

MEDIA RELEASE – 20 SEPTEMBER 2019

NSW EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS MUST CONDUCT CRITICAL REFLECTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE BEFORE TEACHING CHILDREN

In light of today's National School Strike for Climate, the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW urges all NSW early childhood educators to conduct critical reflection on climate change before sharing related information to children aged 0-5 years old.

ACA NSW was this week approached with a story of a Sydney-based educator presenting to a group of children aged under 5 years old of a picture of a distressed polar bear on a floating and small iceberg.

In partnership with parents, NSW-based educators and teachers in early childhood education and care services already pride themselves with the on-going responsibility of helping children to understand their environment, sustainability as well as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and how children could respond as part of their rich educational programmes.

“Notwithstanding, educators and teachers must conduct critical reflection and anticipate the abilities of every child in their care and consider whether it is appropriate and whether their children could successfully absorb what are complex and disturbing information about climate change for them,” said Mr Chiang Lim, CEO of ACA NSW.

The incidence of childhood anxiety is already alarming. [Beyond Blue reports](#) that in the past 12 months:

- 6.9% of children aged 4 to 17 years in Australia suffered from an anxiety disorder;
- 14.3% of children aged 4 to 17 years experienced a mental health condition; and
- 13.9% of children aged 4 to 17 years met the criteria for a diagnosis of a mental disorder.

“All early childhood education and care services have a primary responsibility to ensure the well-being of all children in their care, especially those children who could become more anxious and in distress about the confronting aspects of climate change,” said Mr Lim.

Climate change is not a formal component of any educational curriculum related to the Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Framework.

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Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW (www.nsw.childcarealliance.org.au) is the peak body for privately owned early childhood education and care services in NSW, numbering approximately 1,600 childcare services, employing over 25,000 staff and supporting over 125,000 families. ACA NSW provides advocacy, policy and regulatory and business support and advice, member services and professional development for members and their staff across the state.

**For further media inquiries, please contact
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