




Speech By  
**Tracy Davis**

**MEMBER FOR ASPLEY**

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Record of Proceedings, 19 April 2016

**MOTION: EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

 **Ms DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (6.21 pm): I rise in support of the motion moved by the member for Everton. Like the member for Everton and the member for Mount Ommaney, I have been contacted by many parents concerned about their children with disabilities accessing ECDPs and about whether, under the NDIS, their children will have the choice to be part of this educational program. As we know, choice and control are the guiding principles of the NDIS.

On hearing from parents about their concerns, I immediately contacted the National Disability Insurance Agency to confirm my understanding of the agency's position on whether a program like the ECDP would attract funding for participants. It was made very clear to me during that conversation that the NDIS will provide early intervention supports, including therapy support, but will not provide funding for education, for example learning to read; that would be the responsibility of the state. Tonight's debate is to ensure that Queensland children with a diagnosed disability or a suspected disability can continue to have access to an ECDP, should they choose, beyond 2020.

There is an explicit right set out in article 23 of the charter of the rights of the child, to which we are a signatory—

**Ms Jones:** Did you say that at cabinet?

**Ms DAVIS:** I repeat for the minister: we are a signatory to that. Perhaps she might like to refer to it. Children who have any disability should receive—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Order! Member for Aspley, take your seat for a second. We will not have conversations across the chamber. Please direct all your conversations through the chair. I say that to both sides of the House.

**Ms DAVIS:** Children who have any kind of disability should receive special care and support so that they can live a full and independent life. Further, articles 3, 4, 6 and 28 support the rights of the child to live a full life and for government to ensure these rights are available to children. I am a bit concerned that the Labor government are not too familiar with the charter of the rights of the child because history shows us that they left a very fine mess in the area of child protection services. They ought to get across it pretty quickly because they will be eroding the fundamental rights of children with a disability when they axe ECDPs in 2020.

The ECDPs across the state—and there are around a hundred of those programs operating—provide support to children up to five years of age who have significant support needs arising from a diagnosed or suspected disability. Parents right around the state have reached out to say that our ECDPs cannot be closed down. They have told us that, whilst the minister has indicated they will operate until 2020, they are unsure whether or not their children will be supported through ECDPs should the child receive an individualised package through the NDIS. They are very concerned that this could have devastating consequences for their child's development and future wellbeing.

The Palaszczuk government's decision is distressing so many parents across Queensland who value the education program that is assisting their child to develop the necessary skills for a full life. This government should stand up for children with disabilities and do the right thing: give certainty to parents—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Ms Jones** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members. Minister, you will have a chance shortly.

**Ms DAVIS:**—that ECDPs will remain untouched beyond 2020 and restore the fundamental rights of the child in doing so. If ECDPs are axed then this government and its department of education will fail all of those children with disability, who deserve a fair start to their education and who have rights to a full, rewarding and connected life.

On the weekend the member for Everton and I did meet with very distressed parents regarding the future of the ECDPs in Townsville. Also present was a speech therapist—

**Ms Jones** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Minister for Education, I warn you under standing order 253A. Please desist from your interjections.

**Ms DAVIS:** Also present was a speech therapist and a representative from the early childhood sector who worked in collaboration with ECDPs. One of the most distressing parts of the meeting that we had was hearing a story from one of the parents who has two children with ASD—two boys. What she was very concerned about was that her youngest son would not be able to continue his education through the ECDPs. Her son had been captured under the trial in Townsville and she was so concerned that her son would not be able to access the ECDP she was considering not progressing to the planning stage for her child to be eligible under the NDIS. This is absolutely incredible!

These are real families; these are real children. This is a program that supports them and helps them. Those opposite need to get with the program to ensure that those families can continue to have access now and many more can have access into the future.