

Media Release



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Free online portal brings relief to pre-schoolers

HIGH QUALITY CONTENT BASED ON THE LATEST RESEARCH

Families who missed out on opportunities to play and learn with their pre-school children during the Pandemic are about to have access to some high-quality play experiences online, thanks to Early Start at the University of Wollongong (UOW).

A new free online portal is launching this week to satisfy a need for quality, evidence-based early childhood learning resources, available freely and online.

Play & Learn Together was created by Early Start with partners Early Childhood Australia and Playgroup Australia. The platform has been made possible with generous support from The Ian Potter Foundation.

The initiative will launch at the end of March.

The portal features curated content designed to support families and carers with young children's learning in the home environment, with a focus on evidence-informed, play-based learning and the family's role in early development.

Early Start CEO Anita Kumar states, "Resilience is needed now more than ever, and play can be an integral pathway to support children's wellbeing and development. Through this free platform we hope to support children, families and educators in creating fun, home learning environments focussed on play-based learning. All the activities are underpinned by the latest research, and connect to the Early Years Learning Framework and WHO guidelines."

She said the portal offered family and early childhood educators several advantages, including:

- High quality content based on the latest research
- Content designed with the needs of families from Aboriginal and other cultural backgrounds at the forefront
- Regularly updated and multimodal content, catering to the differing needs or educational background of families.
- Content that can be customised for individuals and optimised for use across mobile devices and desktop computers

This is reinforced by **Samantha Page, CEO, Early Childhood Australia**, "Young children are learning all the time; they are curious and excited to understand the world around them. Every parent wants to support their child to learn and play, and play-based learning really is the best way to do that. This website can help with ideas about play-based activities and tips for guiding children as they follow their interests and establish routines."

“The launch of the Play and Learn Together site is timely,” states **Nadene Lee, CEO, Playgroup NSW**. “The pandemic has highlighted the need for families to have access to early learning support for their children, and quality, evidence-based play resources. This also assists families to raise their young children and create a rich home learning environment. The wealth of knowledge and passion that has gone into producing this platform, between Ian Potter, University of Wollongong, Early Childhood Australia, Playgroup Australia and Playgroup organisations across Australia, is representative of how our impact can expand through partnerships.”

MEDIA NOTES

- Early Start CEO Anita Kumar is available for media interview via the contact details below or through the UOW Media Office.

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