

To Whom it may Concern,

I have been looking through the Productivity Commission Draft Research Report into the Early Childhood Development Workforce.

My comments and concerns are in regards to the requirement of teachers in all Long Day Care Centres.

My first point is that this is an excellent initiative towards the provision of High Quality Education and Care for all children using and attending the wide variety of Early Childhood settings available to families.

Who is going to pay for these teachers? As a teacher already working in Long Day Care on a part-time basis, the pay is grossly underpaid! The conditions in no way resemble those of teachers in schools, government preschools or private Early Learning Centres which are affiliated with private schools.

In South Australia, DECS (Department of Education and Children's Services) is responsible for overseeing regulations, but when it comes to looking after the teachers working in Long Day Care, no-one seems to want to take responsibility.

There are some Long Day Services where the pre-school teachers' wages are covered or subsidised by DECS, but the majority of centres are required to find the wages from parent fees. This also means that parents are going to look at their own costs and the wages for these teachers will be fought over by various concerned parties.

As I work part-time in a Centre, I am able to teach in schools and pre-schools where I receive a teacher wage. My other issue is that the work I am carrying out in the Centre, is not recognised by DECS as "teaching" as this Centre is not regarded as a DECS site (fully under the auspice of the Department).

I am currently trying to have a wage reclassification with this Department, but the many years of working in a Kindergarten room and running a full Kindergarten program, is not being taken into consideration as "teaching".

What is going to happen to teachers who will go and work full-time in Long Day Care and then realise that their work experience (as only new graduates would apply to these underpaid and under recognised positions) would not be taken into serious consideration for their future career development?

Who is going to support these teachers? Who would offer Professional Development (as many of these are not readily available to those not in the "system")? We will see a tiered system and perceived quality of teachers – teachers who teach in pre-schools, and teachers who "babysit" in Long Day Care.

The state departments (unless in Private Schools) need to take over the wages, conditions and support for all the teachers across all areas of Early Childhood, not just for those in the Government pre-schools.

Parents and families are being a good does of scare campaigns by private Centre operators, so DECS (in South Australia) needs to come up to the plate and support the teachers and thereby support the families.

Some families cannot access other Early Childhood services because of work commitments and their working hours do not accommodate the sessional pre-school system which is currently available. Why should they be penalised?

There are still many issues to be sorted out, as I see it; as someone working in the system, and wanting to see positive change. Change for the profession of Early Childhood and for the equal provision of High Quality Education and Care for all children and families.

Pay staff properly!

*[Name of submitter withheld due to privacy reasons]*