



Education Engagement and Attainment Initiatives (EEAI)

Information for Principals and Teachers

EEAI Overview

The Education Engagement and Attainment Initiative (EEAI) has been designed to improve the learning outcomes for First Nations 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 educational needs. Providers work with students, parents, carers, families, communities, and schools, to develop activities and offer learning support 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 schools
- Address engagement barriers through a partnered, place-based approach involving schools, EEAi providers, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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 engagement and 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, relationships and 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 to:

- 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 and engagement in school.

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 engagement rather than just 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 the school. Principals are encouraged to share information and work with teachers and the EEAI providers to ensure a holistic support system for students' and positive and impactful engagement and re-engagement with school for students and their families.



How Schools Can Support EEAI

Schools can maximise the impact of the EEAI and improve learning outcomes for First Nations students by working in partnership with EEAI providers. This can include:

- Working closely with EEAI Providers to design learning strategies, activities and engagement opportunities
- Using existing committees or governance structures (P&C, youth networks, leadership groups, First Nations Community groups) to co-design EEAI activities for students
- Seeking input from families and the community to shape school engagement approaches. This partnership approach results in more effective, community-driven solutions.
- Engaging in deep listening to students' needs and experiences
- Ongoing learning about First Nations history and cultures and inclusion of culture into learning activities at school.

Examples of EEAI Activities

EEAI Student Support in Schools

- Helping children settle into classrooms, especially at the start of term or when new students arrive.
- Supporting students to return to school after long absences
- Working with schools to support students most in need to improve their learning outcomes.

Culture and Language Projects

- Inviting Elders and community members into schools.
- Organising culture and language activities, storytelling, and community-led activities
- After-school and holiday programs.

Family Engagement

- Support with school enrolment forms and other school requirements, including support to transition to boarding school.
- Home visits and providing referrals to other services when families need extra support.

Youth Engagement

- Activities tailored to young people who need support
- Prevention and wellbeing strategies inside and outside the school gate
- Providing learning opportunities to keep students engaged.

Cost

There is no cost to schools for working with the EEAI providers or for First Nations students and their family support networks to access the program.



More Information

More information on the EEAI and participating schools is available on the [Education Engagement and Attainment Initiatives](#) page.

For questions and to discuss the initiative you can contact your local NIAA EEAI Engagement Officer. 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: https://www.niaa.gov.au/about-niaa/contact-us/regional-offices-around-australia

