

I write to you perplexed about the Early Quality Fund. As an operator of a long day care service I believe that staff should be paid more in general, however it needs to be without complication, restrictions or impacting the business. So my heart supports the initiative but my head says no when you go through the issues and the ramifications from such an initiative.

The Early Years Quality Fund has pre-occupied many operators over the last 3 months. The pay increase should be across the board without staff requiring to be a member of a union. (although anyone is free to join a union and the unions have been pretty hard pushing membership to entice staff that they will get the increase if they are part of a union).

Secondly it should be for all childcare services not just long day care. I have currently commissioned an industrial relations lawyer to try and secure the pay increase for my staff. This is at my expense (not the staff) and without any guarantee that we will secure this. (Note none of my staff are union members and do not show an interest in joining) they were also under the assumption that they will get this increase anyway when the news was released and I have had to spend time educating my staff and explaining to them this process. That we will apply but there is no guarantee. (And I will be out of pocket \$2000 from the IR lawyers service.)

The pay increase will impact my superannuation contributions, payroll tax and payg tax, yet if we secure this I will not be able to increase my fees as a result of the pay increase? And it is only guaranteed for 2 years. I am sure most people don't want a pay cut after 2 years and with most staff being very young in age they often want more money but no additional responsibility or training to support them.

It has been ill thought out. I believe you will have a two class wage system within this network of long day care services. When staff retention is a big issue. Most privately owned operators also pay their staff above award, so to retain them even more we will now be forced to match other services wages whom have been fortunate enough to secure the pay increases.

I have done the preliminary analysis of what will I have to do to match this pay increase if my staff don't secure it. I am sure my families would not appreciate the \$6 a day increase in fees that I would have to implement the pay increase for my staff (if I don't secure the funding). This is the reason for being perplexed even more. Should my families have to fund this?

This whole fund notion has pre-occupied so much of everyone's time when it really should be about delivering quality education and care and providing the best possible start to our children and our families so that everyone can flourish.

Susan Franco
Approved Provider



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