

To the members of the Productivity Commission,

It would be beneficial for numerous parents who are lucky enough to be given the opportunity to work from home that a review include an “expansion” to what Childcare should be.

I have 2 children with a third one on the way. I have personally opted to avoid a childcare provider for the first two years of their lives as I strongly believe and have experienced that only we (their father and I) are capable of offering the nurturing environment which is so crucial during their early developmental years. Even after my children have turned two, we have chosen to only use Childcare to a maximum of 3 days a week. This of course reduces the optimal income we are capable of achieving as working parents but unfortunately we are not given the flexibility which meets our working and parenting styles.

I am lucky enough to be valued by my employer for my hard work ethic and be given the flexibility to work from home as necessary. However, this is an offer that I cannot consider because I still need flexible assistance at home for my child to be looked after while I work from home. Using a nanny would be a solution that is unavailable to us due to cost reasons. Neither of us have family which can support us during this difficult juggling period of our lives.

The alternative solution I am requesting the Productivity Commission to review is for the inclusion of having a short term to medium term “Child Care” visa made available to direct family members living overseas. These visas could be based on non-permanent living conditions which could offer the opportunity to return back to work early on a full time basis. I personally would not expect any rebates or subsidies. Instead, due to our increased income, we would happily take responsibility for all living expenses related to “Childcare” assistance I receive through someone I truly trust.

There are several issues and problems that will need to be reviewed in order for individuals not to take advantage of the individual providing the care but I believe that this option would enhance productivity of many parents who are not fortunate enough to have the support in Australia nor parents who chose not to work to avoid unsatisfactory childcare.

This option would have minimal cost impact to the government and could potential avoid a fee or rebate if a family member is brought from overseas specifically to assist in the care of child.

The typology of what we perceive “Childcare” to be should be expanded to include numerous branches which provides flexible options that suit an individual family’s life and parenting style. Childcare should target the provision of flexible time, flexible work environments (such taking the opportunity of being able to work from home when available) and flexible costs whilst providing the best nurturing ambience a parent chooses for a child.

In my case, I simply wish I could take onboard the option to work from home with my child by my side whilst someone I trust looks after him at least for the first year so I could breastfeed on demand and not express milk for when I do work. This solution would greatly enhance not only our financial income but it would also reduce the strain on our current hectic life.

I hope my story is of assistance to this review and hope that care is expanded not to just centres or nannies but further consideration is given to other controversial solutions such as visas dedicated for the care of child at home under strict conditions. This would solve my families current struggles and I am sure other families are also experiencing similar situations.

Kind Regards,

(Name Witheld)