



SOUTH COAST
BAPTIST COLLEGE
SCHOOL OF EARLY LEARNING CHILDCARE

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SUBMISSION TO: Productivity Commission into Childcare and Early Childhood Learning

South Coast Baptist College School of Early Learning Childcare (formerly known as Maranatha Childcare) provides Long Day Care, Outside of School Hours Care and Playgroup programmes for children ranging from 6 months old to 15 years old. We are a service that aims to offer not only a nurturing Christian environment but also a highly educational service influenced by a thoughtful and purposeful philosophy of early childhood learning – to value each child individually and respond to the needs of those children in a flexible and proactive way. We have about 65 staff providing service to an average of 230 families in our community.

We asked our staff to comment on the issues that affect them and their comments are presented below:

Our positive experience working in the Childcare Industry:

- It is great educating, working and interacting with children, being involved with them as they grow and reach their milestones, from babies through to school age, seeing them reach their potential and witnessing their achievements
- Getting to know children's personalities, conversing with them, learning with them.
- Each day is unique.
- We get to build relationships not only with children but with parents/families as well.
- Becoming a part of a small community within a large community. Having the opportunity to meeting new children and families
- Having the opportunity to work with different children/family backgrounds within the community.
- Inclusion
- Following our Reggio Emilio philosophy
- Being able to use our skills and talents in the workplace
- Being in an environment where traineeships, work placements, training workshops are offered



Our negative experience working in the Childcare Industry:

- Being underpaid and undervalued i.e. wages are not appropriate with the work involved
- For the Centre - not enough money for resources and overhead costs
- Unappreciated for our role as educator. Not seen as a professional. Treated as a nanny or a cleaner. Not taken seriously.
- Amount of paperwork that is required every time a government department changes its rules.
- Paperwork within programming. A lot of work taken home. Time taken away from children and family commitments due to paperwork, training and meetings after hours
- Maintaining and keeping up with Licensing requirements – always changing i.e NCAC to ACECQA
- Exhausting physically. Long hours. Getting sick all the time being exposed to sick children. Getting hurt managing angry or aggressive children
- High staff turnover - stress on staff due to extra training. Inconsistency, unfamiliarity between staff, children and parents. Impacts on the ratio. Adjustments in building bonds with the children and the families. Unsettled children, upset parents.

Quality childcare is:

- Looking after the wellbeing of each child, educating them on all areas of development. Preparing this generation for what lies ahead of them. Encouraging and building their confidence for years to come
- Children encouraged to develop on their own pace. Making each opportunity a positive-lasting experience
- Children are supervised, loved and nurtured with love and parents feel confident enough to leave children in childcare
- Staff, families and children working together. Team work



- Having quality staff i.e. educated, have undergone training, aware of regulations and requirements, with passion for caring for children
- Experienced without the Certificate/qualification (e.g. childcarers who have worked in the Childcare industry for many years)
- Environment and Facilities which are well-maintained, safe, secure healthy, hygienic, friendly and fun
- Respect for diversity in learning in multiple intelligence
- Good management and effective systems
- Supervision of children. Right ratios

Role of the National Quality Framework (NQF) and our experience of the paperwork that goes with it (NQF):

- NQF is about the standards that are required to maintain quality childcare, health welfare and wellbeing of the child/family.
- Policies and procedures / Rules and Regulations
- Programming observations, learning journeys, daily/photo diaries, developmental checklists, evaluations, and learning outcomes
- Too much paperwork taking up time during work, during breaks and outside work. Documentation of all the above
- For those who are studying while working, paperwork helps them but at the same time means more work involved
- The assessment rating is not a good guide e.g. “meeting” sounds average and just maintaining, “working towards” mean having not achieved anything



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RECOMMENDATION: Our ideas on how we can improve Early Childhood Education and Care

In order to have quality childcare, we need Quality staff with positive attitude and enthusiasm, with the passion to educate, care for and work with children. We need to increase current childcare wages (e.g. additional \$10 on top of hourly wages) --- better pay to attract and retain quality workers, which also makes staffing stable and constant. We need Early Years Educators to be recognized in the community and be valued for their work with children. We need funding for studies/traineeships and funding for equipment and resources. We need free, available, accessible and local training and workshops not only to develop and up skill workers but most especially during changes in Regulations so that licensing requirements can be met and exceeded. We need to make childcare fees affordable for parents. We need standards to be maintained but at the same time, paperwork to be cut down so that more time is spent with children than paperwork. Investing in early childhood education is investing in our children – the future of this nation.