

Inclusion Ready News



Sector Capacity Building Program

Issue 2 | August 2025



IN THIS ISSUE

From the Manager, KU NSW Sector Capacity Building Program	2	Transition to School	4
Disability and Inclusion Program Funding Application Dates	2	Critical Reflection on Practice: Using Visual Supports for Inclusion	5
KU SCBP Professional Learning	3	Supporting Inclusion in a Remote Mobile Preschool	6
Conference Watch	3	Feature Article: Inclusion Team Meeting Planner Resource	7
What's New on the Inclusion Gateway?	3	Preschool Inclusion Consultants in Focus	8

From the Manager, KU NSW Sector Capacity Building Program

I am delighted to let you know that KU has received an extension of contract and will continue to deliver the Sector Capacity Building Program to all community preschools in the same regions for the 2025-2026 financial year period.

Third term is when we will develop Preschool Profile and Action Plans with you. This is a great opportunity to reflect on inclusion successes of the last 12 months and plan for new priorities and ways that your Preschool Inclusion Consultant can support you with your service's inclusion needs.

In this issue of Inclusion Ready News, our Critical Reflection on Practice feature focusses on practical considerations for using visual supports to include all children. You will also find an article sharing the interesting and unique inclusion challenges and solutions of Federation Council Mobile Preschool. We also feature a specific meeting planner template from the Inclusion Together resource that you may like to use to help facilitate collaboration with families and visiting professionals. Our usual articles such as Conference Watch, Funding Application Dates, and What's New on the Inclusion Gateway Website are included in this issue too.

We encourage you to consider printing a copy of this newsletter to pop on your staffroom table for your whole team to read. Please contact your Preschool Inclusion Consultant, should you wish to discuss anything you read in this issue.



Emma Pierce
Manager, NSW Sector Capacity Building Program
KU Children's Services

Disability and Inclusion Program Funding Application Dates

Below are details of the 2025 cut off dates for High Learning Support Needs (HLSN) and Inclusive Environments (IE) funding applications. Please contact your Preschool Inclusion Consultant if you need support with completing these funding applications.

Application cut-off dates for HLSN Funding	Notification of Outcome and Payment
Submitted by 5:00pm Friday 15 August 2025	Quarter 4: By 31 October 2025 (Funding is for October to December)
Submitted by 5:00pm Friday 10 October 2025	Quarter 2: By 5 December 2025* *Only certain types of variations (increase in hours, decrease in hours, extended absence and child has left) and applications for children enrolled after the Quarter 4 application cut-off date will be considered for payment.

For further information, please see the [Disability and Inclusion Program Funding Guidelines](#).

KU SCBP Professional Learning

You will find all our upcoming webinars and workshops listed under '[Upcoming Events](#)' on the Inclusion Gateway.

A range of webinars, face-to-face workshops and inclusion networking sessions are currently being planned in various locations based on regional priorities, so please keep an eye on your email for registration details. All our Sector Capacity Building Program (SCB) events are funded by the NSW Department of Education as part of the Disability and Inclusion Program making them free to all community preschool educators.

Conference Watch

Coming up in 2025

► [ECA National Conference:](#)

1-4 October 2025, Perth

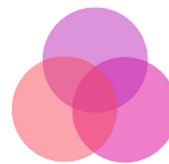
“Universal not uniform: Leading change, strengthening unity and honouring individuality.”



► Reimagine Australia [ChildKind](#) Conference:

26 -28 October 2025, Sydney

“Understand Me, Support Me, and Enable Me”: the 2025 ChildKind Conference program provides a rich blend of keynote addresses, interactive workshops, and panel discussions - all designed to empower professionals in creating meaningful, child-centred outcomes.



