

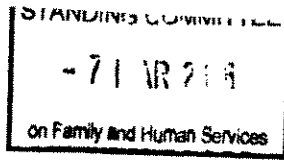
Mr James Catchpole
Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family
and Human Services
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Submission No 178

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JM



Dear Mr Catchpole,

I would like to describe how it is for our family with a child with a disability. Balancing work and family is difficult for 'normal' families but it becomes much more complex if you have a child with a disability.

Our youngest child, Hannah, is 16 years old. She has Angelman Syndrome caused by a chromosomal abnormality. She has a severe intellectual disability and a less severe physical disability. She has high support needs and requires constant supervision.

I was employed as a teacher for 5 years and was happy to become a stay at home mother to raise our three children. As the years passed, however, I needed to return to the workforce both to contribute to the family budget and to satisfy my personal need to work outside the home.

During the past 8 or 9 years I have worked part-time as a teacher assistant. I have not had the

issue of working longer hours or continuing work as a teacher as my daughter still needs someone to dress her, feed her, transport her to the bus help onto the bus, collect her from the bus etc etc. She did access child-care through the SNSS scheme for 1-2 days/week during school holidays which was great for the other children and for the whole family. However, child care centres aren't funded to care for children older than 13 years old. This means that if I needed before or after school care in order to work a longer day I would have to obtain special funding for someone to mind Hannah.

We have had to raise our family on my husband's low income supplemented by my low 40 weeks/year teacher aide income. Our child's disability has had longterm effects on the whole family - holidays, income, housing, opportunities etc. I know other parents in a similar position who have not been able to work a full-time job or a job suiting their qualifications as the problems of obtaining suitable child care are just too difficult to solve. Families with children with complex medical issues have an even harder time as they may feel it is ^{not} safe enough to leave their child in someone else's care.

Hope this information helps. yours sincerely,