



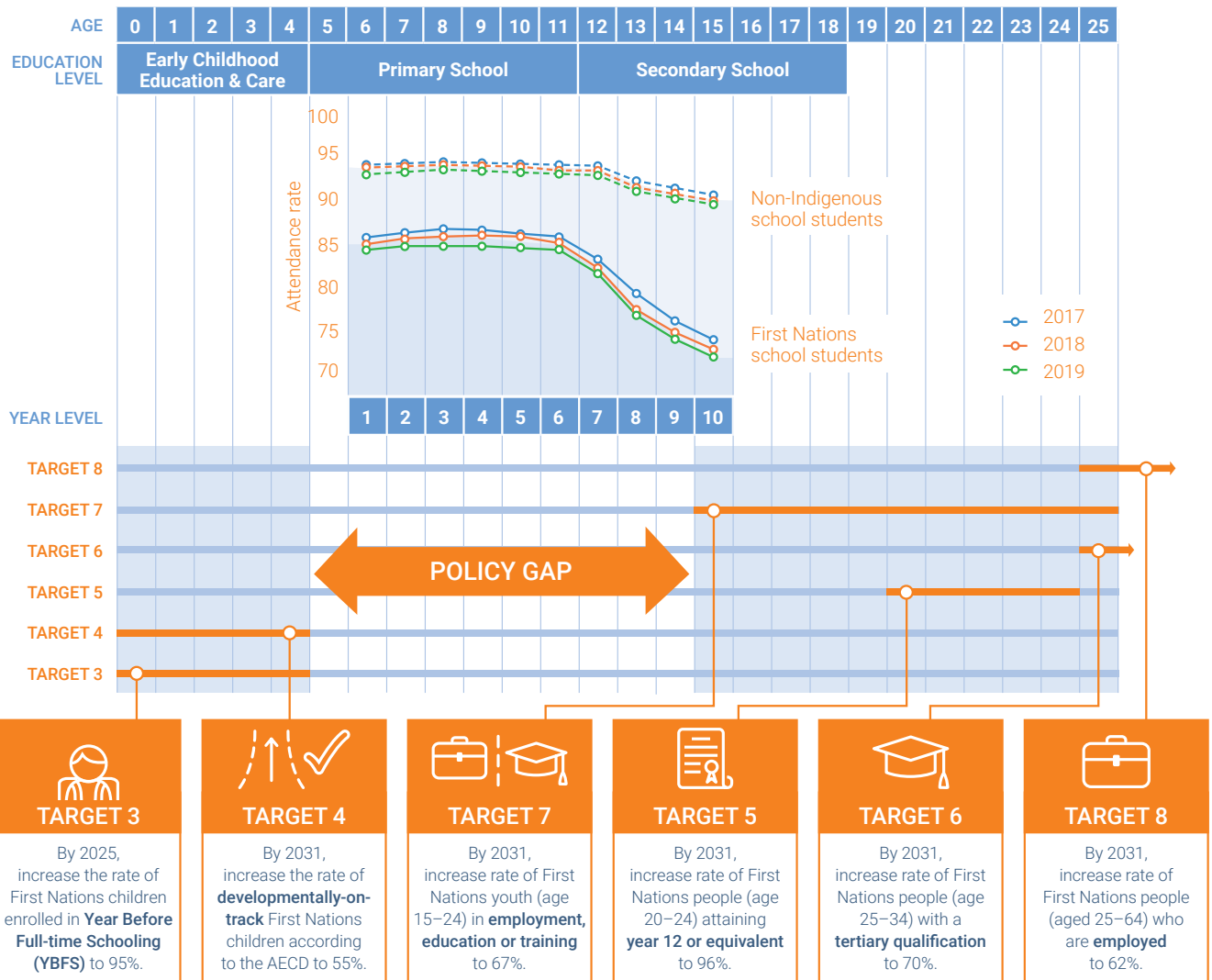
Closing the (policy) gap and attendance cliff of First Nations students

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Closing the gap in educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (First Nations) students in Australia requires an urgent focus on addressing the policy gap and attendance cliff in the crucial transition from primary to secondary school.

School attendance is a key predictor of educational engagement, achievement and Year 12 completion which, in turn, have long-lasting influence on employment, health and well-being outcomes over the life course. Our research highlights that the attendance rates of First Nations students remain consistently below that of their non-Indigenous peers, and below the critical rate of 90%, across all stages of schooling. Significantly, we have

also identified that the steepest decline occurs in the transition from primary to secondary school. However, the reasons for this attendance cliff are not well understood and require deep investigation to better understand the disproportionate challenges First Nations students face in this transition. Closing this policy gap is essential to halting the attendance cliff and progressing educational equity in Australia.



*The National Agreement on Closing the Gap has a total of 17 socio-economic targets. The selected targets above relate to educational outcomes for First Nations students. Data source: The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

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