



**Chamber** House of Representatives on 18/10/2023  
**Item** QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE - Early Childhood Education  
**Questioner :** Khalil, Peter MP  
**Answer :** Aly, Anne MP

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## Early Childhood Education



Mr KHALIL (Wills) (15:02): My question is to the Minister for Early Childhood Education. How is this Albanese Labor government building a strong and sustainable early childhood education workforce by investing in quality training and helping educators to build their skills?

Dr ALY (Cowan—Minister for Early Childhood Education and Minister for Youth) (15:03): I thank the member for Wills for his question. In this role I have the absolute privilege of getting to visit early childhood education centres, meeting with the wonderful, dedicated professionals who are educators and teachers and, most enjoyably, of course, meeting with the children at those centres. All of them are memorable, but the one that I visited with the member for Wills was particularly memorable. It was the Lake Park bilingual kindergarten in Coburg, where we sat with the children and heard a story read to us in Italian, a wonderful example of the benefits of early childhood education and care and the transformative nature that it has for the lives of children.



Of course, the member for Wills, as do all of us in the Albanese government, understands just how important access to good-quality early childhood education is, and that's why we delivered practical cost-of-living relief by making early childhood education and care more affordable for over 1.2 million families across Australia. I'm delighted to inform the House that, in the first week of these landmark reforms, families paid, on average, around 14 per cent less per hour per child for centre based care. That's directly due to the work of the Albanese Labor government in making early childhood education and care more affordable. Paying a triple dividend is good for children, it's good for families and it's good for the economy.

We also recognise that the key to ensuring access to quality early childhood education and care lies in a strong and sustainable workforce of educators. I'm pleased to inform the House that since the Albanese Labor government came to office there are over 14,000 new educators in the sector and 123,000 in training pathways, in no small part due to the efforts of this government through fee-free TAFE. Certificate III in early childhood education and care is the most popular fee-free TAFE course right across Australia. We're also delivering \$72 million in a workforce package specifically targeted at ensuring educators have access to paid practicums and professional development, a direct outcome of the conversations I've had with early childhood educators across Australia.

The government is investing in the workforce that Australia needs to build a better future, and I congratulate Minister O'Connor for ensuring that the workforce needs for our critical education and care economy sectors are at the centre of art recently announced National Skills Agreement, a landmark agreement that will ensure that we are investing in Australia's future.