

# Early Childhood Teaching Performance Assessments

This fact sheet provides information on how Teaching Performance Assessments (TPAs) can be undertaken in early childhood settings. TPAs are part of Program Standard 1.2 of the [Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures](#).

## What is a Teaching Performance Assessment?

A Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) is an assessment of students in the final year of their bachelor-level or above Initial Teacher Education (ITE) program. Through a TPA, pre-service teachers in their final year of study demonstrate their ability to meet the Graduate Teacher Standards<sup>1</sup> through a range of teaching activities – these activities include planning, teaching, assessing, and reflecting.

In the case of early childhood, only qualifications Birth – Age 8 or Birth – Age 12, including combined early childhood and/or primary degrees, are currently required to include TPAs.

Note: the setting in which a TPA is required to be undertaken can depend on state or territory requirements. You should check state and territory requirements before planning a TPA in an early childhood setting.

## Who is responsible for TPAs and their use?

Providers of ITE programs are responsible for administering TPAs. Successful completion of a TPA is an ITE program accreditation requirement of AITSL's [Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures \(2019\)](#) (Standards and Procedures).

In accordance with the Standards and Procedures, AITSL works with a group of experts to endorse TPAs for use in classroom environments.<sup>2</sup> A classroom environment can include similar settings in early childhood where learning and a TPA may take place – for example, in early childhood centres, preschools, kindergartens and long day care services.

<sup>1</sup> See: the [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#) at the Graduate career stage

<sup>2</sup> The AITSL Expert Advisory Group (EAG) has endorsed 12 TPAs across 47 ITE program providers to date.

## How can TPAs be implemented in an early childhood setting?

A partnership involving AITSL, Victorian ITE providers, and the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) has been formed to explore the implementation of expert endorsed TPAs in early childhood settings. This work includes the development of some sector specific resources, including this factsheet, as a first step.

A key condition for undertaking TPAs in early childhood settings is the presence of a supervising teacher. The supervising teacher's role is to educate, support, and provide real-time feedback to the pre-service teacher, during their professional experience placement and as part of their TPA. Early childhood services must have an appropriate degree-qualified teacher, who may also be registered or accredited based on their state or territory requirements,<sup>3</sup> to also act as the supervising teacher for a TPA.

It is the responsibility of each ITE provider to establish partnerships with early childhood services to ensure that supervising teachers are available, appropriately qualified, and where relevant accredited/registered. Providers also have an obligation to confirm that supervising teachers have engaged with the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*. This allows graduate or pre-service teachers to be meaningfully supported to develop their practice by the supervising teacher (as detailed above).

## What are the benefits of undertaking a TPA in an early childhood setting?

Undertaking a TPA in an early childhood setting provides a range of benefits, including greater assurance and confidence that bachelor-level or above graduates of ITE programs are well prepared for their first teaching role, and potentially a career in early childhood education.

For services, colleagues, parents, and others a TPA undertaken in an early childhood setting provides assurance that graduates of early childhood programs have gained relevant practical experience (e.g., in play-based learning), and are prepared to be effective teachers from Day One. A TPA can also provide a foundation for a beginning teacher's professional development into the future.

At the other end of the spectrum, staff in early childhood services who act as supervising teachers can benefit from their role in delivering TPAs. For supervising teachers benefits include upskilling and mentoring by delivering tertiary-level assessments that are nationally recognised, and for early childhood services benefits include opportunities to connect with Universities, attract graduates, and raise their profile.

For the teaching profession as a whole, a TPA can also provide greater consistency of expectations for comparably qualified early childhood and schoolteachers in their respective settings. Feedback from ITE graduates in schools and those undertaking an existing early childhood TPA has shown they found them useful for developing their skills across a range of teaching practices.

<sup>3</sup> See: <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/qualifications/early-childhood-teacher-registration-and-accreditation>