

My notes are as follows:

I have noted some quotes from the paper that resonated with me, & are in inverted commas.

"Some commentators argue that workforce shortages are the result of the relatively unattractive wages offered to workers in the ECD sector. For instance, teachers working in schools in some jurisdictions have significantly higher salaries, longer holidays, and more time for preparation than their preschool counterparts (Evesson et al. 2009). As many teachers are qualified to teach in both primary schools and preschools, such differences in pay and conditions may explain why vacancies for preschool teachers are more widespread than vacancies for primary-school teachers (DEEWR 2010b)." Pp 16

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"There can also be considerable variation in wages and conditions within the ECD sector, with teachers working in childcare centres being paid less than teachers working in preschools, despite having the same qualifications (Watson 2006)." Pp 17

"In addition to wages and salaries, the attractiveness of employment in the ECD sector may depend on other elements associated with employment, such as professional development opportunities, work-life balance, access to leave, and career pathways." Pp 17

*"What are the key factors influencing an individual's decision to work in the ECD sector? Do these vary for different ECD occupations? Why are ECD workers paid less than those working in related sectors? Are the wages and salaries for workers in different ECD occupations appropriate, given the skills and qualifications required? If not, how might this best be addressed?" pp 17*

(This is a short note outlining some of my views. If more information is needed, please feel free to contact me via email. Thank you.)

I feel that there is stigma attached to the term 'child CARE'. Many members of the community, including the school system, older generation members & working professionals see child care as just being that - 'care'. Whereas Preschool seems to hold more recognition for being 'professional and a 'stepping stone' to school readiness'. I currently work at a service (with children aged from 3.5 to 5.5 years of age) where both 'Long Daycare' and 'Pre School' are available. I have had the opportunity to TEACH in both fields and my teaching methods and interactions do not change in either setting. However, some people still see 'Pre School' as being much more important to be a part of rather than 'Long Daycare'.

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I pride myself in maintaining a warm, ethical, professional, genuine and dedicated approach to my career. Working in the EC field is something that I am extremely proud of.

I have a Bachelor of Teaching, Diploma in Child Studies, Cert IV in Training & Assessment and many other certificates and Statements of Attainments related to EC. I would dearly love to further my studies and complete a Bachelor of Education; however I currently work full time as a Teacher at PECC and as a part-time Children's Services TAFE Teacher/Assessor.

The fees for returning to study are beyond my means and having the time to work full time and earn a living unfortunately do not allow me to return to study.

I have noticed that many (untrained or cert III) staff have been awarded Diploma level qualifications by a process of *recognised prior learning (RPL)*. This is something that is not available to staff such as me. I have 17 years experience (over 11 years at my current place of employment) working in the EC field & I feel that RPL would be of enormous benefit to me, my work place, the community and the families and children who attend the service.

Availability of training: Living in the Central West can be an obstacle when it comes to accessing quality EC training and inservicing. Many training opportunities are available in capital cities and travel and accessing relief staff can also be an obstacle when staff choose to attend such workshops.

Suitable training would include: Sustainability, Teamwork, Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), Leadership and Creating Relationships with Families.

Such documents as EYLF and the National Quality Framework (NQF) will raise the bar and the recognition in the EC field. But how can we educate the community as well? What can we do to popularise the belief that 'Teachers are Teachers'?

Streamlined national regulatory arrangements will help in ensuring that a high quality 'blanket' can be put over ALL Early Childhood Services.

The media is always quick to publish any 'incidents' in their newspapers or news reports on TV. Where are the POSITIVE reports? For instance; children become lifelong learners with a thirst for knowledge after spending time in high quality children's services, children who learn how to interact with people from a wide and diverse background, staff who communicate with parents about any skills or areas of needs that their children may have & ways to help work with children who may be gifted, delayed or just need some support before/during school and children, who after spending time in care, have had fun, learnt new things, had their interests promoted and explored, made lifelong friends, or children who have enhanced their confidence and self worth. Also, children who gain a knowledge of 'school skills' such as colour recognition, pre-math skills, enhanced attention spans, fine motor skills, cognitive skills and much more.

I read with disappointment in the report that in 2009, around 40% of children under the age of 6, accessed some form of formal childcare service. (pp 3) Only 40% is a real shame for children who live in a country such as Australia! Affordability may be a contributing factor for families with young children.

I currently work at a not for profit service where all money goes back into the centre. I have high job satisfaction and I can't imagine working in any other field. The children bring so much

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joy and pride into my life. I know that I am making a big difference in their lives. The position all EC workers hold is pivotal, yet our wages do not match the importance of our chosen career. We have the wellness and wellbeing of children as a priority and I mention again, our wages do not match this.

The raising of fees to pay staff wages should not be considered as the answer to the issue of raising wages. If this was to happen, 40% may become 20%! I do not have the answer, (I wish I did!) however, if there high staff turnover, generally, in the EC field is to decrease, something needs to be done to raise the wages of EC Professionals.