

# Home Education Foundation

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## Media Release – Parents Unhappy with Select Committee Report on Social Security Bill

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**Palmerston North, NZ** – The Select Committee’s report on the Social Security (Benefit Categories and Work Focus) Amendment Bill recommends that children of beneficiaries aged 3-4 be compelled to attend an approved Early Childhood Education (ECE) programme for a yet-to-be-determined minimum time per week.

Yet according to the Committee’s report, an “overwhelming number” of submissions on the Bill expressed concern about the Social Obligations, which would force the preschool-aged children of beneficiaries to attend 15 hours’ ECE per week.

The majority of the Committee ignored the substance of these complaints, says Barbara Smith, National Director of the Home Education Foundation.

“The Committee majority recommended that parents should be allowed to home educate their 5-year-olds under the Bill, but does not provide the same home-care option for 3-4-year-olds,” she says.

“This concession will do nothing to make parents happy with the Bill. They want the option to keep their preschool children at home. That’s all. They want to make the best decisions for their children. Many children simply are not ready to be left in a strange environment for any length of time at age 3.”

In addition, the Social Obligations targeting beneficiaries for compulsory health care will remain in the Bill under the Select Committee’s recommendations. “The New Zealand Law Society, in their submission, stated that these obligations were discriminatory because they treated a group of people differently based on employment status,” explains Mrs Smith. “We had hoped that the Select Committee might address that serious flaw in their majority report, but they did not.”

Mrs Smith says that the thousands of parents, grandparents, and young people who made submissions on the discriminatory and coercive Social Obligations will be unhappy and disappointed with the majority’s report.

But the minority views expressed by other parties in the Committee’s Report did speak up for parents facing separation from their young children.

According to the New Zealand Labour Party, “We believe the introduction of social obligations implies that a parent on government support is a poor parent. This is both wrong and unfair.”

New Zealand First said, “The proposed sanctions are dramatic and borderline intrusive in the way beneficiary parents raise children.” They went on to recognise that ECE is inappropriate for some children and families. “We understand that some families prefer home-based education, and in many cases this is more suited to a proportion of children over early childhood education. Many submitters were concerned about the social and emotional effects of separating children from their adult parents before the age of five.”

Mrs Smith says that as the Bill approaches its Second Reading within the next week or two, it's more important than ever for concerned parents to contact their local MPs to encourage them to stand against the bill.

"Ask your MP to vote against the Bill at its Second Reading if the Social Obligations are not removed," she says.

"Call, visit, and write to MPs alerting them to the human rights problems in the bill. Do it today."

More information on the bill can be found at [www.hef.org.nz](http://www.hef.org.nz). A list of contact details for MPs can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/cgyf98a>

### **About the Home Education Foundation**

The Home Education Foundation has been informing parents for 27 years about the fantastic opportunity to de-institutionalise our sons and daughters and to embrace the spiritual, intellectual and academic freedom that is ours for the taking. Through conferences, journals, newsletters and all kinds of personal communications, we explain the vision of handcrafting each child into a unique individual, complete with virtuous character, a hunger for service to others, academic acumen and a strong work ethic. For more information, please visit [www.hef.org.nz](http://www.hef.org.nz) or more specifically [hef.org.nz/2012/make-a-submission-reject-compulsory-early-education-for-3-year-olds/](http://hef.org.nz/2012/make-a-submission-reject-compulsory-early-education-for-3-year-olds/)

### **Contact**

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