

I am writing with regards to my concerns about some of the Productivity Commission's recommendations regarding Childcare and Early Childhood learning. I have one child who attends an excellent not-for-profit childcare centre in Sydney 4 days a week.

My submissions are that:

The child care rebate for all families, regardless of means

Should not be altered. As a working mother living in Sydney on a relatively good income, the cost of living together with mortgage repayments, child care repayments mean that I don't have a choice and I must return to work but without these rebates it is questionable whether it would be worthwhile me returning to work at all as the majority of my salary would go to child care and it would be a struggle to live within my means week to week. I studied as a mature adult part time while working full time to change careers and give my child and any future children the best life I can and I would like to continue to be able to work and send my child and any future children to child care which I question how I my husband and I can ever afford to send a second child if we were not entitled to a rebate. Please do not remove an incentive for women to return to work after having children.

The tax-exempt status of not-for-profit childcare organisations

As evidenced by the Commission's finding that not-for-profit organisations provide higher quality education and childcare than for-profit organisations why would this tax exemption be taken away. This clearly evidences they are able to provide this higher quality care because all profits are ploughed back into the organisation, and because they are tax-exempt. Would you take this away from charities and schools? It just doesn't make sense. 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 thoughtless and careless having regard to the bigger picture.

Requirement of tertiary trained educators for under 3's.

This recommendation is appalling. How can it be recommended that my baby be looked after by more less unqualified staff when they are so vulnerable at this age. The amount of money we pay for childcare and then to hear a recommendation like this disgusts me. I want my child having the best possible care by qualified staff who know how to look after him. How can someone with 3 months training care for my baby? Removing the current tertiary qualification requirements will disadvantage my child. Educators holding higher qualifications (Diploma/Bachelor's degree) deliver higher quality care – it is evident in the carers at the Centre my child currently attends who are the higher qualified teachers. I want this education requirement to continue. The tertiary-qualified staff interact more with my children, listen more closely and devise learning/development opportunities based on my own children's needs and interests. Fewer tertiary-qualified staff in a centre would place more pressure on the remaining tertiary-qualified staff to plan learning and provide feedback to parents, giving them less time to interact with the children. I might as well leave him at home with a babysitter if this rule is changed. I would prefer to work less and spend time at home with my baby if this is changed as someone needs to educate him properly and teach him what he currently learns at day care during the day with his qualified teachers.

After School Care

I would also like to express my views that there is a dire need for more before/after school care and vacation care. There is a dire lack of this form of care out there in the community and this truly complicates the life of working parents.