

Childcare: Money welcome but it can't be a magic pudding solution ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The early years learning and care union, United Voice, has welcomed the Government's plan to invest more in childcare.

United Voice says whilst flexibility of care for families sounds good the detail of the policy will be critical to build a quality early years system for children and the country.

David O'Byrne, National Secretary, said he cautiously welcomed the Prime Minister's announcement of directing up to \$5.5 billion more into early years education.

"This additional money is desperately needed. United Voice members want to work with the Government to make sure it goes to the right place.

"Early years education is in crisis and needs every cent it can get. Parents and educators alike know this money is needed at centres across the country to stop the exodus of 180 educators leaving the sector every week.

"These funds must not be used for new services until the existing system is fixed.

Speaking about the backdown on the Paid Parental Leave Scheme David O'Byrne said the union will be speaking to the cross-bench Senators to ensure the money is put where it is most urgently needed - solving the workforce crisis.

"The Paid Parental Leave scheme was always putting too much money in the first six months of a child's life and ignoring the next four years.

The Government's announcement today comes after research by United Voice showed the Treasurer's electorate supports more funding for the sector and 57% of voters support an increase in wages for the more than 153,000 educators who work in long day care.

Brigitte Mitchell, Sydney educator and United Voice member, said "If the Prime Minister wants to fix women's workforce participation he has to start by fixing wages for early years educators.

"We welcome the move for more money but I am very disappointed the Prime Minister did not once mention the unsustainable low wages.

"If Prime Minister Abbott doesn't understand this issue, he doesn't understand the sector.

"Educators I speak to love their jobs, but without an increase in wages we won't have the workforce to provide these services.

"We have been lobbying government for years about more money going into the sector. The challenge now is to make sure funds go to the right place," said Brigitte Mitchell.

Region: Australia and New Zealand ^[2]

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