



E: <mailto:childcare@pc.gov.au>

Thank you for the chance to reply to your draft report into Childcare and Early Childhood learning. Occasional child care Australia represents 100 services across Australia, I have included some more information about OCCA. Our Submission includes an overview of OCCA and reply to draft recommendations.

Who is Occasional Child Care Australia Inc.?

Occasional Child Care Australia (OCCA) is the peak body for Occasional Child Care Australia. OCCA promotes and supports its members by acting as a resource, disseminating information and advocating on matters pertaining to occasional care services across Australia. OCCA currently has over 40 members across Australia with 80 services in operation.

What is Occasional Child Care?

The unique nature of occasional care services provides flexible and responsive education and care arrangements, which meet the needs of the general community, and allows families to meet their work and non-work related commitments. Families have an option of enrolling their children into an occasional care service for as little as 1 hour to attend an appointment or more hours to go to work. No other children's service allows this flexibility for families.

Who uses occasional care?

Occasional care provides a unique and important service for families for a variety of reasons:

- . To enable parents to attend appointments or meetings where it is not suitable for children to attend
- . As a stepping stone to preschool or long day care as they can attend for a short period of time
- . Where a parent/carer is unwell and unable to meet the needs of their child temporarily
- . An opportunity for children to engage in activities in a stimulating environment with educators who are trained in early childhood
- . Whilst on the waiting list for preschool or long day care
- . A service for parents who have no extended family or other support, or who are new to the area/country
- . Family support agencies use occasional care for parents to attend parenting courses, counseling, etc.
- . Assisting families to meet their work or study requirements.

Occasional care services operate under;

Currently Occasional childcare services operate under their state and territory children's services regulations;

NSW - Education and Care Services Supplementary Provisions Regulations 2012.

VIC – Victorian children's services legislation Child Care Services Act 2007/ Child Care Services Regulations 2007 Child Care Services (Child Care) Regulations 2006

SA- Children's Services (Child Care Centre) Regulations 1998

TAS- Child Care ACT 2001 Centre Based Care Standards Class 4 and Class 5

QLD- Education and Care Services Act 2013 (ECS Act).

WA - Child Care Services Act 2007

There are also a very small number of occasional child care services who are also currently working in-scope of the National Quality framework and National Standards, due to these services's being approved children's services.





Addressing draft recommendations and finds into Childcare and Early Childhood learning;

Families using mainstream services- improving the accessibility, flexibility and affordability.

Responses to draft recommendation 8.3

Occasional care centre hours should not be capped to give families flexibility.

Responses to draft recommendation 8.4

OCCA supports the move to remove caps on the number of occasional care places; this would ensure that services can operate to demand ensure financial sustainability.

Draft Recommendation 12.5

All children, regardless of geographic location, should have the right to access education and care. By only allowing viability subsidies for 3 out of every 7 years, some children will miss out. A service that closes in a time of low demand will not be available to children that do access it and will not be able to re-establish when demand increases.

Additional needs children and services — improving the accessibility, flexibility and affordability

Draft Recommendation 12.8

All service types should be able to access funding for children with additional needs to sure all families have access to flexible early education for their children. Services have the right to use the hours allocated to children with additional needs as they see fit, not have the hours allocated on a daily bases.

Request for information 8.1

Services individualize needs in conjunction with children's individual needs and specialist advice. Cost of meeting needs to be meet by funding which needs to be on a priority bases.

Removal of ECEC assistance to some provides

Responses to draft recommendation 9.1

Families using occasional care services need access to the Registered care CCB because in some occasional care services this is the only way to reduce the cost.

If this is to be removed OCCA would like to see all OC services become CCB registered to ensure families are able to access affordable and flexible care.

Quality assurance processes and regulation of ECEC

OCCA believe that out of scope services including OC services should be brought into the NQF, to ensure all children within Early Education and Care are receiving the same quality, affordable and flexible early education. As a number of OC services are voluntary implementing the NQS and ELYF but continue ongoing support and realistic timelines would be required by all levels of government to ensure there is a smooth transition for services. This would be similar to the support offered to in scope services in the beginning of their journey.





Draft recommendation 7.1

To simplify the National Quality Standard, governments and ACECQA should:

- Identify elements and standards of the National Quality Standard that can be removed or altered while maintaining quality outcomes for children

- Tailor the National Quality Standard to suit different service types — for example, by removing educational and child-based reporting requirements for outside school hours care services.

Draft recommendation 7.8

OCCA supports the extension of the scope of the NQF to include all out of scope services, to ensure all children are receiving the same quality education. OCCA recommends that out of scope services have support and transition time to become in scope.

Draft Recommendation 7.2

It is impossible to separate out education from care. Babies learn from every care interaction, Babies need as high, if not higher access to early education and to qualified early childhood teachers as preschool children. Early education and the benefits it provides to children accrue from the moment a child accesses it. We must ensure that the highest quality possible education and care is provided.

OCCA thanks you for the chance to reply to the draft report into Childcare and Early Childhood Learning.

Please feel free to contact myself if you have any further questions.

Thank you

Carla Yeates
President
Occasional Child Care Australia

occaust@gmail.com

(Written on behalf of OCCA Management Committee 2014)

