



**CHILDCARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING**

**RESPONSE TO PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION**

**ISSUES PAPER – DECEMBER 2013**

**SUBMITTED BY MONASH CITY COUNCIL**

**JANUARY 2014**

## **BACKGROUND**

Monash City Council is located in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. It has a population of 179,740 and there are 20,834 children aged 0-11 years living in the municipality. (ABS Census 2011). Within Monash there are 42 long day care centres and 30 stand alone kindergartens. The majority of long day centres now offer a funded four year old kindergarten program. This offers a wide range of choices to parents looking for a kindergarten program. Over half of the stand alone kindergartens are managed by a “kindergarten cluster manager” organisation.

Council is the provider of one long day care centre and a family day care program. It also provides the buildings for:

- three long day care centres operated by parent committees of management, and
- 27 of the 30 kindergartens in the municipality.

Until recently it was also a provider of three vacation care programs.

Monash Council is the lead agency for an Inclusion Support Agency (ISA) covering the municipalities of Boroondara, Manningham, Monash and Whitehorse. It also employs a Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) to support the inclusion of children with additional needs in four year old kindergarten programs. Through these services and other support provided to early childhood services in Monash the Council has developed a strong knowledge of its local services and the needs of its local community.

This submission was compiled by Council after consultation with a range of ECEC providers in the municipality. It only responds to those questions in the issues paper to which participants felt they could provide an informed response.

## RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

### Government Involvement In Childcare & Early Learning

**What role, if any, should the different levels of government play in childcare and early childhood education?**

- Local government has community knowledge and can be a support agency to ECECs;
- Local government has a planning role in relation to early childhood services and through this each local government can respond to its local community needs in various ways;
- Monash City Council supports its local ECECs in a variety of ways including the provision of inclusion support (ISA and PSFO), provision & maintenance of buildings, administering the kindergarten central enrolment, the provision of networking and professional development opportunities for ECEC staff, the provision of information to parents and partnerships/initiatives with other early childhood services
- It would be less complex and confusing, for the general community and especially the ECEC service sector, if there was one government level supporting all ECEC services;
- Similar funding from different levels of government can have different criteria and this can impact negatively on support to children – see case study 1;
- The developments over recent years in ECEC resulting from the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) decision to reform the sector have been a positive change. Whilst it still retains Commonwealth and State governments having involvement in ECEC, it has achieved a consistent framework for the provision and monitoring of ECEC services across the country;
- Given that all levels of government have some involvement in ECEC services, there is the potential for each level of government to initiate change to the sector;
- The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) scholarships for educators and capital grants offered in Victoria are promoted on the DEECD website. The information is accessible to the ECEC sector and provides comprehensive criteria information – ACECQA website is also easily accessible. There

needs to be continued government support to ensure website information is consistent and comprehensive for ECEC sector, families and authorised officers

*Case study 1 – A child with a disability who attends a state funded kindergarten program in a long day care centre, may not be eligible for the Kindergarten Inclusion Support Subsidy (KISS) funding, but is not eligible to receive the Inclusion Support Subsidy (ISS) during the allocated fifteen hours of kinder even though he/she has been supported by ISS for the previous years of his/her life. Some centres and parents are not registering their child in the 'kindergarten' program even though the child is attending the kindergarten program so they can continue to have an additional educator in the room in order to reduce the staff:child ratios.*

**What outcomes from ECEC are desirable and should be made achievable over the next decade?**

- All ECEC services are rated at, the very least, meeting in all areas or, preferably, exceeding in all areas of the National Quality Standards (NQS);
- Children who are happy and thriving despite their socio economic status; and
- Parents are well informed and are confident at comparing/assessing ECEC services that they are considering for their children.

*Case study 2 – A parent required an ECEC service for her child. She sought information from an early childhood professional about what to look for when choosing a service. The parent visited a centre and thought how wonderful the centre was because of the lovely colours it was painted and was ready to enrol her child. The professional asked her about the activities that were out for the children's care and education. She suggested the parent go back and observe the interactions occurring between the children and educators, the educators and parents and the educators with each other. During the second visit the parent commented that she saw little or no interactions. The professional suggested she visit another service which she did and commented on the vast difference between both centres and began asking more questions at further visits.*

- The sector is continuing to strive for quality in all services whilst recognising it does not have to be costly, so they can still operate as financially viable and sustainable entities.

