



COMMUNITY CHILD CARE CO-OPERATIVE LTD. (NSW)

ABN 81 174 903 921

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
legcon.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee,

Community Child Care Co-operative NSW is the peak organisation for community based early education and care services in NSW.

We are writing to express our support for the establishment of a Commonwealth Commissioner for Children and Young People.

We would like to make the following broad comments on the legislation.

There is currently no single national body within the Commonwealth Government charged with upholding the rights of children and promoting co-ordinated policy development for children. Our work in children's services has given us an intimate knowledge of the piecemeal, and often uncoordinated way public policy is carried out in relation to children, particularly in early education and care service provision, where responsibilities are currently divided between the Commonwealth and state and territory governments.

We believe that the establishment of a National Commissioner will work towards ensuring that children's best interests are central to any changes to public policy within the early education and care policy area. We believe that such a position has the potential to advocate strongly for children's interests.

We are also pleased that the draft bill recognises the importance of early education and care. One of the proposed functions of the Commissioner is "promoting public education programs about, and ensuring strong investment in, early childhood development". This is truly a worthy function, although we do note that it is actually the Government in power that "ensures" strong investment. The Commissioner could only advocate for this investment.

We also support the proposed principles, drawn from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, to be applied in exercising powers and performing duties under the Act. Any Act which enshrines the Convention on the Rights of the Child in decision making has our support as it is children's best interests that are the primary concern of Community Child Care Co-operative NSW!

Yours faithfully,

Leanne Gibbs
CEO
15/12/2010