

28 November 2008

Dear Families

The NSW State Government is reviewing the 2004 Children's Services Regulation. This Regulation determines the **minimum standard** of care that your child receives in a regulated children's service in NSW.

In NSW, regulated children's services include long day care, preschools, mobile services, family day care, home-based services, school-based preschools and occasional care.

Finding out what families want and need from a children's service forms part of the Children's Services Regulation review. An online survey has been developed by the NSW Department of Community Services (Directorate of Children's Services).

UnitingCare Children's Services invites families to visit http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/DOCS/STANDARD/PC_101661.html and follow the link to complete the online survey. A fact sheet is located at: http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/docswr/assets/main/documents/reg_review_fact.pdf

There are many key indicators that determine the level of quality within a children's service, including the presence of qualified early childhood professionals, low numbers of children to staff ratios, quality interactions between children and staff and educational programs for each child.

UnitingCare Children's Services supports, through changes in the Children's Services Regulations, the introduction of:

- The employment of a 4 year trained early childhood teacher in every children's service regardless of the size of the centre (this replaces the existing regulation that only requires a 4 year trained teacher for centres over 29 places);
- The implementation of improved staff/child ratio of 1 staff member to every 4 children under the age of two years (this replaces the existing regulation of 1 staff member for every 5 children). This should replaced the existing staff/ratio across the centre opening hours;
- A commitment to smaller group sizes for children;
- The retention of the current space requirements for all children; 3.25 square meters of unencumbered indoor floor space per child and 7 square meters of unencumbered outdoor space per child.

UnitingCare Children's Services is committed to the provision of high quality early childhood education and care for all children.

Many of the proposed changes to the regulations are already implemented across our centres, therefore it is anticipated that the cost implication for the

proposed changes will be minimal if any. This may be contrary to what is being publicized by other providers of children's services.

Your participation in the online survey will play a vital role as it confirms the importance of quality regulatory standards in all children's services. The NSW Department of Community Services relies on the outcome of these surveys, both parent and service, in the decision making process. If you have difficulty in accessing a computer to complete the survey please contact our Central Office on 8267 4244 and we will make suitable arrangements to ensure your feedback is received.

For further information please visit our website which also contains Fact Sheets for families on various topics.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Death
Director