

Dear Commissioner,

I am a childcare officer with TELLS. My role revolves around arranging childcare bookings for AMEP/SLPET student. This involves liaising with numerous childcares and parents around Queensland. I also have a child (2 year old), I so I can understand the need and wants of the parents with regards to care and what the childcare centres can offer.

From my experience there is no set defined care provided by childcare, they are unique individual in sense. Though many are similar most have different provisions and charges vastly different prices. However it seems, even the large franchise centres have little involvement in the actual centre's daily operation. So I raise my first issue, childcare fees seems to be independent of social and economic factors. Childcare centres can and will charge what they deem reasonable and will raise fees as per demand and reasons undisclosed. In a recent search, I noted fee increased 11.4% annually at one centre, whilst another with in the same franchise and 2 km away raised their fee 6%.

And due to this, there is a waiting list of up to 100 children at the cheaper franchise centre. So this is the second issue to raise, affordability and availability is inversely proportioned, as you would expect, but at a ridiculous rate. And even then the most expensive childcare are getting filled.

Childcare is a major issue, I am lucky to be in a position to be able to assist people locate childcare. On one hand, there is affordability and availability and on the other hand there is care suited to the child. This is a delicate balancing act and has significant domino effect on the overall productive of the community.

Kindest Regards

Owen Su      PhD