

Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia response to request for further information for the Productivity Commissions review of ECEC following the public hearing discussion 21 February 2024.

Family Day Care suggested solution for small rural and remote towns.

Our community in rural South Australia, like many rural towns across Australia, struggle with the lack of childcare. We are too small to attract a private provider to offer centre based long day care, our demand profile makes it unviable. The State Government have a Rural Care program where a childcare service is integrated within government preschools in rural communities where there are limited childcare options, to provide families with access to long day care for children from birth to 12 years. We have been advised by the Department for Education that there will be no further Rural Care places offered above the 17 that currently exist.

We are simply seeking a small inclusion into the current legislation to enable more than one approved family day care educator to care for children in our approved family day care 'in-venue' location. This provides a cost-effective solution to the government to cover childcare demand in small disadvantaged rural communities where no appropriate childcare exists. It strikes us as remarkably unfair that rural communities must continually do all the leg work (volunteering/financially) to provide solutions to issues such as childcare, because it is easier to let us fall through the cracks than support us. Childcare is not going to be a profitable venture in small rural and remote communities that attracts providers, but that does not mean we do not deserve to be supported in providing it.

This small change means that we will be able to meet our current childcare demand, at little to no cost to either state or federal government. It importantly provides the community with an approved and regulated care model, it enables eligible families to claim the childcare subsidy and has the added benefit in that approved family day care educators will have the support of each other in what is widely known as an isolating environment for family day care providers to work in.

Current legislation:

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS - REG 124

[Education and Care Services National Regulations \(2011 SI 653\) - NSW Legislation](#)

Number of children who can be educated and cared for--family day care educator

124 Number of children who can be educated and cared for--family day care educator

- (1) A family day care educator must not educate and care for more than 7 children at a family day care residence or approved family day care venue at any one time.
- (2) In determining the number of children who can be educated and cared for by a family day care educator for the purposes of sub regulation (1)--
 - (a) no more than 4 can be preschool age or under; and
 - (b) if the children are being educated and cared for at a residence, the educator's own children and any other children at the residence are to be taken into account if--
 - (i) those children are under 13 years of age; and
 - (ii) there is no other adult present and caring for the children.
- (3) No more than 7 children can be educated and cared for as part of a family day care service at a family day care residence or an approved family day care venue at any one time

Requested addition to the above current legislation:

In disadvantaged rural and remote areas of Australia where there is an absence, or limited supply, of Centre Based Day Care or Family Day Care services two approved family day care educators may care for children in a single approved family day care venue with an exception to (1), (2) and (3) as follows:

- (1) Two family day care educators must not educate and care for more than 14 children at an approved family day care venue at any one time.

(2) In determining the number of children who can be educated and cared for by a family day care educator for the purposes of sub regulation (1)--

(a) no more than 8 can be preschool age or under; and

(b) if the children are being educated and cared for at a residence, the educator's own children and any other children at the residence are to be taken into account if--

(i) those children are under 13 years of age; and

(ii) there is no other adult present and caring for the children.

(3) No more than 14 children can be educated and cared for as part of a family day care service at an approved family day care venue at any one time.