



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children

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

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 2 August 2023

SIGNING-OFF EARLY LEARNING MATTERS WEEK CELEBRATIONS CONCLUDE AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE WITH SPECIAL GUEST EMMA WATKINS

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) concluded national Early Learning Matters Week celebrations at Parliament House in Canberra this morning. The event showcased the theme for Early Learning Matters Week 2023—learning through connection—and officially launched the Parliamentary Friends of Early Childhood for the 47th Parliament in collaboration with its Co-Chairs — Senator Marielle Smith, Senator Andrew Bragg and Ms Alegra Spender, MP.

Parliamentarians and guests heard from the Co-Chairs of the Friendship Group, The Hon. Dr Anne Aly (Minister for Early Childhood Education) and special guest — dancer, filmmaker and children’s entertainer Emma Watkins, who shared her perspectives on engaging children in learning. They also experienced the value of play first-hand, engaging in a play-based experience alongside children from the Canberra region.

Supported by KU Children’s Services and LEGO Group, this event aims to emphasise the importance of early childhood education and care in Australia and the importance of play and connection in supporting children’s learning.

Sam Page, ECA CEO, said, “Early Learning Matters week is a fantastic opportunity to showcase the power of play and connection and the importance of professional teachers and educators in supporting children’s learning. It is heartening to see this professionalism on display through national celebrations and the level of engagement by politicians, stakeholders and the community for the event”.

Christine Legg, CEO of KU Children’s Services and supporter of the event, said: “We are delighted to be a part of Early Learning Matters week and to celebrate the critical work of early childhood professionals and to emphasise how important it is for children to have access to high-quality early childhood education and care. Early childhood education is an investment that secures Australia’s future.

ECA took the opportunity to share its support for international efforts to establish an International Day of Play through the United Nations.

“ECA are proud to support a newly proposed International Day of Play at the United Nations General Assembly later this year and ambition of marking one day each year to put play first. A UN-recognised International Day of Play will provide opportunities to prioritise making more room for play in children’s lives.”

This is closely aligned with ECA's work in developing a national Statement on Play intended to back the early childhood profession in their work supporting children's learning, development, and wellbeing through play and promoting its importance to decision-makers.

Organised by Early Childhood Australia (ECA), Early Learning Matters Week is an opportunity for advocates of all ages and areas of Australia to amplify the message that high-quality early childhood education and care supports children to be confident, enthusiastic learners and builds the foundation for wellbeing and achievement throughout their lives.

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Early Childhood Australia CEO Samantha Page is available for comment. For interviews, please get in touch with ECA Media on 0475 554 999.

For a downloadable PDF version of the media release, please 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.