



CUMBERLAND
COUNCIL



Cumberland Children and Families Strategy 2019 - 2023

Acknowledgement of Country

*Here is the land and here is the sky,
Here are my friends and here am I,
We thank the Darug People for the land on which we
learn and play.*

Cumberland Council acknowledges the Darug Nation and People as Traditional Custodians of the land on which the Cumberland Local Government Area (LGA) is situated and pays respect to Aboriginal Elders past, present and future.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Peoples of Australia.

Cumberland Council also acknowledges other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples living in the Cumberland LGA.

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Introduction

Why have a Children and Families Strategy?

The *Cumberland Children and Families Strategy 2019 – 2023* provides a clear direction for Council over the next four years to support better outcomes for children and families in Cumberland. It aims to improve the lives of children and their families and ensure that Cumberland is a place where children are safe, have access to quality education and care, have a voice and multiple avenues to participate in community life, including opportunities to develop their health and wellbeing.

It also sets the direction for Council's own provision of education and care services and programming to support children and families into the future. This direction is provided through key priority areas, strategies and actions.

It further outlines how Council will support and partner with the community, other levels of government and

service providers to improve quality outcomes for children and families.

A key focus in the development of this Strategy has been ensuring that Council is collaboratively planning for the growing and changing needs, interests and aspirations of children and families in Cumberland.

Development of the Strategy involved a detailed education and care needs analysis and community engagement to ensure the needs of children and families were understood and shared.

In implementing this Strategy, Council's role is to lead, support and strengthen the important work and initiatives at the local level that consider the needs of Cumberland's youngest residents front and centre.

WHAT ARE THE KEY PRIORITIES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN CUMBERLAND?

Priority Area 1: Child Protection

Priority Area 2: Education and Care

Priority Area 3: Community Participation

Priority Area 4: Health and Wellbeing

What is a family?

“IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD”

In developing this Strategy, Council acknowledges the wide-ranging perspectives and meanings of the term ‘family’ across Cumberland’s culturally diverse communities.

The role of raising children can be a shared responsibility amongst parents, siblings, grandparents and extended family. Community members can also play a significant role.

Defining a family is complex and family structures are diverse in their composition and forms. A household may contain more than one family or extended family, or comprise single-parent families, same sex couple families, blended families and families with adopted or fostered children.

It is also helpful to reflect about whether the term “family” refers, for example, to a group of people living under one roof, to people who are related, to people with shared emotional bonds, or to other things.

Families Australia believes that families are what people define them to be (Families Australia, cited by Robinson & Parker, 2008, p.3).

Some explanations of what ‘family’ means to children and families in Cumberland included:

“A family is a group of people that look up to each other; they are supportive of one another. They are a loving group of related people that have respect for each other.”

(Parent participant)

“Everyone loves each other to the moon and back, it’s where you belong”

(Child participant)

“Loving is the most important thing in a family”
(Child participant)



Children and families snapshot

Cumberland is home to 39,687 children (0-12 years old) (ABS, Census 2016).



16,880 residents (7.8%) are babies and pre-schoolers aged 0-4 years



65.6% of residents speak a language other than English at home



22,807 residents (10.6%) are primary schoolers aged 5-12 years



0.6% of people in Cumberland identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander



41.4% of households are couples with children



12.3% of children aged 0-12 years, living in Cumberland were born overseas



Median weekly household income in 2016 was **\$1,377** (compared to \$1,745 in Greater Sydney)



1.8% of children aged 0-12 years, living in Cumberland need additional assistance due to a disability



90.5% of the Cumberland workforce are employed in either part time or full time work

Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) 2018

According to the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) 2018, 26.1% of children in Cumberland are developmentally vulnerable in one or more domains as they arrive at school, compared to 19.9% in NSW.

Developmental Area	% of children developmentally vulnerable in Cumberland	% of children developmentally vulnerable in NSW
Physical health and wellbeing	10.4	8.5
Social competence	12.4	9.2
Emotional maturity	7.3	6.8
Language and cognitive skills	7.4	5.2
Communication skills and general knowledge	13.6	8.0

(Source: Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) 2018)

Increasing Number of Children

The population of children aged 0 to 4 years is forecast to increase by 7,420 by 2036.

