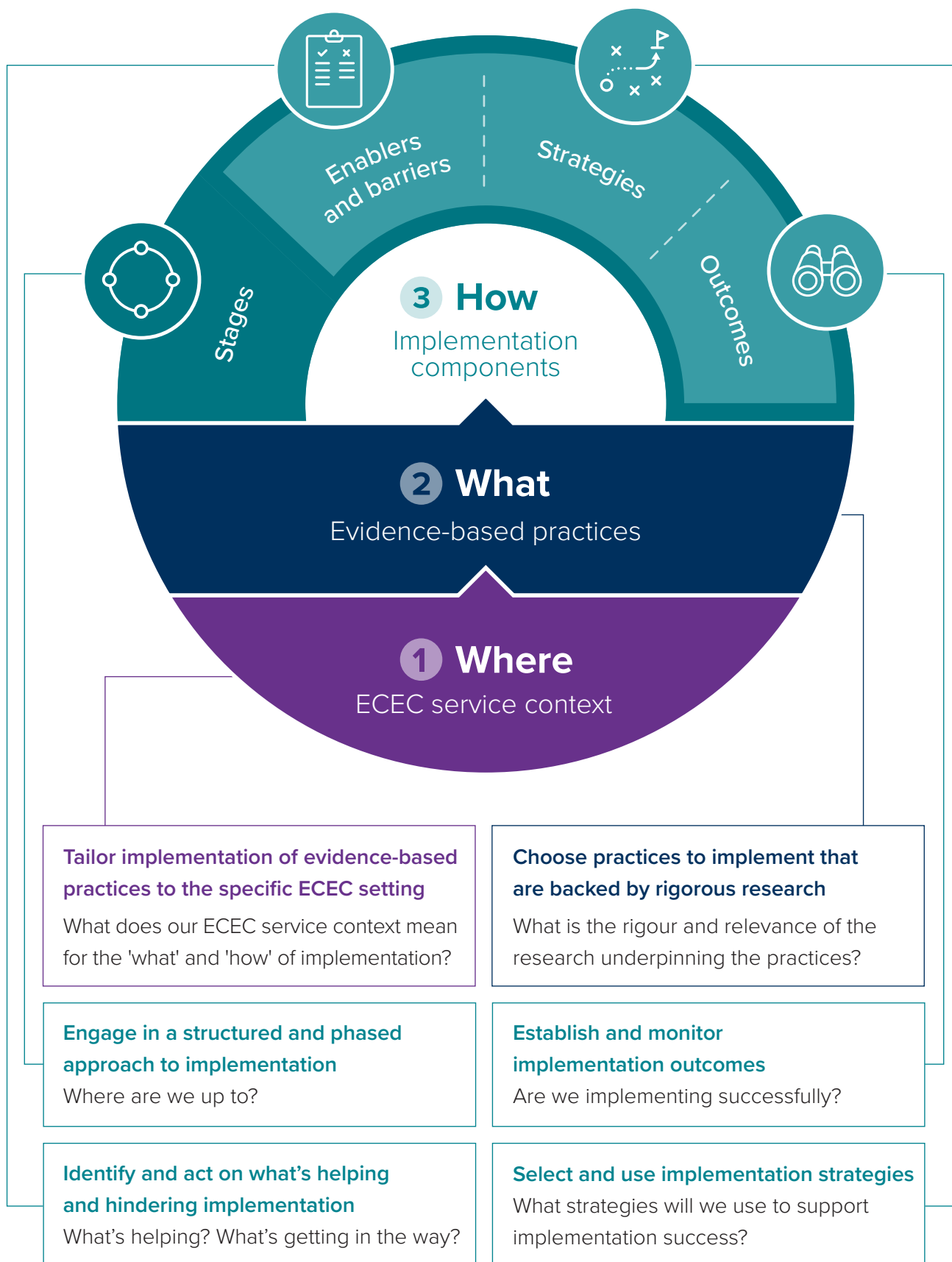
### A deliberate and structured approach to implementation

AERO has developed a ‘deliberate’ and ‘structured’ approach to implementation by identifying and operationalising key concepts from implementation research (see [Figure 1](#)).

