

**Probe Into Teen Trans Autism Rate**

**Health ministers in charge of children's transgender clinics across Australia should take responsibility for investigating the overrepresentation of teenage patients with autism, according to federal Health Minister Greg Hunt.**

This follows reports that an authority on Asperger's wants an inquiry into the autism trend, and revelations that the country's biggest gender clinic at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne had 45% of a group of chiefly female-born teenagers showing autism features on a screening test.

Mr Hunt will ask state health ministers to examine new, more cautious treatment advice and warnings adopted by Britain's National Health System for trans-identifying under-18s and parents deciding on life-altering medical interventions.

There is international concern about the safety and ethics of medicalisation of vulnerable children and teens who do not fit gender stereotypes.

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**This week's stories from the media**

- Effect of the end of Jobkeeper
- Probe into teen trans autism rate
- Relying solely on ATAR profoundly distorts experience
- Student teachers must pass literacy and numeracy test
- We can't flatten curve for key mathematics
- Inquiry into the value of teachers
- Study casts doubt on Ipad benefits

**How Parents And Childcare Workers Will Be Affected By The End Of Jobkeeper**

**Millions of Australians will not get an extension on the Federal Government's free childcare offering due to coronavirus beyond June, Prime Minister Scott Morrison has announced.**

Federal Education Minister Dan Tehan has announced the scheme introduced in April due to the COVID-19 pandemic will come to an end on July 12, with a return to child care subsidy program on July 13.

**What does it mean for childcare workers?**

The JobKeeper payment for childcare workers will be stopped.

Instead the government will introduce a \$708 million support package that will require a guaranteed level of employment for workers coming off JobKeeper.

Childcare workers will receive transitional payments, which the government argues are only slightly less than wage subsidies.

Childcare services will receive this transitional payment from July 20 that Education Minister Dan Tehan predicts will be a "tiny bit" less than JobKeeper.

**What does it mean for parents?**

Under the changes, parents will have to go back to paying childcare fees again from July 13 as demand grows for services.

The Child Care Subsidy will be reintroduced but the criteria for subsidised care for families hit by the coronavirus downturn will be loosened.

"The Government will also ease the activity test until October 4 to support eligible families whose employment has been impacted as a result of COVID-19," Mr Tehan said.

The government will ease the activity test on the number of hours that people have to spend working, studying or volunteering so they can qualify for the subsidies.

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**“...parents will have to go back to paying childcare fees again from July 13 as demand grows for services....”**

### Relying Solely On ATAR Profoundly Distorts Education

The chair of the NSW Education Standards Authority has criticised the ATAR for distorting both the final years of schooling and students' subject choices.

Professor Peter Shergold, of Western Sydney University, is currently chairing a national review into senior secondary pathways.

He wants to keep the ATAR but supplement it with what students learn outside of school, including in casual jobs and carer responsibilities.

In that sense, he wants to create an “education passport that you can then take with you though life”.

Shergold's remarks follow the draft of the NSW Curriculum Review, which recommended eliminating the ATAR due to teacher concerns that it caused students to choose subjects for their ATAR value, not necessarily what they are talented at.

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### Student Teachers Must Pass Literacy & Numeracy Test

A recent media report noted student teachers are facing delays in sitting a literacy and numeracy test they need to pass to graduate, due to the pandemic.

The report noted a group of student teachers have petitioned education minister Dan Tehan to scrap the Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education Students (LANTITE) this year, and indefinitely.

LANTITE is a computer based test student teachers must pass before graduating. It consists of two sections – literacy and numeracy.

The test was introduced in 2016 as part of a series of reforms for educating “classroom ready teachers” and noted lifting teacher standards would equally lift those of students.

Results of the test haven't been released publicly since 2018, but success rates of around 95% would suggest universities are already doing quite a good job of teaching these literacy and numeracy skills.

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### Flatten Curve For Maths

On 5 May 2020 the Federal Treasurer presented his view of our economic future - noting the need to "upskill and reskill the workforce for digital and eco-commerce technologies".

So, what skills from the discipline of mathematics are important today?

The Australian curriculum for mathematics focuses on four key aspects (called proficiency strands) for every content area at every grade level. The proficiency strands are understanding, fluency, problem-solving and reasoning.

This delineation helps stress the fact that there is much more to mathematics than meaningless out-of-date procedures such as long multiplication or long division.

[Full Story](#)

### Inquiry Into Teacher Value

Submissions will close next month into the NSW Teachers Federation's independent inquiry into the value of teachers' work.

“It's been more than 15 years since the last investigation into the nature and value of teachers' work.”

There are seismic changes that education goes through every five to six years in terms of curriculum, technology and pedagogy. This places a lot of pressure on teachers, particularly when it's overlaid with ACARA's national curriculum requirements.

While the recommendations of the independent inquiry will not be binding on the government, it is hoped the government will listen carefully to the views of a range of community members.

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### Study Casts Doubt On Ipad Benefits

New research has found that using iPads in schools may not support brain development, particularly in young children.

The study found the technology did not enhance specific school learning areas such as maths, English and science.

A range of studies indicate fine motor skills like handwriting, colouring and physically cutting and pasting may enhance cognitive development and executive function in a way not seen with typewriting or touch screen writing.

“So it's critical to know how, and if, replacing some or most of these activities with the use of mobile devices, the acquisition of these fine motor skills is affected.”

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