



EDUCATION AND CARE

ECU NEWSLETTER

14 December 2022

GENERAL TOPICS

COVID-19 Notification Requirement – 2023 Guidelines

The ECU has reviewed COVID-19 notification requirements to ensure continued compliance with section 174(2)(c) of the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* as required by regulation 175(2)(c) of the National Regulations.

The ECU has consulted with Public Health in determining the threshold for what constitutes *circumstances arising at the service that pose a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child attending the service* (reg 175(2)(c)).

To balance our aim of reducing regulatory burden of notifications regarding positive COVID-19 cases to the ECU, and meeting regulatory requirements, **from 1 January 2023 the following guidelines will be applied.**

Notifications are required when a service has cases in 20% or more children and/or educators **in a group** confirmed within the 48 hours of their last attendance at the service in a 7-day period.

A group is considered to be where the children spend the majority of their day.

For example, if the service is vertically grouped in one room, the group would be all educators and children at the service. If a service has five rooms and indoor space is not shared the **majority** of the time, it would

be 20% or more of the educators and children in that room.

The ECU understands that some services family group at the beginning and end of day to assist with staffing. This guidance is based on where the children spend the majority of their day and therefore it isn't impacted if they have had a visit to another room for an hour for transitions or to visit a sibling.

The 20% or more room calculation is intended to be used for indoor grouping only and doesn't apply if children share an outdoor environment.

In FDC the threshold for reporting positive COVID-19 cases is 50% or more children and/or educator per family day care premise in a 7-day period.

Changes to Assessment and Rating in 2023

The ECU are implementing several changes to our Assessment and Rating (A&R) processes in 2023 in line with a revised national approach.

The changes include:

- A reduced notice period of 1 to 5 days for most A&R visits from late March 2023.
- From January 2023, an increased use of partial reassessments for services with a current quality rating under the 2018 National Quality Standard (NQS). Services with a 2012 NQS rating, new services that are Not Yet Assessed and those who have gone through a provider change since their last A&R will still undergo a full assessment against the NQS.

These changes seek to make quality assessment and rating more effective.

ACECQA has released an [information sheet](#) which was developed in collaboration with all governments and it includes further details about these changes.

The ECU will also share additional information about what these changes will look like in Tasmania, in early 2023.

Sun protection in outdoor spaces

Under the *National Law*, an approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place in relation to sun protection and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed.

Good quality shade can reduce overall exposure to the sun's UV. When combined with appropriate clothing, hats and sunscreen, children can be well protected from UV outdoors.

Each service is different, and services need to contextualise policies and procedures to reflect their situation. Things to consider include:

- Shade can be natural (such as that from a tree with a dense canopy), built (like a veranda or pergola) or temporary (such as umbrellas, tent or canvas).
- Rough, uneven surfaces (like grass, pine bark or soil) reflect less UV than smooth, shiny, light-coloured surfaces (such as concrete, glass, sand or water).
- Some materials used in the outdoor environment conduct heat, and without shade or appropriate risk management can cause serious burns to children's skin. For example, metals, dark colour fall absorption materials and synthetic grass have been known to cause burns.
- Excursions can present different sun exposure risks, so it is important that sun protection is considered as part of excursion risk assessments.

The following may provide useful guidance and tips:

- [Sun protection policy guidelines – ACECQA \(PDF, 245KB\)](#)
- [Fact sheet on sun safety in child care - ACECQA \(startingblocks.gov.au\)](#)
- [Protecting children from burns and scalds in the playground \(kidsafensw.org\)](#)
- [Guidance sheet on providing a child safe environment \(acecqa.gov.au\)](#)
- [SunSmart Resources - SunSmart \(sunsmartnsw.com.au\)](#)
- [Primary school and early childhood resources - Cancer Council \(cancer.org.au\)](#)
- [How to protect your baby from sun exposure \(kidsafeqld.com.au\)](#)
- [General resources and fact sheets \(kidsafewa.com.au\)](#)

Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) – guide for engaging with families of children with disability

AERO has published a [guide for engaging with families of children with disability \(PDF, 1MB\)](#).

The guide provides strategies for engaging with families of children with disability, elaborating on the approaches outlined in AERO's [family engagement practice guide for early learning \(PDF, 209KB\)](#).

Family engagement is important throughout early childhood education and care. There is significant evidence that families play a critical role in their child's learning and development.

You can find further information and resources on the [AERO website](#).

Aboriginal Education Services – 2023 Professional Learning

The team at Aboriginal Education Services (AES) is looking forward to presenting a number of professional learning opportunities in 2023. While some programs may have a school focus, the knowledge imparted is transferrable to the ECEC setting.

- Explore Sea Country

- Welcomes to Country and Acknowledgements of Country
- Truth Telling in Your Teaching
- Leading 'From Gumnuts to Buttons' with your class
- Tasmanian Aboriginal Communities Today
- Aboriginal resources in your school – getting it right

Follow [this link](#) for more details and links to enrol.

There are further online resources that assist the teaching of Tasmanian Aboriginal histories and cultures at [The Orb website](#).

Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy (CYWS) – Annual Report and First 1000 Days Data Snapshot

The first [Annual Report \(PDF 8,258KB\)](#) for the CYWS has now been released.

The report provides genuine stories and case studies to showcase what has been achieved in the last 12 months, and how these achievements are having a positive impact on Tasmanian children, young people and their families.

A [First 1000 Days Data Snapshot](#) has also been released which provides an overview of selected data.

Find more information at the [CYWS website \(wellbeing.tas.gov.au\)](#).

COVID-19 TOPICS

COVID-19 Risk Level in Tasmania raised to MODERATE

On 25 November 2022, Tasmania raised the official COVID-19 Risk Level to MODERATE as the State continues to experience increases in COVID-19 cases.

This means COVID-19 is circulating widely in our community and we need to do more than the everyday [COVID-Safe behaviours](#) to manage the risk.

Public Health recommends, that as identified priority settings, education and care services should be aware of the increased risk and consider their escalation plans within the framework of their Work Health and Safety Plans.

Additional risk mitigation strategies that might be implemented include:

- Ensuring staff and children who are unwell stay home and get tested.
- Ensuring appropriate hygiene measures on site and considering masks.
- Identifying children and staff at higher risk of severe disease and considering additional measures for them.

The factsheet [Best Practice in Early Childhood Education and Care Services \(PDF, 77KB\)](#) remains a useful resource for guidance.

Further general advice about risk mitigation and an explanation of COVID-19 Risk Levels can be found at [Managing the current COVID-19 risk | Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#).

Where you can find more information

Comprehensive up-to-date guidance can be found on the [Coronavirus website \(coronavirus.tas.gov.au\)](#).

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

Contact details

Education and Care Unit

Department for Education, Children and Young People

GPO Box 169

Hobart Tasmania 7001

Email: ecu.comment@decyp.tas.gov.au

Phone: (03) 6165 5425

Web: www.educationandcare.tas.gov.au