

# New guidelines plan for more child care places

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New national planning and development guidelines for child care facilities have been developed in a bid to encourage innovative ways to deliver families more child care places closer to home and work.

The newly released "Guidelines for the Planning and Development of Child Care Facilities" have been put together by UTS's Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG) with Federal Government support.

The voluntary guidelines aim to encourage [local governments](#) to take a holistic approach to child care planning across their organisations in order to help increase places and reduce development barriers and

delays.

"At the end of day, this is not about telling local governments what to do – it's about all levels of government working together to enable access to more affordable and flexible child care places," ACELG Director Associate Professor Ryan said.

"These guidelines provide a good starting point for local governments, particularly those who do not necessarily have the staff expertise or financial resources to start from scratch."

Associate Professor Ryan said it was important to recognise the guidelines had also been developed with the amenity of neighbours and communities in mind.

"This includes encouraging flexible solutions like sound barriers or landscaping to protect local communities against nuisance issues such as noise and light without unnecessarily restricting the development of new or existing child [care facilities](#)," Associate Professor Ryan said.

The guidelines were informed by more than 40 interviews with local and state government staff and advocates, an extensive desktop study of existing local government policies and environment court rulings, and an online survey with more than 200 responses from stakeholders involved in child care delivery.

Assistant Minister for Education Sussan Ley said the release of the new guidelines was timely with the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Child Care and Early Childhood Learning also considering the role local government plays in providing more child care places.

"The need for more child care places impacts a lot of what local governments do, from planning future suburbs and employment hubs all

the way through to rates, roads and rubbish," Ms Ley said.

"There's currently over 700,000 families using formally approved child care in Australia and, as that demand grows, every level of government has a role to play in supporting access to affordable and flexible [child care](#) places. These guidelines offer innovative, but practical, ways to achieve that."

Ms Ley said it was also about helping ease the burden on local governments themselves – particularly smaller councils in regional areas.

She therefore welcomed the ACELG's inclusion of easy-to-use checklists to help local governments practically incorporate the new [guidelines](#) into their day-to-day operations.

"There are already a number of local governments doing great things in this space across the country, so it's not always about reinventing the wheel, but rather gathering the best of what's currently on offer and sharing it for everyone's benefit," Ms Ley said.

**More information:** "The Guidelines for the Planning and Development of Child Care Facilities" is available online: [www.acelg.org.au/news/guidelin ... -facilities-released](http://www.acelg.org.au/news/guidelin...-facilities-released)

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