

# Early Childhood Education

## Ensuring the best start for our children



Experiences at a young age greatly influence a child's success at school and later in life. The Liberal-led Government recognises the importance of early childhood development and learning.

In 2013 the Liberal-led Government introduced compulsory pre-primary schooling with a guaranteed place for every five-year-old.

Child and Parent Centres – established by the Liberal-led Government in 2010 – provide vulnerable families with health, education and parenting support and ensure young children become familiar with school early.

The centres provide families with access to child health nurses as well as other professionals such as speech pathologists and physiotherapists. They can also get advice on childhood development, preparing kids for school and nutrition, as well as the chance to meet other parents.

In Western Australia around 96% of all age-eligible WA children attended kindergarten but not all of them can get into their local primary school. There are 23 schools that currently cannot accommodate all the four-year-olds in their local area, meaning the children have to attend kindy elsewhere and change schools for pre-primary, potentially disrupting the children's continuity of learning, relationships and attendance.

Before and after school care is essential to working parents. Around 157 public schools host an out of school hours care service provided by a third party provider but there are more than 650 schools with primary school-aged children.



### Fast Facts

- It was a previous Liberal Government that established universal access to pre-primary and kindergarten education for all children in Western Australia.
- The Liberal-led Government has established 21 Child and Parent Centres across the State.
- The centres are attached to Banksia Grove, Brookman, Calista, Carey Park, Challis, Dudley Park, East Maddington, East Waikiki, Fitzroy Valley, Gosnells, Halls Creek, Kununurra, Middle Swan, Mount Lockyer, Rangeway, Roebourne, Roseworth, South Hedland, Warriapendi, Westminster and Wilson Park primary schools.
- In 2016 there were around 95,000 child attendances and 71,000 adult attendances at the 21 Child and Parent Centres in WA.
- In 2010, this Government introduced a program to assess the foundation literacy and numeracy skills of all pre primary public school students to identify children requiring early intervention or extension.
- In 2016, the Liberal-led Government commenced the KindiLink pilot program for three-year-old Aboriginal children, offering six hours of play and learn sessions to help children's development, engagement and learning skills before they start kindergarten.
- The Australian Early Development Census shows the rate of children needing additional help on entry to pre-primary in WA has fallen by 15% since 2009, an indication of the success of the early childhood initiatives introduced by the Liberal-led Government.

### Our Commitment

A Liberal Government will further support early childhood education through:

- An additional five child and parent centres to continue support to vulnerable families and ensure children get the best possible start in life. The five centres – at an estimated cost of \$18 million – will be located in metropolitan and country regions of highest need. Kalgoorlie and Ellenbrook will be our initial priority.
- A guaranteed place for all four-year-olds at their local public kindergarten from 2018 in recognition of increased demand following the State and Federal Governments' agreement to increase kindergarten from 11 to 15 hours a week for all four-year-old children in WA. This will cost \$11.5 million.
- More out of school hours care by ensuring that, where demand exists and third party providers are able to deliver services, facilities are made available at public primary schools for before and after school care.



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