



Election Manifesto 2022

Australia needs high-quality, well-resourced, affordable early learning (childcare) services. We commit our top three election priorities to all parties to adopt.

In a non-partisan manner, we will share the written commitments with our families and our communities.

Our Top 3 Election Priorities

1

Increase affordability for all families

Quality early learning is a right – not a luxury – for every Australian child.

We call on all parties to commit to this “Early Childhood Access & affordability package”.

If the following recommendations are adopted, it will ensure no child is left behind:

- Remove the activity test to allow all families access to at least 18 hours a week (2 days) of subsidised high-quality, affordable early learning services (childcare).
- Extend the multi-child Child Care Subsidy (CCS) increase¹ for all families with two or more children accessing an early learning (childcare) or Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) service regardless of the age of the older child.
- Increase the CCS hourly cap rate to ensure it delivers its intended aim of maintaining affordability for families.
- Enhance early learning opportunities for 3 year olds and build on the benefits of equity of access to high-quality preschool programs.

2

End the educator shortage crisis

Educators are in critical shortage. The Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) predicts that Australia will need around 14,200 new Early Childhood Educators and Teachers by 2023.

We call on all parties to commit to this “Early Childhood Educator Solutions Policy”.

We need to create new funding and recruitment pathways to engage more educators by:

- Implementing a national education campaign to entice jobseekers to upskill and move into the early learning sector, via an entry-level Traineeship or to enrol in an Early Childhood Teaching Degree.
- Continuing to incentivise Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services to hire more trainees.
- Creating the platform for an affordable national fast-track teaching degree to allow the upskilling of educators.
- Maximising workplace benefits for educators.

3

Improve support for children with disability

Disability must not be a barrier to quality and affordable early learning.

We want the next government to:

- Conduct a thorough sector-led, government-enabled root and branch review of the Inclusion Support programs in place.
- Remove the red tape barriers for families and ECEC services.
- Ensure that all eligible children benefit from adequate funding for inclusion in ECEC program.



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A strong and sustainable early learning sector is **critical to the economic health of this nation**, as reflected in the Treasurer's recent *2021 Intergenerational report: Australia over the next 40 years*.²

The long day care sector plays a **pivotal role** in enabling all working parents – emergency and healthcare workers amongst them – to continue in the workforce. Moreover we are essential to the economic security of women – allowing mothers to return and remain in the workforce.

Without a sustainable, affordable early learning (childcare) sector, the economy falters and women are the first to be forced out of their jobs, to stay home and care for otherwise well children.

- Quality and affordable childcare must be a **cost-of-living** priority.
- Nurturing **resilient, confident and inquisitive** children – regardless of their socioeconomic background or where they live – must be a shared national priority.
- No child should be allowed to fall through the cracks.
- Resolving our **national workforce crisis** must be an economic priority – without educators, long day childcare services must reduce their places, forcing mostly mothers out of the workplace.

We need to ensure that **all families** – including those with **only one child** in early learning and those with special needs – have ongoing, equitable and affordable access to world class early learning (childcare)

If these simple and cost-effective policies are adopted by the next Federal Government, we can ensure that **all families**, including working mothers, can fully participate in Australia's workforce.

We can ensure **all children**, including our most vulnerable, have ongoing, equitable access to our world-class early learning services.

We look forward to sharing the commitments sought by all political parties with our families in a non-partisan manner to ensure they know their children will indeed have the **best start in life**.

The Australian Childcare Alliance is Australia's peak body that represents, advocates, informs and promotes quality early learning services throughout Australia. You can read more about our role at www.childcarealliance.org.au

You can read a list of academic research providing evidence that two years of high-quality play-based early learning provides children with the best possible start in life at <https://bit.ly/ECECResearch>.

¹ https://www.dese.gov.au/child-care-subsidy/higher-child-care-subsidy-families-more-one-child-care?utm_source=ECCC%20newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter%20traffic

² 2021 Intergenerational Report: Australia over the next 40 years, Department of Treasury – https://treasury.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-06/p2021_182464.pdf