

## Christmas pay rise for 16,000 early childhood educators

Early childhood education and care workers at Australia's largest early education provider are set for a generous pre-Christmas pay rise, in a new enterprise agreement with Goodstart Early Learning.

Goodstart workers voted to approve the new agreement which will deliver a 10 per cent pay rise in December under the Albanese Government's Wage Justice for Early Childhood Education and Care.

The Goodstart agreement covers 16,000 early childhood educators in more than 650 centres across Australia who will be among the first workers in the sector to receive the wage rises.

The December 10 per cent wage rise will be followed by a further 5 per cent pay increase for Goodstart early childhood educators in December 2025.

The Goodstart agreement has occurred alongside a multi-employer agreement negotiated between 64 employers, the United Workers Union, other unions, and the Albanese Government that will extend to a further 12,000 workers.

The wage increases will result in pay rises for early childhood education and care workers of \$103.00 a week from December, increasing to \$155.00 a week from December 2025. Together with a likely award wage increase in July, a Cert III educator's pay is expected to increase by about \$10,000, from \$54,000 to \$64,000.

The wage increases recognise the importance of early childhood educators in getting children ready for school in a traditionally under-valued highly feminised workforce.

Commonwealth funding under the Wage Justice for Early Childhood Education and Care legislation will help childcare centres to deliver the pay rises for up to 200,000 eligible workers, including out of school care providers.

Under the arrangements, childcare centres must agree to a 4.4 per cent cap on fee increases over the next 12 months, in a cost-of-living relief measure designed to support working families.

### Quotes attributable to ACTU Assistant Secretary, Joseph Mitchell:

"Early childhood educators provide an enormous service to the community and this pay rise is long overdue. Early childhood educators have been taken for granted for too long and this pay boost comes off the back of years of campaigning that has proven beyond any doubt the quality, skill, and value of their work.

"Peter Dutton called this pay increase a 'one-off sugar hit' and failed to immediately back the pay boost.

"The second pay rise due under this agreement would be at risk under a Dutton Government.

"This is far more than a sugar hit; it brings recognition and respect to workers who do some of the hardest work in educating our children.

"For a workforce that has been neglected and taken for granted, this pay boost is long overdue.

"For many who have struggled to meet the cost of daily essentials, it will give them more stability in their lives."

### Quotes attributable to United Workers Union Early Education Director, Carolyn Smith:

"These agreements are a game-changer for early childhood education and care providers across Australia.

"This pay rise has been the missing piece in providing children and families the high-quality early education and care they need.

"Talk to any family that has experience, and they will tell you that early educators are leaving, staff turnover is high, and kids are at risk of missing out on quality education and care.

“The easiest, quickest and most reliable way for educators to get a 15 per cent pay rise is for their employer to sign the Union-approved sector agreement.”

**Quote attributable to Independent Education Union of Australia NSW/ACT Branch Secretary, Carol Matthews:**

“Today we’re seeing the ground-breaking outcome of unions and the federal government working together to lift pay and conditions across the long day care sector. These well-deserved increases recognise and reward the indispensable work of early childhood teachers in laying the vital foundations for children’s development and lifelong learning.”

**Quote attributable to AEU Victorian Branch President Meredith Peace:**

"Early childhood educators are essential workers, and it is crucial that we value the role they play in the early years. This pay increase is a massive relief for those in the sector, and we commend the providers that came to the table to sign off on this agreement with the Federal Government."

**ENDS**

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