



Early Childhood Education Weekly Update

12 December 2022

What you need to know this week:

- Our Information & Enquiries (I&E) team will be closed for the public holidays on 26-28 December and 2 January.
- Services are reminded to review their current hot weather processes and be mindful of hot weather risks.
- Services are reminded to keep up COVID-safe measures to stop the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory and viral illnesses during the holiday season.
- Applications for the Quality and Participation grants program close today. Eligible services can apply for grants of up to \$17,500 in funding to assist with increasing access and participation of vulnerable children.

Sector wide updates

Information and Enquiries operation over the end of year period

Our Information & Enquiries (I&E) team will continue to operate over the end of year period but will be closed on:

- 26-28 December
- 2 January.

Due to staffing arrangements, it may take I&E a little longer than usual to get back to you. We appreciate your patience and understanding.

What to do next

You can contact the I&E team on 1800 619 113 or by emailing ececd@det.nsw.edu.au.

Hot weather risks for children

As we move into December and the weather warms up, it's important that services are mindful of hot weather risks during our summer months.

Hot weather creates specific risks to children because of their high susceptibility to heat-related illnesses and increased risk of accident and injury.

To ensure children remain safe, services should be especially mindful of the following risks during hot weather:

- burns from hot surfaces and equipment, including soft fall
- bushfires and air pollution
- sunburn and dehydration
- access to water
- heat-related illnesses
- transport, particularly children being left in vehicles

Services should also be checking their physical environments for any additional hazards due to current warm and wet weather. This includes checking for snakes, spiders, and stagnant water that may be attracting mosquitoes.

What you should do next

Take the time to review the current hot weather processes in your service.

More information

Visit our [hot weather risks webpage](#).

Now is the time to stay COVID safe

Our community is experiencing an increase in COVID-19 cases so it's important that COVID safety is top of mind once again. This is particularly important as we head into the holiday season as higher COVID risk activities such as get-togethers and events start to fill up our calendars.

There are simple ways services can help keep staff, children, and families COVID safe:

- **Vaccinations:** Staying up to date with [COVID-19 vaccinations](#), including boosters, not only protects you from serious illness, it also protects friends, family, the community and healthcare system.
- **Be COVID safe:** Being COVID safe means choosing to meet outdoors or in [well ventilated spaces](#), ensuring you keep windows open where possible, wearing a [mask](#) in indoor public spaces, on public transport and in crowded places, and washing or sanitising hands regularly.
- **Stay home if you are unwell:** If you have cold or flu symptoms (runny nose, sore throat, cough, and fever), get tested for COVID-19. To support services, the department has provided additional supplies of Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) to identify cases of COVID-19 in your community quickly. Stay at home while you have any symptoms, even if you receive a negative test result. If you live or have had contact with someone who has tested positive, monitor for symptoms, regularly test for COVID-19 and stay home where possible.

More information

To stay up to date with the latest information, visit our [COVID-19 guidelines for ECEC services webpage](#) and the NSW Government's [COVID-19 webpage](#).

Closing today: Quality and Participation grants

Applications for the Quality and Participation grants program close at **midnight tonight**.

Once you have gathered documentation on the intended use of funds, which can include invoices and quotes, applications may take less than 15 minutes.

[Eligible services](#) can apply for grants of up to \$17,500 in funding to assist with increasing the access and participation of children from low-income families, Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse children.

How to apply

Submit your application online via [Smartygrants](#) today.

More information

For more information, including spending rules for the grants, visit the [Quality and Participation Grants Program webpage](#).

Early Years Commitment

Each week we will provide updates about the Early Years Commitment and answer your most asked questions.

Visit the [Early Years Commitment](#) website to find out more or email us at EarlyYearsCommitment@det.nsw.edu.au if you have additional questions.

This week's question

What can the funds from ECEC VET scholarships be used for?

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) professionals are invaluable to maintaining quality education and care to children across NSW. To help develop and foster a highly qualified and sustainable ECEC workforce, the department is offering ECEC VET scholarships to those enrolled part time or full time in a Diploma (Qualification Pathway - CHC50121) or Certificate III (Qualification Pathway - CHC30121) in ECEC.

Funds from the ECEC VET scholarships can be used to offset prospective and retrospective costs associated with studying, including, but not limited to, purchasing technology, stationery, internet access, accommodation, and transportation.

Successful ECEC VET scholarship applicants completing a Certificate III are eligible to receive up to a total of \$3,000 and scholarship recipients completing a Diploma are eligible for a total of \$5000.

For more information on eligibility and how to apply, visit our [Early Childhood Careers microsite](#). Applications close on 15 January 2023.

Don't forget

- Changes to the assessment and rating process will be implemented incrementally beginning in mid-April 2023. To support services through these changes, the department will be communicating and engaging with the sector throughout February and March.
- Services impacted by flooding are urged to stay informed on local situations and taking action to [prevent mosquito bites](#), following an increased risk of Japanese encephalitis.
- Applications are now open for the ECEC Vocational Education and Training Scholarships Program, offering [Certificate III](#) and [Diploma](#) scholarships to help cover study costs, like transport and technology. Applications close on 15 January 2023.
- Free in-service inclusion support for children from multicultural, migrant or refugee backgrounds is available for preschools through the [Preschool Multicultural Support Program](#).
- Accreditation requirements are changing for Early Childhood Teachers. View the [NSW Teacher Accreditation Manual](#) and [interim procedures for ECTs](#) to understand the changes.
- The NSW Government has commissioned the [Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal \(IPART\)](#) to review the early learning sector and make

recommendations to improve affordability, accessibility and consumer choice in ECEC across NSW.

- Reminder: it is the final month to complete the Australian Childhood Foundation's free [trauma-informed practice training](#).

Families Corner

We're sharing resources made especially for families to increase their knowledge on the early childhood education and care sector. This is something you can take and pass on to families via your own communication channels.

- The department offers a [resource for families](#) on supporting children to learn how to work with numbers and letters.
- The [Little Yarns Podcast series](#) is a co-listening podcast series about the diverse languages, stories and Countries of Indigenous Australia, delivered by the ABC and aimed at young children and families listening together at home.

For more information

If you have any questions about your service operation you can contact the Information and Enquiries team on 1800 619 113 or by emailing ececd@det.nsw.edu.au.

For the latest COVID-19 advice please visit the [COVID-19 guidelines for ECEC services](#).



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