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New early childhood education guarantee will benefit more than 120,000 families in need

Parliament's passing of the federal government's guarantee of [three days early childhood education and care \(ECEC\)](#) is a major step towards a more accessible and affordable system.

These federal government reforms to the much-criticised Child Care Subsidy (CCS) activity test will enable over [120,000 children from low-income families](#) access to quality education and care.

High-quality ECEC is an intrinsic component in the continuum of education and a lifetime of learning.

This change moves our nation closer to a universal ECEC system that is fundamental to building a world class education system. It establishes the foundations needed for a child's educational, social and emotional development.

The IEUA has long called for [reforms to the CCS activity test](#). The test had entrenched a frustrating cycle of ineligibility, whereby many parents were unable to obtain employment due to their caring responsibilities, but paradoxically, could not access childcare due to failing the work activity test.

While today's passing of the new childcare laws are a major improvement, many challenges remain.

Greater access to ECEC services will need a sustainable workforce. An additional [21,000 qualified ECEC professionals](#) are needed just to meet current demand. The improved recruitment and retention of ECEC professionals is central to the success of the new laws.

Competitive salaries, manageable workloads and professional development are needed to grow the workforce. [Access to multi-employer bargaining](#) is delivering big improvements for IEU members working in ECEC – these fairer bargaining laws must be maintained to help rebuild the sector.

The IEUA has also [called for more support for sector leading not-for-profit community services](#). These community services deliver high-quality early education, often in areas abandoned by commercial childcare providers or regarded as being financially unviable.

The federal government's separate commitment to a [\\$1 billion Building Early Education Fund](#), focused on not-for-profit services, is another vital reform designed to deliver education to children from First Nations, regional and remote areas and families with less capacity to pay.