

Childcare and Early Childhood Learning Enquiry
Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601

26/08/2014

Submission

Productivity Commission Public Inquiry into Childcare and Early Childhood Learning

Introduction:

The Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania, submit the following for consideration in response to the Draft Report released by the Productivity Commission into Child Care and Early Learning.

The Faculty of Education is an active, research-led Faculty/School, staffed by highly skilled professionals, many of whom have national and international reputation in their area of teaching and research. This submission has been developed in consultation with Faculty of Education Early Childhood Education specialist Dr Bronwyn Reynolds (Course Coordinator, Early Childhood) and seeks to respond specifically to the below excerpt:

Response:

The Faculty of Education is supportive of the thrust of the Draft Report's recommendations however, in relation to:

Draft recommendation 8.5 (Pg. 48):

National Quality Framework requirements for nannies should be determined by ACEQA and should include a minimum qualification requirement of a relevant (ECEC related) Certificate III, or equivalent, and the same staff ratios as are currently present for family day care services.

We strongly recommend that the minimum qualification for nannies be a Certificate IV.

The reason for suggesting this bench-mark minimum is to ensure the provision of appropriate learning experiences so that the nation's children reach their full potential. The importance of the 0-3yrs age period to set the foundations for future learning is well known:

Results from developmental neurobiology studies and animal and human studies provide strong evidence that early neurobiological development affects health (physical and mental), behaviour and learning in the later stages of life. Countries that provide quality universal early development programs for families with young children tend to out-perform countries in which the early development programs are chaotic. ¹

¹ J Fraser Mustard, Early Brain Development and Human Development 2010

This research shows that if the human brain is insufficiently stimulated in the first three years of life, the future capacity to learn is significantly impacted forever. Clearly this is a crucial stage of brain development that is best supported by carers who have a solid underpinning of educational theory to the practice of early childhood education. With a stronger training base, nannies would understand the importance of rich educational experiences (such as constructive, engaging and exploratory play) and be aware of the importance of providing for the different learning domains (social, emotional, physical and cognitive). This combination of experiences that reflect the development of the whole child would translate into an effective and necessary 'readying' of our youngest minds across Australia.

Lifting the requirement from a Certificate III to a Certificate IV in Early Childhood (or similar) would provide a more thorough understanding of the early years yet still be an achievable, affordable and accessible qualification.