

SPRING 2019

the nurture nook

Educator Spotlight

*Jessica McKinnon from
Jacaranda Cottage*

Australian Tax Office & Fair Work

*Changes to wage payments
and entitlements*

Quickies dates for 2020

*From 14 to now 39 sessions to
meet sector demand*

WHAT WILL THE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES BE IN 2020?

NQF, CCS/ACCS, Preschool Funding, NCC, etc.



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What a year 2019 has been!

I cannot believe we are staring at the tail end of 2019 already! But you know what, 2019 has been a massive year for members of the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW.

With two elections under our belt, we bid farewell to Kate Washington MP as the outgoing NSW Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education, and welcomed back Jodie Harrison MP as our returning NSW Minister for Early Childhood Education. The transition has so far been very good, and we look forward to working with Ms Harrison.

We also saw a number of new faces especially in the crossbenches at the NSW Parliament's Upper House.

Overall, our discussions with the NSW Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning (the Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC) and the Berejiklian Government has continued to be active and energetic.

CCS Legislative Amendment

With thanks to our national colleagues, the Australian Childcare Alliance had a significant influence over the first legislative amendment to the Commonwealth's Child Care Subsidy.

The Federal Government will be increasing the number of weeks from 8 to 14 before an enrolment ceases due to non-attendance which will dramatically reduce the administrative burden on families and service providers. This will be particularly beneficial for children who only utilise vacation care.

The government will also be refining absence provisions via Minister's Rules which support payment of CCS when a child is absent at the beginning or end of their enrolment. It is hoped that the Rules, once developed, allow for circumstances beyond a parent's control which can result in CCS not being paid such as illness, public holidays and the sale/transfer of an early learning service, as well as allowing families to provide adequate notice to their service provider.

The removal of the 50% limit on the issuing of Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) (Child Wellbeing) certificates will also support better access for our most vulnerable children.

However, the Federal Government still has not addressed

- The continuing removal of CCS contributions from services' bank accounts after education and care have been given;
- The arguably excessive limitations of the activity tests on certain families;
- How the annual increases in the CCS Hourly Rate are not in sync with the true costs of service providers;
- The non-extension of the activity test so as to allow two years of preschool instead of one; and
- Why there is a continuation of CCS back payments to parents and not services ...

just to name a few

OSHC changes in 2021 further clarified?

ACA NSW was the only peak body who attended the NSW Budget Estimates sessions where the NSW Coalition Government clarified their intentions for Out-of-School-Hours-Care (OSHC) in 2021.

Rather than the NSW Coalition's election promise that all public primary schools would offer OSHC services, NSW Minister Mitchell clarified that it would now be offered where there is demand.

ACA NSW has offered assistance to Minister Mitchell to help the NSW Government development an appropriate implementation that would satisfy children and their families without negatively impacting on existing services.

Review of the NQF

With Phase 2 underway (ie governments develop options following consultation), ACA NSW is anticipating that the governments' options will be released in early 2020 for further consultation. According the official timeline, the implementation of agreed changes will not occur until 2021-2022.

Arguably the greatest issue is how NSW services are being assessed and rated by the NSW Department of Education. And there is evidence to suggest that NSW services are being assessed and rated differently from other states' services. This in turn creates even more confusion and frustrations, and a significant plunge of confidence to ever be promoted to parents.

The other significant issue is the proposal to introduce and increase fees, fines and penalties in order to fund the financial shortfall that was once the responsibility of the Federal Government. Without true transparency and proper and quantifiable definitions of what are breaches and non-compliances, ACA NSW fears that services will experience an increase in fees, fines and penalties and that we may rightly or wrongly conclude the government's efforts as revenue raising.

2019 Excellence in Early Childhood Education Awards

Following the streamlining of the nominations process and the information webinars, ACA NSW has had the privilege of having the problem of over 80 people on the waitlist wanting to join the over 480-guests at the Awards Gala Night on 26 October 2019!

The successive growth, significant popularity and value recognition of the Excellence of Early Childhood Education Awards means we will be sad to be at the Shangri-La Hotel for the last time, and will decant to a much larger ballroom for 2020.

On behalf of the elected ACA NSW Executive Committee, I thank you for allowing us to serve all ACA NSW members and we look forward to another even more amazing year in 2020 for the benefit of the children and families under their care.

Lyn Connolly, President
Australian Childcare Alliance NSW

Ready for 2020? We Are!



Just over three years ago when I was appointed as the next CEO of the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW, the then NSW Executive Committee had tasked me to do fundamentally two things – to re-position ACA NSW to be more assertive with governments, and to re-build ACA NSW in terms of revenue generation, operations and engagement with members and non-members.

Today, ACA NSW has a reputation for being on the right side of history – calling on governments to take new paths for the good of the children, their families and the sector. In three years, I strongly believe ACA NSW had a significant influence over the third extension of Regulation 242, sector-wide concerns over NSW's assessment and rating process, a new dialogue with the Federal Government about childcare oversupply, fixing immunisation loopholes, a re-examination of the Start Strong funding in NSW, and more.

Those advocacies and those that are still ongoing could not have been possible without the assistance and support of the 11 ACA NSW Executive Committee members and our colleagues at the ACA National Committee.

Membership Has Their Privileges

ACA NSW will always provide preferential and significantly superior treatment to our financial members. Within three years, we and our ACA colleagues have:

- Initiated arguably the best vocation-ready registered training organisation in Early Education and Care College (www.eecc.com.au) offering superior Certificate III and Diploma graduates;
- Co-created the Guild Early Learning workers compensation scheme that now has the #1 market share by providing competitive premiums, dedicated account management, free work health and safety compliance toolkit and superior return-to-work processes;
- A free human resources toolkit through

ChildHR to ensure onboarding compliance;

- A free electricity cost comparison already saving members between \$481 and \$16,700 per year;
- Held 29 Network Meetings (21 via face-to-face and 8 via live webinars); and
- A jury duty assistance process that has a 92% success rate ...

... just to name a few.

Spectacular Events

Our 2019 Excellence in Early Childhood Education Awards has been the most well received with a 47.6% increase in the number of nominations and 55.6% increase in the number of participating services! This has even created a waiting list of over 80 people wanting to attend the Awards Gala Night on Saturday, 26 October 2019 but the Shangri-La Hotel (The Rocks, Sydney) has a maximum capacity of 450! A really challenging problem to have.

ACA NSW's Wheels on the Bus Tours has consistently been sold out since 2018. With four tours a year, 57 participants per tour get to visit three vastly different yet all rated Exceeding services to gain an insight and inspiration from those amazing services. After each visit, an educational and operational debrief is conducted on the bus as up to 57 approved providers, centre directors, educators and teachers contemplate how their respective services can be advanced and enriched.

Quickies are the ultimate way to get trained!

In 2019, ACA NSW introduced 14 approved-provider-centric training sessions and was so pleased with its popularity and demand. Hence in 2020, we will expand our Quickies to 37 sessions encompassing the following subject areas:

- Help with the NSW Service Providers' Approval Process
- Managing and Maximising Staff Performance ... LEGALLY
- Multiplying success after your first service

- Flipping Child Care Centres (turning underperforming services into successes)
- Creating the best possible QIP under the "new" A&R
- Secrets of the "new" A&R
- How to ensure you are ready for a spotcheck/compliance visit
- How to create best-in-class priorities and documentation
- How to design successful early childhood education and care centres

In the new year, ACA NSW will also launch its Webinar-on-Demand only series.

What to expect in 2020 ...

