

To whom it may concern.

I have 1 child currently at a not for profit long day care centre at Bondi Junction. My older child also went through the same daycare. In total we have been at this daycare centre for 8 years. I shudder to think what the total cost of that has been but I wanted to give my children the best start in life. With my first child I returned to work when she was 9 mths and my second when he was 7 mths. Long daycare has meant I am able to put in a full days work and still make my contribution to the company I work for, as well as contributing to my children's social and educational development.

I am concerned with the proposal to reduce qualifications requirements for educators of children aged zero to three years. I expect, if I choose to entrust my children to a formal care environment that I leave them with educators who are qualified to support their individual learning and care needs. That is why I chose this establishment and entrust them with my child's education.

Accessing affordable childcare is a big challenge for many families. I welcome the recognition that the overall level of childcare assistance needs to be increased and believe that this should be targeted at working families. For some, there is a fine line between whether going back to work is plausible, given the high cost of daycare. I appreciate that the cost of daycare correlates to the wages required for educated professionals and therefore there should be no reduction to the qualifications required.

My family values quality early learning for children, particularly in the early years. We want to feel comfortable leaving our children with educators who know and understand the development of our child. The first three years of life are a vital part of a child's development, having educators who understand and contribute to my child's development is important to me. Without these caring and confident educators, my children would have no other support network, as we have no other family here. Capable and approachable professionals are part of our "extended family" and we hope to keep them in their jobs, ensuring our children are safe and well rounded individuals.

Regards

Shari