

# Not just wiping noses: Childcare worker writes open letter to David Leyonhjelm <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Read online <sup>[2]</sup>

## EXCERPTS

How hard is it really, to be a childcare worker?

Senator David Leyonhjelm has angered the sector by questioning whether the job really needs qualifications, arguing the requirement is over-the-top and has only driven up costs.

"Apart from the fact you want to make sure there aren't any paedophiles involved, you have to have credentials these days to be a childcare worker," he told Channel Ten's The Project.

"A lot of women — mostly women — used to look after kids in childcare centres. And then they brought in this national quality framework and they had to go and get a Certificate III in childcare in order to continue doing the job they were doing — you know, wiping noses and stopping the kids from killing each other."

Sydney childcare worker Chloe Chant has written a Facebook post in response, outlining some of the more complicated behind-the-scenes work that she does, on top of the expected duties of a childcare worker:

"Dear Senator Leyonhjelm,

Three weeks ago I stopped everything and spent an entire day of my personal, unpaid time creating documents to be used in court for a family in the middle of a child custody hearing.

...The next day I went to work and wiped a lot of noses.

Two weeks ago I identified behaviours that indicated possible child sexual abuse. I talked to the child, I talked to parents, I consulted research and theory, I completed Mandatory Reporting requirements, I cried - a lot...

...And I managed to stop the children killing each other.

This week I held a baby as he experienced febrile convulsions. I cooled him, reassured him, called an ambulance, called the mother, comforted the hysterical mother, evacuated the other children, kept airways open. I provided first aid that could have prevented brain damage or death. I spent 4 hours filling out legal documentation, paperwork, reflections, and analysis.

...And I wiped some noses.

On Monday I completed a set of observations, learning summaries and analyses that culminated in a recommendation that a child be assessed for learning delay. I sat there sweating and feeling nauseated while waiting for the parents to arrive for a meeting to discuss this. I was yelled at, screamed at, accused of being an insensitive, unprofessional bitch, and then they cried, and then I hugged them, and then I talked them through all the support and strategy I was going to offer to help them and their child.

...And, to my knowledge, I managed to let zero paedophiles into my service.

On Wednesday I said goodbye to a family who were moving on from our service. They thanked me for the support, the documentation, the planning, the individual observations, the learning analyses, the patience, the help in times of crisis, the emotional investment and countless episodes of first aid treatments in times of emergency.

...And, I wiped some noses.

...And changed nappies.

...And set up experiences.

...And prepared lunches.  
....And mopped floors.  
...And mediated conflicts.  
...And attended staff meetings.  
...And managed resources.  
...And taught self help skills.  
...And helped children toilet training.  
...And was spewed on by babies.  
...And cleaned up vomit.  
...And raked the garden.  
...And helped multiple babies sleep.  
...And taught pre-literacy skills.  
...And expanded the vocabularies of the children.  
...And introduced the concept of nuclear fission.  
...And explained the fundamentals of DNA.  
...And explained where babies come from.  
...And described the purpose of the dendrites on nerve cells.  
...And I wiped more noses.

That was Wednesday.

I did this for just over 20 bucks an hour.

Your ignorance regarding the lifelong benefits of early learning (sorry, a "Middle-class perk" (Leyonhjelm Jul 2, 2015)), arrogance, self-righteousness and hypocrisy as a self-proclaimed champion of enlightened government investment would be hilarious if it wasn't so damaging to our future prospects as an intelligent nation, and the aspirations of the working class.

Should you need any advice regarding the REAL responsibilities of a childcare worker – or should you need your nappy changed – I am only too happy to render assistance.

Despite your comments, my role is to educate, and nothing would please me more than to educate one of my esteemed parliamentary representatives."

Speaking to the ABC, Ms Chant acknowledged the struggle many parents, from low and middle income families, face in paying for childcare.

She changed careers into child care about two years ago, and it was the hardest job she has ever had.

Senator Leyonhjelm has published a statement on his Facebook page, stating that if families do not want to pay for the "highest quality" child care, they should not have to.

"Families that just want their children to be kept safe, and to have their noses wiped, should have that option available to them.

"If such freedom of choice offends highly-educated child care workers, so be it," he said.

-reprinted from ABC News

**Region:** Australia and New Zealand <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** childcare workforce <sup>[4]</sup>

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Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/17/01/not-just-wiping-noses-childcare-worker-writes-open-letter-david>

Links

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<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-01-12/childcare-workers-open-letter-to-david-leyonhjelm/8178296> [3]

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