



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children

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

MEDIA RELEASE

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Greens steer middle course on early childhood policy

Early Childhood Australia welcomes the Greens early childhood policy that prioritises children, but says more details are needed.

"It is positive that the Greens state that early childhood education and care is essential for the development of all children," said National President Ros Cornish.

The policy proposes child care funding reform similar to what the Coalition Government is proposing, with streamlining of the current Child Care Benefit and the Child Care Rebate into a single means tested payment made direct to centres.

"We have always supported the simplification and streamlining of child care payments, but the details are a bit thin on how this would translate for families," said Ms Cornish.

The Greens have ruled out any activity test and propose 24 hours of subsidised access to child care for all Australian children regardless of workplace participation.

"This shows the Greens have been listening to the early childhood sector, who are also concerned at how a work/study activity test on parents would impact on access to early learning for vulnerable children, who need it the most."

It's worth noting that the Greens say their proposal would cost \$370 million extra in a \$3 billion package, which shows that it is affordable to fund all children to get access 24 hours of early learning.

"We call on all the parties to ensure all Australian children have access to at least two days per week of quality early learning, and the Greens policy provides the strongest support for this goal."

More details are needed on how the Greens would support professional development for early childhood educators and how they will address funding for access to preschool and kindergarten.

"We need enduring funding arrangements beyond 2017 for universal access in the year before school, and to take steps to improve the participation of three year olds in a high quality early learning program delivered through a range of education and care settings," concluded Ms Cornish.

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