The ideas in this approach draw on seminal implementation research and frameworks, with careful consideration of how the approach might be delivered to support ECEC services in engaging in effective implementation.

A deliberate and structured approach to implementation begins with ECEC service context (where), includes an evidence-based practice (what) and relies on 4 implementation components (how).

**Figure 1:** A deliberate and structured approach to implementing evidence-based practice in ECEC



## Where: ECEC service context

Context is the many unique factors that influence a specific implementation effort (Damschroder et al., 2009). The ECEC sector not only consists of a diverse workforce, but there is also diversity in the types of services and service providers. ECEC services also vary widely in structure, including both in operations and practice. This can have an impact on what practices are adopted and how they are enacted. Tailoring to the ECEC service context can include addressing implementation barriers, selecting appropriate implementation strategies or identifying the measures for monitoring implementation outcomes.

The ECEC service context is key when considering the ‘why’ of implementation and is the lens through which decisions are made with regard to the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of implementation.

## What: Evidence-based practice

Evidence-based practices are supported by research evidence<sup>1</sup> showing they are educational approaches likely to be effective for improving children’s outcomes. Evidence-based practice is the ‘what’ we want to be implementing in ECEC services, using a deliberate and structured approach.

## How: Implementation components

There are 4 components that form part of a deliberate and structured approach to implementation. These components are used together throughout implementation and rely on each other – no one component is more important than another. This is the ‘how’ of AERO’s implementation approach.

### 1. Use a staged approach

Implementation is not a one-off event and can instead be thought of in stages that build upon each other (Albers & Pattuwage, 2017; Meyers et al., 2012; Saldana et al., 2012). AERO’s approach to implementation draws on Evidence for Learning’s 4 stages of implementation (Education Endowment Foundation, 2019):

- **Explore** – Services identify the evidence-based practice they would like to focus on based on their services’ needs.
- **Prepare** – Services make plans for a structured implementation process to be ready to work towards the goal identified within the plans.
- **Deliver** – The evidence-based practice is actioned by the implementation team based on the identified goal.
- **Sustain** – The evidence-based practice becomes embedded within the service.

These stages support ECEC services to plan for key activities and decisions as they implement an evidence-based practice.

<sup>1</sup> See AERO’s practice guide, [The Value of Research Evidence: Using Research to Strengthen Your Practice](#), for more information.

## 2. Address enablers and barriers

Every implementation process will experience factors that can help or hinder the successful uptake of an evidence-based practice. Understanding enablers and barriers supports ECEC services in identifying what is working and leveraging these enablers while also addressing what is getting in the way of implementation. We consider enablers and barriers at different levels – the wider context, the service context and the individual context.

## 3. Select implementation strategies

Implementation strategies are the actions that support the implementation of an evidence-based practice. These can include creating an implementation plan<sup>2</sup>, planning for and conducting professional learning sessions, holding regular professional conversations and networking with others. Our implementation approach uses implementation strategies adapted from the School Implementation Strategies, Translating ERIC Resources (SISTER) (Waltz et al., 2019). SISTER highlights 75 implementation strategies across 9 domains (e.g., adapt and tailor to context; train and educate stakeholders). Understanding the breadth of strategies relevant to an ECEC service context enables leaders to consider how the strategies could be used within their context and the support the strategies can provide to the practice being implemented.

