

Bishop joins calls for compulsory preschooling [AU] ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Federal Education Minister Julie Bishop is backing calls for mandatory preschooling.

An Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report, which compares 20 member nations, names Australia as one of the lowest spenders on preschool education.

Australia is behind South Korea and Mexico, with only 0.1 per cent of gross domestic product being spent.

The report has prompted former Australian of the Year, Professor Fiona Stanley, to call for mandatory preschooling to ensure children's early development is properly looked after.

Ms Bishop says preschool education is a state responsibility but she would also like to see it made compulsory.

"I think that parents will always retain the right to choose when they want their children to commence school," she said.

"But we need to have a consistent approach across the country which we don't have, so I'm calling for a nationally consistent approach to preschool education."

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- reprinted from ABC News Online

Related link: More information on the OECD's Starting Strong II ^[2]

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