

ANONYMOUS 17203 - New submission from Early Years Strategy - Public Submissions

Early childhood years are the most fundamental years in a child's life. They shape who a child will be and what they will be like. There have been many studies into early childhood and the significance of this period of life. I worked in an early childhood centre while I was completing my masters in education, I have worked as a teacher in primary schools for quite a number of years, and I have been a stay at home mum for 7 years.

My observations are as follows.

Children need their parents, not care. The cost of living has always been expensive, but it has become impossible to purchase a property on only one salary. If a family wants to ever be able to afford their own home, they must take as little time off work as possible, put their 6 week old in care and get back into the workplace. From my years of working in a childcare centre, I noticed that the children who were in care from the earliest of ages seemed disconnected from their parents. There were comments made by children that they didn't want to go home with mum, rather, they wanted to stay with the childcare worker they had bonded with. Children who are disconnected from their parents also tend to be more badly behaved members of society, in my experience, as parents are busy and stressed and stretched, and don't have the necessary time to invest in their children's behaviour. This is very sad- this generation is raising such badly behaved children, and labelling such as ODD or ADHD. Yes, those diagnosis' exist, but the majority of cases I have seen throughout my years of working in childcare centres and primary schools are just children of parents who have gone back to work too early. If families were paid for one parent to stay home instead of being offered a childcare subsidy, it might make parents more willing and able to invest in their children's formative years. Young families need much more financial support, and the stigma of being a stay at home parent needs to be done away with.

Children are natural learners. They learn everything they need to on their own, with parental support and encouragement. They learn to roll over, stand, walk run. They learn to swallow, to put their hand to their mouth and eat. They learn to babble, then speak. They don't have to attend pre school to be ready for school, all they need is a safe home environment where the parents facilitate their natural learning abilities. And if the parents are not financially stretched from one parent staying home to care for them full time, they can fully experience life, not be stuck in care for years before school begins. I have been a stay at home mum for 7 years and I have absolutely loved it. I take my children out on excursions regularly. We have a zoo membership, we see grandparents who tell the most amazing stories of the history of our local area. We shop, cook, clean together. My children know how to pay for things, how to work for things (pocket money), they know the sound a barking owl makes, and they know to stand for elderly passengers on a train. They know how to read and write, they know how to swim. They know how to be a kind and generous friend, they know the value of an unhurried life, but they also know that deadlines need to be met. They know how to wait their turn, and how to share. My family have sacrificed owning our own home for me to stay home, and it is extremely upsetting that life in Sydney means we have to choose one or the other- we can't have me stay home AND own our own home. We have moved 8 times in 10 years due to landlords ending leases, or raising rent, yet people are always saying to me that my children are the best behaved children they have met. I firmly believe this is because I have stayed home with them and

raised them myself.

In summary, I would like to say that financial support is hugely lacking for parents who stay home with their children, and going back to work too early is the only option. The children suffer immediately from this choice, and society suffers in the future from having a generation of children who were raised by childcare centres. Yes, childcare centres do a 'good job'- but it's exactly that to them. A job. Parents shouldn't have to choose to put their children in care to be able to afford them a home. We need to do better. I appreciate you putting out this survey in order to gain the community's feedback. I hope mine is helpful.