



Wednesday, 5 May

Outside of School Hours Care providers commend Government funding announcement for the childcare sector but say more must be done for parents who depend on Outside School Hours Care in Australia

While we welcome the Federal Government's announcement regarding increased support for Australia's childcare sector, we're disappointed that Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) has been excluded – that's 30 per cent of the sector.

While we're supportive of the additional support as it benefits Australia's childcare system, we urge Government to clarify why the new subsidies will only be increased for families with two or more children aged five and under, which effectively differentiates between families based on the age of their children.

We're also seeking confirmation on what support will be provided to families whose children are moving from child care to primary school and why parents of children requiring OSH care differ from those with children requiring long day care.

OSHC services play an essential role in the provision of supervised essential care for school-age children before and after school, on pupil-free days and during school holidays (where full days of care are required), which allows parents to work, study or look for work.

The OSHC sector is a major and critical component of Australia's childcare sector, accounting for more than one third of our national early childhood education and care market. It is also one of the fastest growing childcare segments as an increasing number of families working part-time or doing shift work have come to rely on OSHC services.

At the same time, the OSHC sector is one still recovering from the impacts of the pandemic, having continued to operate during multiple lockdowns to ensure care was available for those who needed it, despite the crippling effects that this had on the viability of many providers.

Having been recognised as an essential service during last year's lockdowns, and one vital to the continuity of care for vulnerable children and those of essential workers, it is surprising that parents who depend on OSHC have been omitted from this policy initiative.

The Government's oversight will place additional cost burden on these families.

The provision of flexible care for part time workers, vulnerable children and those of essential workers, will be as critical as ever to Australia's post-pandemic recovery.