

# Media Release



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*For Immediate Release*

## **KU keeps quality affordable: 2011 preschool and childcare fees**

KU Children's Services, Australia's leading not-for-profit provider of early childhood education and care services, has released its fees for 2011.

Fees in KU community based long day care centres are increasing by an average of only \$3.66 per day (5.2%), and fees in KU preschools are increasing by an average of only \$2.77 per day (3.8%). KU already has in place many elements of the National Quality Reforms.

"KU is delighted to have been able to keep our fee increases much lower than many being reported in the media," said Sheridan Dudley, KU's Chief Executive Officer. "We have been able to do this by building on our existing commitment to high quality, and by taking a planned, long term approach to implementing the Reforms."

A key element of the reform agenda is the qualifications of early childhood educators. KU has employed qualified kindergarten teachers since opening Australia's first kindergarten in 1895, and today maintains a policy of employing a university qualified early childhood teacher in every KU centre.

KU is also proud to have already implemented the 1:4 staff to child ratios for babies required by the reforms, having done so over several years to minimise the impact on fees. KU will take the same approach to achieving the 1:5 ratio required for 2 to 3 year olds by implementing it gradually over the coming years. KU has had a 1:10 ratio for 3 to 5 year olds in place for many years.

"Unfortunately many parents, and even some providers, have been lead to believe that the Quality Reforms have to be implemented overnight and that as a result, large and immediate fee increases will need to be passed on to families. However this is simply not the case," Ms Dudley explained. "In fact, some of the new quality standards do not have to be implemented until 2016, so the transition can be managed slowly over time.

"Of course there are costs associated with improvements to quality, which is why Governments and providers must work together to ensure these are not unaffordable.

"If Governments provide financial support, as they are starting to do in relation to employing university qualified teachers and ensuring universal access to preschool in the year before school, and if providers transition to the new standards in a planned way over the coming years, we believe quality can be achieved without making childcare unaffordable for families."

### **ENDS**

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