

## Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education & Care

Please make sure your submission contains:

- your name: **Associate Professor Yvonne Karen PARRY**
- your contact email address and/or postal address: [REDACTED]
- your interest in the Royal Commission (eg educator, parent, industry body etc): **Researcher and practice change for connecting education with care especially health access and care**
- your views on the policy settings and services that support:

- a child's first 1000 days:

There is a plethora of data on the importance of the first 1000 days and the disconnection from health and education by families most at risk. My research (over the last 20 years) and professional practice change work, directly focuses on, building, improving, and developing sustainable models of care that incorporate collaborative partnerships between education and health. Via collaborations with state governments, NGO, health services and education or community education providers to deliver services that are embed into communities, and my model provides in-depth health assessments and developmental screening for children 0 to 5 years. The flexible model has referral pathways and referral follow-ups included in the design and delivery. This process is to help parents and children receive the care and support they need to ensure children are offered the best start in life. My research results have validated the impact of the programs initiated in the research projects.

Policy needs to directly address the gaps between services and this model of care and service delivery is one way to address these gaps and reconnect families to services such as education and health.

My current research with the office of the early years has offered screening to 1579 families and have an uptake in the pilot of 56% across 14 with 696 children 0 to 5 screened thus far. We are aiming to offer the pilot screening to a further 6 sites with up to 500 more families before Dec 2023.

We know while there maybe uptake of the 6-week check that is often the last health/development check before the preschool check at aged 4. Children miss essential point of early intervention which proactively aid the child and parents to assist the child to meet their health and developmental outcomes prior to aged 4.

- 3 year old preschool

This would be a benefit to parents and children especially those children currently disconnected from education and health (more eyes on the children). However to upskill and expand the workforce there needs to a consistent national pathway for those with 3 year Early Education Degrees into the 4 years degree preferred by this state (SA) regulations. For years is an appropriate degree length for the course and should not be shortened but there is a need for additional and extra pathways into training and education is needed to up skill those in the industry from TAFE qualifications into an EED.

Additionally, the current compulsory age at 4 years check would need to be completed at age 2 ½ to 3 years prior to entry into preschool and this would aid in the early identification of any health and developmental concerns.

Those working in the sector need a cultural change from the broader Australian population to ensure they are highly regarded specialists and not seen as babysitters. The misogynist disregard for education and nursing has consequences for the sector and the country.

- out of school hours care (OSHC).

Fully funded and regulated childcare after hours would help parents return to work and would increase productivity. There are gaps for parents leaving long day care and their child entering the schooling system which is a juggle and unnecessary stress on parents and grandparents who are working.