

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 20th June 2019

ACA applauds landmark study linking early learning with economic outcomes

The Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA), the peak body for early learning services, applauds Australia's first economic analysis of early childhood education in the year before school.

Following today's release of *A Smart Investment For A Smarter Australia*, a report which examines the costs and benefits of early childhood education, ACA President Paul Mondo has commended independent research enterprise The Front Project on their landmark study.

"Whilst the benefits of high quality, affordable early childhood education to Australia's young children are increasingly being recognised, both by government and the general community, this research indicates that these benefits extend way beyond the early years of a child's life, increasing workforce participation and boosting productivity while addressing developmental vulnerability in children." Mr Mondo said.

The landmark Australian study suggests that there is a two to one benefit in investing in early learning. That is, for every dollar invested into quality early childhood education, Australia receives \$2 back over a child's life.

"This is a higher return than many infrastructure projects," Mr Mondo said. "It validates our view that government funding dedicated to improving the affordability and quality of Australia's early learning services is a sound investment in the future of Australia and our youngest generation."

"In an early learning environment, children develop a love of learning before they commence school and are put on a path to better educational achievement and therefore higher earnings throughout their lives."

"We've been actively advocating that two years of a kindergarten/preschool program before school provides our children with a stronger start in life, with play-based experiential learning being the key to the best learning outcomes for young children."

ACA's priority policy recommendations to the Commonwealth Government 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;
- 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; and
- 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.

"We welcome the opportunity to work with the government and the Department of Education with a view to ensuring that **every child in Australia** has the **best start in life**." Mr Mondo concluded.

A Smart Investment For A Smarter Australia is available online at www.thefrontproject.org.au/images/downloads/Cost-benefit%20analysis_brochure.pdf.

Australian Childcare Alliance

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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.

*ACA's pre-election **Policy Paper: Lets Give Our Children The Best Start In Life** is available at www.BestStartInLife.org.au.*

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