## 4. Monitor implementation outcomes

Implementation outcomes help ECEC services consider how their implementation of an evidence-based practice is tracking. These outcomes focus on the process itself. While improving child outcomes is the ultimate goal, monitoring implementation enables ECEC services to respond in the moment to contextual factors affecting the implementation process. Our approach utilises implementation outcomes from Proctor et al. (2011). The outcomes that we have prioritised to help ECEC services monitor the success of implementation are taken from Proctor et al. (2011):

- **Appropriateness** – The perceived ‘fit’ or relevance between an evidence-based practice and the need being addressed.
- **Acceptability** – The perception among stakeholders (e.g., children, families, staff) that an evidence-based practice is agreeable or satisfactory.
- **Feasibility** – The extent to which an evidence-based practice can be successfully carried out in a given area.
- **Fidelity** – The degree to which an evidence-based practice is implemented as intended within the service.

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<sup>2</sup> Implementation plans serve as a document to guide monitoring and progress of implementation work. They consist of implementation goals, people involved, enablers and barriers and strategies that will be used.

## The ECEC Learning Partner project

The ECEC Learning Partner project commenced in 2023. This project is a partnership between AERO and a small cohort of ECEC services across Australia.

There are 4 main objectives of the ECEC Learning Partner project. They are to:

1. learn about promising approaches to implementing evidence-based practices
2. use an evidence-informed approach to provide support and guidance, with the aim of improving practice and ultimately demonstrating impact
3. generate examples of what effective implementation might look like
4. build credibility by working alongside teachers, educators and leaders to better understand and share insights into implementation.

This paper provides insights from the first 2 years of the project – 2023 and 2024.

### The evidence-based practice of focus

The evidence-based practice of focus for the ECEC Learning Partner project is assessment for learning. We are using [AERO's Early Childhood Learning Trajectories](#) as the supporting resource for implementing this practice. Assessment for learning is defined in the Early Years Learning Framework V2.0 (EYLF V2.0) as 'when information about what children know, can do and understand is gathered and analysed to inform pedagogy and planning' (Australian Government Department of Education, 2022, p. 25). It is present within the Principles and Practices within the EYLF V2.0 and is an integral part of the planning cycle. Assessment for learning is also identified within Quality Area 1, Standard 1.3 Assessment and planning (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority [ACECQA], 2024a).

### Learning Partner services

The ECEC Learning Partner project partnered with a total cohort of 19 centre-based long day care, family day care, and preschool services in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Tasmania. We worked with each cohort over the course of a year and provided light-touch support in the first 6 months of the following the year.

### Criteria for inclusion

To be included in the Learning Partner project cohort for 2023 to 2024, services needed to:

- be rated as 'Meeting'<sup>3</sup> the National Quality Standard – services with a 'Meeting' rating form the largest number of services in the sector (ACECQA, 2023, 2024b)
- be able to identify an Implementation Coordinator to lead the Learning Partner work for the service
- have identified assessment as an area to focus on in their Quality Improvement Plan
- not have committed to any other external projects or competing priorities for the 12-month period of the Learning Partner project.

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3 Further information about the [assessment and quality rating process](#) can be found on ACECQA's website.

Insights from the 2023 Learning Partner project identified leadership as a key enabler for implementation. Having more than one person who is familiar with the staff teams leading and supporting the implementation was more likely to ensure progress. In 2024, based on learning from 2023, the inclusion criteria for the Implementation Coordinator changed slightly to identifying 2 Implementation Coordinators (service leaders), both of whom had been at the service for at least 12 months. Additionally, in our experience, services completing or due to complete the assessment and rating process during the project found it difficult to maintain focus on both the Learning Partner project and the assessment and rating process. In these circumstances, the Implementation Coordinators and staff were unintentionally over-stretched. Therefore, the criteria in 2024 also took into account whether the services had undergone the assessment and rating process within the last 2 years.

## Implementation Coordinators and Consultants

A key component of the Learning Partner project is the assigned roles of service-based Implementation Coordinators and AERO Implementation Consultants:

- The Implementation Coordinators were nominated by the service and usually included the educational leader and (from 2024) one other coordinator who may be the Director, a teacher or an educator.
- The Implementation Coordinators' role was to lead implementation within the service with support from AERO Implementation Consultants.
- The AERO Implementation Consultants worked directly with services to provide advice and guidance on the use of a deliberate and structured approach to implementation.

