



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

7 September 2009

### **New Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centre to open in February 2010**

Commencing in 2010 the Autism Association of Western Australia and Jellybeans Child Care Centres, in partnerships with Curtin University of Technology, will provide a service to parents and carers seeking long day care for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders aged 0 to 6 years.

Six Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centres will be established nationwide with funding provided by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and are an additional commitment to the Australian Government's *Helping Children with Autism* package.

The Autism Association Jellybeans Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centre will open its doors on Monday, 1 February 2010. The Centre will be located within the Jellybeans Child Care Centre in Warwick and will provide a minimum of 20 child care places for children aged 0 to 6 with Autism Spectrum Disorders, or features consistent with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The Centre will be open Monday to Friday 6:30am to 6:00pm and parents will have the option of full day or half day sessions (morning: 6:30am to 12pm and afternoon: 12:30pm to 6:00pm).

Children attending the Centre will be provided with individual support and autism specific intervention strategies to support their participation in child care and early childhood education. The Centre will also provide parents with support in the care of their children and to enable them to participate more fully in their local community.

The Autism Association of WA's Chief Executive Officer, Joan McKenna-Kerr says that parents will be able to access child care in the knowledge that the program will specifically cater for the needs of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

"This represents an exciting new development in supporting children with autism and their parents/carers by providing choices and autism specific programs while they attend child care. We expect high demand across the metropolitan area and anticipate that parents will utilise the Centre in a number of different ways over the week to best support them and their child."



## Autism Association Of Western Australia

Joan McKenna-Kerr further goes on to say that "As the Autism Association of WA already provides early intervention services to nearly 300 children and families through our existing services state-wide, teaming up with a committed child care partner in Jellybeans Child Care now makes affordable autism specific child care a reality."

Families who are interested in a place for their child at the new Centre can contact Jacinta, Project Coordinator at the Autism Association of WA on 9489 8933 or Wendy, Jellybeans Warwick Centre Coordinator on 9243 5577.

### **More information**

Jacinta Hanrahan, Project Coordinator: 9489 8933