

- ***Have you experienced difficulty accessing suitable care for your child? If so is this due to a lack of services in your area or available places at the times you require? Have you found the facility on the MyChild website, which allows you to search for centres reporting vacancies, useful? Have you had any problems with a childcare centre's management of their waiting list? How could this be improved?***

I live in Fitzroy and have had difficulties accessing suitable care for my baby. I wanted to be back in the work force by the time my baby was 6 month old - to support my family and support my own financial independence.

It was really hard to find a quality centre that would take my baby at 6 month old on a full time basis.

My Child website seems like a good tool but not up to date and without enough details. But a good starting point when looking for childcare options.

Also I think priorities to working parents should be enforced as I knew parents of similar aged babies that would get a spot in childcare when one of the parents was a stay at home parents - before families with both parents working.

- ***What factors influence whether you use early childhood education and care (ECEC) services, care for your child at home or have your child cared for by another family member? Is affordability a significant barrier to your use of ECEC services or does it influence the type of service you use?***

I don't have any close family in Australia so this was not an option. However I have always wanted to use a childcare centre as I believe it is the best option for an only child. They need the exposure to other children for the emotional, physical and mental development.

Affordability will become a significant barrier when we have a second child in care. This will impact the career and financial independence of the lowest income earner in our household as they will need to take time off work to look after the kids. Staying in the workforce on a full time basis will not make any sense financially because of the CCB capped to \$7,500 py.

We reach the CCB cap after 8 month of full time care per child which effectively mean that for 1/3 of the year we are out of pocket for the total CC fee.

- ***Do you feel you are able to make an informed assessment of the quality of different ECEC services? Have you found quality assessment information on the MyChild website useful? Do you consider that the quality of available services is adequate? If not, which types of service, or particular aspects of a service do you have concerns about? Would you accept lower quality care if that care is closer to where you live or work, or enables you to work preferred days or times? Would you pay more for ECEC shown to contribute to better learning and development outcomes for your child?***

I feel it is very hard to get an educated idea of the quality of different ECEC services. You basically need to really on people within your community and their recommendation. I am very happy with the services provided by my childcare centre. It is a small centre (50 children), the team is very stable and engaged, there is not much turnover so the carers stay the same year on year and we feel like they actually care a lot about the children in their care.

I would not accept any lower quality care unless it was the only option.

I believe we already pay extravagant ECEC fees so not ready to contribute any further.

- *Are problems with access to, or the flexibility, cost or quality of ECEC preventing you from undertaking work or study (or the number of hours you would prefer to work or study)? How should any problems be addressed? Would, for example, extending childcare centre hours or the length of the school day make it easier for you to work?*
- *Is current support for families (mainly through the Child Care Benefit, Child Care Rebate and Jobs, Education and Training Childcare Fee Assistance) adequate? Are eligibility requirements appropriate and clear? Is working out your eligibility, applying for assistance and reporting changes in your circumstances (that may impact on eligibility, such as work, training, study, or income) straightforward? Is the online childcare estimator easy to use? Could delivery of support be improved to make it easier for parents? Is it appropriate that families receiving childcare support may also receive other government payments for families (for example, paid parental leave or family tax benefits)?*

No the current level of support for families is not adequate. Cost of ECEC should be the same across the country and should not cost twice as much in inner city vs rural areas.

People believe that parents are getting support from the government to pay for 50% of the childcare fees but because of the cap this is not true.

Over a year, I pay \$22,500 worth of Childcare Fee. I get back \$7,500 from the government support. So my out of pocket fees for the year is \$15,000 (this is the price of a pretty decent private high school!!!! And that is what I pay for a baby...)

So effectively, the government is only giving me support up to 33% of the childcare fees and this will be getting less and less with the fees increasing and the cap staying the same.

It feels like the government wants one of the parents to stay at home which is not fair on anyone nor on the country's economy.

Of course it is appropriate for family to receive paid parental leave and childcare support. I don't really understand how that can be questioned? Paid parental leave is here to support a women for a time when she physically can not work because she just gave birth to a baby. It is not a choice, it is a fact.

- *Should support be extended to types of childcare not currently funded or funding increased for specific types of childcare — for example nannies providing in-home care? What standards or assurances should these carers have to meet or provide?*

I believe funding should be extended to the childcare that offer the best quality of care at the most efficient cost. Not sure if nannies fit into that category.

- *Do you have any specific comments about access to, flexibility or the cost of occasional care; outside school hours care (including vacation programs); or preschool? Have you had difficulty finding a nanny or au pair? What could alleviate such difficulties?*

All this type of occasional care should be flexible enough to allow both parents to keep working on a full time basis. School hours are not compatible with most work hours (who works 9am to 3pm?!) which again push one of the parents to step back from his/her career and look after the kids.

- ***If currently using employer provided childcare, what advantages does it offer you? If you don't currently have access, would you find this type of care attractive, if offered?***

Very attractive indeed.

- ***What factors other than ECEC are influencing your decisions about participation in work or study? Is government assistance, or the withdrawal of that assistance, for example family tax benefits, a significant factor?***

If CCB were to be withdrawn or not increased this would have a direct impact on our decision to participate into work.

- ***Do you have a child with additional needs? How well are their needs being met and is the child participating in a mainstream or specialised childcare service? What factors explain any shortcoming in meeting your child's needs? How can operators and governments improve services to additional needs children?***

N/A

- ***Are you living in a regional or remote area? What particular challenges do you face in having your ECEC needs met? What measures could improve access to ECEC?***

N/A