

Parents pay anything from \$62 to \$130 a day ^[1]

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Source: Melbourne Herald Sun

Publication Date: 11 Jan 2012

EXCERPTS:

THE gulf between the cheapest and most expensive childcare centres has blown out to nearly \$70 a day after federal reforms.

Melbourne's cheapest centres, which have managed to avoid large fee rises after mandatory changes to staffing levels, are offering care for as little as \$62 a day.

But many centres have pushed their daily fees over \$100, with a new high of \$130 at one centre, the Herald Sun has found.

Prices can fluctuate drastically even between centres within just kilometres of each other, but parents are urged to make their decision based on quality rather than cost.

Bambini Early Learning Centre in Brighton lifted fees to \$130 a day to cover the cost of hiring new staff.

Regulations introduced on January 1 set the staff-infant ratio at one to four for children aged up to two, down from one to five.

Centres charging low fees say they will rise as further reforms are rolled out.

Waterlily Early Learning Centre in Carrum Downs, which had to abide by the new ratios when it opened last year, charges \$65 a day a child before government subsidies.

"I think some centres are increasing their fees excessively, perhaps overestimating additional costs," said owner Rachel Chamberlain.

Operators at cheap centres said they were meeting industry standards and providing quality care.

Westernport Child Care Centre and Kindergarten is also one of Melbourne's cheapest at \$67.50 per child, but has not had to hire extra staff.

Childcare on Heatherton, in Dandenong, increased fees by \$5 a day this year for full-time care, up to \$66 a day. Its owner-operator, Sharon Baster, is considering raising prices again in July due to the reforms.

But she said she had to keep prices low as some parents had difficulty paying fees last year.

The Productivity Commission estimates the reforms will equate to a 15 per cent rise - or \$43.50 on average a week, in the face of government predictions they will only result in a rise of 57c and up to \$8.67 a week by 2014-15.

Community Child Care executive director Barbara Romeril said parents should choose a centre based on quality rather than the cost.

Region: Australia and New Zealand ^[2]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/12/01/parents-pay-anything-62-130-day>

Links

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