



Developing Digital Technology Policy for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

Policy Delphi Briefing Report Round One Summary

Prepared June 2025

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**Digital
Child.**



Curtin University



Project Title: Developing Digital Technology Policy for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

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This briefing report presents a synthesis of findings from Round One of the Policy Delphi conducted as part of a participatory policy development process focused on digital technology in early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings. The purpose of the Delphi process is to generate informed, context-sensitive policy guidance through iterative consultation with professionals across early education, government, digital technology, academia, and related sectors. This report summarises key insights from Round One and outlines emerging directions to be refined in Round Two. A consensus threshold of 90% agreement was applied across all items.

Participant Overview

- Invited: 122
- Completed: 73 (62 valid; removal due to duplicates and incomplete)
- 27 participants included qualitative feedback.
- Sectors represented
 - Early Childhood Educators (n=29)
 - Digital Technology Education Specialists (n=4)
 - Government (n=2)
 - Academic Researchers (n=22)
 - Other (e.g. Philanthropy, STEM communication, University Professionals) (n=5)

Executive Summary

Round One findings demonstrate a strong cross-sector commitment to safe, inclusive, and pedagogically meaningful digital engagement in early learning settings. Consensus ($\geq 90\%$ agreement) was reached on multiple items related to digital citizenship, educator responsibility, leadership oversight, data privacy, online safety, and professional learning. Participants affirmed the importance of digital technologies in supporting child agency, educator facilitation, inclusive pedagogy, and family-centre communication.

Areas where consensus was not reached include children's rights to determine their digital identity, the designation of digital documentation platforms as 'best practice,' and the appropriate application of generative AI (G-AI). These areas will be the focus of further exploration and refinement in Round Two.

Table of Consensus and Divergence

Definition		% Agreement (Agree + Strongly Agree)	>90 % Consensus 80-90% Moderate <80% Divergence
Digital identity and citizenship			
Young children develop digital identity and citizenship by understanding their rights, responsibilities, and presence in the digital world. It empowers children to make choices about their online identity, manage their digital presence, and protect their privacy, fostering a sense of agency, confidence, and connection as active digital learners.	1. Centre leadership, educators and parents should respect young children’s right to decide their digital identity.	73%	Divergence
	2. Young children can learn to manage their online digital presence (e.g. they can choose if a parent posts a picture of them online).	87%	Moderate
	3. As an active citizen, young children should be connected to their digital world.	95%	Consensus
	4. When given the opportunity, children can confidently experiment with digital technologies.	95%	Consensus
	5. Young children can view themselves as empowered digital learners.	92%	Consensus
	6. An element of young children’s digital citizenship is learning to protect their privacy online.	98%	Consensus
	7. The digital identities of children include an understanding of G-AI and an awareness of potential risks and harms.	100%	Consensus

Early Childhood Educators (n=29), Digital Technology Education Specialists (n=4), Government (n=2), Academic Researchers (n=22), Other (e.g. Philanthropy, STEM communication, University Professionals) (n=5)

Digital environment			
<p>The digital environment is a thoughtfully structured learning space that consists of digital resources, digital interactions and the development of digital literacy skills. This includes the nature of communication (e.g. is it conversational, does it provoke critical thinking and is it inquiry led). Additionally, digital interactions contribute to the socio-emotional nature of the space (e.g. children can safely ask for help when required).</p>	1. Educators use their professional knowledge for structuring the digital environment in their classroom.	85%	Moderate
	2. Centre leadership supports equitable access to digital technologies for all children within the learning environment.	79%	Divergence
	3. The digital environment includes offline devices for educators and children's use (e.g. digital cameras and coding toys).	92%	Consensus
	4. Creative thinking is enhanced through digital interactions.	92%	Consensus
	5. Children can be supported to use age-appropriate digital technologies safely.	98%	Consensus
	6. Educators and children contribute to the socio-emotional climate when developing digital literacies together.	98%	Consensus
	7. Foundation principles and the big ideas about G-AI can be introduced to young children.	95%	Consensus
	8. Educators should actively supervise the use of digital technology by and with children at all times.	90%	Consensus

