



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children

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

MEDIA RELEASE

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New childcare package—too early for verdict on the impact on families and children

The complexity of the Federal Government's announced childcare package makes it difficult to assess how fair the package will be and how all families and children will be impacted, said Early Childhood Australia (ECA), the peak organisation for early childhood services.

'The new injection of investment in early childhood education and care is very welcome', said ECA's CEO, Sam Page, on Sunday. 'And retaining supports for grandparent carers makes a lot of sense.'

'Our primary concern is that vulnerable children don't miss out on important early learning, particularly in those families where one or both parents are struggling to secure regular work. We will be working through the detail of the package to understand how it will affect these families and children.'

'We are particularly concerned about the impact on families with insecure work arrangements and that the real casualties of a stringent "Activity Test" will be vulnerable children, who will benefit the most from access to quality early learning, and provide the greatest benefit to Australia's future prosperity as early learning opportunities improve their performance at school and in life.'

'Ideally, government support for early learning should ensure all families have access to two days per week, and then apply the activity test after that', said Ms Page.

Children's access to early childhood education led by qualified educators amplifies their achievement at school. Research shows that children who attended early childhood education and care score 18 to 20 points higher in reading, spelling and numeracy, and 13 points higher in writing compared to children who do not attend early childhood education and care.

Investment in early learning will also increase our future prosperity as a nation. Research by PricewaterhouseCoopers last year shows that increasing participation in quality early learning by vulnerable children would add more than \$13 billion to the GDP by 2050.

'To achieve the economic goals the government is seeking, it is necessary to get both a lift in workforce participation and better outcomes for children so that they achieve better results at school and in life.'

'Australian families need confidence that the childcare package the government delivers is fair and allows them to have stable, affordable access to quality services', concluded Sam Page.

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