



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2023-2024

Mr Mark Parton MLA (Chair), Ms Jo Clay MLA (Deputy Chair),
Mr Michael Pettersson MLA

With ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Mr Jeremy Hanson MLA: To ask the Minister for Early Childhood Development

Ref: Budget Statement F, Budget Outlook

Hearing Date: 21 July 2023

In relation to: Early Childhood Development and Early childhood 3-year program

In relation to the early childhood 3-year program, can the Directorate provide:

Under Phase 1:

1. How many places are available during the current term?
2. How are those places determined?
3. What is the annual cost of this program:
 - a. Per annum in total and
 - b. Per child per annum?

For Phase 2:

1. How many places will be available under this program?
2. When will the program be implemented?
3. What is the annual cost of this program
 - a. Per annum in total and
 - b. Per child per annum?

For Phase 3:

1. How many places will be available under this program?
2. When will the program be implemented?
3. What is the annual cost of this program
 - a. Per annum in total and
 - b. Per child per annum?

Minister Yvette Berry MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows: –

In relation to the early childhood 3-year program, I provide the following:

Under Phase 1:

1. Phase 1 refers to the provision of 15 hours per week of quality early childhood and care to three-year-old children most in need – those experiencing disadvantage and vulnerability. There are places for up to 500 three-year-olds in this program.
2. Places are determined via the Education Directorate's Placement Pathway Group which receives referrals for priority three-year-olds and identifies a placement that best meets their needs.
3.
 - a. The annual budgeted cost of this program is approximately \$6 million in 2023-24 and indexed in subsequent out years.

- b. The annual actual cost per child is \$11,766 in 2023 (indexed in subsequent out years) for direct cost of service delivery.¹

For Phase 2:

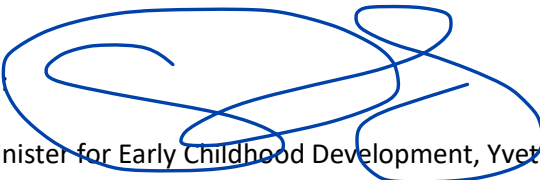
1. Phase 2 refers to the universal provision of one day per week of free preschool. All three-year-old ACT children are eligible.
2. The program commences in 2024.
 - a. The annual budgeted cost of this program is approximately \$13.5 million in 2023-24 and indexed in subsequent out years.²
 - b. The annual cost per child is \$2,500 in 2024 (indexed in subsequent out years) for direct cost of service delivery.³

For Phase 3:

1. Phase 3 refers to the ACT Government's commitment, under [Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT](#), to work towards providing 15 hours per week, 600 hours per year, of free universal early childhood education for all three-year-olds.
2. The expansion to 600 hours per year remains subject to a future decision of Government.
3.
 - a. See above.
 - b. See above.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2023-2024

Signature



Date:

03/08/24

By the Minister for Early Childhood Development, Yvette Berry MLA

¹ While the program budget is allocated on a financial year basis, the program is delivered on a calendar year basis, with funding levels adjusted at the start of each calendar year. This program does not attract Child Care Subsidy (CCS), meaning per child costs are not comparable with the universal provision in Phase 2.

² The 2023-24 Budget Statement shows a cost of \$7.732 million as the initiative will begin in 2024 (halfway through the financial year).

³ While the program budget is allocated on a financial year basis, the program is delivered on a calendar year basis, with funding levels adjusted at the start of each calendar year. The per child amount also does not include the broader sector supports and administration required to deliver this initiative. These amounts are captured in the annual budgeted cost of the program.