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Media release for immediate distribution

C&K applauds Commission's recommendation to maintain kindergarten funding

Queensland's largest early childhood education and care provider C&K has applauded the Productivity Commission for acknowledging the importance of kindergarten education and prioritising funding for universal access to a kindergarten program.

C&K CEO Michael Tizard commended the Commission on some of the recommendations contained in the Childcare and Early Childhood Learning draft report released this morning but said he would be awaiting further clarification on many of the recommendations.

"C&K applauds the recommendation that governments should maintain kindergarten program funding as a priority area, to ensure each child receives 15 hours per week of a kindergarten program for 40 weeks in the year prior to starting school," Mr Tizard said.

"The Commission has acknowledged that the benefits of quality early learning for children in the year prior to starting school are largely undisputed."

"In particular, it has highlighted research which shows improved performance in standardised test results in the early years of primary school as a result of participation in kindergarten programs."

"With uncertainty surrounding universal access funding since the latest budget was announced, this draft report holds promising news for Australian families who want the best start for their children."

Mr Tizard also supported the recommendation for a single payment subsidy that can be used across all service types

"This will provide greater flexibility in the rebate and fee system and is in line with C&K's initial submission to the inquiry."

Mr Tizard did express concern that vulnerable children would miss out on accessing quality early childhood education and care due to the requirement for both parents to pass an activity test of 24 hours of work, study or training per fortnight.

"This would affect a significant number of at risk children who would not be funded under the new payment scheme.

"It is important that vulnerable children are considered and included in funding models, regardless of their families' working status."

Mr Tizard said there were many positive recommendations in the report, but further questions need to be raised on a number of findings in the report before its final release in September.

“We look forward to providing further submissions and attending the hearing process to help ensure that quality education and care is a priority for all Australian children,” Mr Tizard said.

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