



# EXCELLENCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AWARDS

Nominations due by  
11.59 pm on Sunday, 31 May 2026

Finalists announced & tickets on sale from  
Friday, 19 June 2026

Awards Gala Night  
Saturday, 12 September 2026



Presented by  
 ACA  
New South Wales

2026

A woman with blonde hair styled in a 1920s fashion, wearing a sequined silver dress, a pearl necklace, a beaded headband with feathers, and black gloves. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

# A GREAT GATSBY EVENING

A GALA EVENING CELEBRATING  
EXCELLENCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD  
EDUCATION

SATURDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2026  
THE FULLERTON HOTEL,  
1 MARTIN PLACE, SYDNEY CBD

DRESS: THE ROARING 20S

THE BEST DRESSED THAT EVENING WILL  
WIN A \$1,000 GIFT CARD PRIZE!



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## EXCELLENCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AWARDS

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**“To recognise is to adorn the world with  
the jewels of gratitude.”** - Gabrielle Summers





## EXCELLENCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AWARDS

### Enter and celebrate your achievements!

**It is that time of year again!**

**The Excellence in Early Childhood Education Awards is upon us, and we cannot wait to celebrate your achievements with you!**

**We will be honouring services, leaders, teams, educators, teachers and more as they showcase the importance and benefits of early childhood education!**

**The Awards program continues to be the pinnacle for the recognition of individuals, teams and services who have made extraordinary contributions in early childhood education and care. There is a wide range of categories that services may enter, and your service may enter one or more categories.**

**The winners are selected by an independent panel of experienced and expert judges who are representatives from across the sector.**

**The award winners will be announced at the Fullerton Hotel on Saturday, 12 September 2026. So start planning now for this big evening and it could be your service(s), educators and teachers on stage accepting one or more Awards!**

**Do not miss this opportunity for your service and team to be recognised for your dedication and commitment towards the children you develop, nurture, educate and care for, their families and the community.**

Presented by



Awards Gala Night  
produced by

precedent

# The Awards' Process & Important Dates

Each year, the Excellence in Early Childhood Education Awards are your services', your educators' and your teachers' opportunity to be recognised. Being publicly recognised enables you to communicate your invaluable contributions to your families and local communities.

The Excellence in Early Childhood Education Awards is open to all NSW-based long day care services.

Services may submit for a wide array of Excellence Awards for their programs and activities, as well as Awards for individuals and teams.

The full list of categories is included in this Official Nominations Guide.

## Important Dates

<b>Nominations for Awards Open</b>	<b>17 February 2026</b>
<b>Nominations for Awards Close</b>	<b>31 May 2026</b>
<b>Finalists Announced &amp; Ticket Sales from</b>	<b>19 June 2026</b>
<b>Gala Awards Evening</b>	<b>12 September 2026</b>

## How to complete your nomination

1. Activities or programs must have been conducted between 1 January 2025 and 31 May 2026.
2. Review the Award categories and decide which categories best suit your nominations to be recognised.
3. Each nomination should respond to all specific questions within the category criteria.
4. Ensure you include five high resolution photos that illustrate each category entered.
5. Include additional supporting material such as reports, testimonials or press cuttings to back up statements made in your submission(s).

All entries and materials will remain confidential and will be viewed only by judges and managers of the Awards. At the end of the judging process, all judges materials will be destroyed.





# EXCELLENCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AWARDS

## The categories of Awards for 2026

### Metropolitan Services Excellence Awards

1. Large Metropolitan Service (80 places or more)
2. Medium Metropolitan Service (40-79 places)
3. Small Metropolitan Service (39 places or less)

### Regional/Rural/Remote Services Excellence Awards

4. Large Regional/Rural/Remote Service (80 places or more)
5. Medium Regional/Rural/Remote Service (40-79 places)
6. Small Regional/Rural/Remote Service (39 places or less)

### Excellence Awards

7. Excellence in Educational Program & Practice
8. Excellence in Environmental Program
9. Excellence in Partnerships with Families
10. Excellence in Community Involvement
11. Excellence in Inclusivity Practices
12. Excellence in Children's Wellbeing & Health
13. Excellence in Children's Safety
14. Excellence in Food, Nutrition & Menu Design
15. Excellence in Multicultural Program
16. Excellence in Australian History & Culture

### Excellence in Training

17. Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care
18. Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care
19. Degree in Early Childhood Education and Care
20. Training Excellence Award

