



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children



2023
**EARLY
LEARNING
MATTERS
WEEK**

24-28 JULY 2023



GETTING YOUR MESSAGE HEARD: The Early Learning Matters Week Guide to Media Relations

When planning an event at your service for Early Learning Matters Week (24–28 July 2023), it may be advantageous to invite your local media to attend. Especially if you are hosting a visit from your local Member of Parliament (MP).

We know that engaging the media can be daunting so if you have any questions, or would like us to work on a story with you, please contact ECA, on earlylearningmatters@earlychildhood.org.au or 02 6242 1800.

As the national peak sector body for early childhood education and care in Australia, we would love to know how your service is celebrating Early Learning Matters Week. Please register your events with us irrespective of their size. Send us photos and videos of your event via

EarlyLearningMatters@earlychildhood.org.au or tag our dedicated [Facebook page](#). If you're using your social media channels to promote your event, please use the hashtag **#EarlyLearningMatters**.



Key messages

Early Childhood Australia understands that the first five years of life are crucial to children's cognitive, social and emotional development.

Early Learning Matters Week is a national celebration of the importance of high-quality, play-based early learning, and the difference a profession makes. This year's theme is 'Learning through connection', which invites services to consider and share the ways that 'connection' supports children's learning. Events will be run by various early childhood education and care (ECEC) services across the country to showcase what high-quality, play-based early learning looks like and the role it plays in shaping the lives of the young children.

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 is one important way of providing these benefits, especially for children experiencing disadvantage or vulnerability.

- 1.3 million children attend an approved early childhood education and care service.
- 339,016 children aged 4 or 5 years were enrolled in a preschool program.
- In 2021, children who did not receive any ECEC were twice as likely to be developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains when starting school than children that received some ECEC (40.7% compared to 20.3%).
- One in three children in Australia, live in 'childcare deserts' (areas where there are more than three children for every early childhood education service).
- The number of children (aged up to 5 years) using early learning services has risen over the past 10 years, from 39.4 per cent in 2013 to nearly 48 per cent in 2022.
- Children from low-income households, children from Indigenous backgrounds, children from non-English speaking backgrounds, and those with a disability are under-represented in early learning services.
- As of 1 May 2023, 89% of services were rated as meeting or exceeding the National Quality Standard.
- The median weekly cost of centre based early learning services has increased from \$431 in 2018 to \$565 in 2022.
- 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.

Included below is a tip-sheet and sample template of a post-event press release for use during the week.

TIPS FOR ENGAGING MEDIA

If your service or organisation has a media policy or team, ensure that you follow your internal processes before engaging the media.

Pre-event:

- Find your local journalists and media outlets. Contact details for your local newspaper or magazine can be found in the print version (usually on the first page or inside front cover) or on the 'Contact Us' page of their website.
- Target all local reporters, but also any journalists writing specifically on early education or education in general.
- Invite media (providing as much advance notice as possible). In your invitation, include key details of the event such as the date, time, location, and full name and designation of any important guests attending the event. Include a tentative run-sheet of your event (if available).
- Follow-up the media invite with a phone call to ensure they have received your invitation and have all the details they need.

During the event:

- Keep track of the media attending the event through a registration sheet to record their name and contact information. This will help you track the resulting media coverage.
- Photos:
 - Obtain consent prior to including images of children/families in your media release.
 - Take plenty of high-resolution photos with the name of your event and your service name in the background, if possible. Images of an activity in action, a group photo, or of the MP engaging with the children/educators get better traction.
 - Rename the image to incorporate names of key people in the photos with their position on the image (e.g. L–R Hon Min xxxx, Member for xxx; Ms xxxx, Service Director, XYZ Early Learning; Mr xxxx, Educator, XYZ Early Learning).

Post-event:

- Preparing a media release:
 - Have a strong headline and summarise key points.
 - Include the most important information (who, what, when, where, why and how) in your lead sentence.
 - Prioritise your messages and information from most important to least important.
 - Include quote(s) by a key spokesperson and/or a third party. If an MP is attending their quote will be the first one to go on the media release. Use ideally two, but no more than three quotes.
 - Include local facts and statistics from a credible source, if available.
 - Make sure the subject is newsworthy—it needs to be something in the public interest that is current or will affect a significant number of people.
 - Avoid jargon.
 - Include information about your service and the name and number of a contact person the journalist can reach out to in case they have additional questions.
 - Try and keep your media release to ONE page but if you have to go onto a second page include page numbers, e.g. p. 1 of 2.
- Share your media release with two to three high-res images from the event.
- Personalise and send the media release as individual emails to all journalists if possible.



SAMPLE TEMPLATE FOR MEDIA RELEASE¹

MEDIA RELEASE

(Insert publishing day and date)

<Insert service name> CELEBRATES EARLY LEARNING MATTERS WEEK

- **(Optional)** <Insert full name and title of the MP/guest of honour> engaged with the children and educators through <mention one key activity>.
- Over <insert number of participants> children/families/members of the community (please edit as appropriate for your event) participated.
- Add any other key highlight from the event.

<Insert service name> celebrated Early Learning Matters Week with over <insert total number of participants> children/families/members of the community (please edit as appropriate for your event), in the presence of <insert full name and title of the MP/guest of honour> at <insert location name if other than the centre>. Guided by this year's theme of '*Learning through connection*', the event aimed to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of early learning and the difference it makes to children's learning, development and wellbeing.

<Insert a brief paragraph about your event and include key activities/outcomes>.

If an MP attended, ask them to provide a quote to use in the release. Speaking at the occasion, <Insert full name and title of the MP/guest of honour> said: '<insert quote>'.

<Insert full name and designation of your spokesperson> **followed by a quote highlighting why Early Learning Matters.**

(Optional) <Include a quote from a family on why they chose to enrol their child at your service and why early learning matters to them>.

(Optional) Quote² attributable to Early Childhood Australia (ECA), CEO, Ms Samantha Page: 'Early Learning Matters Week is a fantastic opportunity to showcase how high-quality, play-based early childhood education and care builds a foundation for lifelong wellbeing and achievement.'

ENDS

About <Insert service name>: <Insert a brief (50–80 word) bio about your organisation with contact info>.

About Early Learning Matters Week: Early Learning Matters Week is a national celebration of the importance of early learning and aims to recognise and raise the profile of early childhood education and care in children's development and wellbeing. For more information, visit the website:

<https://www.earlylearningmatters.org.au>.

¹ If using the sample template, please ensure to remove/replace all highlighted, footnotes and directional text in grey font prior to sharing with media as it may affect the chances of the media release being picked up.

² Please note, this is a pre-approved quote for use during Early Learning Matters Week 2023 (24–28 July 2023) only. The quote cannot be altered, and any request for changes need to be submitted via media@earlychildhood.org.au for approval.