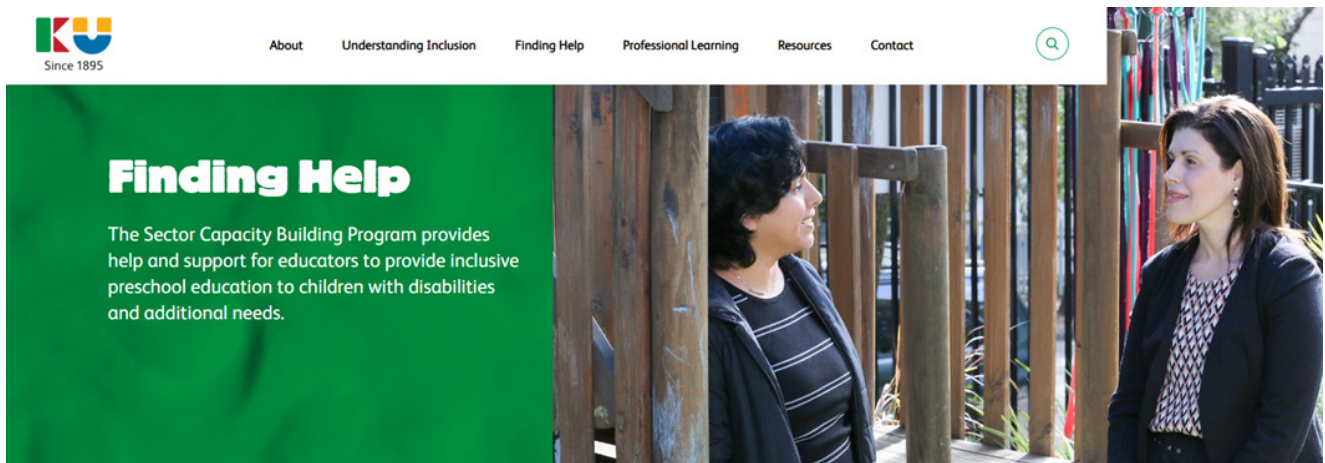
CHILDKIND

Understand me. Support me. Enable me.

Reimagine Australia's 2025 Conference
26 - 28 October 2025
Manly Pacific, NSW

What's new on the KU Inclusion Gateway website

To access our KU SCBP Inclusion Gateway website, click [here](#).



Webinar Recordings

Emma Pierce and Belinda Monkman presented our **‘Developing and Implementing Effective Individual Learning Plans (ILP)’** webinar in term 1.

Watch the recording to learn practical tips and strategies to ensure your ILPs are living documents that effectively support learning and participation. You can access the webinar recording [here](#).

You can access SCBP Individual Learning Plan guide [here](#).

We have developed an Information sheet for families that guides understanding of our program and the support we offer. You can access the information sheet [here](#).

In term 2, Belinda Monkman and Tahni Aitken presented a webinar on **‘Transition to School for children with disabilities’**. You can access the webinar recording [here](#).

Transition to School

Timelines

A reminder that we have created term by term timelines to help educators support children and families to make a smooth transition to school.

You can find the term 2 Transition to School timeline and checklist [here](#). The term 3 checklist can be found [here](#) and the term 4 checklist [here](#).

Don't forget our in-depth resource ‘Transition to School for Children with Disabilities’ page is located [here](#) on the KU SCB Program Inclusion Gateway website and also has links to further information.

Inclusive Practices

- Inclusion Readiness
- Transition to Preschool
- Gathering Observational Data
- Individual Learning Plans
- Supporting Families
- Transition to School for Children with Disabilities**

Transition to School for Children with Disabilities



How can preschools support a smooth transition to school for children with disabilities?


Landing Page

The ‘Transition to Preschool’ landing page is where all relevant resources, such as social scripts, getting to know your child and tip sheets, have been conveniently located and can be accessed.

The information sheet for families is a great resource to share in enrolment packs and orientation visits for new families.

This resource can be accessed [here](#).

SECTOR CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM
Supporting Positive Transition to Preschool for Families



Starting or returning to preschool is a significant transition time for young children and families. For some children, it may be the first time they are away from their family and in the care of other adults and being with a large group of children. There are many ways that your family can support a smooth start or return to preschool. Your child is more likely to have a positive experience of starting preschool when you are able to think ahead and plan for this transition.