*Case studies 3 – Many of our ECEC services in this municipality are rated as exceeding. These services are a range of community based, private, cluster managed. Their budgets allow for them to make an operating surplus while having above ratio educators across the whole centre, which assists them be an exceeding quality centre. Their fees for parents are equal to or lower than services that are rated as meeting the standard or working towards the standard.*

## Who Uses Childcare & Early Learning Services & Why

**Are there families from particular household structures, socioeconomic groups or geographic areas that are now using some forms of ECEC significantly more than in the past?**

- More women in the workforce than there were in the past, therefore there are more dual income families using ECEC services which is reflected in the mixture of full time and part time attendance at ECEC services;
- Families that cannot arrange “shared care: with grandparents due to grandparents remaining in the workforce or living too far away to offer regular care;
- Disadvantaged / vulnerable families – child protection and Child FIRST are encouraging and supporting families to use ECEC services for the health & well being of the children;
- The new Key Worker model in the Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) range of services is now supporting ECEC services to provide an inclusive environment for children with a disability rather than providing exclusive services for children, either at home or at the ECI service;
- The number of children attending ECEC services on a part time basis (three to four days per week) instead of full time care has increased. For example, on these days, the number of hours in a day that young babies are in care has increased. (Families/mothers are working less days but longer hours);
- Newly arrived immigrants attending English classes – these are entitled to receive JET funding to pay for their childcare while they are attending approved English classes; and
- Families are using services outside their household suburb, including child care, kindergarten and schools;

*Case study 4 – The City of Monash has 42 primary schools, but the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) results showed the children of Monash were attending 138 schools*

**Which types of families are likely to require significantly more or less use of ECEC in the future?**

- As above

## Children's Development Needs

The Commission is seeking evidence on the effect of the different types of ECEC, including separate preschool programs, on children's learning and development and preparedness for school.

- Research has found that a quality ECEC service with a four year qualified educator, regardless of setting, provides the best preparedness for school. See case study 5.

**How does the amount of time spent in ECEC and the age at which a child first enters childcare impact on learning and development outcomes?**

*Case Study 5 – Findings from the Effective Provision of Preschool Education (EPPE) Project*

### ***Impact of attending a pre-school***

- Pre-school experience, compared to none, enhances all-round development in children.
- Duration of attendance (in months) is important; an earlier start (under age 3 years) is related to better intellectual development.
- Full time attendance led to no better gains for children than part-time provision.
- Disadvantaged children benefit significantly from good quality pre-school experiences, especially where they are with a mixture of children from different social backgrounds.
- Overall disadvantaged children tend to attend pre-school for shorter periods of time than those from more advantaged groups (around 4-6 months less).

### ***Does type of pre-school matter?***

- There are significant differences between individual pre-school settings and their impact on children, some settings are more effective than others in promoting positive child outcomes.
- Good quality can be found across all types of early years settings; however quality was higher overall in settings integrating care and education and in nursery schools.

### ***Effects of quality and specific 'practices' in pre-school***

- High quality pre-schooling is related to better intellectual and social/behavioural development for children.
- Settings that have staff with higher qualifications have higher quality scores and their children make more progress.
- Quality indicators include warm interactive relationships with children, having a trained teacher as manager and a good proportion of trained teachers on the staff.
- Where settings view educational and social development as complementary and equal in importance, children make better all round progress.
- Effective pedagogy includes interaction traditionally associated with the term "teaching", the provision of instructive learning environments and 'sustained shared thinking' to extend children's learning. (Sylva, K, Melhuish, E, Sammons, P, Siraj-Blatchford, I & Taggart, B. (2004) *The Effective Provision of Preschool Education (EPPE) Project. A Longitudinal Study funded by DfES 1997-2004. Final Report.2004)*

**Would extending the length of the school day have a significant impact on children's learning and development outcomes or parents' workforce participation decisions? What other impacts would such changes have?**

- The assumption is this question relates to the length of day a child is in an ECEC service, rather than the school day, which does impact on parent workforce participation.