In 2020, we face the convergence of a number of challenges:

- What changes will the governments recommend as part of their Review of the NQF
- What will the Fair Work Commission's decision be in respect to the unions' applications to increase teachers pay by up to 59% and educators pay by up to 72%
- What improvements can we have with CCS and ACCS
- Could preschool funding for children in long daycare setting be increased to those comparable in other Australian states
- Will there be more assistance with the labour shortages especially with early childhood teachers
- How can the governments help with childcare oversupply

Whatever happens in 2020, ACA NSW and our interstate colleagues will be there advocating for approved providers and their services for the benefit of the children and families under their care.

Chiang Lim, CEO
Australian Childcare Alliance NSW

Is your membership about to expire?

ACA NSW CALENDAR OF EVENTS OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2019

OCTOBER

02 OCTOBER 2019
ACA NSW QUICKIES
HELP WITH NSW'S
SERVICE PROVIDER
APPROVAL PROCESS

08 OCTOBER 2019
ACA NSW WEBINAR FOR
AGM CANDIDATES

11 OCTOBER 2019
ACA NSW WEBINAR FOR
AGM CANDIDATES

14 OCTOBER 2019
ACA NSW
NETWORK MEETING
(WEBINAR)

21 OCTOBER 2019
ACA NSW BLACKTOWN
NETWORK MEETING

26 OCTOBER 2019
EXCELLENCE IN EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
AWARDS 2019

28 OCTOBER 2019
CORPORATE GOVERNANCE
TRAINING FOR
AGM CANDIDATES

NOVEMBER

01 NOVEMBER 2019
ACA NSW QUICKIES
CREATING THE BEST QIP
FOR THE "NEW" NQF

09 NOVEMBER 2019
WHEELS ON THE BUS
TOUR

11 NOVEMBER 2019
ACA NSW NETWORK
MEETING (WEBINAR)

11 NOVEMBER 2019
ACA NSW
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

25 NOVEMBER 2019
ACA NSW
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING

DECEMBER

23 DECEMBER 2019
ACA NSW OFFICE
CLOSED UNTIL
6 JANUARY 2020

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A LETTER FROM The Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC

NSW Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning

It is hard to believe that another quarter of the year has passed since my last Nurture Nook submission. I have been very busy this year in the Early Childhood Learning space, and remain passionate about ensuring every child – no matter where they are from – has access to a quality education in the years before school.

Since my last submission, in acknowledgement of the fact that our regional communities are still struggling through the most relentless drought on record, the NSW Government has expanded the Drought Relief Program to Long Day Care Centres in drought-ravaged areas across the State. Eligible services can use this funding for initiatives like fee reduction, arranging alternative transport options for children and families to maintain attendance and professional development to ensure services are prepared should these adverse conditions occur again. This initiative was well received when we announced it and I very much look forward to seeing the rollout of this extra help.

The NSW Government continues to invest more in early childhood education than ever before. In 2010-11 the budget, under Labor, was \$212 million. In the 2018-19 Budget, the Liberals & Nationals invested \$474 million. This year, we have increased that investment again with \$526.7 million allocated in 2019-20, a net increase of \$52.4 million.

This boost in funding means we can not only fund our existing Start Strong program, but also expand to support other areas of need.

Some of the budget pieces I'm most passionate about include our new Start Strong Pathways Program which targets the early learning needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable children too young for preschool and supports pathways into Early Childhood Education. Our continuing support for the Sector Development Program is something I am also proud of, which provides training, support and resources to build sector capacity in alignment with government priorities.



As many of you would be aware, last year, the Education Council approved the next review of the National Quality Framework (NQF). Since January 2012, the National Quality Framework has been providing a strong regulatory system promoting compliance and continuous quality improvement in the sector. The 2019 NQF Review aims to ensure that the National Quality Framework is current, fit-for-purpose and implemented through best practice regulation.

The NSW Government remains committed to the NQF and to implementing appropriate governance which is why I'm delighted that NSW is leading the review, chairing the Review (sub) Group and providing the secretariat. The first consultative phase of The Review has now ended and involved making contact with over 1300 people at 14 locations across the state in addition to online feedback. I would like to thank those of you who submitted feedback on the issues paper and urge you all to continue to provide your views as we move forward with the Review.

I'd like to take this opportunity to again thank all of the early childhood educators right across NSW, who do such a wonderful job of shaping our children in the crucial years before school. Thank you for your unwavering passion and purpose and I look forward to my next Nurture Nook submission.

Sarah Mitchell

The Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC
NSW Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning



A LETTER FROM Jodie Harrison MP

NSW Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education

It is my very great pleasure to be able to contribute to this edition of The Nurture Nook, the journal of the Australian Childcare Alliance NSW.

Firstly, I want to thank every one of you, for the incredibly important work that you do to give our youngest people the best possible start in life. The first six years of a child's life are a time of incredible learning, and the work that you do with the children in your care, along with their families, sets a foundation for life.

It is because of the importance of early childhood learning that I was honoured to be asked to become the Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Learning by Jodi McKay, the leader of the NSW Labor Party at the beginning of July. Kate Washington, your previous Shadow Minister, was instrumental in developing the policies which Labor took to the March 2019 election, and I hope to continue Kate's great work.

A key part of my role is to listen to your concerns and aspirations for the early childhood education sector. That is why, in the short term, I will be focussing on consultation and building strong relationships with all the stakeholders in early childhood education. In July, Kate Washington and I hosted a morning tea in Parliament House in Sydney so that I could hear from the peak groups in ECE. I am very pleased that I was able to meet your President, Lyn Connolly, and Nicole Upford, your Vice President at that function and I am looking forward to having an ongoing working relationship with ACA, along with all stakeholders, to ensure the best for our young ones.

It is of immense concern to me that in New South Wales, we have the highest fees for early childhood education and lowest participation rates in the country. In addition to this, the NSW Government spends less on early education per child than any other state or territory.

Yet we know that money spent on early childhood education is money very well spent – it sets a foundation for life. The recent research by Price Waterhouse Coopers ("PWC") for the Front Project "A Smart Investment for a Smarter Australia : Economic analysis of universal early childhood education in the year before school in Australia" (June 2019) states that there are clear financially measurable benefits to quality



early education.

According to the economists, these benefits include increase in wages for grown children who have attended ECE, a reduction in welfare payments to those grown children, and improved employment and earnings of parents. The PWC report says governments are better off when quality early childhood education has been provided through a reduction in children repeating a year of school, increased government receipts (also known as taxation!) from parents, lower criminal activity, lower placement in special education classes, improved longer term health issues including smoking rates and obesity, and increased government receipts from grown children who participated in quality ECE. Employers receive the benefit of increased lifetime productivity benefits from children who have attended ECE.

The economics are clear – ECE pays off. But importantly from a societal point of view, early childhood education is oh so important.

As Shadow Minister for Education I have heard already from the early childhood education sector that there needs to be more government focus on:

- Universal access for three and four year olds to preschool programs.
- Increasing participation rates in NSW
- Supporting the sector to provide early intervention for children with learning disabilities.
- Supporting professional development for teachers and educators.

I'd like to hear more from you on how this can be done, and purpose and I look forward to my next Nurture Nook submission.

Jodie Harrison

Jodie Harrison MP
NSW Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education

We are here to help!



