

1) Red Tape & Bureaucracy

Firstly, thanks for recognising the farcical processes, red tape and obstacles in place to simply work out if it is worthwhile to go back to work. Navigating the system to understand the various government payments is challenging: Parenting Payment, Family Tax Benefit Part A, the Childcare Benefit and Childcare Rebate, each with their own statements.

Example: "Who's on first base"?

The system is made so confusing, it's difficult to make sense of:

My children's childcare provider incorrectly entered my CRN and one of my child's CRN number in the reverse order in the first quarter she attended child care. The result was that I was out of pocket \$1200 for the first quarter I went back to work. After about a dozen phone calls and several visits to the Family Assistance area of the Medicare branches over six months, I had received multiple conflicting advice on what was required to rectify the situation and access my rebate. After supplying paperwork, printouts from the child care centre and following up as requested, I was not any clearer on how to get my money back because each subsequent interaction gave me different advice. I was never reimbursed. While the child care centre "was really sorry about that", a simple processing error from their end didn't get me my \$1200 back.

2) Childcare Choices - Nanny's.

I congratulate Tony Abbot on publicly suggesting families should be able to access rebates on nanny's.

Our children are our most precious gifts in this world and formal childcare in a centre is not always the most suitable arrangement for the child or a family, especially five days per week. Schools operate between 9am - 3pm, yet many young children need to be in the formal setting of a child care centre from 7am to 6pm. Not all work situations fit within standard child care time frames. If nanny's were part of the rebate system and more families had access to this type of care, surely it is also in the best interests of young children to start bedtime routines e.g. be fed dinner in their own home, have a bath, read a book etc in what is considered normal hours for a child. It also relieves the additional pressure and guilt working parents take take on. Similarly, while most school's operate before and after school care, parents should have the choice as to whether it is in the best interests of their children to be in a formal setting for long hours, or at home doing after school extra curricular activities, homework, relaxing or helping with the family chores after a long day.

When I worked part time and my children were in childcare, I had to prepare meals in advance on weekends and on my non-working day (I worked 4 days) in order to feed my hungry children as soon as we got home and get them to bed at a reasonable time. Juggling the demands of a household, including shopping, cleaning, washing, folding, ironing, gardening etc. makes the decision about both parents going back to work, a complete lifestyle challenge that erodes time for personal leisure, including health and fitness. This can be the tipping point, when these considerations are added to unfavourable sums of what's left after childcare fees in your your real take home pay.

I encourage you to please pursue the subsidising nanny's, not just for early childhood care, but also for before and after school care of school aged children.

Many thanks & kind regards,
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