

## Centre speaks the right language

BILINGUAL education in the ACT has been given a boost with an extension to the Chinese Australian Early Childhood Centre in Mawson.

The extension construction was funded by a \$150,000 grant from the Community Services Directorate (formerly the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services), and furnished with funds raised by the Association for Learning Mandarin in Australia, which runs the Early Childhood Centre. "The

department's grant is a tangible example of the government's support for bilingual education, and for improving Chinese literacy among young Australians," association president Dr Ian MacLean said.

"Children are most receptive to foreign language learning when very young, and bilingual centres such as this give them a valuable head-start in their future lives and careers.

"This is especially

significant for languages such as Chinese, which are harder than European languages for English speakers to learn."

The association is seeking funds to build a second Chinese bilingual child care centre in Canberra's north.

The project could see a new bilingual (Mandarin/English) childcare centre for up to 70 children established at the University of Canberra in Bruce. The University of Canberra has offered the association land on a 29-year lease.



Students at the Australian Chinese Early Childhood Centre perform at the ceremony to open a new extension to the school.  
Picture: Elesia Lee