



ACT Government
2005-2006 BUDGET

MEDIA RELEASE

12 HOURS OF PRESCHOOL FOR ACT'S 4 YEAR OLDS

The Stanhope Government has allocated almost \$8 million over four years to honour its election commitment to increase the provision of preschool education for eligible four year olds in the ACT from 10.5 hours per week to 12 hours per week.

“We have very solid evidence that children who have good early childhood experiences in stimulating nurturing environments have better outcomes throughout their lives. The extension of preschool hours will support choice for families” said Minister for Education and Training, Ms Katy Gallagher.

“The extended hours will be trialled in selected preschools from July 2005 and will be available in all preschools in 2006”.

Key outcomes from the proposal are that all ACT families with young children will have:

- increased service provision;
- increased early intervention options;
- greater choice and more affordable options for prior-to-school programs;
- longer day preschool programs which will assist them to use government preschools and release spaces at child care centres to other families; and,
- a more attractive option for those parents/carers of young children with special needs.

“Family structures and support needs have changed significantly with an increase in workforce participation and single parent families. These changes highlight the importance of early childhood programs that are accessible and supportive of children’s development in the early years.”

“The increase in workforce participation also impacts on the demand for full day childcare places. Longer preschool hours will assist young families by providing more accessible and affordable early childhood programs of longer duration,” Ms Gallagher concluded.

Statement ends