



**Early Childhood Australia**  
A voice for young children

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

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Thursday 16 February 2017

### **Stop playing political games with the Child Care Subsidy Reform**

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) calls on all our Federal politicians to stop using the Child Care Subsidy Reform as a pawn in political gamesmanship.

'Child Care Subsidy Reform is too important for continuing this game of brinksmanship currently playing out in parliament and the media', said ECA CEO Samantha Page today.

'The Education Minister is today highlighting the plight of thousands of families whose childcare bills will double when their rebate cap ends, yet the Government has stalled the Child Care Package by tying it to other welfare reforms in the Omnibus Bill. These are real families who need real solutions, sooner rather than later', said Ms Page.

The Lowton family hit their rebate cap in December—they now pay \$620 a week in childcare fees. Both parents work full time and their daughter is in long day care three days per week and family day care two days per week.

'It's near impossible for both parents to have a career and work full time with the current cost of childcare—especially for families with more than one child. It's really impacting the decisions we make for our future in terms of both career and family planning', said Kim Lowton. 'Our family will be \$50 a week better off if the proposed Child Care Reform goes through and the rebate cap is increased to \$10 000.

'The Government needs to put the focus back onto making the improvements still needed in the Child Care Subsidy Package so that Australia's most vulnerable families are not excluded from accessing early learning. The "Activity Test" needs to be modified so that families, where one parent is not working or works intermittently, can access more than 12 hours a week of early learning.'

'We have heard the ALP say that they do not want to obstruct the reform and would support the Child Care Subsidy Package if their concerns can be addressed—it is time for solutions to be put on the table and constructive dialogue to occur', said Ms Page.

'The Greens, NXT and other cross benchers are also well placed to negotiate improvements on the Package and we hope that they will have an opportunity to do so when the Package is separated from welfare reforms.

'Child Care Subsidy Reform should serve two important policy objectives—supporting families to work and sustain themselves and also to provide children with stable, regular and sufficient access to early childhood education that can mitigate disadvantage and set them on the path to lifelong learning and education success', 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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