



Raising voices and influencing policy



As a large not-for-profit social enterprise, Goodstart exists purely to improve the lives of children and their families, as a result advocacy is a part of our DNA.

Increase public commitment to high quality early learning and care

Everyday across the nation thousands of Goodstart educators work with about 60,000 families demonstrating the benefits of early education and care for their children. That knowledge along with research, international evidence and sector alliances puts Goodstart in a strong position to credibly advocate for affordable, quality early learning on behalf of Australian families.

Goodstart has provided detailed analysis, reports, submissions, research, national surveys and polls to better

inform inquiries into the early learning and care sector and proposed Government legislation.

➤ *Goodstart's 'Childcare reforms calculator' was used by 21,734 parents to find out if their family would be better or worse off under the Jobs for Families legislation. The calculator found 74 per cent will be better off under the reforms.*

We believe the expertise of our educators and their experience in working closely with parents everyday ensures we are well placed to work for families to improve the quality and accessibility of early education in Australia.

In addition to the work of our educators, Goodstart Early Learning also provides parent information and resources through our website, social media and open day programs. To help raise awareness and give parents and educators a voice Goodstart supports the Smart Start campaign which now has over 26,000 supporters helping parents and the broader community raise their voice and influence Australian policy makers on early learning childhood issues. The campaign has reached over 500,000 Australians through social media, gained significant media coverage and is active in encouraging supporter submissions to the Federal Senate and emails to MPs.

(continued)

➤ **The 2017 National Smart Start Summer survey - of over 1,500 participant - found 78 per cent of non-working households would consider working more if childcare was more affordable.***

Goodstart will continue to lobby for a better funded, high quality early learning and care sector in Australia.

* For more information on the Smart Start campaign please visit thesmartstart.com.au.

Why is advocacy required?

Compared to other developed countries, Australia ranks poorly in delivering universal access to quality early learning, at 28th out of 45 countries on pre-school provision.

According to the OECD, countries should spend a minimum of 1 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) on early learning and care – in 2014-15, Australia spent just 0.5 per cent of GDP.

Access to quality early learning and care still remains unaffordable and inaccessible

for many Australian families. The Federal Government's child care assistance refunds around 60% of the cost of child care to families. However, that assistance has not kept up with the cost of care, with the cap on the Child Care Rebate being frozen from 2011 to 2017, and Child Care Benefit indexed to CPI rather than the cost of care.

Social benefits flow from children's participation and the nation's investment in early learning and care. There is growing evidence investment in the early learning sector is an effective way to reduce social equality and disadvantage for the most vulnerable Australian children.

“*If we want to become a prosperous country we have to be interested in everybody else's children not just our own.*”

Professor Frank Oberklaid,
Centre for Community Child Health³

Policy discussion all too often focuses on school and tertiary education and workplace training. Strong evidence now exists that investment in the very early years of an individual's life pays powerful dividends as we know that pre-school lays the

foundation for an individual's key skills. The early years of children's development are pivotal in preparing them to navigate the world of work:

- More than 80 per cent of brain development occurs in the first five years of life.
- Early experiences, good and bad, affect the development of brain architecture and provide the foundation for all future learning, behaviour and health.¹
- Neural connections are made at an incredible rate in these first five years to form the brain's fundamental infrastructure. These pathways for learning set the course for a lifetime.²

Children entering school without access to quality early learning can start school behind their peers and stay behind for their entire education.

References

1. Harvard University Centre on the Developing Child: <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/brain-architecture/>
2. Harvard University Centre on the Developing Child: <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/brain-architecture/>
3. Sydney Morning Herald, November 8, 2010 "Preschool key to happier futures"

Our Vision

is for Australia's children to have the best possible start in life.

Our Purpose

is to ensure children have the learning, development and wellbeing outcomes they need for school and life.



To see how we bring our plan to life, you can view our animation here: <https://vimeo.com/goodstartel/strategic>

**goodstart
early
learning**

Together there's no limit.