



## Early Childhood Educators' Well-being Project (ECEWP) EDUCATORS AND COVID-19

Professor Sandie Wong,<sup>1</sup> Dr Tamara Cumming,<sup>1</sup> Professor Rebecca Bull,<sup>1</sup> Dr Laura McFarland,<sup>2</sup> & Dr Helen Logan<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Macquarie University <sup>2</sup>University of Melbourne <sup>3</sup>Charles Sturt University

### Background

The 'Educators and COVID-19 Project' is nested within the Early Childhood Educators' Well-being Project (ECEWP). ECEWP takes a holistic approach to examining the psychological and physiological aspects of early childhood (EC) educators' well-being within the context of their work environments, and the broader socio-cultural-political environment.

### Aim

Despite Australia being held in high regard around the world in relation to managing the COVID-19 pandemic, the EC sector has been hard-hit in a variety of ways. The 'Educators and COVID-19 Project' aimed to outline the governmental and organisational responses to the pandemic in relation to the EC sector, and to understand the impacts of the pandemic on educators' well-being.

### Organisations and COVID-19

As part of the 'Organisations Project', we explored [how organisations supported educators' well-being during COVID-19](#) (Logan et al., 2021). A multi-site case study was conducted with five senior managers or CEOs of EC organisations.

Selected findings included:

- Educators' well-being was negatively impacted by exposure to physical risk, fear and anxiety, financial stress and feelings of betrayal by government.
- Organisations supported educators' well-being through crisis planning, increased and focused communication, support for physical safety, well-being resources and programmes, and advocacy for and recognition of educators' contributions to society.

### Educators and COVID-19

Over 900 educators working in a variety of EC settings across Australia 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.

Educators answered questions from the existing Early Childhood Educator Well-being Survey (ECEWS), plus additional questions related to their experiences of COVID-19.

Findings have been published in a book chapter on [the impact of COVID-19 on EC educator well-being](#) by McFarland et al. (2022). Selected findings included:

- While most EC services surveyed remained open during the pandemic, educators received little training or preparation for their dramatically altered working conditions.
- Educators' mental health and emotional and financial well-being were negatively impacted.
- Educators identified some positive coping strategies they used during the crisis.
- When services had clear, consistent and reliable information from a trusted source (especially their management and peak bodies), they could plan in a timely and appropriate fashion.
- When services prioritised well-being, they were better able to provide the environments that families and children needed.

#### MORE INFORMATION

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

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Email [ecewp@mq.edu.au](mailto:ecewp@mq.edu.au)