

## Proven benefits of AEL\*

<b>Access and inclusion</b> Excellent results supporting vulnerable children to access and attend kindergarten	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kindergarten enrolment of 99% of children</li> <li>• Children attended 81% of enrolled kindergarten hours (compared to 73% for children participating in Early Start Kindergarten)</li> </ul>
<b>Child wellbeing and development</b> Positive changes in children's speech, language and communication skills, social skills, behaviour, emotional maturity and overall development	<i>'It's not just one specific thing, the difference has been all-round... social skills, his vocabulary, pretty much everything has improved 10-fold. He is a completely different little boy because of everything [the AEL facilitator] has been able to do with him. He's such a happy and confident little boy. He asks me literally every day if he's going to kinder.'</i> (AEL family)
<b>Supporting families</b> High levels of family engagement and satisfaction, with positive impacts on attitudes towards early learning, and parent capability and confidence to support children's learning	<i>'[AEL facilitators] were very helpful. We had meetings and follow up meetings to make sure we had everything we needed, and how they could support us in what we needed.'</i> (AEL family)  <i>'I do more activities along with [my child] and his younger siblings now. I didn't know that you could start [that] early. So some of the activities, I'm actually doing with my two year old as well.'</i> (AEL family)
<b>Supporting educators to engage vulnerable families</b> Professional practice development and mentoring has built educator capacity to engage vulnerable children and families	<i>'That's been one of the great things, I've been able to have those conversations. The AEL program has come in and we're able to discuss where the family's at, what we can do to help each other and then take it from there and have those reflections.'</i> (Educator)
<b>Improving access to and collaboration within the service system</b> Excellent results delivering joined up and holistic support to families, including coordination with additional support services	<i>'So it happens almost every time we meet with the family, something will come up that they need a referral into another service, be it financial counselling, other early childhood services, Maternal and Child Health. We have partnerships with almost all of the areas that we would refer families into.'</i> (AEL worker)

## Why choose AEL-SRF?

AEL-SRF helps educators to engage vulnerable children and families, and sustain high levels of participation in kindergarten. It targets the School Readiness Funding priority areas of child wellbeing (social and emotional), and access and inclusion. The AEL model recently received a strong evidence rating of five (foundational research) on the School Readiness Funding Menu, having demonstrated its effectiveness in two independent evaluations.

By using AEL-SRF, educators gain skills and resources that improve the lives of vulnerable children and support the development of positive child/parent relationships.

## ACCESS TO EARLY LEARNING – SCHOOL READINESS FUNDING

## AEL-SRF

### How can I implement AEL-SRF at my service?

AEL-SRF can be purchased on the School Readiness Funding menu. Find out more about how AEL-SRF can sustain the engagement of vulnerable children with your early childhood education and care service by contacting your local Department of Education and Training Early Childhood Improvement Branch representative.

### REGIONAL OFFICE CONTACTS

Regional Office	Locations	
North-Eastern Victoria 1300 333 231	Benalla Wangaratta Shepparton	Wodonga Seymour Glen Waverley
North-Western Victoria 1300 338 691	Bendigo Swan Hill Greensborough	Mildura Coburg
South-Eastern Victoria 1300 338 738	Moe Warragul Cheltenham Dandenong	Leongatha Sale Frankston
South-Western Victoria 1300 333 232	Ararat Geelong Warnambool Keilor	Ballarat Horsham Footscray



\*Source: Evaluation of the Access to Early Learning Service Model: Program Implementation Report (2018).

Regardless of their circumstances, all children should have the opportunity to participate in quality early learning. Evidence shows the benefits of early learning are greatest for vulnerable children, yet they are the least likely to access high quality early learning programs.

AEL-SRF (Access to Early Learning-School Readiness Funding) makes it easier for vulnerable children to fully participate in kindergarten and experience the benefits of quality early learning.

A two-year evaluation by the Murdoch Children's Research Institute showed that AEL provides broad and powerful benefits for children, families, educators and the wider service system.

