

ANONYMOUS 17215 - New submission from Early Years Strategy - Public Submissions

Since the implementation of the NQF in 2012 the standard of education and care expectation has risen considerably as has the training package to become an early childhood educator. That said the pay and working conditions have not improved so much and the cohort of students this course attracts is of a relatively low academic level thus meaning that there is a high attrition rate for the course and the workforce is in crisis.

In order to ensure there is a skilled and professional workforce to support the ECEC sector some entry level requirements are necessary, for example at least a school graduate certificate. In order to attract this level of student the pay and working conditions for educators needs to be addressed to make the profession more attractive.

Age too is an issue, students/educators as young as 15 are entering this workforce, this does raise some ethical and risk factors, I wonder if ethically the Government should impose this risk factor on children from both a child and Educator perspective. 18 is the requirement to enter a school classroom to educate children however this is not a requirement to educate and care for our young and most vulnerable.

The implementation of the activity test has excluded a number of children from the minimum 2 days of quality education and care that we know as research tells us is beneficial for children to attain the best start to life. If we can invest in children's best start to life, then we have greater prospects for active contribution to society in the long term which has exponential economic benefits. The activity test needs to be either removed or amended to reflect a 2-day minimum subsidised education and care for all children.

High ratios and qualified pedagogical educators are key to providing high quality education and care. High quality education and care cannot be attained on implementing only the minimum regulations and standards which is the standard of many early childhood services in particular the 'for profit' sector. The 'for profit' sector is accessing huge amounts of Government money (public money) through the Child Care Subsidy system which is not being spent responsibly and ethically in the best interest of early childhood education. If private for-profit services are to be able to receive these vast amounts of Government funding, then there needs to be some accountability and transparency around the spending. Children's wellbeing should not be compromised in favour of huge profit margins.

Ultimately the pay and working conditions for educators needs to be improved.

The entry requirements for the Cert III in Early Childhood Education needs to be lifted.

Accountability and transparency of Government money provided through the CCS system needs to be addressed.