

Dear Coordinator /Management Committee

I am writing to you all to inform you of the changes that have been occurring within our sector. As you all know our sector, occasional child care, is and has always been recognised as one of the major sector that is included in the Child Care Support Program. The National Occasional Child Care Association have been working and consulting with the Former Government and also the Department of Family & Community Services and Indigenous Affairs with regard to the changes which were meant to be implemented at the beginning of the last financial year which was going to move to the utilization funding model. The National Association had extensive meetings and transferring of information with all aspects of the new model. Hence it was not implemented as it was seen by the Department it would not be a workable model for our sector. Now I feel that we as a sector have come to the end of a long journey and after all my years associated with occasional care, we finally have a clear definition of what occasional care is:

***“Occasional Care (OCC) is a centre-based form of child care. OCC services are responsive to the needs of the general community and provide flexible care which allows parents to meet their work related and non-work related commitments. Families can access OCC regularly on a sessional basis, or irregularly. OCC do not offer full-time care, all day care except in extenuating circumstances. OCC provides families with the flexibility to leave children in an early childhood environment on days and hours that best meet their needs. OCC can provide care at short notice and immediate emergency care. OCC services charge fees that reflect the amount of time a child spends in care. OCC is available to all children, however most of the children in care will not have started school.”***

The definition clearly states what occasional care is and I would like to think that you and your service appreciate and acknowledge the development of the definition. Over the many years that I have been attending meetings with the Department, they have always been very positive and two way exchange with some negotiation process. That is why I am a little disappointed that some services have forwarded some negative feedback to the Department. To try and alleviate any further negative feedback from services the Department have developed the Questions & Answers document which will hopefully provide services with some clarity about what the revised definition will mean to you and your service. Your service will also receive a letter formally announcing the revised definition. To ensure that you have access to this information quickly please go to the link below and it will take you to the Q&A document on the Departmental website. <http://www.oceccc.gov.au>

The National Occasional Child Care Association were fully consulted with the developing of the final definition and it would be appreciated if all services embrace and recognise that the changes to occasional care has evolved and will continue to evolve and adapt to the changing needs of our communities. You and your service will have 12 months to prepare for this change but I seriously think there will not be many services that will not have to change their operating business structure.

**The above link is common knowledge for you to distribute to any person you feel may be interested in regard to the Q & A.**

Yours sincerely  
Mary A Cottee  
President