

I wish to comment on some aspects of early childhood care and education provision.

I am concerned about what will not be considered - the inequity of the Paid Parental Leave funding which ignores the work of mothers/fathers who choose to raise their children and forego a paid job for a part of that time. This inquiry should be looking at the benefits of children being raised in their own home (benefits of social and emotional wellbeing which will have effects on these individuals and the community for many years to come) and the need for governments to support those families and also workplaces that are family friendly for parents who do need or choose to work outside the home. Flexible work practices rather than flexible care – adults can cope with being more flexible and elastic than babies and small children. Children are not parcels to be parked at our whim.

Children learn from their interactions – brain science is showing us that quality interactions build the architecture of the brain – we cannot afford to treat the young children of this country like guinea pigs – which is what it seems “flexibility” will mean – overnight and weekend care – when will families have time together? As a preschool teacher I have seen the effects on behaviour and social skills of young children being in care for the maximum time available – they switch off from forming relationships and do not engage in learning environments. They are in defensive mode from never feeling completely at home in their own place – a service is not their home.

I am concerned about the level of documentation required by the NQS – I am a preschool teacher and I support the goal of improving quality but paperwork to prove that we do what we do is not a measure or enabler of quality. Babies and small children need relationships and interactions, care and time not photos and paperwork.

Quality Improvement Plans every year are an additional burden – surely we could just do an update each year and a full blown one every 3 years?

Thankyou.

Name withheld.