

**INQUIRY INTO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND
CARE SECTOR IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 25 March 2025

Partially
Confidential

I am an early childhood teacher, who has been in the profession since 2016. I am here today to tell you my experience about a centre I worked at during 2018. This centre has since closed down, however the owners and management are still running a sister centre in another location in NSW.

Before starting at this particular centre, I had heard some horror stories particularly from my best friend, whose child attended there and had their own traumatic experience with the centre. However, I am a believer in giving places a go and succeeded in gaining a full time position at this centre. I was excited to start however that excitement soon diminished. On my first day, I was in the 2 - 3 year old room and unfortunately the room leader was incapable of managing children who needed additional support. There was myself, the room leader and a trainee and we were under ratio. In NSW the ratio for this age group is 1 - 4, however the room leader decided to lock myself and 5 children, who had the highest additional needs outside with no resources to keep them entertained. I had the trainee bring me out playdough and books, only for the room leader to come and remove these items. I took the children to the playground and got in trouble for doing this. This was just one thing I experienced at this centre, along with neglect for children in nappies, food used as punishment, consistency with being under ratio with staff to children, severe lack of supervision, many of my fellow educators were working towards with not many qualified staff on the floor and in responsible person positions. I was let go via a text message from the owner on a Sunday morning not long after starting employment and with no reason except for no shifts being available for me when we were struggling for staff.

This is my experience, however there are many ECTs and educators across the state of NSW (and nation as a whole) who have similar stories and experiences to myself. Many RTO's are pumping out qualifications and no proper training or knowledge. This is contributing to burn out amongst ECTs and educators, along with low pay rates, high expectations, continuous paperwork that results in less time forming meaningful connections with children (which is an important stepping stone for children's education in early childhood education), long days due to lack of staff, a lack of duty of care from some management teams (I do recognise this is not the case at all centres as I have worked for some amazing owners and management teams, and currently am part of a fantastic team with wonderful management at my current centre). Ratios also need to be examined, particularly within the ECE profession (and OSHC) as the current ratio is also factoring into burn out and driving brilliant educators and ECTs away from the profession.

We also deserve the recognition we deserve for what we do. We play an important role in children's development and help them achieve skills and knowledge that will benefit them not just across their educational journey, but their lives as a whole. Parents and families are a child's first teacher, and we are their second teacher who helps them learn and grow. We teach children through play and make note of their developmental milestones as they grow and learn. We are more than 'glorified babysitters', we are teachers helping little humans grow into beautiful big humans.