



MEDIA RELEASE

Budget a vital opportunity to help disadvantaged children access early education

The Front Project is calling on the Australian Government to use the upcoming Budget to make sure no child misses out on the benefits of early education and care (ECEC) by addressing the barriers to access currently faced by children living in disadvantaged circumstances.

CEO Jane Hunt says unstable home situations, limited transport options, time poverty, disability, and lack of literacy skills, are among the structural barriers to accessing ECEC Australian families experiencing disadvantage typically face.

‘The further away you live from the city, the more likely you will start school behind, with nearly half of all children in very remote Australia facing barriers to their early learning,’ she said.

‘In addition, the existing activities test tied to accessing the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is a significant barrier because disadvantaged children are more likely to live in families with a higher level of maternal unemployment and are therefore eligible for fewer subsidised childcare hours.

‘Factors such as casual employment, family violence, or mental health conditions may also force parents to drop out of the workforce altogether.

‘We are calling for additional targeted funding to better support ECEC services and disadvantaged communities to address these local barriers to access.

‘This will provide funding certainty for service providers to initiate programs to support greater access to quality ECEC for local children and families.’

Ms Hunt said that by leveraging off existing supports to ECEC services like the Inclusion Support Program (ISP) and Community Child Care Fund (CCCF), government can easily help equip service providers to support families to tackle these complex barriers to ECEC, especially in regional, rural and remote communities.

‘With inequality exacerbated due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Lee, 2021), the Australian Government must ensure children currently slipping through the cracks of our ECEC system have the support they need to access high-quality ECEC services.

‘Removing barriers to ECEC for those most in need will help both break the cycle of disadvantage and increase workforce participation.

‘More broadly, we need to invest in the ECEC workforce to build quality in every community.

‘And finally, we need the policy and funding settings to ensure that every Australian child gets two years of preschool education - and more for those who need it the most.



22/03/2022

‘While some important steps forward have been taken in ECEC policy over the last 12 months, this Federal Budget can ensure Australia’s ECEC system is robust, equitable and affordable for all families, no matter where they live,’ Jane Hunt said.

Read the full [Budget Submission](#).

The Front Project (TFP) is an independent, national enterprise working to improve quality and create positive change in Australia’s early childhood education and care (ECEC) system.

The Front Project works with government, business and the early education sector to address disadvantage, improve outcomes for children, and increase the short and long-term gains for Australia.

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