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Digital connections			
Digital connections involve the stewardship of technologies to connect, communicate, strengthen relationships, and interact with the world. This may include examples such as centre newsletters, communication across centres, and connecting with family overseas. The affordances of digital connections are they broaden the scope for children to connect with, and within, the world.	1. Digital technologies are used to connect and communicate.	100%	Consensus
	2. Relationships among parents, families, educators, and young children can be strengthened through digital interactions.	97%	Consensus
	3. Digital communication between educators and parents is essential to the management of centres.	89%	Moderate
	4. Digital documentation platforms (e.g. Storypark or Xplor) are best practice for digital communication.	59%	Divergence
	5. Centre-home digital communication is a reciprocal process (e.g. educator to parent and parent to educator).	92%	Consensus
	6. Digital technologies are more effective for learning when adults and peers interact or co-view with young children.	94%	Consensus
	7. Educators can design activities that build young children's understanding of how digital technologies are interconnected.	100%	Consensus
	8. Educators can model self-regulated digital use during social interactions with children and other educators.	95%	Consensus
	9. Digital technologies can be purposefully used for making play and learning connections.	98%	Consensus

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Digital resourcing			
Digital resourcing includes the allocation of materials, information and time to those who interact with digital technologies in early learning settings. For example, information provided by the centre leadership and educators around how the technology is used in the classroom and ideas for extending the play into the home.	1. Centre leadership should provide access to a range of digital resources that guide and assist facilitation of children's agency.	95%	Consensus
	2. Centre leadership should provide information and advice to educators and parents around safe use of digital / electronic devices e.g. smart toys, security cameras and monitors.	98%	Consensus
	3. Centre leadership have a responsibility to understand the design features and targeted users of devices before introducing them to the centre.	100%	Consensus
	4. Educators require allocated time to develop their digital skills and literacies.	100%	Consensus
	5. Educators can petition for provision of digital resources from their centre leadership.	98%	Consensus
	6. Educators can communicate children's digital interactions (e.g. what devices are used and for what purpose) to parents.	98%	Consensus
	7. Parents suggestions of additions to the centre that might enhance their child's digital capabilities are valued by educators.	90%	Consensus
	8. Educators encourage children to share suggestions for additions to the centre's digital environment.	90%	Consensus

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Data and data privacy			
Data privacy and security is essential to the digital environment in early learning settings. This includes adhering to National Laws and Regulations and ensuring family data is kept safe and stored according to ethical and legal requirements.	1. Centres must document their data privacy and security processes.	100%	Consensus
	2. Centre leadership is responsible for the ethical capturing, storing and sharing of children’s images and videos.	100%	Consensus
	3. Parents consent that photos taken within the centre are accessible by all parents (e.g. photos shared on a digital documentation app can be accessed by parents other than the child tagged).	76%	Divergence
	4. Before utilising digital devices in the classroom, educators are aware of where data is stored and accessed.	88%	Moderate
	5. Centre leadership should be aware of, and have approved, any apps downloaded onto centre devices.	97%	Consensus
	6. Centre leadership should provide information to families about how long their digital data will be held and how it will be destroyed once children leave the centre.	98%	Consensus
	7. All device settings must be at a level of privacy that reflects data protection laws.	100%	Consensus
	8. Information about the collection, use, retention and deletion of digital data held about young children and families should be made accessible to all parents.	98%	Consensus
	9. Children should be guided in an awareness of their rights in relation to their digital identity and the use of generative AI.	100%	Consensus
	10. Centre leadership and educators ensure children or families personal information is not inputted into unsecured G-AI tools.	93%	Consensus

