



Don't cut preschool funding

Our children deserve Universal Access

Funding for preschool programs is currently delivered via a National Partnership Agreement that runs out at the end of 2017.

Since 2013 all Australian children have had access to 15 hours / week (or 600 hours / year) of a high-quality preschool program delivered by a degree qualified teacher and educators.

If this funding is not secured, children will lose up to a third of their preschool education.

We know that 15 hours of preschool education makes a significant difference to young children. It sets them up for life.

As identified by the Productivity Commission Inquiry report into Childcare and Early Learning, "*Universal access to a preschool program in the year before children start school should continue to be supported by all governments as a key measure for child development and transition to school.*"

Further, the report recommends "*The Australian Government should continue to provide per child payments to the states and territories for universal access to a preschool program of 15 hours per week for 40 weeks per year.*"

Preschool children deserve nothing less. This is important for their long-term development and to make a successful transition into school.

Parents and caregivers deserve certainty about their child's education. For many families it will result in cutting preschool access by a day. Parents will be scrambling to secure childcare in an already overburdened system. It will impact on parents' own work arrangements.

Preschool staff deserve job security. Teachers and educators should not be questioning whether their hours or jobs will be cut every twelve months.

In the lead up to the May budget, we call on the Turnbull government to make a permanent investment towards Universal Access, at least at the current funding split between Commonwealth / States / Territories.