

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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## **Children can thrive in child care**

There is little doubt in anyone's mind that one-on-one parental care during the early years of a child's life is seen as the ideal option for both the parent and the child. However, psychologists at the Australian Psychological Society (APS) caution parents against panicking that their children will suffer through being in child care.

"The impact of child care on infants' and children's development has been researched and debated a lot through the years. It's a very emotional issue for many parents, who need or want to work, and use child care," said APS President, Amanda Gordon. "The big debate is about how much is too much, and particularly on whether more than 30 hours per week is detrimental in the first year."

Gordon commented that there are strident voices on either side of the argument. "Researchers have found that it is not only the total hours per week in child care, but the quality and consistency of child care that will contribute to the child's development," she said.

"The key focus of concern should not be on the possible adverse effects of child care, but rather on the consequences of not providing high quality care to children. High quality care can even enhance socio-emotional functioning, cognitive abilities and school performance."

"A better way of looking at the problem is to focus on what children need. All children need a secure emotional base, help to solve their problems, encouragement to learn, routines that help them feel in control, firm and loving limits to be safely independent, a trusted adult when they need to be dependent, and protection from trauma. There are many ways in which this can be provided, some of which include quality child care," said Gordon.

"We do support the Government in investigating all aspects of this issue and urge them to develop a sound paid maternity scheme for all mothers that will provide them with the optimum choice of when to return to work."

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*The APS is the largest professional association for psychologists in Australia, representing more than 16,500 members. The APS is committed to advancing psychology as a discipline and profession. It spreads the message that psychologists make a difference to peoples' lives, through improving psychological knowledge and community wellbeing.*

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