### Excellence in People

21. Team Excellence Award - Large Metropolitan Service (80 places or more)
22. Team Excellence Award - Medium Metropolitan Service (40-79 places or more)
23. Team Excellence Award - Small Metropolitan Service (39 places or less)
24. Team Excellence Award - Large Regional/Rural/Remote Service (80 places or more)
25. Team Excellence Award - Medium Regional/Rural/Remote Service (40-79 places)
26. Team Excellence Award - Small Regional/Rural/Remote Service (39 places or less)
27. Employer Excellence Award
28. Nominated Supervisor/Director Excellence Award
29. Educator Excellence Award
30. Young Educator Excellence Award (25 years or less)
31. Educational Leader Excellence Award
32. Service Support Person Excellence Award
33. Wellbeing Excellence Award - Metropolitan Service
34. Wellbeing Excellence Award - Regional/Rural/Remote Service

### Children's Outcomes

35. Outcomes for Children (Birth - 3 Years)
36. Outcomes for Children (Preschool)





# Your Checklist for Nominating

- Entries must be submitted via the online portal no later than 11.59 pm on Sunday, 31 May 2026.
- Services may enter as many categories as they wish.
- Services must complete a separate entry online for each category being entered.
- Entries must have a different photo for each category being entered.
- Enter your e-mail address at the end of the nomination to receive a copy of your submission

## Checklist

Each nomination must include the following:

- Category Number
- Category Name
- Service Contact Details
- Personal Contact Details
- Answers to each Criteria Question
- Five high resolution photos  
(Note: File formats to be in JPEG or PNG, ideally 1920x1080 pixels or at least 2 Mb per file.)

## Photos

Every entry must **five different photos relevant to the category**. This could include members of your team integrating with children or community members.

Photos will be used for the presentation evening. **Every category you enter must have different photos.**



# Excellence Awards

Each category selected requires a separate entry.

## Metropolitan Services Excellence Awards

1. Large Metropolitan Service of the Year Award (80 places or more)
2. Medium Metropolitan Service of the Year Award (40-79 places)
3. Small Metropolitan Service of the Year Award (39 places or less)

### Criteria Questions (for Categories 1-3)

Address the following questions ensuring your answers relate to the corresponding category.

- a. Describe your service including type of service, number of places, age ranges of children, number of early childhood educators, teachers and support personnel. Also include the history and values of the service
- b. Describe your service's approach to education and care.
- c. Outline involvement with families and the community.
- d. How did your service achieve quality education and care and children's outcomes?
- e. What are the plans for your service in the future? (Note: This may include improvements to your service, additional offerings for all enrolled children and their families, collaborations with external agencies for children's health and development.)
- f. Outline the strengths and successes of your service and why you believe it should win this Award?

## Photos & Supporting Material

Include five different photos relevant to each category entered. Supporting material may also be included.



# Excellence Awards

Each category selected requires a separate entry.

## Regional/Rural/Remote Services Excellence Awards

4. Large Regional/Rural/Remote Service of the Year Award (80 places or more)
5. Medium Regional/Rural/Remote Service of the Year Award (40-79 places)
6. Small Regional/Rural/Remote Service of the Year Award (39 places or less)

### Criteria Questions (for Categories 4-6)

Address the following questions ensuring your answers relate to the corresponding category.

- a. Describe your service including type of service, number of places, age ranges of children, number of early childhood educators, teachers and support personnel. Also include the history and values of the service.
- b. Describe your service's approach to education and care.
- c. Outline involvement with families and the community.
- d. How did your service achieve high-quality education and care and children's outcomes?
- e. What are the plans for your service in the future?
- f. Outline the strengths and successes of your service and why you believe it should win this award.

### Photos & Supporting Material

Include five different photos relevant to each category entered. Supporting material may also be included.



# Excellence Awards

**Each category selected requires a separate entry.**

7. Excellence in Educational Program & Practice
8. Excellence in Environmental Program
9. Excellence in Partnerships with Families
10. Excellence in Community Involvement
11. Excellence in Inclusivity Practices
12. Excellence in Children's Wellbeing & Health
13. Excellence in Children's Safety
14. Excellence in Food, Nutrition & Menu Design
15. Excellence in Multicultural Program
16. Excellence in Australian History & Culture

## Criteria Questions (for Categories 7-16)

Address the following questions ensuring your answers relate to the corresponding category.

- a. Describe the aims of your program and how were successes measured.
- b. What activities did your program involve and what were the corresponding successes?
- c. What were the overt benefits and outcomes for children?
- d. Outline the observed/overt benefits of and consequences for the community.
- e. Outline how the team contributed and were leveraged in order to achieve your goals.
- f. How was your program's successes recognised by your children's parents, families and community?

## Photos & Supporting Material

Include five different photos relevant to each category entered. Supporting material may also be included.



# Excellence in Training

Do you have an outstanding trainee and/or early childhood educator at your long daycare service? Is s/he/they displaying an outstanding commitment to her/his/their training and making a difference?

