

Desperate parents demand national ban on childcare waiting list fees ^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

Parents have demanded a national ban on childcare waiting list fees as operators gouge families of hundreds of dollars simply to put their name down for a place.

As desperate families seek childcare for babies and toddlers, traditionally the area of greatest shortage, some parents are being charged up to \$100 every time they place their name with a centre.

For parents with two children, placing their names at several centres costs hundreds of non-refundable dollars.

Parental advocacy group The Parenthood will today launch a national campaign to ban waiting list fees in Australia following complaints raised by mums and dads in an online survey of 1000 parents.

The Parenthood executive director Fiona Sugden said the practice was a cash grab that must be stopped.

In Sydney, most parents in the inner west are paying fees of \$15 to \$100 per child to put their child on a waiting list.

But in Penrith, in the outer west, only 9 per cent of centres charged a waiting list fee, with the fees much lower at between \$10 to \$50 per family.

"It appears that in the suburbs closer to the city where there is very high demand for childcare, centres are capitalising on parents' desperation by charging waiting list fees," Ms Sugden said.

But childcare operators have defended the practice on the grounds that centres are forced to administer long waiting lists.

Australian Childcare Alliance spokeswoman Gwynn Bridge said charging a fee was one way to ensure families were "serious" about needing a place as many parents put their child's name on every childcare centre's waiting list, creating a false sense of actual demand.

"I know centres have rung so many families before they find parents that still need a place. For those who have huge waiting lists it's a way of ensuring parents are serious.

"Parents don't think to ring centres when they get a place."

A spokesman for Childcare Minister Sussan Ley declined to comment on the call for a national ban on waiting list fees.

-reprinted from the Australian

Region: Australia and New Zealand ^[2]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/14/02/desperate-parents-demand-national-ban-childcare-waiting-list-fees>

Links

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