



# Child Care

Issue 27 August 2009

UPDATE

Welcome to this edition of the Child Care Update!

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## What are the latest national developments?

Work on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care, an important part of the National Early Childhood Development Strategy, is advancing steadily.

Consultations were held in Tasmania recently about the Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) for Early Childhood Education and Care Quality reforms, with discussions covering the proposed National Quality Standard, streamlined regulatory arrangements, the Quality Rating System, and the proposed implementation arrangements.

As noted in the RIS, assessments of services against the new standard and streamlining of existing processes are proposed to commence in July 2010. New ratio and qualification requirements and regulatory arrangements would be implemented progressively in order to allow the sector time to adjust to any new requirements.

To keep up to date with developments, please refer to the website [http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Policy\\_Agenda/Quality](http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Policy_Agenda/Quality)

## CBCI Licensing Standards Review

Given that the National Quality Standard is 'on its way', as part of the Early Years Education and Care reform agenda, why did the CCU conduct a Review of the CBCI Standards in March and April this year? The primary purpose of the CBCI Review was to clarify the Standards and their implementation, not to make any major changes to the standards. The amendments took effect from 01 July 2009.

Thank you very much to those services that responded to the CBCI Review. Your comments and suggestions were much appreciated, and have been incorporated where relevant.

A full set of the amended standards, together with a new copy of the BCA Appendix – Tasmania as it relates to child care services, should have reached your service in early July. Providers who operate a number of services will receive a copy for each licensed premises, plus a 'central' provider copy.

The reviewed CBCI Standards are also posted on the CCU website, at [www.childcare.tas.gov.au](http://www.childcare.tas.gov.au) under 'What's New?'. As a quick reference, the online version at 'What's New?' has the changes to both the Standards and Explanatory Notes highlighted in green.

Included with this Child Care Update is a 'Summary' of the changes to the Standards. We hope this 'ready reference' will be of use to you.

## CBC2 (Outside School hours Care) Stage 3 Standards

Thank you to those services that contributed to the validation phase of the Stage 3 draft standards. Once again, we thank you for your valuable feedback. The finalized Stage 3 OSHC standards also came into effect on 01 July 2009.

CBC2 and CBCI/2 services have been sent a folder with the complete set of the CBC2 standards.

As with the introduction of the Stage 2 standards, an OSHC service will not be accountable against the

Stage 3 standards until its next licensing assessment – however, judging by the response from services during the validation phase, it appears that many OSHC services are already well on the way to implementing the Stage 3 standards – which is great news!

The complete CBC2 Standards are posted on the CCU website, at [www.childcare.tas.gov.au](http://www.childcare.tas.gov.au) under 'What's New?'. The online version has the Stage 3 Standards and Explanatory Notes to the Standards highlighted in green.

## **Change to the numbering of both CBC1 and CBC2 (Outside School Hours Care) Standards**

You will notice that the numbering of the Standards has been simplified, e.g. Standard 2.1.1 now reads Standard 2.1, Standard 2.1.2 now reads Standard 2.2, Standard 2.1.3 now reads 2.3 and so on.

This will involve some changes to numbering on service Action Plans as these are updated/amended, and to Conditions of Licence at licence renewals or amendments.

## **Flu Pandemic**

The CCU has been forwarding the Human Swine Flu updates by email so that services receive the information promptly.

Posters developed by DHHS have been mailed to services – we request that these posters be prominently displayed in your service.

Further valuable information can be found at [http://www.pandemic.tas.gov.au/what\\_does\\_it\\_mean\\_to\\_you/schools\\_and\\_childcare](http://www.pandemic.tas.gov.au/what_does_it_mean_to_you/schools_and_childcare)

## **Use of Alcohol based hand cleaner/'hand-rub'**

The latest Human Swine Flu Update sent to services on 4 August notes that children's use of an alcohol based hand-rub should be **under adult supervision**.

The CCU has received a couple of queries about this—rest assured, an alcohol based hand rub is perfectly safe to use under normal conditions.

Under normal conditions, it is not hazardous or toxic (it dries almost instantly).

However, the product should be kept out of reach of small children, and in a sealed container.

Contact with eyes should be avoided—eyes should be irrigated with plenty of fresh water if contact does occur, and of course, it is not to be taken internally!

With careful supervision, this is an extremely effective product.

## **Response to CCU's survey re management of staff breaks, including morning and afternoon tea breaks**

The relevant standard in CBC1 and CBC2, Standard 3.4 'Carer:child ratios are to be maintained at all times', states that *carer:child ratios are to be maintained at all times, including lunch breaks and children's sleep times*.