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Professional learning			
Ongoing professional learning opportunities for centre leadership and educators focused on digital technologies and literacies across early learning settings. Professional learning may improve the implementation and appropriate use of digital technologies by, with and for children.	1. Centre leadership should be responsible for providing opportunities to educators for the advancement of their digital literacy skills.	100%	Consensus
	2. Professional learning focused on digital technologies and literacies within early year centres is essential.	100%	Consensus
	3. Professional learning opportunities advance educator knowledge of online safety to enable them to identify and mitigate the risks associated with being online.	100%	Consensus
	4. Educators should be responsible in updating their own learning of digital and cyber safety for children.	86%	Moderate
	5. Educators need to understand how to use digital technology effectively.	100%	Consensus
	6. Professional learning opportunities can be used to advance educator knowledge of safe G-AI practices.	100%	Consensus
Online safety			
Safety when interacting with online accessible digital technologies is non-negotiable to the centre leadership, educators, parents and children. Educators work closely with families to promote online safety both in the centre and at home.	1. Centre leadership should be responsible for determining the online accessibility of all centre devices.	93%	Consensus
	2. Educators should discuss and teach children how to keep safe online with children and families.	98%	Consensus
	3. Children can learn how to participate safely in digital contexts through cyber-safety education.	98%	Consensus
	4. When interacting with online devices, educators are responsible for regularly reminding children about online safety.	100%	Consensus

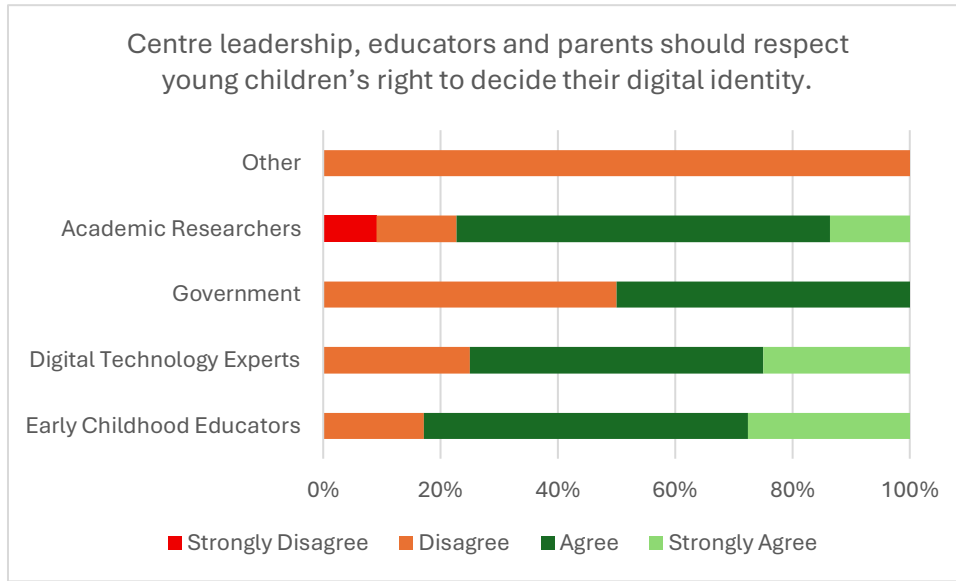
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	5. Classroom activities promoting respectful relationships can include discussions around appropriate online behaviour.	100%	Consensus
	6. Educators can support families to learn how to promote and provide safe online experiences for children at home.	98%	Consensus
	7. Critical thinking and questioning of G-AI is a foundation skill for young children.	93%	Consensus
Digital pedagogy			
Digital pedagogy is the practice of integrating digital technologies into teaching to create engaging, learner centred experiences that foster skills like creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Educators utilise digital technologies to transform learning through child-led inquiry and active participation.	1. Educators should model the use of digital technologies for inquiry purposes to assist children to investigate and document their findings.	100%	Consensus
	2. Using digital tools for inquiry (e.g. interactive whiteboard) can expand children's learning opportunities.	98%	Consensus
	3. Children should have access to a range of age-appropriate digital technologies (e.g. tablets and digital microscopes).	97%	Consensus
	4. Educators should demonstrate how digital technologies are a feature of everyday life.	95%	Consensus
	5. Educators should provide opportunities for children to critically evaluate the quality and trustworthiness of digital information sources.	100%	Consensus
	6. Children should be invited to engage in learner-centred experiences.	100%	Consensus
	7. Educators' teaching approaches greatly influence how digital technologies are used in learning.	97%	Consensus
	8. G-AI can be used as a tool by educators as they differentiate learning experiences for the individual needs of children.	85%	Moderate

