



Getting your message heard

The Early Learning Matters Week guide to media relations

When planning an Early Learning Matters Week event at your service, it may be advantageous to invite your local media to attend, especially if you are hosting your local Member of Parliament.

We know that dealing with the media can be daunting. To help you get your message across easily, we've outlined steps on preparing a media release (see p. 2). If you need further support or would like Early Childhood Australia (ECA) to work on a story with you, please contact Katie Golding, ECA's Media Officer, on 0475 554 999.

As the peak body for the early childhood sector in Australia, ECA wants to hear your stories so we can promote the great work that your service provides. Please let us know what your service is doing. Email us the photos and details of your event on EarlyLearningMatters@earlychildhood.org.au. If you will be posting photos of the event on social media, please use the hashtags **#EarlyLearningMattersWeek** and **#EarlyLearningMatters**.

Early Learning Matters Week: Key messages

The first five years of life are crucial for children's cognitive, social and emotional development. ECA organises Early Learning Matters Week each year to highlight the importance of early education.

When children have inclusive, positive and rich early learning experiences, they are more likely to go on to become successful learners with high levels of wellbeing. Early childhood education and care (ECEC) is one important way of providing learning experiences, especially for children experiencing disadvantage or vulnerability. Here are some of the key messages you can share when planning your event:

- 1.3 million children attended an approved early childhood education and care service in 2020.
- Children who attend early learning services are less likely (by 33%) to be developmentally vulnerable when they start school, compared to those who do not attend early learning services.
- The number of children (aged up to 5 years) using early learning services has risen over the past 10 years, from 36% in 2010 to nearly 45% in 2019.
- There is inequity in access to early learning services. Children living in remote areas, children from Indigenous backgrounds, children for whom English is a second language, and those with a disability are under-represented in early learning services.
- Australia's investment in early learning is below the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average (0.7% of GDP). Australia is ranked 11th among 21 OECD nations.

The goal of fully realising the benefits of early learning for all children in Australia has not yet been reached. To make better progress, we need to:

- recognise the benefits of early learning for children, families and the wider community
- address unequal access to early learning by targeting the barriers to participation
- address workforce issues in the ECEC sector—including retention, qualifications and skills
- ensure the delivery of high-quality early education and care, regardless of service type or location.

Included below is a template press release for your use for the week.

MEDIA RELEASE (Template)

Date

PREPARING A MEDIA RELEASE

Have a headline that is catchy, interesting and strong and summarise the key points

Your lead sentence needs to include the most important information – the 5Ws and H (who, what, when, where, why and how).

When writing the body think of a pyramid, prioritising your messages and information from most important to least important.

“Have a quote,” said by a key spokesperson and/or a third party.

Include facts and statistics if appropriate.

Things to remember: Do you have a spokesperson ready to respond? Do you have all the facts and information? Do you have/need third party endorsement? Do you know your target publics? Have you researched the target journalists and media outlets?

Also keep in mind - Most of the time local journalists use media releases to write stories. When preparing a media release, ensure you are targeting the right journalist otherwise you will be wasting the journalist's time. Make sure the subject is newsworthy – it needs to be something in the public interest that is current, unusual, sensational, or will affect a significant number of people. Understand why you are writing the media release – what is the desired outcome of the media coverage?

Have you reinforced the fact that early learning services, like yours, are a vital part of Australia's education system?

Is your release clear to someone who knows nothing about the issue? No jargon. Can you scan it in a few seconds and get the general idea of the story? If not re-write it until you can.

Contact:

For more information, contact: Name and phone number where your media liaison person can be reached ALL the time.

Additional information

About the organisation or issue if necessary (e.g. if the topic is complex or the media may not be aware of the organisation). This is where you might include your website link and other reference information.

Media releases that are more than one page are *not* read!

Try and keep it to ONE page but if you have to go onto a second page include page numbers

e.g. p.1 of 2