



Berri Regional Child Care Centre
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Childcare and Early Childhood Learning
Productivity Commission
GPO 1428
CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601

To The Commission

I write with reference to clause 132, of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. The requirement for an early childhood teacher – centre-based services – 25 to 59 children has been appropriately met at our Long Day Centre.

One month in to the year allows only for brief reflection. I appreciate the opportunity to draw to The Commissions attention the following:

- We applaud the move to increase the professional basis of the Educator Team in child care. However, far more - in fact the provision of any - support is essential to both give direction for the concept of the position, and to reassure current Diploma of Children's Services qualified Educators of the professional learning and caring curriculum and environment they have implemented always and in an ongoing manner regardless of the new Regulation.
- Publicity is required. This Regulation now gives parents the choice of having their child remain in child care, creating seamless education and care until beginning school. The perception parents have always been presented with is that children must move out of child care and into pre-school in the year prior to starting school. The child care sector requires publicity and support to break this old fashioned perception. As from the beginning of this year we see the divide between child care and pre-school as nil. Both have qualified Educators presenting the same nationally recognised curriculum framework (the Early Years Learning Framework) to the same aged children (with acknowledgment to the new system of 'single intake' in the pre-school and school sectors); that being children aged 3 years, 9 months to children aged 5 years, 9 months.
- Despite the similarities between child care and pre-school, there is one difference: the fees. The cost of child care is frequently prohibitive to parents considering entering the workforce or returning to work. With the introduction of the Early Childhood Teacher in Child Care an unavoidable expense is now in the Centre budget. Parents at our service are kept in touch with the list of expenses their child care fees pay for – children's learning materials and equipment, meals, utility bills, repairs and maintenance, cleaning, wages and so on. In pre-school the teacher's wages are paid for by the State Government (Department for Education and Child Development). In child care, through their fees, parents pay the wages for all staff. This now includes the wages of the teacher. Unfairly, the next door pre-school passes no wages costs on to parents. The same service but hundreds of dollars difference in weekly fees.

Thank you for taking notice of these current issues facing the Staff and Management Committee (group of volunteering parents), for the parents and children, of our community based, not for profit, long day care Child Care Centre.

Yours sincerely,
Lisanne Jarvis
Director
3rd February 2014

'Quality Care When You're Not There'