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| Children's Education and Care Assurance Alert | | |

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| *The Children’s Education and Care Assurance Update links professionals, providers and educators with news, resources and information that supports quality outcomes for children in ACT education and care services*  December 2020  **Education and Care Services Closures**  Under the [Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations/national-regulations) ECEC services are required to notify CECA of any operational changes.  Any ECEC service planning to be closed for a period of time between December 2020 and January 2021 will need to submit a notification using the [National Quality Agenda IT System](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/national-quality-agenda-it-system). ***Services are reminded to complete this notification by COB today.***  Services should complete a **SA12 Notification of Change of Information About an Approved Service** form to ensure that Children’s Education and Care Assurance have been notified. Closure dates will need to be included in the **Change Description** section of this form. When completing this form please **do not** alter the **Operational Hours Details** section of this form.  **Emergency Contact update**  A reminder to all Services and Providers to ensure their primary contact and after-hours emergency numbers have been updated in the National Quality Agenda IT System. These numbers will be provided to the Emergency Services Agency (ESA) in the event of a local emergency or to provide precautionary advice.  **Prepare your service for summer heat, bushfires and thunderstorm asthma season**  With the commencement of summer, bushfires and thunderstorm asthma, providers, nominated supervisors and their teams should consider reviewing their emergency and evacuation management policies and procedures.  An emergency can be an incident, situation or event where there is an imminent or severe risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of children or other persons at a service. Examples of emergencies include floods, bushfires, extreme heat or situations which require a service to be locked down. All reasonable precautions must be taken to protect anyone at the service during an emergency.  Early childhood education and care services are required to have policies and procedures in relation to emergencies and evacuations. See [Regulation 97](http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653/chap4/part4.2/div5) and [Regulations 168 to 172](https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653/chap4/part4.7/div2/reg168).  A copy of the service’s emergency and evacuation policy and procedures must be available at the service premises, family day care residence or venue at all times or on request.  **Preparing Emergency and Evacuation Procedures**  Providers must conduct a risk assessment to identify potential emergencies that may impact on their service. Emergency and evacuation procedures must include:   * Instructions for what to do in the event of an emergency * An emergency and evacuation floor plan * Emergency evacuation floor plans are required to be prominently displayed near each exit of an early childhood education and care service’s premises, family day care residence and family day care venue.   **When preparing your service’s emergency management policy and procedures, consider:**   * Consulting and keep up to date with relevant authorities for guidance and advice. For example, ACT Fire and Rescue ,Emergency Services and ACT Health on the management of bushfire risk and emergencies. * Identifying circumstances when decisions could be made to close the service and how closures will be communicated and managed. * The approaches of other nearby facilities when developing your procedures for specific emergencies * Checking that your emergency contact details are up-to-date in your procedures and plans. * An important step is to ensure that provider and services contact details are kept up to date by using the [National Quality Agenda IT System](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/national-quality-agenda-it-system).   A group of people walking down the street  Description automatically generated  **Rehearsal of Emergency and Evacuation Procedures**  Services are required to regularly rehearse their emergency and evacuation procedures  ([Regulation 97](http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653/chap4/part4.2/div5))  **Centre-based services must**:  Conduct a rehearsal every 3 months of both emergency and evacuations. These must be documented and involve everyone who is present at the service at the time of the rehearsals. This includes all staff members, volunteers, parents and children and the responsible person in relation to service who is present at the time of the rehearsal.  **Family day care services must:**  Conduct a rehearsal every 3 months of both emergency and evacuations. These must be documented and involve the family day care educator; parents and the children being educated by the family day care educator on the day of the rehearsal.  Services must keep a documented record of each rehearsal.  **Supporting effective supervision and transitions**  At the beginning of the new year, many children experience multiple transitions between education and care settings and their community. Implementing effective supervision during these busy times will assist educators to provide safe and secure environments for children. CECA encourage providers, service leaders and educators to work together and prioritise regular assessment and continuously improvement of transitions and supervision strategies.  