

The Greens (WA) 2017 policy

Children

The Greens (WA) believe that:

- all children have the right to realise their full potential as human beings through the best possible family, schooling, community and physical/natural environments
- all children have the right to be raised in a safe, loving and nurturing environment free of physical, emotional and sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination
- a loving home is the most important element in ensuring a child's well-being and diverse family arrangements in which children can grow and thrive should be valued
- raising children is a shared responsibility of the community as a whole
- the most effective support for families offers mentoring and information from infancy in order to reduce the need for intervention and crisis management at a later date
- support strategies are needed at all levels and in all environments where children are cared for and educated
- State legislation should adhere to the UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child

Aims

The Greens (WA) want:

- collaboration in service delivery between all government departments in the interests of child protection, health, education, care for and the well-being of children
- the establishment of an Office for Early Childhood
- equal access to parenting support services for all people performing child-rearing roles, including foster carers and Grandcarers
- timely and appropriate support and interventions in which mentoring support is the first approach, for all families who need it
- affordable, quality, publicly-funded child care for low and middle income families
- the prevention and elimination of physical, emotional and sexual abuse of children
- early and accurate diagnosis of the causes of learning difficulties, e.g. hearing, sight and sensory processing problems (see also The Greens (WA) [Education](#) policy)
- the special developmental and learning needs of all children to be met quickly and appropriately with the option of additional support in the home, childcare centre or classroom, whether or not there is a medical diagnosis of those needs
- community participation and consultation, particularly by and with Aboriginal children and their families, so that children can maximise their potential regardless of economic, ethnic or social background, ability or where they live (see also The Greens (WA) [Aboriginal & Torres Strait Island Peoples](#) policy)

- planning decisions that make urban environments inviting and safer for protection against exposure to harmful chemicals for children (see also The Greens (WA) [Sustainable Settlements](#) policy)

Measures

The Greens (WA) will encourage and support legislation and actions that:

- support individuals engaged in child-rearing
- adequately resource agencies to develop and implement programs which assist carers to develop positive and healthy childrearing skills and which support the emotional, social and intellectual development of children. Particular emphasis should be placed on the early years to prevent later and more costly interventions
- establish specialist trauma and attachment services to avoid the lifelong problems that can arise from trauma and grief experienced in childhood
- promote community-based delivery of services (see also The Greens (WA) [Public Participation](#) policy)
- commit to program delivery to communities experiencing poverty, social exclusion, abuse and/or parental stress
- ensure that all social workers, teachers, child-care workers and other professionals responsible for the care, education, development and protection of children receive ongoing, professional support and training based on best practice and research (see also The Greens (WA) [Education](#) policy)
- ensure frequent accreditation checks of childcare centres to ensure standards of staffing, adequate levels of trained staff and suitable facilities
- resource rural and remote communities to provide childcare appropriate for their needs
- resource and staff childcare centres and schools to accommodate children's learning needs as identified by professionals and other carers

Adopt a holistic approach to child health:

- ensure all schools have prompt access to school nurses, psychologists, counsellors, social workers and other specialist support staff
- support school kitchen gardens and breakfast programs (see also The Greens (WA) [Food](#) policy)
- fund preventative programs to reduce childhood accidents
- support ongoing research into childhood health and development
- implement Social Emotional Learning (SEL)¹ programs (see also The Greens (WA) [Mental Health](#) policy)

Prevention of child abuse:

- educate the broader community about the effects on children's lives and well-being of domestic violence, of physical, psychological, emotional and sexual abuse, of neglect and of drugs and alcohol
- increase investment in programs that focus on community awareness, prevention and reporting of abuse against children and young people
- fund high-quality services for child survivors of abuse and neglect

- in all decisions and interventions, ensure the safety and well-being of the abused child is paramount
- provide access to protective behaviour programs in schools
- develop and implement programs to reduce bullying
- provide school based parenting programs for teenagers, based on child development theory and research

(See also the [Australian Greens Children and Young People](#) policy)

Glossary

1. **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)** programs help students to develop the understanding, strategies and skills that support a positive sense of self, promote respectful relationships and build students' capacity to recognise and manage their own *emotions* and make responsible decisions

Children policy ratified by The Greens (WA) in 2017