



To Hon. Jim Chalmers,

19th May 2023

Early Years Intercultural Association is a registered Australian charity supporting children under six years and their families living in Australia from refugee, asylum-seeking, or immigrant backgrounds. The charity is NSW based and consists of a team of voluntary Allied Health and Early Childhood Education specialists.

Refugee Council of Australia, on 31st August 2021, reported 4 452 children under eighteen had applied for temporary or permanent protection visas [1]. Restricted residency can cause barriers for immigrant families to access government funding such as childcare subsidies. Families look to alternate care, informal childcare, or charity supported programs such as our Community Integration Program. I witness family distress and therefore seek your support for all children living in Australia to access subsidised Early Childhood Education and Care. The Australian Government must address this now as vulnerable families are at risk due to the rising cost of living in NSW. Full rate of daily fees is not feasible for these families and small charities do not have the financial means to subsidise the cost of fees.

The Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP, Minister for Social Services, hoped the Early Years Strategy would include all Australian children to access subsidised Early Childhood Education and Care [2]. Early Years Intercultural Association believes this narrative must consist for all children living in Australia. I encourage the Australian Government to provide subsidies as in Europe where all children residing in European Union countries receive subsidised Early Childhood Education and Care regardless of their residential status. Similarly, the United Kingdom offers all children aged three years until school entry 570 hours of free preschool annually [3]. Nordic countries offer the most generous Government funded schemes for children with highly qualified Early Childhood Teachers and Educators. In 2020, Australia reported below OECD average government spending on Early Childhood Education and Care, thus risking learning outcomes for young children and the continuity of the Early Childhood Education workforce [4].

The Australian Government must move forward with a commitment to an urgent reform which is progressive as in the Nordic, European, and United Kingdom countries. Make certain critical principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in the best interests of all children living in Australia through equal eligibility to subsidised Early Childhood Education and Care.

Yours sincerely,

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Board Director



Sources:

[1] *Asylum Statistics in Australia*. Refugee Council of Australia

<https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/asylum-community/>

Last accessed 19<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

[2] The National Early Years Summit Summary (n.d.).

[https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/03\\_2023/national-early-years-summit-summary.pdf](https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/03_2023/national-early-years-summit-summary.pdf)

Last accessed 19<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

[3] Service, G.D. (June 15, 2015). *Find free early childhood and Childcare*. GOV.UK.

<https://www.gov.uk/find-free-early-education#:~:text=All%20%20and%204%2Dyear,Scotland%2C%20Wales%20and%20Northern%20Ireland.>

Last accessed 19<sup>th</sup> May 2023

[4] Pf3.1: Public spending on childcare and early education- OECD. (n.d.).

[https://www.oecd.org/els/soc/PF3\\_1\\_Public\\_spending\\_on\\_childcare\\_and\\_early\\_education.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/els/soc/PF3_1_Public_spending_on_childcare_and_early_education.pdf)

Last accessed 19<sup>th</sup> May 2023