

Productivity Commission draft report response

Draft Recommendation 12.3

I strongly support this recommendation to maintain equitable access to services for children with disabilities and/or parents with disabilities

Information Request 12.3

I strongly support maintaining access to subsidised child care for families who do not meet the activity test. I suggest between 20-24 hours per week. The benefits for both families and children is significant with child care service providing not just quality care and education for children but also develops a support network for families, a place where they can seek further parenting advice, be referred by staff to other services. A place they can develop a sense of belonging, a place that is friendly, welcoming and approachable. A place that can support the development of strong families.

I do consider it is imperative for the system to monitor this activity test more effectively. I have seen many families have access to 50 hours of subsidised care per week who do not meet the activity test. This is both unfair and an inappropriate spend of government funds.

Information Request 12.5

For the families who access Grandparent Care, the access to free child care has a significant impact on both the children and the grandparents lives. For grandparents who have often taken on the care of their grandchildren in difficult circumstances, the support of a child care service is more than child care. It provides a point of support as well as networking with other families with young children.

Grandparents that I have worked with are caring for their grandchildren who have, in almost all situations, some challenges such as disability, medical needs or behaviour that is often rooted in the instable environments they have come from.

Draft Recommendation 8.3

Abolishing this requirement will mean more services will be potentially able to provide subsidised child care, therefore increasing the overall child care subsidy spend. This does not seem in line with the overall savings strategy!

Draft Recommendation 8.5

Firstly I strongly support the notion that any service eligible for subsidised child care should be accountable to the same minimum requirements eg NQF.

I am extremely disappointed and confused why this Productivity Commission draft report is almost silent on Family Day Care as a service type.

Family Day Care as a sector has significant capacity to provide the expanded flexible care that these draft recommendations make. In fact replace the label of nannies, In Home Care and Family Day Care with "Home Based Care" and the existing infrastructure of Family Day Care services could implement this change in a positive, consultative and financially effective manner.

Without the support and monitoring from a coordination unit it is unthinkable how individual operators could meet the significant administrative burden and accountabilities of NQF and at the same time offer a quality child care service to children and families.

I also question the capacity of regulatory authorities to conduct assessments of regulatory compliance through random and targeted inspections. Given the significant lag they currently have, I cannot see this being at all possible without a significant investment in resources.

Draft Recommendation 7.9

I am perplexed at the rationale for recommending that pre-schools be removed from the NQF. This is not a positive step forward for recognising the relevance and importance of early childhood education. This move will see children once again “schooled” in a system that does not incorporate current early childhood theory in regard to play based learning.

Draft Recommendations 9.1

I fully support this action as I this type of care was not at all monitored or accountable to the state/national law, despite receiving government funding to provide care.

Draft Recommendation 7.2

It is astounding to me that despite the plentiful evidence that shows the importance of the first three years in a child’s development as an indicator of future success, that a recommendation would be put forward to lower the qualification requirement of children in this age group. I understand the additional costs of providing quality care to younger children but as a country we would be doing a great injustice to our youngest citizens in reducing their access to an equitable centre based service model. It must be maintained at current level.