

16801 - New submission from Early Years Strategy - Public Submissions

I completed my Early Childhood postgraduate studies in 1994. I have worked as a director of a not-for-profit childcare centre and as a primary school teacher. I retired as a teacher in 2016 but continue to do supply teaching, often working in the early years, Prep, year 1 and 2. Over the last few years I have witnessed a steady decline in the quality of preparedness of children to enter school. There are a number of reasons for this; parents needing to go to work, parents unsure if their child is ready, pressure on schools to get bums on seats to maintain numbers. Prep used to be just that, PREPARATION for school. Students learned to share, socialise, follow instructions, develop fine and gross motor skills, wipe their bum and open a tub of yoghurt. With the focus on pushing more "knowledge" into our kid's heads, we are not letting them be kids. We are not allowing them to develop the skills that are the foundations of learning.

I would respectfully suggest that you survey EVERY teacher in the country who is teaching, or has taught early childhood in the last 5-10 years and ask them. If you are serious, please don't rely on academics and "experts" in the education field. I would ask, how many of your committee are currently in a classroom or have actually been in a classroom in the last 10 years?

Teachers have been swamped by a plethora of changes all aimed at slowing or reversing Australia sliding down the international academic scales. ALL of these changes however have been initiated by people who haven't been in a classroom for 15 years, if ever.

Please please please stop introducing changes recommended by "experts" and ask the real EXPERTS.

Ask the people dealing with these young people for 40 weeks a year. There are still enough experienced teachers in the system with ALL the answers. Ask them before they too are gone.

Please prove my cynicism wrong. Please, even if this does get read, show there are still genuine people running this show and not bin my submission. I'm now retired but I'm as passionate about our youth and education system as my first day in front of a class. I know I'm "just a teacher" but we teachers have some ideas as well.