Facing the Facts about the early years

The best start possible for every child

We all know that early childhood is a critical time that lays the foundation for a child's future development, wellbeing and learning.

Recognising this, the SSTUWA advocates for a comprehensive, whole-of-system approach to early childhood education and care.

This approach aims to improve school readiness, provide effective early intervention – particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds – and provide smooth transitions into (and success during) the early years of school education.

Universal access to quality early learning

Universal access to affordable, high-quality early learning opportunities is essential. Too many kids are missing out. We need collaboration between the WA government and the Commonwealth to ensure that every child, regardless of their socio-economic background, has access to early education. Quality early learning experiences are crucial for cognitive, social and emotional development, setting the stage for lifelong learning and success.

Support for disadvantaged children

Children from disadvantaged backgrounds often face significant barriers to learning. The SSTUWA calls for targeted support through play-based education in small groups, led by qualified educators. Play-based learning is particularly effective in fostering creativity, problem-solving skills and social interactions. By focusing on small group settings, educators can provide personalised attention and support, helping each child to thrive. For Aboriginal children – and their families – these settings must be culturally safe and responsive.

Coherent human services policies

Addressing educational disadvantage requires more than just changes within the education system. The SSTUWA advocates for coherent human services policies aimed at reducing family and child poverty. These policies should address the root causes of disadvantage, providing families with the resources and support they need to create stable, nurturing environments for their children. Reducing poverty and its associated stresses can significantly improve children's readiness for school and their overall wellbeing.

Enhanced child development services

Improving child development services is another key priority. The SSTUWA calls for the establishment of more child and parent centres, which offer a range of services to support physical and mental health, wellbeing, parent support and engagement and learning. Centres can provide crucial early intervention services, helping to identify and address developmental delays or other issues before they become more significant problems. By supporting both children and their parents, centres play a vital role in fostering healthy development and strong family bonds. By working closely with schools they foster strong transition, trusting relationships and early achievement.

Expansion of parenting programs

Parenting programs are essential for equipping parents with the skills and knowledge they need to support their children's development. The SSTUWA is calling for the expansion of these programs, ensuring that all parents have access to the resources they need. Effective parenting programs can help parents to understand child development, manage behaviour and create positive learning environments at home.

A joined-up response across government

The complexity of children's needs, particularly in the early years, requires a coordinated response across various sectors of government. The SSTUWA calls for a joined-up approach that brings together education, health, social services and other relevant sectors. By working together, these sectors can provide comprehensive support to children and families, addressing the multiple factors that influence school readiness and educational outcomes.

Long-term benefits

Investing in early childhood education and support services has far-reaching implications. Better support for infants and young children can lead to improved school engagement and educational achievement, reducing the likelihood of future social and economic disadvantage. This, in turn, can decrease costs across all human services, as fewer resources are needed to address issues that could have been prevented through early intervention.

Providing the best start possible for every child requires a holistic, integrated approach that addresses the diverse needs of children and families. It's time to face the fact that the measures advocated by the SSTUWA are essential to ensure that all children have the opportunity to thrive, laying the foundation for a brighter future for individuals and communities alike.



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