

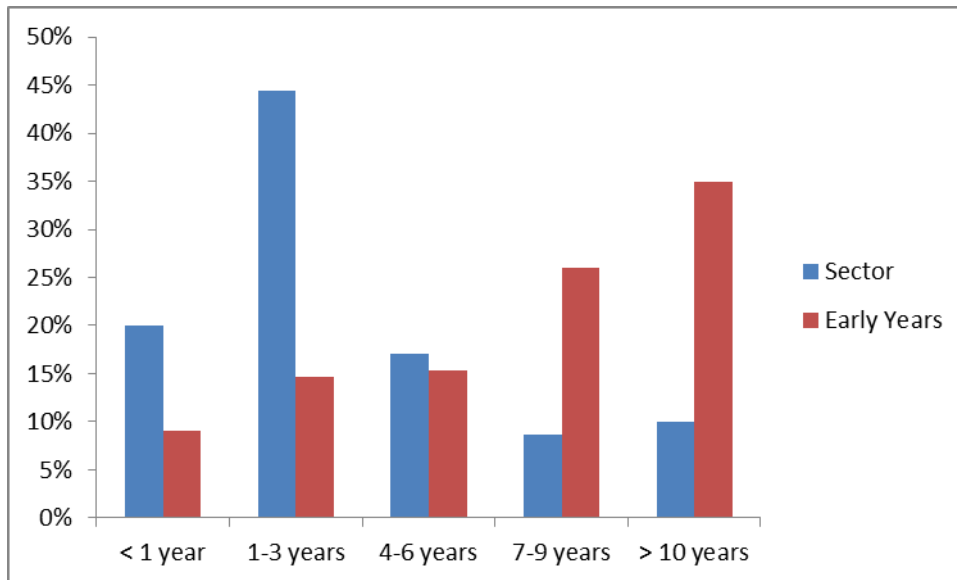
9 September 2014

SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION TO THE PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION INQUIRY INTO FUTURE OPTIONS FOR ECEC IN AUSTRALIA

UNSW Australia Early Years was mentioned in the Productivity Commission’s draft report on page 491 in the section “How is the sector responding?”. The comment as made by United Voice clearly links our staff high retention rates and ability to attract staff to our services with above award pay rates and employment conditions. Early Years would like to expand on this comment and demonstrate that the high retention rates and low turnover of our staff are not singularly due to these financial incentives, but also a range of other factors.

Figure 1 below compares Early Years’ staff retention with the sector average and clearly shows that we experience little difficulty in attracting and retaining staff.

Figure 1- Tenure of paid contact staff with current employer¹



¹ Sector data from The Social Research Centre, 2014 as referenced in the PC’s draft report, pp. 483-485

Highlights/ key Early Years' internal survey findings

- 61% of our staff has been working for Early Years for more than 7 years
- 35% have been with us for more than 10 years
- The three centre directors surveyed have been with us for 37 years, 12 years and 11 years
- General manager has been with us for 16 years

Early Years' staff indicated that the following were primary reasons for staying:

- Low staff turnover rates – educators stay because everyone else stays – stability begets stability
- There are a range of professional development opportunities available – we have approximately \$95,000 in our training and professional development budget which forms 1.17% of our overall annual budget. The very nature of our organisation also allows for opportunities to collaborate across the centres, do staff swaps within the organisation and participate in training and team building exercise together
- Career progression opportunities – there are ample opportunities for staff to progress to higher levels or transfer to other centres
- UNSW Australia takes pride in offering a range of family friendly flexible work arrangements as per its family friendly policies and procedures
- Consistently high job satisfaction
- A strong mentoring culture
- Governance and leadership is strong
- Rewards and recognition programs are offered annually

Table 1- UNSW Australia pay rates compared to award (averages)

(\$ rate per hour) Position	Award		Difference
	Government	UNSW	
Admin	17.04	27.44	10.40
Assistant cooks	16.47	27.11	10.64
Certificate III	18.67	25.41	6.74
Diploma	21.59	29.87	8.28
Director	27.34	50.98	23.65
Early childhood teacher	27.16	39.58	12.42

As highlighted above, the remuneration Early Years staff enjoys are substantially higher than the excessively low award rates. This is why early years has been a strong supporter in the United Voice Big Steps campaign to lift pay rates for the entire sector to the pay rates paid at UNSW.

At Early Years we experience the benefits of paying professional pay rates every day in:

- High quality rankings
- Low staff turn over
- High attraction rates
- Committed and dedicated educators striving for high quality ECEC for all children
- Sustained trusting relationships with all stakeholders
- Same educator works with families for long period of time while siblings go through the centres – saves time in developing trusting relationships each cycle
- Ability to achieve long term goals
- Deep connections with local resources and community
- Minimal time, money and energy spent on recruitment
- Positively impacts reputation and trust in brand
- Staff members are inspired and incentivised to further their training and continue to learn.

Another reason we know that our high staff retention rates are not only due to pay and employment conditions is that two of the centres at Early Years have only come under the management of the university in the last four years. Prior to this, these centres were employed on award rates and conditions even still their retention rates were significantly higher than the sector average.

Yours sincerely,

Jemma Carlisle
General Manager
Early Years