Sharing important information with educators

- Your preschool will have asked you to complete enrolment forms to gather some information about your child and family to help them to prepare and gain a picture of each child. There may be additional information that it is important to share with the preschool team such as therapy reports, medical and dietary information. Children adapt best to new experiences best when educators listen to and work in partnership with families.
- Parents and carers can:
 - Show any significant things happening in your lives with the preschool team. For example, moving house, new baby, going on a holiday, a death in the family (including pets), relationship breakdowns/challenges etc. Knowing this information helps educators to have a better understanding of what is happening for your child emotionally and if there are any changes in behaviour and be able to support them and respond more appropriately.
 - Raise any questions or concerns about any areas of your child's development or health. If your child is having any therapies, the preschool can work collaboratively with them to support your child's inclusion. Your preschool can also share contacts for support, assessment or therapy with your family as needed.
 - Let the preschool know where your child is up to with toileting so they can support your child e.g., still in nappies, needs reminders to use toilet, needs help to wipe.

Emotions around starting preschool

- Consider your own needs as an adult. You may be feeling understandably nervous about your child starting preschool. Being as calm and positive as possible will help your child feel more confident about starting preschool.
- Check with the preschool about whether your child can bring a comfort toy/blanket from home. This can be reassuring for your child and mark a connection between home and preschool. Check with the preschool if your child could bring along a family photo. Even if these items stay in your child's bag, your child

The Sector Capacity Building Program is funded by the NSW Government Department of Education
V.1 Released December 2022 - Page 1
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Critical Reflection on Practice: Using Visual Supports for Inclusion

When preschools take an inclusive approach to using visual supports, all children benefit. We invite your team to reflect on how visuals are currently used in your setting.

Below are some **guiding questions** to support meaningful reflection:

- ▶ What is working well?
- ▶ What may be getting in the way of fully embedding visuals into your program?

Consider how you can gather input from all educators in ways that suit your unique context.

Considering the Purpose

- ▶ What is the purpose of each visual (e.g. supporting understanding, guiding transitions, promoting independence)?
- ▶ Are visuals used to invite children's ideas or only to deliver adult messages?
- ▶ Are we considering all children's understanding and using a range of levels of symbolic representation (photos, line drawings, real objects)?
- ▶ Do visuals enhance other teaching methods (e.g. storytelling, play, songs)?
- ▶ How do children respond to particular visuals?

Cultural & Social Relevance

- ▶ Do visuals reflect children's culture, home language and family backgrounds?

Children's Agency

- ▶ Are you using visuals to support children to communicate their wants and needs?
- ▶ Do children help create visuals that are meaningful to them?

Evaluating Effectiveness of Visuals

- ▶ How do we evaluate the effectiveness of visuals in daily routines?
- ▶ Is every team member confident and involved with using visuals i.e., a whole team approach?
- ▶ Are visuals used consistently, embedded in practice, and used with all children across all rooms and days?

Preschool reflections on the use of visuals:

"I always knew the valuable role that visuals can have for all children. But it wasn't until I started using them more regularly that I realised the many, many different ways that they can be used. From supporting a child with separation anxiety, to helping another child process the steps in their morning routine, visuals have become a daily part of my teaching."

Chloe Ferguson, Early Childhood Educator, Bomaderry Community Preschool

Supporting Inclusion in a Remote Mobile Preschool

Federation Council Mobile Preschool operates in the northern townships of the Federation Council, in the Murrumbidgee region and has been in operation, visiting our most isolated communities since the 1970s covering 5685 square kilometres. We operate at a different venue each day: Tuesday at Urana, in the church Hall, Wednesday at Boree Creek in the Memorial Hall, Thursday at the Rand Community sports ground and Friday at Daysdale Hall with our Bush Preschool program operating from a local farm.

We added transportation for children to our service in 2016 to allow more families to access early childhood education. Since offering this service, most of our children are enrolled in at least 15 hours of preschool a week. Our transport is a big part of our program. On the morning bus run, children are offered paper and pencils to document what they see on their travels. We have noise-cancelling headphones and sensory toys readily available for children to access. On the afternoon run, we listen to music, children may sleep, read a book or sing along to the music. We are always learning from what we see on our travels.

While we see the environment as the third teacher, as a mobile preschool it is our biggest challenge. At some of our venues, we have limitless physical boundaries, and this can be challenging for creating safe environments for all children. We are fortunate to have a high educator to child ratio which allows us to have excellent supervision plans in place and use safety cones as a visual indicator of our play space.



