



BETTER EARLY EDUCATION

For a great start in life

The ACT Greens understand that quality early childhood education is essential to give our children a great start in life.

Quality early childhood education is essential in giving our children a great start in life. Not only does it importantly allow parents to re-enter the workforce, but it also ensures children are developmentally ready for school and it provides opportunities to socialise with children of their own age.

A recent review showed that for people in the lowest income bands, child care is simply not affordable even with the highest level of commonwealth rebate. We also know from a survey of all Australian children in their first year of full-time school found that the ACT is falling behind in key areas of development, in particular language and physical coordination, as compared to the rest of the nation. We know that for many young children, these skills are developed through engagement with playgroups, Early Childhood Education and Care (formerly childcare) and preschool.

> Investing in early education

The ACT Greens value early education. That is why we will:

» **Trial an enhanced prior-to-school transitional program** designed to support children and parents prior to school enrolment.

This community-based, parent-led playgroup in school program would be initially trialled in five sites across Canberra. Initial trial site selection could be based on interest from schools as well as targeting areas of social disadvantage and identified AEDC vulnerability criteria.

» **Develop a strategic plan for Early Childhood Education and Care Services** to better plan for skills shortages, capacity issues, and the level of support required to ensure we have the highest quality child care for all ACT Children.

» **Undertake an investigation** into improving access to childcare by working with the ECEC sector in what can be done to increase access to childcare for low income families.

