

To the members of the Productivity Commission

Within this submission I can wear many hats. As a parent who has used childcare, a grandparent of children currently in childcare and the director of a not for profit childcare centre.

I have had years to observe the value of childcare to children and the benefits (of quality care) to families. The NQF has been a wonderful innovation – making childcare national makes sense. Having to comply has caused many a complaint BUT this is about children and what is best for them. They can't go to newspapers, or lobby politicians so it is harder to have their voices heard.

The importance of early education as a means of empowering children as they begin life's journey is something we will still be evaluating in years to come but the emphasis now being placed on Belonging, Being, Becoming, on interest based learning alongside intentional teaching is building confident children with ability and opportunity to go from early education into mainstream schooling and to flourish.

These children know how to question and to extend on their interests.

None of this happens without qualified specialist educators supported by the Early Years Learning Framework, the NQF and the National Regulations.

I remember seeing a study which supported the money spent on Early Education as being returned tenfold plus when the children became adults – probably because they are more likely to get an education, hold down jobs and stay out of jail.

This commission has an opportunity to strengthen and value what we offer our children. Please don't allow the loud voices of those who are more interested in saving money now damage the investment we should, as a nation, be making in our children's early years.

Yours Sincerely

Annette Henderson