



# Education Engagement and Attainment Initiatives (EEAI)

## Information for Providers

### EEAI Overview

The Education Engagement and Attainment Initiative (EEAI) has been designed to improve the learning outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. The EEAi is an Australian Government funded program under the [Children and Schooling Program](#) and the [Indigenous Advancement Strategy \(IAS\)](#) via grants. It contributes towards the [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#).

The program is delivered by EEAi providers in remote locations with high education needs. Providers work with students, parents, carers, families, communities, and schools, to develop activities that meet the needs and experiences of students, so they can do well in school.

The initiative supports First Nations children, their parents, caregivers, families, communities and schools to:

- Engage or re-engage youth in schooling
- Improve educational and engagement outcomes
- Improve and provide access to educational opportunities
- Build and strengthen relationships between students, their caregivers, families and communities with their schools
- Address engagement barriers through a partnered, place-based approach involving schools, EEAi providers, and First Nations communities to improve education and engagement for First Nations children and youth.

Each EEAi-funded organisation is funded to provide a range of activities, developed in consultation with each community, including:

- Cultural activities
- Targeted and tailored support for students and families needing it most
- Improved education engagement and school attendance through shared information and coordinated support.



## Objectives

Education provides lifelong benefits such as enabling access to more employment opportunities, improvements to health and wellbeing, social skills, and relationships. When combined with connections to culture, language, family and country, it supports the development of a strong sense of identity.

The objectives of the EEAI are:

- Help First Nations students to do well in schooling
- Work with communities to provide students with cultural and language learning activities
- Build relationships between schools and parents, families, caregivers and communities to talk about learning needs and create activities and provide support
- Improve access to school

## EEAI Provider Responsibilities

EEAI providers play an important role in improving school engagement and educational outcomes for First Nations children. The EEAI Operational Framework outlines essential requirements for EEAI delivery, including developing Semester Activity Plans, collaborating closely with schools, and ensuring ongoing involvement of families, parents and carers in decision-making.

Providers use the Framework to plan, implement and monitor activities that may include mentoring, family engagement, cultural and language projects, transition support, community events, and other locally relevant services. All activities must demonstrate a clear link to improving young people's readiness and engagement with school, their relationships with teachers and peers, and their long-term educational outcomes, rather than focusing solely on school attendance.

## Factors Impacting First Nations Students' Engagement

In remote areas, challenges such as limited accessibility to education because of location, language barriers and cultural and kinship commitments, limited resources, historical and ongoing experiences of racism and discrimination, have created barriers to educational access and outcomes.

There are many factors that can impact First Nations students' engagement with schools, and their educational outcomes. These can include but are not limited to:

- Cultural differences
- Cultural and kinship responsibilities
- Social, emotional, health and wellbeing of students, their caregivers, families and community members
- Limited access to resources
- Language barriers
- Student experiences at home or school
- The nature of relationships for students with their peers, educators, the curriculum, their families and their communities



## Why engagement matters

First Nations children are better supported and enabled to thrive with holistic support systems that value their cultures and kinship connections, and which are focused on education engagement rather than just school attendance.

## The Importance of School and Principal Engagement

A supportive, engaged school principal is essential to ensure teachers are aware of and engaging with the program and supporting students' engagement or re-engagement with school. Principals are encouraged to share information and work with teachers and the EEAI provider to ensure a holistic support system for students' and positive and impactful engagement and re-engagement with school for students and their families.

## Involvement of Parents, Caregivers, Families and Communities

First Nations children do better when parents, caregivers, families and communities are included in their learning. EEAI providers should work with students' larger family networks, to talk about and develop activities and learning support that works best for them. By doing this, activities are created to meet the specific needs and experiences of students, and learning can importantly include culture and language.

## Key principles for EEAI providers

### Community-led

Local First Nations people must guide design and decision-making. Providers must demonstrate how community input has shaped the activities in the Semester Activity Plans.

### Community-Involved

Local people should be involved in delivery, with ongoing engagement—not one-off consultations. Providers must build regular feedback loops, giving community the opportunity to provide their insights.

### School Engagement

School-based activities must be approved by principals. Providers remain accountable to communities—not schools—and cannot replace school-funded roles.

### Strengths-Based

The EEAI should build on local strengths, including culture and language, avoiding western-centric definitions of success; and must value First Nations perspectives.

### Coordination, Not Duplication

Activities must complement existing services, supporting and extending them—not replicating or replacing them.



## Flexibility

Activities must adapt to community needs, school rhythms and local priorities. Providers should adjust delivery based on feedback.

## Link to Education Outcomes

Activities should clearly contribute to improved student engagement, wellbeing or learning outcomes, with measurable links to education achievements.

## Best Practice Steps

- Employ local First Nations people from the community where the EEAI activity is being delivered
- Develop local staff by providing meaningful support and development opportunities
- Understand community including language groups, culture, demographics, seasonal patterns of mobility, persons in positions of leadership/cultural seniority and history.
- Build trust with the community
- Understand needs and gaps
- Plan activities with clear roles and community approval
- Act and adjust if outcomes are not being met
- Review and improve planning and delivery based on feedback

## More Information

More information on the EEAI is available on the [NIAA website](#).

For questions and to discuss the initiative you can contact your local NIAA office. Locations and contact details are available on NIAA's [Regional offices around Australia](#) page.

## Contacts

A list of EEAI providers can be found on the [EEAI page](#).

| Organisation  | Phone        | Website                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NIAA Helpline | 1800 079 098 | NIAA Regional Offices: <a href="https://www.niaa.gov.au/about-niaa/contact-us/regional-offices-around-australia">https://www.niaa.gov.au/about-niaa/contact-us/regional-offices-around-australia</a> |