Another challenge is availability of allied health professionals to travel and visit our children at preschool as well as the extensive wait times for children to access their services. We use virtual meetings to connect with services such as Murrumbidgee Community Health or to connect with therapists. We have a wonderful connection with our Maternal Health nurse who offers resources and support to all our families. One of our biggest advocates has been our KU SCBP consultant Grace, who has connected us to other mobile preschools, given invaluable support and advice for individual children and built our capacity through professional development.

As we share our environments with the community, some days we don't know what we are walking into. For example, there may have been a 21st event and no one has cleaned up which makes our set up harder. As a mobile preschool, we must think creatively to find solutions. We have resources that we carry with us on our trailer to support the engagement of all children for example a hammock, calming tent, sensory tunnel and additional seating supports. We have introduced a 'Feelings house' using the Zones of Regulation colours. Each child has a little wooden person with their face and can place them on the feeling colour throughout the day.

We pride ourselves on including all children in our service. Some children need more tools than others to participate in our educational program. We have staff members with knowledge to support our team with ideas, such as building a tool kit of resources including visuals and sensory materials. At all venues we have set up a map of the day (visual schedule) which helps children feel secure and settle smoothly into their preschool day.

FEATURE ARTICLE

Inclusion Team Meeting Planner Resource




The meeting planner from the [Inclusion Together](#) resource is a free helpful tool designed to support clear, respectful, and collaborative communication between educators, families and early childhood intervention professionals to facilitate inclusion in early childhood education.

By outlining key topics, goals, and discussion points ahead of time, it helps keep meetings focused on the child's strengths, needs, and progress.

The planner also encourages shared decision-making, allowing both educators and families to add agenda items, raise questions, and voice concerns. Most importantly, it promotes a team-based approach where the family's insights are valued alongside professional input, leading to more consistent and meaningful support for the child across both home and preschool settings.

Resources for having a shared conversation can be accessed [here](#).



Inclusion Team Meeting Planner

Meeting date: Today's meeting leader:
 Minutes will be taken and shared by:
 Child's name:

Agenda Items	Key Points Discussed	To Do
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> Shared conversations </div>		
Welcome ▶ Introductions (if needed) Check-in ▶ What is going well for (child)? ▶ What is working well for (inclusion team member/team)? ▶ Is anything not going well for (child/team member/team)? New ideas ▶ Are there any new ideas to support (child) for the team to discuss?		
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> Common ground </div>		
Teamwork ▶ What do we want to work on or decide on today? Roadblocks ▶ Are there any challenges or problems that we need to talk about? ▶ Are there any resources or supports that could help us?		

This project was funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and led by the NSW/ACT Inclusion Agency.

Page 1 of 2
 V1 Released June 2024

Preschool Inclusion Consultants in Focus

We asked two of our KU SCBP Preschool Inclusion Consultants:

- ▶ What do you find most inspiring about your role as a Preschool Inclusion Consultant?
- ▶ What does inclusion mean to you?



Sandy Luo

*Western and South
East Sydney regions*

I deeply enjoy my work as it lets me connect and grow alongside many dedicated educators. Together, we are on a shared journey, taking intentional steps to improve mindsets, environments and practices to support the meaningful participation of all children.

Our goal is to help every child thrive in ways that are inclusive, empowering and developmentally appropriate.

To me, inclusion is about growth - growth in understanding, knowledge and skills to create environments where every child and family feels they belong. Whether rethinking routines, adapting materials or shifting perspectives, the work of inclusion challenges us and deeply rewards us by expanding what is possible for all children.



Alice McMahon

Murrumbidgee region

Working alongside passionate educators in rural communities is a true privilege. I'm inspired every day by their commitment to creating inclusive environments that reflect the unique strengths and needs of every child.

My role allows me to support preschools in remote and regional areas to embrace inclusive practices that are both practical and meaningful within their context.

For me, inclusion is about more than access - it's about recognising each child's individuality and ensuring they feel a sense of belonging and connection. I love being able to offer fresh perspectives, grounded in evidence, lived experience, and empathy, and to walk beside educators as they strengthen their confidence and capacity to support all children to thrive.