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- ✓ Template letter of casual conversion
- ✓ An average estimated savings of over \$3,844 - \$11,500 per year for businesses*
- ✓ Template supporting letter from employer service provider to the Sheriff, NSW Department of Justice
- ✓ Copy of clause 10.6 Children Services Award 2010
- ✓ Compare as often as you like for free even within the same year
- ✓ Customised supporting letter and documents from ACA NSW providing further official Federal Government evidence of the challenges faced by the service providers to recruit staff
- ✓ Template employee form of acknowledgement
- ✓ Not just for members' centres but also for members, staff and parents to save money on their energy bill

*Amount saved so far based on live examples



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Working with children can be unpredictable. If something happens to a child in your care that escalates to a claim, it can be overwhelming.

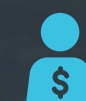
Our Guild Liability Claims specialists are here to offer claims advice on regulatory obligations for your unique situation, and can even engage the services of Meridian

Lawyers, Australia's leading allied health legal defence team and part of the Guild Group where legal support is needed.

We also provide 2 hours free legal advice on employment related issues made against you or your centre, even before a claim is made, helping you stay well informed on employment and regulatory matters.

When you're insured by Guild Insurance, you can enjoy peace of mind knowing here is one less thing to worry about, so you can stay focused on what you do best – looking after the children in your care.

Our early learning business insurance offers benefits such as:



2 free hours of legal advice on employment related matters – even before it's a claim



We can even engage the services of Meridian Lawyers, where legal support is needed



Advice on regulatory obligations



Guild Liability specialist for advice on claims

Managing Complaints in Early Learning

Receiving a complaint is often an unexpected part of running any business, including a child care or early learning service. No business is immune from receiving a complaint, regardless of how successful it is or how customer focused staff are. There can be a tendency to see a complaint as a personal criticism rather than constructive feedback. However, there can be positive outcomes when the situation is managed appropriately.

Why do people complain?

There are many reasons why parents might complain about an early learning centre and the service they've received. Sometimes a complaint will almost be expected following an incident; sometimes it will take you by complete surprise. Understanding why people may complain can assist with managing a complaint if it occurs and potentially reducing the likelihood of further complaints. The following are some of the reasons why people may feel the need to complain.

High expectations – consumer expectations are increasingly high when

engaging professional services. This is particularly for early learning services. When a parent leaves their child with a service, they will have understandably high expectations regarding the level of care and supervision that will be provided to their child.

Unrealistic expectations – it is also possible that at times parents may have slightly unrealistic expectations about what they can expect from an early learning service. It's therefore important that a service assists their parents to be clear and fully informed about the types of care and education they provide to children. Having this information documented and readily available to parents, for example on your website or in brochures provided before children enroll, can be beneficial. Encourage parents to ask questions so that expectations can be discussed and appropriately managed.

"Parents may wish to make a complaint about an incident simply so they are sure you and your staff are aware of what has occurred and how they feel"

Emotional motives – some parents may struggle with separation anxiety as much as their child. Some may even feel a sense

of guilt when leaving their child with an educator who is initially a stranger. This level of emotion may contribute to the level of expectation they have regarding the quality of care provided.

To inform and be heard – parents may wish to make a complaint about an incident simply so they are sure you and your staff are aware of what has occurred and how they feel. They may complain so they're listened to and acknowledged, especially if their child has been impacted. Not all complaints will lead to a formal demand for compensation; sometimes people want to receive information about how the incident is being managed to ensure it doesn't arise again.

Belief that someone is responsible – when something goes wrong we often try to determine who's responsible. Sometimes someone is obviously responsible, sometimes it's hard to determine who's

responsible and other times there is no one person responsible but it's just an unfortunate set of circumstances.

However, if a parent thought something had gone wrong and this might have led to a poor outcome, such as an injury to their child, it's quite possible they may complain with the intention of holding someone responsible and possibly liable.

The importance of managing complaints

There may sometimes be a temptation to ignore a complaint and hope it'll just go away. Maybe the parent won't follow up. Maybe the incident won't occur again. This is a very short-sighted way to run any business as there are clear benefits to appropriately managing complaints.

Parents would understandably expect to see their complaint dealt with quickly and fairly. When this doesn't happen it's possible that further complaints will follow, and the issue or concern could become a much greater one. Complaints may also escalate to other people or organisations, such as your Regulatory Authority.

Managing complaints should be seen as good 'customer service'. You rely on parents and families to keep your business afloat.

When customers are unhappy with a service they can talk with their feet by not returning to the service. Keeping parents happy and satisfied is more likely to see them continue to use your service and recommend you to others.

"Keeping parents happy and satisfied is more likely to see them continue to use your service and recommend you to others."

Complaints can provide an early learning service with an opportunity to review and improve their service. Receiving a complaint may highlight an issue which the service had not been aware of. When investigating and dealing with the complaint, the service may wish to consider a change in a procedure to avoid that issue arising again in the future.

How to manage complaints

It's advisable that all early learning services have a complaints policy. This means that the service will have an agreed-to process which allows for all complaints to be dealt with in a fair and consistent manner. It also means staff know what to do which is important as managing complaints can be a challenging.

A key aspect in dealing with any complaint is listening to the person. Where possible, make time to sit down in a quiet space and give them time to express their concerns. Make the effort to hear what they have to say and take on board what they have told you.

You may not agree with all they are saying, however it helps if you can try to understand the situation from their perspective. You may wish to ask them to document their concerns so you both have an accurate record of the matter. Avoid being defensive or taking the complaint personally as this may inflame the situation.

With low level complaints you may be able to offer a solution there and then. However, this won't always be the case. With more serious complaints you should provide the person with an assurance that you'll investigate the matter and get back to them with a response at a later date.

Guild Insurance expects those insured with us not to admit liability (or name someone else as being at fault), or to offer any compensation without contacting us first. Contact Guild Insurance on 1800 810 213 as soon as you've received a complaint; don't wait till it escalates to a claim for compensation. We will provide advice and support to assist you to deal appropriately and professionally with what can be a challenging and possibly upsetting situation. This support can be the difference between sorting a problem quickly and it escalating to a serious claim.

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Building Code of Australia's Proposed Amendment

can negatively impact childcare fees without making centres or children any safer

The Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW released its submission (see <https://tinyurl.com/acanswabcbsubmission>) to the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB)'s proposed amendment (see <https://tinyurl.com/abcba-amendment1>) to the Building Code of Australia arguing that the ABCB may have opened a Pandora's Box for all childcare centres and consequently increase childcare fees and introduce new hazards to children and their carers without making children any safer.

"We appreciate the ABCB's and the Building Ministers' intentions, but without any prior discussion with the early childhood education and care sector, their proposal as drafted will increase childcare fees by mandating sprinklers and other fire infrastructure even for two storey buildings and can make evacuations of young children aged 0-5 years old even more dangerous under wet conditions," said Chiang Lim, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW.

Prophetically, ACA NSW had been approaching government authorities for over three years about its concerns of the lack of empirical standards for

how quickly children must consistently be evacuated and where they should appropriately be evacuated to.

"Our fire expert has identified the futility of purely relying on the introduction of sprinklers and fire infrastructures as the solution to protecting children. What if childcare centres can consistently and safely evacuate all their children even before the sprinklers are activated? Why have governments not considered the consequential impact of new childcare centres' ever-increasing capacities of children? And why do governments still approve childcare centres where the nearest appropriate evacuation assembly area may be blocks away?" asked Mr Lim.

The national law and regulations for early childhood education and care came into effect on 1 January 2012. They enabled childcare centres to have unlimited numbers, thereby giving rise to new childcare centres with significant capacities. The largest childcare centre is currently 300 places. Prior to 2012, the maximum capacity was 90 children per centre.

"New South Wales already has the dubious honour of having the highest proportion of household expenditure on childcare across all the OECD countries.

