



## Goodstart Early Learning and United Workers Union Joint Position to slow the spread of COVID-19:

The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) coronavirus (COVID-19) [statement](#) on 18 March 2020, has provided high level risk mitigation measures for the early childhood education and care sector. This document highlights our adherence to these measures and how we are achieving this in our centres in partnership with our staff.

While educators can practice social distancing from parents and from each other, they cannot practice social distancing with very young children. Therefore, they need to be confident about the steps being taken to reduce the risk of any infection getting into their environment.

The United Workers Union has proposed a six-point plan to give educators and parents the confidence that early education is as safe as possible for everyone. It is an important document and Goodstart supports the broad intent of the plan.

While the majority of the measures in the plan are already implemented in one form or another at Goodstart, we have worked closely with the Uwu to achieve a shared view of the measures we can all take to keep children and staff safe, sector wide.

This document reflects what we are doing and will be doing to make our centres safe.

We welcome ongoing engagement with our centre directors, educators and with the unions on safety issues, and will continue to provide regular updates, particularly as advice and practices change.

### Managing work, health and safety

Goodstart's plans must meet or exceed the requirements of the National Quality Standards Quality Area 2, the relevant legislated workplace health and safety requirements and the requirements of the federal, state and territory health authorities. At no point can any of our decisions supplant any workplace health and safety laws or the most recent health department advice on COVID-19.

## STEP ONE: Arrival and departure practices

*We acknowledge that every early learning centre is designed differently. This means some centres may be able to use their foyer as a drop off and pick up area if they are large enough. It is important to note that the Government's requirement on social distancing must not be compromised by this practice.*

*This document outlines the risk assessment considerations that must be discussed with all staff members, before this practice can be implemented. Centres who have a small foyer should not complete drop offs and pickups in the foyer area.*

Goodstart has established procedures for educators to monitor the health of children in their centre and these are more important than ever and should be enhanced in the current environment:

1. We will be strongly encouraging families to complete temperature self-checks of their own child on arrival. Where a family does not wish to participate in completing a self-check of their child, the educator should discuss with the family whether the child has been well overnight and look for signs and symptoms that indicate they are not well. An educator can make the decision with the responsible person to refuse care for the day based on their assessment.
2. A child must not attend care with a temperature higher than 38 degrees
3. Families must not give their child/ren any fever reducing medication prior to drop off (paracetamol or ibuprofen)
4. Unwell children will be refused access and the parent will be told to take the child home
5. The child will only be accepted upon a subsequent day if:
  - a. Their temperature has dropped to 37.5 degrees or lower for at least 24 hours;
  - b. They are not displaying any of the following signs or symptoms:
    - has trouble breathing
    - becomes drowsy or unresponsive
    - unexplained or persistent cough
    - seems dehydrated, refuses to drink or is weeing less often
    - complains of a stiff neck, persistent headache or light hurting their eyes
    - vomits persistently, or has frequent bouts of diarrhea
    - suffers pain or is continuously crying
    - is causing the educator or parent to worry for any other reason.
6. Thermometers will be made available for families to test their child's temperature on arrival each day. A family can choose to bring their own thermometer for personal hygiene reasons if preferred.

7. If a child has a temperature over 38 degrees an educator must discuss with the family whether the child has been well overnight and look for signs and symptoms that indicate they are not well. Children who are unsettled or who have been active will have higher temperatures, this does not mean they are unwell. An educator can make the decision with the responsible person to refuse care for the day based on their assessment.
8. Thermometer covers and cleaning supplies must be available for families to clean the thermometers.
9. Where a child has their temperature taken at the centre, the thermometer used must be cleaned prior to use and must be cleaned again immediately after use.
10. Families must ensure the interactions with any educators or centre staff are limited to less than 15 minutes. This will help reduce the risk of any face to face transmission.
11. Only one family member can attend the centre at a time unless a family is dropping off multiple children and requires additional assistance.
12. Families who require longer conversations regarding their child's care and education should be contacted by phone, email or video to ensure there is continuation of care for the child.
13. It may be possible to for centres with large foyers to complete the drop off/pick up process in the centre foyer. A risk assessment must be completed before this practice can be implemented and all staff consulted on any changes. This practice should only be considered if:
  - Families are not required to queue outside in the carpark.
  - There is a steady flow of people and families are not clustering in the foyer area.
  - There must be 2 metres between each family. There is an additional 0.5 metre allowance to include the child.
  - Educators must use hand sanitiser between child collections.
  - Staff should mark a coloured cross on the floor where families sign in/out and measure 2 metres from this point. The next cross should be placed 2 metres from the last one.

- Two staff members should be rostered to complete the role of family greeter. One staff member should wait in the foyer while the other supports the child to the room.
- The role of family greeter must be rotated every 15 minutes to ensure that the same staff member is not continually exposed to other adults during drop off/pick up time.
- A separate area for families who need to complete additional paperwork such as medication forms or temperature self-checks, should be made available. This area should be 2 metres from the sign in /out location.

