

PARENTING INFORMATION CENTRES

**1017. Mr JOHNSON to the Minister for Community Development, Women's Interests, Seniors and Youth:**

I refer the minister to her decision to close the highly successful parenting information centres that are currently located in shopping centres throughout the State.

- (1) Is the minister aware that these centres were described by the Telethon Institute of Child Health Research as visionary, and at the world cutting edge of prevention science?
- (2) Will the minister confirm that her rationale for this decision, as stated in her press release, is that families in need do not frequent shopping centres?
- (3) Is the minister aware that only 23 per cent of Western Australian children who are under three years attend the day child-care centres to which the minister intends to relocate the parenting information centres?

**Ms McHALE replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question. It allows me to explain to the House the rationale and logic behind the decision.

- (1)-(3) The State has about 20 parenting information centres and four models of service delivery. Some are based in shopping centres - primarily in the metropolitan area - some are based in community facilities and in regional and remote areas, and some metropolitan areas are serviced by mobile units.

The dissemination of parenting information is critically important to this Government's agenda. As such, it has decided to reconsider the models through which the information is delivered, and the PICs in shopping centres are to be phased out. It is increasingly apparent that target families - those at most risk or in need - do not necessarily frequent PICs in shopping centres. Different methods must be found to make information more accessible, and the Government has decided to reconfigure the service to achieve that aim. The Department for Community Development will work with local communities through family and child-care centres and community nurses, who have day-to-day contact with many at-risk families. The mobile services will be maintained.

This is a very sound decision based on the need to focus on children up to the age of four. More effective methods must be used. The shopping centre units have not necessarily failed; services are simply being delivered in a way that will increase accessibility. That is the rationale for this very good decision.