Why do we want to increase costs especially when the proposed solutions will not work in the overwhelming majority of childcare services? To protect children, we need a holistic and truly consultative approach, not a piecemeal nor we-know-better approach," said Mr Lim.

"New South Wales already has the dubious honour of having the highest proportion of household expenditure on childcare across all the OECD countries. Why do we want to increase costs especially when the proposed solutions will not work in the overwhelming majority of childcare services?"

The Society of Fire Safety Engineers Australia (SFSEA) is anticipated to release their High-Rise Childcare Guide. The Education Council and the NSW Department of Education are reviewing emergency and evacuation requirements for revision in 2021-2022. The NSW Department of Planning has said they will begin their review of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Educational Establishments and Child Care Facilities) 2017. But none appear to be coordinated nor harmonised.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2019 Annual General Meeting of the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) New South Wales will be held at 7.00 pm AEST on Monday, 11 November 2019, at the office of the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW, 19 Fennell Street, Parramatta NSW 2150. Light dinner and refreshments will be available from 6.00 pm onwards.

Members can download the formal notice of the 2019 Annual General Meeting from nsw.childcarealliance.org.au/images/agm/2019/AGM_Notice_2019_-_Official.pdf.

The notice includes the agenda, a nomination form for candidates seeking election onto the ACANSW Executive Committee, a proxy form, as well as information about the nomination process, the election process and the returning officer.

The proposed agenda is as follows:

1. Welcome
2. Apologies and Proxies
3. Confirmation of Quorum
4. Adoption of Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 21 November 2018
5. President's Report
6. Financial Report
7. Auditor's Report
8. Declaration of Elected Office Bearers and Members of the Executive Committee
9. Appointment of Auditor
10. Close of Meeting

Members are asked to RSVP their attendance via e-mail to nsw@childcarealliance.org.au or call 1300 556 330 no later than 5.00 pm on Friday, 1 November 2019.

Annual General Meeting 2019

Monday, 11 November 2019

From 7.00pm AEST onwards

(NOTE: Light dinner and refreshments available from 6.00pm onwards)

At the ACA NSW Office

19 Fennell Street, Parramatta NSW



MEMBER BENEFITS

1. ADVOCACY & LOBBYING

The Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW is the leading peak body representing privately-owned childcare services who regularly engages the Federal Government, NSW Government, their Parliaments as well as the Fair Work Commission.

2. INDUSTRIAL REPRESENTATION

The ACA NSW is usually the only organisation that represents the privately-owned childcare services at the Fair Work Commission primarily dealing with Awards and unions' Wage Claims.

3. MEMBER SUPPORT

All ACA NSW members receive free regulatory or legislative interpretation/advice, government programme information/clarification, staff issues, policy development, assessment & rating, general business advice and dispute resolution advice.

4. MODERN AWARD & WAGE RATE ADVICE

All ACA NSW members receive the sector's Modern Awards and any information determined by the Fair Work Commission.

5. FREE LEGAL & INDUSTRIAL ADVICE

If specialist advice is needed, members can access up to 15 minutes free legal advice and up to 45 minutes free industrial relations advice, with discounted rates applying thereafter.

6. INDUSTRY PUBLICATIONS

All ACA NSW members receive the Nurture Nook and Belonging magazines in hardcopy.

7. POLICY TEMPLATES

All ACA NSW members receive free and continually updated templates of Regulation 168 policies. Those with Member Plus memberships will have access to over 150 additional template policies, agreements, forms, checklists and other helpful documents.

8. MEMBERS ONLY-ACCESS

Only ACA NSW members have unique usernames and passwords to that they can access Members-Only information on the ACA NSW website.

9. E-MAIL & SMS BROADCASTS

ACA NSW Members stay informed by receiving broadcasts including The Weekly Update, From the President, Member Alerts and Red Alerts.

10. NETWORK MEETINGS

ACA NSW conducts a minimum of 16 (and up to 26) Network Meetings per year where members are briefed on pressing issues as well as new opportunities.

11. DISCOUNTED TRAINING & EVENTS

All ACA NSW members receive discounts on all its training and events including its conferences, awards night, Wheels on the Bus Tours and its Early Education and Care College.

12. VOTING RIGHTS

ACA NSW (Classic & Member Plus) members have voting rights at their Annual General Meetings, Special General Meetings and General Meetings.

EXTRA BENEFITS

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How To Build A Childcare Team YOU CAN BE PROUD OF

'A successful team is a group of many hands and one mind...' – Bill Bethel

Talking recently at a centre group's team conference, Sam Hendry, College Manager with Kool Kids Training College talked about some of his experiences with leading teams and what teams need to be effective.

In this edition of Nurture Nook, Sam covers some important points in how to develop a successful team culture.

Doing More With Less

That means that teamwork is more important than ever, and it's critical that teams work well together.

Failures in teamwork have caused serious workplace accidents. They've also caused planes to crash and businesses to fail.

The problem is that many teams are really a collection of individuals. A group of people is not a team just because they're called 'a team'.

For a group of people to become a fully functioning team, a whole range of psychological processes need to be nurtured.

While all teams are different, psychologists have discovered there

are some things that all teams need. Here's the low down:

1. Social Skills

A study conducted by Wooley Et Al in 2010 found that a group intelligence is: "...not strongly correlated with the average or maximum individual intelligence of group members but is correlated with the average social sensitivity of group members..."

And it's not an isolated finding, this evidence emerges in research again and again.

So strong communication and social skills are critical to great teamwork.

2. Clear Goals and Roles

It might seem obvious, but clear goals and roles make a huge difference in teams.

A recent survey of 7,200 U.S. adults found that only 12% of employees set priorities with their managers. But that 12% were much happier than the employees who scored their managers' goal setting towards the bottom of the scale.

Organisation goals and clearly defined team roles prevent confusion and increase stability in so many ways. In fact, clearly defined roles decrease absenteeism and lateness (Kammeyer Mueller and Wanberg, 2003).

Role clarity is particularly important during times of change. Teams with clear roles can adapt easily, but when individuals don't know who's responsible for what, chaos reigns.

Sam highlights how surprised he is at the number of educators who have been in centres for lengthy periods of time are still yet to have a formal performance review.

"Performance reviews are critical. Without them, people are often in the dark or making presumptions (often negative) on what management thinks about their performance," Sam said.

3. Trust

Whilst trust might seem obvious when it comes to team function, it's more complex than that.

Research conducted by Naquin and Kurtzberg in 2009 found that people will base their assessments of team trust on the least trustworthy individual in a team.

So, each member of the team must be trustworthy, and be perceived as trustworthy for people to trust the group. If not, the whole team suffers.

4. Humour

As crazy as it might sound, Professor William Hampes has found that people with a strong sense of humour are perceived as more trustworthy.



"Performance reviews are critical. Without them, people are often in the dark or making presumptions (often negative) on what management thinks about their performance."

Equally, teams with strong group dynamics will joke around together. Humour is a signal that groups are getting along well and has the added benefit of reducing stress, increasing team cohesion and increasing creativity (Romero and Pescosolido, 2008).

Sam said that in the team he leads every week the whole share in the 'WOW Report' a collection from each team member of some of the week's highlights (and sometimes lowlights). Although it is framed as a positive sharing of stories from the week, often it leads to some funny outcomes.

"Sharing a laugh with your colleagues does relieve some of the pressures of the job. We find weekly when sharing the WOW Report that many funny conversations start as a result. Certainly, in the report the laughing emoji appears a lot!"

"Exploring the human side of your co-workers and having some fun is important. It builds rapport, happiness, fulfilment in the role and goodwill for the company as an employer that embraces the differences of each team member."

