



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children

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

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 6 October 2020

FEDERAL BUDGET: MISSED OPPORTUNITY TO INVEST IN THE EARLY YEARS

Treasurer Josh Frydenberg's 2020-21 Budget is a missed opportunity to recognise the critical role of early childhood education and care in supporting Australia's economic recovery.

While ECA welcomes the COVID-19 Response Package to support early education services struggling to manage the impacts of the pandemic, including additional support for Victorian services and an extension to the easing of the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Activity Test, this does not go far enough—it does nothing to reduce the cost burden on families or improve access for children at risk of long-term disadvantage.

'Early childhood education and care has the capacity to secure more than 200 000 jobs (of which 91% are filled by womenⁱ), support families impacted by job losses or reduced income and provide children with quality early development experiences that can set them up for long-term education outcomes and good mental health,' said ECA CEO Samantha Page.

'The consensus amongst economists and leading researchers is that increased investment in early education would aid Australia's economic recovery in multiple ways—boosting female workforce participation and improving education outcomes,' Ms Page said. 'However the Morrison government has chosen to overlook this.'

'The Budget fails to address affordability issues, address workforce shortages or help women back into paid employment.'

ECA is particularly concerned that the Budget fails to provide certainty for the *National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education and Care (Universal Preschool)*, by only extending funding for 6 months to December 2021. Numerous reports have called for a secure, long-term funding commitment to ensure certainty for children and families.

CONTINUES OVER

This Budget fails to include any of ECA's recommendations as outlined in our [pre-budget submission](#). ECA will continue to call for:

- A **10–15% increase to the Child Care Subsidy** to address affordability.
- **Suspension of the activity test** until at least 30 June 2021.
- **Additional funding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** community-controlled early learning and family support services.
- A five-year **national funding agreement for universal preschool**.
- Increased **funding for children with disability and additional needs**.
- **Professional development to help teachers/educators** support children through the pandemic.

ENDS

ECA CEO Sam Page is available for comment. For interviews, contact ECA Media Officer Katie Golding on: 0475 554 999

For a downloadable PDF version of this media release, please visit: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/media

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

ⁱ ECEC Workforce Census (2016) <https://docs.education.gov.au/node/45126>