

EDUCATION AND CARE

ECU NEWSLETTER

2 August 2022

GENERAL TOPICS

Processing of Notifications and Applications

The ECU will trial a new approach to streamline our review and approval process. Notifications and applications you submit will be allocated to our Authorised Officers (AOs). Allocations will be made based on when we have received your submission rather than being automatically allocated to your point-of-contact (POC) officer.

Any of our AOs may contact you asking for further information or additional documents in relation to your submission. This process aims to spread workload more evenly between our staff and improve our response time.

We recommend your submissions contain sufficient detail with supporting documentation. This will help our AOs make an assessment quickly.

For example, a serious incident notification involving an injury to a child will require details:

- about the equipment involved,
- on supervision practices implemented during the incident such as:
 - the location of the closest educator, and
 - the activity leading up to the injury.

Your POC Officer is available to answer your queries and will continue to conduct monitoring visits at your service.

Changes to Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

CCS rates will [increase](#) from 1 July 2022 to account for adjustments in the Consumer Price Index. Find out how combined families can get the Higher CCS.

Refer to these [Australian Government Department of Education](#) ('AGDoE' previously 'AGDESE') and [Services Australia](#) links for further details

'I CAN READ!' Workshop

This workshop explores methods at actively developing children's reading ability from a reading identity perspective. This workshop explores several ways to create opportunities for children to:

- use their agency as readers,
- meaningfully engage with texts in their play,
- see themselves as readers and build a strong disposition to engage with texts, and
- develop strategies for meaning making and oral language composition with texts.

Learn more about the course [here](#) or [email](#) the event organisers. The workshop will be conducted on Saturday 13 August 2022 9:30am - 3:00pm at the Sustainability Learning Centre 50 Olinda Grove, Mount Nelson, TAS 7007.

Make a booking through this [link](#).

Early Years Forum

The Early Years forum is jointly organised by Early Childhood Australia (Tas Branch) and B4 Early Years.

This year's forum is titled '*2022 Early Learning Doesn't Happen on its own - It take a Tasmanian Village*'.

The forum will be held Saturday, 20th Aug 2022, 8:30am - 4:00pm – AEST at the Blundstone Arena 15 Derwent St, Bellerive TAS 7018.

Book your tickets [here](#).

Find out more about the program details by contacting ECA (Tas) at (03) 6225 3954 or by email at: ecatas@earlychildhood.org.au

Mental Health Week

This year's Mental Health Week is titled '*Awareness, Belonging, Connection*'. The Grants Program aims to help community organisations celebrate Mental Health Week (8-16 October). All services and communities are invited to hold events and activities to celebrate the week and raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing.

The 2022 Mental Health Week Small Grants Round opened on 27 June and closed at 4:00pm, 27 July 2022. Get more details on the event and apply [here](#).

The Grants Program is only for not-for-profit organisations.

COVID-19 TOPICS

Post-emergency declaration advice

Since 1 July 2022, the Public Health (PH) Emergency Declaration in relation to COVID-19 in Tasmania is no longer in effect.

To assist you in this transition, PH has developed several best practice guidelines available [here](#).

These factsheets have direct relevance to our sector:

- [Management of COVID-19 after the Public Health Emergency](#) – this provides a summary of what will continue and what will be changing.
- [Best Practice for Vaccination](#) – this guidance note contains important information about conditions employers must meet if they wish to require COVID-19 vaccination at their workplace.
- The [Best Practice Facemasks](#) guidance note outlines when facemasks are recommended and why they are important.
- [Best Practice for Early Childhood sector](#) – specifically for the ECEC sector and provides a summary of what COVID-19 requirements will remain in place with tips on how to continue using your COVID-19 safety plans.

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](#).

COVID-19 FAQs

The following FAQs have been updated to align with current advice from Public Health:

- [If a child is a close contact, must they undergo testing?](#)
- [How long will the vaccination mandate be in place for?](#)

- [Do educators in an early childhood education and care setting need to wear masks?](#)
- [Where do I go for information about pandemic plans?](#)
- [Can unvaccinated ECEC staff members return to work in the ECEC sector under the same circumstances prior to the vaccination mandates in place?](#)
- [Who is responsible for notifying Public Health of a child's positive test?](#)
- [What must a service do if staff/children who were at their facility \(including within the last 48 hours\) test positive?](#)
- [If a child is a close contact, must they undergo testing?](#)
- [What are the isolation/quarantine requirements for close contacts?](#)

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

Public Health's emails and phone lines will be monitored at the following times:

- 8am to 8pm on weekdays
- 8am to 5pm on weekends
- After 5pm, the CNC mobile will be monitored by an on-call CNC.

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

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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