



# Early Childhood Educators' Well-being Project (ECEWP)

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## Background

Over 900,000 Australian children attend early childhood (EC) children's services each week. The 200,000 educators who work with these children need to be well in order to provide stable, stimulating, supportive, effective learning environments. However, relatively little is known about EC educators' well-being.

## Aim

The Early Childhood Educators' Well-being Project (ECEWP) takes a holistic approach to examining the psychological and physiological aspects of EC educators' well-being within the context of their work environments, and the broader socio-cultural-political environment.

## What do we know about well-being?

Compromised educator well-being is costly - to educators themselves but also to the organisations that employ them. Costs can relate to absenteeism due to illness or injury, meaning organisations must employ casual staff and/or pay higher workers' compensation premiums if claims are made. Absenteeism may also mean that children have unstable care arrangements and relationships with families may be compromised.

Through our research we are assessing:

- **educators' psychological well-being** through a range of psychometric assessments
- **educators' physiological well-being** through health screening; biometric measures of height, weight, flexibility and blood pressure; cortisol measures; and cardio-respiratory activity and physical effort using [wearable technology](#)
- **the impact of organisational and social factors** on educators' well-being
- **the impact of educators' well-being on their interactions with children.**

By taking this holistic view, the data we gather provides a comprehensive understanding of EC educators' well-being that can inform interventions to better support and sustain the workforce. These interventions will have benefits for educators themselves, the services and organisations they work for and, importantly, for children and their families.

## Conceptualising well-being

Taking the weaknesses of the body of research into account, along with findings from research concerning educators' well-being completed in the past 30 years, Tamara Cumming and Sandie Wong (2018) have developed a [holistic conceptualisation of educator well-being](#). The model takes into account the complex interactions of individual, organisational, and broader social and cultural factors, to understand well-being in EC professionals.



*Holistic conceptualisation of early childhood educators' well-being ©*

## MORE INFORMATION

- Video <https://youtu.be/QqfNX7f4XnQ>  
Facebook [ECEWP](#)  
Twitter [ECEWP\\_Aus](#)  
Email [ecewp@mq.edu.au](mailto:ecewp@mq.edu.au)



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## ECEWP sub-projects

### CONCEPTUALISATION

This project [conceptualised educator well-being](#) (Cumming & Wong, 2019) and included a [comprehensive literature review](#) (Cumming, 2017). We are also exploring how educators understand well-being both in Australia and internationally with researchers in Canada, Finland, Hong Kong SAR, Iceland, New Zealand and Singapore.

### STATE OF WELL-BEING

This ongoing project, supported by multiple EC organisations, measures educators' psychological and physiological well-being within organisational contexts. To date, we have collected data on over 100 educators and centre directors working in centre-based services across several Australian states and territories. [Initial findings have been published](#) (Cumming et al., 2020) in scholarly and practitioner outlets.

### SOCIAL, CULTURAL, POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

This project explored educators' well-being in the context of COVID-19. Over 800 educators responded to an online survey about the state of their psychological and physical health and the role their workplace played in supporting well-being during the pandemic.

### ORGANISATIONS

This project explored [how organisations support educators' well-being](#) (Logan et al., 2020), and [how their approaches changed during COVID-19](#) (Logan et al., 2021). Interviews were conducted with workplace well-being managers (or equivalent) to identify their views, knowledge and understandings of educators' well-being, and to determine what supports were in place.

### INTERVENTIONS

Through these projects we are seeking to understand the impact of interventions aimed at supporting educators' well-being. We are currently working with providers to evaluate the impact of clinical supervision on centre directors' well-being, and to document effective well-being initiatives.

### INTERACTIONS

We are currently exploring how educators' well-being impacts their interactions with children. Pending funding, we will work with ten partner EC organisations on this exciting research.

### INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

We are working with partners in Canada, Finland, Hong Kong SAR, Iceland, New Zealand and Singapore to understand educator well-being in these contexts.

