

# The Australian Declaration for Young Children



## CONSIDERATIONS

We pledge our long-term commitment and determination to improving children's outcomes in the early years (conception – age 8) and jointly advancing the agenda for early childhood development, policy and practice, particularly for those children and families experiencing adversity.

- What happens in the early years of a child's life is fundamental in shaping their capacity for learning, development, health, and social and emotional wellbeing.
- Consistently positive interactions with family and other primary caregivers help to build and strengthen a child's developing brain, providing a solid foundation for learning, development, health, and social and emotional wellbeing.
- Experiences of severe or prolonged adversity can increase a child's risk for poor health, learning and interpersonal relationship problems.
- Positive early life relationships, experiences and caring, health promoting environments can help to create resilience and protect children from the developmental effects of severe or prolonged adversity.
- Evidence-informed, contextually appropriate policies and practices aimed at enhancing early childhood experiences can help to create a strong sense of identity, protect children from the effects of adversity, promote learning and support the development of all children.
- The benefits from effective, culturally appropriate and locally relevant early childhood policies and practices can outweigh their monetary costs, and deliver substantial benefits and long-term savings for government, the community, families and children.

## ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

We pledge our long-term commitment and determination to improving children's outcomes in the early years (conception – age 8) and jointly advancing the agenda for early childhood development, policy and practice, particularly for those children and families experiencing adversity.

- Collaborate with children, families, caregivers and communities to meaningfully co-design and implement policies, practices and services that:
  - Enable and support children to thrive in all the places they spend time and live.
  - Focus on the multiple aspects of child development (e.g. physical, social, emotional, cognitive, spiritual and cultural).
  - Are culturally appropriate and locally relevant, for every family.
  - Address the cultural, structural and other social factors affecting children and families.
  - Build on the capacity and confidence of primary caregivers.
- Provide high-quality, culturally secure and locally relevant services, with the flexibility to be tailored to the strengths and level of disadvantage experienced by children and families.
- Invest in rigorous early childhood research in collaboration with communities, to better understand what works for whom and why in different contexts and settings, especially with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, and other Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) populations.