In 2023, AERO Implementation Consultants worked directly with the nominated Implementation Coordinator, as well as teachers and educators, to support and progress implementation. In this first year of the project, AERO Implementation Consultants:

- conducted weekly in-person visits
- facilitated professional learning sessions within services for teachers, educators, service leaders and the Implementation Coordinator
- supported the Implementation Coordinator in implementation planning and progress monitoring through regular one-to-one consultation
- facilitated discussions among Implementation Coordinators across services.

Informed by learning from 2023, the role of AERO Implementation Consultants varied in 2024.

Insights from the 2023 evaluation showed Implementation Coordinators were heavily reliant on the AERO Implementation Consultant, often deferring to the AERO Implementation Consultant to speak with educators and teachers about particular tasks, or using the impending visit to influence action. This led to changes in the approach in 2024 to reduce reliance on AERO and provide more in-house (and thus sustainable) support for implementation.

In 2024, AERO Implementation Consultants only worked with the nominated Implementation Coordinators and reduced their number of in-person visits. In 2024, the AERO Implementation Consultants:

- conducted one in-person visit and 2 online check-ins every quarter
- facilitated 2 in-person professional learning sessions every quarter with all service Implementation Coordinators at an external venue, using a ‘train the trainer’ model to equip Implementation Coordinators to plan, lead and monitor implementation within their services
- facilitated discussions among Implementation Coordinators across services and created opportunities for Implementation Coordinators to network across services.

## Insights from the ECEC Learning Partner project

AERO has drawn on the experiences of participating services to adapt and strengthen the design of the Learning Partner project since it began in 2023.

The following 5 key insights about implementation in ECEC services were drawn from the 2023 and 2024 mid- and end-year interviews and surveys with Implementation Coordinators, teachers, educators and AERO Implementation Consultants:

1. Service context influences implementation
2. Role clarity and purposeful, collaborative leadership support implementation
3. Finding your ‘why’ gains buy-in for implementation
4. Adopting a structured approach helps to sustain implementation
5. Establishing and facilitating supportive relationships advances implementation.

These insights are discussed in the next section. We have also provided some possible actions for each insight for services to consider how this learning might be applied when implementing an evidence-based practice.



## Insight 1

### Service context influences implementation

Every ECEC service is different. Each service operates within a unique community, shaped by its philosophy, staffing, routines, leadership structures and priorities. Understanding these dynamics from the outset gives meaning to the implementation work and the possibility of sustainment. Our partnerships with ECEC services have highlighted the importance of grounding the implementation within the service context.

At the start of the project, AERO Implementation Consultants spent time developing a 'service profile' through the information provided by Implementation Coordinators during service visits and observations of practices. The service profile aimed to consolidate the various characteristics of the service that would have an impact on planning for and the process of implementation, such as staffing structure, roles and responsibilities of staff, qualifications, skillset, knowledge and experience of staff, service philosophy and policies, demographics of the community it serves, professional development plans and the current goals and/or priorities of the service and individuals. This relational groundwork enabled AERO Implementation Consultants to tailor the support and advice they provided for the duration of the project and to align it with each service's existing goals, structures and policies.

Understanding context also means acknowledging the everyday pressures that services navigate. Operational factors, such as staffing, compliance requirements, community commitments and other priorities, could influence how and when implementation activities take place. Frameworks such as the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR)<sup>4</sup> (Damschroder et al., 2009) support exploration of each service's enablers and barriers to implementation. Implementation Coordinators, with the support of AERO's Implementation Consultants, considered implementation enablers and barriers at the individual level (e.g., beliefs and confidence), service level (e.g., internal culture, leadership, team dynamics) and wider level (e.g., national policy, frameworks) in relation to the evidence-based practice of assessment for learning.