Supervision strategies should be adjusted to:  •             Consider the design and arrangement of children’s environments  •             Reduce or prevent injury; and  •             Make decisions about when children’s play needs to be interrupted or redirected  •             Ensure there are effective transitions of children between services types and schools  The [Education and Care Services National Law](https://campaign.acecqa.gov.au/t/i-l-pjrdrll-jllkkkiiud-n/) requires that children must be adequately supervised at all times (s165). Providers and nominated supervisors need to be aware that simply meeting the minimum staffing ratio requirements set out in [Education and Care Services National Regulations](http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/maintop/view/inforce/subordleg+653+2011+cd+0+N) will not guarantee that all children are being adequately supervised at all times. Providers, nominated supervisors, co-ordinators and educators have an obligation to ensure that adequate supervision of children who are being educated and cared for both at the service and on excursions are maintained at all times.  Effective and adequate supervision prevents and reduces accidents and incidents through early detection of potential hazards and an awareness of children and their activities. For more information please read [ACECQA's Active Supervision Information Sheet](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/search?s=Active+supervision). Additional resources about effective transitions are available on the [Be You website](https://beyou.edu.au/fact-sheets/development/transitions) and in [Continuity of Learning: a resource to support effective transition to school and school age care](https://docs.education.gov.au/documents/continuity-learning-resource-support-effective-transition-school-and-school-age-care) document.  **Early Childhood Degree Scholarship Program**  The Early Childhood Policy and Regulation Branch of the ACT Education Directorate is committed to increasing the number and profile of degree-qualified educators in the ACT.  The 2021 Early Childhood Degree Scholarship Program has commenced. This Program will provide up to eight (8) individuals who are working in the ACT non-government education and care sector financial assistance to gain an approved early childhood degree qualification.  The 2021 Early Childhood Degree Scholarship Program offers:   * Funding of up to $25,000 per scholarship, for full time or part time study * Encouragement to Employers to contribute to the funding, enabling higher numbers of scholarships to be offered * Funding to employers to backfill staff while they are on study placement * Funding to employers for students to attend a four-week placement in CECA in their final year of study and * Early Childhood Degree Scholarship Program Deed between student, employer, and ACT Government.   Applications close on **31 January 2021**.  To request a 2021 Early Childhood Degree Scholarship Program information pack please email Children's Education and Care Assurance at [CECA@act.gov.au](mailto:CECA@act.gov.au) or call +61 2 6207 1114.  **CECA Staffing Update**  Early Childhood Policy & Regulation has had some changes within the Management Team, please see below updated Management Team list for your information.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Executive Branch Manager – Early Childhood Policy & Regulation | Sean Moysey | | Senior Director – Early Childhood Policy & Regulation | Clare Brookes | | Director – Quality Assurance and Audit | Jo Williams | | Assistant Director – Policy & Coordination | Leah Partridge | | Acting Assistant Director – Educate & Inform | Tamara Mico | | Assistant Director – Investigation Team | Janine Fairburn | | Assistant Director – Audit and Rick Management Team | Delphine Coutin  Jane MacCulloch | | Assistant Director – Quality Assurance Team | Wendy McDuff  Jessica Annerley | | For enquiries please call CECA on 6207 1114 or email [CECA@ACT.gov.au](mailto:CECA@ACT.gov.au). | |   **CECA Operational Hours 25 December 2020 - 3 January 2021 (inclusive)**  The CECA office will be closed between 25 December 2020 to 3 January 2021 (inclusive). CECA will be operating with reduced staffing from 21 December 2020 to 10 January 2021. During this time, Service and Provider approvals, waiver and other applications will be will not be processed. CECA will resume normal operations from 11 January 2021.  For urgent matters requiring CECA’s assistance during this period please contact Clare Brookes Senior Director, Early Childhood Policy and Regulation on 6205 0615 and leave a message including your contact details. Messages will be monitored regularly.  Please note that notifications can continue to be submitted using the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQAITS) and CECA will respond to these from 4 January 2020.  The CECA team acknowledges the ACT education and care community’s great efforts in maintaining services to children and families over a very challenging year. We wish you all a relaxing and safe break and look forward to working with you in 2021.  **[Are Muslims Behind the Happy Holidays vs. Merry Christmas Debate? | About  Islam](https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Faboutislam.net%2Freading-islam%2Funderstanding-islam%2Fare-muslims-behind-the-happy-holidays-vs-merry-christmas-debate%2F&psig=AOvVaw3tLjMD551Fa-TX89Oi6HSu&ust=1607735394339000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAIQjRxqFwoTCLC6t5vfxO0CFQAAAAAdAAAAABAj)**  For enquires in relation to this notification please call CECA on (02) 6207 1114 or email [CECA@ACT.gov.au](mailto: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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