



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children

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

MEDIA RELEASE

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Delivering for children a priority for 'new' Government

Today, Australia's peak early childhood body, Early Childhood Australia (ECA) outlined its priorities for consideration by the Australian Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull MP.

'Early Childhood Australia congratulates the new Prime Minister. He has demonstrated strong knowledge and support for early childhood development in his past Ministerial roles and we look forward to working with him and his new Cabinet.'

ECA's CEO, Samantha Page said that delivering the Government's Child Care Assistance Package needed to be a priority for the incoming Prime Minister.

'The Government's \$3.5 billion reform package will make a significant investment in building Australia's future prosperity.

'However, it has been clear for some time that some children will miss out on the early learning that we know amplifies their development.

'This is an opportunity for a fresh approach to guarantee that children can access at least two full days of subsidised early learning.

'This will not only ensure that children are supported, but will give parents in irregular and insecure work the stability to get a foothold in work and increase their hours.'

The current system provides up to 24 hours of Child Care Benefit, regardless of parents' workforce participation. Under the new system, children whose parents aren't working will lose all subsidies unless they are on very low incomes under the 'Child Care Safety Net'.

In addition, Ms Page said that if the Prime Minister wanted to make a significant early decision, it would be to appoint a Minister for children in his new Cabinet.

'Appointing a Cabinet Minister for children would be a highly symbolic move and ensure that child development is a paramount consideration in national decision making.

'There is no greater asset to our future economy, than the foundation skills of our next generation.'



The OECD's *Starting Strong IV* report is due to be released in a matter of days. One of the OECD's enduring recommendations is for the Government to 'nominate a lead ministry that works in co-operation with other departments and sectors'.

The responsibility for children is currently split across different Ministers and Departments in Social Services, Education and Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Various analyses, including the OECD reviews, show the advantages that can flow from bringing policy-making under one agency:

- More coherent policy and greater consistency.
- More effective investment in young children.
- Enhanced continuity of children's early childhood experiences.
- Improved public management of services.
- Strengthened early childhood education and care (ECEC) policy units at central level.
- Reinforced early childhood expertise.