

MEDIA RELEASE

Saturday 28th March 2020

ACA calls upon Australian Government to throw the child care (early learning) sector an urgent lifeline

Australia's peak body for child care (early learning) services applauds the Prime Minister's acknowledgement of the importance of the early learning sector and the essential role it plays in keeping the economy running.

Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA), President Paul Mondo, said the **845,000 families** relying on Australia's early learning services would agree wholeheartedly that the sector is vital in allowing them to participate in the workforce.

"Whilst many families have felt the need to withdraw their children, due to either financial reasons or health advice, Australian families want their children to be able to return to their existing childcare (early learning) services, once we get to the other side of this enormous crisis." Mr Mondo explained.

"While early learning services nurture the students of tomorrow, we are also the lynchpin of Australia's economy," Mr Mondo said. "It was a relief to finally hear the Prime Minister today acknowledge long day care and early learning services as 'fundamental' to helping Australia get to the 'other side' of this crippling pandemic."

"But right now, our families, our educators and our providers are being smashed by the economic fallout from this virus and the fear, confusion and unemployment it has brought about at a rapid speed," Mr Mondo said. "As it stands, there is no funding certainty and without that, no future for our sector."

Mr Mondo said that ACA's 2,500+ member centres are now desperately struggling to keep their doors open, as a result of the sudden decrease in enrolments.

"Our families, educators and the service providers need the Prime Minister's words to translate into rock solid support and **we need it now**."

We have mapped out a way to keep our centres open, to continue caring for children in a safe environment, particularly for children with parents on the healthcare front line and other essential workers, along with disadvantaged and vulnerable children who greatly benefit from early learning" Mr Mondo said.

"We are deeply concerned that if funding certainty is not delivered urgently to these services, the sector simply cannot continue supporting these families through this crisis. To make matters worse, many of our vital early learning (child care) centres will not survive the coming weeks in order to support the economy on the other side of this health crisis, with further withdrawals daily."

ACA has presented a suite of measures to the Government that, if adopted now, would immediately ease the financial burden of families, keep educators in jobs and protect centres from permanent closure.

We understand all of Australia is struggling at this challenging time but without quality early learning or child care, it's going to be extremely difficult for Australia to bounce back from these economic dark days." Mr Mondo said.

ENDS

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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 **Policy Paper: Lets Give Our Children The Best Start In Life** is available at www.BestStartInLife.org.au.

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