

No expense spared at Byron's preschool [AU] ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS

It may be an eye-watering annual outlay but Sam Mattila and her husband, William Mertens, have come to terms with paying a huge premium for a luxury nursery for their son.

Their 14-month-old toddler, Byron, goes to Junction Juniors, a Bondi Junction nursery thought to be the most expensive in Sydney. It charges a standard rate of \$105 a day for children under the age of two.

For their money, Byron gets the use of special facilities inside Bondi's Westfield shopping centre.

The nursery has an outside play area and an abundant supply of toys. Everything - including nappies, sun cream, linen and food - is included.

Ms Mattila said they had minimal choice of child care. "I don't know if you can call it shopping around. I had my name down at a number of places around the eastern suburbs from when I was eight weeks' pregnant. When Byron was born, only two had spaces available."

Ms Mattila was impressed with Junction Juniors' ratio of one member of staff to every three babies, compared with the legal requirement of one to five.

The Woollahra couple were unimpressed by the Federal Government's offer of a tax rebate of 30 per cent of the cost of child care - Ms Mattila said it was capped at \$4000, which would barely nudge the \$26,000 annual cost of sending a baby full-time to Junction Juniors.

The centre is unapologetic about its fees, citing a combination of high rent, huge demand for places and its brand new facilities as justification.

The nursery is jointly owned by a former director of the investment bank Morgan Stanley, Brendan McAssey, and an internet entrepreneur, Trevor Bolland.

- reprinted from the Sydney Morning Herald

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