The areas with the highest forecast growth in the number of children aged 0 to 4 are:

- Merrylands-Holroyd (+1,590 children)
- Auburn (North) (+1,016 children)
- Auburn (South) (+930 children)
- Lidcombe (North) (+817 children)
- Wentworthville (+593 children)

The population of children aged 5 to 12 years is forecast to increase by 9,660 by 2036.

The areas with the highest forecast growth in the number of children aged 5 to 12 years include:

- Merrylands-Holroyd (+2,091 children)
- Auburn (South) (+1,272 children)
- Auburn (North) (+1,142 children)
- Lidcombe (North) (+919 children)
- Wentworthville (+706 children)

(Source: Profile.id and Forecast.id)

COUNCIL SERVICES SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (AS AT 2019)



Council also provides a range of health and wellbeing opportunities at Council's Swim Centres, Parks and Sporting Fields.

Libraries

1. Auburn Library
2. Granville Library at The Granville Centre (planned)
3. Granville Library
4. Greystanes Library
5. Guildford Library
6. Lidcombe Library
7. Merrylands Library
8. Regents Park Library
9. Wentworthville Library

Arts and cultural facilities

10. Peacock Gallery and Auburn Arts Studio
11. The Granville Centre Gallery at the Granville Centre (planned)

Education and care centres

12. Auburn Long Day Child Care Centre
13. Cumberland Council Family Day Care
14. Frances Fisk Child Care Centre
15. Friend Park Children's Centre
16. Guildford West Children's Centre
17. Holroyd Children's Centre Banksia Babes
18. Holroyd Children's Centre Gumnut Grove
19. Guildford West OOSH
20. Parramatta West OOSH*
21. Pemulwuy Children's Centre
22. Pemulwuy OOSH
23. Pendle Hill OOSH
24. The Sometime Centre
25. Ringrose OOSH
26. Sherwood Grange OOSH
27. Wenty Children's Centre
28. Widemere OOSH

Staffed multipurpose community centres

29. Auburn Centre for Community
30. Berala Community Centre
31. Guildford Community Centre
32. The Granville Centre (under development)



* Parramatta West OOSH is Council-run, however is located outside of the Cumberland LGA boundary.

Development of the Strategy

The *Cumberland Children and Families Strategy 2019 – 2023* has been developed on a strong evidence base to ensure the priority areas, strategies and actions accurately reflect the needs and aspirations of children and families in the Cumberland community.

Development of this Strategy involved the following:

Policy Context

Consideration has been given to the local, state, national and international policy and planning context to understand key directions, challenges and opportunities in planning for the needs of children and families in Cumberland (as illustrated below).



Local Context

An education and care needs analysis was commissioned by Council to investigate the supply and demand for education and care services across the Cumberland area and its suburbs in 2019 and to 2036. This included an audit and mapping of all education and care centres operating in the Cumberland area. It also considered the outcomes of consultation with local service providers around service utilisation as well as how the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Educational Establishments and Child Care Facilities) 2017* and other recent policy changes affect Council's ability to plan for and manage local services to meet community expectations and needs.

The resultant *State of Education and Care in Cumberland Report* considers the role Council can play in improving the quality of education and care services available to families in Cumberland and was utilised to inform the strategies and actions under 'Priority Area 2: Education and Care'.

The *State of Education and Care in Cumberland Report, June 2019* is available on Council's website (cumberland.nsw.gov.au).



Community Engagement

A comprehensive community engagement process was undertaken in 2018/19 to gain community and stakeholder input into the development of this Strategy.

The information received through engagement activities helped Council to better understand the needs and interests of children and families in Cumberland now and into the future, and also informed the development of appropriate strategies and actions for Council to implement over the next four years.

Community engagement activities included:

Face to face consultation with children and families

▶ 347 children and 318 parents/carers engaged

Children and their families were engaged in face to face community engagement activities at community events, community centres, libraries, schools and education and care services. They were asked about what an ideal Cumberland looks like for children and families and what they liked and did not like about existing local services and activities.

Children and families survey

▶ 177 surveys completed

Online and face to face surveys were conducted with local families to understand how well the needs of children and families are being met, priority areas of need and input into strategies for child protection, education and care, community participation and health and wellbeing.

Family friendly workshops

▶ 33 residents engaged

Both children and their families were invited to participate in family friendly workshops. They were asked to share their stories and suggestions for improving life in Cumberland for children and families, comment on each of the priority areas and put forward ideas for Council to implement as part of the action plan.

