

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Early learning peak body backs families to access a Transition Payment

Australia's peak body for early learning (childcare) services, the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA), has commended the Australian Government for putting a transition process in place that supports the early learning sector and ensuring families will still have up to 100 hours of subsidised care each fortnight.

"We commend the government for recognising the importance of the early learning sector over the past few very difficult months in the COVID-19 context." ACA Paul Mondo said.

From 13 July, the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) will return, along with a Transition Payment of 25 per cent of their fee revenue during the relief package reference period (17 February to 1 March) from 13 July until 27 September. The Transition Payment is intended to replace the JobKeeper, which will cease from 20 July for the early learning sector.

"This Transition Payment is designed to deliver a more equitable outcome across all early learning service providers." Mr Mondo continued.

"The ECEC Relief Package delivered a lifeline at a time of great need for our sector, at a time when our centres were on the verge of collapse through worried families withdrawing their children or out of their own sudden unemployment.

However, as the COVID crisis is reigned in and more and more children are returned to their early learning centre, the Relief Package is no longer working for services and families."

"This Transition Payment ensures the survival of service providers as we navigate through a period of economic uncertainty, while offering up to 100 hours of subsidised care each fortnight for our families, whose employment has been negatively impacted by COVID -19."

"It also means that service providers can operate at their full capacity, offering the vital placement that their families need."

"We have fought hard for our families, our educators and our members and this initiative is an important next step in the careful recovery of the ECEC sector. We support the Government's decree that employment levels are maintained and are still seeking detail on this point." Mr Mondo said.

"We will monitor the pressure of operator costs to ensure the new policy settings regarding fees being maintained at February levels do not cause undue harm to families, educators or the providers.

Mr Mondo said that as the bedrock of Australia's economy, the ECEC sector has fought to stand by the children and their families. "We would like to wholeheartedly thank Minister Tehan, the Treasurer and the Prime Minister for listening to our members and recognising the importance of ensuring that all Australian families have access to high quality early learning services throughout this difficult year.

"It is obviously very difficult to predict the attendance outcomes of the weeks ahead, let alone months ahead at this point in time with so many possible variables in this current climate. ACA will continue to assess the situation and work with the government in the best interests of families and their children at this time." Mr Mondo concluded.

ENDS

Australian Childcare Alliance

A Suites 1&2, 10! Atherton Road, Oakleigh VIC 3166 P 03 9532 2017

President Paul Mondo (VIC) 0411 587 170 president@childcarealliance.org.au

Vice President Nesha O'Neil (NSW) 0412 085 068 Nesha.oneil@childcarealliance.org.au

State Presidents

QLD/ACT	Majella Fitzsimmons	0410 526 136
NSW	Lyn Connolly	0425 225 275
VIC	Paul Mondo	0411 587 170
WA	Ann Chemello	0408 935 703
SA	Kerry Mahony	0419 819 754

Media enquiries:

ACA National

ACA President - Paul Mondo 0411 587 170

ACA Vice President - Nesha Hutchinson 0412 085 068

ACA State Presidents

ACA QLD/ACT - Majella Fitzsimmons 0410 526 136

ACA NSW - Lyn Connolly 0425 225 275

ACA VIC - Sarah Tullberg 0417 143 725

ACA WA - Ann Chemello 0408 935 703

ACA SA - Kerry Mahony 0419 819 754

Background

The Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) works on behalf of early learning (long day care) service owners and operators to ensure families have an opportunity to access affordable early childhood education and care (ECEC) throughout Australia.

Our national and state bodies work collaboratively with all levels of government, regulatory authorities and other stakeholders with an evidence-based approach, to ensure that families are supported into the future with a sustainable, affordable and viable ECEC sector.

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.

The benefits of high-quality early learning are now well recognised and acknowledged locally and globally across the education sector, as well as **among families**.

There is a wealth of academic research that demonstrates that children who enjoy quality early learning 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.

ACA believes that with the right policy and financial frameworks in place, we could ensure that **every child in Australia** has access to high quality, affordable and sustainable early learning (childcare) services, and therefore the **best start in life**.

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