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Australian Government support for non-mainstream early childhood education and care services: Discussion Paper Author: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Government of Australia Source: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Government of Australia Format: Report

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Excerpts from the news release:

The Australian Government recognises the important role that early childhood education and care (ECEC) plays in promoting good learning and development outcomes for children, and supporting their families and communities.

The Government is therefore committed to supporting high quality ECEC services to ensure that all children-in particular our most vulnerable children-get the best start in life.

The Budget Based Funding (BBF) Program, a sub-element of the Community Support Program (CSP), is an important part of the Australian Government's support for ECEC services, helping to give Australian children the best start in life.

Direct operational funding is provided to around 330 different types of ECEC services throughout Australia in areas where the market would not normally allow services to operate, including in urban, regional and remote communities, and where there are additional needs for culturally appropriate services.

The Hon Kate Ellis MP, Minister for Early Childhood and Child Care, has announced a review of the BBF Program.

The purpose of the review is to ensure that the program continues to achieve its policy goals, is well targeted to contemporary needs, and delivers the very best quality ECEC services and outcomes for families, children and communities.

This review builds on the findings of the 2010 Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) Report on MACS and Crèches [No.8 2010-11] which included recommendations to examine the program's key performance indicators and funding model.

The review will assess a range of issues, including how the BBF program can better:

- support improvements in service quality
- support access to ECEC services where market failure would otherwise exist
- respond to changes in community needs and circumstances over time
- support increased participation, especially for vulnerable children, and
- support better family and community engagement.

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