



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

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

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Wednesday 4 July 2018

### **New Child Care Subsidy—call for two days per week access to early learning for all children**

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) warns that some children will miss out on accessing early learning as a result of the new Child Care Subsidy system, due to its complex eligibility requirements. ECA calls on the government to reinstate two days per week of access to all children, regardless of their parents' activity.

'While we expect that most families with two parents working will receive an increased fortnightly Child Care Subsidy and a higher annual cap, our main concern is how the government's new Activity Test will impact on those children with parents who don't meet the requirements, and who are then removed from stable early childhood education', said ECA CEO Samantha Page.

'ECA is concerned that more than [130 000 children](#) are at risk of losing access to early childhood education and care if their parents fail to meet the new Activity Test', said Ms Page.

When families register for the new Child Care Subsidy, they have to prove that they are BOTH working, studying or volunteering for eight or more hours per fortnight. If they can't show this, and their combined income is more than \$67 000, it is likely that they will not be eligible for any subsidised early education and care.

'We have always been concerned that the Activity Test, designed by the government, is not responsive to the diversity of circumstances that parents may find themselves in. We specifically identified parents with health and mental health issues as being vulnerable to missing out on subsidies, as well as parents in irregular or highly variable work.

**'The solution is to provide all children with two days per week of subsidised early learning before applying a parental Activity Test.** This would make the subsidy system much easier to understand and provide children with stability. Additional days could then be subject to an assessment of children's needs or parents' activity—according to policy and funding priorities', said Ms Page.

Children benefit from regular, stable access to early education that doesn't fluctuate based on parents' work activity. With the above solution, parents with irregular work or variable income could at least rely on their children being in early education for two days per week, and then make a decision about additional days, based on what they need and what they can afford.

**For interviews with CEO Samantha Page, contact:** Carolin Wenzel 0475 554 999

#### **Endnote**

- (1) Phillips, B. (2016). *Distributional Modelling of Proposed Childcare Reforms in Australia*. Canberra, ACT: ANU Centre for Social Research and Methods. Retrieved from [www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Distributional-Modelling-of-Proposed-Childcare-Reforms-in-Australia.pdf](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Distributional-Modelling-of-Proposed-Childcare-Reforms-in-Australia.pdf).

*Early Childhood Australia is the peak advocacy body for children from birth to eight years, their families and early childhood professionals.*