

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate Release

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Local providers work with local parents to ensure that 'the best interests of children come first'

The Australian Institute of Family Studies today released a report² *Flexible child care and Australian parents' work and care decision-making* describing a sample study exploring parent decision making around work and childcare.

Choices around child care are individual and complex and often change as each child grows and develops, as workforce hours change, and as parents move toward adapting their needs to meet the fixed times required by schools.

The *Child Care Flexibility Trials*³, a project conducted by the Australian Government in 2013 and 2014, showed us all that that perceptions of flexible childcare needs often don't translate into booked use of specially designed flexible services.

The Australian Childcare Alliance today reassured the Australian community that:

- **Providers are local**, they know and care about their local families and work hard to meet parent needs and their children's needs, and are proud of their position as a community asset.
- **Service staff become a part of family lives** and work together with families and local schools and other services to provide quality education and care, meeting each child's ongoing needs.
- **The needs of children are at the heart of what providers do.** In the debate around the need for flexible childcare, it is the needs of children that are often forgotten in public debate.
- **Children who aren't at home with their families need a safe, quality environment that meets independently assessed standards** and that provides the strongest support for children's critical early years, including a social cohort of friends they grow with.

The Australian Childcare Alliance welcomes further research into this complex and important area.

¹ Education and Care Services National Law Act (WA) 2012

² Baxter, J. A., Hand, K., & Sweid, R. (2016). *Flexible child care and Australian parents' work and care decision-making* (Research Report No. 37). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies. <https://aifs.gov.au/publications/flexible-child-care-and-australian-parents-work-and-care-decision-making>

³Baxter, J. A., & Hand, K. (2016). *Flexible child care: Key findings from the AIFS Evaluation of the Child Care Flexibility Trials*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies. <https://aifs.gov.au/publications/flexible-child-care>

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Australian Childcare Alliance, Australia's largest representative of private and community childcare service providers.

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