



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

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

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Tuesday 24 October, 2017

### **Early childhood advocates welcome new Shadow Minister**

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) welcomes the appointment of Amanda Rishworth as the new Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education and Development in Labor's Shadow Cabinet.

'As Australia's peak advocacy organisation for children from birth to eight, their families and professionals working in the early childhood sector, ECA looks forward to working with the new Shadow Minister to develop strong policies that prioritise delivery of quality, affordable and accessible early childhood education and care for Australian children and families,' said ECA CEO Samantha Page.

'The early childhood sector acknowledges the important progress made under Kate Ellis – when she was the Minister for Early Childhood. The introduction of the *National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care* and the *National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Preschool* were significant reforms that improved both access and quality of early childhood education.

'It is great to see the baton being passed on to another strong advocate for children and families, who also brings her own experience as a parent of a young child to the portfolio.

'ECA agrees with Ms Rishworth that 'investment in early childhood education and development is critical for the long term future of the country.'

'Participation in quality early learning sets the foundation for lifelong learning, allows children to reach their full potential and is a powerful way to transcend disadvantage,' said Ms Page.

Australian and international research shows that children who participate in quality early learning perform better in academic tests, are better adjusted socially and emotionally, and are better prepared to join the workforce.

Thanks to the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Preschool, enrolment of four and five year olds in preschool programs in the year before school has increased from just 12 per cent in 2008 to 91 per cent in 2015.

One in five children are developmentally vulnerable in one or more domains of development when they start school, according to the Australian Early Development Census, and participation in quality early learning is a key means to address this high level of vulnerability.

'A key challenge for early childhood is to find ways to increase participation in early learning, especially for vulnerable children,' concluded Ms Page. 'We look forward to working with Ms Rishworth on this and other policy challenges in the early childhood space.'

*ECA is the peak advocacy body for children under eight, their families and early childhood professionals*

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