



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

No. 283

WRITTEN QUESTION

J Davis to the Minister for Education and Training, Hon Jo-Anne Hersey MLA:

Early Childhood Development

1. The 2024 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) shows Northern Territory children have the highest developmental vulnerability in the country, with around 40.8 per cent vulnerable on one or more domains and 26.9 per cent on two or more — almost double the national rates.
 - a. What is the Territory's specific, written plan to reduce these figures over the next five and ten years?
 - b. What interim targets has the Government set for reducing developmental vulnerability, on what date were they set, and in which document are they recorded?
2. The AEDC is designed as a planning tool across education, health, disability and family services, not only as a school readiness measure.
 - a. Which ministers and agencies share responsibility for improving AEDC outcomes in the Territory?
 - b. What formal governance structure holds them collectively accountable for delivering that improvement?
3. What specific changes to service locations, funding or program design have been made because of the 2024 AEDC results?
 - a. Will the Government publish a public AEDC response plan showing which high-vulnerability communities will receive additional early education, health, disability and family support?
4. Thriving Kids is built on delivering supports in children's everyday settings — homes, early childhood services and schools. Within the existing budget and workforce, what specific actions will the Minister take to embed inclusive early intervention practices in all NT schools and early learning settings, rather than waiting for new Thriving Kids funding?

5. Will the Minister commit to every NT government school adopting a multi-tiered system of supports, or an equivalent tiered framework, so that universal, targeted and intensive supports are organised inclusively within classrooms?
 - a. Will AEDC and school-level data be used together to decide which schools receive additional coaching and specialist support?
6. Budget Paper No. 3 for 2026–27 lowers two enrolment targets. Aboriginal preschool student enrolments fall from a target of 1,200 to 1,150 against a 2025–26 result of 1,145, and total preschool enrolments from 2,800 to 2,700 against a result of 2,746. Aboriginal primary and secondary enrolments fall from 13,200 to 13,100 against a result of 12,985.
 - a. Who decided to lower each of those enrolment targets, on what date, and in which document is that decision recorded?
 - b. Is a reduction in Aboriginal preschool enrolment expected in 2026–27 and, if so, on what basis?
 - c. What is the estimated number of Aboriginal children of preschool age in the Territory, and what proportion of them does an enrolment target of 1,150 represent?
 - d. What funded measures are directed to increasing Aboriginal preschool enrolment in 2026-27, and what is the allocation to each? Please identify any of those measures that is also counted toward improving attendance.