



MEDIA RELEASE

21 January 2009
For immediate distribution

New Children's Services Regulations to improve quality in early childhood services

The new draft Children's Services regulations will support higher quality in early childhood services, according to the CEO of the peak body for early childhood education in Victoria. The draft regulations implement several changes KPV has advocated for in recent years.

'KPV has been concerned about the numbers of children in childcare services who do not have access to kindergarten programs. We are also delighted by this clear acknowledgement of the importance of qualified teachers to deliver the educational leadership vital to the great outcomes for children that quality early childhood services can provide,' said Meredith Carter, Chief Executive Officer of KPV.

'These new regulations should not only benefit children but their families and the broader community and ultimately the economy. They will also make a significant difference to bridging the gap in health and learning so often experienced by vulnerable children.'

'Increasing the ratio of staff to children supports quality relationships between staff and children. Over time these changes should be extended to children aged 3-5 as well. We look forward to this being an outcome of the ongoing COAG process in the not too distant future' said Meredith Carter today. 'Higher staff-child ratios not only give staff more time to focus on the needs of individual children. They also create more room to build partnerships with parents, whose influence remains critical to the best outcomes for children'.

'The requirement for each long day care centre to employ a degree qualified early childhood teacher is a great step forward. It acknowledges the important contribution degree qualified teachers make as educational leaders - promoting quality in early childhood education and care', said Meredith Carter. 'The phase in by 2014 is also realistic acknowledging the workforce shortages in this sector but is also an improvement on the 2016 date proposed previously by the Victorian government which KPV had criticised as too far away.'

The new requirement for all carers in licensed children's services to hold a Certificate III will also promote quality in early childhood by equipping them to assist in implementing programs developed by teachers. Heightened quality in the sector should assist in improving the appeal of early childhood education and care to potential entrants to the field.

The draft regulations include the following changes for licensed children's services:

- Increased staff-child ratios for children under 3, from 1:5 to 1:4 staff to children (effective from 2014). The ratios for children aged 3-5 remain unchanged. All long day care centres will be required to employ a degree qualified early childhood teacher, effective from 2014.
- All staff and carers must hold a minimum Certificate III, including those working in Family Day Care and Out of Hours School Care, effective from 2014.

Meredith Carter, CEO of Kindergarten Parents Victoria is available for interview on 0400 511 763 or 03 9489 3500.

Kindergarten Parents Victoria (KPV) is the peak organisation and employer body promoting the voice of parents in quality early childhood education for Victorian children, representing over 1000 centres serving more than 200,000 Victorian children and families each year.

End media release