Following several queries about the implementation of this standard, the CCU surveyed the sector earlier this year. Thank you to those who responded – the strong theme coming through all responses was the sector's support for the standard, and an acknowledgement that staff breaks be covered, to ensure a service meets its duty of care by providing a safe environment for children.

It was interesting to read the range of strategies that services have in place to meet this standard! It quickly became clear to the CCU that a 'one equation fits all' approach would not be able to successfully provide for the widely varying circumstances in services.

Consequently, the CCU's policy is:

*In relation to morning and afternoon tea breaks, a service may meet this standard:*

**either** by having the correct ratios  
**or** by implementing a management plan which is approved by the licensing authority (CCU).

If a service elects to have a management plan to manage staff breaks, this will be included as a Condition of Licence. The service's licensing officer will check the implementation of the management plan at licence renewal visits and other service visits.

The CCU is presently developing criteria to assist any service that chooses to have a management plan with preparation of their submission to the CCU.

## **Response to CCU's survey re a service holding an approval for a person under 18 years in the staff:child ratio at the same time as holding an approval to have an unqualified carer in a qualified position**

This issue arose earlier in the year, when the CCU received several queries about whether a service could utilize both types of approvals at the same time. At that stage, the Explanatory Notes to the CBC1 Standards did not allow for it.

The CCU again surveyed the sector – and we thank everyone who responded to this survey. As you can imagine, there was a wide spectrum of responses to the scenarios and to the questions posed in the survey. Responses indicated significant sector concern that any

service is in the position to properly support and mentor either a person aged under 18 years employed within the staff:child ratio, or an unqualified person who is acting in a qualified role. Several services expressed concern that a services may not be in the position to adequately support both approvals simultaneously.

Taking all responses into consideration, the CCU developed the following policy position:

1. A service can have both approvals BUT cannot use both approvals simultaneously.
2. For services holding both approvals, there will be 3 conditions of licence (COL) -
  - a. that the service holds an approval to use a person aged 17 years of age in the ratio;
  - b. that the service holds an approval for an unqualified carer to occupy a qualified position (UQ approval); and
  - c. that the service cannot implement both approvals simultaneously.
3. Persons aged 17 years who meet all the criteria may be nominated for an approval, but **not persons under** the age of 17 years.

Amendments have been made to the CBCI Standard 3 Explanatory Notes to reflect this policy position.

The policy was implemented from 01 July 2009.

*Please note*—based on the CBCI Review consultations, persons aged 17 years may be approved for inclusion in the carer:child ratio, but not persons under the age of 17 years.

## Approval process for persons aged 17 years

Responses to the above survey additionally highlighted the sector's concern that the approval process for a person aged 17 years should clearly 'capture' its original intention, i.e. that the candidate is **exceptional**, and has already demonstrated to the service their high level capabilities.

Consequently, the CCU is revising the approval process, including development of an application form, to ensure that a service adequately addresses all the criteria.

For CBCI, the criteria include:

- The person aged 17 years meets and demonstrates excellence against the criteria listed in CBCI Standard 2.1.
- The person aged 17 years must be supervised at all times by senior staff, one of whom is qualified, i.e. the baseline is that the room/area/group require 3 staff for an approval of a person aged 17 years.
- The person who supervises a person aged 17 years cannot hold an UQ approval.
- Across the service there must be 2 qualified carers for each carer aged 17 years.
- The carer aged 17 years is undertaking training or

is working towards an approved qualification (evidence of enrolment will be required at the time of application).

- There are agreed strategies (between service, carer and the RTO) in place for the service to support the carer in their training and to monitor their progress.

For CBC2, the criteria include:

- The carer aged 17 years is adequately supervised by senior staff.
- The carer aged 17 years is undertaking training or is working towards an appropriate qualification (evidence of enrolment will be required at the time of application).
- There are agreed strategies (between service, carer and RTO) in place for the service to support the carer in their training and to monitor their progress.

**Note:** If the person aged 17 years is employed on a temporary basis (i.e. for a holiday care program) that person does not need to be undertaking training nor working towards a qualification; however, they do need to meet the criteria outlined in Standard 2.1.

*Please note*—the National Quality Standard promotes a consistent approach nationally to staffing issues. When the NQS is implemented, it may impact on (and may even remove) any discretionary factors that Tasmania has in place on issues such as employing persons aged 17 years in the carer:child ratio.

## Children's Safety....and doors

Over the past few years, there have been several accidents in services where children's fingers have been badly damaged after being caught in a door—some even requiring surgery to re-attach the finger.

