



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **NEW CANBERRA SURVEY REVEALS IMPORTANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS IN CHILDREN'S WELLBEING**

**DATE: WEDNESDAY 2 SEPTEMBER 2020**

A survey of 786 parents of children attending Early Learning Centres (ELCs) in Canberra has explored the perceptions and experiences of families who attend Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC).

The survey was carried out by the Children First Alliance; a network of ACT not-for-profit ECEC and is being released to coincide with Early Childhood Educators Day.

The survey found that the majority of parents (84%) saw their child's educator as a trusted source of knowledge about their child's development and wellbeing.

Co-Chair of the Alliance and CEO of Community Services #1 Ms Amanda Tobler said "The vital role early childhood educators has been highlighted again this year. Our educators have been there for families and children, while also managing the uncertainty of bushfire threats, dangerous air quality and now a global pandemic. The survey shows that parents clearly value the important role early childhood educators play in their child's lives."

The survey also highlighted that early childhood educators play an essential role in parents attitudes towards their child's early learning centre. The majority of parents identified staff and educators as the best thing about their child's early learning centre. Themes identified in the survey included, the trust of staff with children, the caring nature of staff, stability of staff in early learning centre and communication.

Some of the responses received from parents included:

*"I love how approachable and caring the educators are. They put 100% into the children and developing secure, safe and supported relationships. This is seen not only through relationships with children but also relationships with families."*

*"The staff and the culture, such an excellent team and the low turnover speaks volumes. The care they have for the children is genuine and really evident in how they do their jobs."*

Parents also support further investment in the ECEC workforce, with the majority of parents (89%) supporting higher salaries for early childhood educators.

Alliance Co-Chair and CEO of Communities@Work Ms Lee Maiden said “High quality early childhood education and care has a significant impact on children. Access to ongoing professional development is key to ensuring that our early childhood educators are supported. Investing in professional development opportunities for early childhood educators across Canberra will demonstrate the value we place in them and their important contribution to the community.”

The Children First Alliance is calling on political parties this ACT Election to highlight the importance of early childhood educators by investing in them. The impacts of COVID-19 has once again demonstrated that early childhood educators are some of the most vital workers in the country.

Alliance Co-Chair, Amanda Tobler said “We know that parents value the role of early childhood educators. The Children First Alliance is calling on our leaders to invest in those who are doing some of the most important work in our community, educating and caring for our future generations. Investing in our early childhood educators has never been more important.”

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### **Summary of Survey Key Findings**

- 786 parents of children in an Early Learning Centre (ELCs) in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) were surveyed about their perceptions and experience of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC).
- The majority of parents (84%) said that they saw their child’s educator as a trusted source of knowledge about their child’s development and wellbeing.
- Staff were identified as the most common theme when asked what the best thing is about their child’s early learning centre.
- The majority of parents (89%) support higher salaries for early childhood educators.
- The majority (82%) of staff said that they enjoy working with children as the reason that motivated them to work in the ECEC sector.

**Co-Chairs Amanda Tobler, CEO Community Services #1 and Lee Maiden, CEO of Communities@Work are available for interview.**

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**About the Children First Alliance:** The ACT Children First Alliance (the Alliance) is a network of longstanding for purpose providers of children’s service in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), including early learning centres (ELCs), family day care, preschool and outside school hours care. The Alliance was established to develop and communicate a shared vision for ECEC in the ACT and to ensure that all children have access to ECEC. The Alliance has nine members: Anglicare NSW South, NSW West & ACT, Capital Region Community Services, Communities@Work, Community Services #1, Goodstart Early Learning ACT, MOCCA, Woden Community Service, YMCA Canberra and YWCA Canberra. The nine members operate 43 ELCs with 3,491 places to children.

For more information about the Alliance visit: [www.childrenfirstalliance.org](http://www.childrenfirstalliance.org)