



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children

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

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 9 November 2020

EARLY CHILDHOOD AUSTRALIA WELCOMES EXTENSION OF FEE RELIEF FOR NSW COMMUNITY PRESCHOOLS

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) welcomes the decision by the NSW Government to further extend its COVID-19 relief for approximately 700 community and 38 mobile preschools across the state until the end of 2021.

‘COVID-19 has caused financial strain for many families and disrupted life for many young children. We applaud this decision from Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning Sarah Mitchell, which will ensure young children in NSW can access high-quality early education in the critical years before school regardless of their parents capacity to pay,’ said ECA CEO Sam Page.

‘Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, too many children in NSW were at risk of poor education outcomes because they are not developmentally on track when they start school. According to the [Australian Early Childhood Development Census](#), 21% or one in five Australian children are vulnerable in one or more development domains; this increases to 41% or two in five amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. This is much too high, it is very difficult for children who start school behind their peers to catch up and feel capable as learners, Ms Page added.

‘Attending a high quality preschool with qualified teachers delivering a play based learning program, for at least two days per week over 12 months – even better if that is 24 months – can substantially reduce this disadvantageⁱ. Children that have attended preschool are significantly more likely to make a successful transition to school and go on to complete tertiary or vocational education when they finish schoolⁱⁱ.

Many NSW parents choose to access preschool programs within long day care settings, which also employ qualified teachers and adhere to National Quality Standards. ECA calls again on the federal government to address the financial pressures for these families by increasing the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) by 10-15%. This would improve affordability and help to ensure that no child misses out on preschool education.

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'The [Grattan Institute](#), [KPMG](#) and most recently [International Monetary Fund](#) (IMF), have all recognised the benefits of increasing the CCS to 95% would have for the economy and women's participation in the workforce.'

'It's time for the federal government to listen to the chorus of voices calling for greater investment in early education and care,' Ms Page said.

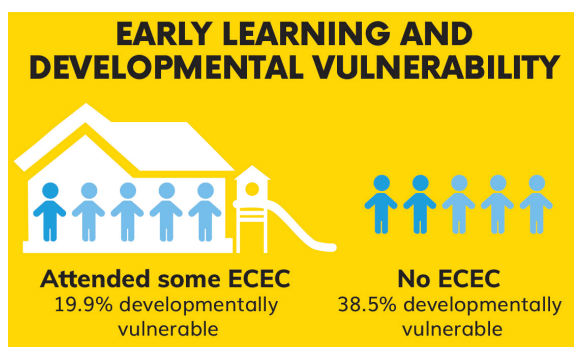
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ECA CEO Sam Page is available for comment.

For interviews, contact ECA Media Officer: Katie Golding 0475 554 999

For a downloadable PDF version of the media release, click here: 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 Mitchell Institute (2016) [Two Years are Better than One](#)

ⁱⁱ Brennan & Pascoe (2017) [Lifting Our Game: Report of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools through Early Childhood Interventions](#)