

FREE, UNIVERSAL EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

EXPANDING FREE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

Every child is entitled to high quality early childhood education and care.

To turn that vision into a reality, the ACT Greens will invest an additional \$88 million into early childhood education and care over 4 years. This will provide universal, free education for all three and four year-olds for up to 18 hours a week.

We will set a ten-year target to provide 30 hours per week of free early childhood education and care by 2034.

We will boost support for early childhood educators, increasing funding for the workforce and creating a new scholarship to allow teachers to build their skills.

THE ACT GREENS WILL:

- ▲ Provide 18 hours a week of free, universal education for three and four year-olds
- ▲ Scale up to 30 hours a week of free education for three and four year olds by 2034
- ▲ Provide scholarships to upskill more educators
- ▲ Boost support for educators to build skills and complete masters degrees

FREE EDUCATION FROM THE START

EXPANDING FREE EDUCATION

The ACT Government currently provides around six hours a week of free early education for three year olds. That's not enough education to help children develop and thrive, and it's stopping parents from working more hours.

The ACT Greens will boost free early education for three and four year olds to 18 hours per week by 2028. This allows more flexibility for families, and it will mean that kids get more time to learn in their crucial early years.

By 2034, we will boost free education to 30 hours per week. This boost will give many more children the benefits of education when they need it most. It will also support more families to work.

SUPPORTING MORE EDUCATORS

We know that in order to improve Canberra families' access to universal, free early childhood education, we need to work closely with the early childhood education and care sector, and most importantly, their workforce. Early childhood educators and staff are at the beating heart of our early childhood education and care sector. There is clearly more work to be done to ensure early childhood education and care is valued and supported as a career.

The ACT Greens will fund new scholarships to allow educators outside

of the for-profit sector to complete masters degrees. We will also increase support to organisations that provide workforce support to the sector. We will work closely with the early childhood education and care workforce as we roll this policy out, and will invest the funding as needed by the sector.

WHAT'S THE INVESTMENT?

\$88 million over four years - including \$83m for the expansion of free universal education and care, and \$5m into workforce support and upskilling.

A RECORD INVESTMENT

Our plan will make a record investment in early childhood education - and it is an investment that will pay off in the long-term. The ACT Education Directorate has said that every dollar spent on early childhood education saves \$7 over the longer term, and research from the Front Project and the Australia Institute show that early investment in children pays off.

Children who get the benefits of a quality education early in life need less support later on, and are more likely to earn more as adults. The parents of these children will benefit immediately, being able to return to work more easily and take on more hours.

The ACT Greens believe that investing in our children is too important to wait for the Federal Government to stop dragging its feet. But we will fight to ensure they pay their fair share.