



# PRESCHOOL FUNDING

**A LIFETIME OF VALUE**



## Quality early childhood education is an investment in our children's future

Quality early childhood education provides the knowledge and skills that enable children to succeed at school and throughout their lives. It develops the whole child – their social and emotional skills, their ability to communicate, get along with others and manage their behaviour and emotions.

These critical skills enable children to thrive during their transition to school and help them become lifelong learners. Preschool is an opportunity to build strong foundations for optimal early development and school readiness.

Providing ongoing, guaranteed pre-school funding is the most important step the federal government can make to give children the best start to school education.

The [OECD](#) has found that students who had attended pre-primary education perform better in school at age 15, and that a longer period of preschool has a significant impact on a child's literacy at age five. The evidence is clear, and has been confirmed time and time again by multiple Australian and international studies.

## Two years of preschool is the international standard

The benefit of two years of preschool is even higher, and is equivalent to more than an entire year of schooling. Despite this, [nearly one quarter](#) of Australian children arrive at school without the skills they need to thrive.

The vast majority of countries provide two years of preschool in line with the international standard. Australia is one of 11 countries which only provides a single year along with Algeria, Angola, Bermuda, Gibraltar, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Nigeria, the Philippines, South Africa and Sri Lanka.

The [Mitchell Institute](#) has described funding for three year old preschool in Australia as "a clear opportunity" and found that "moving to universal access to two years of preschool can be an affordable, achievable and effective way for us to achieve greater and more equitable outcomes for Australian children."

## Funding Early Childhood Education benefits us all

There is very strong evidence showing that quality preschool makes a significant, life-long difference to educational and other developmental outcomes. While all children benefit, increasing participation among those who are experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage delivers a huge benefit across multiple areas.

There are also very significant economic benefits to society to providing funded preschool to all children – every dollar invested returns between \$2 and \$4 through increased employment, better health and improved life chances.



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## COST VS BENEFIT

**FOR EVERY ONE DOLLAR INVESTED AN ESTIMATED \$2-4 IS RETURNED TO BENEFIT BOTH THE CHILD AND COMMUNITY**

**\$451  
MILLION**

✓ Improved employment and earning potential	✓ Reduced rate of incarceration
✓ Increased high school graduation	✓ Improved school readiness
✓ Reduced reliance on welfare	✓ Reduced special education use
✓ Improved commitment to schooling and reduced absences	✓ Increase tertiary education attainment

## Preschool funding is due to run out this year

Australia has the equal third lowest level of preschool investment among OECD countries and the Commonwealth Government has not committed to funding preschool permanently - the current funding will run out at the end of 2021.

A Government commissioned review found that this insecure funding of preschool “has a debilitating effect on the sector” and that “non-renewal or a reduction of the Australian Government’s preschool contributions would have significant consequences, including for access and quality” leading to declines in school outcomes, social mobility. It recommended a new five-year plan to secure funding and to transition to a permanent funding arrangement from 2026 onwards, but the Government has not responded to these recommendations.

This uncertainty is hard for parents, teachers and educators. It is very difficult to attract and retain staff and plan for the future when funding is not guaranteed.

It is resoundingly clear that Australia should be expanding early childhood education – securing ongoing funding for four year olds and introducing universal access for three year olds. That requires investment and commitment by the Federal Government.

## Early childhood education sets children up for school and for life

Experts agree that the first 1,000 days of a child’s life are the most important time for brain development and critical for building good social and emotional skills. Children who attend preschool can expect to achieve greater academic success, have better career prospects, better health outcomes and stronger family and personal relationships.

Australia needs a high quality, permanently funded preschool sector now. The Federal Government needs to step up and support young children and their families, as well as teachers and educators working in the sector by permanently funding early childhood education

We need your help to ensure that the Federal Government understands how important this issue is to communities across Australia.

For more information on how we can ensure every child in Australia gets the best start in life visit: <http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Preschool-Funding-Now> or our social media pages below.

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