



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children

**OUR
VISION:
EVERY
YOUNG
CHILD IS
THRIVING
AND
LEARNING**

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, 26 November 2015

Early action vitally important for lifelong benefits

Australia's early childhood peak body, Early Childhood Australia (ECA), today welcomed the release of the Government's response to the National Mental Health Commission's Review of Mental Health Programme and Services.

ECA commends the Government's statement that it will work across portfolios to join child mental health programmes to reduce the impact of mental illness on children commencing with the early years and going through to adolescence. The announcement included:

A single integrated end to end school based mental health programme which will support promotion and prevention activity help to build resilience skills. The consolidated approach will build on the success of KidsMatter and MindMatters, covering the continuum from early childhood to secondary school and be promoted through the Safe School Hub

"Today's announcement on mental health reform that recognises the important role of educators, early childhood services and schools in improving health and economic outcomes through better mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention," says ECA CEO Samantha Page.

"Building resilience and early identification and support for children experiencing mental difficulties are a critical role in the prevention of emerging mental health issues later in life," Ms Page said.

"Early Childhood Australia welcomes the announcement that the reforms will be rolled over a three year period between 2016 and 2019."

KidsMatter is a mental health and wellbeing initiative for children. KidsMatter Early Childhood works with early childhood education and care services to support the mental health and wellbeing of young children, their families and early childhood educators using a promotion, prevention and early intervention framework.

Recent data on the mental health of Australian young people suggests that 1 in 4 will experience a mental health issue –appropriate investment in prevention in the early years can reduce this and potentially make a significant difference in the lives of the next generation.

"It's absolutely critical that parents and educators have access to resources to support the mental health and wellbeing of young children to reach the potential of lifelong mental health."

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