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MEDIA RELEASE

ACA Applauds Funding Support Allowing Greater Sydney ECEC Service Providers to Waive the Gap Fee for parents

Australia's peak body for early learning (child care) commends the Australian Government's recent announcement to better support families and educators during the current Greater Sydney lockdown by allowing services impacted to waive the gap fee.

"The announcement means that, right now, families in Greater Sydney who choose to keep their children at home, whether it be for financial, health or other reasons, don't have to pay a fee for care they are not using," Mr Mondo says.

"They can keep their children enrolled, without any risk of losing their place at their child's service."

"At the same time service providers can still receive the Child Care Subsidy, allowing them to stay afloat, keep educators employed during a sudden high absence period, and still be there for families on the other side of the lockdown."

The changes should provide assistance to over 200,000 families and 3,600 Early Childhood Education & Care (ECEC) centres in the locked down areas of Greater Sydney, the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Wollongong and Shellharbour.

Service providers may also qualify for the business support payments announced earlier this week to help offset any loss of revenue as a result of the waiving of gap fees. We will continue to assess the suitability of this support to ensure that all services are able to remain viable and maintain the employment of their educators through the lockdown."

"Whilst there are currently no formal direction limiting the attendance of children at early learning services, it is completely understandable for families to choose to keep their children at home and this measure allows services to continue to provide access for those families who continue to require it."

Mr Mondo says that as the proven bedrock of Australia's economy, ECEC service providers do everything they can to protect and nurture the children, their families and the educators who care for them, during this challenging COVID-19 climate.

"We would like to wholeheartedly thank the Minister for Education, the Treasurer and the Prime Minister for listening to our members and recognising the importance of ensuring that all Australian families have access to high quality early learning services, especially during these hard lockdowns."

"ACA will continue to work with the government, in the best interests of families and their children at this time."

ENDS

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About the Australian Childcare Alliance

The Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) works on behalf of early learning (long day care) service owners and operators to ensure families have an opportunity to access affordable Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) throughout Australia.

Our national and state bodies work collaboratively with all levels of government, regulatory authorities and other stakeholders with an evidence-based approach, to ensure that families are supported into the future with a sustainable, affordable and viable ECEC sector.

ACA believes that with the right policy and financial frameworks in place, we could ensure that every child in Australia has access to high quality, affordable and sustainable early learning (childcare) services, and therefore the **best start in life**.

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