



EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION
FOUNDATION



DONATE TODAY

*Give our most vulnerable
children the best start to life!*





MISSION

To support vulnerable children to attend kindergarten programs to help build their brains and bodies now and set them up for positive health in the future.

OUR VISION

A healthier, fairer Australia where children are supported according to their needs to reach their potential.

OUR STORY

The Early Childhood Education Foundation (ECEF) was established by Dr. Terry Nienhuys in 1997 with the purpose of providing funding to enable disadvantaged children to attend a kindergarten for free.

There is an overwhelming body of Australian and International research that supports the critical importance of quality Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) to children's cognitive, social and emotional development.

The long-term benefits to the community and economy are also compelling.

The need to access quality ECEC is even more acute for pre-school aged children deemed 'vulnerable'. For many of these children, what happens in their kindergarten years sets them on a path for life.

With Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA) appointed as the Trustee, supported by the generosity of donors, philanthropic funds and businesses, the ECEF has provided support to thousands of families to enable their children to attend kindergarten.



Why we need your help

Too many children are vulnerable and miss out when it counts

Approximately one in five children in Australia are considered vulnerable developmentally on one or more domains when they start school. Children who are vulnerable are the least likely to have access to kindergarten¹.

The Covid-19 pandemic has also dramatically impacted children's lives and their development.

Attendance in ECEC environments was interrupted and for many children completely ceased. As the pandemic continues to unfold some families are struggling to afford kindergarten parent fees due to insecure work, poor health, mental health issues, family violence, cost of housing pressures and rising living costs.

Once vulnerable children start school behind their peers, they remain behind for the rest of their schooling².

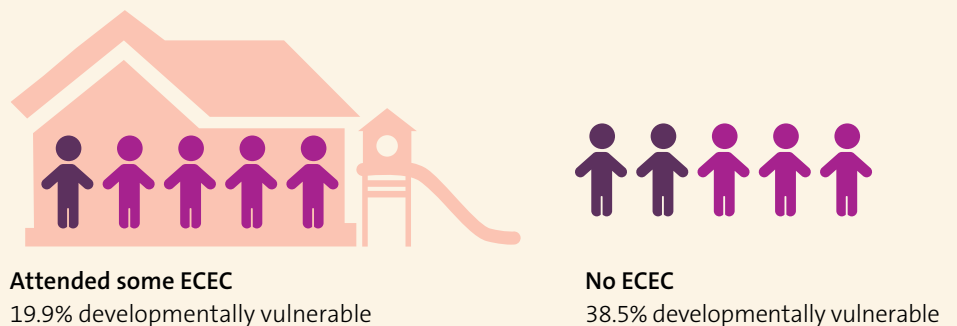
Three and four-year-old kindergarten sets children up for life

Between the ages of three and five years foundational skills critical for learning are established³. The science behind brain development shows that these two years are optimal for learning essential skills for life and preparing children for school. Children

from disadvantaged backgrounds, who attended preschool are half as likely to have a developmental vulnerability (Figure 1).

Quality education and warm nurturing relationships with teachers and educators are vital to children's development, building skills which support their physical wellbeing. Children who have attended preschool have a better start at primary school which alters their life trajectory and supports better long term health outcomes.³

Figure 1: Early Learning and developmental vulnerability⁴



Neuroscience tells us that **90%** of a child's brain development occurs in the first five years of life



1 in 5 Australian children start school developmentally vulnerable



2 in 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children start school developmentally vulnerable



1:2 For every dollar invested now, Australia receives \$2 back over a child's life. Recent analysis shows that our current system of early education offers a significant return on investment of **1:2**.⁵



Children who live in economically disadvantaged areas under-represented at kindergarten