Survey of services who work with children and families

▶ 94 services engaged

Services who care for or support children and families were invited to participate in a targeted survey which considered issues such as education and care utilisation as well as the main issues children and families experience from the services' perspective.

Peak body and stakeholder forum

▶ 66 stakeholders engaged

Council held an Education and Care in Cumberland Forum in April 2019 to present key findings from the *State of Education and Care in Cumberland Report* and engage in joint action planning with key stakeholders around the supply and demand of quality education and care services in Cumberland.



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The importance of engaging children

Children and families make up a large proportion of Cumberland's population. Almost one in five residents in the Cumberland area are aged 12 years or under, and this is higher than the rate for Greater Sydney (ABS, Census 2016).

The presence of children can be seen throughout the community in schools, parks, playgrounds, libraries and other community spaces. Cumberland Council has an important leadership role to play in upholding the rights and celebrating the contributions of children as its youngest citizens.

Community development principles tell us that community members are the experts in their lives and this is also true for children and families. Enabling community input into decision making also fosters the community's investment in the projects and outcomes outlined within this Strategy.

Child participation has been an essential component of Council's methodology for the development of this Strategy. This challenges historical stereotypes of children being innately vulnerable, dependent and having limited valid input in decision making. Listening to the voices of children in matters that affect them is

about respecting their rights. Article 12 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)* highlights that all must have respect for the views of the child.

Throughout the community engagement process, children have been provided with multiple opportunities for creative input and have offered unique perspectives, which have informed the actions included within this Strategy. It is hoped that by investing in children's participation, local children and families will have a sense of ownership, and outcomes will be relevant as they are based on first hand evidence and need.

When considering child protection, child participation and involvement is considered a fundamental standard. *The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses into Sexual Abuse (2017)* recommends the implementation of ten Child Safe Standards. Standard 2 is 'Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously'. Cumberland Council adopted these Standards in 2018 as part of its *Child Protection Policy*. A child having a space to have their voices heard is an important strategy around keeping them safe.





Key research findings

WHAT DOES AN IDEAL CUMBERLAND LOOK LIKE TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES?

"A place where families can enjoy time together without fear"

"Children have the opportunity to grow and learn in safe surroundings"

"A safe and ideal Cumberland is one where everyone lives in a supportive and caring environment"

"Celebrating everyone's different cultures and teaching our children that diversity is beautiful"

(Source: Community engagement participants, 2019.)



THE STATE OF EDUCATION AND CARE IN CUMBERLAND REPORT

The *State of Education and Care in Cumberland Report* outlines that there is likely to be an undersupply of education and care services for 0 to 5 year olds in the Cumberland area in the future and that, although there is unlikely to be an undersupply of services for 5 to 12 year olds across the whole of Cumberland, there is likely to be an undersupply in some suburbs.

It also clearly highlights that there are a large number of education and care services in Cumberland that have issues around quality.

As a result of these findings, building an understanding that the quality of education and care being provided in Cumberland, other than Council's own, is lower than other areas of Australia will be an ongoing concern for Council. It also highlights the importance of Council continuing its direct involvement in the provision of education and care services to ensure the community's access to quality of care in Cumberland.

The *State of Education and Care in Cumberland Report* further outlines a number of priority needs that have been incorporated into the actions of this Strategy, they include:

- **Education and care services that meet the needs of diverse residents and those working in Cumberland**, including supporting services to be sensitive to the needs and preferences of culturally diverse families and encouraging new services in areas where they are needed.
- **Access to quality education and care services in the Cumberland LGA**, including exploring how Council can help to improve the quality of non-Council run services available to local residents.
- **Access to affordable education and care services for low income earners.**
- **Sustainable education and care provision**, including assisting to address the low utilisation rates of many services across the LGA.
- **Equitable access to Council services**, including developing new services to ensure equity of access to high quality services in areas of undersupply or planned growth.
- **Access to OOSH services in new schools**, including advocacy to the NSW Government to ensure that provision of OOSH services is made within existing, expanded or new schools.



