



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

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

**MEDIA RELEASE**

Tuesday 25 October 2022

**THIS YEAR'S BUDGET IS A POSITIVE STEP TOWARDS A LONGER-TERM VISION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE REFORM**

Early Childhood Australia (ECA), the nation's peak advocacy organisation for children and services, welcomes the government's budget as a positive step towards a longer-term vision for early childhood education and care (ECEC).

ECA welcomes the proposed investment of \$4.7 billion from 2022–23 over four years to improve access to and affordability of ECEC for families by increasing Child Care Subsidy rates to 90% for eligible families by July 2023. ECA also welcomes the government's previously announced progressive increase of paid parental leave to 26 weeks. These investments in children and families are a significant step in the right direction towards longer-term reforms. ECA is concerned, however, that an increase in the rate of the Child Care Subsidy (CCS), without a complementary measure to increase the number of hours available to families with low incomes and less than 16 hours of work, study or training, will exacerbate existing inequity and widen attainment gaps for children in families with low incomes and insecure work.

Ms Samantha Page, CEO of ECA, said, 'The support measures for families to improve access to early childhood education and care announced today are a step in the right direction and represent movement towards longer-term reform that will be progressed through the ACCC and the Productivity Commission reviews.

'We recently welcomed the removal of the activity test for Indigenous families, but it must be removed completely so that vulnerable families' children are not left out and get better access to the early childhood education system,' added Ms Page.

The government has also allocated \$4.2 million over 18 months to support the development of a whole-of-Commonwealth Early Years Strategy, taking an integrated approach targeting the wellbeing, education and development of Australia's children in the early years.

'The investment in the Early Years Strategy clearly signals the government's vision in delivering the best possible outcomes for Australian children. ECA is excited by the prospect of developing and delivering on a strategy that elevates the importance of children's education, development and wellbeing outcomes alongside the goal of supporting workforce participation,' said Ms Page.

However, the ECEC sector needs a well-supported and thriving workforce for it to contribute to any solutions for broader workforce participation. The government's allocation of funds to fee-free TAFE and additional university places is a welcome addition to address the workforce issues currently

**National Office** 3/16 Mildura Street Fyshwick ACT 2609 **T:** 02 6242 1800 **E:** [eca@earlychildhood.org.au](mailto:eca@earlychildhood.org.au) **W:** [www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au)  
**Patron** His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

faced by the ECEC sector, which desperately needs a greater supply of qualified teachers and educators. But low wages is also a significant workforce issue for the sector. Treasurer Dr Jim Chalmers outlined the government's effort to get wages moving again, naming their Child Care Subsidy increases as a critical contributor to this, alongside training, investing in industries and fixing broken bargaining systems.

'It is promising to hear the Treasurer refer to the significant role that early childhood educators play in the lives of children,' said Ms Page, 'thereby recognising the effort of the profession as "more than care." While this form of recognition is important—and necessary—urgent effort is needed to address poor wages in the ECEC sector to enable it to deliver on the government's promise of more affordable and accessible ECEC for children and families. We invite government to work to address the wage issue in collaboration with the sector. We are optimistic that the government's commitment to get wages moving will extend to improving wages for the ECEC workforce, the majority of which is women,' added Ms Page.

In addition to the above initiatives, other notable investments include \$12.4 million over four years towards playgroups and toy libraries; \$225.2 million for prevention activities that aim to stop violence against women and children; funding addressing underlying drivers of violence, such as \$30 million to support outcomes under *Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021–2031*; and \$10.2 million over three years to establish the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership.

**Note:** A full summary of the Federal Budget 2022–23 for early childhood education and care will be published tomorrow.

## ENDS

Early Childhood Australia CEO Samantha Page is available for comment. For interviews, please contact ECA Media Officer Reshma Jayesh on 0475 554 999.

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