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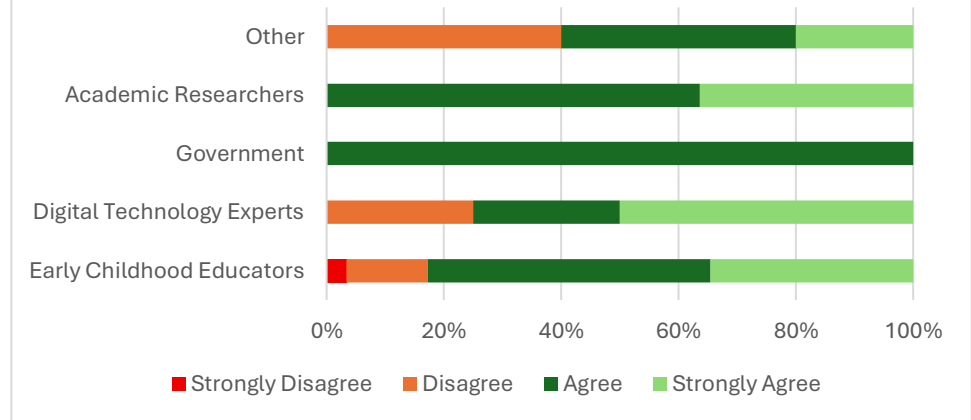
Health and wellbeing			
Appropriate use of digital technologies can promote overall health, safety and wellbeing. Digital technologies can be used with intentionality for purposes such as digital storytelling, music and movement. They may aid self-regulation for children with additional needs, as well as be utilised to support neurodiversity. Overall, digital technologies are intended as one element of a learning environment, contributing to a child's overall health and wellbeing.	1. Digital technologies are intended as only one element of a learning environment and should not replace physical experiences and outdoor play.	98%	Consensus
	2. Ideally children develop a strong sense of personal wellbeing in their digital environment.	92%	Consensus
	3. Children may benefit from a period of rest and relaxation enabled by digital technologies.	86%	Moderate
	4. Digital technologies can provide opportunities for children's development (e.g. skill mastery).	100%	Consensus
	5. Digital experiences can promote movement opportunities (e.g. educators and children participate in pilates via a tutorial video).	93%	Consensus
	6. Children can be supported to develop self-regulation capabilities when interacting with digital technologies.	95%	Consensus
	7. Classroom routines and structures can promote access to a variety of digital and non-digital activities.	98%	Consensus
	8. Digital technologies can be used to support children with additional needs.	100%	Consensus