FEEDBACK FROM THE EDUCATION AND CARE SECTOR

Education and care providers in Cumberland and peak organisations in the sector also outlined a number of suggestions for Council in relation to these findings. Key suggestions included Council:

- Playing an increased role in providing accessible training for local services to improve quality and programming.
- Leading advocacy around the need for councils to be returned some of the controls over approvals of new education and care services that were removed via the SEPP.
- Making more information available to potential developers about the existing supply and demand of education and care in the Cumberland to influence the locations of new services.



Priority areas, strategies and actions

Four priority areas have been identified to guide Council's planning, program and service delivery for children and families over the next four years.

The priority areas and actions are based on the findings and recommendations of the *State of Education and Care in Cumberland Report*, community engagement and Council staff engagement.

PRIORITY AREAS

1. CHILD PROTECTION

Aim: To establish Council as a child safe organisation and improve the safety of children throughout Cumberland.

2. EDUCATION AND CARE

Aim: To improve quality in education and care services and meet the educational and care needs of children and families in Cumberland.

3. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Aim: To create engaged and invested future Cumberland citizens by providing opportunities for children and families to participate in activities and programs in their community and increase community connection.

4. HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Aim: To help children and families to reach their full potential and engage in healthy lifestyles.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Strategies and actions have been developed for each priority area. Collectively the priority areas, strategies and actions aim to improve the lives of children and families in the Cumberland community now and into the future.

TIMEFRAMES

Timeframes are identified for each action. These timeframes reflect the delivery of the action, noting that some actions are ongoing or to be delivered over multiple years of the Strategy.



PRIORITY 1:

CHILD PROTECTION

Child protection is an important issue that impacts children and families in Cumberland. Council plays a role in child protection through direct service provision and program delivery to children and young people, acting as a resource for other local services and organisations and being a contact for the community.

Child Protection in Cumberland

Child protection is a complex issue with a magnitude of contributing factors. Capturing representative statistics on the prevalence of child protection concerns is challenging. This is due to a number of factors including known under-reporting and concerns occurring on a spectrum. Definitions of abuse and neglect can also be somewhat subjective

and the victims of the abuse often do not have a voice to disclose due to age, capacity, grooming or vulnerability.

In 2018, there were 410 criminal incidents against children reported to the Police within the Cumberland area, including:

- 140 sexual offences
- 96 intimidation, stalking or harassment offences
- 86 domestic violence related assaults
- 82 non-domestic violence related assaults

(Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, 2018)



Aim: To establish Council as a child safe organisation and improve the safety of children throughout Cumberland.

Strategy	Actions	Timeframe
<p>1.1 Establish and implement a comprehensive child protection framework for Council staff and representatives.</p>	<p>1.1a Implement relevant Royal Commission recommendations and Child Safe Standards throughout Council.</p>	<p>Y1-4</p>
	<p>1.1b Develop and implement child protection guidelines and procedures for Council staff and representatives. Work with relevant Government oversight bodies to ensure these align with legislation and best practice.</p>	<p>Y1</p>
	<p>1.1c Train Council staff in the requirements and expectations around child protection.</p>	<p>Y2</p>
	<p>1.1d Share this framework and associated resources with other councils and organisations for implementation.</p>	<p>Y2</p>
	<p>1.1e Embed children’s participation in Council decision making processes that impact them, including community engagement and consultation processes.</p>	<p>Y3</p>
<p>1.2 Enhance and develop the community’s knowledge and awareness of child protection.</p>	<p>1.2a Work in partnership with service providers and stakeholders to develop and deliver a community education campaign on child protection in the Cumberland area.</p>	<p>Y3</p>
	<p>1.2b Establish a webpage to serve as a local resource library with child protection resources, templates and documents accessible to residents as well as service providers and stakeholders.</p>	<p>Y1</p>
	<p>1.2c Conduct research into child protection in Cumberland to identify particular areas or groups that are more vulnerable or at risk.</p>	<p>Y3</p>
<p>1.3 Improve and support the personal safety of children and empower them to identify unsafe settings.</p>	<p>1.3a Work in partnership with services that have expertise in child protection and sexual harm prevention to develop and implement a personal safety protective behaviour program for children in the Cumberland area.</p>	<p>Y2</p>
	<p>1.3b Implement an online safety program for children and families in the Cumberland area.</p>	<p>Y2</p>

The aim of this priority area is to improve access to quality education and care services in Cumberland and therefore improve outcomes for children. Access to quality education and care services also has social and economic benefits to families, communities and Cumberland Council.

