

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mrs Finocchiaro to the Minister for Education:

Families as First Teachers (FaFT) Update

- 1. How many FaFT sites exist in the Northern Territory, as at 7 February 2019? Please list the FaFTs by region and location.**

As at 7 February 2019, there were 39 Families as First Teachers (FaFT) programs across 42 sites (34 remote and five urban). Current FaFT sites by region and location are detailed in Attachment A.

- 2. How many FaFT sites have discontinued operations since 2016? Please identify the particular FaFTs.**

No FaFT sites have been discontinued.

The FaFT program at Yirrkala Homelands temporarily ceased operating in Semester 2, 2017 due to local community issues. The program re-commenced in Term 1, 2019.

- a. Have these FaFT sites been replaced?**

As above.

- 3. What is the average attendance at each of the FaFTs in the NT? Please provide average attendances for each FaFT site.**

In 2018, the average number of days children participated per year was 22 days across the remote sites.

In 2018, 2391 children participated in a FaFT program at least one day during the reporting period. This was an increase of 467 children compared to 2017.

- 4. What is the total funding for FaFT? Please break down by Commonwealth and NTG funding streams.**

The 2018-19 FaFT budget is \$11.56 million. The Northern Territory Government contribution is \$4.77 million, with the remaining \$6.79 million being Commonwealth Government funding.

There has been further investment from the NT Government to expand the FaFT program through the establishment of 14 additional FaFT – Stay, Play, Learn sites in 2019-20 under the *Starting Early for a Better Future – Early Childhood Development Plan*. The investment of \$5.25 million over four years will allow expansion to seven new FaFT – Stay, Play, Learn sites in 2018-19 and a further seven sites in 2019-20, expanding the total FaFT programs to 53 by 2020.

5. What training or qualifications are required to run a FaFT program?

Each FaFT program is staffed by a qualified early childhood teacher and a local Aboriginal Family Liaison Officer with a certificate level qualification in early childhood education and care or equivalent.

All FaFT staff are trained in:

- the Abecedarian Approach Australia (3a) Practitioner certification
- the developmental screening tool - ASQ-TRAK (Ages and Stages Questionnaire – Taking about Raising Aboriginal Kids)
- the database Early Childhood Program Attendance System
- 3a strategies and coaching.

6. What venues are being used to run FaFT programs? Please identify for each site (e.g. preschool, primary school, community centre etc)

All FaFT programs are delivered through schools with the exception of the FaFT program in Wurrumiyanga which operates from the Jirnani Child Care Centre.

The schools provide a range of facilities including:

- purpose-built child and family centres
- preschool facilities
- re-purposed classrooms.

7. How does FaFT interact with other programs and playgroups for early learning?

FaFT has established partnerships with the Department of Health, local health centres, particularly for hearing health, and non-government organisations including Anglicare NT, Save the Children Australia and The Smith Family to foster a more integrated approach to the delivery of early childhood services in communities.

8. Will FaFT have any interaction with new Child and Family Centres established in response to the *Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children?*

The department is working with the Reform Management Office on the establishment of the new child and family centres.

The department is committed to the provision of quality services to support early learning opportunities and build parent capacity. This may include the establishment of FaFT or FaFT style programs at the new child and family centres.

9. Since the expansion of the FaFT program, have preschool attendance rates increased?

There are many contributing factors that affect attendance rates at schools. The purpose of FaFT is not primarily to increase enrolment at preschools. Many FaFT and preschool programs work side by side. FaFT contributes to children's language and self-regulation skills, starting from birth. These skills are the best indicator of success for children throughout their schooling.

10. Has the proportion of children assessed as 'developmentally vulnerable' in one or more domains fallen since the expansion of the FaFT program? Please provide Australian Early Development Census Data in your response.

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) is a population-based measure of child development conducted every three years of children in their first year of full-time schooling.

The Commonwealth Government is expected to publicly release the 2018 AEDC data in March 2019. The department is unable to provide specific information regarding this question in advance of its public release.

ATTACHMENT A

Families as First Teachers Program sites

Table 1: 39 current sites by community, school and region as at February 2019

Schools South			Schools North		
Alice Springs	Barkly	Katherine	Palmerston and Rural	Arnhem	Darwin
1.Ntaria	5.Alekareng e	110.Barunga- Wugular	19.Gunbalanya	26.Angurugu	38.Ludmilla
2.Papunya	6.Alpurrurul am	12.Borroolola	20.Nganmarriyan ga	27.Galiwin'ku	39.Mimik-ga Centre
3.Yuendumu	7.Arlparra	13.Kalkaringi	21.Pularumpi- Milikapiti	28.Gapuwiyak	
4.Larapinta	8.Elliott	14.Lajamanu	22.Wurrumiyanga	29.Gunyangarra	
	9.Tennant Creek	15.Ngukurr	23.Wadeye	30.Maningrida	
	10.Ampilat watja	16.Minyerri	24.Jabiru	31.Milingimbi	
		17.Jilkminggan- Mataranka	25.Palmerston	32.Numbulwar	
		18.Katherine		33.Ramingining	
				34.Umbakumba	
				35.Warruwi	
				36.Yirrkala	
				37.Yirrkala Homelands	