

## PARENTS SUPPORT EDUCATORS IN THEIR 'BIG WALK OFF'

Many parents across Australia will be finishing work early tomorrow, Tuesday the 27<sup>th</sup> of March, as more than six and a half thousand educators at childcare centres stage a walk-off – and they don't mind a bit.

"Parents know what a tough job early childhood educators do and value the role they play in educating and caring for their children," said The Parenthood's Principal Campaign Manager Nicole Lessio.

That is why parents will stand in support of the educators who support them and their children.

"Parents recognise the enormous and under-valued contribution that their children's early childhood educators make and have responded to the walk-off with support, enthusiasm and solidarity," said Ms Lessio.

"We know that early years education is crucial to our children's development and school-readiness, but the wages these qualified educators receive in no way reflects the importance of their role," said Ms Lessio.

As with too many female-dominated fields, early childhood educators' work isn't highly paid.

"If pay is an indicator of what we value, it would seem we place caring and educating – traditionally more female-dominated sectors – near the bottom of the pack," said Ms Lessio.

"That's why we're supporting educators from across the country in their national campaign for better wages - Big Steps. We're joining in their call urging the Federal Government to properly invest in early learning and care so it's affordable for families, accessible for all kids, AND where educators are paid properly," Ms Lessio said.

"Educators know how much their families and their children depend on them - that's why they gave us plenty of notice and have asked for us to support them by making alternative care arrangements tomorrow, so they can have one day to focus all their energy on their campaign," Ms Lessio said.

"Walk-offs might be a little challenging for parents, but we want educators to know that we support them in their fight for equal pay, so are more than willing to be inconvenienced for an afternoon. There often isn't a more powerful way to show politicians and decision makers just how valuable you are than to stop doing the work hundreds of thousands of families depend on," said Ms Lessio.

"Our nation's economy turns on the love and labour of these wonderful educators, and our children's education starts with them. It's time they received the pay they deserve."

**END.**

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