"If there is one thing I would recommend, it is share stories amongst the team. People love to know what is going on, and if it has a humorous side to it, all the better." Sam said.

If your team would like Sam to present at an upcoming team event or conference on leadership, just send him an email at info@eccc.com.au



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EDUCATOR SPOTLIGHT *Jessica McKinnon* Jacaranda Cottage

What drew you towards working in early childhood education?

The decision to work in Early Childhood Education always seemed like the path I was destined for. From the age of 12, I used to babysit the children in my street for \$2 an hour after school and on weekends. It was my passion and it never felt like work. After 15 years in the profession, I couldn't imagine myself not working in Early Childhood Education.

What is your fondest story that makes you proud to be in your chosen vocation?

There are several stories that make me feel proud to be in Early Childhood and my proudest moments always stem from the gratitude of children, staff and families. I cannot put into words how honoured I feel to have been a part of so many people's lives. The impact that they have had on me and the lessons I have learned with and from them over the years have made me the person I am today. The memories I have from my time at Jacaranda Cottage are some of the most powerful memories I have and they will last with me forever.

What is the biggest challenge you face as a Nominated Supervisor/Educational Leader/Room Leader/Educator/Teacher?

I think the biggest challenge as a Director and Nominated Supervisor is the constant pressure you are under. There are so many different roles you have to fulfil and that can take a toll on you – your mental and physical well-being. I think it's really important to make sure you take the time for yourself so you can be the best version of yourself for others. I was lucky



enough to recently attend a Director's retreat in Byron Bay hosted by CELA. There I met some amazing people from all different fields of Education and heard their stories. It was an experience I took more than I ever could have expected from. They said go in with an open mind so that's exactly what I did. The support you received from people you had just met was incredible. It was nice to know that although you can sometimes be under this immense pressure in your role that there are people out there to support you and who have so much knowledge and experience to share.

If you could change anything in the early childhood education and care sector that would bring enormous benefits for children and their parents, what would that be?

I think that both children and their parents would benefit most from a reduction in the cost of childcare. I think that all children should have the opportunity to attend some form of quality early childhood education. With the cost of childcare so high, especially in cities, there are so many families that just can't afford it. Early Childhood Education has so many benefits and it's only going from strength-to-strength with services like Be You and KU Inclusion Support assisting and educating centres to better support children and families.

"I think it's really important to make sure you take the time for yourself so you can be the best version of yourself for others."

What do you (really) think of your approved provider? Or what makes you stay on with your approved provider?

I consider myself lucky. I have a lot of respect for my approved providers and over the 14 years I have been at the centre working different roles I have come to think of them as family. There are so many factors that contribute to my reason for staying with the one approved provider for so long including the passion for Early Childhood Education the two sisters, Cathy and Linda share, the holistic philosophy, the team of educators I get the privilege of working with each day and the children and families that attend the centre. Cathy and Linda are always striving to provide a high quality long day care centre which requires them to put in a lot of time and effort and I respect them for this. Don't get me wrong, we constantly debate about the best way to do things but that's a part of what I love. It's so important for me to feel like my opinions are valued and I always get that at Jacaranda.



Jessica and the team at Jacaranda Cottage

Quickies

Maximising & Managing Staff Performance ... LEGALLY

26 February 2020 10 June 2020
28 October 2020

Secrets of the "new" A&R

25 March 2020 5 June 2020
31 August 2020 14 October 2020

CCS Application Process

7 February 2020 4 May 2020
7 August 2020 2 November 2020

Creating the Best QIP for the "new" NQF

12 February 2020 17 April 2020
22 June 2020 9 September 2020
30 October 2020

How to Design Successful ECEC Centres

6 May 2020 21 August 2020
14 October 2020

Help with NSW's Service Provider Approval Process

13 March 2020 13 May 2020
3 August 2020 25 September 2020
18 November 2020

Flipping Childcare Centres

3 February 2020 3 April 2020
27 July 2020 16 October 2020

How to be Ready for a Spotcheck/Compliance Visit

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THE UNPREDICTABILITY of an early learning centre

Early learning and childcare centres are dynamic, unpredictable, ever-changing environments. For some educators, it's this type of environment which makes it a fantastic place to work. However, this environment can also make it a hazardous place to work if the risks of an ever-changing environment aren't identified and managed.

All early learning centres have processes in place to be sure the centre is tidy and orderly at the beginning of the day with all furniture and equipment where it should be. However, this rarely lasts long and nor should it. Through the regular activities undertaken throughout the day, many pieces of equipment can end up being left in areas which may create a hazard and lead to an injury to staff and children. Also, it's possible for toys, play equipment and even furniture to become damaged over time and this also creates a hazard. The solution of course isn't to stop the children playing and using what's in the centre.

The solution requires all staff who work in centres to be aware of the risks within their environment and what they can do to manage them.

Constant Vigilance

Working in an early learning centre requires constant vigilance from all staff. This means staff are always looking around and scanning for risks and hazards which could lead to injuries.

Centres have processes in place where regular inspections are carried out. While these checks are important, they aren't enough. Staff need to be in a habit of being continually on the lookout for risks at all times and in all locations within a centre.

Risks aren't always obvious

There are some risks which will be obvious and that all staff would know to look out for and rectify, such as toys being left in walkways or spilled drinks on the floor. However, this is not the case with all risks. Some are harder to spot and may be unexpected, such as a poorly fitted baby gate closing on a staff member. This further emphasises the need for constant vigilance and not just looking for common risks. It means staff should be continually asking themselves 'What could happen?' and thinking outside the square when answering this.

Don't put it off

It's not uncommon for Guild Insurance to hear of an injury occurring in a centre due to a hazard which had previously been identified yet no action had been taken. This lack of action may be due to other competing priorities, lack of funds or the risk may have not been taken seriously. When a risk or hazard has been identified it's important that it's assessed immediately so the likelihood of an injury and the potential seriousness of that injury are both well understood. This will assist the centre in developing an action plan for what needs to happen to reduce or eliminate that risk and how urgent this

is. Staff and children do suffer serious injuries in early learning centres which can affect them for a very long time. Hoping the risk won't eventuate isn't sufficient risk management, centres need to take action.

Risk register

Creating a risk register is an important process for dealing with identified risks and being sure they don't get forgotten about. The risk register should contain important details about each risk including the likelihood of the risk occurring, the potential consequence if it did occur, what actions or

"All early learning centres have processes in place to be sure the centre is tidy and orderly at the beginning of the day with all furniture and equipment where it should be"

steps are required to mitigate or reduced that risk, who is responsible for doing this and by when this action needs to occur. This register should be made available to all staff and discussed regularly so there is constant monitoring of which risks have been actioned and which still needs actioning.

Whose job is it?

In every workplace, everyone has a responsibility to ensure it's a safe environment for all who attend or visit. This means that all staff, including the newest and least experienced right up to the most experienced, have a responsibility to continually be on the lookout for hazards and act on them when found. Leaving this to someone else is not acceptable.

While some staff members may not have the ability to create the change necessary to reduce the risk, for example it's not their responsibility to book in maintenance staff, all staff have a responsibility to at least report the hazard to someone who can take action.

To ensure staff do speak up when they see a risk or hazard, it's important that a culture of speaking up is encouraged. This means making all staff aware of their responsibility but also listening to and taking on board the concerns raised by staff.

Regular safety discussions

To encourage and support staff to continually think about safety and identify risks, regular safety conversations in the workplace can be very beneficial. This can be done in a number of ways such as having safety as an agenda item at staff meetings or by including staff in discussions about how identified risks will be actioned. This continual conversation encourages safe thinking to become how people do their job, not an addition to it.

