

### **17211 - New submission from Early Years Strategy - Public Submissions**

The aspiration for an EY Strategy is welcomed that is supported by solid research and frameworks as identified. A vision and outcomes as identified in the discussion paper is important but it is the actual HOW and WHEN that is most important to express with measurable outcomes within realistic timeframes.

I have worked in the ECEC sector for many years and have seen this type of focus and effort many times, BUT we still see similar issues prevailing and real challenges for children, particularly those most disadvantaged.

Sufficient funding is critical - this is the number 1 contributor to address. Secondly is the need for educators that can actually care for and educate children - workforce shortages are dire, even with opportunities currently being made available through state governments. Can this be addressed so that real changes/improvements are made. Without staff (and quality staff) families cannot access care and/or the care their children is receiving is not always high quality- too many casuals and agency staff because centres simply cannot recruit and retain staff. In collaboration with the states let's continue to encourage children's services that are built within/as community hubs and/or on school sites so we provide more seamless and supportive access of care and education to families - the easier access is, the more likely, particularly hard to reach families, will use care. And for those in rural and remote areas, bricks and mortar is not always the solution - mobile services and FDC are key BUT these services MUST be supported by a workforce - how can we encourage and support more people to work in ECEC in rural and remote locations. At a local government level, so often what I see in ECEC is everyone doing their own thing - some of this is fabulous and reflects innovative solutions, but how better would it be if they joined forces and worked together, particularly less resourced LGAs.

I look forward to hearing more and seeing a strategy for the early years that is not just words in a nice shiny booklet that is launched with much aplomb - actions and outcomes and investment that make a real difference to the lives of young children and their families.