

# Childcare Alliance Australia



## FAMILIES OF AUSTRALIA SURVEY

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Online Survey results collated by



# Aims



- To understand the views of parents whose children attend long day care centres (community and private)
- To test how important affordability of access is to a quality childcare centre for our parents
- To gauge how parents rate the quality of the centre to which they entrust their child/children and how parents rate the staff
- How our parents view the potential increases to childcare fees that will be incurred through these proposed National Quality Agenda reforms
- To determine what impact (financial and social) those increases will have on our families

# Research methodology



- **n=1095 online quantitative and qualitative survey across Australia of parents whose child/children attend a long day care centre.**
- **Survey by CAA conducted between October 13, 2009 and December 04, 2009.**
- **Questions included 4 open-ended questions exploring potential impact of fee increases on families and what their likely reaction will be**

# What Parents Want



- 8 out of 10 parents nationally have heard of the proposed reforms to childcare
- This reflected a high level of interest in the issue – NSW and QLD were the highest.

Have you heard of the proposed National Quality Agenda Early Childhood Education and Care? (Q4)												
	Total		NSW/ACT		VIC		QLD		SA		WA	
Yes	770	80.5 %	121	94.5 %	149	72.3 %	460	81.6 %	23	65.7 %	17	70.8 %
No	187	19.5 %	7	5.5 %	57	27.7 %	104	18.4 %	12	34.3 %	7	29.2 %
Total	957	100.0 %	128	100.0 %	206	100.0 %	564	100.0 %	35	100.0 %	24	100.0 %

# What Parents Want



- Almost 100% of parents said they regarded access to an affordable high quality child care centre for their child/children as very important

*“My child loves the childcare he attends & not only receives quality care but a great sense of belonging.”*

- Parent from Mayo SA

*“Without it I would be unable to work 2 days a week which pays for our food, petrol and some living expenses. I need to know my child is safe, happy and in an environment that suits (my son’s) particular needs in order for him to feel comfortable to play and learn.*

- Parent from Parkes NSW

# Parents Want Affordable Quality Childcare



How important is having access to quality childcare to you?

*“(it is) extremely important - there is no way our family could survive (i.e. keep our modest two bedroom home) without both my husband and I working (I only work 3 days a week), so having access to quality childcare is vital for us to provide a safe and secure home for our child.”*

– Parent from the electorate of Capricornia Queensland.

- *Extremely! My husband works long hours Mon-Fri and often works weekends. I have 3yo twins, am receiving ongoing treatment for depression & don't have a family support network. Also, I see it as vital for the children's social skills.*

– Parent from the electorate of Moreton Queensland

- *“It is very important - it is essential for me to keep my job and ensure that my children are safe and happy as well as being well cared for.”*

- Parent from the electorate of Wills Victoria

# What Parents Can 't Afford



- The overwhelming majority – 79.3% nationally – of parents surveyed say they could not afford fee increases (from \$13- \$22 a day).
- NSW/ACT – 90.5% No
- Vic - 79.0% No
- QLD - 78.1% No
- SA - 54.3% No
- WA - 87.5% No

If the fees went up by between \$13 to \$22 per day, could you afford to have your child or children continue at this centre? (Q6)

	Total		NSW/ACT		VIC		QLD		SA		WA	
Could afford	198	20.7 %	12	9.5 %	44	21.0 %	123	21.9 %	16	45.7 %	3	12.5 %
Could not afford	758	79.3 %	114	90.5 %	166	79.0 %	438	78.1 %	19	54.3 %	21	87.5 %
Total	956	100.0 %	126	100.0 %	210	100.0 %	561	100.0 %	35	100.0 %	24	100.0 %

# What Parents **Don't** Want



- The overwhelming number of parents expressed deep concern for the financial impact on their families and their ability
- Single mothers say they may have to go back onto the single parent pension
- The majority of those surveyed believe they will have to withdraw their child from formal childcare and either opt for unreliable backyard care or quit their jobs altogether
- Others say if they are forced to quit work, they may be forced to sell their homes

# Parents Fear Fee Increases



**If the fees at this centre are forced up by between \$13 - \$22 a day per child (due to the Government's proposed reforms); what would your reaction be?**

*"It is vital to my existence. I am a single parent who is about to start my own business - I certainly don't have an extra one hundred dollars per week to spare The cost of living is soaring, I find this a morose subject!"*

- Parent from the electorate of Hasluck WA.

