

16957 - New submission from Early Years Strategy - Public Submissions

From my experience in EC over the last 14 years, I see the following as priorities:

- change the language, we are educational professionals. The whole Australian culture towards our profession is one of baby sitting in order for work. We are teachers and educators whose knowledge should be respected. I've had drs say to parents to tell daycare to but out when we are trying to get children the medical attention they need etc
- don't call private centres "for profit", I understand it is a business structure but it has derogatory connotations and makes us look evil to both families and staff when most of us are very passionate about children and their rights. We also provide a very valuable, much needed service. We work 52 weeks of the year, 12 more than community preschools, we work long days, providing for proper working parent hours and we deliver equivalent education opportunities if not better than other facilities.
- have a publicly funded local Aboriginal employed to attend all EC centres to teach history, language and culture on a regular basis.
- for every 10 new preschool (age 3-5) places the facility should also need to provide places for under three years of age. It is not fair on centres who provide the whole service to have to compete with centres who take only the cream. That is, we cross subsidise our under three year old positions with over threes, then cop flack that we are not a proper preschool. Our wait lists are full of under three years not over three years. Funding not for profits to create more 3 years plus positions is only going to take business away from long day care and force up the cost for families with under threes. It seems the govt is looking to make LDC for under 3s and is not interested in this age group themselves because they know it is too costly and not viable.
- stop making us responsible for delivering your policies. For example, immunisation, collecting payments from parents when you back pay entitlements or take CCS away from us, and the fee relief funding. Administratively it is a bourdon on us with no financial gain. Not only that, because families can only get it at one location (which makes the local community based preschool the better option), we have to keep track of payments and then pay money back to you. What a nightmare!
- get rid of the red tape. Things like reporting two or more gastro cases to not one, but two departments.
- publicly fund ECTs wages, make their salary level pro rata based on the number of weeks they work. That way LDC might be in a better position to retain university trained staff.
- implement national systems and stick to it. Don't change them for different states.
- focus more on sustainability and providing free educational resources and training in it.