

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment - Education

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2013-2014**

Outcome 1 - Early Childhood Education and Child Care

Department of Education Question No. ED0423_14

Senator McKenzie asked on 26 February 2014 , Hansard page 55

Question

Consideration for flexibility trials

Ms Wilson: That is right, for the calendar year. So, that has been one of the comments that has been made to us about people did not want to pick up in the middle of the year for a child. I guess the other issue is, by definition, in a trial there is no certainty about the future for a child. Senator McKENZIE: Right. Ms Wilson: So whether people were willing to change arrangements middle of the year and not knowing whether they would have certainty beyond 12 months— Senator McKENZIE: Families plan a little further ahead about how they make those arrangements of balancing work and family life. So that is something that has come through. Do you know if that was actually something considered in the construction of the trial project? Do we collect data on when people usually enrol their children? Is that something we would have known? Ms Wilson: I might need to take that on notice if that was considered for this process.

Answer

While the Department does not directly collect data on when families enroll their children most families usually enroll for a calendar year commencement.

Of the six projects involving the enrolment of children in 12 month trials, the two largest (the Family Day Care Australia trial and the Goodstart trial) commenced mid-year. The remaining four trials commenced either late in the 2013 calendar year (one of the vacation care programmes) or early in 2014.

A range of issues were considered as part of the construction of all trials, including trial commencement time and potential concern for families in relation to changing child care arrangements for a 12 month trial.

In collaboration with trial partners, a range of strategies were implemented to address these issues including undertaking additional promotional activities for the two trials that commenced mid-year. These activities did not elicit the anticipated response from parents.