



MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 13 March 2019

ACA launches pre-election policies

The Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) is calling on all sides of politics to support the policy objective of ensuring that **every child in Australia** has access to high quality, affordable and sustainable early learning services, and therefore the **best start in life**.

Today ACA is proud to launch www.BestStartInLife.org.au – a new website that presents ACA’s policy position in the lead up to the federal election, along with a set of academic research which illustrates the benefits of giving our children two years of high quality play-based early learning.

Among the top priority policies, recommendations include:

- an immediate revision of the Child Care Subsidy parameters so that all families qualify for **18 hours per week of subsidised access** to early learning services, equivalent to meeting step 1 of the activity test; and
- an immediate extension of the existing Universal Access funding for 4 year olds, with a caveat that it is delivered equitably across all service types including the **long day care** sector in **all states and territories**.
- a new funding arrangement to allow **all 3 year olds** to participate in a kindergarten/preschool program, with **long day care** recognised as a primary partner in the delivery of this program. This policy takes advantage of the **age-appropriate, developmentally-appropriate** and culturally inclusive environments and pedagogy that are **already established** in **long day care** services, therefore reducing the need for significant capital investment by government.

“Affordable access to early learning services is a huge priority for many Australian families with young children, as well as those planning to have children.” ACA President Paul Mondo said.

“ACA believes that **all children** have the right to attend a high quality early learning program, regardless of their background or family’s life choices.”

“As it stands, the new Child Care Subsidy (CCS) which was introduced on 1 July 2018 **does not provide a minimum level of subsidised access** to early learning services **for those children whose families do not meet the activity test**, reducing their capacity to afford early learning services.”

Australian Childcare Alliance

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“The benefits of high quality Early Childhood Education and Care are now well recognised and acknowledged locally and globally across the education sector, so it doesn’t make sense to deny affordable access to this cohort of Australia’s children.”

ACA believes that with the right policy and financial frameworks in place, Australia could be a world leader in the delivery of high quality early Early Childhood Education and Care within 10 years.

“We welcome the opportunity to contribute to the policy considerations for all parties in the lead up to the next federal election, and we urge our stakeholders to do the same, in the context of ensuring that every child in Australia has access to high quality, affordable and sustainable early learning services, and therefore the best start in life.” 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, to ensure families have the 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.

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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