

10 April 2018
The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP
Prime Minister
via email malcolm.turnbull.mp@aph.gov.au

Dear Prime Minister,

Time for action - calling for universal early learning for every Australian child

Following a meeting on 8 February 2018, we the undersigned, call on federal, state and territory governments to accept and implement the recommendations of the *Lifting our Game*¹ report to achieve sustained educational excellence in Australian schools, by increasing participation of all children in quality early childhood education for at least 600 hours per year for two years before school.

We acknowledge the progress made in most, but not all, jurisdictions towards 600 hours of universal access to high quality early childhood education delivered by a degree qualified early childhood teacher, for children in the year before school (typically when children are four-years of age). Sustainable investment and improved performance measures are needed to ensure that participation continues to increase in those jurisdictions that have not yet reached COAG benchmarks.

At the same time the evidence is compelling that we will not reduce the achievement gap for children who have experienced disadvantage in the early years without extending early learning participation for at least two years. Extending access to quality early learning for all 3-year-old children is a key recommendation of the *Lifting Our Game* Report that we endorse. The opportunity presents itself now, with support of all jurisdictions and the sector, to place greater importance on every Australian child's early education.

Secure, long-term investment in two years of high quality early childhood education for every child is the wisest decision any government could make. Achieving this objective must be underpinned by sound investment in the early childhood workforce, and an acknowledgment of the continuing and significant contribution that educators at all qualification levels make.

A strong, prosperous society is underpinned by the accessibility, affordability and quality of our education system, beginning in the earliest years. Investing in early childhood education is a mechanism towards all children achieving their potential. It sets them up for a successful transition into school plus academic, health and social success long into the future. The benefits for children experiencing disadvantage and vulnerability are particularly amplified.

We call on all levels of government to share this vision for every Australian child with evidence-based policy and sustainable investment. We want to see Australia 'Lift our Game' internationally to bring us up to par or ahead of our international counterparts. Every Australian child deserves nothing less.

We look forward to working with politicians, policy-makers, families, community, providers and the profession to take the next steps towards achieving our shared objective of an early childhood education and care system that truly delivers for every child and their family, now and into the future.

As individual organisations, and as a collective, we will take the actions necessary to ensure every Australian child has the best possible start in life.

Yours sincerely,

For further information please contact Elizabeth Death elizabeth@elacca.org.au or 0438 553 152

¹ Lifting our Game: Report of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools through Early Childhood Interventions, December 2017.



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