



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children

**OUR
VISION:
EVERY
YOUNG
CHILD IS
THRIVING
AND
LEARNING**

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 31 October 2019

Productivity Commission highlights urgent need for early mental health support

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) has today welcomed the call for better funding to support early childhood educators to have evidence-based training in social and emotional development and identifying young children at risk.

The call by the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health is among many recommendations for early childhood in the Draft Report released today. ECA CEO Samantha Page said the integration of social and emotional wellbeing checks of children aged up to three years was worthwhile, but more support for early childhood professionals to have capacity to undertake training was crucial.

‘Integrating mental health related support across the early childhood curriculum, programming and practice is effective in ensuring young children have adequate access to mental health support. However, it is essential there is adequate time for early childhood educators to participate in quality, evidence-based professional development,’ Ms Page said.

ECA is pleased the inquiry accepted its recommendation and has proposed for better funding for backfilling to be made available to enable educators to attend professional development opportunities.

‘We know developmental vulnerability and disruptions in developmental processes can negatively influence a child’s capacity for learning and relating to others, which has lifelong implications,’ Ms Page said.

‘Early childhood services can provide crucial support. Unfortunately, when children do not have access to affordable, high-quality early learning, they may miss out on both educational opportunities and the protective factors that can decrease the impact of mental ill-health.’

Building off the great work of KidsMatter Early Childhood, the Be You initiative, which provides educators with the knowledge to support children’s mental health, has been successful in implementing mental health support and programs across Australia. However, it requires further investment from the Federal Government to increase its impact.

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Early Childhood Australia is the peak advocacy body for children from birth to eight years, their families and early childhood professionals.