Council plays multiple and sometimes complex roles in this space, and there is a need to balance the role of consent authority with the role of direct service provider and leader within the community supporting quality provision.

Council's role in relation to education and care in Cumberland is:

- As a strategic planner and consent authority for new education and care services.
- As a direct provider of the highest quality education and care services in Cumberland.
- As an advocate and leader through the opportunity to influence the quality of services in the area by leading through example.

CURRENT SUPPLY OF EDUCATION AND CARE FOR CHILDREN 0 TO 5 YEARS

- As at January 2019, there were 4,948 long day care, preschool, and occasional care places in 112 centres across Cumberland providing education and care for children aged under 5 years.
- Council owns and operates 17 services (8 Long Day Care, 7 OOSH services, 1 Occasional Care, and 1 Family Day Care scheme).
- All services are rated against the National Quality Standard for Education and Care Services (NQS). Services across Cumberland are on average of lower quality with only 20% of Long Day Care services in Cumberland rated as 'Exceeding' the NQS, lower than the national proportion of 32%. 33% are rated as 'Working Towards' the NQS, which is much higher than the national proportion of 25%.
- Services run by Council are all rated as either Exceeding or Meeting the National Quality Standard.
- Benchmarks indicate that there is a current (January 2019) gap of 1,014 places for children aged 0 to 5 years for centre-based care.
- By 2036, benchmarks indicate there will be a gap of 2,864 places (1,850 additional to 2019).

CURRENT SUPPLY OF EDUCATION AND CARE FOR CHILDREN 5 TO 12 YEARS

- There are currently 2,372 OOSH places in 31 centres across Cumberland for children aged 5 to 12 years.
- Council is the operator of 3 OOSH services within Council owned facilities. Council operates a further 4 OOSH services in Department of Education facilities within schools.
- Services are of higher quality for 5 to 12 year olds. 54% of OOSH services in Cumberland are rated as Exceeding the NQS, which is higher than the national proportion of 16%.
- Based on benchmarks, there is no LGA-wide current or forecast gap in the supply of OOSH places for children aged 5 to 12 years.
- While there is no current or forecast gap in supply at an LGA-wide level, supply is inequitably distributed across the LGA, and by 2036 there will be demand for additional OOSH places in some high growth areas.

(Source: Cred Consulting, State of Education and Care in Cumberland Report, June 2019.)

Based on the current and forecast data of education and care supply and demand for children aged 0 – 12 years in Cumberland, improving quality and managing future supply will remain a high priority for Council throughout the term of this Strategy and beyond.

Aim: To improve quality in education and care services and meet the educational and care needs of children and families in Cumberland.

Strategy	Actions	Timeframe
2.1 Deliver high quality education and care for all children in the Cumberland area.	2.1a Continue to deliver high quality education and care services to the community.	Y1-4
	2.1b Develop a comprehensive professional development program for Council's education and care staff to ensure they are upskilled and provide high quality care.	Y1-4
	2.1c Develop a targeted educational and communications campaign designed to highlight the benefits of early engagement in education and care to Cumberland's culturally and linguistically diverse communities.	Y1
	2.1d Review affordable education and care options to cater to the socio-economic diversity of families in the Cumberland area.	Y3
	2.1e Develop and implement a model of inclusion support for all children engaged in Council's education and care services including for those with additional needs.	Y3
	2.1f Complete the upgrade and re-open Friend Park Children's Centre, Wentworthville to operate as a 40 place long day care centre.	Y1
	2.1g Undertake and implement an internal audit and compliance review of Council's Family Day Care service.	Y1-2
2.2 Coordinate facility planning for Out of School Hours (OOSH) services in partnership with State Government departments.	2.2a Continue to monitor Council's OOSH service provision and needs and work with the State Government to identify solutions to address any issues or gaps that arise	Y1
	2.2b Work with School Infrastructure NSW to investigate opportunities for new community facilities through Joint-Use agreements	Y1
2.3 Improve the distribution of Council operated education and care services across the Cumberland area, based on community need.	2.3a Transition The Sometimes Centre, Merrylands into a long day care centre with ongoing occasional care places to meet community need and ensure the ongoing viability of the service.	Y1
	2.3b Plan for the development of a 60 place Council-run long day care centre in the Wentworthville Ward.	Y4
	2.3c Investigate opportunities to provide additional Council operated education and care services in the eastern section of the Cumberland area.	Y4