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IMPORTANT CHANGES

to Wage Payments and Entitlements

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) has recently issued some updated guidance for employers in relation to the calculation of superannuation contributions.

The guidance concerns annual leave loading payments and whether or not they form part of an employee's ordinary time earnings (OTE). Until recently, it had been widely believed that they did not.

Many employers have therefore calculated their superannuation contributions for employees on the basis that annual leave loading was excluded from the definition of 'ordinary time earnings'.

The ATO has now issued updated guidance, clarifying that annual leave loading will be classified as ordinary time earnings (OTE), unless an employer can provide evidence to show that the entitlement to annual leave loading is referable to an employee's lost opportunity to work overtime while on annual leave. (Please note that ACA's legal advisors have advised us that this is highly unlikely given that all staff paid under an award receive their annual leave loading due to the requirements of that award.)

As superannuation payments are calculated using your employees' OTE, of which annual leave loading is now considered to be a part of, this means that employers need to pay superannuation on annual leave loading.

To put it simply, if you're not paying superannuation on annual leave loading, you really need to start doing it.

The ATO has confirmed that, where an employer pays superannuation on future annual leave loading payments (on the basis that they are OTE), they will not dedicate resources to investigating previous quarters.

We therefore strongly advise our members to start paying superannuation on annual leave loading for all staff employed under an award from now on.

Contact your payroll software provider to ensure that they are including annual leave loading in their superannuation calculations.

If you require further information about your employer obligations to pay superannuation, you can visit the ATO website.

You may also wish to undertake the ATO's super guarantee employer obligations online course, which is designed to help employers understand their obligations to pay super for eligible employees. The course is free and takes around 2 hours to complete.

Fair Work Changes Wage Payments on Terminations

The Fair Work Commission recently varied the payment of wages provisions in the Children's Services Award 2010 regarding payment of wages on termination.

When an employee's employment is terminated the employer must pay:

- All outstanding wages up until the end of the day of termination; and
- Any payments owing under the award or National Employment Standards (e.g. notice of termination, redundancy pay etc.) no later than 7 days after the day on which the employee's employment terminates.

This requirement applies whether the employment was terminated by the employer or by the employee (i.e. resignation).

Prior to the change, employers were required to pay out an employee's termination pay at the time of leaving, or in certain circumstances, the next working day.

The change brings the award into line with the provisions of the Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2010 which was updated in a similar manner in November 2018.

Have you heard?

Guild Early Learning Workers Compensation insurance extends to preschools

As of 3 July 2018 Guild is proud to provide workers compensation insurance under our specialised licence for childcare, preschool, OOSH and kindergarten centres in NSW.

Employees are your most valuable asset and at Guild, we understand they can be more like family. Sometimes, despite your best efforts to prevent it, they may get hurt on the job. Of course, prevention is better than the cure, but when an injury occurs, you want your employees treated with respect and provided with solutions that help them bounce back as quickly and cost-effectively as possible.

We understand that working with children is busy enough, so we've made protecting your business and your employees even easier and more cost effective. Combine your Guild Childcare Business Insurance Policy with a GEL workers compensation Policy and you could save 5% off your insurance premium*.

You're already entrusting us to protect your business, so why not let us protect you and your staff as well? Getting a quote is easy, simply visit our website guildinsurance.com.au/GEL or contact your trusted Account Manager.

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WHAT WILL THE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES BE IN 2020?

NQF, CCS/ACCS, Preschool Funding, NCC, etc.

After two elections, the Review of the National Quality Framework (NQF) being underway, the future funding of the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) ending on 30 June 2020, proposed changes to the National Construction Code for services in high-rise and multi-storey buildings, another review of the Universal Access National Partnership, one could very well be forgiven for thinking that 2020 is shaping to be a very significant year of changes.

The Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW and our interstate colleagues have been on every one of those battlefield frontlines and we provide a brief on what changes might occur. All of ACA NSW's submissions and advocacies can be found on its website (www.nsw.childcarealliance.org.au).

New and Increased Fees, Fines, Penalties

You will recall that in May 2018, the Federal Government announced that it will not be renewing the National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care. This meant that after 30 June 2018, the NSW Government had stopped receiving \$6.9 million (of which \$2 million would normally be redirected to ACECQA).

Although the NSW Government was obliged to fund the shortfall of \$4.9 million annually since, the discussion appears to have morphed into new and increased fees, fines and penalties targeting repeat non-compliant offenders.

Everyone would agree that all services ought to comply with the National Law and National Regulations. That said, ACA NSW's significant concern is that without the appropriate transparency, accountability, checks-and-balances, there could be an increase in the number of non-compliances that correspond to an increase in revenue for the Regulatory Authority.

Service Approval Process

Since 1 July 2016, 840 new approved providers were granted in NSW out of the current 4,010 approved providers. The NSW Enhanced Approval Process was meant to block those unfit to become approved providers. It is unclear as to whether this has been achieved. It remains concerning that there continues to be police prosecutions of approved providers alleged to be fraudulent or deemed as real risk to children.

As part of the Review of the NQF, it would seem that the NSW Department of Education is looking to streamline its processes so that approved providers can be approved faster. This of course is a good thing. However, why does it continue to oblige existing approved providers to take the test whenever possible on the basis of risk? If they are at risk, should the Regulatory Authority already have adequate powers to address the deemed risky approved provider?

Outdoor Space Waivers

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, Regulation 108 states that education and care premises has at least 7 square metres of unencumbered outdoor space.

However, predominantly in central business districts and inner-city areas, we have noticed a rising trend of the NSW Department of Education approving

waivers to Regulation 108 and allowing new childcare services to have lesser access to outdoor spaces if at all.

As an example, during the calendar years 2017 and 2018, there were 384 new NSW-based childcare centres approved, along with 73 centres that were granted a waiver to comply with Regulation 108, with 42 centres still operating with such a waiver in force.

The NSW Department of Education cites that they use the NSW Department of Planning & Environment's Child Care Planning Guideline (August 2017) to determine whether a waiver to Regulation 108 is warranted. Yet, the NSW Department has refused to publish the reasons which the waiver is based on citing commercial confidentiality and the use of the Guideline.

ACA NSW has long argued that the NSW Department of Education should publish the reasons for the waiver, and is concerned about those children who may now have less access to sunlight.

Emergency and Evacuation

As population density increases especially in Australian cities, it is understandable that new services could be in high-rise and multi-storey commercial and residential buildings. It is therefore pleasing that the Review of the NQF has included the question of whether emergency and evacuation requirements are adequate.

Coincidentally, the Australian Building Codes Board released in September 2019 its first amendment to their National Construction Code (aka Building Code) to recommend changes to address the alleged risks to children in high-rise and multi-storey commercial buildings.

ACA NSW welcomes those discussions but is disappointed that there has been

inadequate consultation with and testing by the sector as to whether proposed solutions would work in every services' environments. We are gravely concerned that at best they could be marginal solutions, but at worse those untested solutions may introduce more hazards than solving the risks.

Assessment and Ratings

In the first 12 months of the "new" "streamlined" National Quality Standards from 1 February 2018, NSW had 57.1% of already existing Exceeding rated services who were re-assessed were re-rated lower to either Meeting or even Working Towards.

There are also a number of other disappointments about the assessment and rating outcomes in NSW compared to other Australian states. And therefore it comes as no surprise that there is near universal loss of confidence about the subjective and inconsistent nature that is assessments and ratings in NSW where services tend not to promote their ratings, nor do most families understand or appreciate it.

