



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children

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

MEDIA RELEASE

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Two years of preschool funding would benefit children

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) welcomes today's announcement by Opposition Leader Bill Shorten that a Federal Labor government would extend preschool funding to include three year olds and commit to permanent, ongoing funding for Australian children to access two years of preschool before starting school.

"The evidence is clear that access to two years of preschool improves educational and wellbeing outcomes for young children, and enables them to do better at school and in life, so a commitment to ongoing support for three and four year olds to attend preschool programs in all states and territories would be of great benefit to children, and is an acknowledgement that the early years form an important part of a child's education," said ECA CEO Samantha Page.

Current funding by the Federal Government supports all Australian children to access preschool in just the one year before school and the annual funding of \$440 is only guaranteed to the end of 2019 with an extension being negotiated between the Federal and State and Territory governments.

Australia's participation of three year olds in high quality early education is currently below the OECD average.

"Extending support for three year olds to access quality play-based preschool education was a key recommendation of the [Lifting Our Game](#) report endorsed by all State and Territory Education Ministers, and we would welcome any move by the Federal Government to address three year old preschool," said Ms Page.

ECA welcomes the ALP focus on play-based learning for three and four year old children as an acknowledgement that young children learn best through play, and that high quality early education is delivered in a play context.

It will be important to ensure that preschool programs for three year olds are high quality, and delivered by qualified early childhood teachers irrespective of the setting.

Key elements of the ALP National Preschool and Kindy Program welcomed by ECA:

- Permanent funding commitment to support early education for all young children in the two years before school, with a clear target of boosting 3 year old participation to 90% by 2023
- Support to improve quality, including a reinstatement of a \$20million cut from the National Quality Agend
- Support for delivery of preschool / kindy programs through a range of early education settings, including community preschools, government preschools and the long day care sector

"High quality early education is an important part of a child's educational journey, and an investment during the crucial early years of development is a wise investment for the future of our young children," said Ms Page

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

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