

To Whom It May Concern:

When I left work for maternity leave I did not have the option to return. As a result, I have chosen to stay at home to raise my son. When I had my son, I had been living in Sydney for less than 18 months and I don't have any family here. Therefore, I have no support (other than my husband) to help me raise my son in Sydney.

I first looked for occasional care to provide a break from raising my child entirely alone for 5 days a week whilst my partner was at work. Without it, being a full time mum with no option to have even an hour to myself was incredibly difficult. Then, when my friends with children all started to return to work and send their children to day care, I became acutely aware of an experience my son was liable to miss. That is, the experience of being around other children for extended periods of time and, importantly, within a structured environment with 1. a program of activities and 2. alternative figures of authority and role models for him to spend time with, other than simply my partner and I. I have no need for long day care (I do not work) and I want to spend as much time with him as I can (whilst retaining my sanity!). But I do want to offer my son these experiences and I do need a break from time to time. Occasional care is the perfect answer.

My son now spends a minimum of one full day (8.30am – 4pm) at CNOCC. The staff there have settled him in quickly and I am always thrilled to see what he has been up to at the end of the day in the centre diary. When I believed I would be going back to work and researched long day care I do not remember visiting a centre that provided anything that CNOCC is not offering my son. That is exactly how I would want it. I hope that you will continue to support the fantastic service that my Occasional Care centre provides for my son and the other centres like it across Australia.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Smith