

Dear Sirs,

Please allow me to make a brief submission to the Child Care and Early Learning Inquiry. I will not comment the full scope of the inquiry, save to say that it is unfortunate that the tone indicates that the government does not seem interested in promoting real choice for mothers when this includes the option to stay at home to raise their children. It seems that 'choice' means only the choice of benefits available to mothers in the paid workforce.

But it should not be forgotten that stay-at-home mothers provide childcare too. In fact, it was not so long ago that they provided the only means of childcare. If the government is really serious about promoting choice then the benefits to stay-at-home mothers should match those in the paid workforce.

Please ensure your recommendations permit true choice by not favouring mothers who choose paid work over those who wish to raise their children themselves.

We need to be careful how we look at this.

The children of families with single parents predominantly fatherless homes are the biggest impost on the nation with regard to crime and poverty costs when compared with homes with a Mum and Dad present. This cost is very high to our nation and growing all the time. If Mum is driven to work because of society pressure or because she would be "silly" (financially) then this may well get a whole lot worse.

The best outcome for families and by default the nation is for families to have a Mum and a Dad. Research concludes this time and time again.

Knowing this to be a true guide to the best results we can aspire to, does this policy support or discourage this.

I am not against career women. But we have to be very careful about what we are supporting and the outcome on the family which is the strength and backbone of our nation.

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Mr John Shenton