

To Whom It May Concern

I am concerned with the proposal to reduce qualifications requirements for educators of children aged zero to three years. I also worry about future proposals that might extend this reduction from 0-5 years.

The quality of the carers and educators who care for children and the price that has to be paid when choosing to return to work is very important to my family, and I believe it is important to the community as a whole.

I have had two children attend a not for profit long day care centre at Goodstart in Drysdale. I currently have a five year old who has attended a long day care since 6 months of age. She is a prime example of how early childhood educators can make the world a better place for young children whose parents work full time. At my daughters early childhood centre, the educators not only care for my child, but they also know how to keep her actively involved in learning experiences, encourage engagement, and conceptual development and how to promote life skills and her understanding of safety and health issues. I expect, if I choose to entrust my children to a formal care environment that I leave them with educators who are qualified to support their individual learning and care needs, and at a price I can afford. I welcome the recognition that the overall level of childcare assistance needs to be increased so that all children in early childhood centres can experience the quality education and care that my daughter has experienced.

We must also realise that children from disadvantaged backgrounds get the biggest benefit from accessing quality early learning and care. It would be a backward step if access to early learning for disadvantaged children became even harder.

My family values quality early learning for children, particularly in the early years. We want to feel comfortable leaving our children with educators who know and understand our child's developmental and individual needs.

The first five years of life are a vital part of a child's development. We need educators who understand and contribute to each child's development so that they get the right start in life. After all, making care and education affordable and educating and nurturing our young will only make way for a better educated and caring society.

Yours Sincerely,

Trisha Stuart