

I have owned and operated my own 58 place Long Day Care Centre for 16 years.

During this time I have never seen such dissatisfaction within the industry. We have been given National Quality Framework, National Quality Standards, Early Years Learning Framework and a complete set of new regulations. To add insult to injury we have tax payers funding being delivered to a select number of Centres, who will receive this funding depending on how good their applications and presentations are.

I find it discriminatory that some staff will receive the increase and some will not. **I will not apply for it!** I could not allow my staff to feel that they were any less worthy than staff from a Centre down the road who may be granted the increase.

I have a Centre full of passionate dedicated educators, whom I pay over the award salaries for an over the award performance. Why do I do that? I do it because I work with them everyday, I see the passion, the long hours, the sacrifices they make to make our Centre special. What do the appointed board know about my staff or the staff from any other Centre for that matter. Nothing!!!!

This funding is viewed by many as tokenistic. The unions have used it as a lever to boost membership. The union have not visited my Centre, but they have visited nearly every Good Start and Guardian Centre that I know off, more than once.

Do this government only ever have a vision that stops after two years?

What happens after the funding ceases in two years? Do those educators, leave early childhood and enter the public school system (where most of them are anyway) or do those Centres approach parents cap in hand and ask them to pay for the increased salaries, that taxpayers have been funding for the past two years.

In summary, this fund shows a complete lack of understanding of the early childhood sector and a complete misuse of tax payers money. No one deserves more recognition, higher salaries and better conditions than early childhood staff, but it must be equality for all. I will ensure that my own staff receive adequate reward for their efforts and I will be able to do it without a cent of taxpayers money.

There is no doubt that early childhood is seriously underfunded but tokenistic selective handouts are not the answer.

I, together with a large number of my fellow owners look forward to scrutinising the distribution of funding between, private, community and not for profit Centres.

I look forward to your comments.

Yours truly,

Margaret