Study considers early education investment

By Stephanie Fitzpatrick

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- **Map: Mount Isa 4825**

A $5 million study has begun that will track 300 children in Mount Isa, in north-west Queensland, and another 1,000 in Brisbane in an effort to improve the level of early childhood education in Australia.

The research is being conducted by the Queensland University of Technology to look at children's development in different learning environments and whether enough money is being invested in early childhood education.

Professor Karen Thorpe says Mount Isa is ideal for the study because of its remote location.

"There are a lot of working families because it's a mining town, so there's a lot of demand for things like child care and kindergarten, but there are not as much access so there are families who are wanting that sort of provision but not getting it," she said.

"We do know the waiting lists in Mount Isa for access to kindergartens and to childcare centres is very high."

Professor Thorpe says the research is trying to find out what impact early care and education factors have on a child's development and what needs improvement.

"Where should we put that fixed amount of money? Is it investing in more qualified teachers? Is it putting in more certificate-three people into childcare centres? Those sorts of questions," she said.

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