Divergent responses by stakeholder

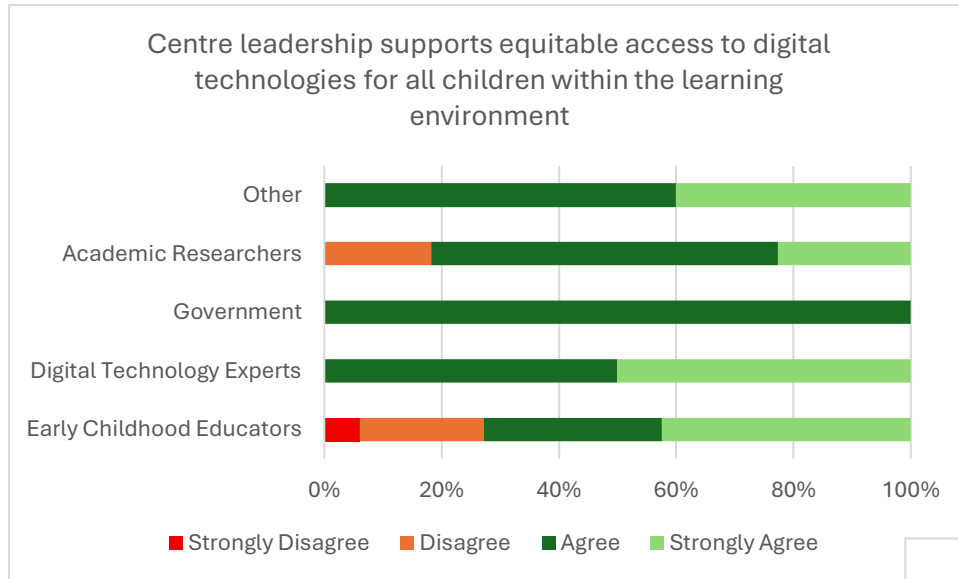


Digital identity and citizenship

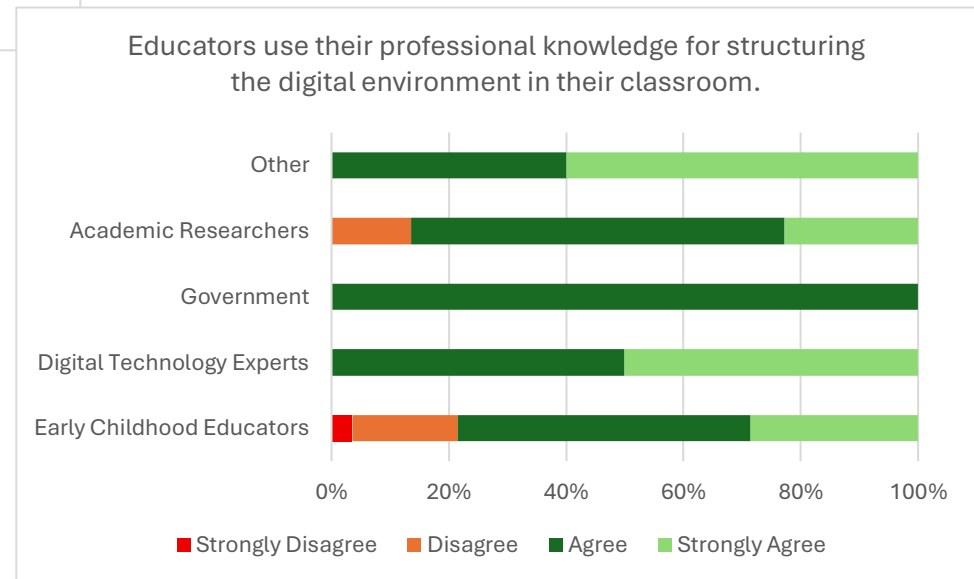
Young children can learn to manage their online digital presence (e.g. they can choose if a parent posts a picture of them online).



