

-Senate Committee: Education and Employment

**QUESTION ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017**

Outcome: Early Childhood and Child Care

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ16-001006

Senator Collins, Jacinta asked on 20 October 2016, Proof Hansard page 88

Family day care

Question

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: You will probably need to take this on notice: can you tell me how often in 2014, 2015 and 2016 family day-care educators were paid for more children than, under the regulations, they should be providing care to?

Mrs Pearce: I will attempt to do that. There could be a scenario where a family day-carer had children for a couple of hours in the morning, so you really need to do compliance to—

Answer

The number of children who can be cared for by family day care educators is covered under the National Law administered by state and territory regulatory authorities.

Child care fee assistance is paid by the Australian Government on behalf of families to approved child care services and not directly to educators. Hence the Department of Education and Training does not collect data on payments made to educators.

While exceeding limits on the number of children in care is a state regulatory authority responsibility, the department may detect sessions that exceed seven children in care per educator in its monitoring of non-compliance. This is an indicator of possible non-compliance. Sessions of care that exceed seven children in care per educator may be due to legitimate circumstances as specified under the National Law and individual situations are examined.

Family assistance law (Commonwealth) establishes the payment of fee assistance on a sessional basis. A session of family day care can be up to 12 hours. Although an educator may have provided care for more than seven children during a session, this does not necessarily mean that there have been more than seven children in care at any one time. For example, some children may leave and others start during the same session.