

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee —Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing—October 2010

Answers to Questions on Notice

Parliamentary Portfolio, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: Capital Hill Early Childhood Centre

Question: P 7 a)–i)

Written: Senator Kroger

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 3 December 2010

P7

- a) Have all 25 available places at Capital Hill Early Childhood Centre been allocated?
- b) If not – are some kept open for emergency placements of travelling members and staff?
- c) To whom are the 25 available places allocated? Could you please provide a breakdown for politicians, media staff, EO staffers, APH staffers, Canberra based APS staffers etc.
- d) Is there a waiting list?
- e) If so, how long is it?
- f) How high is the staff turnover rate at the centre?
- g) How long is the contract with Anglicare?
- h) What is the procedure for re-tendering this contract?
- i) Could you please advise on the current fee structure and the opening times?

Answer

- a) On 30 January 2009, prior to opening, the ACT Office for Children, Youth and Family Support approved the Capital Hill Early Childhood Centre (**the Centre**) to accommodate a maximum of 30 children up to 3 years of age.

Of the 30 places, 27 are allocated for permanent bookings and three places are available for casual and/or daily bookings.

As at 2 November 2010, permanent places are available during non-sitting weeks on Monday and Friday, with Tuesday to Thursday fully booked.

During sitting weeks, permanent places are available on Friday only, with Monday through to Thursday fully booked.

- b) There are three places available for casual bookings. Priority access for casual bookings is given on a “first booked, first confirmed” basis to children of Senators or Members, followed by non-Canberra-based staff and then Canberra-based staff.

- c) As of 2 November 2010, there are 46 active families using the Centre. 35 of these access permanent places and the remaining 11 access casual places as outlined in the following table.

	Senators / Members	Media	Senate staff	Reps staff	Ministerial staff	DPS staff	Retail Licence staff	AFP
Permanent place users (Canberra)		9	8	4	1	10	2	1
Casual place users (Interstate)	6			1				
Casual place users (Canberra)				1	1	2		

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- d) Yes.
- e) As of 2 November 2010, there are 27 children on the waiting list for the Centre. As places become available, preference will be given to those who have been on the waiting list the longest, as well as other considerations such as day required, age group and requested start date.

The table below details the current waiting list numbers by each month.

Preferred start	No. of requests
Nov 2010	0
Dec 2010	0
Jan 2011	3
Feb 2011	4
Mar 2011	2
Apr 2011	6
May 2011	1
Jun 2011	2
Jul 2011	3
Aug 2011	1
Sep 2011	2
Oct 2011	1
Nov 2011	1
Dec 2011	0
2012	1
Total	27

- f) There are currently ten employees (permanent and casual) working in the Centre. In the middle of 2010, one staff member left due to an interstate move. This position has since been filled. All other staff members have been working in the Centre for 12 months or more, with two staff members still remaining of the original seven from when the Centre opened in February 2009.

In February 2011, one staff member will be going on maternity leave.

- g) The current licence with Anglicare is for a three-year term with an option for DPS to offer an extension for a further three years. The licence was executed on 18 September 2008; however, the Centre was not fully operational until opening in February 2009.
- h) DPS will assess the commercial arrangements of the childcare centre licence before it expires. Given the small response when the licence was originally tendered, it is likely that DPS will seek to renegotiate terms for a new licence with the current licensee. If negotiations are not successful, or if the licensee does not wish to enter into a new licence, DPS would approach the market.

- i) **Opening Times (Monday to Friday)**

Non-sitting weeks: 8:00am–6:00pm Sitting weeks: 7:30am–6:00pm

Extended hours are available upon request between 6:00pm and 9:00pm.

Fee Structure (as of 5 July 2010)

- \$95 per day for permanent bookings
- \$11.30 per hour for casual bookings
- \$140 per day when extended hours are used.