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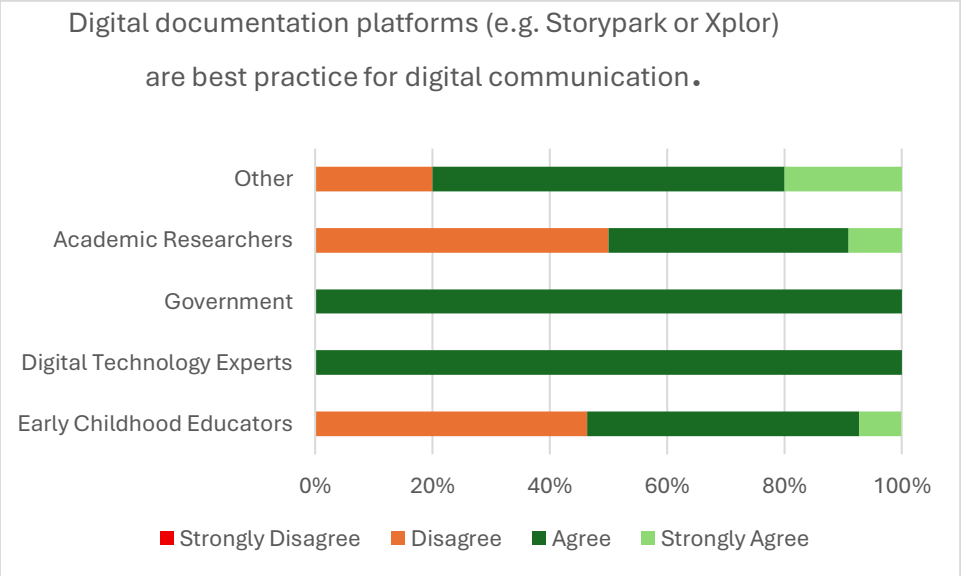
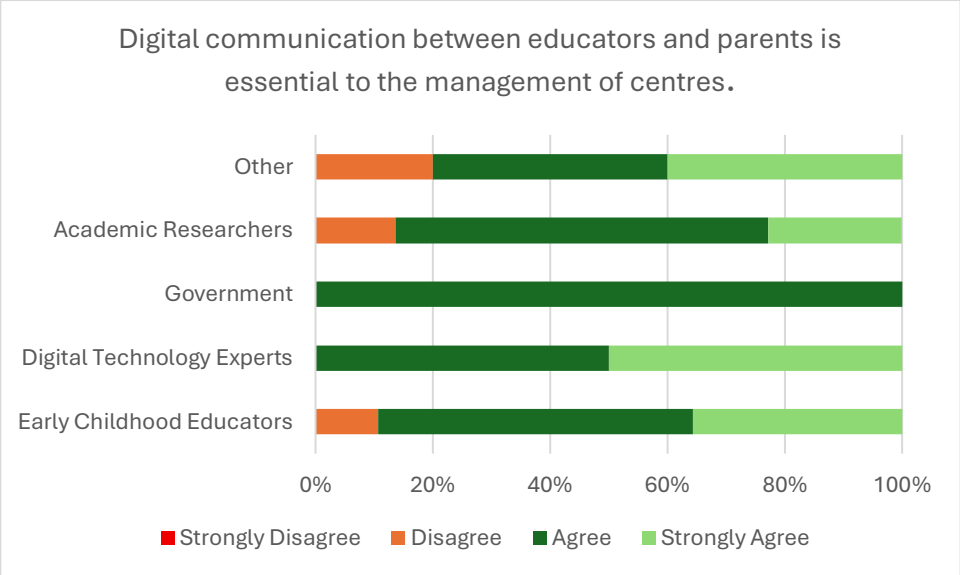


Digital environment



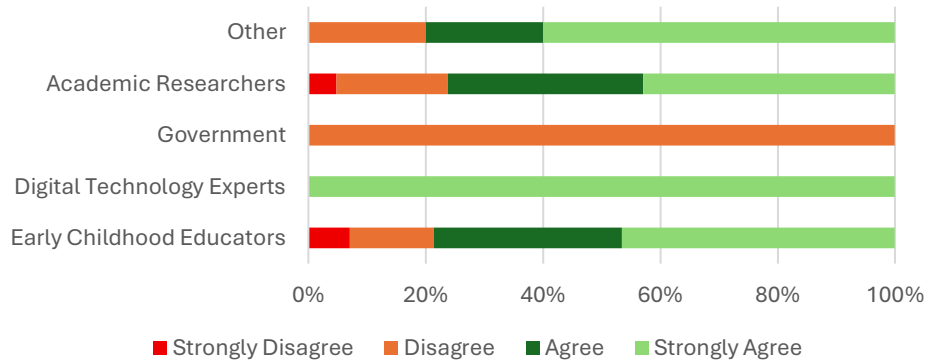
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Digital connections



