



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children

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

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 31 January, 2017

Early Childhood sector welcomes new NSW Minister

Early Childhood Australia welcomes new Minister Sarah Mitchell and looks forward to continuing the dialogue started with the state's first Early Childhood Education Minister Leslie Williams.

The sector recognises the commitment to the early years demonstrated by former Education Minister Adrian Piccoli during his years in the Education portfolio, and then Leslie Williams in the last two years.

"The NSW government made progress under Ministers Williams and Piccoli to improve the chances of children under five in NSW being able to access quality early learning, and more still needs to be done," said NSW President of Early Childhood Australia, Carol Burgess.

"Despite extra funding to support families with four year olds to access at least 15 hours per week of pre-school, costs to families of attending pre-school in NSW are still the highest in the country and more work needs to be done to bring attendance rates up to the levels in other states."

"We urge Ministers Mitchell and Stokes to champion the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education, as their predecessors did," said Ms Burgess. "This Partnership agreement runs out in December this year and must continue to maintain Federal funding for four year old children to access pre-school."

"We thank Leslie Williams for her willingness to engage very broadly across the sector and make herself available to a wide range of groups involved in the care and education of young children. Her openness and enthusiasm for the portfolio was much appreciated."

"We look forward to working as closely with incoming Early Childhood Education Minister Sarah Mitchell, including on early childhood issues for Aboriginal children & families," said Ms Burgess.

"Supporting indigenous children and families in the first five years is a key way to 'close the gap' in education. Participating in quality early learning has enormous impact on indigenous children's engagement with school and their ability to achieve their potential in life," concluded Ms Burgess.

Early Childhood Australia is a national federation of state branches. It is the peak advocacy body for children under eight, their families and early childhood professionals.

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