

Dear Sir/Madam,

With this letter I would like to express my concerns (as a private citizen) about some of the Productivity Commission's recommendations regarding Childcare and Early Childhood learning. I have a daughter of almost 15 months who attends a very good not-for-profit childcare centre in Sydney three days a week.

My concerns are on following:

- The commission recommends retaining the current NQF tertiary qualification requirements including the requirement of tertiary trained educators for under 3's.

I don't understand this recommendation as children under 3 year learn so much and develop all their basic skills in this stage of their lives. Think about motoric skills, eye vision, hearing, strength/movement of body/hands/feet/head and not to forget their speaking.

In my opinion, higher qualified educators deliver higher quality care. This is also seen in other line of businesses outside of education. The tertiary-qualified staffs are able to interact more with the children, divide their attention to the specific needs of my child and other's. They provide feedback and analysis in the form of a report of my daughter's behaviour as individual and also in group activities and her personal development.

The fewer higher-qualified staff would mean that these feedback will eventually became less detailed because less-qualified staff would need more time to make these reports which means less time spent on the children. Or the few higher-qualified staff would need to produce more reports, which also leads to less time to interact with the children. As a parent I find these reports very important as I can read what my daughter's day activity was and be part of it. This also gives me a reassurance that I can leave my daughter in good hands/care.

Too much pressure is not good for the staff as they will get sick/stressed out quicker which leads to hiring more casual staff and this is not good for the bonding with children and settling them in.

-The commission recommends retaining the tax-exempt status of not-for-profit childcare organisations

Not-for-profit childcare centres provide good childcare service for a reasonable price. Their philosophy is child-centred: their guiding principle is to do the best for the child, independent of profit. This produces a better outcome for children, as evidenced by the Commission's finding that not-for-profit organisations provide higher quality education and childcare than for-profit organisations. They are able to do this because all profits are ploughed back into the organisation, and because they are tax-exempt. Their societal benefit is similar to that of charities and schools (also tax-exempt). The argument that childcare should be subject to market forces because it is 'the best' way to ensure that education and care services can meet the needs of families is baseless. This argument would appear ridiculous applied to schools or charities – why should it be applied to early childhood care and learning?

I am very lucky to have the opportunity to follow good education. Please don't take that away from my daughter. She needs care AND education, not only care.

With thanks for your consideration,
Anna van Ruitenburg-Lim