Improving Early Childhood Outcomes

A national survey that will help strengthen services and resources for the early childhood sector is being conducted in the Northern Territory.

The Education Minister Paul Henderson visited Karama Primary School today where transition teachers have completed the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI).

He said the survey is about measuring the services provided to our children that help mould them before they enter school.

“Building a solid foundation provides our children with the best chance of educational success, health and well being,” Mr Henderson said.

“The information gathered will help build a better picture of the health and development of our youngsters.

“It’s well known that children are shaped in their early years and investing in resources and services for children of a young age, across a range of sectors, will bring life-long benefits.

“With the AEDI results, communities and governments can develop and better target services to help children have the best possible start in life.

“AEDI also helps parents understand how their children are doing developmentally compared to children nationally and in other communities within the Territory.”

The AEDI survey is made up of more than 100 questions in five development areas – physical health and wellbeing; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive skills; communication skills and general knowledge.

Teachers complete the AEDI survey based on their knowledge of the children in their class.

Mr Henderson said in recognition of the need for all communities to have data on early childhood development, the Federal Government has provided $15.9 million to roll out the AEDI nationally as part of its Education Revolution program.

He said the Department of Education and Training is working with the Menzies School of Health Research and other organisations on an Indigenous pilot study. As part of this study, additional support is being provided to Palmerston, Gunbalanya, Maningrida and schools in the Warlpiri Triangle to investigate the best ways to report AEDI results back to Indigenous communities.

The AEDI survey will be undertaken in all Territory schools throughout this month.

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