

COVID-19

YOUR RIGHTS TO A SAFE & HEALTHY WORKPLACE

Workers in the early childhood education and care sector have always been exposed to greater risk of contracting infectious diseases than many other workers. Exposure to COVID-19 poses a significant risk to the health and safety of the 200,000 early childhood educators across Australia.

If you feel unsafe at work call your Union IMMEDIATELY.

The Prime Minister has declared that early childhood education and care services are essential services. This means that centres are currently staying open.



EXPOSURE OR POSSIBLE EXPOSURE AT YOUR CENTRE:

- Your employer should not be letting anyone who has the virus, or who has been exposed to the virus, attend the centre.
- If someone attends the centre who has the virus, or your centre has been exposed to the virus, the United Workers Union recommends that the centre is immediately shut down for the health of both staff & children.
- If your employer refuses to shut down the centre you can refuse to carry out work if you have a reasonable concern that you will expose yourself to a serious risk.

Being asked to work in a centre that has been exposed to the virus is an imminent risk to your health & safety.

If your employer refuses to shut down the centre after exposure, call your Union IMMEDIATELY. Your Union can give you advice on your rights & responsibilities.

INFECTION CONTROL MEASURES:

- Your employer should have a workplace plan for dealing with COVID-19 which includes practical information on infection control measures.
- You should have access to the protective equipment you need.
- Your employer must consult with you about their plan to address the threat of COVID-19.

BEING PRESSURED TO ATTEND WORK:

- Unwell early childhood educators should never attend work or feel pressured to attend work.
- Your employer has a duty to monitor conditions at work. This includes making sure people know how to report risks and what to do if they are feeling unwell.
- Employers are able to seek waivers for ratios during the pandemic and they should do so if needed to ensure educator and family safety.
- Your employer should be supporting you to stay home to reduce the community infection rates by providing you with special paid leave if it is unsafe for you to attend work.

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WHAT DOES YOUR EMPLOYER NEED TO DO?

Your employer should have a workplace plan for dealing with COVID-19 which includes practical information on infection control measures. They should provide the protective equipment you need.

- Your employer has an obligation to ensure your workplace is always safe and your health is protected. During this global pandemic your employer must take action to ensure you do not contract COVID-19 while at work.
- The best way to protect both staff and children is to make sure that anyone who has been diagnosed or exposed to the virus does not come into the centre. When staff must self-isolate, the employer should provide special paid leave.
- Your employer should not be letting children attend the centre if their parents, siblings or close family members are confirmed as having the virus.

WHY IS SUPPORT IMPORTANT?

It is essential that workers are supported to take the measures necessary to help control the spread of the virus.

- Casual workers, and others without access to leave, are more likely to attend work whilst sick for fear of a loss of income or future shifts.
- Workers who are not supported to isolate are at greater risk of not identifying themselves.
- All workers need access to paid special leave, and to be supported to identify potential exposure and isolate at home.



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