



MEDIA RELEASE

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CANBERRA EARLY LEARNING CENTRES HIGHLIGHT CHILDREN'S VOICES THIS NATIONAL CHILDREN'S WEEK

DATE: Friday 26 October 2018

Today the ACT Children First Alliance (the Alliance), a network of not-for-profit children's services providers in the ACT, will celebrate National Children's Week by releasing a report highlighting children's voices on what's important to them and what they like about their Early Learning Centres.

National Children's Week is celebrated in Australia annually to coincide with Universal Children's Day on the 24th of October. This year Children's Week is being held between Friday 19 October and Sunday 28 October.

The 2018 theme of Children's Week is based on Article 12 of *The United Nations Convention on The Rights of The Child*, that 'children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account'.

Mr Bruce Papps, CEO of Northside Community Service, and Alliance Co-Chair said, 'Quality Early Childhood Education and Care plays a vital role in supporting a child's development in the early years at a time when children experience the most rapid period of growth and change in their lives. This National Children's Week focuses on highlighting and ensuring the voices of children are heard. To celebrate this, we are sharing what is most important to children and what they like about their early learning centres, educators and teachers.'

Ms Amanda Tobler, CEO of Community Services #1 and Alliance Co-Chair said, 'We need to change the conversation about Early Childhood Education and Care to focus on children, how they can be supported to have the best start in life and what's important to them. When we asked children what was important to them; they frequently mentioned family and friends. When we asked about what they like most about their Early Learning Centre, educators and teachers; they referred to their friends, playing, learning and being cared for.'

'The *United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child* identified that investment in the early years is critical for children. This year the ACT Government committed to extending universal access of early childhood education to three year old children. This, along with a comprehensive Early Childhood Strategy, will make a significant difference to the lives of children in the ACT.' Ms Tobler said

Some of the responses received when children were asked about why they liked their early learning centres included:

"I like the trees, I like the toys. I like my friends. I like my teachers. I like my lunch ...um.. I think I like everything." Isabel, 4 years, Appletree House Child Care & Education Centre, Comms@Work

"I like helping the teachers because I'm bigger." Addyson, 3 years, Abacus Child Care and Education Centre, Comms@Work

"Play, play, play all of the time. That's what I like." Aisha, 4 years, Goodstart Early Learning – Garran, Goodstart Early Learning ACT

"I like coming here because I get to play with my friends." Ashton, 5 years, Campbell Cottage, YWCA Canberra

Some of the responses received when children were asked about why they liked their about their teachers included:

"They listen." Alyssa, 4 years, Condor Early Childhood Services, YWCA Canberra

"I like that they look after me when my mummy's away. I love all my teachers." Indyana, 3 years, Abacus Child Care and Education Centre, Comms@Work

"Nilmini teaches me how to draw, how to make potato men and about planets." William, 4 years, Goodstart Early Learning – Braddon, Goodstart Early Learning ACT

"We learn things from Sam, Kate, Nancy and teach other people." Evie, 5 years, Abacus Child Care and Education Centre, Comms@Work

The report will be released at an event at Campbell Cottage Early Childhood Service at 10am on Friday 26 October 2018.

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Co-Chairs Amanda Tobler, CEO Community Services #1 and Bruce Papps, CEO, Northside Community Service 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 not-for-profit providers of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in the ACT. 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 ten members: Anglicare NSW South, NSW West and ACT, Belconnen Community Services, Communities@Work, Community Services #1, Goodstart Early Learning ACT, MOCCA, Northside Community Service, Woden Community Service, YMCA Canberra, and YWCA Canberra. The ten members have 46 early learning centres with 3,543 places for children.

For more information about the Alliance visit: www.childrenfirstalliance.org