



*Occasional Child Care Australia Inc. Submission to  
2014 Review of the National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality  
Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care.*

Due: 4<sup>th</sup> July 2014

**Who is Occasional Child Care Australia Inc.?**

**Who we are?**

Occasional Child Care Australia (OCCA) is the peak body for Occasional child care Australia. OCCA promotes and supports its members by acting as a resource, disseminating information and advocating on matters pertaining to occasional care services across Australia. OCCA currently has over 40 members across Australia with 80 services in operation.

**What is Occasional Child Care?**

The unique nature of occasional care services provides flexible and responsive education and care arrangements, which meet the needs of the general community, and allows families to meet their work and non-work related commitments. Families have an option of enrolling their children into an occasional care service for as little as 1 hour to attend an appointment or more hours to go to work. No other children's service allows this flexibility for families.

**Who uses occasional care?**

Occasional care provides a unique and important service for families for a variety of reasons:

- To enable parents to attend appointments or meetings where it is not suitable for children to attend
- As a stepping stone to preschool or long day care as they can attend for a short period of time
- Where a parent/carer is unwell and unable to meet the needs of their child temporarily
- An opportunity for children to engage in activities in a stimulating environment with educators who are trained in early childhood
- Whilst on the waiting list for preschool or long day care
- A service for parents who have no extended family or other support, or who are new to the area/country
- Family support agencies use occasional care for parents to attend parenting courses, counselling, etc.
- Assisting families to meet their work or study requirements.

**Occasional care services operate under;**

Currently Occasional childcare services operate under their state and territory children's services regulations;

NSW - Education and Care Services Supplementary Provisions Regulations 2012.

VIC – Victorian children's services legislation

WA- Child Care Services Act 2007/ Child Care Services Regulations 2007  
Child Care Services (Child Care) Regulations 2006

SA- Children's Services (Child Care Centre) Regulations 1998

TAS- Child Care ACT 2001 Centre Based Care Standards Class 4 and Class 5

There are also a very small number of occasional child care services who are also currently working in-scope of the National Quality framework and National Standards, due to these service's being a approved children's services.





**Terms of reference items addressed**

As Occasional childcare services are out-of-scope within the early education and care sector. As an out-of-scope model we are unable to comment on a number of the key term of references outlined in the 2014 Review. The terms of references we have commented on effect occasional child care out-of-scope services.

**3. Whether the range of services covered by the National Quality Framework should be expanded to include services currently excluded by the regulations (e.g. Budget Based Funded services).**

As a peek body for out-of-scope services, we believe that in a timely manner occasional child care services need to become in-scope to ensure that all children are receiving the same quality of care as a child who attends another form of early education and care. This should not happen until all other service types currently under the National Quality framework have completed rating and assessments process. To ensure that all the non working parts have been ironed out correctly and the system can then handle taking of unique early education and care service types.

Occasional child care services are unique in nature and flexible within how care is offered as children can attend for as little as an hour a month.

Educators within Occasional care still offer children the same experiences and education as a child who attends long day care/ preschool/family day care, it is offered to the child in a more flexible and individual tailored manner.

A number of services are currently voluntary implementing parts of the National quality framework that works for their service type, with success.

Within each of the quality areas there are parts of the national quality framework that occasional care services can implement as of now but there are a number of parts that are just not workable within the nature of the care they offer.

**OCCA Recommendation one;**

For out-of-scope services to become in-scope within a reasonable time frame after all other in-scope service types have been through the rating and assessment process.

**OCCA Recommendation Two;**

For government and ACECQA to have discussions and work with out-of-scope peek bodies and services about becoming in scope. To ensure the process is tailored for unique early education and care types.

**4. Whether legislative requirements can/should be tailored to particular service types/settings (E.g. Outside School Hours Care).**

OCCA believes that legislative requirements should be tailored to particular services types/settings to ensure that children within those service types are receiving the highest quality of early education.

**OCCA Recommendation:**

Government law and legislation implement a workable legislative requirements for different service types e.g. LDC, FDC, OSHC, occasional care/mobile children's services.

**5. Potential connections across other initiatives e.g. Australian Early Development Index, National Information Agreement, the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education and the national education reform agenda.**

OCCA believes that a connection of other initiatives within early education is import for consistently within the sector for children to receive the highest quality of care. Currently a number of out-of-scope services are unable to access funding for children under the IPSP to enable OCC centres this





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currently disadvantage to children and families by not being able to access flexible early education and care that meets their needs. Which disability to enable OC centres to provide a high quality of care, OCCA believes all children have the right to high quality education and funding to ensure there development and education.

### **OCCA Recommendation;**

Access to funding for children with disabilities with flexible early education and care services of their families choose, including out-of-scope services.

### **Conclusion;**

In the long term we at OCCA want to see the implementation of some form of the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care within out-of-scope service which meets out-of-scope service type's early education learning environments.

As a peek body we are a representative organisation that aims to provide information, membership support, resources, advocacy and representation, research and policy development of our members within occasional child care services. Within moving forward of including out-of-scope services we believe OCCA should be the governments best contact for Occasional child care service.

### **Contact:**

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