



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

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

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Thursday 30 August, 2018

### **Sacrificing quality not in children's interests**

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) is concerned by a new report by the Centre for Independent Studies '[Why childcare is not affordable](#)' (29/8/18) that blames regulation of childcare under the National Quality Framework for increased fees.

The National Quality Framework is essential to develop and maintain quality early learning environments for all Australian children. We know that the first five years of a child's life are crucial in terms of their development, and that high quality early learning can improve educational, social and emotional outcomes through school and into adulthood, delivering benefits for the whole of society.

'The report is based on out of date data - for many families affordability has recently improved as a result of the new Child Care Subsidy,' said ECA CEO Samantha Page.

'Many families have increased the number of days that children are attending early learning settings due to improved affordability. With children for more hours –it becomes even more important that the programs delivered are of high quality and support long term educational outcomes.

It is wrong to think that policy makers have to choose whether early childhood services are supporting workforce participation or early learning, the system serves both objectives and the two need to be balanced.

'The evidence for the National Quality Framework is very strong, as is the research linking qualifications and staff-to-child ratios to the quality of the programs delivered,' said Ms Page.

A recent [study](#) by Sheila Degatardi at Macquarie University demonstrated the importance of frequent, intentional verbal communication between educators and babies to promote language development which is critical to literacy development down the track.

For children as young as 6 weeks of age to receive high quality care, educators must have sufficient time to spend with each child, providing individually tailored and developmentally appropriate learning opportunities.

'There is strong evidence that poor quality services in the 1970's caused children to experience stress and elevated cortisol levels,' said Ms Page. 'We have come a long way since then and it is important that the improvements are not eroded by ideological objections to regulation.

'Early childhood education must be affordable for families, but cutting quality will cost families and the community more in the long run, resulting in poorer outcomes for children. Quality regulation is a small price to pay for ensuring our children's development is nurtured and supported in the vital first five years of life,' concluded Ms Page.

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