



Championing the Role of the Nanny

Productivity Commission Investigation into
Childcare and Early Childhood Learning



Submission made by
PORSE Education & Training (NZ) Ltd
5 September 2014

1. Background

The Australian Productivity Commission's investigation into childcare and early childhood learning in Australia has prompted an opportunity for international models of early childhood education and care to be considered if relevant to Australia.

PORSE Education & Training (NZ) Ltd ('PORSE') is interested in the recommendations that have come from the Productivity Commission's draft report, released 22 July 2014. Of particular interest is the introduction of a single child-based early care and learning subsidy that could be offered to support "approved" nannies.

With 20 years' experience in championing the role of the nanny to support families with the ever increasing demands of juggling both childcare and work, PORSE has developed a nanny model that advocates for sustainability, accessibility, flexibility, affordability and quality.

The following submission serves to respond to the initial draft report recommendations that relate to the role of the nanny, providing a framework for how the nanny role could best operate in Australia under an approved funding structure.

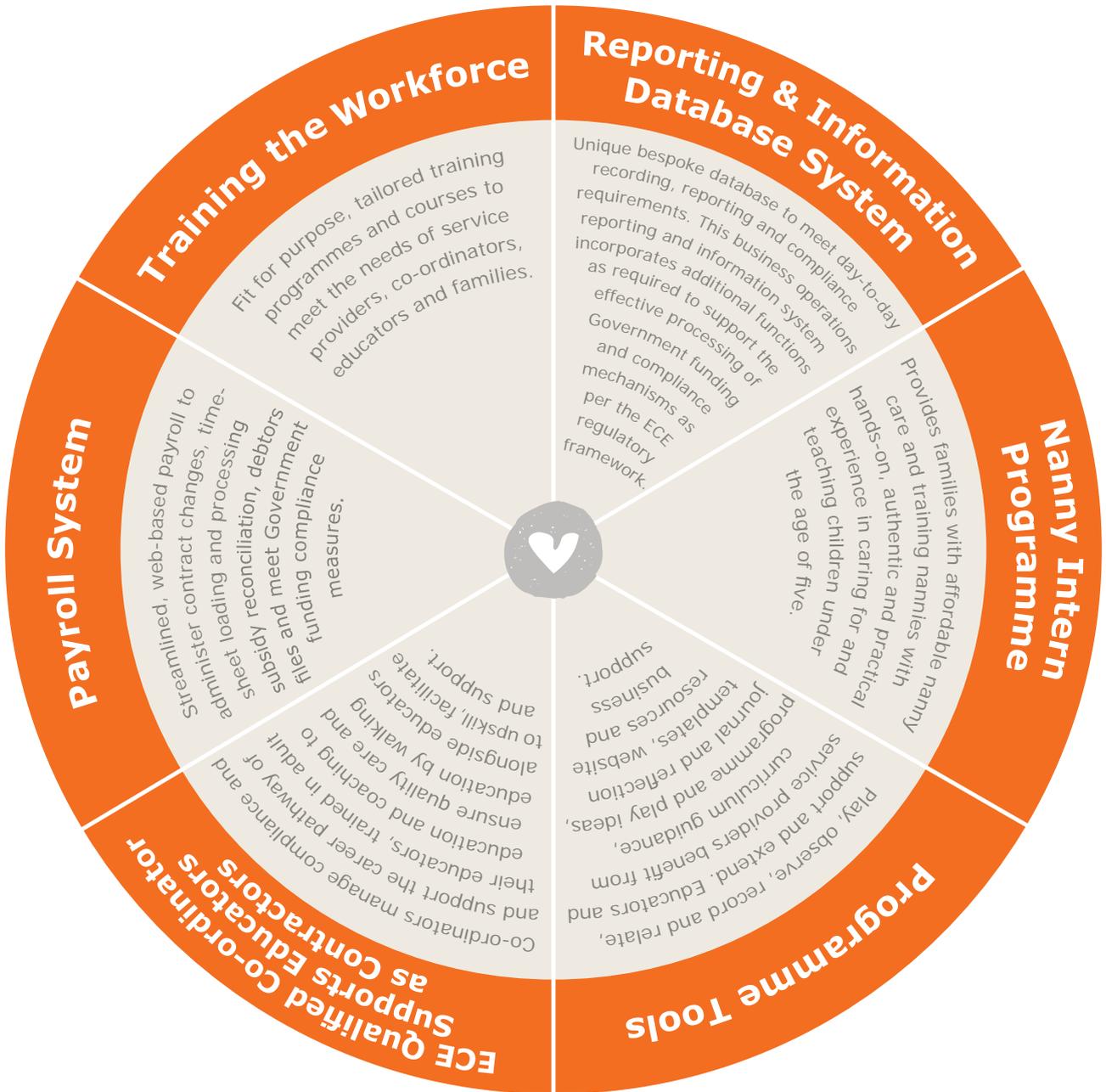
Given the number of questions that have been raised at Public Hearings with relation to how the nanny role would operate under an approved structure, the intent of this submission is to convey how the PORSE model could be introduced, either in full or as a trial in Australia in order to guide the introduction of the approved nanny role to the early care and learning subsidy.

