

ABC to pay staff to study childcare [AU] ^[1]

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Source: The Australian

Format: Article

Publication Date: 5 Oct 2006

AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS

Childcare mogul Eddie Groves has offered to pay his employees to study at university in an attempt to tackle the skilled-labour shortage and raise the quality of care.

Mr. Groves said yesterday that his ABC Learning Centres, which employ 17,000 workers who look after 60,000 children, had made a deal with the Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union that staff would vote on in November.

Under the agreement, staff would be offered free study to complete a certificate III, diploma and advanced diploma in children's services with the ABC-owned National Institute of Early Childhood Education.

The deal would also pay staff to study childcare at the University of Southern Queensland.

Mr Groves said the agreement would cost millions of dollars. But he assured parents and shareholders that the increased costs would not be absorbed by higher fees or smaller profits, saying greater occupancy rates would offset the difference.

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ABC controls a fifth of the childcare market. This year Mr Groves was named Australia's richest young man, with Business Review Weekly putting his net worth at \$260 million.

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- reprinted from the Australian

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[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/06/10/abc-pay-staff-study-childcare-au> [2]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/region/australia-and-new-zealand> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/staff> [4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/privatization>