

# Spending on childcare ranked low [AU] <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

See text below.

## EXCERPTS

Australia's spending on early childhood education is the second lowest among OECD countries according to a landmark eight-year study.

The Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care report examined early childhood education across OECD countries, including the United States and Italy.

Queensland University of Technology (QUT) early childhood researcher Professor Collette Tayler said while funding was not a sole indicator of program provision and quality it was critical and in Australia's case was contributing to low quality care.

"Australia invests 0.45% GDP in early care and education - Canada is the only country that invests less at 0.3% of GDP - the highest spending is 2% of GDP," she said.

As a result of under-spending unqualified staff are being employed on low wages and with poor working conditions.

...

"The debate in Australia also needs to look at child care as more than just a holding pen while parents work because the evidence shows that all children have a right to support outside the family to enhance their development.

"Research shows that children who stay at home until compulsory school do not do as well as those who spend time in quality care. In many of the OECD countries reviewed, most children aged over two and a half are in early childhood services for most of their week."

- reprinted from the Courier-Mail

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