



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children

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VISION:
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YOUNG
CHILD IS
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MEDIA RELEASE

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Quality is critical for flexible care

Early childhood Australia (ECA) welcomes the Government's proposed nanny trial as an important opportunity to explore flexible response to family needs. However, ECA is surprised that the trial will sit outside the *National Quality Framework* and will not require nannies to hold basic qualifications.

ECA has previously publicly supported subsidies for nannies on the condition that they meet the *National Quality Framework* (NQF) like other early childhood services. Many of the organisations that are well placed to participate in the trial will already meet quality standards and may prefer to employ people with qualifications for the role.

'The primary benefit of incorporating nannies into the system is to provide flexibility for families with non-standard work hours who require care in the early mornings, evenings and overnight, but nannies may also be employed in a diversity of roles that include caring for children with additional needs and supporting families in isolated areas,' said Samantha Page, CEO of ECA.

'ECA supports subsidies for flexible care like nannies, but only if the basic skills and qualifications to support children's development and wellbeing are met.'

The Productivity Commission, in its Inquiry into Child Care and Early Childhood Learning recommended that nannies hold a minimum Certificate III qualification.

'We are concerned about the safety and wellbeing of children, and ensuring that nannies have basic skills to support children's development.

'Like family day care, nannies should demonstrate that they are meeting the *National Quality Standard* with qualified educators and professional support.'

Currently family day care services, which provide care in the home, are required to have a Certificate III, or equivalent qualification. Minimum staff to child ratios are also required, as well as oversight and support from a central coordination unit.

'Poor quality services can present a risk for children and we will be raising these concerns with government during consultations on the programme.'

Ms Page said she has also called on Government to ensure that the investment of \$246 million in nannies did not come at the expense of support for low- and middle-income families accessing mainstream services. In particular, concern that the proposal of a tightened activity test could see access to 24 hours of subsidised early learning removed.

‘The implementation of a new activity test could exclude thousands of families from access to subsidised early learning that amplifies children’s development.

It is critical that priority for investment is supporting children from low- and middle-income families to maintain access to early learning.’

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