Baseline activities and early conversations about assessment for learning helped some Implementation Coordinators gain fresh perspectives on the enablers and barriers at the individual and service level, the current state of the practice and the readiness and openness of the staff to improve on the practice. In some cases, this revealed new insights that informed the planning and the approach of the implementation to ensure the engagement of staff. Based on the Implementation Consultants observations, implementation was most effective when leaders had a strong understanding of their service's internal dynamics, and tracking enablers and barriers helped build this over time.

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4 The CFIR is a comprehensive, meta-theoretical framework used to assess and guide implementation in complex settings. It includes 5 major domains that influence implementation: intervention characteristics, outer setting, inner setting, characteristics of individuals, and implementation process.



### Possible actions

- Collate and create a service profile – the goals and priorities of the service, governance and operational structures, staffing, professional learning goals and plans, internal practice support for staff, feedback processes, etc.
- Identify what will help with implementation (enablers) and what will get in the way (barriers). This will enable plans and/or strategies to be put in place to leverage the enablers and address the barriers. Enablers and barriers can change over the course of the implementation. Reflecting on them at regular points in time will facilitate implementation progress.
- Undertake a baseline snapshot of teacher and educator knowledge of the evidence-based practice of focus to capture gaps in knowledge or misconceptions about what the practice is or how it is implemented. This can help identify enablers and barriers at the individual and service level.

## Insight 2

### Role clarity and purposeful, collaborative leadership support implementation

Leadership is widely acknowledged as a critical factor for successful implementation. Across multiple studies, the influence of leaders on the adoption and sustainability of practices is a recurrent theme, though the specific dynamics and strategies may differ depending on context (Albright et al., 2025; Bustos et al., 2021). Further, the literature shows that effective leadership positively influences workplace quality, enhances the standard of education provided and contributes to improved wellbeing and developmental outcomes for children over time (Gibbs, 2025; Waniganayake et al., 2017).

In ECEC settings, leadership can be shared across different roles, and one person may hold more than one role – for example, Educational Leader, Centre Director, Assistant Centre Director, Room Leader, and sometimes external advisor or head office support staff. Clear role definition is especially important for Implementation Coordinators who juggle multiple leadership roles within a service, to ensure individuals know where their responsibilities lie and who is accountable.

Implementation Coordinators were usually part of the service leadership team, specifically holding roles such as the Educational Leader and/or Centre Director. Implementation Coordinators played a central role in planning for and leading the implementation within their service. As part of the project, they were expected to take ownership of the implementation and lead the work, leaning in on their existing collaboration within the leadership team and not solely relying on the external support of AERO Implementation Consultants to progress the implementation.

[working on the implementation project] has enhanced the working chemistry between me and my fellow leader..’

— Implementation Coordinator

Implementation Coordinators who started the project with clear roles and responsibilities or spent time early on clarifying roles and responsibilities of their existing role within the service saw smoother implementation progress. Key characteristics of leadership for this project included guiding the team, communicating clearly and creating shared commitment. Regular professional conversations among Implementation Coordinators within the service supported this clarity, especially in services with shared leadership or staff turnover.

‘The best thing was having both the educational leader and centre leader involved – it meant one less hurdle to get it back to the team, [we] don’t need to convince each other, and [we] held each other accountable.’

— Implementation Coordinator

‘Having 2 participants, having each other’s back, bouncing ideas off each other, holding the fort when the other needed some time off [facilitated the implementation work].’

— Implementation Coordinator

This highlights the importance of collaborative leadership within the implementation work, actively supporting teams to engage with the practice. Leadership that is deliberate, inclusive and clear creates conditions where change is understood, embraced and sustained.



