

Most (not all) working women who have school age children arrange their work life so that they work during school hours. If they work full time they can afford to have their children cared for, if the children are young and need such looking after. Mothers with children not yet at school find their finances quite drained by Pre-school fees.

The great benefits of pre-schooling to the educational and social development of students have been demonstrated by a number of studies. These benefits have been recognised by the previous Federal Government in its decision to fund Pre-school for aboriginal children.

Early childhood education should be provided for all Australian students — from high, middle and lower socio-economic environments. Students who really need preschool education the most are often deprived of this important support because their parents cannot afford to pay the high fees.

Many other countries around the world have schooling years beginning at age 4 with scheduled school for 3 days per week for the first year. These countries are the same ones that have the best long term educational outcomes.

Both existing pre-school and/or primary school facilities/properties and the current pool of unemployed teachers should be utilized to assist in giving all Australian children the opportunity of a great start in life by being able to go to school free of fees from age 4 (albeit limiting the days per week to 3 — as is now general practice at pre-school — to allow for their younger age capabilities).