PORSE offers an innovative and capacity-building model so as to provide a turnkey service to educators and families. The PORSE philosophy is founded on the child being at the heart of all programme delivery, with a relationship-based lens guiding all quality assurance processes to determine the best possible outcomes for children and families.

Ultimately, PORSE provides a service solution to reach, immerse and support adults to raise the next generation of responsible, resilient, competent and contributing members of society.

The PORSE Capacity Building Model

Responsive, flexible and targeted in-home early childhood education (ECE) provision that is service-funded to grow capacity and capability.



PORSE has welcomed Australian delegates to understand more about the provision of care and education that we offer alongside our unique education and training focus. For more information on PORSE Study Tours, see Appendix One.

2. Introduction

PORSE is New Zealand's largest and longest serving home-based early childhood education ('ECE') and training provider, enabling home-based care and education for nearly 7,000 children and 5,000 families, while also providing workplace training for nearly 3,000 nannies and educators working across New Zealand. PORSE has 39 Community Team offices operating within communities nationwide, holding 76 licences with the Ministry of Education as a licensed ECE service provider.

PORSE values attest to living and learning beginning at home, with the belief that the best foundation for early learning is the provision of a stable and secure environment where children can build strong one-on-one attachment relationships with their educators.

PORSE educators embark on a career pathway, supported by regular home visits (fortnightly-monthly) from qualified early childhood education teachers who are able to provide professional support, educational resources and evaluation and assessment of each child's education and care programme.

3. The Role of the Nanny in New Zealand

The role of the nanny is to provide provision of care and education in the family's own home. In New Zealand, PORSE Nannies have the same child-adult ratios as educators working in their own homes (the Australian Family Day Care model), caring for up to four children at one time – and no more than two under the age of two. These ratios are regulated by the Ministry of Education. In light of before and after school care provision, approved nannies are able to care for up to 10 children at one time, including children under the age of five, to enable effective provision of outside of school care. These ratios are regulated by the Ministry of Social Development.

Inherently the role of the nanny is to provide responsive, flexible and quality care and learning for the children and families that they work with. It fits well with supporting parents to return to the workforce, enabling flexibility with working hours and days (including overnight hours and shift work). PORSE currently offers a number of different nanny models to ensure that individual needs of families are met in order to make the nanny model as accessible and affordable as possible. These models include:

Nanny Intern

A Nanny Intern is placed with a Training Family as a part of a training programme so that they can complete a nationally recognised qualification in early childhood education while also benefiting from hands-on, practical experience in a family home. Training Families are offered a Nanny Intern at a heavily subsidised training rate, making it an extremely affordable childcare option.

Nanny Share

More than one family can partner to enjoy all the benefits of a nanny while sharing the cost. The nanny's hourly rate is divided between the families and the children benefit from shared play and learning experiences.

PORSE Nanny hourly rates are determined by the nanny as the family/ies enter an Individual Employment Agreement with their nanny, eg. the family is the employer. This allows rates to be set that reflect the current market and location.¹ It also enables PORSE to support by offering a programme and ongoing support to both nanny and families as opposed to managing an employer/employee relationship. We do however offer payroll and wage administration facilities at a heavily discounted rate to take the burden off families.

The PORSE nanny model and programme could be offered in Australia as an additional service provided by interested Family Day Care or centre-based providers already in operation. It is important that, as Australia looks to adopt the nanny role as a part of an approved national framework, that different nanny models are considered and introduced as a part of this. This will enable the nanny model to truly live into the intent of the Productivity Commission report – making childcare more accessible, flexible and affordable to all families.

