

The Parenthood's Submission to the NDIS Review

“Children are the future of Australia so ensuring they are nurtured to reach their full potential is in the nation’s best interests. For children to thrive, parents and families need support.” *Wendy McCarthy AO, Chair of The Parenthood*

About The Parenthood

The Parenthood (TPH) is an advocacy organisation that represents more than 80,000 parents, carers and supporters nationally. Our mission is to make Australia the best place in the world to be a parent because when parents are supported, children can thrive.

Becoming a world leader in ensuring that all parents and children are supported to realise their full potential is a bold ambition that is not beyond Australia’s capability. Indeed seizing this opportunity and investing in best-practice evidence-based policies to optimally support children and their families yield profound health, social and economic benefits. Making Australia the best place in the world to be a parent and raise a child will lead to a healthier, more equitable and more sustainable future for all Australians.

Acknowledgement of Country

TPH acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to both their land and seas. We also pay our respects to Elders – past, present and emerging – and generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples now and into the future.

How universal access to early childhood education and care can alleviate strain on the NDIS

Universal access to high-quality early childhood education and care plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of our society. Early childhood is a critical period of rapid development, and providing comprehensive educational opportunities during this time can have profound effects on a child's cognitive, emotional, and social capacities.

The first five years of a child's life are undeniably crucial, as approximately 90% of their brain development occurs during this period. It is a phase of remarkable growth and rapid cognitive expansion, laying the foundation for all future learning and development. During these early years, a child's brain forms countless neural connections in response to their experiences and interactions with the world.

Beyond individual benefits, we believe that investing in early childhood education and care holds the potential to alleviate strain on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) by fostering early intervention and support for children with developmental challenges.

By embracing inclusivity, empowering families, and promoting strong community connections, universal access to early childhood education sets the foundation for a more compassionate and supportive society where all children can thrive.

The power of early intervention

One of the key advantages of early childhood education and care is the focus on early intervention. By identifying developmental challenges at an early stage, educators and caregivers can provide targeted support and resources to address these concerns promptly. Early intervention has been shown to be highly effective in improving outcomes for children with developmental delays or disabilities. It can reduce the severity of certain conditions, enhance developmental progress, and equip children with valuable skills that promote their independence and functioning.

In short: For children with disabilities or developmental needs, having access to comprehensive and inclusive educational opportunities from an early age can be transformative.

Empowering families, communities, and societies

The impact of early childhood education and care extends beyond the individual child. When children receive quality education and support during their early years, it positively influences their families and communities. Parents and caregivers can be actively involved in their child's learning journey, gaining knowledge and skills to support their child's development at home. This empowerment can lead to a more cohesive family unit, where parents feel confident and capable in meeting their child's needs.

Moreover, by investing in early childhood education and care, we can create a more inclusive and compassionate society. Early childhood centers and educational programs serve as hubs for building strong connections within communities. They offer spaces where families from diverse backgrounds come together, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual support. Through these connections, parents can share experiences, offer insights, and learn from one another, creating a network of support that extends well beyond the early childhood setting.

Promoting empathy and acceptance

Additionally, early childhood education and care centers can play a vital role in fostering inclusive practices. They embrace diversity and cater to the unique needs of each child, creating an environment where all children can thrive. Children with disabilities or developmental challenges have the opportunity to interact with their peers, fostering empathy, understanding, and acceptance from a young age. As a result, children with disabilities are more likely to develop social skills and form friendships, which can have a profound positive impact on their emotional well-being and overall development.

Long-term benefits for the NDIS

The long-term benefits of universal access to high-quality early childhood education and care are far-reaching. By providing children with the necessary support and resources during their early years, we can potentially decrease the number of individuals who may later require NDIS services. This preventive approach can lead to better long-term outcomes, reducing the burden on the NDIS and freeing up resources to support those with more complex needs.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we believe that universal access to high-quality early childhood education and care is a strategic investment in the future of our society. By focusing on early intervention and support, we can empower children to reach their full potential and reduce their reliance on support services later in life. Moreover, fostering inclusive environments and building strong community connections enriches the lives of all children and their families, promoting a more cohesive, compassionate, and supportive society as a whole. As we prioritise early childhood education and care, we take a significant step towards building a brighter, more inclusive future for everyone.

Kind regards,

Jessica Rudd

Chief Executive Officer

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