

This statement has been produced by ELAA on behalf of the following organisations:



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The Ten Principles for an Early Childhood Education State

As a united group of early childhood peak bodies, service providers, community sector organisations and research institutions, we are today releasing *The Ten Principles for an Early Childhood Education State*, a framework to guide the Victorian Government's reform agenda in early childhood education and care (ECEC) over the next ten years.

The release of the Ten Principles coincides with the conclusion of the Government's consultation process around its Education State initiative.

Our broad sector coalition calls on the Andrews Government to ensure that the ECEC system is founded on the principles of the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*; to make new investments in a child's early years (from birth to 8 years); and to ensure that its vision of the 'Education State' is built on a viable, high quality, universally accessible and affordable ECEC system.

We welcome the Education State initiative and deeply value the personal commitment of Premier Daniel Andrews and the Minister for Families and Children, Jenny Mikakos to build an outstanding ECEC system.

It is encouraging and exciting to work with a Government that acknowledges the evidence base of research and quality practice, and publicly puts early childhood learning and development at the heart of its vision for an Education State.

On 14 September, Early Learning Association Australia hosted a wide-ranging sector 'conversation' to discuss the Government's Education State agenda and the recently-released Early Childhood Consultation Paper.

That conversation brought together a diverse range of service providers, educators, academics and advocates to reflect on what we collectively believe the Government's priorities should be.

As organisations and individuals, many of us have made submissions to the Education State consultation process and our submissions differ in emphasis depending on our areas of expertise.

However, we are united as the early childhood sector in calling on the Government to use these Ten Principles as the framework for reform.

First and foremost, we call on the Government to ensure that our ECEC system is founded on the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, and that our system respects and collaborates with children, families, professionals and the wider community to ensure accessibility for all children.

We also call on the Government to make new early years investments that maximize the learning and development opportunities for children at a time when research demonstrates that the human brain has the greatest capacity for growth.

To support the Education State agenda, we also believe the Government must act quickly and effectively to ensure that we are building on a solid and sustainable foundation.

At a critical time for service providers in the kindergarten sector particularly, there are core funding issues that need to be addressed in the short term to ensure kindergarten programs remain viable and affordable for families, especially low income households.

Similarly, Long Day Care providers are keen to ensure that proposed reforms by the Federal Government to child care subsidies maintain access to affordable, high quality ECEC for as many children as possible.

But these Ten Principles are much broader than any one segment of the ECEC system or any one immediate reform or funding priority.

The Ten Principles reflect the fact that we – as a sector - accept the Victorian Government's challenge to outline a shared vision of what a truly outstanding ECEC system should look like.

We hope the Victorian Government will use the Ten Principles as a framework to build the Early Childhood Education State – and we ask all governments to consider these principles as a prompt to action.

We want to continue to work in partnership with all levels of government – and with families and communities - to develop and implement an ECEC reform agenda that delivers excellence in early learning for every child.

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The Ten Principles for an Early Childhood Education State

An outstanding early childhood education and care system...

1. ***...is founded on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and respects and collaborates with families and the community to ensure accessibility for all children.***
2. ***... is "child-ready", focussed on the learning and development opportunities for children from birth to 8, and supports families and practitioners to better understand the knowledge, tools and practices that most encourage overall learning.***
3. ***... builds on a solid, sustainable and universal foundation to ensure it is viable, high quality, affordable and accessible into the future.***
4. ***... is evidence-based, integrated, positively, proactively and ethically engaged with children and families, and reflects community expectations that governments will support and fund excellence in ECEC.***
5. ***... is experienced by a range of community members, and reflects and responds to the expectations of children, families, communities, practitioners, researchers and policy makers, and governments.***
6. ***... requires governments to play a strong leadership role – in collaboration with the sector – to share knowledge with the wider community about the critical importance of quality early learning for the nation's social and economic health and well-being.***
7. ***... facilitates greater collaboration between child-centred and adult-centred services; better understands and overcomes barriers that result in disadvantage for vulnerable children and families, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups; supports socially, culturally and linguistically inclusive practices; and expands inclusion support.***
8. ***...is made up of sustainably resourced organisations, working within an enabling policy and regulatory environment.***
9. ***... develops outcomes frameworks for learning, and builds integrated governance and reporting frameworks that are child-focussed, and support workforce professionalisation.***
10. ***... broadly defines families in order to provide greater support and recognition of the resources and skills that families offer as a child's 'first educators.'***