

Media release

## Insights on implementation in early education

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### A deliberate and structured approach is the key to unlocking lasting change in early childhood education and care settings

The Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) has released a new insights paper showing early childhood education and care (ECEC) services can achieve sustainable practice change when a deliberate and structured approach to implementation is adopted.

The new paper, [Implementing evidence-based practices in early childhood education and care - 2026](#), draws on the insights from AERO's 2025 Learning Partner project. This involved AERO working with 14 early childhood services across New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia to deepen the evidence-based practice of assessment for learning, using AERO's Early Childhood Learning Trajectories.

The report found that using a framework 'Explore, Prepare, Deliver and Sustain' for tracking implementation progress helped services to frame key priorities, gave service leaders a common vocabulary, and helped them pace change deliberately, rather than progressing before teams were ready.

Implementation planning, professional learning and regular consultation were rated the three most useful strategies by ECEC leaders.

AERO Chief Executive Officer Dr Jenny Donovan said the findings reinforced that lasting change in ECEC settings depended as much on how implementation was led as on the evidence-based practice being implemented.

"When a service leader treats implementation as something the whole team owns, rather than a task delegated to just one individual, lasting change becomes far more likely," Dr Donovan said.

"This project is also showing us that services need a shared language and a realistic pace for change, so good intentions don't stall before new evidence-based practice becomes embedded.

"These insights matter because they tell us where we should be directing our effort.

"Implementation planning, professional learning and regular consultation were the strategies service leaders found most useful."

AERO's ECEC Learning Partner project has now partnered with 52 services since it began in 2023.

The services in this study, for the first time, included services rated 'Meeting' and 'Exceeding' the National Quality Standard (NQS).

Early insights reveal leaders from 'Meeting' services self-reported greater overall growth in knowledge over the year, compared to those from 'Exceeding' services who entered the project with higher self-reported baseline knowledge and skills.

The full report, Implementing evidence-based practices in early childhood education and care - 2026, is available on AERO's website. <https://www.edresearch.edu.au/research/discussion-papers/implementing-evidence-based-practices-early-childhood-education-and-care-2026>

## **About us**

AERO is Australia's independent education evidence body, established in 2021 and funded by Commonwealth, state, and territory governments.

Our vision is to achieve excellence and equity in education outcomes for all children and young people through effective use of evidence. AERO's role is to generate high-quality evidence, make it accessible and encourage adoption and effective implementation of evidence into practice and policy.

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