



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children

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

MEDIA RELEASE

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Lets connect more dots on welfare reform – include access to early learning

Supporting families and increasing the participation of young children in quality early learning should be part of an Australian investment approach to reducing disadvantage. This is a central focus in New Zealand and other countries working to reduce inequality over the long term.

"For families to provide a safe, nurturing home for young children they need stability in income and housing as well as access to support when they need it. There is good evidence on the efficacy of paid parental leave, home visiting, playgroups and other early years programs that support parents to provide the best start for babies and young children, it is important to measure the return on these investments rather than just the cost of support.'

"Access to quality early learning is also one of the best way out of the cycle of disadvantage for the next generation, reducing vulnerability and giving children experiencing disadvantage the opportunity to catch up to their peers before they start school – this is a central aspect of the New Zealand welfare approach," said CEO Samantha Page

"In New Zealand all 3, 4 and 5 year olds are eligible for free access to 20 hours of early learning per week: <http://bit.ly/NZ-20hrsECE>

One benefit of having PWC so closely involved in analysing the outcomes of the new approach announced by Social Services Minister Christian Porter yesterday, is that PWC has also looked at the long term benefits of investing more in quality early learning.

Their report '[Putting a value on early childhood education in Australia](#)' found that ensuring all vulnerable children attended quality early learning would add \$13.3 billion to Australia's GDP by 2050..^[1]

"It would be wonderful to see Ministers Porter and Birmingham and their departments working together to connect the dots on how we can get the maximum benefits for our future prosperity," concluded Ms Page.

Early Childhood Australia is the peak advocacy body for children under eight, their families and early childhood professionals

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^[1] *Putting a value on early childhood education and care in Australia*, Price Waterhouse Cooper, J. van Smeedijk
<http://www.pwc.com.au/publications/early-childhood-education.html>