

High quality early childhood education is the key

(in response to Family First releasing research suggesting daycare is detrimental to children – [Who cares? Daycare report](#))

We need to stop engaging in debate over which is better – home or centre. The reality is that children benefit from high quality early childhood education and home environments where stress and unhappiness is at a minimum. Comprehensive, integrated policies such as adequate paid parental leave, high quality early childhood education, policies that lead to low unemployment, and low poverty all contribute to the wellbeing of children. To make assertions that fuel value judgements about the choices families make or are forced to make detracts from the real issues and ultimately act to the detriment of children.

We would endorse the recent release by the Families commission ([NZ research has answers to the debate on child care](#)). Parents and whānau need to have freedom of choice. 'Choice' means having affordable, accessible early childhood services with well qualified teaching staff. The Families Commission also raise another important point about using research sourced from outside NZ. We would question the relevance of some centre based research from countries with differing standards of quality across their ECE sectors and cultural beliefs around family. NZ is highly regarded internationally for its commitment to high quality ECE so research from a country with differing policies may not be relevant here. Another committed advocate for children, The Children's Commission produced a paper called [Through their lens – an inquiry in to non-parental education and care of infants and toddlers](#) based on NZ children and families. We would encourage families to read this report.

We are committed to our position as a recognised high quality service provider. We employ 100% qualified teachers, offer 20 hours free ECE to all children (government policy is only for 3 and 4 year olds) and we have services in most communities across the region.

Link to the Who Cares? report

<http://www.familyfirst.org.nz/research/who-cares-daycare-report/>

Link to Families Commission response

<http://www.nzfamilies.org.nz/news-events/children-and-youth/nz-research-has-answers-to-the-debate-on-child-care>

Link to Children's Commission response

http://www.occ.org.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/8107/CC_SRThroughtheirlens_21032011.pdf