

## **Wynnum Family Day Care**

### **Submission to Productivity Commission**

It is imperative that the government maintain the National Quality Framework in its current form to ensure the continued professionalism of the sector. There must be no compromise on the quality of early childhood education and care for the children of Australia.

This legislation has allowed Wynnum FDC to develop models of service delivery which have significant impact on the lives of children and families. This increased quality of services is mainly possible because of educators now being qualified, and also because we are attracting and retaining educators with a high motivation to work in this professional sector. It is clear that a qualified workforce is imperative to the maintenance of high quality standards.

Wynnum FDC, a relationship based business, shares ownership of service delivery with coordinators, educators, and the approved provider. All stakeholders reflect on our practices in a way that ensures quality outcomes. What does this look like in practice? It means that there is no differentiation amongst team members – our service is considered as a team of 120 people, comprising educators and office staff who work together, collaborate, and share information and responsibilities equally. Committees have been established to ensure that deliverables reflect all participants, and are used as a way of achieving quality outcomes for our clients. These committees consist of parents, educators and coordination unit staff; examples include our advisory committee and child protection committee.

The coordination unit clearly has an important role in supporting children in care. Wynnum FDC employs coordinators with a minimum of a Bachelor degree in early childhood and offer valuable support to all children in care, and to educators whose qualifications include Certificate 111, Diploma, Advanced Diploma and Bachelor degree.

The coordination unit has a focus on links with other community services in order to benefit educators and families. Coordinators attend community meetings, meet individually with providers, review available services, and to share this information with educators and families as well as providing direct assistance to access support services. It is not reasonable to expect educators working directly with children to be aware of and make links with the numerous community services available to them and their families. Therefore the coordination unit, having collaborated with educators and families to identify their needs, resources educators and enables them to run their business and continue to offer high quality education and care without having to interrupt their service.

An example of the above is seen in our Child Development Initiative (CDI). Over the past 12 months we have seen the majority of our educator team make direct enquiries about engaging with the CDI, resulting in valuable professional conversations focusing on supporting children, parents and educators about general milestone development. 130 children have been identified by parents, educators, and the coordination unit team as requiring various levels of support. 97 children have received formal written assessment reports by our team of consultants including Ms. Olwen Forker, Paediatric Speech Pathologist (86 reports), Ms. Lindy Thompson, Paediatric Occupational Therapist (11 reports) and the

Wynnum and Redland Health Service Centres' allied health teams. The CDI has encouraged collaborative partnerships with families, community services and support agencies. WFDC recognise the expertise of families and the importance of involving them in the child's learning and wellbeing. Supporting parenting and family wellbeing by offering connections to community agencies as well as offering 'in-house' opportunities for training and assessment relating to children's inclusion in high quality early childhood education and care. 35 additional children will be observed by our learning support team prior to their potential future assessment by consultants. 19 children have been diagnosed or under diagnosis for a developmental delay and educators are receiving ISS funding. In regards to speech and language assessments, children were identified as having mild (47%), moderate (35%) and severe (18%) delays. Occupational therapy assessments outlined the importance of children's involvement in sensory integration and processing therapy to assist children to live, play and learn to the best of their ability. We are so excited to see the benefits of children's, educators' and parents' engagement with the CDI. This program is fully funded by Wynnum FDC.

The loss of government funding for the coordination unit presents issues for the Inclusion Support Subsidy program. Currently Wynnum FDC manages and supports 20 children within the ISS program. To effectively manage this program, it takes a team member 10 hours per week, directly related to completing paperwork, in addition to the on site support for educators and parents. The cost of this highly valued program is borne by the service to ensure the inclusion of children and families with additional needs. If parents were to be charged for this service, they would be disadvantaged. We recommend a review of the paperwork required for Inclusion Support Subsidy, or project based funding from the government to ensure that the sector continues to offer this valuable service to all families and educators as required.

To manage the service, Wynnum FDC requires 330 hours per week for the office to support 110 educators, equating to 3 hours per educator per week. This does not include the hours spent supporting parents and families. In the face of government funding cuts, effective business management of services has never been more important - office staff require the ability to manage a financially viable business.

We support the introduction of nannies, provided that they are governed by the NQF and are registered with a service. Nannies should have a different title in order to be recognised as educators.

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