

MEDIA RELEASE – 26 MARCH 2020

**330,000+ CHILDREN’S PLACES, 66,000+ EMPLOYEES AND
5,600+ CHILDCARE SERVICES AT RISK NOW AND IN THE FUTURE**

Especially since Monday, 23 March 2020, New South Wales’ early childhood education and care services have experienced a massive drop of up to 90% in the number of children in attendance. Consequently, about 50% of employees are now facing reduced employment or retrenchments. Without a change in the governments’ policies, this is more than likely to get much worse.

“As the largest NSW peak body by the number of NSW-based services we advocate for, we call on both the Federal and NSW governments to stop being out-of-sync with each other, and for both tiers of government to understand the repercussions for NSW and the nation of crippled early childhood education and care services post COVID-19 in terms of jobs and the economy,” said Mrs Lyn Connolly, President of the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW.

Over 66,000 employees and 5,600 childcare services face extremely dire futures as the Federal Government has to date refused to distribute the already budgeted Commonwealth’s Child Care Subsidy (CCS) unless the corresponding gap fee is paid by parents. Yet, the Federal Government has announced that services can receive the CCS without any contributions from parents if services were shut down.

NSW Premier, the Hon Gladys Berejiklian MP, exacerbated the situation when she publicly suggested to parents that school children should stay at home if they can even though schools will remain open, thereby causing parents to fear the worst for their children.

The horrible consequences of governments’ actions, inactions and public statements are that frontline personnel’s children who would normally be cared for by educators already trained and qualified to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, will now be cared for by grandparents who are at greatest risk to COVID-19. Or the frontline personnel themselves will look to forgo serving the public good and instead care after their own children.

“At the very least, the Federal Government can help by immediately distributing the CCS without the parents’ contribution in order to support children and families, protect jobs and ensure the best possibility of early childhood education and care services surviving post-COVID-19 in the interest of the broader Australian economy,” said Mrs Connolly.

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Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW (www.nsw.childcarealliance.org.au) is the peak body for privately owned early childhood education and care services in NSW, numbering approximately 1,600 childcare services, employing over 25,000 staff and supporting over 125,000 families. ACA NSW provides advocacy, policy and regulatory and business support and advice, member services and professional development for members and their staff across the state.

**For further media inquiries, please contact
ACA NSW President Lyn Connolly on 0425 225 275
ACA NSW CEO Chiang Lim on 0427 277 299**