*Case study 6 – With the introduction of fifteen hours of kindergarten per week, this municipality has found that parents would prefer to have 2 x 7.5hr sessions of kindergarten for their children rather than shorter sessions more often. These longer days are a better outcome for the parent's workforce participation opportunities.*

### **Impacts On Workforce Participation**

**What is the relative importance of accessibility, flexibility, affordability and quality of ECEC (relative to other key factors) in influencing decisions of parents as to whether they work or remain at home to care for children?**

- It has not been possible to formally assess the relative importance of these factors. However in the City of Monash the following has been observed:
  - Accessibility – availability of a place at an ECEC service would seem to be the highest priority. Many centres often struggle to match the days requested by parents to available places (days of week and correct age cohort), especially when utilisation increases and reduces the places available;
  - Flexibility – While there is little flexibility in service hours for long day care, there is greater choice of service hours in stand alone kindergartens. Since the introduction of 15 hours per week for four year old kindergarten programs, a range of program models have been implemented in Monash. Parents have mostly preferred to select kindergartens offering longer kindergarten sessions, but other preferences are also catered for by other kindergartens. For parents who require more flexibility of long day care hours may find Family Day Care (FDC) more appropriate to their needs;

- Quality – the majority of services in Monash have been rated as “meeting” standards or “exceeding” them, so it is thought that quality has been seen to be less significant as a factor used by parents, in order to differentiate between ECEC services when selecting one for their children;
  - Monash Council’s owned and operated long day care centre has an extensive waiting list of families who are seeking a Council managed service with quality ratings.
  - Some parents regard the smaller child/staff ratios of FDC, the home environment and the mixed ages being cared for together, including siblings together are offering a better quality service; and
- Affordability – fees are quite similar across the municipality so They are less likely to be a key factor in the selection of ECEC services by parents. In the selection of a service type, parents looking for regular long day care have a choice between long day care centres and FDC. Generally the cost of FDC, especially for those wanting limited hours each day, is less than long day care, so for parents who do have affordability as a priority, FDC will have more appeal.

**What trade-offs do working parents make in relation to their demand for ECEC? For example, are they prepared to accept lower quality care if that care is close to where they live or work and/or enables them to work part-time or on certain days?**

- ECEC providers have advised Council that parents generally enrol their child where they can access a place in order to meet work commitments, as long as the selected ECEC service is within their price and quality parameters;
- Having enrolled their child at an ECEC service parents rarely move their child(ren) to another service if their child(ren) is happy there, regardless of the quality of the ECEC service. As previously stated, parents are not always fully aware, or able to assess the quality of the program being offered by the ECEC service.

*Case study 7 – A parent who requires a full time place for their child may accept a part time place initially at the centre of their choice, in preference to accepting a full time place at a different centre. The parent may make the decision to have her child attend two centres per week until a full time place becomes available at the preferred centre.*

**Has increasing workforce participation by mothers increased demand for childcare, or have improved availability, affordability, and/or quality of childcare led to increased participation?**

- The demand for childcare has increased due to various reasons
  - Mothers returning to the workforce, either by choice or necessity;
  - Vulnerable children known to child protection and community support agencies who can benefit from participation in ECEC services;
  - Funded kindergarten programs being offered in Long Day Care services which has resulted in children not leaving long day care in order to attend a stand alone kindergarten; and
  - Demand has increased to services who have been awarded an “exceeding” rating following assessment against the NQS.

### **Availability Of Childcare & Early Learning Services**

**The Commission is seeking evidence on the extent to which parents are experiencing difficulties accessing ECEC that meets their needs/preferences and whether there are particular categories of care, times, locations or circumstances for which accessing ECEC is more difficult — for example, regional areas, certain days or part days each week, or for children with additional needs?**

- Services report that the available places are not equally distributed across the week. There are more often vacancies across the municipality on Mondays and Fridays (on typical public holidays);

- Children with additional needs who, eg. attend Special Developmental Schools (SDS) may struggle to get care in an after school care program if they are required to be transported to a mainstream program, if their school does not provide an Outside School Care program;
- Council has found that a proportion of the families using the FDC program do so because the service hours are more flexible and better suited to those who do not work traditional business hours;
- SDS Early Childhood programs are not funded for children who have turned five years of age even if they are not going on to school. Therefore, those children receiving a second year of kindergarten do not receive any ongoing support from the SDS; and
- Due to fears and experiences of discrimination some families are not disclosing that their child has an additional need during enrolment process at ECEC services.

