

Louise Swinn

August 24, 2014

To whom it may concern,

I write in response to the Productivity Commission's inquiry into Childcare and Early Childhood Learning.

We send our daughter, Decca, to East West Childcare in Fitzroy. It is by no means the closest childcare centre to our house but it was the best childcare centre that we visited, by a country mile.

The first thing you notice when you enter East West is that the staff are content. They are happy, calm and relaxed, engaged, intelligent, thoughtful, and deeply concerned with the wellbeing of the children in their care – and, I am glad to say, of each other. These people are engrossed, useful members of the community, and we count ourselves lucky every time we drop Decca off – lucky that she is in the company of people who are so switched on.

East West has a high ratio of staff to children. This means that the children are given plenty of attention, and it means that the staff are not anxious. We are happy to pay more for this privilege.

When I drop Decca off, she is immediately absorbed into an activity, where she is happy. I couldn't believe that someone who hadn't spent any time away from her parents would be so quick to settle into a new place, and it is because she knows she is being cared for. I believe that the staff at East West do everything they can to look after, educate and nurture the small people who are in their care, day in and day out. I think this is a massive job. Anyone who has had to look after children, not just for a short stint of time like a day or a week or even a few months, but for a lifetime, a career, a vocation, will know that there is no job that is more taxing on all aspects of a person – physically, intellectually, psychologically.

Having Decca attend daycare where she is happy and I feel as though she is being encouraged to be a decent, creative human being, means that I can concentrate on my work. I am a publisher and editor and my work often involves great attention to detail. This is impossible to achieve if I am distracted with worry about whether my child is being properly cared for and engaged.

It is in the best interest of the child, the parents and families, and the workers at the centre to maintain a really high quality service. It cannot be underestimated how the high quality of East West enhances our family's health and lifestyle.

Please do not hesitate to be in touch if you have any questions regarding my thoughts above.

Yours,

Louise Swinn
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