

# Melbourne child care struggle: Waitlists at 92pc of centres put pressure on young families <sup>[1]</sup>

**Author:** Rawlinson, Clare

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## AVAILABILITY

Read online <sup>[2]</sup>

## EXCERPTS

An inner-Melbourne child care centre's forced closure is putting stress on young families, with a new report finding 92 per cent of Melbourne centres refer families to waitlists.

The Curzon Street Children's Centre in North Melbourne has advised parents of its 75 enrolled children to seek alternative arrangements, 12 months before the centre is expected to close due to a planned redevelopment by the site's owners.

Clare West, a mother of two and chair of the Curzon Street Children's Centre board, said she began seeking alternatives two years ahead of the centre's expected closure but had failed to find an appropriate place.

"We have one option but only for two or three days and we need four days, otherwise I'll be unable to work," she said.

A new report by the Office of Adam Bandt MP found 50 per cent of centres in the Melbourne electorate had no vacancies for infants to two-year-olds.

It said 31 per cent had vacancies on "some days", but Ms West said that was rarely sufficient.

"We've already had our name on lists for 12 months ... and that's what you'll get — a day here or there but it's not enough to work your working life around," she said.

The report found 92 per cent of centres in the Melbourne electorate had waitlists for children aged up to two, with an average waitlist of 10 months — an increase of almost 10 per cent on 2014 figures.

Ms West said the difficulty for mothers wanting to plan their return to work was that as soon as an offer arose at a child care centre, parents must either take it immediately or forfeit their place on the list.

Modern families staying in the city

Another mother at Curzon Street Children's Centre, Zoe Alnutt, said young families like hers were no longer willing to move to the outer suburbs to access child care centres and a "family-friendly" lifestyle.

"More and more people are moving into the inner city and it's just unfortunate the child care isn't keeping up," she said.

Ms Alnutt said the quality of child care was as important as the quantity for parents' peace of mind.

"We're faced with a lot of uncertainty which isn't great when you've got a newborn baby — we want to know where our kids are going and we want to send our kids somewhere we're happy with," she said.

Of the centres surveyed in the report, 59 per cent said their places were restrained by funding and resources.

-reprinted from ABC News

**Region:** Australia and New Zealand <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** accessibility <sup>[4]</sup>

spaces <sup>[5]</sup>

demand <sup>[6]</sup>

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/16/01/melbourne-child-care-struggle-waitlists-92pc-centres-put-pressure> [2] <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-01-05/child-care-pressure-in-inner-melbourne/7068118> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/region/australia-and-new-zealand> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/accessibility> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/spaces> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/demand>