EduCare
MAKING LIFE EASIER
FOR FAMILIES

A Government for You

WA Labor Policy
January 2016
Why EduCare?

I believe schools play one of the most important roles in our society and that is educating our children.

And I know Western Australian families have busy lives, where many mums and dads both work.

Schools are significant community assets that can also play a significant role in assisting working parents to deal with the pressures of balancing work and family.

Sarah and I have three kids and we know what it’s like every morning trying to get them ready for school then juggling the dreaded ‘double drop off’ between the child care centre and school.

Sarah is a school teacher and sees the struggles that parents face everyday.

I understand these pressures and I want to help make life easier for families.

I am committed to working with local school communities to open up opportunities for more childcare, before and after school care and holiday care, conveniently located at our public schools.

The most important role of our schools will always be to educate our children, but why can’t we do more with what we have?

Some schools already have this type of care on site because it makes sense.

I want to ensure all of our government school communities can work in partnership with quality service providers to provide the child care that working mums and dads need.

Let me know what you think.

Mark McGowan
WA Labor Leader
A WA Labor Government will:

- Provide a site for a childcare centre in the planning for every new public primary school.
- Provide opportunities for before and after school care and school holiday care at every new public primary school.
- Work with local school communities at existing public schools to open up the opportunities for more childcare, as well as before and after school and school holiday care facilities.
- Support working parents trying to balance work and family responsibilities.

Key Issues for Consideration

1. What childcare services are currently operating at your public school?
2. How has the school community benefitted from the provision of childcare services?
3. What are the childcare needs of families in your school community?
4. What are the long day care needs at your school?
5. What are the before and after school care and school holiday care needs at your school?
6. What support could be provided to assist your public school entering into arrangements with childcare providers?

Survey

Please complete our online survey at markmcgowan.com.au/educare

Or complete the attached survey and return:

Via email to leader@loop.wa.gov.au

Postage paid to:
Mark McGowan, WA Labor Leader, Reply Paid 84126, West Perth WA 6005
Supporting parents and children during the working day

A lack of childcare can be a major stumbling block to parents pursuing or maintaining their employment opportunities. This can have a negative impact on the financial viability of households and the general economic activity of the State.

Allowing school communities the option of providing extra childcare through quality childcare providers can also lessen the pressures on everyday family life.

Many parents are all too familiar with the stress of balancing work and family. It begins with finding a childcare place for infants and toddlers, which can lead to the dreaded double drop-off between the childcare centre and school, and then getting to work on time. In the afternoon, it all starts again when school finishes hours before many of us finish work. School holidays bring extra headaches as parents wonder what to do with their kids during working hours.

WA Labor is seeking your input on how public school facilities can be utilised to help resolve these family pressures. While considering options, WA Labor is forever mindful that the most important job of our schools will always be helping our children to maximise their educational potential.

Do you face any of these working day pressures?

- finding a childcare place for infants and toddlers
- double drop-off between childcare and school
- getting to work on time
- school finishes hours before many of us finish work
- what to do with your kids during school holidays
School Facilities

Schools play one of the most important roles in society: educating our children.

They are also one of the most important public resources in our community, with almost 300,000 children enrolled in Western Australian public schools and kindergartens last year and projected to reach more than 334,000 by 2020.2

Western Australia’s population growth is tipped to keep growing faster than the national average in coming years,3 putting greater pressure on our infrastructure at a time when our economy is slowing.

Allowing school communities the option of providing extra childcare through quality providers can also lessen the pressures on everyday family life.

Each year, millions of taxpayers’ dollars are invested in building and maintaining school infrastructure, including buildings, ovals, playgrounds and covered assembly areas. In 2014-15, the Department of Education spent almost $466 million on its asset investment program.4

Yet many of these significant community assets are only utilised during school hours and for about 42 weeks of the year.

It’s a good time to expand the use of our public schools to help make life easier for families.

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1 WA Department of Education 2013-14 annual report, p. 11.
2 WA Legislative Council Hansard, 19 March 2015, p. 1825a.
4 2015-16 WA Budget, Budget Paper 2, Vol I, p265
Growing need for quality childcare

- A productivity commission report into childcare estimates that there are up to 165,000 parents (on an FTE basis) who would like to work, or work more hours, but are not able to do so because they are experiencing difficulties with the cost of, or access to, suitable childcare.

- Around 38 per cent of Australian couple families have one parent working full time and one parent part time, compared with an OECD average of 24 per cent. Around 21 per cent of Australian couple families have both parents working full time.

- The workforce participation rate of mothers with a child under 15 years has grown from 57 per cent to 67 per cent over the past two decades.

- In Australia, 86 per cent of mothers returning to work use flexible work arrangements in order to care for their child, including working part time (65 per cent), flexible hours (35 per cent), and working from home (26 per cent).

- The rate of child care use in Australia increased by 77 per cent between 1996 and 2011 and the proportion of children in formal care rose from 13.4 per cent to 23.7 per cent.

- In Australia, 37.6 per cent of three year olds were in formal child care or pre-school in 2010, compared with countries like France (100 per cent), Belgium (99 per cent), Denmark (97 per cent), Germany (88 per cent), the UK (83 per cent) and the OECD average of 63 per cent.

- Around 1.57 million Australian children attend childcare centres.

- Full-time work became more common as children grew older, with mothers slightly more likely to be in full-time than part-time work when their youngest child was 12–17 years.

- For mothers with a youngest child aged 6 years and over, increases in full-time work were greater for single mothers than couple mothers.

- The percentage of families in which both the mother and father were working full-time increased with the age of the youngest child, from around one-tenth of families with children aged 0–2 years, to around one-third of families with children aged 12–17 years.

- The percentage of families with one parent employed full-time and the other part-time also increased with the age of the youngest child.

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Baxter, Jennifer, Australian Government, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Parents working out work, 2013
School Name:  
Contact Name:  
Email:  
Mobile:  

1. What childcare services are currently operating at your public school? 

☐ Childcare  
☐ After school care  
☐ Before school care  
☐ School holiday care  
☐ None  

Name of childcare providers:  
Comments:  

2. How has the school community benefitted from the provision of childcare services?  


3. What are the childcare needs of families in your school community?  

Has a childcare needs assessment been undertaken at your school?  
☐ Yes  
☐ No  

What gaps did the childcare needs assessment identify?  
☐ Long day care  
☐ Before school care  
☐ After school care  
☐ School holiday care  

Comments:  


4. What are the long day care needs at your school?

What is the demand for a childcare facility at your school?

☐ Low  ☐ Medium  ☐ High  ☐ Very High

Does your school have available facilities that could be used?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No

Is there land available that a childcare provider could utilise to build a childcare facility?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Details:

5. What are the before and after school care and school holiday needs at your school?

What is the demand for before and after school care at your school?

☐ Low  ☐ Medium  ☐ High  ☐ Very High

What is the demand for school holiday care at your school?

☐ Low  ☐ Medium  ☐ High  ☐ Very High

Does your school have available facilities that could be used?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No

Are there any suitable municipal facilities close by that could be used?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No

Details:

6. What support could be provided to assist your school entering into arrangements with childcare providers?

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