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Child Care (National Children's Services Program) Amendment Bill 1989 (Private Senator's Bill)

Date Introduced: 15 July 1989
House: Senate
Presented by: Senator Irina Dunn

Digest of Bill

Purpose

To increase the number of places available at child care centres in Australia and develop a strategy for the provision of child care services beyond the year 2000.

Background

The Commonwealth provides capital and recurrent assistance for a wide range of services for children and their families under the Children's Services Program (CSP). These include centre based day care which provides care and developmental activities for under school age children of working parents and family day care which comprises a network of individuals who provide care and activities in their own homes for other people's young children. Occasional care services provide part time care for children of parents who choose to stay at home but require a few hours each week to shop, attend appointments, and engage in other activities. Out of school hours care services are provided for school age children during school hours and before and after school hours. Vacation care services provide care for school age children during school holidays and are directed at children of working parents and other children who have special needs.¹

As at 30 June 1988, the CSP provided 35 405 centre-based, 39 417 family day care, 29 224 outside school hours care, and 1576 occasional care places. Commonwealth outlays on the CSP in 1987-88 were \$215.4 million. In the 1988-89 Budget, the Government announced an expansion of the CSP by an additional 30 000 places over the next 4 years, comprising 4000 centre-based places, 4000 family day care places, 2000 occasional care places and 20 000 outside school hours care places. Of the 4000 centre-based places, 1000 have been assigned to expanding child care provided by employers for low income employees. In addition, the Government announced that it would seek to build on existing joint funding arrangements with the States to pay for the proposed 30 000 CSP places.²

Main Provisions

Clause 3 provides that the Minister may make additional grants to non profit community organisations (eligible organisations) who operate child care centre's where they can demonstrate to the Minister's satisfaction that their operating costs justify doing so.

New Part's IVB and IVC (proposed sections 13D and 13E) will be inserted into the Principal Act by clause 4 and will deal with matters the Minister is to take into account in making or revoking certain grants and plan's for increasing the number of places available at child care centres. Proposed section 13D of Part IVB of the Bill provides that the Minister is not to make grants to eligible organisations for approved projects, approved equipment, operational subsidies and projects related to the development of child care centres in a State, unless the Minister is satisfied the centre is capable of providing to preschool age children developmental opportunities, cognitive experiences, and remedial intervention where required.

Proposed section 13E of Part IVB of the Bill provides that the Minister may revoke operational subsidies where a child care centre fails to provide programs referred to in proposed section 13D or services that reflect the cultural diversity of users or potential users of a centre.

Two other proposed sections 13D and 13E appear in Part IVC of the Bill, that provide that the Minister is to develop a plan for increasing by at least 200 000 the number of places available at child care centres by the year 2000; a strategy for child care services beyond the year 2000 whereby the Minister is to have regard to the projected need for certain extended hour places and out of school hours places; and that the Minister may enter into agreements with a State or Territory for the joint funding of the proposed additional child care centres places.

References

1. Department of Community Services and Health, *Annual Report*, 1987 - 88, pp. 60 - 62.
2. Budget Statements 1988 - 89, *Budget Paper No. 1*, pp. 166 - 168.

For further information, if required, contact the Education and Welfare Group.

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This Digest does not have any official legal status. Other sources should be consulted to determine the subsequent official status of the Bill.

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