*Case study 8 – A child who attends an SDS during the school term required specialist equipment and care during the vacation care program at a mainstream school. The child required a hoist to be available in order to be moved from wheelchair to toilet. Due to the time required to organise both the equipment and the specialist support to train the educators to use the equipment, the vacation care program took the decision that they were unable to enrol the child. Had the SDS had vacation care funding, the equipment and care would have been available.*

**How parents identify vacancies or choose which ECEC service to use — for example, are parents aware that the My Child website ([www.mychild.gov.au](http://www.mychild.gov.au)) and at least one privately operated website allows them to search for centres reporting vacancies and do they find this service accurate and/or useful ?**

- Services have reported that they had received feedback from parents that the mychild website is difficult to navigate, which may impact on the parents' understanding of quality within ECEC services

*Case study 9 - Family Day Care service has reported that parents are often frustrated when they cannot get a "yes or no" answer when they contact a FDC scheme through the My Child website. A typical enquiry received through the My Child website - "i have 11 months old baby girl, please let me know if i have suitable vacancy at your family daycare", cannot be answered without the service knowing a lot more information about the child/family.*

**The Commission is seeking information from ECEC providers on how the sector has responded to growth in demand, including changes to types of care offered, cost and pricing structures used by different types of providers, and any viability pressures:**

- In response to demand of growth some ECEC services are adding rooms to their buildings;
- In response to (or in expectation of) increased demand some existing ECEC service providers are building new long day care centres as well as new service providers establishing new services;
- In response to demand of different ages of children requiring care, ECEC services are changing the room arrangements to suit the numbers e.g. with an increase of 2 yr olds they may move these children into a bigger room ( some services have the capacity to do this where some services do not); and
- Some services are offering family grouping rather than the traditional age based configuration which is in response to varying ages of enrolled children.

**The key barriers that are inhibiting an expansion in ECEC services where demand is highest, development of more flexible ECEC, or alternative models of care :**

- Limited capital funding is one of the inhibitors for ECEC services to undertake capital works to expand their services so as to increase quality, capacity and efficiency;
- To establish a new long day care centre, providers will generally have to accept the risks associated with borrowing money to operate a service that has a very high proportion fixed costs and who require a high level of utilisation to achieve a positive financial outcome;

- Management skills could be inhibiting the development of more flexible arrangements;
- Available land space; and
- ECEC Workforce capacity can inhibit services from offering additional/alternative hours of care (e.g. to parents working in the retail, hospital and hospitality sectors)
- If additional hours are to be provided this needs to be financially sustainable so demand will need to be significant enough to achieve adequate utilisation rates for these extended hours

**Approaches to managing childcare waiting lists that have been shown to be successful.**

- The experience of service providers suggests that active ongoing monitoring of waiting lists is required to keep it up to date and of value. This can be time consuming;
- Central enrolment was introduced for the kindergarten sector in this municipality to reduce families putting themselves on the waiting list at a number of centres, thus reducing each centre's ability to budget confidently. However, no equivalent system has been developed locally for long day care due to the much greater level of complexity. For kindergartens, children all attend for the same amount of time each week and all commence at the start of the calendar year for the same period. Places are offered up to six months in advance and by all stand alone kindergartens at the same time. These characteristics do not apply to other ECEC services; and
- The experience of Family Day Care providers is that formal waiting lists are very difficult to maintain, when the filling of a vacancy requires careful consideration of many variables.

**The Commission is seeking information from employers that currently provide childcare services or assist employees to access childcare on the nature of the services or assistance provided:**

- Some work based services have access arrangements in their Enterprise Bargaining Agreement;

- Some ECEC services allow educators children to attend the service;
- Some ECEC services offer the educators a discount on the fees; and
- Other services have policies that do not allow educators children to be in the same centre.

### **Services For Additional Needs & Regional & Remote Areas**

**The Commission is seeking information on how well the needs of disadvantaged, vulnerable or other additional needs children are being met by the ECEC sector as a whole, by individual types of care, and in particular regions.**

- Within this municipality, children with additional needs tend not to utilise Family Day Care (FDC) as an option, most use formal long day care settings.

*Case Study 10 – Within this municipality there are currently one hundred and twenty three children receiving inclusion support in ECEC services. However, only 3 children are in FDC. FDC is conducted in educators homes which are generally not equipped to accommodate children with high support needs e.g. wheelchairs, hoists, walking frames.*

- Under the Inclusion Professional Support Program (IPSP) ECEC service can apply for ISS funding for an additional educator. However IPSP guidelines state that services can only receive ISS funding for a maximum of 10% of the children attending the service.

