



the greatest gift you can give
a child is a good beginning

Media Release

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**ARACY Report Card confirms many Australian children get a poor start in life,
yet progress is being made, says national charity**

Too many Australian children still do not have a good beginning in life because of the wide range of difficulties parents face during children's early years, according to a national charity that provides practical, community-based support and programs for parents and young children.

Commenting on today's Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) Report Card on children's wellbeing, Good Beginnings Australia national director Jayne Meyer Tucker said the report quantifies and highlights the challenges already familiar to non-government organisations (NGOs) working with children and families.

"Good Beginnings is particularly concerned with the wellbeing of babies and young children and their parents, because a child's early years are the most crucial in ensuring they can grow into well adjusted, educated, healthy, productive, caring adults," Ms Meyer Tucker said.

"Through Good Beginnings' 29 programs around Australia, our staff and volunteers see evidence every day that there is work to be done in supporting, educating and encouraging parents to provide them with the knowledge, practical skills, community networks and confidence to raise their children well.

"Yet while some of the Report Card's statistics are alarming, it's important to recognise that NGOs like Good Beginnings are already making a significant difference to Australian mums, dads and children, improving the chances of young Australians getting a good beginning," she said.

Ms Meyer Tucker, whose experience in the sector most recently included six years as director of the United Kingdom's Sure Start program, said Good Beginnings hoped to expand its programs further and was encouraged by the Rudd government's supportive stance for the sector.

"We are also heartened by the positive outcomes Good Beginnings is achieving for the clients in its programs, which range from parenting education, fathering initiatives and supported play groups to intensive family support and culturally sensitive programs in Indigenous communities," she said.

"Children are a worthy investment. Evidence shows that good quality early childhood intervention programs addressing parenting and early learning experiences for children provide life-time returns on investment of 17 per cent each year."

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For further information on Good Beginnings, visit www.goodbeginnings.net.au

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