

# OPPORTUNITIES FOR DATA COLLECTION ON THE IMPACT OF THE JOBS FOR FAMILIES CHILD CARE PACKAGE

**Advice to the Australian Government 22 August 2017**

## INTRODUCTION

Australian Community Children's Services (ACCS) welcomes the opportunity to assist the Australian Government to develop a new Child Care IT system.

As the national peak body for community owned, not for profit children's services, we see an exciting opportunity to put in place right at the beginning of a new system the capacity to monitor its impact on children and families.

The following proposals have been developed with the intention to assist the Australian Government Department of Education and Training to gather clear evidence of the impact of the new Child Care support system on:

- women's workforce participation
- the participation of families experiencing vulnerability
- sustainability of the service system in communities where many families do not meet the new Activity Test.

## PROPOSED DATA COLLECTION FOR NEW I.T. SYSTEM

### 1. Data on the impact of Child Care Package on increasing participation of women in the workforce

Proposed data to be collected:

- Trends in the proportion of women with young children in the workforce, by total number and by hours of work per week.
- Changes to the number of families/women accessing government income support after implementation of the Package ie women leaving the workforce
- Increase or decrease in permanent days, hours or sessions of enrolment in Early Childhood Education and Care
- Reasons for changes in enrolments

Proposed method of data collection:

- existing ABS Child Care Survey
- Centrelink data
- Families could be asked to indicate reasons when altering enrolment hours on line in the IT system, through a simple tick box survey eg

Please tick the main reason/s for changing your enrolment:

- Changes in working hours
- Taking a second job
- Changes in informal family care arrangements
- Prohibitive cost of formal Early Childhood Education and Care
- Other

**2. Data on the impact of the changes on the participation of families experiencing vulnerability** (eg. Changes to the activity test, to Priority of Access Guidelines, to Additional Child Care Subsidy – Child Wellbeing and to Additional Child Care Subsidy – Temporary Financial Hardship):

Proposed data to be collected:

- Track changes in participation in Early Childhood Education and Care by:
  - Indigenous families
  - Families with a person with a disability
  - Families who are on the maximum rate of CCB or who are in receipt of income support
  - Families from a non-English speaking background
  - Single parent families
  - Newly arrived families

Proposed method of data collection:

- Baseline data for enrolments by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and low income families – a snapshot of demographic data at the closure of the Child Care Management System
- Build into the new IT system a capacity to track changes in enrolments of families with specified vulnerabilities eg number of families receiving 24 hours of Subsidy

**3. Impact on capacity of the Early Childhood Education and Care services sector to sustain services in communities with a high percentage of families who do not meet the new activity test**

Proposed method of data collection:

- Build into IT system the capacity to track:
  - openings and closures of Early Childhood Education and Care services with a highest percentage of families:
    - who do not meet the activity test
    - on the highest level of Subsidy;
    - on the lowest level of Subsidy
  - debt levels carried by services

## **FOLLOW UP**

We would be pleased to discuss these proposals further. Please contact:

- Prue Warrilow, National Convenor: Ph: 0408 020 904
- Linda Davison, Deputy National Convenor and ACCS representative on the DET Working Group for the new Child Care IT system: ph: 0417 052 061