*"I would not be able to afford the care and I would have to change the arrangements or drop the number of days I use or stop working unless the Government provides real financial assistance and backs up the proposals with financial support to the Centre or to the family."*

- Parent from the electorate of Adelaide South Australia.

# Parents Fear Fee Increases



*“Our children will be detrimentally affected by not having access to the learning & enjoyment of childcare. Our family will suffer enormously due to the decrease in income/increase in childcare costs.”*

- Parent from Bowman Queensland

*“If childcare fees were to increase then I would consider pulling out my daughter as I couldn't afford it and there would be no point in going to work at all.”*

- Parent from Blaxland NSW

*“I would have to quit work and be a stay at home mum as we cant afford it to go up any further. Its not fair that if you don't have a job your fees of child care are next to nothing yet the parents are home all day, but if you work to provide a future for your children your penalised for working by paying half your wages on childcare.”*

- Parent from Canning WA

# Parents Say They Have High Quality Centres Now



- The parents surveyed all believe that the centres their child/children attend are already of the highest quality
- 88% or nearly 9 in 10 parents rate their centre as very good or excellent – that level of support was repeated in each state.

How would you rate the early learning care program that your child participates in? (Q2)												
	Total		NSW/ACT		VIC		QLD		SA		WA	
Poor	3	0.3 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	3	0.5 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
Average	25	2.6 %	2	1.6 %	3	1.4 %	18	3.2 %	0	0.0 %	2	8.3 %
Good	87	9.0 %	4	3.1 %	17	8.1 %	63	11.1 %	1	2.9 %	2	8.3 %
Very good	269	27.8 %	8	6.3 %	53	25.1 %	191	33.6 %	11	31.4 %	6	25.0 %
Excellent	582	60.2 %	114	89.1 %	138	65.4 %	293	51.6 %	23	65.7 %	14	58.3 %
Total	966	100.0 %	128	100.0 %	211	100.0 %	568	100.0 %	35	100.0 %	24	100.0 %
AVG		4.5		4.8		4.5		4.3		4.6		4.3

# Parents Say Staff Are Excellent



- 9 in 10 Australian families rate the staff who care for their child/children as very good or excellent

Using that same scale how would you rate the staff there? (Q3)	Total		NSW/ACT		VIC		QLD		SA		WA	
Poor	3	0.3 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	3	0.5 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
Average	15	1.6 %	1	0.8 %	1	0.5 %	11	1.9 %	1	2.9 %	1	4.2 %
Good	77	8.0 %	2	1.6 %	16	7.6 %	56	9.9 %	0	0.0 %	3	12.5 %
Very good	269	28.0 %	12	9.4 %	52	24.8 %	193	34.2 %	9	25.7 %	3	12.5 %
Excellent	598	62.2 %	113	88.3 %	141	67.1 %	302	53.5 %	25	71.4 %	17	70.8 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>962</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>565</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>AVG</b>	<b>4.5</b>		<b>4.9</b>		<b>4.6</b>		<b>4.4</b>		<b>4.7</b>		<b>4.5</b>	

## Scale used to the answers in order to generate an average (AVG) rating

Poor = 1

Average = 2

Good = 3

Very good = 4

Excellent = 5

So the higher the average the better the rating.

# Conclusion



- More than 1000 families across Australia took part in this survey. They all have children in long day care centres.
- Almost 100% of parents rates both their centre and the staff who work within as very good or excellent
- Against that; nearly 8 out of 10 say they could not afford any of the likely increases in fees (\$13-\$22 a day per child) that may be incurred with the proposed childcare reforms
- The vast majority said the impact on their families – financially and socially – would be devastating

# For further information:



- Please contact the following State Presidents:
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