



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children

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VISION:
EVERY
YOUNG
CHILD IS
THRIVING
AND
LEARNING**

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 7 February 2023

Vulnerable children are missing out on early education

The Productivity Commission's latest Report on Government Services (RoGS) shows that vulnerable groups are more likely to miss out on early childhood education.

Children from non-English speaking backgrounds, children from low socio-economic areas, low-income families, and children with a disability continue to be under-represented in preschool education programs compared to their representation in the community.

'While we are encouraged by the federal government's commitments to universal preschool and we welcome the Child Care Subsidy increases that come into effect from July, we are very concerned so many children miss out. The children who would most benefit from high-quality early education are often those who are least likely to attend', said Ms Samantha Page, CEO, Early Childhood Australia (ECA).

'The latest report shows that the participation gaps between most equity groups of children have increased or haven't improved much. ECA is concerned about the impact that this unequal access can have on the children's long-term educational outcomes and wellbeing', added Ms Page.

The 2023 RoGS on child care, education and training shows that:

- children aged four to five years from non-English speaking backgrounds make up 23.9% in the community and only 16.8% of those are enrolled in a preschool program in the year before full-time school
- children aged four to five years from low socio-economic areas make up 17.5% of the broader community while they account for 16.8% of those enrolled in a preschool program in the year before full-time school
- children aged birth to five years from low-income families make up 25.7% of the community but account for 23.1% of children attending early childhood education and care—most concerning, the proportion of attendance has decreased since 2021 (24%)
- children with a disability are under-represented in prior-to-school programs from birth to five years—this is of particular concern in the year before school where they make up 7.6% of the community but only 6.2% of children enrolled in a preschool program
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are attending preschool programs from the age of four or five years (6.4%) but are under-represented in programs for children aged birth to five.

ENDS

ECA CEO Sam Page is available for comment. For interviews, contact ECA Media Officer Reshma Jayesh on 0475 554 999. For a downloadable PDF version of the media release, click here:

www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/media/

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

Early Childhood Australia is the peak advocacy body for children aged birth to eight years, their families, and early childhood professionals.