ACA NSW was refused by ACECQA and the NSW Department of Education when we asked for access to the same training as their assessors so that at least services could be on the same wavelength.

Childcare Oversupply (inc SEPP)

Australian governments generally avoid intervening in the marketplace unless absolutely necessary. So it is somewhat ironic when government policies are significantly increasing supply, thereby seeing now 94% of centres declaring vacancies (the highest in 6 years), and fees are still increasing.

The Federal Minister for Education (the Hon Dan Tehan MP) invited ACA NSW in September 2019 to begin a dialogue with his Department with a view of enabling the government to release more aggregated and deidentified market information so as to help the market understand their risks of entering an area where there is already an oversupply of services. This is a promising start.

Child Care Subsidy

The first legislative amendment will be increasing the number of weeks from 8 to 14 before an enrolment ceases due to

non-attendance which will dramatically reduce the administrative burden on families and service providers. This will be particularly beneficial for children who only utilise vacation care.

The government will also be refining absence provisions via Minister's Rules which support payment of CCS when a child is absent at the beginning or end of their enrolment. It is hoped that the Rules, once developed, allow for circumstances beyond a parent's control which can result in CCS not being paid such as illness, public holidays and the sale/transfer of an early learning service, as well as allowing families to provide adequate notice to their service provider.

The removal of the 50% limit on the issuing of Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) (Child Wellbeing) certificates will also support better access for our most vulnerable children.

However, the federal government still has not addressed:

- The continuing removal of CCS contributions from services' bank accounts after education and care have been given;
- The arguably excessive limitations of the activity tests on certain families;
- How the annual increases in the CCS Hourly Rate are not in sync with the true costs of service providers;
- The non-extension of the activity test so as to allow two years of preschool instead of one; and
- why there is a continuation of CCS back payments to parents and not services ... just to name a few.

"one could very well be forgiven for thinking that 2020 is shaping to be a very significant year of changes."

Preschool Funding

After years of unfair NSW Government preschool funding of children enrolled in the year-before-school, the Federal Government has fortuitously commissioned Nous Group to develop the future of preschool funding nationally.

ACA NSW submitted in October 2019 that the NSW Government ignored its own Review of NSW Government Funding for Early Childhood Education report by Professor Deborah Brennan in 2012 which recommended that the subsidy for long daycare providers be set at about one-third of the subsidy for (community) preschools. This would place long daycare funding for NSW children for the year-before-school to be about \$1,729 and not what is currently \$459 per child per year.

Fair Work Commission

As the only organisation defending against the two unions' applications to the Fair Work Commission to increase educators' pay by up to 72% and teachers pay by up to 59%, 2020 could be the year where the Fair Work Commission finally makes its conclusions.

NSW Government's OSHC supports in 2021

ACA NSW was the only peak body at the NSW Budget Estimates Hearing on 4 September 2019 at the NSW Parliament House. During which, the NSW Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning (the Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC) clarified that "... it is not [for] every parent in every public primary school" and OSHC services will be available "... where there is demand for those services".

This was different to the NSW Coalition's election campaign announcement on 10 March 2019 that out-of-school-hours-care "... will be made available to all parents with children at public primary schools by 2021" and "public primary schools in Sydney, Newcastle, Illawarra and the Central Coast as well as major regional centres, will be required to open their playgrounds, halls or classrooms for before and after school care and school holiday care from 7am to 6pm to make life easier for families. Before and after school care services are available to primary school-aged children".

Notwithstanding, ACA NSW has offered to NSW Minister Mitchell to help the NSW Government develop an appropriate implementation that would meet the needs of children and their parents, as well as existing and new OSHC service providers.



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Gayle Kee, TG's Childcare

Based on a retrospective review of their latest energy bill against the new supplier over 12 months.



"Since switching to the energy saving program, Creative Childcare has saved **\$11,500** per year. This allows us to spend more money on the kids and it was so easy."

Kymberly Smith, Creative Childcare

Based on a retrospective review of their latest energy bill against the new supplier over 12 months.

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ChildHR

Discusses 5 Ways Employers Can Help With Mental Health in the Workplace



The Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) has partnered with ChildHR to ensure that ACA members have the right tools for a compliant and sector consistent approach to managing HR. Through this partnership, ACA members are offered an exclusive deal which provides cost savings and the flexibility to choose the software features and documentation that best suit your service's needs.

Administration and compliance created errors, duplication and ineffective management Mental Health is an area of growing concern in the workplace for both employers and their staff. We know that one in five Australians are taking time off work to manage a mental health problem, highlighting the need for action and greater support for employees in the workplace.

Here are 5 ways you can help with mental illness in your service:

1. Reduce Stresses in the Workplace

Working within the early learning sector presents numerous stresses due to being on your feet most of the day, juggling a number of conflicting tasks and meeting the expectations of multiple stakeholders.

Here are some ways to reduce stresses in your service:

- Ensure staff take their allocated breaks during the day
- Provide a soundproof area to separate staff from the children during scheduled breaks
- Roster enough staff to ensure the workload is manageable
- Prevent staff burnout by encouraging use of entitled annual leave
- Allow employees to take planned mental health days – this means shifts can be covered in advance and your employee receives peace of mind knowing there is a break on the horizon

2. Implement Clear Policies

The Disability Act of 1992 makes it illegal to discriminate against employees who have a mental health condition. However, many employees are not aware of this and fear that they may be discriminated against (90%) or even fired (78%) if they admit to a mental health problem.

It is important for you to outline clear policies to your team, making it clear what they are entitled to and more specifically giving employees peace of mind that you will support them when in need. Specifically include mental health days as one of the grounds for sick leave - it helps if managers and supervisors are not afraid to take a mental health day themselves.

3. Open Dialogue about Mental Health

Stigma surrounding mental illness is sadly still prevalent in society. It is your role as an employer to squash this stigma in your workplace creating a platform for open communication and trust regarding mental illness and work stresses.

Here are a few ways to facilitate this in your workplace:

- Have proactive conversations about mental health and encourage people to talk about their problems. Make sure these conversations are not limited to 'R U Okay? Day'
- Have a transparent and fair complaint process for bullying and harassment

- Listen to employees on what they want and what would make their job easier

4. Confidentiality

Providing a communication stream surrounding mental health is a great start to instilling a trusting and open work environment. For your employees to truly feel comfortable to share, it is crucial to ensure confidentiality surrounding any mental health issues.

Start by creating a separate room for meetings and confidential conversations. If a team member discloses any workplace stresses, personal issues or a mental health condition, make sure to keep it confidential and then discuss some potential solutions to lessen the load. For example, changes in shift times, provisions for medical appointments, lessening workload.

5. Education and Counselling

Providing support to employees who are experiencing a mental health illness is only as good as the tools you provide to the leaders on-hand to lend that support. Organise mental health awareness training for the leaders in your workplace and provide information to your whole team on taking care of themselves, getting enough sleep, mindfulness and meditation.

In addition to educating your team, it is important to offer a viable solution to those who need additional assistance. Provide access to free confidential counselling and also consider offering financial counselling as many of your employees may be living pay cheque to pay cheque.

How ChildHR Can Help

ChildHR is an online cloud-based HR software designed exclusively for the Education and Care Sector to help you meet legislative requirements, streamline staff management and save time.

The ChildHR software is designed to encourage ongoing performance management, providing you with the tools to have open dialogue and provide feedback - encouraging employees to speak up if they feel overwhelmed. Throughout this process all conversations can be recorded in the system which will help to reassure your employee that the resolutions discussed in your meetings will be implemented.

