



Ministerial Media Statements

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Recent Statements



Colin Barnett
Premier; Minister for State Development



Elizabeth Constable
Minister for Education

Tue 20 March, 2012

New centres to give children the best start in life

Portfolio: Premier, Education

- **Ten new Child and Parent Centres to provide easy access to vital services**
- **Centres at public schools to provide integrated services combining education, health, parenting and playgroups to care for children**
- **Additional 75 schools to receive new grants of up to \$10,000 for support programs**

The State Government will open 10 new Child and Parent Centres across Western Australia to provide vital services to families with young children at risk, Premier Colin Barnett and Education Minister Liz Constable announced today.

"Back in December 2010, I announced that this Government would use some of the State's growing prosperity to establish Child and Parent Centres on school sites to help those children and parents who most need support in closing the gap between performance and potential," Mr Barnett said.

"These centres, to be located on public school sites in areas with the highest concentration of developmentally vulnerable children, will provide fundamental services to help young children develop into healthy and well educated young people.

"The State Government will invest \$28.8million in the next four years to establish the centres and provide integrated services for children and parents.

"We have learned from the successes of various models where parents and teachers work together including Challis Early Childhood Education Centre in Armadale, Roseworth Primary School in Girrawheen and Midvale Primary School, where a range of services are already integrated to help families, and will build on these.

"The new Child and Parent Centres herald a new era in early childhood services for Western Australian families."

Dr Constable said each centre would develop a suite of services and programs to meet the needs of local families.

"Schools are welcoming places, and the best place to assess and help children's development," she said.

"Parents will be able to come to the school and ask for advice. The programs and services on offer will be family friendly."

These might include:

- Child health checks and referrals by a nurse
- Parenting information and programs
- Student assessment referrals, counselling and family support delivered by school psychologists
- Playgroups and early learning programs with parental involvement
- Advice on supporting children's physical, cognitive, language and social and emotional development
- Allied health services such as occupational therapy, speech therapy and physiotherapy

"The types of services included on each site will be determined by the needs of the local community, but the centres will each bring together health, education and child and family support professionals, with the aim of ensuring every child has access to people and programs that will benefit their development, health and learning outcomes," Dr Constable said.

The centres would allow professionals to:

- Provide services targeted to the specific needs of individual families
- Identify and engage with 'at risk' children and their parents
- Work to ensure the proper, healthy development of young children
- Improve learning outcomes and school attendance
- Provide a welcoming space with a range of easily accessible specialists
- Better support for parents to help nurture their children

Each centre will receive \$200,000 per annum to fund additional programs, services and operational costs. There will be opportunities for non-government organisations such as The Smith Family to provide programs and services at the centres, with the co-ordination of services to be managed where appropriate, by not-for-profit organisations.

"It is vital that we deliver the best possible start in life to the children of Western Australia and the new Child and Parent Centres will help parents do just that," Dr Constable said.

"It is unequivocal. In the first few years of life children must get the right early education, they must receive health checks in order to allow specialists to intervene if there are any issues.

"By making these types of services easily accessible to parents, we will be able to make a difference during the most important years of a child's life - the earliest years.

"This is about giving all children a fair start in life and removing barriers to success and wellbeing."

As well as the 10 centres, an additional 75 primary schools in low socioeconomic areas would be eligible for an annual Early Years Service Grant of up to \$10,000 each, starting in 2013.

"These new grants will allow schools to better support programs for children aged four and under," Dr Constable said.

"Up until now, schools have mostly catered for school-aged children only. But we know that children begin learning from birth, and we need to ensure that every child's early years are enriched with learning.

"Child and Parent Centres will allow a range of professionals to work together to deliver continuity in support to children and families and intervention when needed. Their location on public school sites recognises the central role primary schools play in communities.

"All parents want the best for their children. These centres will help parents raise successful, happy and healthy children."

Fact File

- **Departments of Education; and Health and the Department for Communities will work together to deliver fundamental services at each Child and Parent Centre**
- **Each centre to have a co-ordinator commencing in the second half of this year. They will begin working with their communities and agencies in 2012**

- **Centres will build on the success of the Independent Public Schools model**

Premier's office - 6552 5000

Education Minister's office - 6552 5700

The 10 Child and Parent Centres to open for the beginning of the 2014 and 2015 school years are:

Child and Parent Centres	Suburb
Challis Early Childhood Education Centre	Armadale
Neerabup Primary School	Banksia Grove
Roseworth Primary School	Girrawheen
Westminster Junior Primary School	Westminster
Dudley Park Primary School	Mandurah
Carey Park Primary School	Carey Park
South Hedland Primary School	South Hedland
Brookman Primary School	Langford
Calista Primary School	Calista
Warriapendi Primary School	Balga

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