*Case study 11 – A small OSHC service has nine children attending, one of these children has a disability. There is one educator as national quality standards require but the service would benefit by having an additional educator to ensure safety and inclusion of all children. As one child is less more than 10% of the children, and equates to 0.9 of a person, attending, the service is not eligible for ISS funding*

*On Pg 35 of the Inclusion and Professional Support Program Guidelines for 2013 – 2016 - **Conditions relating to ECEC educators/carers employed with the Inclusion Support Subsidy***

*Where the ECEC service receives the Inclusion Support Subsidy to employ an additional ECEC educator/carer, the ECEC service is responsible for:*

- *2 - ensuring that the number of Inclusion Support Subsidy funded additional educators/carers in a service at any one time is limited to no more than 10 per cent of the ECEC service's currently utilised child care places*

- Within this municipality there are services that have open doors to all families but there are also services that are less welcoming. As a consequence families do not utilise these services for their children with additional needs.

*Case study 12 – An ECEC service with a rating of ‘working towards’ recently enrolled a child who had just been “asked to leave” an ECEC service with a rating of ‘Meeting’. The new service rang to seek ISA support as it did not want to turn the child away given the child’s experience at the previous centre.*

- ECEC services are unable to receive ISS funding for children with high medical needs. As a result when services provide service to children with high medical needs they must fund the additional staff resources, and possibly equipment, from within their own budget.

*Case Study 13 – There is a four year old child enrolled at an ECEC service. This child has cerebral palsy, epilepsy and is confined to a wheelchair. The child is PEG feed and requires to be sat at a certain degree when being feed; this requires two educators and can take one hour a time... The child has also started going to the toilet, this takes two educators to lift and support. Under IPSP guidelines ISS funding can be provided to assist with the physical issues associated with her cerebral palsy but cannot be used to respond to her medical needs . This child is in a ratio room of 1:15 so two additional educators are required ( two to support the child and one to support the other children)*

- In this municipality there are educators who find working with children with additional needs challenging. There are many reasons for this - from lack of experience to lack of training. It seems that graduates of the Certificate 3 and Diploma in Children Services are not being taught sufficiently about additional needs by registered training organisations (RTO).

**The extent to which additional needs are being met by mainstream ECEC services or specialised services & key factors that explain any failure to meet these needs:**

- Waiting list for Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS) can impact on children's ability to access mainstream services because of the limited specialist support available to educators;
- As stated above, the lack experience and skills of the educators ;
- Philosophies and approaches can differ between organisations / agencies / services supporting children with additional needs; and
- Allied health professionals, who generally work one-to one with children often lack an appreciation of the challenges/logistics facing ECEC educators working with children with additional needs within a group setting with ratios of up to 1:15.

*Case study 14 – An ECEC service has a child enrolled with Autism, the family have applied for the Autism funding and have employed an ABA therapist to work with the child. The therapist attends sessions at the LDC centre. The therapist works one on one with the child, which goes against the IPSP guidelines. The therapist suggests different techniques for the educators to follow but the service feel these techniques go against their philosophy.*

**What can childcare operators and governments do to improve the delivery of childcare services to children with additional needs?**

- Streamline the funding models – for example state and Commonwealth funding models for inclusion – very different criteria currently in place for ISS funding (Commonwealth) as against KISS funding (State government);
- ECEC services struggle to support children who demonstrate behaviour issues due to variety of reasons. These include being from a vulnerable family, children who have suffered trauma and/or children who have an undiagnosed disability (eg autism).

These children impact on the learning environments within the ECECs but due to guidelines, the ECEC are unable to apply for additional support/funding; and

- Have short term funding – similar to Flexible Support Funding (FSF) – for all ECEC services, including kindergartens, to support the orientation of children with additional needs as stated in the previous dot point
- Support their staff to access professional development

### **Costs Of Childcare & Early Learning Services In Australia**

**The Commission is seeking information and where possible quantitative evidence on changes in the use of ECEC, including the type of care used (formal and informal), in response to changes in the cost of care.**

- Families are using more formal care, for example, families are using ECEC services rather than the informal care they may have accessed previously, as extended family members (i.e. grandparents) may not be able to care for children as they are very often still in the workforce.

**The extent of price competition between providers and the effect this has had on fees and the quality of services provided.**

- In this municipality the fees for ECEC services are reasonably similar; and
- In this municipality 28.3% of ECEC services have been assessed against the NQS. The breakdown of this is 39% are exceeding, 41% meeting and 20% working towards.