4. Support and Guidance to Ensure Quality Care and Learning Provision

With the release of the draft Productivity Commission report and recommendations, questions have been asked with regards to the minimum mandatory standard of qualification for nannies given their relatively isolated 'sole charge' working environment. In New Zealand, there isn't currently a mandated qualification, however, all PORSE Nannies are supported by a local Programme Tutor (a degree/diploma trained early childhood teacher) and visited at least monthly with contact occurring at least fortnightly. The Programme Tutor offers professional mentoring, coaching and guidance when it comes to programme planning and delivery. The role of the Programme Tutor is to provide: professional development, an advocacy service, regular updates and communication with families, quality assurance checks and licensing/compliance support, community programme updates, programme resources and templates and additional resources.

Nannies are empowered to undertake a journey with PORSE, with an internal Certification Pathway guiding them as they become PORSE Approved, PORSE Certified and PORSE Professional. This encourages fit for purpose and targeted training that covers all things relevant to the role of the nanny, including providing a safe environment, first aid, planning individual children's programmes, nationally recognised qualifications and ongoing self-reflection and review.

¹Additional legislative requirements under the New Zealand Holidays Act 2003 such as minimum wage and holiday and leave entitlements have to be met.

PORSE believes that the role of the Programme Tutor is critical in enabling the success of the role of the nanny. It is this role that offers connection, relationship and professional guidance in a role that would otherwise be autonomous.

In light of the Productivity Commission report recommendations, it is important to note that health and safety would need to be looked at closely with regards to the role of the nanny. The family home would be the home requiring a certain standard when it comes to the child's health and safety. This is notoriously more complicated than when it is an Educator's home (Family Day Care model) as families often don't understand the requirements and can feel overwhelmed by the detail and responsibility involved in meeting certain requirements.

PORSE has designed and developed a model for supporting both nannies and families with all elements of effective programme delivery, including initial and regular hazard assessments and mitigation strategies in the home. This model could be adopted as a part of the wider Australian National Quality Framework.

PORSE has designed and developed a model for supporting both nannies and families with all elements of effective programme delivery, including initial and regular hazard assessments and mitigation strategies in the home. This model could be adopted as a part of the wider Australian National Quality Framework.

5. Socialisation and Connection

There is a myth that children under the age of three require 'socialisation' with other children in a group-based setting. Decades of research shows us that what children under the age of three need is a secure, nurturing, responsive relationship with a significant other. This enables them to build relationship security and reap the benefits that come from this. At a very young age, infants and toddlers are not able to build a lot of relationships with more than three responsive adults and consistently being put in situations where they are forced to engage with a number of other children and adults can be overwhelming, deregulating and detrimental to their development.

To support a growing network of connected nannies, PORSE offers the opportunity to engage in regular community events with one another – forming PODs (small groups/pairings of nannies and children) if there are common interests so that they can support one another, attending weekly sessional PlaySchools (guided social playgroups in their community) and other regular outings or events in the community. This provides children – and nannies - with the opportunity to engage in short group-based activities if they choose to while also respecting the individual programmes nannies have with each child in their own home.

6. Meeting Parent Need and Demand

The PORSE nanny model is seen as widely accessible by every day New Zealand families due to the different nanny models available. The nanny is the most flexible model of early childhood care and education – with the capacity to work from the parent/caregiver's home, meet the parent/caregiver at work or even travel with them in instances that require them to be away. They can be available 24 hours a day, with families who work irregular hours or night shifts often opting for a nanny to enable their child to remain in their familiar home environment while sleeping.

PORSE agrees that there is greater opportunity to work with both employers and parents to more fully integrate the role of the nanny in day to day working life. This could include flexibility of hours on the employer's behalf (as already noted in the recommendations provided in the draft report), however, could also include flexibility of the nanny role to be available to meet working parents on-site in corporate or business environments to take care of short-term childcare needs. This will become especially important as more and more parents opt to return to work in a capacity that sees them working largely from home, with only brief trips into the office for key meetings and appointments. The changing nature of the way in which we work is important to note given we are now moving towards a technology age that enables much of what we do to be done from anywhere, not necessarily just an office environment. Having flexibility of care models to enable this will be essential.

7. Advocacy and Support - Championing the Role of the Nanny

With 20 years' experience in growing the role of the nanny in New Zealand, PORSE offers ongoing advocacy and support to nannies. As an accredited Private Training Enterprise (PTE), PORSE offers nationally recognised education and training qualifications and programmes. Enjoying over 90% qualification completion rates, PORSE is a highly credible training organisation that was recently issued with a 'Highly Confident' judgement in educational performance from the New Zealand Qualifications Framework as a part of an external evaluative review.

