



Speech By  
**Hon. Grace Grace**


**MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 12 June 2019

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Budget, Education**

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (9.50 am): The Palaszczuk government has a proven track record of supporting school students with a disability, and I am proud that the 2019-20 budget continues this support. Last week I was pleased to join the Premier to announce that the budget would include a four-year, \$136.2 million funding boost to provide additional teachers and teacher aides in state school special education services across Queensland.

The number of students with a disability enrolled in Queensland is expected to grow by around four per cent over the next five years compared with around 1.5 per cent in mainstream schooling. Some students with a disability require one-on-one interaction with teachers while other students may be more appropriately taught in small group settings. The additional funding, which equates to a boost of around 150 teachers and 90 teacher aides next year alone, will ensure these students have the specialist support they need. The budget also includes funding for a new special school at Palmview on the Sunshine Coast and to complete construction of a new special school at Caboolture which is due to open next year. For the information of the House, primary schools generally enrol right across from prep to year 6 in both mainstream and special schools.

I am also very pleased to announce today that the budget includes \$63.6 million funding over four years to continue early childhood development programs and services across Queensland. I was pleased to visit an early childhood development program in Caboolture East with the Minister for Police earlier this year to see some of the great work being done by the dedicated teachers, teacher aides, staff and of course parents and carers. I also want to acknowledge the advocacy of the members for Redlands and Keppel as well as the Minister for Disability Services and Seniors for the continuation of this funding.

Early childhood development programs, ECDPs, provide early intervention to children with a disability under five years of age who require intensive, multidisciplinary programs. The programs help these children to develop skills and behaviours to maximise their participation in schooling. This continuation of funding will ensure these services receive tailored support from teachers and teacher aides to help them develop the knowledge and skills they need as they prepare for the important transition to school. ECDPs will remain available to eligible children who have been diagnosed or are suspected of having certain disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disability, hearing impairment, physical impairment, speech language impairment or vision impairment and others as well. There are currently around 1,770 children registered at ECDPs across Queensland. This funding commitment will mean that all 102 ECDPs will remain open for registrations, which are largely driven by local needs and the availability of other supports and services in the community.

I can also announce today that the Department of Education will provide ECDPs with around \$500,000 in funding for professional development of staff. This investment ensures ECDPs will continue to provide high-quality educational support for the young children who access their services. The Palaszczuk government will continue to work hard to ensure that all Queensland kids, including those with special needs, receive a world-class education, giving every child a great start.