

The role of staff in quality improvement in early childhood ^[1]

quality, workforce

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Abstract

There is international recognition of the importance of high quality services for young children with a consensus that three pillars contribute to quality improvement: adult: child ratios, staff qualifications and group size. In Australia over the past 5 years, early childhood policy has attempted to drive improvements in early childhood service quality through national regulations for both adult: child ratios and qualifications. However, a review of early childhood history demonstrates that service quality in the past tended to depend more on the dedication of staff who were expected to be emotionally rewarded through their caring roles rather than from the pay and status associated with their work. The current political direction in Australia is now tending again towards this latter position. We review the literature associated with both positions in relation to quality improvement and flag our concerns for the future.

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