

## A Flying Start for Queensland Children: What are some of the challenges and what is being proposed for Queensland's youngest children?

The Education Green paper for public consultation, A Flying Start for Queensland Children (<http://deta.qld.gov.au/aFlyingstart/pdfs/greenpaper.pdf>) seeks the views of parents, carers, grandparents, students, teachers and all members of the community.

Early care and education is one of the areas being carefully examined **with a focus on literacy** and numeracy both within the home, in kindergarten and child care settings and in schools. One important goal is to make sure that every child has the chance to attend a quality kindergarten program as a way to help Queensland children catch up to other states and territories and give them a flying start to school.

The paper cites

- *international research where it is estimated that **every dollar invested in universally available quality early care and education returns itself many times over** in public education, criminal justice and welfare costs over the next few decades*
- *research that has found there is nearly a **90 per cent chance** that a child who is a poor reader at the end of Year 1 will remain a poor reader at the end of Year 4*
- *an Australia-wide survey of five-year-olds in 2009 showed more than one-third of Queensland children are not regularly read to at home and states that*
- *just 20 minutes a day reading aloud with young children builds stronger relationships, encourages listening and language skills, promotes attention and curiosity, and establishes a strong reading foundation.*

**Parents are seen as a valued resource and encouraged to act as volunteers within schools.** The aim is to build on the current level of volunteering by getting more people involved from the community and business and expanding the range of school activities they are involved in.

**Teachers** are recognised as critical to the quality of children's educational experiences. **Teaching training** is a focus with a promise **to improve student teacher practical placements. The Government will establish Teaching Centres of Excellence in selected schools to take on more teaching students and give them the opportunity to learn from the best.**

**We encourage all ECA members to take a look, share with your educational communities and respond to the various questions!**

[www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au)

