



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

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

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Sunday, 22 May 2022

### **ECA WELCOMES THE NEW LABOR GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO A FAIRER EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SYSTEM**

While official counting continues, Early Childhood Australia (ECA), the nation's peak advocacy organisation for children, congratulates the Anthony Albanese-led Australian Labor Party. We welcome Labor's plans to improve affordability of early childhood education and care as a positive step towards the ongoing investment needed to re-imagine a fairer and more inclusive early childhood education system.

'We look forward to working with the newly formed government to build a stronger early learning and education system that delivers more accessible, affordable, inclusive and stable early childhood services to ensure that every young child is thriving and learning,' said ECA CEO Samantha Page.

A recent report by the [Mitchell Institute](#) shows that 35.2% of the population live in 'childcare deserts', which reflects the extensive gap in access to early learning. In a recent [analysis](#) of the report ahead of the election, the institute also underlined a wide gap in children's developmental vulnerability based on their socio-economic status. Many children are missing out on the benefits of high-quality early education.

It is also important to note the immense pressure on the early learning workforce, and the ongoing challenge of staff shortages. Immediate funding is needed for professional learning in order to keep pace with the demands and complexities facing the current workforce.

'We welcome Labor's position on making gender pay equity an objective of the Fair Work Act and hope this will be expedited to minimise the loss of qualified educators and teachers. A well-supported and professionally paid workforce is key to achieving stability in the sector and delivering the best early learning and development outcomes for children,' Ms Page said.

To sum up, ECA proposes the following recommendations under the four core categories of **access, affordability, inclusion and stability**:

- **Access:** Ensure all children get the best start in life by providing every child access to at least three days per week of high-quality, play-based early learning, with at least two years of quality preschool programs. Additional funding is needed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled early learning and family support services.
- **Affordability:** Make early childhood education and care free for all low-income families for up to three days per week, tapering down to 30% for high-income families.
- **Inclusion:** Inclusion has multiple aspects, and therefore we recommend increased integration across early childhood services by employing specialist integrated staff; improved awareness of the Additional Child Care Subsidy to support inclusion of vulnerable children; investment in educators' and teachers' professional training to support inclusion of children with additional

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Patron His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

needs and trauma-informed practice; and an increase in funding for children with disabilities and additional needs to match the increased demand.

- **Stability:** Investment into the implementation of the consultative National Workforce Strategy developed by ACECQA, and immediate investment in improving pay and conditions for the sector.

## ENDS

ECA CEO Samantha Page is available for comment. For interviews, contact ECA Media Officer Reshma Jayesh on 0475 554 999 or [media@earlychildhood.org.au](mailto:media@earlychildhood.org.au).

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.