

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate Release

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ACA applauds Shorten's plan to fund preschool /kindergarten access for 3 and 4 year old children

The Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) commends the Labor Party on their recent announcement to extend access to 15 hours per week of subsidised kindergarten/preschool to three-year-olds for the first time, if Bill Shorten wins the next federal election.

Mr Shorten has committed to giving both **three** and **four-year-olds** access to 600 hours of preschool or kindergarten in a \$1.75bn funding commitment.

“Under the existing system, four-year-old children already have access to universal early childhood education but the existing program is funded year-by-year, with no commitment currently beyond 2019.” ACA President Paul Mondo said.

“ACA has always implored the Australian Government and all political parties to put the concept of universally accessible Early Childhood Education and Care for all children at the forefront in any policy development, respecting the parents' choice of service type.” Mr Mondo said.

“We have previously recommended extending kindergarten/preschool funding to three and four year old children, given the overwhelming evidence from studies in Australia and internationally demonstrating the significant benefits children experience from attending quality early learning services, which in turn flows on to their family and the wider community.”

These benefits include better intellectual development and higher levels of concentration, sociability and independence.

Children who enjoy quality early learning services are likely to be well socialised, confident, inquisitive about the world, accepting of diversity, resilient to manage challenges and also to be life-long learners.

“It is clear that the Labor Party has listened to our recommendations along with feedback from the broader sector about the importance of quality, play-based Early Childhood Education in giving children the best possible start in life.” Mr Mondo said.

“In the event that the Labor Party wins the next federal election, this planned policy would be a great outcome for Australian families, and in particular for those families and children from disadvantaged and vulnerable backgrounds, who will no longer slip through the cracks and miss out on this important stage of early learning.”

Australian Childcare Alliance

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“Should the Labor Party come into power at the next federal election, ACA is keen to contribute to ongoing discussions, to ensure effective implementation which results in equitable distribution to all service types, respecting parent choice. We also call on all state governments to recognise that quality early learning can be delivered in a range of service types.”

“ACA will continue to engage with the Labor Party to understand this proposal, with a view to ensuring that this proposed funding model would support the delivery of early learning services in an appropriate play-based environment that fosters experiential learning, and also recognises the significant contribution of long day care in Australia’s early education environment.” Mr Mondo concluded.

ENDS

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BACKGROUND

As the national peak body in the Australian Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector, the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) represents more than 2,500 members and approximately 360,000 families throughout Australia.

We work on behalf of long day care service owners and operators, predominantly private, to ensure families have an opportunity to access affordable, quality ECEC throughout Australia.

The ACA has existed in various forms for more than 30 years and has extensive experience in the fields of early childhood, education, training and management. Our experience means that we understand the critical role a quality ECEC program plays in the life of families and the importance of a viable long day care sector in preparing children for the best start in life and learning.

The ACA’s national and state bodies work collaboratively with all levels of government, regulatory bodies and other stakeholders to ensure that families are supported into the future with a sustainable, affordable and viable sector, with a focus on the best interests of Australia’s young children.

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