

CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL

Draft LTCCP 2009-19

- Received via Web

Submissions close on 16 April 2009

I do NOT wish to present my submission at the hearing, and ask that this written submission be considered

Are you completing this submission:

For yourself

If you are representing, how many people do you represent?

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15 April 2009

Your Submission:

Issue: Council's proposal to charge community child care centres market rent.

Specific action required: Maintain the current rent subsidy scheme.

Why:

I am a parent of a pre-schooler attending St Albans Educare centre. We have been advised that the Council propose to charge market rent for their sites. I have a number of concerns about this, namely:

1. This organisation makes only a small annual profit sufficient only to cover any emergency repairs or staffing contingencies. Accordingly the only way to make more money to cover rent would be to charge higher fees. This centre offers 20 free hours as well as govt assistance so there are not that many fee paying parents. Accordingly this would lead to staff reductions to reduce costs which is not in the interests of any child or parent.
2. If the Council wants to charge rent it should lobby government for a higher subsidy for the 20 free hours. If the Government saw fit to introduce this initiative then Councils should support it.
3. Community preschools are more affordable and provide a viable option for parents to have time out from young children. Any increase in fees makes this unaffordable. Time out from preschoolers may sound like an indulgence but unless you are looking after them yourself you cannot appreciate the absolute importance of a few hours respite.

4. The staff who work at this type of facility are invaluable to the community. They are not there to get rich they are there because they are committed to looking after young people in our community. If you take away this type of role it is seriously eroding into community spirit. Also these people already run the centre on bare bones it would be such a disservice to them to put financial pressure on top of their already strained roles.

5. Because this type of facility lacks funding they run on the smell of an oily rag and fully utilise the community and its facilities such as parks and libraries. This enhances a symbiotic community relationship and also opens up these facilities to families who would otherwise perhaps be unaware of them.

6. The St Albans Educare building is seriously delapidated. The council have thwarted any obligation to renovate or maintain it and have created illwill in their reluctance to provide assistance. To add insult to injury the proposal to charge more than a token rent is ridiculous.

7. There is a serious shortage of preschool childcare facilities particularly those offering 20 free hours for 3 and 4 year olds. The council should be increasing its role in support of this area of the community not decreasing it. There is a huge waiting list at St Albans Educare which shows the great need for this service. It is unfathomable that the Council would seek to remove its financial rent support.

8. Personally we won't have children at St Albans Educare Centre long enough for this new rent proposal to have any personal impact on our family so I am not writing this submission out of personal gain. I am writing because I am truly committed to the service this facility provides and would be so disappointed if the current council chose to alter the existing rental support currently provided. Our community should be supporting and increasing this type of facility not eroding them into non-existence. I think the Council should be finding a new site for this centre, building a new purpose built centre and leaving the centre to continue to run a first class community service.