



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

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

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Thursday 15 July, 2021

### **A GOOD FIRST STEP: FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR NSW FAMILIES IN COVID LOCKDOWN**

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) welcomes today's decision by the federal government to allow early education services to waive the gap fee for families keeping children at home due to the COVID-19 lockdowns in NSW.

ECA CEO Samantha Page said the decision will ensure 'families don't have to worry about paying fees when keeping children at home, while also ensuring that educators continue to have paid employment and services can remain open for those who need them'.

While the measure is a good one, there is likely to be confusion and unnecessary pressure on services unless the fee waiver measure is backdated to 26 June to match the start of lockdown (currently it comes into effect Monday 19 July, but the lockdown commenced on 26 June),' added Ms Page.

ECA also believes the government should increase the number of allowable absences to reflect the five-week lockdown, and provide transition funding to services to protect the jobs of educators where these are at risk. This would be consistent with the approach used during the Victoria lockdown in August 2020.

'When Victoria entered lockdown, the government provided a "triple guarantee" ensuring services stayed open for families, children kept their enrolment even if they had to stay home, and increased the number of allowable absences. The same support should be provided to services and families in NSW.'

ECA has written to federal and state health ministers calling for priority access to vaccinations for early childhood educators and teachers, who have been on the frontline of the COVID-19 outbreaks and continue to turn up for work. 'The Delta strain is more contagious and poses a greater risk to adults and children. It is unreasonable to expect educators and teachers to keep working without the protection of vaccination—this should be an urgent priority,' Ms Page said.

## **ENDS**

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/](http://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.*