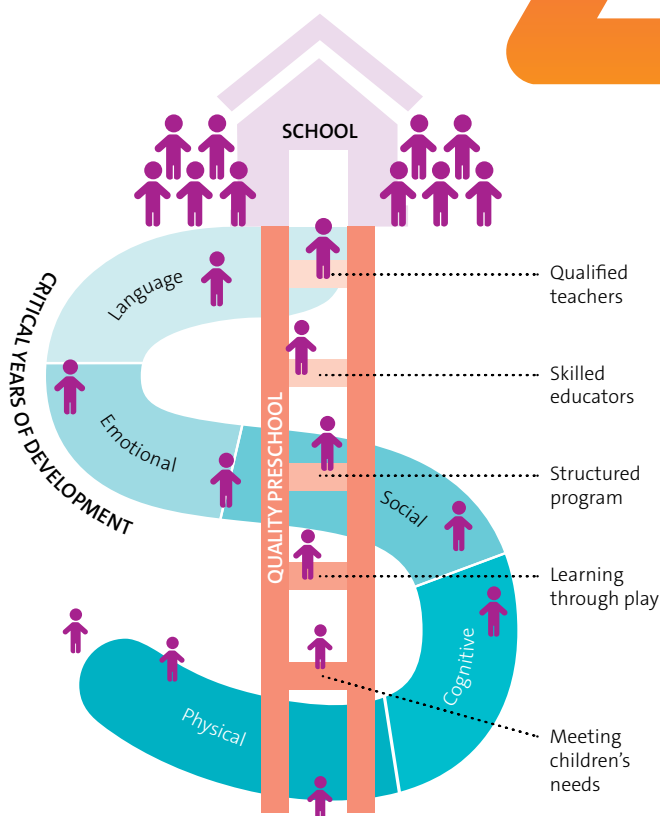
Children who attend kindergarten are more likely to go on to complete secondary school

Why we need your help

The ripple effect of kindergarten

Children who attend preschool develop emotional control, social skills and language abilities which are critical to academic learning and success. They are the skills we use to build relationships, manage adversity and our health and wellbeing. Adults who have had two years of kindergarten are more likely to complete secondary school and go on to further education, to be employed and earn more.⁶

By supporting the ECEF, you are not only making a difference to the lives of the children whose kindergarten fees are subsidised; there is evidence that all children in a classroom tend to learn more in a given year if the average skill level in the classroom at the year's start is higher.⁷



A message from our CEO, David Worland

"It is during the first five years of life that children build the foundations for life-long learning, well-being, and health.

The interaction between young children's developing brains and the environments in which they learn has a significant impact on a child's long-term development.

Access to high quality early childhood education is critical. Research demonstrates the important role of high-quality early childhood education experiences on children's development. Early childhood education can help your child make friends, develop independence, and learn new skills.

The cost of sending children to a kindergarten program for vulnerable and disadvantaged families and carers is often a barrier to attendance.

Unfortunately, children who start school behind their peers stay behind. Over a lifetime, this early disadvantage for children leads to:

- Increased likelihood of starting school with insufficient language and cognitive skills
- Lower school participation and completion rates
- Reduced likelihood of obtaining formal qualifications
- Lower earning capacity and poorer health outcomes
- Increased likelihood of negative participation in the justice system
- Continued exaggeration of cross generational poverty.

Investment in high quality early childhood education gives children the best start to life. Academic and economic studies on the value of high-quality early childhood education

programs have consistently indicated benefits at two to four times the initial investment.

These benefits are greater – often substantially so – for programs targeted at vulnerable or disadvantaged children.

Every child deserves the best start to life. Every dollar invested in the ECEF goes directly to funding vulnerable and disadvantaged children to attend a high-quality early childhood education program for free.

The benefits of investing over a child's lifetime are profoundly important and positive and I would welcome the opportunity to discuss how we can tailor an outcome best suited to you or your organisation."



*The Foundation supports children like Alia, Jack and Rose**

Alia is the youngest of five children. Her family **migrated to Australia from Sudan** five years ago. Her father, was working at an abattoir and caught **Coronavirus (COVID-19)** which developed into long COVID. He is in receipt of WorkCover payments but the family's financial situation has deteriorated now he can't work overtime. Alia's mother is a leader in her local community, supporting other Sudanese families to settle whilst looking after her own family and caring for her husband. The rent rebate on their home has been lifted and the kindergarten fees are now out of reach for the family.



Jack is the child of a sole parent escaping **domestic violence**. He has another sibling and the mother is the sole earner, trying to provide for herself and her children repaying her partner's debts of around \$200K. Jack has been diagnosed with PTSD, and has been identified as an 'at risk' child. Both Jack and his sibling are involved with multiple support services in their local area. Jack was at risk of further isolation because his mother could not afford kindergarten fees due to her financial situation.



Rose's mother suffers significant **mental health issues**, and her father is the sole income earner for the family earning just over the Health Care Card threshold. Rose also has a younger sibling. The family could not afford Rose's kindergarten fees and were about to withdraw her. The medical professionals treating Rose's mother was of the view that the mother's mental state has had a detrimental impact on Rose, and has placed her at risk. He recommended that attending a kindergarten/childcare would provide Rose with the stimulation and socialisation that she currently lacked at home.



