



**Early Childhood
Australia**

A voice for young children

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Early childhood experts welcome recommitment to quality childcare reform

The ALP's recommitment to ensuring quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) will be good for our children and good for Australia says the nation's leading advocacy organisation for young children.

Early Childhood Australia CEO Pam Cahir today called on the Federal Opposition to match the Labor Party's commitments to increased ratios and higher qualifications for the early childhood sector.

"The impact of quality ECEC on the nation is not just about the benefits to the children, but to the broader economy – a fact supported by the Organisation for Economic Development.

"That's why its crucial that action is taken by our leaders to implement the National Quality Reform Agenda endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) last year."

The COAG reform agenda would see early childhood workers increasing their level of qualification over time and improvements in staff-to-child ratios.

"Quality relationships and interactions with children are an important aspect of their development and learning. Well qualified staff and high staff: child ratios are the key to these relationships", Ms Cahir said.

"It is not possible to provide high quality care where staff are unqualified. We must support staff to ensure they are receiving the necessary level of training to carry out their job effectively.

"We would also like to see further commitments from the government to improve staff-to-child ration for babies from the 1:4 proposed to 1:3"

Reforms would also see the development of a national quality rating system to give parents access to information about the quality of their child's service.

"This will give parents the information necessary to be able to assess the quality of the service their child is attending. It is information to which parents are entitled.

"These are reforms that will take time to implement but it is important that we start working now towards these improvements.

"We are already seeing some services taking the initiative and responding to the evidence around the benefits of quality ECEC and are well on the way to achieving these standards.

"Our children and the nation deserve no less than leadership and vision from our politicians on this issue.

"It is only fair that we ensure that all children have access to quality services."

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