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MEDIA RELEASE

Early learning peak body supports more affordable child care measures but says workforce crisis must be urgently addressed

The Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) commends the passage, through the Senate, of the Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Cheaper Child Care) Bill 2022.

The peak body for private early learning services whose educators care for more than 850,000 Australia families has long been advocating that affordability of early learning (child care) is one of the most pressing issues facing working parents.

“We are extremely grateful that the Australian Government has listened to these concerns and the funding mechanism is now locked in to ease the financial burden on families and help support equity of access to high quality early learning (child care),” the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) President Paul Mondo said today.

“Given the immediate financial pressures facing families relying on early learning services, this is a really positive outcome that we can all be proud of,” Mr Mondo explained.

However, Mr Mondo said the changes will take effect from July 2023 amid a severe educator shortage crisis.

“We are concerned that this significant investment by the government could be negated, if we can’t meet the increase in demand for childcare due to a critical shortage of educators.”

“Without educators, families risk being forced out of their beloved early learning (childcare) service.”

“The workforce shortage, across the country, is now time critical,” Mr Mondo said.

“We are working closely with the Australian Government to develop a suite of cost-effective solutions that will offer immediate relief to the workforce crisis.”

This includes a temporary wage supplement funded by the government until a longer-term mechanism can be implemented aimed at, first, retaining the educators that are already in the early learning sector, while at the same time building a pipeline of more high-quality candidates.

Mr Mondo said the additional funding for early childhood degree places and fee-free TAFE and vocational education places, announced in October by the Minister for Education, the Hon Jason Clare MP, was a critical first step in expanding the early learning workforce and meeting the needs of the sector.

“ACA will continue to collaborate closely with the Australian Government on policies that drive accessibility and affordability for families, while at the same time providing the critical support needed to build a strong workforce of highly skilled early childhood educators and teachers,” Mr Mondo said. “We need to co-design policies that resolve the workforce crisis without forcing additional costs onto families who are already doing it tough with the rising cost of living.”

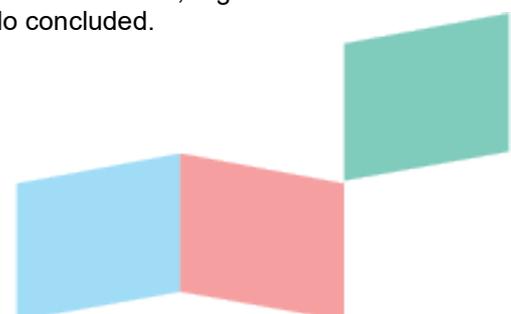
“Our shared mission is to ensure that that every child in Australia has the **best start in life**, regardless of their parents’ socioeconomic circumstances or where they live.” Mr Mondo concluded.

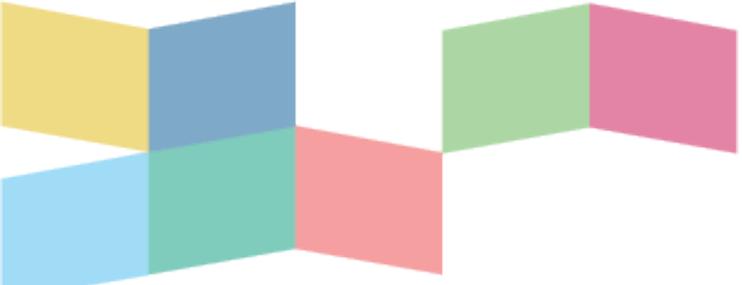
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About the Australian Childcare Alliance

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. We represent over 3,000 early learning service providers across the country.

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.

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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