

THE HON KATE ELLIS MP

MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT PARTICIPATION AND CHILD CARE

MEDIA RELEASE

12 April 2011

New report reaffirms the need for early childhood reforms

A new report from Early Childhood Australia (ECA) has highlighted the importance of the Australian Government's national reforms to early childhood education and care.

Minister for Employment Participation and Child Care, Kate Ellis today welcomed the State of the Sector report: *Our future on the line; keeping the early childhood education and care reforms on track.*

"The more than 800,000 Australian families who use child care deserve to know their children are well looked after," Ms Ellis said.

"Research shows that the first few years of a child's life shape their future outcomes and the Australian Government is determined to make sure that future is bright."

The Australian Government is working with State and Territory governments to introduce a National Quality Framework for child care, which will lift the standard of care across the country.

The new reforms will improve staff to child ratios, so that every child gets more individual care and attention and raise staff qualifications, to ensure staff are better able to lead activities that help children learn and develop.

The Australian Government is also introducing a quality ratings system for all child care services so that parents know the quality of care on offer and can make more informed choices.

The reforms will also see a reduction in red tape related to services, so that providers can spend less time on paperwork and more time with the kids in their care.

"The ECA's new report clearly makes the case for quality in child care and we agree with the ECA that we must not delay our roll-out of the new quality reforms for the child care sector," Ms Ellis said.

"The Australian Government is deeply committed to investing in our children's early development and delivering affordable, accessible and high quality child

care.”

“That is why we are investing \$18.2 billion in early childhood education and child care over the next four years – almost \$11 billion more than was provided in the last four years of the former Coalition Government.”

“Our investment in the nation’s children has meant that out-of-pocket costs for families earning \$75,000 have reduced from 13 per cent of their disposable income in 2004 to 7 per cent in 2010.”

All governments are working closely with the child care sector to implement the new National Quality Framework, with extensive public consultations throughout the transition period.

The ECA report is available online at:

http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/pdf/our_future_on_the_line.pdf

For more information about the National Quality Framework, visit

www.mychild.gov.au

Minister Ellis’ media contact: Elissa McKay 0417 803 403

DEEWR Media: media@deewr.gov.au **Non-media queries:** 1300 363 079