### Possible actions

- Nominate 2 to 3 staff as Implementation Coordinators to lead the implementation of practice change within the service. This group of staff should include the Educational Leader and members of the service leadership team, as leading implementation aligns with the expectations of their roles.
- Ensure the Implementation Coordinators are clear about their existing roles and responsibilities within the service, as well as their roles in leading the implementation. This will help facilitate delegation of tasks, monitoring of practice and discussions about implementation.
- Establish a regular meeting time for the Implementation Coordinators to discuss, plan for, reflect upon and progress implementation. These meeting times are important pauses to ensure alignment among the Implementation Coordinators for the work.

### Insight 3

## Finding your 'why' gains buy-in for implementation

At the start of the planning for implementation, Implementation Coordinators were supported in identifying why their service wanted to focus on the practice of assessment for learning. When communicating their 'why' to the staff before embarking on implementation, they shared where they would like to see the change and what would be done. In accordance with Sinek's Golden Circle (2009), starting with the 'why' enabled Implementation Coordinators to gain support and buy-in from their teams. This process supported Implementation Coordinators to pause, reflect and build a shared understanding with their staff before moving into action.

"I feel like I have a better understanding of how to talk about children's learning with my team... of how to engage with my team."

— Implementation Coordinator

Implementation Coordinators also found it useful to revisit their service's 'why' with the team at various points during the implementation process. This enabled teams to remain focused and work towards the intended implementation goals.



### Possible actions

- Take time to reflect upon the 'why' – that is, why it is important that the evidence-based practice of focus is implemented and what it will achieve if implemented with fidelity. Workshop this among the Implementation Coordinators and prepare a short, sharp paragraph to gain buy-in with the teachers and educators involved in implementation.

### Insight 4

## Adopting a structured approach helps to sustain implementation

The ECEC environment is dynamic and fast-paced. Finding dedicated time to plan, reflect and review can be challenging. Yet through this project, Implementation Coordinators reflected that having a structured and planned approach to implementation created space for them to be more intentional in facilitating and supporting practice change.

Using a structured implementation approach provided Implementation Coordinators and staff teams with clarity and focus.

When Implementation Coordinators plan for implementation, they identify the goals they would like to work towards, leverage enablers, find ways to address barriers, project and monitor implementation progress, commit to and develop implementation activities (e.g., professional learning sessions, professional conversations and discussions) to support teachers and educators' ability to work towards the implementation goals. Implementation Coordinators were guided to clarify their implementation goals, deepen their understanding of the practice, reflect on their staff's existing understandings of the practice of assessment for learning and plan concrete steps for meaningful change instead of introducing AERO's [Early Childhood Learning Trajectories](#) straightaway. Implementation Coordinators were better able to prioritise tasks, organise their efforts and keep things moving as they paced out what needed to be done.

'Many of us are used to working at a fast pace, but this gave us permission to implement changes at a slower rate, which, in the end, helped things stick.'

— Implementation Coordinator

Service leaders recognised that pacing allowed them to align their planning and support for staff based on their contexts and navigate the complexities of change more effectively. For many Implementation Coordinators, the value of pacing the implementation was in its ability to reduce feelings of being overwhelmed. It enabled Implementation Coordinators to feel more in control and confident in the direction of their work.

'I feel like I have a good framework for implementing change, to go slower and spend most time in the planning stage.'

— Implementation Coordinator

'I don't think I'd thought through the [implementation] process before. It surprises me that my service has successfully implemented any change [previously], but it does explain the years of headaches I've encountered doing this the hard way.'

— Implementation Coordinator



### Possible actions

- Plan for regular opportunities to learn and deepen the evidence-based practice over time to give it a better chance to stick, rather than providing teachers and educators with all the information at once. This also gives teachers and educators time to apply what they have learnt without feeling overwhelmed.
- Dedicate sufficient time when setting up your implementation plan, clarify goals, project and monitor implementation progress, and commit to and develop implementation activities (e.g., professional learning sessions, professional conversations and discussions).