## Categories

17. Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care
18. Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care

## Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to be nominated for either of the above awards you must meet the criteria below:

- Must be enrolled or completed the CHC30121 Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care or CHC50121 Diploma of Early Childhood Education Care qualification with **Kool Kids Training College (RTO 40636)** in NSW
- Have (or had prior to completion) a registered training contract with the NSW Department of Industry
- Have completed the following criteria questions.

## Criteria Questions (for Categories 17 & 18)

Address the following questions ensuring your answers relate to the corresponding category. This must be completed by the nominated trainee/educator.

- a. Full Name
- b. Trainer(s)' Name
- c. Qualification you are completing/completed at Kool Kids Training College (CHC30121 OR CHC50121)
- d. Are you yet to complete the course? (Yes/No)
- e. Completion Date (if you have completed your training)
- f. Provide a short overview of why you chose to undertake training as an early childhood educator.
- g. What has given you the most satisfaction from this decision to become an educator?
- h. Provide a short overview that impresses the judges with a WOW moment. It could be an idea you put forward, an experience or event with the children or families that was amazing, an initiative that helped the growth and development of children in an early learning centre.
- i. Provide a short overview of how you are going to make a difference in Early Childhood Education in the coming years. Knock it out of the park!

## Photos & Supporting Material

Include a portrait photo of just the nominee and four different additional photos of the nominee at the service with activities, or the children. Supporting material may also be included.



Do you have an outstanding early childhood teacher(s) at your long daycare service? Is s/he/they displaying an outstanding commitment to her/his/their studies and making a difference?

## Category

19. Degree in Early Childhood Education and Care

## Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to be nominated for this award, you must be enrolled in or have just completed an undergraduate course recognised by the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) and the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).

### Criteria Questions (for Category 19)

Address the following questions ensuring your answers relate to the corresponding category. This must be completed by the nominated undergraduate.

- a. Full Name
- b. Name of tertiary institution
- c. Name of the degree qualification you are completing or have completed
- d. Are you yet to complete the course? (Yes/No)
- e. Completion Date (if you have completed your training)
- f. Provide a short overview of why you chose to undertake studying to become an early childhood teacher.
- g. What has given you the most satisfaction from this decision to become an early childhood teacher?
- h. Provide a live example of how the undergraduate course has benefitted your colleagues and your children that was not possible before embarking on such tertiary studies.
- i. Provide a short overview of how you intend to leverage your tertiary qualification to make a substantive difference in early childhood education in the coming years.

## Photos & Supporting Material

Include a portrait photo of just the nominee and four different additional photos of the nominee at the service with activities, or the children. Supporting material may also be included.



The Training Excellence Award recognises a long daycare service that has a proven approach with evidence of successes in their service(s) with respect to the best training organisation(s) and guidance for tertiary education, achieving quality measurable outcomes and supporting their educators.teachers.

## Category

### 20. Training Excellence Award

#### Criteria Questions (for Category 20)

Address the following questions ensuring your answers relate to the corresponding category.

- a. Explain the service's training approach and criteria for selecting the best training organisation(s).
- b. Demonstrate how the service measures expected outcomes of their selected training organisation(s) against actual results from their trainees and educators?
- c. When actual results are not aligned with expected outcomes, what is the remedial plan of action implemented for both the service and the training organisation(s)?
- d. Outline your service's measurable successes in terms of children's outcomes and your service's successes, as well as educators' recruitment and retention as a result of the service's training approach?
- e. Does your service have any future amendments to the existing training approach and criteria? If so, what are they and why?
- f. Complementary to what the training organisation(s) offer, what other training and development does your service provide for your trainees and educators in order to further advance their professional, vocational and personal aspirations?

#### Photos & Supporting Material

Include five different photos relevant to each category entered. Supporting material may also be included.



# Excellence in People

**These awards go to the teams that have developed and maintained an excellent standard of early childhood learning, showing exceptional group values and a commitment to working together for the common good.**

## Categories

21. Team Excellence Award - Large Metropolitan Service (80 places or more)
22. Team Excellence Award - Medium Metropolitan Service (40-79 places)
23. Team Excellence Award - Small Metropolitan Service (39 places or less)
24. Team Excellence Award - Large Regional/Rural/Remote Service (80 places or more)
25. Team Excellence Award - Medium Regional/Rural/Remote Service (40-79 places)
26. Team Excellence Award - Small Regional/Rural/Remote Service (39 places or less)

### Criteria Questions (for Categories 21-26)

Address the following questions ensuring your answers relate to the corresponding category.

- a. Explain the service's philosophy for building, sustaining and retaining a high performance team.
- b. What does your superior team structure look like? Explain each role and how it produces better outcomes.
- c. What are your service's practices for recruitment, induction and their availability of training and development?
- d. Provide evidence of your team's results-oriented approach?
- e. What are your service's reward practices and progression opportunities?
- f. Outline your service's success during the past year and how the team has contributed to it.