Strategy	Actions	Timeframe
2.4 Build the capacity of the Cumberland education and care sector and improve quality outcomes across all education and care services.	2.4a Provide training and support for local education and care services to increase quality outcomes for children and families	Y1-4
	2.4b Advocate to relevant state and federal government bodies to increase supports available to the education and care sector to improve quality outcomes.	Y1
2.5 Influence future supply of high quality education and care services in areas of demand.	2.5a Contribute to the NSW Department of Planning's review of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Educational Establishments and Child Care Facilities) 2017 (SEPP).	Y1
	2.5b Develop and implement a tool kit with local education and care distribution and supply data to inform developers seeking to establish new education and care facilities.	Y2





PRIORITY 3:

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The children and families of Cumberland identified that community participation was an important way to bring communities together, promote a sense of belonging and help families make connections with local services.

Children and families consistently highlighted the importance of Council providing:

- Free child and family friendly activities
- Localised events
- New activities and initiatives through services they already visit
- Educational programs
- Outdoor nature play experiences

Throughout the engagement process, families also welcomed new opportunities for their children to

participate in planning for their future:

"Children are the future and we need to adapt to meet their needs."

Children and families make up the community so *"to listen to them is to make them feel a part of this community."*

Children engaged also expressed they want to be heard, their voices and opinions matter and they should have a say in the decisions, plans, programs and activities that affect them now and in the years to come:

"We want to know - Your voice is loud and cared about."

"All our ideas will form amazing things."

(Source: Community engagement participants, 2019.)

Aim: To create engaged and invested future Cumberland citizens by providing opportunities for children and families to participate in activities and programs in their community and increase community connection.

Strategy	Actions	Timeframe
3.1 Identify and utilise platforms where Cumberland's children and families gain their information and communication.	3.1a Develop effective and age appropriate communication and marketing campaigns utilising suitable platforms accessible to children and families.	Y1
	3.1b Pilot new engagement methods to support and connect with children and families who are experiencing social isolation.	Y2
3.2 Contribute to a variety of child-centred events, programs, activities and educational experiences that are accessible to children and families.	3.2a Increase children's engagement in the planning of events, programs, activities and educational experiences.	Y2
	3.2b Access and engage children and families at Council and community run events, programs, activities and educational experiences.	Y1-4
	3.2c Undertake research on transport barriers and needs for children and families in the Cumberland area.	Y1
3.3 Develop and deliver meaningful programs for children to participate in their local community.	3.3a Develop and facilitate outdoor play-based programs for children and their families to introduce them to Council facilities.	Y2
	3.3b Develop and implement targeted children's programs supporting their development, focusing on suburbs identified as having the greatest developmental vulnerability (based on results from the 2018 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)).	Y1-4





PRIORITY 4:

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Health and wellbeing are fundamental rights for all children. Families informed Council that there is a lack of awareness and information about local health and wellbeing services, that outdoor play is important to children and issues like excessive screen time and mental health were important concerns for children in Cumberland.

Community engagement also identified a number of barriers for children and families participating in formal and informal sport and recreation activities. These included financial barriers, accessibility of programs including geographic location and access to transport, parent engagement and time constraints, peer pressure, language barriers and family/cultural expectations.

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC), which provides a snapshot of children's development as they arrive at school, indicates that the majority of suburbs within the Cumberland LGA have high proportions of children that are considered developmentally vulnerable in the area of physical health and wellbeing (when compared to NSW).

The top five suburbs with children considered developmentally vulnerable in the area of Physical Health and Wellbeing are:

- Merrylands West (14.7%)
- South Wentworthville (14.1%)
- Guildford (14.0%)
- Guildford West (12.8%)
- Westmead (11.7%)

(Source: Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) 2018)

Council plays a key role in supporting and promoting children being physically active and adopting healthy lifestyles. This includes delivering and promoting a range of programs, facilities and activities that support health and wellbeing as well as developing partnerships with schools, community groups and government agencies that address specific health and wellbeing needs.

Aim: To help children and families to reach their full potential and engage in healthy lifestyles.

