

Toy Libraries Australia supports the Thrive by Five Early Childhood Guarantee Bill 2024

May 2024

Why we support the Bill

The evidence for investing in the early years is undeniable¹. A good start in the first 1000 days can set a child up for life. Australia has pockets of excellent early years services, however access to the services that families need - be that maternal and child health care, affordable 3- and 4-year old preschool, paid parental leave, or toy libraries - is patchy, with families who most need it in regional areas, growth areas and lower socio-economic communities missing out. It is also a system that many parents find difficult to navigate, with a lack of coordination between social, health, disability and education services. This needs to change.

All children and families, no matter where they live deserve access to a high-quality early childhood development system. Toy Libraries Australia supports this being achieved through the legislation of a universal Early Childhood Guarantee. We urge all parties to support this important legislation.

About toy libraries

Toy libraries are a magical space where children and adults come together to celebrate and connect through play.

A toy library enables families to borrow a large variety of educational toys, games, puzzles, and equipment in a process like that of a book library. These toys suit children aged from birth to primary school and beyond. Toy Libraries Australia's members have a specific focus on promoting the educational value of play for younger children, encouraging positive adult/child interactions through play, and creating strong community connections in a setting that encourages the sustainable use of resources.

There are 380 toy libraries across Australia, with over 130,000 people using a toy library each year. Our member toy libraries operate in a variety of formats and settings, but most are community organisations run primarily by volunteers.

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¹ For example: Australian Government Department of Social Services. (2024). *The Draft Early Years Strategy 2024-2034*.