The revised Standards include the issue of entrapment—please refer to:

Standard 11.7 'Building and grounds—cleanliness, repair and safety'

(c) *Gates, doors, design features, fencing and outdoor equipment must present no entrapment hazards for children.*

Standard 11 Explanatory Notes 'Are there requirements about the services buildings and grounds?' makes reference to this aspect of safety.

The CCU recognizes that this is difficult to deal with, particularly given the numbers of doors in child care services, however, the CCU encourages services to consider how they manage this issue—for example, some services have installed door jamb covers or hinge guards which provide significant protection. Supervision is a key factor.

'Finger Safe', a product which prevents children from putting fingers and hands in the hinge side of door jambs is available through Kidsafe NSW. For doors which swing further than 90°, 'Finger Safe' is 260mm x 1385mm, and costs \$40 plus postage. The order form is available at [www.kidsafe.org/safety\\_infosheets.htm](http://www.kidsafe.org/safety_infosheets.htm)

## Food Safety Issues ....

In recent months, the question of food safety compliance in child care services has been raised.

The main concern relates to the application of *Food Safety Standard 3.3.1 - Food Safety Programs for Food Service to Vulnerable Persons* to services which provide only basic foods, such as fruit platters or those which handle only lunch-box foods. Valuable information from Eric Johnson (Principal Adviser, Food Safety, DHHS), was emailed to services some time ago.

Assistance on risk evaluation can also be sought from DHHS should that be needed. Eric has invited services to call him for assistance on this – his number is (03) 62 227705.

*Many thanks to Eric for working with Council Environmental Health Officers to develop this approach and for preparing the advice which was circulated to services.*

## Audits of Food Safety Programs

Many services attended workshops recently to learn about developing a simple and effective Food Safety Program (FSP), appropriate to the level and types of food served at their service.

Services required to institute an FSP are also required to have this FSP audited.

Further information is available on the DHHS website [http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/news\\_and\\_media/new\\_food\\_safety\\_auditor\\_approval\\_requirements](http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/news_and_media/new_food_safety_auditor_approval_requirements)

The CCU understands that the following organisations in Tasmania are available to assist with FSP audits:

- Jamie Wood and Owen Hunt at Environmental Health Services (Tas), on 6228 1600
- Tom Boarder of Tom Boarder Consulting [trbconsulting@yahoo.com.au](mailto:trbconsulting@yahoo.com.au)
- Felicia Kow ph: 6335 4473
- Dale Anderson ph: 6393 7059 (cannot audit facilities operated/funded by DHHS)
- Andrew Groves ph: 6424 7217 (cannot audit facilities operated/funded by DHHS)

Further information is available on the DHHS website at [http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/news\\_and\\_media](http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/news_and_media), and follow the link to 'Food Safety Auditors and approval Requirements'. The CCU understands that services may be contacted by companies that provide food audits.

## First Aid Update

**As previously advised, services should check with their preferred RTO that the RTO is able to deliver Emergency Asthma Management (EAM).**

The reason is because child care personnel require an EAM qualification, EITHER 21886VIC certificate OR a

qualification which has been approved as equivalent, to obtain a supply of Salbutamol (ventolin) and also to administer it.

Some RTOs now deliver the EAM 21886VIC course in conjunction with 301B'Apply First Aid'.

Information about RTO's and the courses included on their scope can be found at <http://www.childcare.tas.gov.au/> go to 'What's New?', *First Aid Standard from 01.01.2009 and First Aid RTO's*.

## And to news about some staff changes at the CCU!

**Chris Symons**, staged an all too brief return to the CCU earlier in the year. Chris has now moved to Tasmanian Polytechnic, to take up the position of Client Services Senior Regional Manager.

**Joanne Maher** has joined the CCU's southern office, commencing on 6 April. Joanne has worked in the child care sector for 23 years, in both Tasmania and New Zealand, most recently working as Team Leader at Mersey-Leven In Home Child Care, southern office. Prior to this, Joanne worked with Sorell Council for 6 years in Family Day Care and In Home Child Care.

**Michelle Potter** is a welcome addition to the North-West team. Michelle, who spent her childhood in the North-West, has had almost 24 years in child care around the state. Michelle has worked in the North-West for some years now and most recently was director of ABC, Devonport for almost 3 ½ years.

**Viv Mitchell**, Team Leader (Licensing) will be taking long service leave from 7 September until 16 October—enjoy it, Viv!

**Allison Reid and Lyn Chapman** will share the leadership of the Western licensing team in Viv's absence.



Pictured above are Michelle Potter (left) and Joanne Maher

