

To Whom It May Concern,

Outlined below are areas we believe need addressing in the Early Childhood Industry.

Teacher Qualifications in Long day Care Centres

- It is very difficult to attract and retain high quality early childhood teachers for the Kindergarten program and the centre under the NQF regulations. Most teachers only stay for a year as they are looking for school positions. Additionally we are finding that graduates have very little experience with children and qualified Group Leaders with experience deliver a far better Kindergarten program than inexperienced trained teachers. Experience and age make a better educator for children.
- Please consider: ECT's be working with minimum Early Childhood Diploma and studying towards a bachelor of Education (early Childhood) rather than someone who has completed ½ their course. We need to get educators working in early childhood settings sooner under an ECT qualification that is catered for the long day care sector.
- Additionally ECT students need to be supported through a high level of funding and opportunities to compete practical components mostly within long day care settings.
- There needs to be a greater expectation on educators to complete a required amount of professional development each year, raising the bar on professionalism, knowledge building and high quality outcomes in early childhood settings. Accessible professional development supported through funding to ensure that these opportunities do not disadvantage individual services financially.

CCR Payments

- CCR should be paid direct to the service. There should be no option to have it paid to the parent directly. This will ensure the payment is used for childcare fees and will avoid having to chase parents through legal action to pay fees. If a parent has an outstanding fee from a service they should not be allowed to start at another service and receive CCR until the first service has been paid.

ISS

- Federal and State governments need to collaborate on this payment. Children in Kindergarten programs cannot claim ISS due to the government theory of 'double dipping' into funding. The only option to support these children currently is to not claim Kindergarten Funding.
- ISS funding process is tedious and very time consuming. Once funding is approved the process is repeated when the child moves rooms- the information on the whole does not change yet the process has to begin all over again. There is a lot of pressure and expectations on the creation of the Service Support Plan and these expectations are constantly changing.

More access to child care spaces nationally in a range of early childhood settings.

- The demand for childcare places is already high. Implementing further ratios (to less children per staff member) will only make it harder to get places and increase costs. We don't need to reduce the staff/child ratios. Especially when a service has obtained a high NQF rating.

- The process of establishing new centres through local council is very long. New childcare centre should be fast tracked to create more places quickly. This is what the governments says it wants and yet there has been no change in the local council process to make it happen faster.

NQF Assessment and rating Process

- The NQF and assessment and ratings process has been positive for the sector. The workload and expectations on the Office for Early Childhood Education and Care however is not realistic and does not allow OECEC officers the chance to keep in touch with centres in the area. More staff is needed here.

Educational Leader

- More detailed guidelines for role of the educational leader is needed. We would like to see more professional support for the educational leader.