



Early Childhood Educators' Well-being Project (ECEWP)

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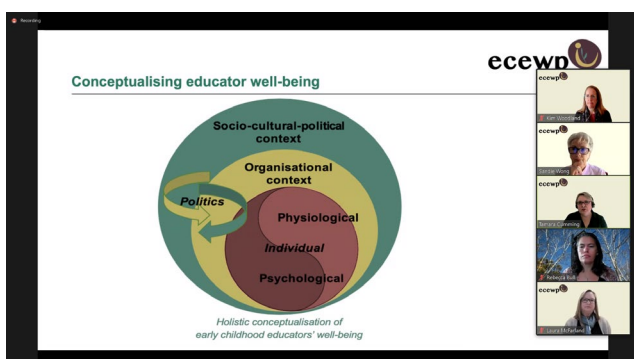
Introduction

Hello and welcome to the eighth ECEWP newsletter. We know that 2022 continues to be a difficult year for many educators and early childhood education (ECE) service providers. In particular, the ongoing effects of COVID-19 have had a huge impact on the ECE workforce – educators have been getting sick and it's been challenging for many services to stay open to meet the needs of children and families in the face of huge staff shortages.

The ECEWP team acknowledges and respects 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!

Now, perhaps more than ever before, it is critical that we investigate, and try to find out 'what works', to support educator well-being. The ECEWP team is firmly committed to this mission through our research and advocacy work.

Stakeholder update event



On 17 May we held an online event to update stakeholders on our recent research findings, future directions and ways to contribute.

Over 40 people attended the event, and we appreciated the opportunity to meet with policymakers, representatives from large and small EC organisations, unions, professional development organisations, educators and academics. Feedback was very positive!

“Your work on the ECEWP is so valuable and I hope that one day the evidence you secure will provide an advocacy platform for reforms to better look after the well-being of our workforce.”

I read all your papers and try to practically apply to practice when I am supporting early learning services to implement actions to support educators' well-being. In this way, your work is already making a difference.”

Dr Kathryn Hopps, Be You Consultant

If you would like to receive our stakeholder information package, please email us at ecewp@mq.edu.au



Q&A on educator well-being

At our recent update event, stakeholders asked some great questions and indicated interest in a number of areas related to educator well-being. Here are responses to some of the questions – more to come in the next issue.

What form will the culmination of all your projects take and will it be accessible?

The projects we're conducting are all contributing to the 'story' of EC educator well-being. We publish about these projects in scholarly journals and book chapters, as well as in professional journals. We also share our work in conferences and other types of presentations, through our biannual newsletters, and soon on our new website.

What are the feedback loops to organisations that participate?

We aim to work collaboratively with our funding partners. We write reports for funders, as well as offer to give presentations on the findings. Educators who participate in the physiological assessments are also provided with a summary of their individual results.

How can we get big organisations to take these findings seriously?

We find that the organisations we work with are interested in the findings and receptive to making changes. In the current employment market, we would encourage educators to ask their employers what they are doing to support educators' well-being.

Can you tell us more about the supervision project?

This project was an evaluation of professional supervision for centre directors working in geographic areas experiencing disadvantage. This research highlights the benefits of supervision for supporting centre directors. We are preparing a journal article at the moment and will provide the details as soon as it is published.

Do you have information around worker's compensation in the sector?

Follow [this link](#) to read an article we wrote on our analysis of NSW worker's compensation data for early childhood education.

Will there be a central place to access your research?

Yes! We will soon have an ECEWP website attached to the new Macquarie School of Education, Centre for Research in Early Childhood Education. For now, please 'like' our [Facebook](#) page – that's where we keep everyone up to date on our work – and also follow us on [Twitter](#).

Australian Research Council update

In 2021, together with a number of Partner Organisations, we submitted an application for funding through the Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Program to build on and expand the knowledge and learnings from ECEWP.

After encouraging feedback from reviewers, we were very disappointed to learn that we were unsuccessful in our application. However, our commitment to evidencing educators' well-being continues, and we are planning to submit a revised application in the next round of funding later in 2022.

In the meantime, we are also preparing to pilot the use of two new research tools which will form part of the ongoing research project.

International news

Our colleague from Finland, Dr Mari Saha, has received funding from the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture to continue her research on educator well-being. Eerika Rouvinen has also received funding from the Emil Aaltonen Foundation to complete a PhD assessing factors predicting educator turnover and intention to leave, in Finland and Australia. She will be supervised by Mari and Rebecca. In addition, our colleague in Singapore, Dr Ee Lynn Ng, has submitted a working paper to the Ministry of Education advocating for a focus on educator well-being in future research.

AJEC Call for Papers

The *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood* (AJEC) is [calling for papers](#) for a special issue on early childhood global workforce challenges. Full papers are to be submitted by 1 February 2023.

Recent and upcoming presentations

In February, Rebecca Bull and Laura McFarland presented a roundtable at the 2022 *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood Research Symposium*. Their topic was *Should I stay or should I go? Factors predicting intention to leave the early childhood profession*.

On 30 May, Tamara presented [The Early Childhood Educators' Well-being Project: An approach to assessing and advocating for educators' well-being holistically](#) at the online Early Childhood Seminar Series, Faculty of Education and Social Work, at the University of Auckland.

In July, Sandie will travel to the 74th OMEP World Assembly and Conference in Greece. She will present a symposium titled *Researching educators' well-being: Lessons from Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Canada*. In this symposium we will talk about how we have worked together to develop rigorous, cross-cultural research using ECEWP resources and models.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

Academics from the Macquarie University School of Education, including Tamara Cumming, Sandie Wong and Rebecca Bull, have submitted an initial response to the NSW Government's [Women's Economic Opportunities Review](#). The review will focus on supporting women to enter, re-enter and stay in the workforce, as well as on opportunities to improve access to, and affordability of, EC education.

Recent publications

As part of their *Everyday Learning Series*, Early Childhood Australia have published our resource on [developing a happy, healthy and sustainable EC workplace](#). The premise of the book is that EC workplaces are unique, and a conscious effort needs to be made to design or adapt them so they support educators, staff, leaders and their practice.

The book includes case studies and tips on how to develop well workplaces. It can be purchased through ECA.



Our book chapter on the [impact of COVID-19 on EC educators' well-being in Australia](#) has been included in an international book published by Springer Nature (available soon). The chapter publishes findings from our online survey of over 800 educators and service leaders working in a variety of EC settings across Australia. We asked them about their psychological and physical health and how their workplace supported well-being during the pandemic.

McFarland, L., Cumming, T., Wong, S., & Bull, R. (2022). 'My cup was empty': The impact of COVID-19 on early childhood educator well-being. In J. Pattnaik & M. R. Jalongo (Eds.), *The COVID-19 pandemic: Effects on early childhood education and care*. Springer Nature.

Media and other coverage

ABC NEWS | [Australian childcare 'in crisis'](#), as new figures show 11% need special federal government waiver to legally operate

Belong Be Become | [The Early Childhood Educators' Well-being Project](#) [interview]

We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners of the lands, past and present, where we live and work.

MORE INFORMATION

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