



## media release

11 May 2017

### **Federal Budget – What’s in it for Early Childhood?**

The 2017/18 Federal Budget has quietly ushered in the Jobs for Families Package, a new funding model for child care subsidies, and a one-year extension to the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education. Despite this welcome investment in education and care, many in the early childhood sector remain deeply concerned.

*“We seem to have lost sight of the fact that while the new Jobs for Families Package will provide increased child care subsidies for many families, it cuts in half access for some of Australia’s low-income families and removes it altogether for others,”* says Dr Anne Kennedy, Chairperson of Community Child Care Association (CCC).

Currently, all children can access two full days per week (up to 24 hours) of subsidised education and care regardless of whether their family meets an activity test. The Jobs for Families Package removes this universal access to education and care, pushing Australia backwards in the early childhood policy arena.

- Families with an income over \$65,710 where one parent does not meet an activity test will no longer receive any subsidy.
- Families with an income of less than \$65,710 where one parent does not meet an activity test will have their access cut in half.

*“The early years are critical to children’s lifelong learning and development. This is not a matter for debate. We know that participation in quality early childhood education results in better outcomes for children, families, and communities. This is not a matter for debate. We know that participation in early learning settings is a positive protective factor for children and families in vulnerable circumstances. This is not a matter for debate. We even know that investment in early childhood education results in long-term economic gains for nations. This is not a matter for debate. The government does not dispute any of this but has still chosen to progress a new funding model that removes current provisions for all children to access two days of early learning.”*

CCC welcomes the announcement of the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education but believes an ongoing commitment to funding is seriously overdue.

*“Families and services need to know that the 15 hours of funded kindergarten is secure and ongoing. How can services plan their delivery model if they cannot predict from year to year what will be funded? How can families plan their work–life patterns when there are no guarantees how many*



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*hours of kindergarten will be available to them from year to year? Even this one-year extension required extensive lobbying across the sector. It is totally unreasonable that the government won't commit to an ongoing base level of early education funding."*

**For further comment:**

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**Chairperson**

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