

media release

4 October, 2018

Goodstart welcomes Labor's early learning policy as 'nation building'

Australia's largest, not-for-profit, early learning organisation – Goodstart Early Learning – has welcomed Labor's early childhood education announcement today as nation building.

"Ensuring all three and four-year-olds attend age-appropriate, play-based early education will launch them into learning and ensure Australia remains competitive internationally in the years to come," CEO Julia Davison said.

"This policy has the potential to change the lives of generations of Australian children, giving them the skills they need for school and life – and it has a great return on investment for the nation.

"China, New Zealand, swathes of Europe and South East Asia are already providing early education for their three-year-olds. With this policy Australia would join leading nations ensuring every child launches into learning with the skills they need.

"The current Government's reforms to the CCS have significantly helped working families with the affordability of early learning and care, today's announcement will help ensure all children get the early education they need to thrive – and that's good for all Australians.

"Currently, 1 in 5 of our children begin formal school already behind their peers, introducing age-appropriate, play-based learning for all three-year-olds will help ensure the children who need extra assistance will get it – when it counts the most.

"We know from the research that children who start school behind, stay behind.

"In their "Lifting Our Game" report, Sue Pascoe and Professor Deb Brennan found that children who participate in a high quality early childhood education program were:

- More likely to be ready for school and higher achievers while they are there
- Less likely to need special educational placements and less likely to repeat a grade in school
- More likely to complete high school and go on to further education; and
- More likely to be employed, and at a higher wage.

"As the authors note, quality early childhood education is an investment, not a cost and the benefits are greatest for the children who are most in need of extra support," Ms Davison said.

Quality early education for three and four-year-olds is vital in:

- Fostering early communication and language – skilled communication is essential for future learners
- Helping children build resilience and start taking some risks – having a go is a very important part of every child's development and future learning

- Supporting friendship making and it's also vital as children learn not just with their peers but from them
- Fostering imagination and creative thinking - a skill necessary for the future
- Helping parents understand why something as simple as reading a book to their child can to build their child's developing brain

"The early learning sector has plenty of capacity to welcome even more three year olds into our services to access this great new program, in all types of settings including long day care and preschool and kindergarten," Ms Davison said.

Media contact

An interview or photo opportunity can be arranged on request. Please contact 0429 553 103 or media@goodstart.org.au

Notes for editors

Goodstart is Australia's largest provider of early learning and care. As a not-for-profit social enterprise, we exist purely to improve the lives of Australia's children and their families. We operate 644 early learning centres in all states and territories of Australia, caring for 70,900 children from 59,500 families and employing 14,900 people. For more information, visit www.goodstart.org.au