Asked by Miss Lee MLA:

In relation to: Early Years Learning Framework

1. What assessment is done at the beginning of the kindergarten year to assess the reading level of students starting school?
2. What percentage of students enter kindergarten able to read?
3. What percentage of students enter year 1 able to read?
4. What percentage of students enter Year 7 unable to read proficiently?
5. Is any assessment made either within each school, or at Directorate level, of the progress of students who start kindergarten after a year of pre-school and those who don’t?
   5a. If so, what types of assessment are made, and how are they made?
   5b. If not, why not?

Yvette Berry MLA: The answer to the Member’s question is as follows:

1. Performance Indicators in Primary School (PIPS) assesses the early literacy and numeracy skills of students at the beginning of term 1 and the start of term 4 of kindergarten. The purpose is to explore literacy and numeracy skills students have when they start school so that appropriate learning programs are prepared and to assess progress later in the year. Teachers work with students one-to-one, in front of a computer to administer the assessment. Reports are provided for parents at the end of term 1 and term 4. Schools have access to online results and reports to assist with planning and teaching.
2. There is no national recognised standard of reading proficiency for kindergarten students.
3. There is no national recognised standard of reading proficiency for year 1 students.
4. There is no national recognised standard of reading proficiency for year 7 students.
5. Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics analysis (Report on government Services 2018, 2017) approximately 99% of ACT children were enrolled in preschool programs in 2017 and 98% in 2016. There are insufficient children to compare the progress of students who don’t start kindergarten after a year of preschool with those who start kindergarten after a year of pre-school. In public schools, the feedback to teachers following the PIPS retest in term 4 includes an indication of the growth that has taken place during the kindergarten year in reading and mathematics.

- Longitudinal studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of high-quality, focused preschool programs in reducing the effects of social disadvantage, developing children’s social competency and emotional health, and preparing children for a successful transition to school;
- Children living in disadvantaged communities, those not proficient in English, and Indigenous children were identified as particularly vulnerable and most likely to benefit from high-quality preschool programs;
- Number of months of attendance at preschool is related to better intellectual development and improved independence, concentration and sociability; and,
- Stand-alone preschools and day care with preschool programs were both reported to promote cognitive and social development benefits, with evidence of improved performance in standardised tests in the early years of primary school.