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| Children's Education and Care Assurance |
| 1 April 2020**COVID-19 information to support ACT education and care services** **Collaboration across education and care settings during pupil free days**CECA would like to congratulate education and care providers, service leaders and schools on the work they have recently put in place to establish ongoing arrangements over the pupil free period for children and families. The Education Directorate is currently developing options to meet the needs of children, families and the essential services workforce in response to the evolving situation of COVID-19. More information will be distributed when it becomes available.Providers and service staff should continue to communicate with the school/s they provide services for wherever possible. However please do not engage with schools about alternative education and care arrangements. Alternative arrangements may contribute to the establishment of unregulated and unauthorised education and care programs within schools.**Use of playground equipment in approved education and care settings**As you will be aware the Government has imposed further restrictions and social distancing requirements. These further restrictions include the closure of playgrounds to the public. Please note that education and care services can continue to use playgrounds and equipment within their approved education and care space. If you have any questions, about playground equipment located at an ACT Government school please contact the ACT Education Directorate’s Strategic Finance team by email EDUStrategicProcurement@act.gov.au or phone: (02) 6205 9811.**Keeping up to date with Commonwealth Government support** Like many sectors, COVID 19 poses significant challenges to the financial viability of education and care services. To assist education and care services to remain viable and operational during this challenging period, the Australian Government is making a range of provisions to support the sector. The Commonwealth Government is continuing to pay Child Care Subsidies (CCS) to services that are able to remain open with children enrolled. More information about CCS can be found at: <https://www.dese.gov.au/news/coronavirus-covid-19> The Commonwealth Government’s Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) Special Circumstances Grant Opportunity is also available. Grants are available for ECEC providers experiencing financial viability issues as a result of COVID-19, for example, withdrawals of children, reduced enrolments or service closures. More information about the CCCF Special Circumstances Grant Opportunity can be found at:<https://www.education.gov.au/cccfspecialcircs> You may also be eligible for other forms of business support offered by the Commonwealth Government. Some of these provisions are specifically designed to help businesses and not-for-profit organisations to support their staff through the COVID 19 health crisis. This includes JobKeeper payments (wage subsidies), boosting cashflows for employers, and temporary relief for financially distressed businesses. More information about these provisions can be found at:<https://treasury.gov.au/coronavirus/businesses> 25 March 2020**COVID-19 information for ACT education and care Services** The Australian Government announced new measures to combat the spread of COVID – 19 last night. You can find further details of these at the link below.<https://www.australia.gov.au/>The position for schools and education and care services remains unchanged. Minister for Early Childhood and Education Yvette Berry posted this video on her [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/YvetteSBerry/) page yesterday to clarify the current arrangements. At this time although pupil free days have been introduced at ACT schools to allow teachers time to plan for alternative methods of delivering education to children. Schools remain open and continue to provide services for children whose parents are working in essential services or where parents have been unable to make alternative arrangements. The advice from ACT Health remains that it is safe for schools and education and care services to remain open but that increased hygiene practices and social distancing should be applied.     This means that changes in the way activities are offered, for example managing risks by reducing the size of groups, maintaining contact with families by phone and use of technology. Education and care services can access factsheets to support daily practice that can assist with hygiene and physical distancing strategies. To find out more visit the [Education Directorate website](https://www.education.act.gov.au/early-childhood/information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-for-early-childhood). For enquires in relation to this notification please call CECA on (02) 6207 1114 or email CECA@ACT.gov.au.This email has been authorised by the ACT Regulatory Authority (CECA). CECA are responsible for administering the National Quality Framework within the ACT. |

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