

MEDIA RELEASE – 28 September 2017

RED TAPE FIASCO: CHILDCARE CENTRES FILLING OUT MORE GOVERNMENT PAPERWORK – BUT FEES ARE HIGHER AND KIDS ARE MISSING OUT

A new survey has found childcare centres across NSW are spending more time than ever on paperwork, compliance requirements and unnecessary red tape at the expense of educational outcomes of children.

A survey of 1,700 childcare centres across the state found 62 per cent of staff are spending over a third of their time on administration tasks.

“Our educators and hard-working staff want to spend more time with children in their care and less time filling out unnecessary forms and paperwork,” said Australian Childcare Alliance NSW President Lyn Connolly.

“What’s worse – despite the increased burden of paperwork and the pointless regulatory regime imposed on educators, there’s no material net benefit to the education outcomes of children.”

“This survey is proof that the NSW Government’s priorities are wrong. There has to be a point where the red tape and paperwork has to stop. The very real concerns of childcare operators can no longer be ignored.

“ACA NSW supports the National Quality Framework (NQF)’s vision to improve early childhood education and care – but the resulting increased operational and compliance requirements are not having the intended educational outcomes for children.

“Educators did not enter this profession to do paperwork and documentation. They want to make a difference in children’s lives and spend their time encouraging children’s growth and development,” Mrs Connolly added.

The survey found only 14 per cent of respondents stated that the NQF had significant positive impact on children’s educational outcomes and only seven per cent stated the legislation has had a significant positive impact on children’s socialisation outcomes.

Alarmingly, the survey also found that the NQF had increased the costs of childcare between 20 to 75 per cent, putting further pressure on parents. Additionally, over half of respondents (54 per cent) stated that the NQF had a negative or major impact on centre costs.

“The NSW Departments have so far not been able to produce the original reference documents the introduction of the NQF,” Mrs Connolly said.

“Perhaps now, more than ever, is the time to revisit the legislation and regulations, the cost to families and childcare providers, as well as deal with the chronic issue of oversupply, and the need for a better planning system.

“At the end of the day, it’s all about how we effectively and efficiently achieve the desired outcomes for our children. Spending time filling out forms instead of with children is not what we should be doing, or what parents are paying for,” Mrs Connolly added.

The survey conducted between July and September 2017 also looked at issues involving oversupply, staff:child ratios and cost of time spent on non-educational activities.

Other key findings include:

- 36.5 per cent stated that the NQF had a negative impact on costs to parents and 51.23 per cent stated it had a negative impact on costs to services;
- 24.2 per cent of respondents said that the change in the 2 year old ratios had a large positive effect on educational outcomes;
- 23.8 per cent stated that the change in 2 year old ratios had a large positive effect in socialisation outcomes;
- 58.9 per cent stated that the change in ratios had a negative or large negative impact on the cost of running the centre; and
- Only 23.8 per cent of respondents stated that there would be a significant negative effect if 2 year old ratios reverted to 1:8.

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Australian Childcare Alliance New South Wales (www.nsw.childcarealliance.org.au) is the peak body for privately owned early childhood education and care services in NSW, numbering approximately 1,600 long daycare services and supporting over 125,000 families. ACA NSW provides advocacy, policy and regulatory and business support and advice, member services and professional development for members and their staff across the state.

**For further media inquiries,
ACA NSW President Lyn Connolly on 0425 225 275.**