



## COMMUNITY CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION SUBMISSION

Committee Secretary Work and Care  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra, ACT 2600 Australia

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Community Child Care Association (CCC) thanks the Senate Select Committee on Work and Care for the opportunity to provide a response to the terms of reference. Our submission responds specifically to item b): *“the impact of combining various types of work and care (including of children, the aged, those with disability) upon the well-being of workers, carers and those they care for”*.

Community Child Care (CCC) is the peak body for not-for-profit, and community owned and managed education and care services for children in Victoria, and is also the state peak body for outside of school hours care (OSHC). CCC has a long and valued history as a trusted source of expertise and knowledge within the sector and has been providing advice to policy makers at state and federal levels for over fifty years.

Our submission and recommendations to the Committee are outlined in these key issues, as below:

### **Key issue 1) The importance of children’s learning**

The care of children is intrinsically linked with the support of children’s learning, and there are mandated curriculums in both early education and care settings, and in outside of school hours services. These play-based learning outcomes are guided by pedagogical theories and practice and are delivered by a highly specialised workforce of trained educators and teachers. Each educator plays a vital role in enhancing children’s learning and development (Jackson, 2020). The combining of various types of work and care doesn’t account for the profoundly important work that is delivered by a professional workforce that provides essential care, as well as education for children, and learning outcomes for children are unlikely to be met.

### **Key issue 2) Quality early childhood education and care supports healthy development and wellbeing – now, and into the future**

*“High quality early childhood education also has broader impacts; it is linked with higher levels of employment, income and financial security, improved health outcomes and reduced crime” (Pascoe and Brennan, 2017).*

More than just ensuring young learners are developmentally ready for school, the early years are critical for establishing health and wellbeing over the life course (Moore et al. 2017). High-quality education and care provides a safe environment for children to play and learn from birth until five years old – these are key years for a child’s healthy brain development. Providing positive environments and experiences in their early years can set key pathways for life (Pascoe and Brennan, 2017), where children are growing and learning to

be and become active and responsible citizens. The benefits of this are far-reaching, and will have positive impacts for children, their families, and their communities.

### **Key issue 3) Care is provided by a specialised, professional workforce in child-centred environments**

The care of children is provided by a specialised workforce, in environments designed specifically to meet the needs of children. Education and care settings are designed with children front of mind and are not suitable spaces for providing care for adults. Equally, environments designed to provide care and support to those with additional needs, such as the elderly or disabled, are not environments equipped for the needs of children. These three groups all have distinctive requirements to ensure their safety and wellbeing and are not interchangeable. Child-safe environments, where the safety and wellbeing of children is prioritised, is of utmost importance. In education and care settings, all adults providing care are required to have a Working With Children Check and undergo police or other equivalent background checks. In order to meet Child Safe Standards in an environment providing combined modes of care, all adults providing care or being cared for, would need to meet these safety requirements.

Responding to children's needs for care and education, and supporting children and guiding their behaviour, requires that educators and teachers undergo specialist training that is evidence-based. The workforce of trained professionals must undertake professional development to keep their skills and learning up to date, similar to the requirements for those providing care to elderly or disabled persons. The workforce that provides this care are not interchangeable with the workforce that provides education and care for children.

**Recommendation: combining different types of work and care would negatively impact the care workforce and those they provide care to and is not recommended by Community Child Care Association.**

Combining different types of work and care would have negative impacts on those being cared for, and on the workforce providing that care. In particular, this would not serve the needs or the rights of children and would not be providing care that takes into account the best interests of a child. It is essential that the safety and wellbeing of children is of utmost importance in education and care settings, and this could not be ensured in an environment that combines children and vulnerable adults who also have specific needs. Community Child Care recommends the Committee for Work and Care take these key issues into consideration when making decisions concerning the care workforce, and those they care for.

### **References:**

Jackson, J. (2020), *'Every educator matters: Evidence for a new early childhood workforce strategy for Australia'*, Mitchell Institute, Victoria University.

Moore, T G, Arefadib, N, Deery, A & West, S, 2017, *'The first thousand days: An evidence paper'*, Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Parkville, Victoria.

Pascoe, S & Brennan, D, 2017, *'Lifting our game: Report of the review to achieve educational excellence in Australian schools through early childhood interventions'*, Victorian Government, Melbourne.