PORSE has also partnered with For Life Education & Training, a training organisation focused on neuroscience and building the architecture of the brain so that we can grow healthy, happy and secure children. For Life Education & Training offers guidance in the field of early childcare and learning with a research base in early brain development and attachment theory (see attached Appendix Two). Having worked specifically with nannies, PORSE also champions the role of the nanny in the family's home – offering ongoing guidance through connection with our Community Teams.

Finally, PORSE is one of the founding members of the Home Early Learning Organisation (HELO), an advocacy group representing the in-home sector focused on working together to give families quality in-home early learning and care founded on relationships with love, trust and respect. HELO represents nearly 9000 children and over 50% of the New Zealand in-home ECE sector, including over 4000 Nannies, Educators and Au Pairs.

The Aims of HELO:

- To strengthen in-home early learning through improving quality and professionalism.
- To effectively communicate the benefits of in-home early learning.
- To define in-home early learning and care through evidence-based research.
- To support and encourage learning and training opportunities for teachers, coordinators, educators and parents.
- To foster strong, cooperative relationships of mutual respect with the Ministry of Education and Government.
- To support a sound regulatory framework for the in-home sector that ensures quality, stability, consistency and clarity.

Because of our experience in this field, PORSE would welcome the opportunity to work with Australian providers of early childcare and learning to support the integration of the role of the nanny into the approved funding structure and framework, providing guidance around the development of support and advocacy networks.

8. Additional Comments in Relation to Report Recommendations

PORSE has the following responses to make in light of other recommendations made by the Productivity Commission as a part of the draft report:

- One recommendation indicated that Governments should allow services to temporarily operate with staffing levels below require ratios by averaging ratios out across a week as opposed to a day to day ration. PORSE has concerns that this could compromise the care of the child, with higher ratios inevitably leading to a lack of one-on-one responsive relationships.
- PORSE endorses the recommendation that educators working with children aged birth to 36 month are only required to hold a Certificate III or equivalent. This will add value to the work that is being done with our youngest and most vulnerable children given the other varied histories, experiences and backgrounds that can be taken into account when it comes to whether or not someone is deemed to be 'trained'.

Many mothers and grandmothers instinctively know how to nurture, protect and respond to infants and toddlers in a way that will promote early brain development and provide a relationship-based learning programme. PORSE believes a Certificate III adequately prepares carers and educators for this responsibility while also recognising that a formal qualification is not the only indicator of quality care and education provision.

A very recent survey conducted by PORSE in July 2014 looked at the importance of qualifications relative to other aspects of what the home-based ECE sector provides. The survey shows that 46.4% of the sample of 435 family respondents saw the qualifications of their home educators or nannies as somewhat important, whereas only 27.4% saw qualifications as important, and 14.3% as very important.

By way of contrast, all family respondents identified the provision of a consistently safe, nurturing and loving environment as the most important thing they expected for their child. This was seen as the best environment to support and engage their child in learning, and was summed up by one family respondent as:

Being empathetic, respectful, providing a stimulating learning environment, consistency between family home and educator's home, being enthusiastic and loving towards my child.

- PORSE believes that changing the current multiple childcare subsidies to a single subsidy that would be paid directly to the parents' choice of ECE provider, and be means and activity tested will simplify the current process for both families and providers, enabling more transparency overall.

9. Conclusion

PORSE supports the work of the Productivity Commission in working to find ways to make early childcare and learning more affordable, flexible and accessible. PORSE believes that the introduction of the approved nanny role in Government funding subsidies will enable more families to benefit from accessing quality early childcare and learning while still meeting their unique needs. In order to do this, in-home care provisions must be supported and funded in a way that enables them to continue to grow their offering of quality programmes and models to meet the needs and demands of families.

PORSE believes that in-home childcare will be the way of the future as we move to support more mothers re-entering the workforce with transient hours of care and businesses evolving to a point where office blocks are no longer sustainable nor desired as full-time working environments. This is a paradigm shift that will see a shift in care back into the home environment, aligning with neuroscience that recognises the importance of familiar, settled environments and nurturing one-on-one relationships in growing well-adjusted, resilient, happy and healthy children.

We welcome the opportunity to share our experience of the nanny model and be involved in the evolution of the Australian early childcare and learning sector.

Appendices

Appendix One: PORSE In-Home Childcare (NZ) Ltd, *Nurturing Our Future – PORSE Study Tour*, 2014.

Appendix Two: For Life Education & Training (NZ) Ltd, *Inspire Me Early Childhood Education & Training*, 2014

“You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.”

BUCKMINSTER FULLER