In addition, the ChildHR software streamlines administration, reducing stresses through a certification's renewal tracker and easy application for personal and annual leave.

For more information about ChildHR and exclusive offers with your Australian Childcare Alliance membership go to www.childhr.org.au/ACA or email sales@childhr.org.au.



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CURRENT NSW LISTINGS



South Sydney, NSW

Rare FREEHOLD licensed for 16 places. Operational for the past 25 years and highly regarded within the local community. The centre is situated in a quiet location and is known for its home like environment. The long term staff keep the service neat, tidy and welcoming while maintaining a constant 100% occupancy.



NSW Freehold 16 Places \$1,450,000



Liverpool Area, NSW

This well established and neatly presented 49 place going concern opportunity is situated on a corner block and conveniently located close to schools and shops. This is a great opportunity for a savvy operator looking to purchase an affordable centre with significant growth opportunity.



NSW Freehold 49 Places Offers over \$2.8M



Canley Vale, NSW

This long-day care centre is located in Sydney's South-West. A 42-place Early Learning Centre that has been owned and operated by the current owner for the past 7 years, with significant potential for expansion. All rooms are well maintained and present the new owner with a unique opportunity to enjoy a well-run and profitable centre.



NSW Leasehold 42 Places \$450,000k



Northern Beaches, NSW

This 64-place centre is located in the quintessential Northern Beaches area of Sydney. The modern centre caters for children aged 6 weeks to 5 years of age with 4 spacious rooms. The centre also has a large indoor play area with plenty of natural light and resources.



NSW Leasehold 64 Places \$1.5M



Cabramatta West, NSW

This DA Approved purpose-built centre will be located 32 kilometres south-west of Sydney's Central Business District. The centre will be close to public transport, shops and several schools. Catering for children aged 2-5 years with a large outdoor play area that can accommodate a sustainable garden and sensory floor.



NSW DA Site 28 Places EOI



Inner West Area, NSW

Located in the highly sought after Inner West area, this established boutique childcare centre is just 10km from Sydney's CBD. In a leafy residential street and surrounded by parklands this centre is at the heart of a well-established community. This delightful and award-winning 25 place centre currently cares for children aged 1-5 years.



NSW Leasehold 44 Places Over \$1M

CAPABILITIES



Centre Design

We work with architects and clients to create viable centres that exceed industry standards that are beneficial and highly engaging for children, families and all childcare stakeholders.



Centre Development

We use our extensive industry experience and networks of experts to assist and support owners and centre purchasers during their childcare development journey.



Centre Leasing

We assist our clients to negotiate commercially advantageous lease agreements that are in line with industry standards.



Centre Brokerage

We use our industry connections to ensure profitable and speedy centre sales nationally



Marketing & Sales

We provide full marketing (including digital, social and graphic design) services for centres by engaging with community stakeholders, articulating a centre's brand and increasing occupancy, all through KPIs and reported ROI.



Viability

Our business experience and commercial acumen is at the very core of our services ensuring all transactions are financially viable and achieve objectives.

Making a Difference Through The Power of the **HUGGIES®** BRAND

Kimberly-Clark's iconic Huggies® brand has been providing the highest quality nappies to Australian parents for over 30 years. During this time, Huggies has been committed to serving the changing needs of modern Australian families, to help provide the very best care for babies to ensure they thrive.

Fundamental to the brand's success has been a longstanding commitment to a sustainable and socially-conscious operating philosophy. Kimberly-Clark, the maker of Huggies, continues to work towards progressive environmental targets which focus on developing innovative ways to improve and reduce nappy packaging, recycling solutions for flexible soft plastic waste, increasing energy efficiencies during production and the ongoing challenge of developing a solution to fully recycle disposable nappies.

Huggies is committed to giving back to Australian communities, supporting babies and families in need, with a range of local partnerships and initiatives that ensure babies receive the essential assistance they require to thrive. Huggies supports The Nappy Collective charity during their annual donation drives in May and October, providing nappy products to be redistributed to disadvantaged families in need. Huggies is also a proud financial partner of Life's Little Treasures Foundation, Australia's leading charity supporting families of premie and sick babies and an ongoing major supporter of the Australian College of Midwives and its work to enhance the quality of maternity care for Australian women and their families.

In addition, Huggies also supports the Australian Multiple Birth Association (AMBA), a not-for-profit that provides support, resources and education to multiple birth families and provides ongoing financial support to the Rhodanthe Lipsett Trust, to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander midwifery students with their studies.

Huggies continues to cater to the changing consumption behaviours of modern parents – developing innovative ways to interact and create strong emotional ties with parents online. Today, the Huggies website attracts over 1 million visitors per month and is a leading resource for new parents - providing advice, tips and tricks to support every stage of their babies' journey. Huggies has also recently expanded its e-commerce footprint, working with local retailers such as Amazon, Coles and Woolworths to make the complete Huggies nappy available to purchase online - a convenient way for parents to purchase on-the-go, and have delivered direct to their door.

Most recently, Huggies has expanded its portfolio of nappy products, including recent innovations to improve the existing Huggies Ultimate, Huggies Ultra Dry and Huggies Essentials nappy ranges, plus the launch of limited-edition designs and the re-introduction of much-loved wipes formats in refillable tubs and Clutch 'n' Go pouches for on-the-go use.

The Huggies brand has an extensive pipeline of new product innovations and improvements to come, to ensure Huggies remains responsive to the changing needs of modern families and can provide the very best care for Australian babies for years to come.



Do employees need to serve additional notice periods when converting from casual employment to part-time/full-time employment?

As a casual employee, the period of service served can count towards the minimum employment period (probation period) if the employee was on a regular and systematic basis; and if the casual employee has reasonable expectation of ongoing employment on a regular and systematic basis. The Fair Work Act 2009 s.384(2) also sets out the above information.

What is employment on a regular and systematic basis?

This is where a clear pattern or roster of hours shows a repetitive pattern. It does not mean that the hours worked are frequent, often, uniform or constant. A systematic engagement requires a system, plan or method be established with the frequency of employment during a period of service. Regular and systematic employment can also be established where the employer has offered work at times that the employee has made themselves available.

Work can also be offered and accepted regularly enough that it is no longer considered occasional or irregular.

What is a period of service for a casual employee?

A period of service is defined as each occasion an employee is engaged in a separate contract of employment. This can be week to week, shift to shift, hour to hour or for any agreed short period.

Employees period of service, rather than period of employment, are considered in cases of unfair dismissal. If you have a written agreement that the employee would serve an additional probation period, when converting to part-time or full-time employment, legally it would have no effect under the Fair Work Act 2009 s.384(2). The employees' whole period of service would be considered and will count towards the period of continuous service.

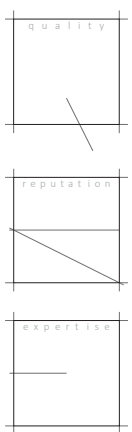
Continuous service is established upon the regular and systematic basis of ongoing employment. If either party break the continuous service, they must make it clear to the other party that there will be no further engagements. Absence for illness or injury does not break a period of continuous service.

More information can be found at:

- Fair Work Commission Unfair Dismissals benchbook
- Fair Work Act 2009
- www.fairwork.com.au

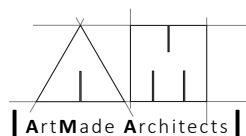
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07 October 2019 Blacktown	17 February 2020 Coffs Harbour
11 November 2019 ACA NSW Webinar	

For more information, visit our website at
nsw.childcarealliance.org.au/events/network-meetings-2019



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