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## Early years workforce must be long term priority: Early Childhood Educators' Day

**1 September 2021** – Securing the long term future of the early years workforce must be a priority for the Federal Government, according to Early Childhood Australia, Goodstart Early Learning, the United Workers Union, and Thrive by Five.

Early Childhood Educators' Day is an opportunity for parents, political leaders and the whole community to join together and thank educators for the essential work they do educating and caring for Australia's youngest children.

However, as well as thanking educators, we are calling on the Federal Government to prioritise the early years workforce for COVID-19 vaccination, develop a plan for better pay and conditions and address long-standing early childhood education workforce shortages.

***The following quotes are attributable to Jay Weatherill, CEO of Thrive by Five:***

"The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated a range of pre-existing early years workforce challenges to the point of crisis.

"Early childhood educators are essential workers. Without them, children do not enjoy the benefits of a high quality early childhood education and parents are not able to work as effectively which slows the economy significantly.

"As well as thanking educators today on Early Childhood Educators' Day, we are calling for priority access to vaccines, better pay and conditions and long term solutions to address workforce challenges."

***The following quotes are attributable to Sam Page, CEO of Early Childhood Australia***

"This educator's day - take some time to thank your early educator for the incredible work they do supporting children's learning and development, not only today but every day.

"Early childhood education and care has been a backbone for children, families and communities during COVID-19. The sector deserves a more substantial investment to keep educators engaged and employed.

"There is still a lot of work to be done to further improve conditions for early childhood education and care, including developing a plan for better pay and addressing why educators are leaving the sector."

***The following quotes are attributable to Sue Robb OAM, Pedagogy and Practice General Manager Goodstart Early Learning***

*Sue Robb OAM, Goodstart Early Learning's Pedagogy and Practice General Manager, said early childhood educators were making an important and valuable contribution to children's development and education that should be recognised by all Australians.*



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“As an educator and teacher, I have worked in school and early childhood settings and I know that it is qualified educators in the early years who make the biggest difference to children’s development. High quality early learning sets children up for a lifetime of learning by giving children the skills and the passion to learn.

“And yet teachers and educators in the early years are valued less, heard less and paid less than their professional colleagues in schools. That needs to change.”

***The following quotes are attributable to Helen Gibbons, Executive Director – Early Education, United Workers Union:***

“Throughout the pandemic educators have worked tirelessly to support children, families and communities.

“Yesterday was Equal Pay Day, highlighting the gender pay gap in this country. It is no coincidence that the majority of early educators are women, and their work is undervalued and low paid.

“Turnover in the sector is unsustainable. There is no early childhood sector without educators, and they simply can’t afford to hold the sector together anymore.

“Today is not a day for empty words of appreciation but of action.

“The Federal Government must step up and finally recognise educators for the vital role they play in our society, and address the real issue that drives educators out of the sector: low pay.”

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