

EDUCATION AND CARE

ECU NEWSLETTER

5 September 2022

GENERAL TOPICS

Safety at early childhood education and care (ECEC) services

In response to recent incidents, services and approved providers are encouraged to reflect on their upkeep of safe environments. Services should pay particular attention to having designated storage areas for items that are not in use.

Under the *National Law*, approved providers must ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.

Under the *Child Care Act*, licensed services must provide a safe environment and ensure all reasonable precautions are undertaken.

Premises and equipment should be kept in safe, clean and good repair. There should be sufficient furniture and equipment to simultaneously accommodate all children cared during care.

The [Risk Assessment and Management Tool](#) explains and asks reflective questions to help in your planning.

The [indoor and outdoor learning environment safety checklist](#) helps you make a safety assessment of your

premises and identify hazards and areas to better manage risk.

Extension to the Request for Information (RFI) period – *Working Together 2024: supporting early learning program*

The RFI deadline has now been extended till 2pm, 14 September 2022. The RFI invites eligible ECEC services to express their interest at participating in the Working Together program.

The program provides funding arrangements with partner ECEC services to help Tasmanian children in the pre-Kindergarten cohort experiencing disadvantage and obstacles at engaging with pre-school early learning opportunities.

In response to enquiries, the Department of Education has issued an addendum on 31 August 2022 via the [TasGov eTendering Page](#) which details the process that an ECEC service should take to revise the details of a response that they have already submitted.

Process – Any service interested in changing the details of a RFI response they have submitted should submit a new response with 'new submission' in the file name.

The Department will consider this to be the service's latest response and disregard the service's original response.

If you have enquiries regarding this process, please contact the Department's liaison officer – Dave Whittle on 61 65 5391 or dave.whittle@communities.tas.gov.au.

Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) – Early Childhood Practices

AERO is Australia's evidence and research body on education. It aims to gather and produce reliable and high-quality data that can be used to create strategies at improving learning outcomes for all children and young people.

AERO has recently added content to [their library](#) of practical and evidence-based guidance material for the ECEC sector. These resources are targeted at children between 3 to 5 years and address the following topics:

1. [Family engagement in early learning](#)
2. [Executive function and self-regulation](#)
3. [Early numeracy](#)
4. [Early literacy](#)

Educators can adopt these [tried and tested practices](#) to enhance their skills at developing children's learning and skills in their daily interactions and experiences.

Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework (CYSOF)

The Tasmanian Government is developing a new CYSOF that aims to improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in institutional settings. The CYSOF is based on the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Leaders of organisations that work directly with children and young people are encouraged to take [this short survey](#) to measure their confidence and awareness of child safeguarding in organisations.

The findings of this survey will inform the development of tools and resources for the organisations required to comply with the Framework.

The Tasmanian Government is hosting three online forums about the development of the new legally mandated CYSOF. The CYSOF is expected to apply to a wide range of organisations, including government agencies.

These forums are an opportunity to learn and provide feedback about the proposed legislation to establish the CYSOF. The online forums are free and available across three timeslots.

The forums will take place on:

- [Forum 1](#) - 10am to 12pm on Monday 12 September
- [Forum 2](#) - 3pm to 5pm on Wednesday 14 September
- [Forum 3](#) - 1pm to 3pm on Friday 16 September

Register for any of the three forums in the links above.

You may also get more information through this [link](#).

Changes to the Australian Fire Danger Rating System

The Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) is a collaborative effort across jurisdictions to standardise fire danger nationally and improve accuracy of fire danger predictions.

The AFDRS will be implemented on 1 September 2022. Review your emergency management and policy documents to update references to fire danger ratings.

Read about the changes [here](#) or learn more about the new AFDRS by signing up to their [online training courses](#).

2022 Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Conference Scholarship Recipients

We are pleased to announce that Sarah Bowen and Kristy Gilroy have been selected by the ECA as recipients of the ECU Conference Scholarship program.

We wish them the very best and hope this opportunity enhances their professional development and that they have a fulfilling time at sharing and receiving their experiences.

Family Day Care Australia (FDCA) Conference and Booth

The FDCA Conference will be held at the Hotel Grand Chancellor (Hobart) from 15-17 September. The conference will host a wide range of workshops sessions and keynote speakers covering topics related to the family day care and ECEC sector. View the conference program [here](#). Tickets may be purchased [online](#) with subsidies available for FDCA members.

The ECU has sponsored this event and will be attending a booth (booth #9) at the conference on the 16-17 of September. We look forward to meeting with you in-person.

COVID-19 TOPICS

COVID-19 support extended to June 2023

The Australian Government will extend the following COVID-19 measures for the ECEC sector until 30 June 2023:

Absences

Families are eligible for at least 52 absences in the financial year with an option to request for more. The exceptions to the 'absences before and after care rule' have also been

extended for enrolments that start or end between 1 December 2021 and 30 June 2023.

Visit this AGDoE [link](#) for further information about proof of absence and other allowances.

Gap fees

Until 30 June 2023, you can waive the gap fee and continue to receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) if a child is unable to attend care for one of three reasons listed on the [AGDoE website](#).

Where you can find more information:

Services are advised to contact the Public Health Clinical Nurse Consultant (CNC) to obtain service-specific COVID-19 advice.

- The CNC can be reached via email at covid.response@health.tas.gov.au or on mobile phone at 0467 960 114.

The ECU will continue to share relevant information from Public Health to the sector without providing health advice.

The CNC should only be contacted by services. The general Public Health Hotline remains available to others outside the sector.

The [Resources for living with and managing COVID-19 in ECEC services](#) page contains guidance and information on responding to COVID-19 related matters as we move towards living with COVID-19.

The [FAQs on ECU website](#) are frequently updated with the latest information.

Contact details

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