

From: Kate Potter [REDACTED]  
Sent: Tue 15/03/2005 4:38 PM

**Subject: Balancing work and family**

15 March 2005

Dear Ms Bishop,

I write in relation to the enquiry into balancing work and family. I am a 27 year old mother of sixteen-month old, with a second baby due in a few weeks. I am a solicitor by training but never practiced, making the decision to have my children first and establish a career later. Having said this, I was a full-time member of the public service in a different field before the birth of my daughter.

I undertaking my PhD part-time (no scholarship) and working part-time to help pay for every-day expenses. I chose to work from home so that I did not have to put my daughter in to care.

What I find most disturbing is the emphasis that is so often placed on full-time work. I believe that even your enquiry is biased in this direction. If women chose or need to work full-time after having children that is fine, but you must recognise this is not the ideal for many. Balancing work and family life for many women means the choice to work part-time so as to spend more time with their children.

There are two main points I would like to make about access to day care.

1. It is incredibly difficult to get a part-time place for children. I understand that preference is given to those who want their children in care full-time, but as mentioned above, this is not the choice for many. Many day care facilities have a two-day minimum, and there are plenty of women who work from home and need only one day of care to be at work. (I realise there is family day care, but many mothers prefer a supervised centre.) This minimum requirement needs to be addressed.

2. The cost of child care. I do appreciate that we have chosen to have children, and should be responsible for the costs associated; I also know child care workers are undervalued and underpaid. However, once a second child is born it is simply not worth returning to work. The cost of having two children in care is prohibitive.

I think our society needs to place greater value on motherhood and understand that it is a job in itself!

Sincerely  
Kate Potter

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