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## **Union calls on one of Australia's largest childcare providers to fund staff paid parental leave**

The union for early childhood teachers backs the campaign by activist shareholders to pressure G8 Education into funding paid parental leave for staff.

G8 is the country's largest sharemarket-listed childcare provider. It employs about 10,000 people – mainly women – at more than 400 childcare centres throughout Australia.

Yet it is in a minority of Australian employers in not offering paid parental leave in addition to the government-funded scheme to attract and retain staff.

The Independent Education Union of Australia NSW/ACT Branch represents university-qualified teachers in long day care centres and non-government preschools in NSW and the ACT.

IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews said childcare providers such as G8 should provide staff with employer-paid parental leave to address the sector's staff shortages and high turnover rates.

"A lack of employer-paid parental leave contributes to women's economic inequality," Matthews said. "And a lack of paid parental leave exacerbates the 'motherhood penalty', whereby women suffer a dramatic loss in earnings in the first years of parenthood."

More than 91 per cent of the early childhood education and care workforce are women.

The IEU welcomes the [campaign](#) by shareholder lobby group Sustainable Investment Exchange to pressure G8 to fund paid parental leave for staff.

"Our members in G8 are women supporting other people's families," Matthews said. "They should have support for their own families."

G8 Education chief executive Pejman Okhovat's salary package is [reportedly worth \\$3 million a year](#).

Yet university-qualified teachers at long-day care centres operated by his company earn only a fraction of this salary and have no access to employer-paid parental leave.

Mr Okhovat last year said G8 was committed to working with the government, unions and the Fair Work Commission to "ensure the best outcome for educators in the sector so that we provide the best possible outcomes for children and families".

"Mr Okhovat should now practise what he preaches through G8 funding staff paid parental leave," Matthews said. "Improving pay and conditions for teachers and educators in this sector means better learning outcomes for children."

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*The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch represents over 32,000 teachers, principals and support staff in Catholic and independent schools, early childhood centres and post-secondary colleges.*

**Authorised by Carol Matthews, IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary**