

**Availability of care** - I am quite new to this game I must admit - I have been a senior executive for a local government, and taking maternity leave for six (6) months was the worst decision of my career, on attempting to return, I was demoted, told my position was no longer relevant and to take my substantive position back or not have a job or be put anywhere in the department. My substantive position was significantly lower pay and poorer conditions. Dealing with this as well as having no secured day care was barbaric. I applied for care at numerous centres as soon as we found out we were pregnant, as required I continually sent in emails every month stating that I wanted to be maintained on the lists. I had absolutely no offers, some people laughed at me when I rang and asked if they had a vacancy, their common comment was return in the new year, we always have positions in the new year.

**Application for child care benefits and even parental leave** – I agree that these should be rationalised, you need to be high court judge to work out some of these benefits, and many are form after form asking exactly the same information over and over again.

Furthermore middle-class families are not the enemy here, just because you are not a low income family does not mean that child care costs do not affect your families bottom line, middle class families receive considerably less benefits.

**Qualification requirements for educators** – My son receives excellent care from Lady Gowrie, Campbell Street. On choosing a facility (limited in Hobart), I had definite requirements, as I am an Architect by trade and have designed child care centres, so I know the requirements – unfortunately few in Tasmania comply with these. However the actual care, I have discovered is the most important factor. My son has received such fantastic learnings from day care and has grown from strength to strength. The carers take an individual approach to children and seek out what interests them and turn that into learning outcomes, these learning outcomes and milestones are recorded and are a fantastic way of moving through the early childhood with purpose, direction and namely fun.

**Removal of Pay Roll Tax** – Lady Gowrie is a not-for-profit organisation and this can be clearly felt from the moment you enter, to the way you are charged to the way you are dealt with – this is not a business. A level playing field can be made through many avenues open to the government and these should be explored further, rather than seriously compromising existing service providers that are undertaking a valuable role in the community.

**Work Test** – Unfortunately it is an all too easy statement to make “if you do not work, you do not get care”, however often the children of parents that do not work or who are disadvantaged are the most in need of facilitated care. I agree that there should be stricter limits applied as to the quantity of care provided, however, children should not bear the burden of their parents lack of income, lack of knowledge and education or lack of direction and drive.

**Required Ratios** – This decision was obviously made by a person that has never navigated the road of looking after more than one baby/toddler/child at a time. Caring for children is an exhausting career, expanding the ratios further will make this career untenable and in many instances dangerous to the child in care. Children are adventurous little things and Houdini's, something carers are very adept at dealing with, but they are not super heros.