

UNITED WORKERS UNION ECEC RULES TO STOP THE SPREAD OF COVID-19:

Staff, parents and the community must have confidence that centres are doing everything they can to have safe and healthy centres that are actively limiting the spread of COVID-19.

As schools across Australia are closing, early childhood education is the only place where children can receive care while health workers save lives, cleaners and council workers keep our homes and cities clean, and retail staff work hard to make sure we have everything we need to get through this crisis.

Early childhood education and care need clear and strong rules to make sure workers, children and parents are confident that centres stay safe and healthy.

Educators cannot practice social distancing with very young children. Therefore they need to be confident that everything possible has been done to prevent any infection getting into their environment. This 6 point plan gives confidence to educators and parents that early education is as safe as possible for everyone.

It is the only way that this essential service can safely remain operating.

MANAGING WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY

1. It is the requirement of all Centre Directors, Organisations and/or approved providers to develop sufficient plans and processes needed to operationalise these requirements.
2. These plans must meet or exceed the requirements of the National Quality Standards Quality Area 2 and the relevant legislated workplace health and safety requirements.
3. At no point can a Centre's decisions supplant any workplace health and safety laws or the most recent health department advice on COVID-19.

Below is our 6 point plan for maintaining a safe and healthy early childhood education centre.

..... **STEP ONE: PRE-ENTRY SCREENING**

1. Every day each child must have their temperature taken in the Centre foyer by an educator before being admitted into the Centre. If no central foyer exists, a central point for screening must be implemented. This may need to be located outside the service entry.
2. The parent of a child (or children) can accompany the child (or children) as far as the foyer (or entry point), but cannot go into the Centre either at drop off or pick up, or in-between.
3. A child must have a temperature no higher than 37.5 degrees. If the temperature is higher than 37.5 degrees the child will be refused access and the parent will be told to take the child home. The child will only be accepted upon a subsequent day if they:
 - a) Have medical clearance showing that they are not infected by COVID-19; and,
 - b) Their temperature has dropped back to 37.5 degrees; and,

Children will have their temperature checked and recorded again at midday. If their temperature has spiked, process will be as above.

4. If a child is unsettled upon drop off, and as a consequence their temperature is above 37.5 degrees, the parent will be asked to leave and return to the centre in 30 mins.
5. The thermometer used must be sterilised prior to use on the child, and must be re-sterilised immediately after use.
6. Only one child and their parent (unless a parent is dropping off more than one child) may enter the foyer area at a time for pre-entry screening.
7. If there is a line of parents and children outside the centre, the 1.5 metre social distancing gap should be kept between the families. This should be effected by designating the standing spots every 1.5 metres so parents know where to stand and wait.
8. Children's entry time into the Centre should be staggered, and capped at 15 families per 30 minutes. The start times should prioritise family groupings. Two educators will conduct pre-screening.
9. To ensure that pre-screening checks can run efficiently the parent must email necessary daily notifications before children are taken to the centre. This is to ensure conversations upon drop off are kept to a minimum.
10. The educator conducting the pre-entry screening must wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment. This includes face masks and gloves.
11. If a child has a temperature over 37.5 degrees the foyer shall be comprehensively cleaned (including the door and door handles used to access the foyer). The educator shall remove and dispose of their Personal Protective Equipment and comprehensively clean themselves prior to any new children being admitted.
12. If a child does not present with a fever, parents must confirm and sign that they have not taken any fever reducing medication prior to drop off (e.g. paracetamol, ibuprofen).

..... **STEP TWO: ADEQUATE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT**

1. Before a Centre opens the Director must be satisfied that there is sufficient Personal Protective Equipment to last 48 hours.
2. Personal Protective Equipment includes:
 - a) Antibacterial soap
 - b) Disposable gloves
 - c) Face masks
 - d) Thermometers
 - e) Sterilising equipment
 - f) Cleaning detergent and disinfectant
 - g) Cleaning mops and buckets
 - h) Antibacterial floor cleaner
 - i) Toilet paper
 - j) Nappies
3. A Centre must not open until there is sufficient Personal Protective Equipment.
4. Centre Directors must have access to appropriate funding to replenish Personal Protective Equipment.
5. It is the responsibility of the organisation to support Centres in accessing and sourcing appropriate PPE. This may include creating community links between centres for resource sharing.