Strategy	Actions	Timeframe
<p>4.1 Increase awareness and availability of health and wellbeing programs for children and families across the Cumberland area.</p>	<p>4.1a Support the provision of health and wellbeing programs for children and families across Cumberland through the Cumberland Council Community Grants Program.</p>	Y1
	<p>4.1b Promote and support established NSW Health initiatives for children and families in Cumberland.</p>	Y2-4
	<p>4.1c Implement and expand Council's Healthy Kid's Initiative, including the ongoing delivery of accessible sport and recreation programs to support children's health and wellbeing.</p>	Y1-2
	<p>4.1d Improve access to up to date and accurate information on services supporting children's health and wellbeing for local families.</p>	Y3
	<p>4.1e Investigate and promote the availability and accessibility of support for new parents.</p>	Y2
<p>4.2 Provide outdoor accessible physical environments for all children and families.</p>	<p>4.2a Investigate the increased provision of nature play spaces for children in the Cumberland area to provide equitable distribution of sensory rich and accessible outdoor play opportunities.</p>	Y3
	<p>4.2b Trial inclusion initiatives at Council events, activities and programs to support children of all abilities; e.g. quiet zones, accessible equipment and activities.</p>	Y1





Implementing, monitoring and evaluating the Strategy

The *Cumberland Children and Families Strategy 2019 – 2023* will be incorporated into Council’s Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Progress on the implementation of the actions will be regularly monitored, and reported annually to Council.

At the end of its term (2023) the Strategy will be evaluated against the outcomes identified in the following table. These outcomes will serve as performance indicators.

Priority Area	Outcome	Data Source
1. Child Protection	% of Council staff who completed child protection training.	Council staff data
	Number of children and families participating in child protection education programs.	Council data
	Number of community members accessing resource library located on the child protection web page.	Council data
	Number of information and resources provided to local Government and non-government organisations.	Council data
	Children’s level of satisfaction with opportunities to participate in Council’s decision making process.	Council data based on children’s feedback

Priority Area	Outcome	Data Source
2. Education and Care	Number of advocacy initiatives undertaken to improve quality of education and care.	Council data
	Utilisation of Council run education and care services.	Council data
	Utilisation of education and care services in the Cumberland area.	Education and care survey
	Level of satisfaction with Council from education and care services.	Community satisfaction survey
	Assessment and Rating classifications for services in the Cumberland area.	ACECQA data
	Number of new locations, venues and Joint Use agreements secured for Out of School Hours care.	Council data
	Number of attendees at Council-run professional development and networking forums for education and care providers.	Council data
	Number of development application tool kits distributed to potential service providers and developers of new education and care services.	Council data
3. Community Participation	Number of Council family and child friendly events delivered.	Council data
	Increased attendance of children and families at targeted programs developed by the Children, Youth and Families team.	Council data
	Rate of developmentally vulnerable children in the Cumberland area according to the 2021 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC).	AEDC data
	Number of Council events where the Children, Youth and Families team are represented.	Council data
4. Health and Wellbeing	Number of participants attending programs and activities promoting health and wellbeing.	Council data
	% of Cumberland Council Community Grants supporting programs promoting health and wellbeing for children and families.	Council data
	Level of satisfaction with improved access to information and resources on children's health and wellbeing.	Council survey
	Number of new Council facilities and spaces for children and families planned and established	Council data

Appendix 1

DEFINITIONS: EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES

Family Day Care (FDC) is home based childcare where educators work within their own homes and care for up to 4 children aged 0-5 years and up to 3 additional children of primary school age. Educators can care for their own children in this setting however they are counted within the ratios. Family day care educators are registered with an approved provider which acts as a coordination unit.

Long Day Care (LDC) centres provide care for children under primary school age. These services can offer extended hours for working parents. LDC services are required to deliver a transition to school or preschool program if they care for 3-5 year olds.

Occasional Care (OCC) offers short, flexible periods of care for children. This service may suit parents who are studying, working part-time or are required to attend appointments. Fees are charged by the hour. Occasional care can be booked on a regular or irregular basis.

Out of School Hours (OOSH) services offer care for primary school aged children before and after school, during the school term, and vacation care, during the school holidays. OOSH services can be located on school grounds or within close proximity.

Preschools (PS) services offer planned programs for children prior to their commencement of primary school. Preschools typically target children aged 3 – 5 years providing education and care to support the transition to school. These services generally operate school hours during the school term. Preschools can also be referred to as kindergarten or prep, particularly in other states.



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