## Insight 5

### Establishing and facilitating supportive relationships advances implementation

Relationships matter at every stage of implementation. The interviews and surveys conducted with Implementation Coordinators, teachers, educators and AERO Implementation Consultants shared that trust, respect and collaboration are essential for meaningful implementation and contribute to sustained practice change. When teachers and educators were guided by their Implementation Coordinators, and when Implementation Coordinators were supported by educators, teachers and AERO Implementation Consultants, confidence grew for everyone involved.

Regular consultations, professional learning and networking facilitated and supported implementation. These strategies were used not only as a planning tool but also to build shared ownership of the change process.

Regular consultations occurred at different levels, between the AERO Implementation Consultant and Implementation Coordinators, between the Implementation Coordinators with staff and among staff. Regular consultations with the AERO Implementation Consultants not only kept Implementation Coordinators accountable to the tasks but also promoted Implementation Coordinators' commitment to and confidence in leading the implementation work. Implementation Coordinators noted that regular consultations significantly enhanced professional conversations within the service.

‘Before the project, we didn’t have those kinds of professional discussions.’

— Implementation Coordinator

‘It is really nice to see ... the way that they [teachers and educators] can talk about it [assessment for learning] between themselves and the use of more professional language within that collaboration.’

— Implementation Coordinator

The professional learning sessions within and external to the service gave Implementation Coordinators, teachers and educators time to engage with content away from their usual settings. In 2024, Implementation Coordinators attended AERO-led professional learning sessions in person alongside other service leaders within their jurisdiction cluster. While it was challenging at times to be out of their service, Implementation Coordinators experienced the benefits of making time for their own professional growth:

‘The professional learning sessions have been so beneficial for learning but also getting us away from the service to effectively plan.’

— Implementation Coordinator

The professional learning sessions also served as networking opportunities, enabling Implementation Coordinators to step outside their own contexts, gain fresh perspectives and feel a sense of shared experience. Online professional learning sessions in the form of mini cluster check-ins, where 2 to 3 services of similar profiles were grouped together to learn and share, also contributed to a sense of connectedness and collegiality among the Implementation Coordinators.

‘It’s helpful to know others have similar issues.’

— Implementation Coordinator

‘It’s time where we can really reflect away from the context that we’re in and be surrounded by other people, hear their ideas.’

— Implementation Coordinator

Together, these experiences reinforced a simple but powerful message – implementation progress is supported not only by structures and tools, but by the quality of the relationships that surround them.



### Possible actions

- Reach out and network with other Implementation Coordinators or service leaders to discuss and challenge your thinking.
- Provide regular opportunities for teachers and educators to reflect, learn and share their practice together. This can be through planned internal sessions to engage in professional learning activities, room meetings where the practice is discussed or one-to-one conversations with Implementation Coordinators.

## What's next for ECEC implementation at AERO

This discussion paper has provided insights into the use of a deliberate and structured approach to the implementation of the evidence-based practice assessment for learning in a cohort of ECEC services across 2023 and 2024. Insights highlighted the value of:

- understanding and recognising context
- enabling leadership
- finding the 'why' to implementation
- taking time and pacing a deliberate and structured approach to implementation
- relationships with others using an implementation approach, both within and across services.

These insights show the importance of services investing in planning and supporting implementation to ensure effective practice change across teams and the 'possible actions' provide services with a starting point.

AERO has continued to work alongside services in 2025 to further understand how a deliberate and structured approach can be used for implementing evidence-based practices in ECEC. In 2025, we have made further adjustments to the Learning Partner project design:

- we have shifted the criteria to include services with 'Exceeding' ratings.
- we have started to explore opportunities to provide AERO Implementation Consultant support remotely.
- we have also included roles in head office and/or service provider-assigned staff in supporting implementation at a service level.

AERO is focused on evaluating and sharing further insights in 2026 from the current iteration of the ECEC Learning Partner project to increase the understanding of and support needed for sustainable evidence-based practice change.



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