## Category

27. Employer Excellence Award

### Criteria Questions (for Category 27)

Address the following questions ensuring your answers relate to the corresponding category.

- a. Outline your service's approach toward and successes in recruiting and retaining talented early childhood educators and teachers.
- b. What are your service's practices for training and development of early childhood educators and teachers that demonstrably impact onto your service, your children and your employees' positive growth professionally as well as personally?
- c. What evidence do you have that demonstrates your team's empowerment and abilities in producing results.
- d. What are your service's support structures and/or programs that directly contribute to the positive well-being of your educators and teachers? (For example, ACA NSW's Telus Health Employee Assistance Program (EAP))
- e. How has management contributed toward the success(es) of early childhood educators and teachers as individuals and as a team?
- f. Provide examples of feedback from the team regarding your service's positive and fulfilling workplace and culture.

## Photos & Supporting Material

Include five different photos relevant to each category entered. Supporting material may also be included.



## Categories

Each category selected requires a separate nomination.

**28. Nominated Supervisor Excellence Award**

This award will be presented to a Nominated Supervisor who ensures the service operated in developing a thriving, high quality service which delivers a superb educational program for children and education.

**29. Educator Excellence Award**

This award will be presented to an early childhood educator who has shown outstanding care in developing a thriving, high quality service which delivers a superb educational program for children.

**30. Young Educator Excellence Award (25 years or less)**

This Award will be given to a young early childhood educator under the age of 25, who excels in their personal and team roles, and exhibits enthusiasm, professionalism, confidence and a shining commitment to their on-going career development.

**31. Educational Leader Excellence Award**

This Award will go to an Educational Leader who shows the leadership skills required to provide a safe and stimulating environment for children, excellent ability to support and develop other team members, and an ability to observe, assess and track children's learning and development.

**32. Service Support Person Excellence Award**

This Award goes to a person who excels in their position that supports the success of the daily activities of the service. This could be an administration clerk, cook, parent or volunteer.

## Criteria Questions (for Categories 28-32)

Address the following questions ensuring your answers relate to the corresponding category.

- a. What are the nominee's main responsibilities?
- b. What were the nominee's unique talents and skills that caused the service to recruit/appoint her/him?
- c. List the nominee's qualification(s) and training experience.
- d. Outline the nominee's substantive contributions s/he have made through the service.
- e. What impact has this person had on children, families, the local community, her/his colleagues and the early childhood education service and/or sector?
- f. What is/are the nominee's unique characteristics that differentiates her/him from other educators/teachers?



## Photos & Supporting Material

Include a portrait photo of the nominee, plus four different photos relevant to each category entered. Supporting material may also be included.

## Categories

The Wellbeing Excellence Awards recognise two long daycare services that demonstrate outstanding and holistic commitment to protecting and enhancing the health and wellbeing of their early childhood educators, teachers and support personnel.

These Awards acknowledge services whose employees feel safe, supported, valued and able to thrive.

33. Wellbeing Excellence Award - Metropolitan Service
34. Wellbeing Excellence Award - Regional/Rural/Remote

### Criteria Questions (for Categories 33 & 34)

Address the following questions ensuring your answers relate to the corresponding category.

- a. Describe your service's approach to achieve, address and support the wellbeing of your early childhood educators, teachers and support personnel.
- b. Contrast your service before and after implementing your wellbeing approach.
- c. What tools/services does your service employ to assist your objectives of wellbeing?
- d. How are wellbeing successes identified, monitored, achieved, communicated and celebrated?
- e. Outline the benefits to your children from achieving wellbeing of your early childhood educators and teachers.
- f. Describe how your service highlights wellbeing as part of its recruitment and retention strategy.

## Photos & Supporting Material

Include five different photos relevant to each category entered. Supporting material may also be included.



# Children's Outcomes

## Categories

- 35. Outcomes for Children (Birth - 3 Years)
- 36. Outcomes for Children (Preschool)

## Criteria Questions (for Categories 35 & 36)

Provide examples of programs, activities AND outcomes of a child or children in terms of her/his/their improvements.

- a. Describe your educational, health and developmental program that relate to the aspired outcomes.
- b. What activities, resources and external parties did your program(s) involve to achieve the aspired outcomes for children?
- c. How were the outcomes of children measured and how were their benefits communicated?
- d. Outline your program's successes within the context of the challenges faced by your local community.
- e. Outline how your early childhood educator(s)/teacher(s) were aligned to and/or supported your program(s) and their results.
- f. Demonstrate those children's parents' (and if applicable their subsequent schools') appreciation.

## Photos & Supporting Material

Include five different photos relevant to each category entered. Supporting material may also be included.







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