..... **STEP THREE: ADEQUATE TIME FOR WORKERS TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS**

1. Educators must be provided with time to take the following precautions:
 - a) If travelling directly from home to the centre, workers may arrive and leave directly in work clothes and shoes.
 - b) If travelling between locations before arriving at the centre, workers must bring their work clothes and shoes with them to work and from work in a sealed bag. They must change into and out of their work clothes inside the centre.
 - c) Workers must have 2 different bags for transport clothes between centre and home:
 - i. One plastic/washable bag for clean clothes and shoes
 - ii. One plastic/washable bag for dirty clothes and shoes
 - d) If workers are not returning home directly after work, they must follow steps outlined in points (b) and (c).
2. All educators must also wash their face and hands comprehensively upon arrival and departure from the centre. They must be given 20 minutes paid time before the commencement and at the conclusion of work to complete the steps in stage one.
3. Educators must isolate and wash their work clothes prior to wearing them again back at the Centre.
4. Employers must pay a weekly laundry allowance.
5. Educators must have their temperature taken each morning before being admitted to the Centre.
6. Educators must shower and wash before being admitted into the Centre.
7. Educators should shower and wash upon leaving the Centre when they get home.
8. If an educator does not present with a fever, they must confirm and sign that they have not taken any fever reducing medication prior to arriving at work (e.g. paracetamol, ibuprofen).
9. Educators will have their temperature checked and recorded again during the day. If their temperature has spiked, they must be immediately excluded from the service.
10. Educators will not leave the centre during break times, to minimise the possibility of cross contamination. Employers will ensure that all employees are provided with paid meal breaks.

..... **STEP FOUR: ADEQUATE CLEANING**

1. High traffic areas in the Centre must be comprehensively cleaned every 2 hours. This includes door knobs, hand rails, coded door entries, exit buttons and so on.
2. Every toy and surface must be comprehensively cleaned twice per day.
3. In addition, at the end of each day, after the last child leaves, the entire Centre, including all objects and surfaces must be comprehensively cleaned by a professional cleaner.
4. Centres that provide bedding for rest periods, for example: sheets, pillows or blankets, will ensure that bedding will not be shared between children.
5. If families provide bedding they will be required to:
 - a) Provide freshly laundered sheets on a daily basis.
 - b) Bring clean bedding to the centre in a plastic/washable bag.
 - c) Provide one plastic/washable bag for dirty bedding to be sent home in.

..... **STEP FIVE: ADEQUATE STAFFING**

1. Under-the-roof ratios must not be used during the COVID-19 epidemic.
2. Additional staff must be rostered for cleaning. Educators cannot be responsible for deep cleaning while fulfilling their other duties to children.
3. Where possible, group sizes must be smaller than ratio to limit cross infection.
4. In each room, an additional educator must be employed per room.
5. Rooms must split children into two groups and rotate between indoor/outdoor to limit the number of children per square metre.
6. During drop off and pick-up periods separate rooms cannot be merged
7. An exception to the above is that children in the same family should be kept together regardless of age to limit cross infection. In this case, mixed aged ratios need to apply. At all times, ratios should be maintained above national recommendations.
8. It is the responsibility of the Centre Director and the organisation to employ and roster educators as required to cover direct contact ratios during peak times, while staffing for pre-screenings and cleaning priorities.
9. Transitional meal times must be observed, capped at a maximum of ratio 1 ed:chn of the age group. Therefore, 1:4 for under 2s, 1:5 for 2-3s, 1:10 for 3s and over.

..... **STEP SIX: HYGIENE**

1. Staff and children must wash their hands on an hourly basis, and at the following times:
 - a) On arrival and departure from the Centre
 - b) Before and after consuming food or drink
 - c) After cleaning children's faces
 - d) After playing with toys or playing outside
 - e) When hands are visibly dirty
 - f) After going to the toilet or helping a child go to the toilet, or changing a nappy
 - g) After handling rubbish, household or garden chemicals, or anything that could be contaminated
 - h) Before you preparation of food or handling of bottles
 - i) After wiping/blowing your nose or sneezing
 - j) After patting an animal
 - k) After cleaning up or touching sores, faeces, a wound, blood, vomit or other bodily fluids.
 - l) After removing gloves
 - m) Before and after giving medication

EXCLUSIONS AND INFECTION

1. The following people will be excluded from entering a centre(all staff subject to exclusion will be paid):
 - a) Any worker or child who has a temperature reading over 37.5 degrees.
 - b) Any worker or child who indicates any breathing difficulty
 - c) Any worker or child who has been outside of the State or Territory in which the Centre is located within the last 14 days
 - d) Any worker or child who has been in contact with a person who is suspected of or has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
 - e) At the discretion of the Centre, any child who has, or resides with someone who has a pre-existing health issue that makes them more vulnerable if they contract COVID-19.
 - f) Any worker who has, or resides with someone who has a pre-existing health issue that makes them more vulnerable if they contract COVID-19. As these workers cannot be guaranteed a safe working environment they will be placed on paid leave or provided with safe options to work from home until they can be guaranteed of a safe workplace. These options may include completing programming or training.

EXCLUSIONS AND INFECTION (cont'd)

2. The following rules apply if a child, parent or worker has attended the Centre after being diagnosed with COVID-19:
 - a) Every parent and worker must be informed immediately
 - b) The Centre must be shut down immediately
 - c) All relevant departments and regulatory bodies must be notified
 - d) A registered industrial cleaning company must be brought in to do a comprehensive clean of the centre to make sure it is virus free
 - e) All educators and children must undergo a COVID-19 test to ensure they are virus free.

Only once the above is done, may a centre re-open. Centres are to comply and follow the advice of the relevant health department.