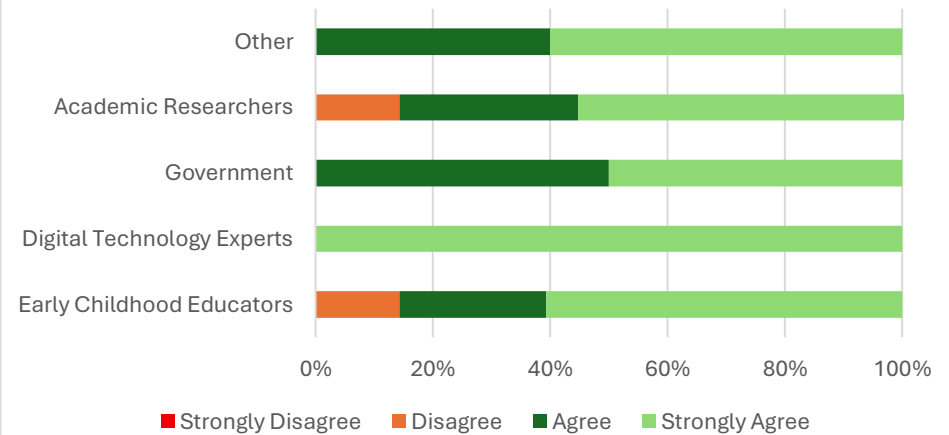
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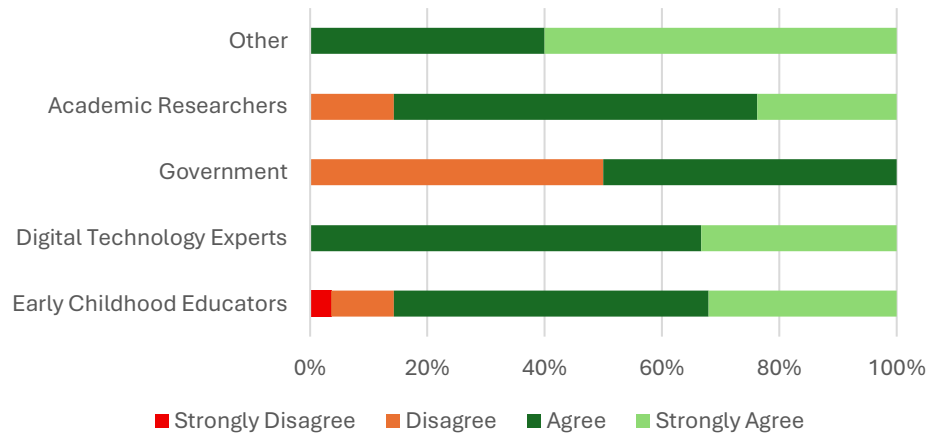
Data and data privacy

Before utilising digital devices in the classroom, educators are aware of where data is stored and accessed.



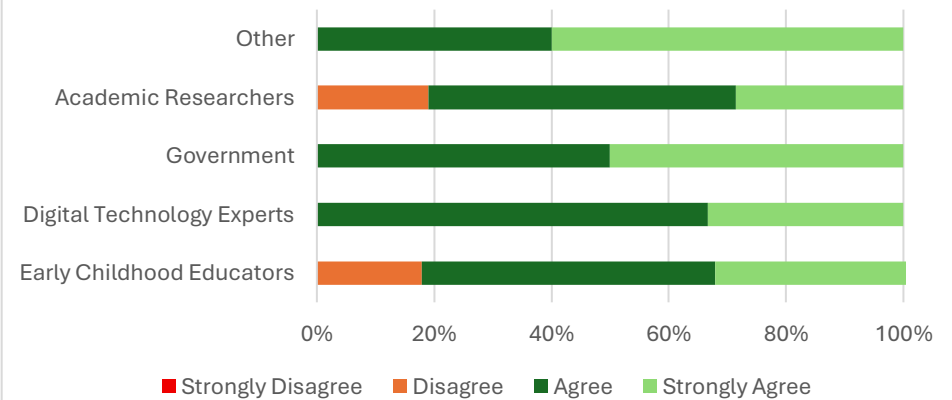
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Educators should be responsible in updating their own learning of digital and cyber safety for children.