## What is AEL-SRF?

AEL-SRF is an adaptation of the Department of Education and Training's successful Access to Early Learning (AEL) program. AEL has helped vulnerable children to access and participate in early learning since 2011. Evidence shows AEL has succeeded in:

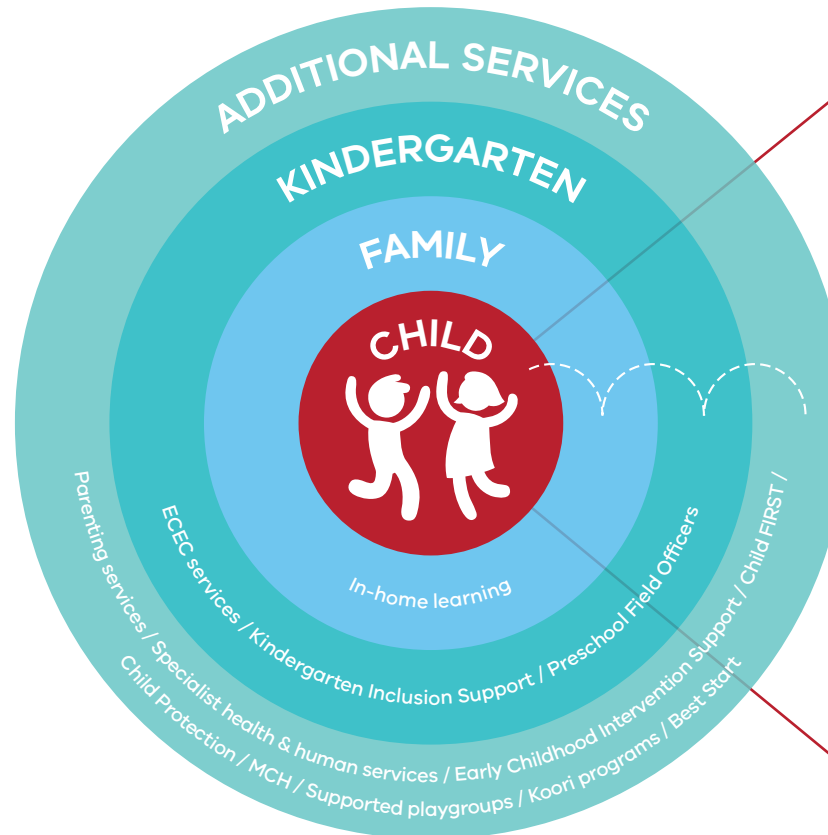
- **sustaining vulnerable children's participation in early childhood education**
- **improving parents' understanding of their children's learning and development**
- **increasing parents' confidence and ability to respond to their children's needs**
- **supporting educators to identify and address the barriers to engagement for vulnerable children and families.**

## How does AEL-SRF work?

AEL-SRF provides an experienced and degree-qualified facilitator to work with families, educators and services to ensure vulnerable children participate in kindergarten and in-home learning.

### Important features of AEL-SRF include:

- **dedicated resources** to identify, engage and support children and families experiencing high vulnerability to access and fully participate in kindergarten and in-home learning
- **consistent and individualised support** for children that extends from kindergarten to home
- **tailored support for families**, including flexible funding to provide additional resources that promote kindergarten participation and in-home learning
- **mentoring and professional learning for educators** to enhance their engagement and support of vulnerable children and families
- **trusting and respectful relationships** between AEL facilitators, children, families and educators that provide the foundation for effective support by focussing on family strengths and children's learning needs.



## The AEL facilitator:

- CHILD**
  - focuses on children's learning and development needs
  - strengthens relationships and provides tailored support
- FAMILY**
  - strengthens parent capacity to support in-home learning
  - addresses family barriers to kindergarten access
- KINDERGARTEN**
  - addresses practical barriers to kindergarten participation
  - strengthens the links between kindergarten and in-home learning
  - collaborates with educators and ECEC services to support family engagement
- ADDITIONAL SERVICES**
  - promotes the systematic identification of vulnerable children and families
  - supports families to navigate and engage with additional services
  - promotes collaboration between services.