

Position Description

Principal Policy Officer

Why work with us

The Office for Early Childhood Development was created to champion change and to help build a system that gives all South Australian children a flying start to life.

Guided by the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care, the Office for Early Childhood Development is the steward of the early childhood development system in South Australia.

The Office is tasked with a significant responsibility: bringing together a holistic, connected system for early childhood development across South Australia, with the goal of reducing the rate of children entering school developmentally vulnerable. Critical to this is the roll-out of universal 3-year-old preschool from 2026, giving every child access to 2 years of teacher-led, play-based early learning before school by 2032.

Our values

We are part of the South Australian public sector and share the values of:

							
SERVICE	PROFESSIONALISM	TRUST	RESPECT	COLLABORATION & ENGAGEMENT	HONESTY & INTEGRITY	COURAGE & TENACITY	SUSTAINABILITY
We proudly service the community and the South Australian Government.	We strive for excellence.	We have the confidence in the ability of others.	We value every individual.	We create solutions together.	We act truthfully, consistently, and fairly.	We never give up.	We work to get the best results for current and future generations of South Australians.

About this role

The Participation, Integration and Inclusion Division leads the design and delivery of additional supports to unlock the potential of all children and support the governments' commitment to reduce the rate of South Australian children entering school developmentally vulnerable. We recognise that children and families have different needs and collaborate across OECD, other agencies and the sector, to develop a range of supplementary programs to add to the core preschool teaching and learning offer, so all children can thrive.

Reporting to the Program Lead, Outreach and Pathways, the Principal Policy Officer is responsible for providing policy leadership, project management and expertise to support the coordination and delivery of strategic policy priorities and associated strategic initiatives, in alignment with existing and emerging agency objectives.

The position delivers policy expertise relating to the identification and analysis of complex issues and provides recommendations and reports to influence future policy and process initiatives. The Principal Policy Officer negotiates with and influences diverse stakeholders to reach agreement and achieve policy and program objectives for and on behalf of the Office for Early Childhood Development (OECED) and will support complex and/or sensitive change management processes to guide and support the ongoing achievement of policy objectives.

Position title	Principal Policy Officer
Classification	ASO8
Division	Participation, Integration and Inclusion
Directorate	Outreach and Pathways
Location	30 Flinders Street, Adelaide, with flexible working arrangements available
Reports to	Program Lead, Outreach and Pathways
Direct reports	Nil
Role description date	March 2026

What you will do (key outcomes)


1. Lead the development of specialist advice to ensure the successful development and implementation of matters that inform and influence the early childhood development policy agenda.
2. Lead the design of policy and research proposals and/or projects, including strategic initiatives on a state-wide level, to support the advancement of the early childhood development agenda, particularly in the areas of preschool participation, inclusion, and outreach to families.
3. Lead critical strategic initiatives and priority projects that influence and guide the achievement of South Australia's early childhood development priorities and targets including those that contribute to Closing the Gap commitments.
4. Establish strong and trusted relationships with key internal and external stakeholders and research partners, which result in improved policy and research formulation and delivery
5. Deliver high level liaison, consultation and services to internal and external stakeholders
6. Support the initiation, development, and delivery of complex and/or strategic policy outcomes, and related projects or initiatives including delivering coordination and leadership support.
7. Help to maintain a safe and healthy working environment by proactively reporting incidents, hazards and injuries.

The capabilities you will bring (key competencies)

- **Research and Analytics:** Proven high level analytical and research skills and an ability to undertake objective analysis and evaluate complex information, from a range of trusted sources to draw accurate conclusions that recognise and manage contextual issues.
- **Policy Development:** Ability to identify problems requiring public policy intervention and proven ability to use creative, strategic and critical thinking skills to lead the development, implementation and evaluation of complex policies, solutions, plans and strategies that support government objectives.
- **Communication:** Demonstrated high level communication skills with ability to prepare reports and briefings and present concepts, recommendations and complex documents clearly. Demonstrated ability to develop successful relationships and networks and achieve shared objectives.
- **Information analysis and provision:** Demonstrated ability to interpret and apply legislation; analyse, evaluate, and present complex information, including statistical data, to support policy development and proven experience in providing specialist and expert advice to senior officers and executive, including in cross jurisdictional forums.
- **Achievement of outcomes:** Ability to work independently, under broad direction, to achieve high level performance outcomes within timeframes, often in a context of competing priorities and expectations and demonstrated ability to conduct negotiation and consultation processes with stakeholders.
- **Coordination:** Proven experience in planning, developing, implementing and coordinating a range of programs, strategic projects, and services to support government policy directions.
- **Knowledge:** Knowledge of the early childhood development, education or human services policy environment within South Australia would be advantageous.

Who you will work with (key relationships)	Qualifications
<p><i>Senior Officers and Managers within OECD and across government</i></p> <p><i>Commonwealth, Local and Government Officers</i></p> <p><i>External stakeholders</i></p>	<p>Essential: Nil</p> <p>Desirable: A tertiary qualification in a relevant discipline.</p>

Corporate responsibilities	Special conditions
<p>Keep accurate and complete records</p> <p>Act appropriately in line with the Public Sector Code of Ethics at all times</p> <p>Support diversity and promote an inclusive workplace for everyone</p> <p>Maintain a commitment to Work Health and Safety legislative requirements</p>	<p>You may need a current driver’s licence and be willing to drive</p> <p>You may be asked to work out of hours</p> <p>You may need to travel within or outside South Australia</p> <p>You need to achieve mutually agreed performance goals</p> <p>You must have a current Working with Children Check</p> <p>You must do Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care training</p> <p>You must be an Australian resident or provide evidence you have a current work permit</p>

<p>Assessed by: Rhiannon Edwards, P&C Consultant</p>		<p>Approved by: Natalie Atkinson, Participation, Integration and Inclusion</p>	
<p>Date: March 2026</p>		<p>Date: March 2026</p>	