

CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY SERVICES (CHILD CARE) REGULATIONS 2006

**884. Dr J.M. WOOLLARD to the Minister for Community Development:**

I refer to the changes to section 43 of the Children and Community Services (Child Care) Regulations 2006 that will come into effect on 1 January.

- (1) (a) How many before and after-school care places are currently available in public childcare centres, and how many places will be available after 1 January?
- (b) How many before and after-school care places are currently available in private childcare centres that receive a government subsidy, and how many will be available after 1 January?
- (2) Has the government provided any assistance to childcare centres to meet the new requirements?
- (3) If yes, what form of assistance is being provided?
- (4) Will the government consider alternative arrangements, such as the establishment of school-based centres, in 2007 to assist parents who cannot find before and after-school care places for their children?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:**

I thank the member for Alfred Cove for the question. I also acknowledge Dr Alexandre Kalache, Director of the Ageing and Life Course Program of the World Health Organisation, Geneva, who is visiting Western Australia to provide advice to the state on the important issue of elder abuse.

- (1) (a) Before and after-school care places may be provided in outside school hours care services, outside school hours family day care services and childcare services. As at 22 November there were 9 304 licensed places in outside school hours care services, and 32 places in outside school hours family day care services. There were also 25 814 places in childcare centres where places may be used for school-aged and preschool-aged children. There is a greater number of children than places because places are used by more than one child; for example, one child may use the service on Monday and Tuesday and another child will use it on Friday and so on.
- (b) It is estimated that the total number of places available in January 2007 will be similar to the number quoted above.
- (2) I am happy to provide that information on notice because of the time required to collect the details.
- (3) The Children and Community Services (Child Care) Regulations 2006 were gazetted on 18 January 2006. As the member will be aware, in the past 10 months the department has worked with childcare services to provide information, advice and support on implementing the regulations. Further information on the regulations for school-aged children in childcare centres will be provided to childcare centre licensees in the near future. I expect to receive that information in the next couple of weeks.

**Dr J.M. Woollard:** I would like a copy please.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am happy to provide that.

- (4) Western Australia employs excellent children's services officers to work with families and services throughout the state to assist families to access child care. I have been very impressed by the quality of the children's services officers. Members in the wheatbelt areas have indicated to me their strong support for the officers who work in the wheatbelt.

**Mr B.J. Grylls interjected.**

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I agree. We need to preface all this with the understanding - the member for Alfred Cove supports this - that the new regulations were introduced with the primary focus on the protection and safety of children and to ensure that the services, activities and facilities provided are appropriate for the age -

**Dr J.M. Woollard:** There may be an increase in fees next year if places are lost. I asked the fourth question specifically to ensure that the government addresses that issue.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am very keen to ensure that we continue to provide quality childcare places for Western Australian children and families. The member can be assured that I will continue to work that way.