*Names, some details and images changed to protect privacy of children and families.

Every dollar invested helps our most vulnerable children and assists with breaking the cycle of inter-generational disadvantage



* Kindergarten fees vary. Example based on annual fees with term fees set at \$500 per term.



EARLY
LEARNING
ASSOCIATION
AUSTRALIA

Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA) is a peak body which works in partnership with early learning providers and parents to deliver our vision of excellence and equity in Early Childhood Education and Care.

Our diverse membership includes over 630 service providers managing services at over 1,250 locations with more than 15,000 staff caring and educating over 70,000 children.

Our members are Early Years Management organisations, independent kindergartens, local governments, long day care services, government and independent schools and out of school hours care programs.

ELAA supports its members and the sector with:

- Advocacy and representation to government
- Expert advice and support
- Training and industry resources
- Management of the ECEF

More information about ELAA can be found at www.elaa.org.au



Our Board

*Early Learning Association Australia
is managed by a skills-based board.*

Grant Boyd – President

Grant is the CEO of Bethany Community Support Inc – a group based in Geelong, Victoria incorporating Bethany Kindergarten Services Ltd. Grant has worked in the education, disability, health and community sectors as a practitioner, consultant and in leadership roles for government, not-for-profit and private sector organisations. He holds qualifications in Education, Special Education and Child and Adolescent Psychology and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Ros Casey – Secretary

Ros is a Principal Consultant with Alicorn Associates and is a specialist in philanthropy, sponsorship and industry and community engagement. For ten years she led the Advancement Office at Victoria University responsible for philanthropic, sponsorship and alumni relations programs. Prior to joining VU, she was a consultant to the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership. Ros has worked with many organisations including the National Council for the Centenary of Federation, Engineers Australia the Australian War Memorial and is currently a Board member of the AFL Cape York House Foundation.



Tracey McKay

Tracey has over 15 years experience in Early Years Management in the not-for-profit and local government sectors. Tracey joined bestchance in June 2016 as General Manager – Early Years Service. Her formal qualifications include Bachelor of Computing (Information Systems), Diploma of Management and Certificate IV Business (Governance).



Sue West – Vice President

Sue is an Associate Director of the Centre for Community Child Health and a Group Leader of Murdoch Children's Research Institute. Sue leads a national program of work including initiatives concerned with early childhood policy, translation of research into practice, workforce development, service improvement and evaluation. Her group includes the award winning Raising Children Network in partnership with the Parenting Research Centre.



Stacey Fox

Stacey is the Manager of Strategy and Translation at Our Place, an organisation that supports place-based initiatives in Victorian schools. Stacey has worked in research and policy across child, youth and family sectors for many years and has authored significant reports on early childhood policy, family engagement in learning, prevention and early intervention, and systems design.



Aileen Ashford

Aileen is the CEO of Kids First an independent not for profit child and family services provider. Prior to leading Kids First, Aileen was the Children's Commissioner in Tasmania and a Board member of the Tasmanian Early Years Foundation which was instrumental in the policy and design of the innovative Statewide Early Years Child and Family Centre's services sector.



Georgie Chapman

Georgie is a Partner with substantial experience in both litigious and non-litigious employment and workplace relations. She acts for a wide range of employers on matters including discrimination, industrial relations, occupational health and safety and employee termination related issues.



Krishnan Rangaswamy – Treasurer

Krishnan Rangaswamy is a risk management professional with over 25 years of experience. Currently the Executive Director Transformation at the ANZ Banking Corporation, Krishnan is passionate about sharing his extensive financial experience with not-for-profit organisations. Krishnan has been an expert member on the ELAA Finance Committee for the past two years, assisting with the review of the financial systems and investments, and developing the investment policy.



Ian Sanders

Ian is a senior executive from the finance sector with extensive experience in managing customer businesses. Ian is passionate about building customer focused businesses and helping others to realise their potential. He has a B.Sc. (Hons) from London University, MBA from QUT, and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Ian also serves as a Board Member of Uniting AgeWell, Victoria and Tasmania.



Samantha Kolasa

Samantha is the CEO of the Glen Eira Kindergarten Association. Samantha completed her Masters of Business Administration (MBA) with a focus on Human Resource management and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



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*Give our most
vulnerable children
the best start to life.*

Get in touch today
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elaa.org.au/ecf

