

20 September 2011

Dear Centre Provider, Operator and/or Director

The 'Parent Power' Campaign Help us ensure quality child care remains affordable

Parent Petition Instructions

Please accept this letter, as a request, by your fellow long day childcare Providers and Directors to stand with us – at Queensland and the Australian Childcare Alliance - shoulder-to shoulder, as we seek to ensure your families can continue to have equity of access to affordable high quality long day child care.

We believe in improving quality and we support, in principle, the Federal Government's (and the Council of Australian Government's) National Quality Agenda reforms but we must get it right.

With less than 5 months to go, we are becoming more concerned. Due to the uncertainty and haste of the Government to rush through these seismic changes to our sector:

1. we fear for the impact of these reforms on parents – your parents - who we know cannot afford any further cost increases;
2. we worry for staff – your staff - who are becoming increasingly agitated and fearful about their role, their skills and the training demands placed on them; and
3. we are very concerned for centre Providers and Directors. Seventy percent of whom are not fully aware of their legal obligations under the National Law¹

Quite simply, this sector and our families **are not ready for the full impact** of these reforms. **We seek your assistance to help delay, by two years, the National Quality Agenda reforms that are due to be implemented on 1 January 2012.** There is no cost to the Federal and State Governments to delay the regulations until we get it right and until the Government can afford them.

If not funded properly by the Federal Government, these reforms could see the cost of quality long day child care rise by at least \$13-\$22 a day. This has been independently estimated for centres nationally (and may vary from centre to centre). **Your assistance could help avert such cost increases.**

We believe that the reforms need to be slowed down until:

1. The Federal Government – and not parents/centres - can pay for the costs;
2. Staff must have time to be properly trained and up skilled (we require 40,000 staff to be retrained nationally) and for this to be properly funded and supported by the Government;
3. Centre providers receive appropriate support and education to understand their legal obligations, training requirements and accreditation changes; and
4. Policies are properly developed to support the demand for 3000 tertiary qualified staff to be engaged by centres nationally. Right now there is a chronic staffing shortage among the unskilled let alone skilled. For centres that simply can't find the staff, they may receive an exemption but they will lose their high-level accreditation status. This is not fair and we are working with the Government to help them deliver their own policy without having a negative impact on families, staff or centres.

The Federal Government has already hurt your families this financial year by reducing the maximum CCR rebate available to families by nearly \$700 to \$7,500 and freezing the indexation for four years. If you require further information please do not hesitate to contact myself on 07 3808 2366

Warm regards,

Mr Peter Price
State President

Mr Frank Cusmano
Secretary, Australian Childcare Alliance Inc.

¹ 'Is Childcare Ready For the National Quality Framework'. Survey of private and community centres June 2011.



Petition instructions

We believe a message from your families to the Government will have an impact. The request is simple. There is an urgent key activity we ask you to actively encourage parents to participate in:

1. The parent petition to the Federal Parliament

The Parent Petition

1. Please provide the attached 'letter to parents' to all of your parents via their child's take home pocket.
2. Please have copies of this petition on your front desk. (the wording must not be changed as it complies with strict guidelines)
3. Together with the front page addressed to parents – ask them to read it and if they agree, to please sign the petition.
4. Use the key message notes above to explain why.
5. Please photocopy as many of the petition sheets as you require.
6. Please retain the petitions until you have gathered as many signatures as you believe possible or **until September 27 2011** and then if you need more time, please call our association to discuss. Please alert your association as to the progress at this point. Please be proactive – only a huge response that grab the attention of media and decision makers and we have weeks not months to delay consideration of the regulations.
7. Please, when you have as many signatures as you can gather, send the originals to your State association. We will then send petitions from all states to the Prime Minister. Where possible, these petitions will also go to the State Parliament.
8. Please keep track of how many signatures you finally receive.
9. Please keep an eye out for particularly concerned parents who may be willing to speak to the media or use their situation as a case study for Government. Please ask these concerned and outspoken parents for their details for us to contact. We would not put the media to them direct without their prior permission.
10. Please explain to your parents that there are new rules for petitions – it will make an impact as the Government is forced to explain how it plans to respond to your concerns.

This petition will then be used to send a very strong and unequivocal (but non political nor aggressive) message to the Prime Minister and her Cabinet and State Governments that they must all agree to delay the regulations by at least two years **until the Government, and not your parents,** can afford to pay for the reforms.

We also want to hear your story so please feel free to attach a note about how these reforms will impact on you, your families and your staff.

Thank you for making this campaign a success.