

9th March 2010-03-09

Board of Inquiry

Child Protection Inquiry

GPO Box 1708

DARWIN NT 0801

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

You have asked me for suggestions and comments on your system from my perspective as a FACS Carer since September 2009. I feel you need to compensate the carers better. The pay rate for a FACS Carer is \$125.00 per week for an older child and younger children is \$132.00 approximately. A Family Day Careworker would charge \$10/hour 7 days times 24 hours, which is approximately \$240 /day plus 5 meals a day (based on age of child) which can work out to be \$70 week for an two year old without a food and nappy levy.

How can the Department justify paying FDC workers the much higher amount (which can be up to \$2000.00/week per child) when we are receiving minimal financial support and very little emotional support for the children during special occasions like their birthdays and at Christmas time. The system should be fairer right across the board, the children are the ones that are missing out, by that I mean the children in 100% FACS care and not at Family Day Care.

I'd like to see the children put back to their families more but with supervision or monitoring so we know the kids are safe. The Carers need to right type of person with genuine motives to providing the care of the children that access FACS so they aren't going from a negative home environment to another questionable environment, because after all it is meant to be all about raising the children's physical and emotional well being. I don't feel the children are receiving the quality care that they are entitled to in many situations. I feel that many carers are caring purely for financial gain and not physical and emotional reasons for the the kids. The kids need to feel that their cultural/nationality needs are accepted no matter what the circumstances. I feel this is not happening presently. I feel the permanent FACS workers should be more fairly compensated but not for the amount of \$2000 per week.

The current rates that FACS workers receive do not met the basic expenses of everyday living let alone the additional expenses of outings and special occasions, it needs to be more equitable.

In closing I do love the children and therefore the work. It is rewarding to see smiles on their faces and know that I have been apart of their new emotional well being. If the department does not address this inequality in pay rates you will lose your genuine carers because it is too hard financially

for the carers with their own family obligations and it's not fair that your own children miss out because you are doing the right thing for foster children. There is no way you will recruit new carers as the system stands.