



Early Childhood Educators' Well-being Project (ECEWP)

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Introduction

We know that 2021 has been a particularly difficult year for many educators and early childhood education service providers. We acknowledge and respect the important work educators and service providers do to support children and their families and communities, and the contributions they make to Australian society more broadly. Thank you!

We wish you all a happy end of the year and hope that 2022 will be much better.



Australian Research Council update

Early this year we worked with a number of Partner Organisations to submit an application for funding through the Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Program.

Our proposed study aims to build on and expand the knowledge and learnings from ECEWP – the only study to date that has examined the holistic well-being of Australian early childhood (EC) educators.

Funding announcements from the ARC for 2022 have been delayed and we hope to have further news soon.

Educators and COVID-19

Despite Australia being held in high regard around the world in relation to managing the COVID-19 pandemic, the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector has been hard-hit in a variety of ways.

In response, we undertook a sub-project on educators and COVID-19 to outline the governmental and organisational responses to the pandemic in relation to the EC sector, and to understand the impacts on well-being.

To examine organisational perspectives, we conducted a multi-site case study with five senior managers or CEOs of EC organisations. Our findings were published in the [*Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*](#).

In addition, over 800 educators working in a variety of EC settings across Australia responded to our online survey about the state of their psychological and physical health and how their workplace supported well-being during the pandemic. Educators answered questions from the Early Childhood Educator Well-being Survey (ECEWS), plus additional questions related to their experiences of COVID-19.

Our findings will be published in early 2022 as a chapter in a book published by Springer Nature titled *The COVID-19 pandemic: Effects on early childhood education and care*.

We are very pleased to have received a generous donation during 2021 from an industry partner. These funds will support us in continuing to research and advocate for Australian early childhood educators' well-being.

Recent articles



We have had two articles published in the *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*. The first examines the [interactions between educators' well-being, work environments and 'quality'](#), as well as changing policy and practice. The second presents a case study of [how ECEC leaders have supported educators' well-being during COVID-19](#).



Our article on [collegiality, quality and well-being](#) was published in Early Childhood Australia's *Every Child* magazine (Vol. 27, No. 1, 2021). ECA will also release an *Everyday Learning Series* booklet we authored on happy, healthy and sustainable ECEC workplaces.



The Independent Education Union of Australia published our piece on the [psychological wellbeing of educators](#) in the May issue of *Bedrock*. The article covers why educators' psychological well-being is crucial for quality education and care, common causes of mental stress and injury, warning signs, the impact of COVID-19, resources for educators and how to take action.

International update

In our [last issue](#) we introduced the international members of our research team, working across Finland, Canada, Hong Kong, Singapore and The Netherlands. We continue to meet online monthly to discuss issues and plan research.

In **Finland** Dr Mari Saha and in **Canada** Dr Brooke Richardson have collected survey data on EC educators' well-being that can be used for both in-country findings and cross-country comparisons with our Australian data. Dr Saha's Master's student Eerika Rouvinen has recently been accepted to undertake doctoral research on EC educators' well-being and predictors of their intention to leave the profession.

Congratulations Eerika! We hope she will spend part of her candidature with us in Australia.

Dr Jin Sun has received funding to undertake data collection on EC educators' well-being in **China**, and she has also just submitted a grant application to the highly competitive University Grants Committee, **Hong Kong**. In **Singapore**, Dr Ng Ee Lynn will soon start collecting data from educators of infants, and she is preparing a working paper on educators' well-being and high-quality ECEC.

We look forward to more opportunities to examine educator well-being across the globe.

Media coverage

ABC NEWS | [Disturbing levels of stress and injury among educators](#)

THE CONVERSATION | ['Insulting' and 'degrading': Budget funding for childcare may help families but educators are still being paid pennies](#)

WOMEN'S AGENDA | [What researchers are learning about the health of early childhood educators](#)

THE SECTOR | [Emotionally exhausted, physically worn – what researchers know about educator health](#)

THE LIGHTHOUSE | [Early childhood educators 'underpaid, undervalued'](#)

Recent presentations

This year we have delivered presentations on our research to a wide range of audiences, including the National Nutrition Network Early Childhood Education and Care group; Early Childhood Australia's Central West branch; the 2021 Australasian Journal of Early Childhood Research Symposium; Community Connections Services Australia; Gowrie NSW and the Media Centre for Educational Research Australia.

MORE INFORMATION

Video <https://youtu.be/QqfNX7f4XnQ>

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