

Standing Committees on Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2021 - 2022

Outcome: Early Childhood and Child Care

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. SQ21-000446

Senator Louise Pratt on 03 June 2021, Proof Hansard page 6-7

Child Care Subsidy - Second and subsequent children

Question

Senator PRATT: May I ask, please, in that context, if that benefit is designed to go to families who have two or more children in below-school-age care at the same time? Clearly, as children come into child care—it might be at seven months, it might be at one, it might be at two—unless you've had your children very close together or they're multiple births, there's only a small period of time in which you are likely to have three children in under-school-age care. Do you have data on what those numbers are?

Dr Baxter: We know that, in terms of people who would be impacted by this measure, it's 250,000 families who have more than one child under six in care. We also know that's not a static—

Senator PRATT: How many with three?

Dr Baxter: I don't know how many of those have three. I'm sorry. We could get that for you on notice.

...

Dr Baxter: Sorry, they're not separate groups. You asked what's the total number in care, and I gave you the 900,000 number. The number of families who would benefit from this measure—you asked how many families have two or more—is 250,000. I don't know how many have three, but I'm sure we could give you that.

Senator O'NEILL: Could you break it down for me, because I have no sort of sense of whether there's one, two or three, and this policy seems to be significantly different from others in that you've got to have multiple children in here and there's a time constraint. I've got family members who had children very close together, but certainly that wasn't my experience. This is going to play out very differently for differently shaped families. Can you provide some clarity? You must have these numbers.

Senator PRATT: For example, how long on average is a family going to be one of those 250,000 as opposed to one of the 900,000?

Dr Baxter: We can certainly get you that on notice, how long they are likely to be in. I can tell you it's not a small group. It 250,000 people who have two or more children in care. What we see quite frequently is that there may be a child who has started school but not yet turned six who has some care in out-of-school-hours care. You may have two younger children if the parent is working.

Answer

Of the 250,000 families that are expected to benefit from the budget measure, approximately 41,700 (16.7%) have 3 or more children under the age of 6.