Professional learning

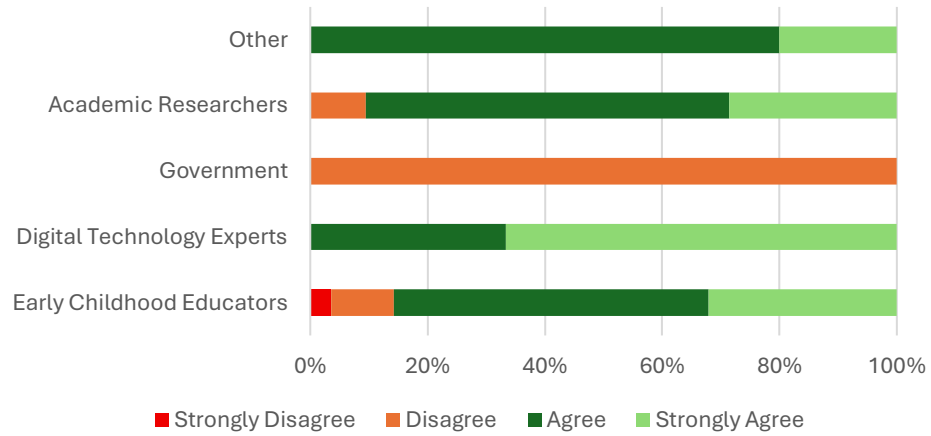
G-AI can be used as a tool by educators as they differentiate learning experiences for the individual needs of children.



Digital Pedagogy

Early Childhood Educators (n=29), Digital Technology Education Specialists (n=4), Government (n=2), Academic Researchers (n=22), Other (e.g. Philanthropy, STEM communication, University Professionals) (n=5)

Children may benefit from a period of rest and relaxation enabled by digital technologies.



Health and wellbeing

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Qualitative Feedback (n = 27)

Participants emphasised balanced, intentional and equitable integration of digital technologies into early learning environments. A strong consensus emerged around the importance of pedagogical purpose, with technology framed as a tool to enhance, rather than replace, traditional play, creativity, inquiry, and connection. Several participants advocated for purposeful planning, cautioning against ad-hoc or convenience driven use (e.g. unvetted YouTube content), instead promoting curated platforms (e.g. ABC iView) and educator-led intentional engagement.

Centre leadership was widely viewed as the primary driver of digital practices, often overriding educator or parent preferences. Participants expressed concern that such decisions are sometimes based on personal belief rather than research-informed strategies. This highlighted the need for organisational accountability and governance alignment.

Equity and access were recurrent themes. Participants urged policy to address digital divides across socioeconomic and geographic contexts, ensuring inclusive access to devices, training, and support for both educators and families.

Participants stressed that digital tools should be developmentally appropriate, free of ads or tracking, and used with adult supervision. There were also reflections between 'can' and 'should,' emphasising caution. For instance, children can engage in relaxation via apps, but it was raised whether they should. Participants recommended maintaining non-digital downtime and promoting face-to-face interaction skills as central to policy.

Many called for greater support for parental understanding and modelling of digital use, noting the importance of consistency between home and centre practices. Educators were encouraged to increase their awareness of how digital environments are shaped by business logic and persuasive design, with a need to teach children critical digital literacy and the ability to evaluate online content.

Data privacy and ethical concerns were flagged as insufficiently addressed in current practices. Some participants warned of opaque data practices, risks of tracking/profiling children, and the need for centres to scrutinise terms and conditions, particularly when parental consent alone may not ensure ethical compliance.

In summary, the qualitative responses reveal strong stakeholder support for digital integration that is purposeful, ethical, inclusive, and developmentally aligned. They also bring to the fore a desire for policy that empowers educators and families to make informed, context-sensitive decisions within a complex and evolving digital environment.

We acknowledge limitations in the Round One Policy Delphi. Some participants noted that questions were overly general, lacked contextual clarity, and at times assumed agreement implied endorsement. The fixed-response format also limited opportunity to express nuanced views.

Round One reflection adds important depth to the areas where strong consensus was reached and shed light on the values and tensions underlying areas where agreement was more variable. These insights reinforce the direction outlined in the executive summary and have informed the development of Round Two, where participants will have further opportunity to contextualise and clarify their views on issues such as digital identity, documentation platforms, and the application of generative-AI.