



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children

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

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 7 March 2016

Government must recognise that two days of early learning is the key to improving child development

Today's release of the [Australian Early Development Census](#) (AEDC) shows that one in five children are still developmentally vulnerable as they start school—and more needs to be done to provide two days of early learning support in areas showing poor performance if we are to reduce this figure by 2018.

'Australia leads the world in measuring developmental vulnerability in our children when they start school through the Australian Early Development Census, but we're still not very good at using that information to help those children and families likely to experience developmental difficulties,' said Early Childhood Australia CEO Samantha Page today.

'With national coordination and resources we could do a much better job of targeting those areas where the AEDC shows children are not doing well and support those families to work with early childhood education services to give those children the support they need to do better.

'We are particularly concerned about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are still twice as likely as non-Indigenous children to be developmentally vulnerable. This is an appalling situation that requires urgent and effective response.'

[Research on the AEDC](#) shows that children who attend early learning are less likely to be developmentally vulnerable across all five developmental domains that are assessed by the AEDC.

'Children who attend at least two days of quality early learning perform better at school and are better prepared for life,' said Ms Page. 'Early learning amplifies children's ability to learn and improves their social, emotional and cognitive development.

'The government's Child Care Package must ensure all families are supported to access at least two days of early learning for their children,' stressed Ms Page.

'Most early childhood experts are very worried that the government's activity test in the *Jobs for Families Childcare Package* will do the opposite and act as a barrier to vulnerable children maintaining access to early learning.

'The AEDC results show that now is not the time to be cutting back on early childhood services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. Ensuring Aboriginal block-funded services are viable under the new Childcare reforms should be a priority as well as resourcing for child and family centres that show good outcomes.

'Investing in early learning, especially in areas where we know children are most vulnerable due to the AEDC results, is also an investment in improving Australia's future prosperity,' concluded Ms Page.

View 2015 AEDC results: <http://www.aedc.gov.au/resources/2015-aedc-results>

Research on impact of early learning on early childhood education and care and the transition to school:
<https://www.aedc.gov.au/resources/detail/early-childhood-education-and-care-and-the-transition-to-school>

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