

# NSW Children's Services Forum

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30 October 2015

To whom it may concern,

## **RE: FACS REFORM OF TARGETED EARLIER INTERVENTION PROGRAMS**

### ***About the NSW Children's Services Forum***

The NSW Children's Services Forum is comprised of state-wide, not-for-profit community based children's service organisations. The Forum aims to:

- Promote the role of not for profit children's services;
- Advise governments on the quality, range and provision of children's services in NSW;
- Advocate for policies to improve the quality range and provision of children's services in NSW; and
- Engage in regular dialogue with other stakeholders in children's services;
- Promote principles of social justice in the planning, funding and delivery of children's services.

The current list of members of the NSW Children's Services Forum is attached to this submission.

### ***The reform of Targeted Earlier Intervention Programs***

Members of the NSW Children's Services Forum share a common concern in ensuring the best possible outcomes for children. In many cases there are strong linkages between the services provided by Forum members and those programs listed for review as part of the reform of Targeted Earlier Intervention Programs.

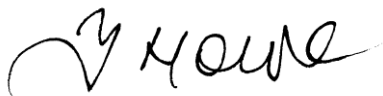
The Forum has a strong history of advocating for quality education and care in the early years of a child's life. In the lead up to the NSW Election, the Forum campaigned for greater investment in NSW education and care services to ensure all three- and four-year old children are able to access funded early education. This issue has since been incorporated into the NCOSS 1 in 7 Children in Poverty Campaign as one of five key measures that would improve the life outcomes of children born into poverty. The 1 in 7 Campaign Paper is attached to this submission.

Although early education sits outside the scope of this reform process, we consider it a critical enabler of a successful early intervention system. As noted in the ARACY paper *Better systems, better changes*, participation in early education is one of the strongest predictors of children's academic outcomes. But it is children from disadvantaged families, and children from Indigenous families and from non-English speaking backgrounds who are most likely to be missing out.

We believe there is considerable opportunity for early intervention services to work more closely with children services towards the goal of universal access. Further, there is scope to build on the potential for early education and care services to provide pathways through which developmental and other issues can be identified early and families connected into a more targeted service system. We therefore recommend that providers of early education and care services be invited to participate in district-level planning processes in order to further these synergies.

We would also like to ensure that the reform process does not result in the shifting of resources away from population-based initiatives, prevention and very early intervention programs. Rather, we believe that an injection of funding is needed to ensure the system is properly resourced, with the view to reducing the need for spending on more resource intensive interventions in the longer term.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tracy Howe'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'T' and 'H'.

Tracy Howe  
NCOSS CEO, on behalf of the NSW Children's Services Forum

### ***NSW Children's Services Forum Membership***

The NSW Children's Services Forum is comprised of state-wide, not-for-profit community based children's service organisations. Current members are:

- Australian Community Children's Services (NSW Branch)
- Benevolent Society, The
- CCSA
- Community Child Care NSW
- Contact Inc
- Council of Social Service of NSW (NCOSS)
- Early Childhood Australia (NSW)
- Ethnic Child Care, Family & Community Services Co-operative Ltd
- Goodstart Early Learning
- Gowrie NSW
- KU Children's Services
- Local Government NSW Children's Services
- Mobile Children's Services Association Inc
- Montessori Australia Council
- Montessori Australia Foundation
- Network of Community Activities
- NSW Family Day Care Association
- Occasional Child Care Association
- Playgroup NSW Inc
- SDN Children's Services
- Uniting Care Children, Young People and Families
- Uniting Care Children's Services