

17/12/2013

This is my family's situation; my husband and I are the parents of a 9 month old, our child started in Long Day Care in September 2013 when he was 6 months old.

The MyChild website was a great source of information for all childcare related info, models of care and for finding Childcare centres in our area. However, was almost never accurate when it came to the vacancies available area.

We visited all the childcare centres in our area and were able to quickly identify the ones that were quality and the ones that were just a babysitting service and we felt did not have the passion for Early Childhood Education. We narrowed it down to 8 childcare centres we ended up going on the waiting list for.

I started putting my unborn child on waiting lists from the time I was 6 months pregnant and paid "waiting list fees" that ranged from \$5 -\$20 at each centre (even if they were part of the same group).

When my son was born in in early 2013 I phoned all the centres he was on the waiting list for and updated our waiting list place with his name, DOB and gender. To date I have only heard back from 2 centres that he was on the waiting list for, despite calling each childcare centre fortnightly/ monthly to see "how things were going".

I was even encouraged by 2 centres to ring every week to see if a space had become available as Childcare centres make a note of every time you call, so when a space becomes available they are more likely to give you the space because of the persistence and the interest in their centre. This didn't seem like a fair process to me (especially given you pay a waiting list fee to join the queue) but was a game I felt I needed to play to get him a place. Our son does not attend one of the centres that encouraged us to do this.

My husband and I work very hard, pay our taxes and neither of us had ever received Centrelink despite both being students are one point of our lives, so did not feel guilty this year when I claimed the paid maternity leave from Centrelink. Due to financial reasons I returned to work a month earlier than planned so didn't even receive the full entitlement.

Unfortunately, due to our combined household income we do not qualify for CCB or any Family Tax Benefits. We only qualify for CCR. Having said that, if the CCR was to become income tested under the current limits, we would not qualify for the CCR either.

The current rate per day for our child in the Nursery room of his childcare centre is \$86.00, which is then reduced to \$43.00 per day after CCR is applied, he attends 4 days a week meaning our current out of pocket expense is:

	<b>With CCR</b>	<b>Without CCR</b>
<b>Weekly</b>	\$ 172	\$ 344
<b>Fortnightly</b>	\$ 344	\$ 688
<b>Annually</b>	\$ 8,944	\$ 17,888

If the CCR was to become income tested, there would be little financial benefit to me working as a large part of my salary would go to childcare.

I believe that Day-care and Kindy are crucial to a child's social and academic development and that by being a working parent, I am setting a good example to my child that you must earn your living.

In addition to the above, another issue family's face when your child is in day care is the almost never ending sickness. While some families have a great support network in the form of grandparents or other family members that can look after a sick child, others are not so lucky. The only option we have found is to hire an emergency carer through a nanny service at \$25 per hour, this is not an affordable option for most (not all) working family's as I certainly don't earn \$25 an hour after tax to pay for an emergency carer, meaning whenever my child is sick I don't work and therefore don't get paid.

In summary, consideration needs to be given in the following areas:

- The priority of access to child care
- The effectiveness of Waiting Lists
- The affordability of child care for working families if the CCR was to become income tested
- Affordability of emergency carers (nanny's) for sick children