School readiness funding (SRF) is an Australian first; needs-based funding for kindergartens that aims to reduce the impact of educational disadvantage on children’s learning and development.

All funded kindergarten service providers must complete a SRF Annual Plan for each of their services. To build service knowledge of SRF and support the development of the SRF Annual Plan, all service providers are encouraged to participate in a planning workshop.

The following guidance and related worksheet will help you prepare for the workshop by supporting you to:
- collect and analyse important information about the children and families that attend your service(s)
- make preliminary choices on how you propose to spend school readiness funding, based on a menu of evidence-informed programs and supports (the menu).

Where to start

School readiness funding must be used to support outcomes for children in three priority areas, which are based on the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (the VEYLDF).

The Early Years Planning Cycle (Figure 1) is the framework to collect and analyse evidence that contributes to a detailed, up-to-date, picture of teacher practice and children's learning and development. The guidance and SRF Annual Plan follow the Early Years Planning Cycle.

You should develop your SRF Annual Plan as part of annual planning processes you already have in place. Your Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and, for EYM, Service Improvement Plans (SIP), should be the main document(s) you refer to when developing your SRF Annual Plan.
Step 1: Collect information

Collate and collect information at a community/child, educator and service level to provide a picture of the recurrent learning and development needs of children and families that typically attend your service. Figure 2 suggests sources you can look at in addition to your QIP. Collate this information in the planning worksheet provided.

- Australian Early Development Census
- Municipal Early Years Plans
- Observations and assessments of current and past children in service
- Discussions with other professionals from local schools or services (e.g., Maternal and Child Health Nurse)

Step 2: Question/analyse

Using the planning worksheet, question and analyse the information from Step 1.

**Community/Child Level**

1. Considering the school readiness priority areas, what are the commonly occurring needs of the families and children (not individual children) who typically attend the service?
2. What are the local community’s demographics and characteristics that impact upon or contribute to these commonly occurring needs?

**Service Level**

1. What is the focus of your service that is reflected in your QIP (and SIP for EYMAs)? What are you trying to improve?
2. What are you already doing that you could build on to achieve your goals? Which school readiness funding priority areas align with these?
3. What do your NQF ratings tell you about how ready your service is to implement small or more complex practice changes?

**Educator Level**

Considering the commonly occurring needs for the children that typically attend your service, do your educators need particular/additional support/training to:

1. Undertake intentional teaching, responsive teaching and scaffolding, child-directed learning and critical reflection?
2. Support self-regulation and collaborative learning for children with these needs?

Based on the answers from Step 2, identify on the planning worksheet the school readiness funding priority area(s) you will focus on.

Step 4: Familiarise yourself with the items from the menu that align with your chosen school funding priority area(s).