

To the Productivity Commission,

I am a Family Day Carer since 2011. I love my work and have been nominated for the "educator of the year award" several times. I love being self employed and making a living in a meaningful way, while at the same time being available for my own family as much as possible. I believe Family Day Care is unique because it offers the children a first safe, secure, stimulating and personal experience away from home. Family Day Care offers that "family feel" which can be especially beneficial for children who are quite attached, have anxieties or never had the experience to be cared for by someone other than their parents. Family Day Care can work for those children, where Day Care Centres won't. Family Day Care can offer a highly personalized program which enhances the children's learning in the best way possible. A loving, trusting and continues relationship is the heart of every Family Day Care (this is very hard to establish in a Day Care Centre with more staff and more changes). The stimulation and nurture in the family environment and the interaction a child has with their parents is the main factor for a child's advanced emotional and intellectual development. Family Day Care (of all Care options) comes closest to a family environment. Therefore I believe that the care option of "Family Day Care" needs to be supported and available for as many families as possible.

Family Day Care is different from having Nannies. Nannies usually work in the families home with the families children. Children cared for by Nannies do not make new friendships and do not learn to build a relationship outside their familiar environment. They do what they usual do and their learning is not necessarily expanded. *I do feel it is good to make more Nannies available for families who need Care, but it can not and should not be at the cost of making the situation harder for Family Day Care.* I also feel that Nannies need support, like the support a Family Day Carer has through the scheme. The connection to the scheme motivates a Family Day Carer to do their best and to continuously reflect on their work methods and provide Quality Care. Family Day Carers have someone to ask for advice and someone to discuss problems that occur. They are part of a team and a network, which is a healthy and professional set up, not only for the educator but also for the children being cared for.

*Trying to keep more women in the workforce is important, but not at the cost of less quality in Early Childhood Learning.* The early years are very important. If you make it harder for parents to access FDC and easier to hire nannies, which are unsupported, the quality of care will be reduced. Many of my families would not meet the 24 hour a week study work criteria. Many of my families decide to spend the early years with their children, which is best for the children and best for most mothers too. Those families sacrifice income and maybe a good position to do what they know is best for their children. We should not punish those families but support them. They make a valid contribution to society. They might pay less TAX, but their children might come out emotionally and socially more healthy in the short and long term as well as intellectually ahead of their peers. I feel it is legitimate for all families (also respite or less than 24 hours work/study) to have access to quality care and get subsidies for that care. How will a stay at home mum pay full fees? The suggested changes will definitely impact on my FDC, the way I run it now and the families I attract. Most likely I will be closing down. I do invite you to come and watch me work at my home and meet my families and hear first hand how much they value, what I offer to their child and how much those children have benefited from coming to my Family Day Care. Thank you for your time and thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my thoughts. Kind regards