



SDN Children's Services

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—MEDIA RELEASE —

Proposed NSW funding cuts puts access to preschool programs at risk for children and families

SDN Children's Services is calling on the NSW Government to reconsider proposed changes to Start Strong funding, warning that the removal of support for preschool programs in long day care services will disadvantage children, families and providers across NSW.

The proposed changes would result in an annual funding reduction of almost \$800,000 across SDN services, with individual centres experiencing significant impacts.

A not-for-profit that has been delivering quality services for 120 years, SDN acknowledges that governments regularly review and adjust funding programs. However, changes of this scale should be implemented with appropriate planning and transitional support to minimise unintended consequences for children, families and services.

Start Strong funding plays a critical role in supporting the delivery of high-quality preschool programs within long day care settings. The funding contributes to qualified teachers, educational planning and assessment, professional learning for educators, educational resources, and additional support for children who may require it.

The funding also supports important school transition processes that help children move confidently into primary education.

For many families, long day care services provide both preschool education and the flexibility needed to balance work and family commitments. Families who attend SDN services rely on extended hours of care that cannot be provided through many standalone preschool models.

"Families should not be disadvantaged because they choose, or need, to access preschool through a long day care service," said SDN CEO Kay Turner.

"Two-thirds of children in NSW access their preschool program through long day care. Any reduction in funding to these services risks placing additional pressure on providers and families at a time when the sector is already navigating workforce challenges, increasing costs and growing demand for inclusive education and care."



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SDN is particularly concerned about the impact funding reductions could have on affordability, accessibility and continuity of learning for children attending preschool programs in long day care settings.

SDN is calling on the NSW Government to work with the sector to implement any funding changes gradually and provide appropriate transitional arrangements that allow services and families time to adapt.

"If we are serious about ensuring every child has access to high-quality early learning, funding changes must be carefully managed to protect quality, equity and inclusion," said Kay Turner.

"The children entering preschool in 2027 should not be the ones who bear the cost of sudden funding reductions. A phased transition would help ensure services can continue delivering the high-quality educational programs that children and families rely on every day."

SDN joins with other not-for-profit early childhood providers and sector representatives in urging the NSW Government to reconsider the proposed approach and work collaboratively with the sector to develop a sustainable funding model that protects access to affordable, high-quality early childhood education for all children.

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About SDN

SDN Children's Services (SDN) is a not-for-profit organisation that has been delivering quality services to children and their families since 1905. With more than 600 staff across 32 sites in Sydney, regional NSW and the ACT, we are one of Australia's most respected children's services organisations.

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