

# B4 Submission- Independent Review of Education in Tasmania Public Consultation Paper

Attention: Vicki Bayliss  
Independent Reviewer  
[contact@ier.tas.gov.au](mailto:contact@ier.tas.gov.au)

## B4 Submission- Independent Review of Education in Tasmania Public Consultation Draft

As B4 Chair I welcome the opportunity to provide the B4 Early Years Coalition (B4) submission to the Independent Review of Education in Tasmania Public Consultation Draft.

The B4 Early Years Coalition (B4) was announced by then Minister for Education in June 2016, as part of the Tasmanian Government's commitment to provide quality early learning and developmental experiences for all young children. B4 also supports and has a role in the governments "It takes a Tasmanian Village: Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy" (the Strategy) and Lifting Literacy Action Plan.

The name B4 represents the early years of a child's life from pregnancy to age four, the years 'before' a child begins full-time school. B4 also represents the time before birth, recognising the importance of this very early stage of development. B4 is based on the 'collective impact' model (Kania and Kramer, 2011) where organisations and individuals from across diverse sectors work together to address social issues and drive change across the early years.

For further information or clarification please do not hesitate to contact through the B4 Support Team at [b4@decyp.tas.edu.au](mailto:b4@decyp.tas.edu.au) or 03 616 5666.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Di Nailon".

Dr Di Nailon OAM  
B4 Chair  
14 October 2024

*In Tasmania, there is already significant investment and support in place for family engagement during the early years before school starts, aimed at better preparing children and their families for schooling. The early childhood education and care sector plays an important part in this, together with State Government initiatives and programs.*

*The Review's Terms of Reference ask it to focus on Kindergarten to Year 12, and examining early childhood education and care is out of scope. However, the Review highlights the important role these services and programs play in engaging families and children in learning that establishes the foundations for learning into the early schooling years. There are important lessons to be learned from Tasmania's early years engagement approach, which demonstrates how strong partnerships between families, educators and communities promote the value of education.*

Excerpt from Consultation Paper p.6

The B4 Early Years Coalition notes the scope of the review is from kindergarten to Year 12. A scope which B4 argues is discordant with current research and evidence on the early years.

While B4 fully supports the current commitments and work being done in the early years across Tasmania, we highlight Tasmania's Australian Early Years Development Census (AEDC) results which show categorically, that 1 in 5 children across Tasmania are arriving at school without the necessary foundations to learn, being developmentally vulnerable in one or more domains.

This is a statistic that has not altered significantly since 2009 when the first AEDC data was collected.

#### **AEDC Data - Tasmania<sup>1</sup>**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2021</b>
Vuln 1	21.8%	21.5%	21.0%	21.5%	23.2%
Vuln 2	10.8%	10.1%	10.7%	10.7%	11.9%

It is anticipated that 2024 data will demonstrate an increase in levels of vulnerability as this window of data collection will fully capture the children most affected by COVID and its impacts during their early years. As stated by the Centre for Community Child Health, in exploring disadvantage,

*"The COVID -19 pandemic has likely increased existing disadvantage for these children, contributing to worsened outcomes and increased inequity"<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Source [AEDC](#)

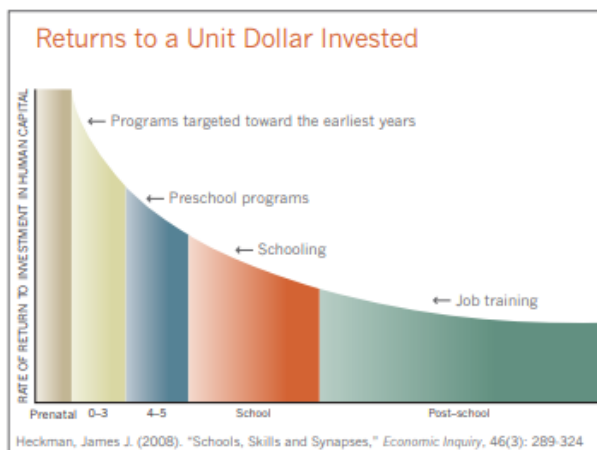
<sup>2</sup> Source: [CCCH-Measuring-Disadvantage-report-phase2.pdf](#)

Research also demonstrates that when children start school without the foundations necessary to learn and develop, the gap between those who thrive in school and those who continue to fall behind increases exponentially.

*That is, children who start behind stay behind—they are rarely able to make up the lost ground.<sup>3</sup>*

As interventions to narrow this gap are more expensive and less effective as children age, the early years are crucial to narrowing this gap<sup>4</sup>.

By ignoring this key lever, being the early years, to school and later life success this Review is creating a gap in where solutions need to be focused, and where the government and others can get the greatest return for their investment.



Early childhood education is an efficient and effective investment for economic and workforce development. The earlier the investment, the greater the return on investment.

in the field we are not shifting the percentage of children who arrive at school without the skills, knowledge, and experiences for success, as reflected in Tasmanians AEDC results.

The Review when exploring *Strengthening supports and engagement for all learners at all stages of their education* highlights the key foundation provided by the early

The Heckman equation remains one of the key drivers in the rationale for early investment<sup>5</sup>. The highest rate of return comes from investing as early as possible, with an emphasis placed on the first 1000 days acknowledging skills beget skills in a complementary and dynamic way. The evidence clearly indicates that investment in early childhood generates positive returns, for the child, the family and the wider Tasmanian community.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the investment in a range of services and supports, and the passionate and dedicated professionals

<sup>3</sup> Source: Garcia E. & Weiss E. 2017 Educational inequalities at the school starting gate. Economic Policy Institute

<sup>4</sup> Source [Inequality-in-early-years-education.pdf \(suttontrust.com\)](https://suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/F_Inequality-in-early-years-education.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Source [https://heckmanequation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/F\\_HeckmanDeficitPieceCUSTOM-Generic\\_052714-3.pdf](https://heckmanequation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/F_HeckmanDeficitPieceCUSTOM-Generic_052714-3.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Source <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7418662/>



years noting however that this is not always the case for all students. Ensuring a gap is already created from the commencement of schooling.

The transition from early years services and supports on entering school is also often acknowledged as one where families facing vulnerabilities or requiring supports feel a distinct shift in what and how services and supports are provided. Often “ageing out” of early years services the transition for many families and their children from a supportive wrap around service system experienced in the early years often comes to a dramatic stop. For families who experience periods of vulnerability this transition can be difficult with limited options and awareness of how to reengage with alternate support service/s for themselves and their children.

B4 has provided this submission to highlight and reinforce the overwhelming research and evidence that clearly points to the need that for Tasmania to change the outcomes of the education system it must change outcomes in the early years.

By its exclusion from scope of this review it removes a critical window of opportunity to influence change.