



## Childcare

Policy Category: D. Care for People

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### Principles

*The Australian Greens believe that:*

1. all Australian families are entitled to access high quality, affordable childcare when they need it.
2. positive, interactive learning and socialisation opportunities offered by childcare can benefit children and the community by assisting a smooth transition to formal education.
3. all carers of children should have the opportunity to re-enter or maintain their engagement in the workforce.
4. childcare should be a not-for-profit service.
5. people working in the childcare sector should be fairly remunerated for the work they do.
6. families should have diversity in their choice of childcare alternatives within easy access, including via public transport, to the home and workplace.

### Goals

*The Australian Greens want:*

7. an end to escalating childcare costs exacerbated by increasing profits derived from government subsidies paid to private sector providers.
8. more publicly funded community-based and not-for-profit child care facilities, especially in areas of high unmet demand or growth and areas of high socio-economic need such as outer suburban and rural areas.
9. better directed funding to community-based and not-for-profit childcare centres.
10. an immediate increase in the pay rate for childcare workers, and the phasing in of much larger increases to reflect the skill level required in, and the importance of, childcare work.
11. improved nationally consistent standards of childcare based on the best available evidence from early childhood research.
12. increased access to publicly funded childcare for parents on low to middle incomes who are working or undertaking training or education.

### Measures

*The Australian Greens will:*

13. Improve the affordability of childcare for low and middle income families by:
  - reforming the Child Care Benefit (CCB) and the Family Tax Benefit (FTB) to more accurately address the ability to pay, including substantially increasing the amount paid to low and middle income families;
  - replacing the Child Care Tax rebate with a Child Care Benefit Guarantee;
  - increasing the CCB benefit to more accurately reflect costs;
  - increasing benefits in relation to under-2-year-olds to reflect the real cost of caring for them;
  - increasing funding for children with special needs;

- increasing the funding available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from other culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and
  - moving towards long term reform, including direct funding of child care facilities to replace the CCB.
14. expand the Job Education and Training childcare scheme to assist parents who are studying.
  15. provide incentives to workplaces which offer not-for-profit childcare in-house, and flexible childcare, including 'childcare credits', where workplaces assist parents to place children in childcare close to home.
  16. provide incentives for childcare centres to offer extended care to more reasonably reflect the flexible working hours of modern parents.
  17. develop with industry an hourly unit-cost of providing good quality child care services, reflecting appropriate staff ratios, decent pay for accredited staff, and the cost of providing infrastructure.
  18. establish a schedule of government-recommended fees for services.
  19. explore funding and regulatory mechanisms to increase the proportion of community based and not-for-profit child care centres.
  20. increase direct funding to not-for-profit and community-based childcare services particularly in areas of unmet demand.
  21. pursue additional funding to community-based and not-for-profit childcare centres to pay for increases in childcare worker pay.
  22. restore operational subsidies and capital funding to community-based and not-for-profit services.
  23. establish a national planning system for childcare services, including a national demand model for childcare service planning.
  24. establish nationally consistent childcare standards including carer-to-child ratios of at least 1:3 for children up to 2 years old and 1:4 for children older than 2 years old.
  25. establish nationally consistent accreditation standards articulating the quality of the programs and activities needed to promote appropriate levels of child care and child development.
  26. improve professional development opportunities and professional standards for childcare workers.
  27. increase unannounced spot checks by the appropriate Australian Government agency as part of the national accreditation system to strengthen the current validation and accreditation process.
  28. ensure penalties for non-compliance are predictable and consistent.
  29. establish comprehensive and transparent reporting requirements.

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