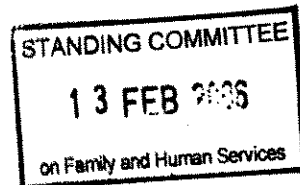




Mr James Catchpole
Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family and Human Servi
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Submission No: 174
AUTHORISED

JK



8 February 2006

RE: Inquiry into Balancing Work and Family

Dear Mr Catchpole,

Please find enclosed a copy of the Australian Association for Families of Children with Disability (AAFCD) pamphlet, along with the most recent edition of the AAFCD bi-monthly newsletter National NoticeBoard, which includes an article on Work/Family Balance on page 4.

AAFCD is a national organisation supporting families of children and young adults with any type of disability across Australia. AAFCD provides a free telephone support service and self-help information to families, as well as advocating for improvements to government policies and raising community awareness of the realities of life for families of children and young adults with a disability.

As outlined in the Work/Family Balance article, one of the big issues for families is the chronic lack of out-of-school hours care, including vacation care. How many employers are happy to hire people who need to take all school holidays off work? How many jobs are there for people who can only work during school hours? Not to mention parents needing time off when a child is too sick to go to school or has medical appointments during school hours.

Many parents of children with a disability would love to have increased opportunities to return to the paid workforce. But for many families this can only occur if there are significant improvements to back-up support through flexible and affordable child care, including the capacity to support parents when children are too sick to go to school.

At a later stage, we would like the opportunity to provide further submissions to your Inquiry on these issues and would welcome any opportunity for further discussion with members of the Standing Committee.

Also enclosed is a copy of the Victorian based Association for Children with a Disability pamphlet and NoticeBoard magazine, along with come back copies of National NoticeBoard which cover issues related to child care and vacation care. Of particular note is the 'Vacation Care Catch 22' article from the March 2004 edition. These issues require particular attention and remain unresolved.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Gourlay

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Michael Gourlay
CEO, Association for Children with a Disability
on behalf of the Australian Association for Families of Children with Disability (AAFCD)