



**Sarah Mitchell**

Minister for Early Childhood Education  
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs  
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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **HISTORIC HIGH: MORE CHILDREN ATTENDING PRESCHOOL FOR 600 HOURS IN NSW THAN EVER BEFORE**

The number of children in NSW undertaking 600 hours of preschool each year has increased by more than 40 per cent in the last year as a result of the NSW Government's Start Strong program.

Minister for Early Childhood Education Sarah Mitchell has welcomed the results from the 2017 Preschool Census and said the success can be attributed to the fact more money than ever is being invested into early childhood education in NSW.

"This Government is determined for every child in NSW to get the best start in life and the first step is ensuring they all have access to early childhood education – that's why the NSW Government's Start Strong program is reducing fees, improving quality and strengthening the early childhood workforce," Ms Mitchell said.

The \$115 million Start Strong program was extended to 2021 with a further \$217 million in funding over four years announced in the 2017-18 NSW budget.

"Of all children aged four and above in the Preschool Census, 91 per cent are now enrolled for more than 600 hours of early childhood education. This is a significant increase from 66 per cent in 2016-17."

The 2017 Preschool Census is the first since the implementation of the Start Strong reforms, with 737 community preschools across the state completing the Census.

Following the significant changes to the preschool funding policy under Start Strong, Minister Mitchell said last year's census results demonstrated these policy changes had achieved their objectives.

"Not only has Start Strong significantly reduced average daily fees by 25 per cent, we now have more children than ever participating in 600 hours of preschool in NSW. This is proof the Start Strong program is working and I am proud this Government is delivering for the children and families of this state," she said.

More information in the NSW Government's Start Strong program can be found at <https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/operating-an-early-childhood-education-service/grants-and-funded-programs/start-strong>

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