### **National Quality Framework**

**The Commission is seeking views and evidence on the effect of increased staff ratios and qualification requirements on outcomes for children.**

- With the new ratio of 1:4 for children under 3yrs of age, the ISA has found there is less demand for support in these learning environments; and

- Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) results showed significant reduction in the number of children being assessed as vulnerable in either one or two domains between 2009 and 2012. During this period the NQF was being implemented with improved child:staff ratios and improvements in staff capabilities/qualifications; and
- Qualification requirements will only have a positive outcome for children if the quality of the course is of a high standard. An Educator in receipt of a Diploma achieved in 6 weeks and without any placements will not have the same level of education and training as an Educator who has completed the course over 2 years.

**The case for greater recognition and assessment of competencies as an alternative in some cases to additional formal training and qualifications.**

- There are huge concerns amongst experienced educators with the training that is offered to some ECEC students. There are educators who have received their diplomas from RTOs in a six week period, with the feeling they have never had their practices questioned or challenged in the manner that would be expected of tertiary training;
- In this municipality there are educators who find working with children with additional needs challenging. There are various reasons for this from their lack of experience to not having had sufficient training in working with these children. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there is limited training provided to both Certificate III and Diploma in Children's Services by the Registered Training Organisations (RTOs); and
- In order to give educators recognition of prior learning, there should be a training body that assesses the training teachers to ensure the highest quality training is provided.

**The Commission is seeking information on the extent to which training/childcare courses enable workers to meet the requirements of the NQF and how training could be improved.**

- The trainers and lecturers need to have more current knowledge; anecdotally the perception is that they seem to be out of date;
- ECEC providers reported that they are receiving a number of telephone contacts per week from students requesting placement experiences. Providers are concerned that the arrangement of placements is not being adequately coordinated by RTOs and that students may not receive the best possible placement experience
- Many students are not receiving supported visits by RTOs during the student's placement;
- There are some educators who are gaining a diploma within 6 weeks;
- Huge variations in the undergraduate courses and the RTOs; and
- Many training providers do not require students to complete placements. Service providers feel this is a critical gap in training for those students.

*Case study 15 – The City of Monash hosts a number of students in ECEC bachelor and diploma courses during the year. There is a huge variation in the input from the training organisations when the students are attending. At one university the students are required to find their own placements for eg Professional Advocacy and Leadership and Management subjects. The students have had no tutoring in the subjects, but give the students readings – it is then up to the student to read them or not. One supervisor noted: “The student does their placement and I am required to send a letter saying the student attended the organisation for their prescribed hours. There is no requirement for any assessment on my part or any information about what the student learnt during the placement. Another university organises the placement for the student giving me an idea of what they would like the student to achieve. A supervisor then came on site to speak to the student and myself to see whether we had achieved the goals that were set.”*

**Could the information provided on the ‘My Child’ website be changed to make it more useful or accessible to families? Are there other approaches to providing information to parents about vacancies, fees and compliance that should be considered?**

- Anecdotal feedback from parents suggests that they find the 'mychild' website is quite complicated to navigate around;
- Feedback from ECEC services is that parents tend to find their service from web searches, seeing the service whilst driving around the neighbourhood or word of mouth; and
- Vacancy information is irrelevant for Family Day Care schemes as so many variables have to be considered – what suburb are the vacancies in, are Educators with vacancies able to care for children of all ages (lifting restrictions), do Educators with vacancies drive a car (does a family want their child driven in a car), nationality of Educator (often families are seeking Educators of their own nationality or culture).

### **Support Provided By State, Territory & Local Governments**

**Is it confusing and/or costly to deal with the large number of programs and agencies administering ECEC support? Is there overlap, duplication, inconsistency or other inefficiencies created by the interaction of programs?**

- ECEC services can at any one time have more than three different agencies supporting them linked to one child

*Case Study 16 – A LDC service has a child with Autism enrolled. The child was in the Kindergarten room. The service requested support from the Inclusion Support Agency (ISA – Commonwealth funded) and Pre School Field Officer (PSFO – State Funded). The child was also linked with an ABA therapist and a speech therapist (Commonwealth funded Autism package). All these support professionals were suggesting various techniques to the educators and families which created some confusion as to how the child was going to both access and participate in the environment.*