

Productivity Commission
Childcare and Early Childhood Learning
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Draft Report
July 2014

Dear Commissioners,

I would like to comment on both the Draft Recommendation 7.2 and Information request 7.1 regarding Educators qualifications lowering to Cert III (or equivalent) for children under 3 years of age.

As a working mother, single parent of 2 young children, Occupational Therapist and user of Early Childhood Education and Care services in N.S.W. since my children were 9 months old, I would like to plead for the continuation of requirements that ECEC Educators working with less than 3 years children hold more than a Cert III. I would like to stress the importance of Educators working with younger than 3s having a deep and contemporary understanding of Early Childhood Development, encompassing a child's cognitive, emotional, spiritual and physical development. I believe there is little chance of this knowledge coming from entry level, competency qualifications such as Cert III.

My story is as a mother of 2 small children, I became a single parent after my partners return from service in the war in Afghanistan. This particularly affected my older child, who now displays heightened anxiety behaviours. For Educators to have the skill to see behind this behaviour and work with my child to assist him overcome his anxiety takes knowledge and understanding acquired by significant tertiary education. I have been fortunate to have had University and or Diploma trained staff in all of my child's ECEC room settings. The significance of this high level support to my child cannot be overstated as my child heads off to school next year.

My youngest child has a moderate hearing loss and as a consequence major speech delays. Although just turned 3, his speech is on track as a 12 month old. Additional to his regular speech therapy, the Educators in his ECEC room are all highly qualified, 1 being University trained and 1 with her Diploma. The ability to understand the development and mechanics of speech is intricate, and Educators with Cert III whilst well intentioned, would not be able to identify, support and follow through with our speech therapy, including incorporating aspects of it into the day to day ECEC program.

Although neither of my children are classified "additional needs" and would not show up in any data collection for this, they have complex individual needs, as do many of their peers in their ECEC rooms. They are not original and I am sure these scenarios are repeated across Australia in every ECEC settings on any given week day.

I implore you to maintain the high standards of Qualifications required for children under 3 and the N.S.W Ratios. I can assure you that without the support of these skilled and highly qualified Educators my life and my children's life would be very different. I would be unable to continue working if meeting all the needs of my children was left solely to me. As a single parent I must have a supportive and highly skilled ECEC setting to help me do my best.

I would ask that my name is withheld from any publication into the future, however I am happy to speak to you in more detail if required

Regards