

I write in order to express my absolute amazement and disgust at the following references to Occasional Care in the Draft Report

Compared to other areas of the ECEC workforce, workers in OC services have relatively high levels of qualifications. Given that children typically spend limited time in OC, and OC thus has a relatively limited scope to contribute to cognitive development, there is no compelling case to impose mandatory qualification requirements on OC.

and

7.4 Occasional care

The age profile of children in OC and the ad-hoc nature of demand for OC services suggests that there is very limited scope for educational interactions. With children in services for limited periods of time, demand is almost exclusively for care services.

In Victoria, children may and do attend Occasional Care for up to five hours per day and fifteen hours in any given week. This represents as much or more time than children commonly spend in pre-school, and provides ample opportunities for educational interactions, with a focus on cognitive, social and emotional growth.

Occasional Care services in Victoria are closely supervised by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and checks are regularly made to see that much more than just care is being provided.

Developmental observations of children are recorded and programs planned accordingly, using the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework.

Early childhood education qualifications are required for the trained staff, who may be assisted by volunteers working under their supervision.

From 1 January 2011, all staff members of limited hours type 1 services (Occasional Care) were required to meet minimum

Trained staff members are active participants in local Early Years Networks and regularly attend in-service training sessions on developmental early years education.

Children are referred to Occasional Care from Early Intervention services and services dealing with migrant families specifically for the developmental early learning experiences provided..

Please correct the inappropriate content of the draft report accordingly.

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