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| **Monitoring implementation of the new childcare policy in Australia: implications for Indigenous children and families** |
| **Setting/problem (1022 characters)**  In Australia, the new childcare policy brings significant change for Indigenous children. The changes make it marginally better for some and much worse for others. The new policy positions childcare as a service for parents rather than a fundamental right for children.  Low income families no longer have access to 24 hours of care per week and now only access 12 hours of childcare per week. This has huge implications for Indigenous children where drivers for accessing care include opportunities to shift developmental vulnerabilities before starting school.  The disadvantages experienced by Indigenous children begins early with rates of infant/child mortality three times higher than non-Indigenous counterparts. Indigenous children also have lower rates of participation in early childhood education. Without preschool learning opportunities, Indigenous children experience further disadvantage before they start school. The realisation of educational rights for Indigenous children is crucial for healthy development.  **Intervention (467 characters)** SNAICC - National Voice for our Children is a national peak body representing the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.SNAICC administered and analysed a quantitative survey at 3 points and complemented the survey data with detailed qualitative case studies:- Before the new child care package starts (June 2018)- 3 months after the new child care package starts (October 2018)- 6 months after the new child care package starts (January 2019) **Outcomes (394 characters)** The first phase of monitoring identified negative trends: Indigenous families opting out of services; increased out-of-pocket expense for Indigenous families; decrease in free hours of childcare for Indigenous families (from 24 hours to 12 hours); Indigenous services no longer remaining viable and losing their Indigeneity; small and regional Indigenous services are most vulnerable to closure. **Implications (551 characters)**  The benefits of investing in high-quality early childhood programs have been consistently demonstrated. Indigenous children are missing out on accessing early learning as a direct result of the new childcare system due to its complex eligibility criteria.  There is renewed call to: Reinstate two days per week access to early learning; Increase the hourly cap by 15% for the child care subsidy in Indigenous communities; Include an adequate Indigenous specific program within the Child Care Safety Net to provide top-up subsidies to Indigenous services.  **Preferred presentation format -** oral |