



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children

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

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 2 February, 2021

LATEST PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION DATA HIGHLIGHTS EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE ISSUES

The cost of early education and care is increasing, and Australian children are continuing to miss out on early learning. This picture emerges from the Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services, released today.

The report confirmed many issues within the early education and care sector, including increasing costs of early education across Australia with the national average up from \$508 in 2019 to \$525 per week in 2020.

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) CEO Samantha Page is particularly concerned about the proportion of children from low-socioeconomic backgrounds, remote communities and with a disability who are missing out on early learning before school.

'The children who are slipping through the cracks and not accessing early learning opportunities are the ones who would benefit the most from early learning. We need a national effort and national leadership to ensure that our most vulnerable children are accessing early learning opportunities,' Ms Page said.

'We also need to be diligent about quality in early education. The number of safety incidents is a concern as is the finding that in 2016 nearly a quarter of staff didn't have the relevant qualifications for working within early education and care. We know that qualified educators are the key to children's learning and development and can only hope this has improved in the past four years.'

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‘COVID-19 shone a light on workforce shortages within early education and care which continue to be an urgent and significant challenge. More up-to-date research and data is needed to address workforce issues.’

‘On a more positive note, ECA is pleased to see the small growth in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children across Australia attending early education and care services. We would like to see these rates continue to rise and hope the Closing the Gap commitments support improvement.’

ENDS

USEFUL LINKS:

- [Productivity Commission Report on Government Services](#)

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.