



SNAICC – National Voice for our Children
(Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation)
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TARGETED EARLY YEARS SUPPORT ESSENTIAL FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN

SNAICC – the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, welcomes the Australian Government’s recent announcement to increase investment in early childhood education and care.

Early years services are critical to improving outcomes for children before they start school and set them on a journey for success throughout their lives.

The promise of increased subsidies for families with two or more children in child care will help to make early education more affordable and accessible for many families.

“We welcome the announcement of increased support for our families after such a difficult period. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families’ health and wellbeing, with additional stress from economic hardship”, says SNAICC CEO Catherine Liddle.

“However, the changes will do little to address many of the barriers to accessing early education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families – far more is needed.”

One of those barriers is the activity test required for people to access early childhood education and care. The test continues to exclude children by limiting hours of subsidised access to early education when parents and carers do not meet minimum work or study requirements.

The Australian governments and Coalition of Peaks have committed to increase the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track against the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) to 55% by 2031. Currently, 35% of our children are developmentally on track in all five domains.

Ms Liddle continues, “This is an ambitious target under the *National Agreement for Closing the Gap* and requires targeted investments and strategies.

“The current child care funding model is a one-size fits all approach, and doesn’t do enough for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families that may be experiencing vulnerability.

“The result is that our children are not accessing the early childhood education and care that will support their development and help ensure they grow up strong in their culture and identity.”

It is evident that holistic early years support models that are grounded in the strengths of our cultures, languages, and traditions, have a positive impact on the development and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

SNAICC calls for a specific funding program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

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community-controlled services with a focus on holistic early education and family support services that are culturally safe. And SNAICC continues to call for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to have access to at least 30 hours per week of 95% subsidised early childhood education and care. This new investment fails to address these critical priorities.

“If we want to truly close the gap in outcomes for our children, then it is time that our national policies ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have every opportunity to learn and be supported in their early years.”

– Catherine Liddle, SNAICC CEO

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For interviews with SNAICC CEO Catherine Liddle or one of our early years service members, please contact:

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About SNAICC – National Voice for our Children:

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children is the national non-governmental peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. We work for the fulfilment of the rights of our children, in particular to ensure their safety, development and wellbeing.

Founded in 1981, SNAICC was established to engage in activities that promote and accommodate a strong voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

Over the past 30 years SNAICC's efforts has resulted in many key milestones and achievements both in policy developments at state, territory and federal levels and in developing innovative and useful resources for the sector.

SNAICC is governed by an influential Board of Directors made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled children and family services.