14. Centres with small foyers should not complete drop offs and pickups in the foyer area. The centres should continue to allow families to access their child's room. A risk assessment must be completed, and all staff consulted on any proposed changes. Areas to consider in the risk assessment include:

- There is a steady flow of people and families are not clustering in the room.
- Consider having outdoor play programs each morning and afternoon to allow families to complete drop off and pick up outside.
- A separate area for families who need to complete additional paperwork such as medication forms or temperature self-checks, should be made available. If you will have more than one family completing this at a time, these areas should be 2 metres apart.

## **STEP TWO: Adequate personal protective equipment and essential hygiene products**

*Goodstart is aware of the vital importance of having personal protective equipment and essential hygiene products.*

A Centre Director must ensure that there is enough Personal Protective Equipment and essential hygiene products to last 48 hours.

1. Personal Protective Equipment includes:
  - a) Soap
  - b) Disposable gloves
  - c) Thermometers
  - d) Cleaning detergent and disinfectant
  - e) Cleaning mops and buckets
  
2. Essential hygiene products include:
  - a) Toilet paper
  - b) Nappies
  - c) Paper hand towel
  - d) Tissues
  
3. A Centre must not open if there do not have all of the above Personal Protective Equipment.
  
4. Centre Directors have appropriate funding to replenish Personal Protective Equipment or essential hygiene products as required.

### **STEP THREE: Workplace precautions**

*Educators and parents both share responsibility for ensuring that infections are not brought into the centre, to protect both children and co-workers.*

1. Staff who travel on public transport must bring their work clothes and shoes in their bag to change into when they arrive at the centre.
2. All staff must wash their hands for at least 20 seconds upon arrival and departure from the centre.
3. Staff must wash their work clothes prior to wearing them again at the Centre
4. Staff should shower before arriving at the centre and when they return home each day.
5. Staff must not work if they are sick and should not come to work if their temperature is above 38 degrees.
6. Staff will be sent home if the Centre Director suspects that they may be unwell.
7. Families who work as frontline health workers are requested to wear a change of clothes when collecting their child after completing their shift.
8. Families will apply hand sanitiser on arrival at the centre and prior to using the iPad sign in/out screen. If this is not available, they should wash their hands with soap and water.

### **STEP FOUR: Adequate cleaning**

*Goodstart centres are professionally cleaned daily. Any centre that is not satisfied with their cleaners is asked to contact their Facilities Manager to have the quality of cleaning assessed. Now more than ever, cleanliness is everyone's responsibility.*

1. High traffic areas in the Centre must be cleaned every 2 hours using detergent. This includes doorknobs, hand rails, coded door entries, exit buttons, and iPads.
2. Sign-in/out kiosks should be wiped every 30 minutes.
3. Every toy and surface must be cleaned once per day. Toys that have been mouthed by a child must be cleaned before being used by another child.
4. The entire centre must be cleaned nightly by a professional cleaner. The cleaning scope must include all surfaces, furniture and equipment.
5. Centres will ensure that bedding is not shared between children.
6. Bedding belonging to an unwell child must be washed immediately after the child leaves.
7. If the bedding is provided by the family, it must be sent home with the child and the family advised that it must be washed before the child returns.

## STEP FIVE: Adequate staffing

*With falling attendances due to COVID-19, Goodstart centres are likely to be more than adequately staffed. We are committed to ensuring there will be sufficient staff in place to ensure the safety of children and staff is met. Measures we have in place to address staffing include:*

1. Under-the-roof ratios are discouraged during the COVID-19 epidemic and must only be used in the event child or educator safety and supervision is not compromised.
2. Additional staff must be rostered for cleaning where it cannot be achieved during rest time.
3. Where possible, group sizes must be smaller than ratio to limit cross infection.
4. Limit the cross-over of rooms in shared environments for example bathrooms, lunch areas, playgrounds, common centre areas to limit the risk of cross infection within the centre.
5. Fresh air and adequate ventilation are encouraged in the indoor environment, with open windows preferred to the use air-conditioning where building design and weather permits.
6. Family grouping should be separated into two age groups, 0-2 years and 2-5 years. Family grouping should only occur when the children can safely be grouped in one room for each age group.
7. It is the responsibility of the Centre Director and the organisation to employ and roster educators as required to cover direct contact ratios during peak times.
8. Progressive mealtimes and self-service of food by children is no longer allowed. Educators must now serve all meals to children.

## STEP SIX: Hygiene

*Goodstart centres have well developed hygiene practices that meet the standards of the state and territory health authorities for COVID-19. It is important in this current crisis, that every staff member pays specific attention to their personal health and hygiene. Centres should ensure that:*

1. Staff and children wash their hands at the following times:
  - a) On arrival and departure from the Centre
  - b) Before and after consuming food or drink
  - c) After playing with toys or playing outside
  - d) When hands are visibly dirty
  - e) After going to the toilet
  - f) Before preparation of food or handling of bottles
  - g) After wiping/blowing your nose or sneezing
  - h) After patting an animal
  - i) Before and after giving medication
  - j) After removing gloves.
  
2. Gloves must be worn for the following activities:
  - a) helping a child go to the toilet
  - b) changing a nappy
  - c) cleaning children's faces
  - d) handling rubbish or carrying rubbish bags
  - e) using spray bottles with chemicals
  - f) wiping a child's nose
  - g) after cleaning up or touching sores, faeces, a wound, blood, vomit or other bodily fluids.



## Exclusions and infection

1. The following people will be excluded from entering a centre:
  - a. Any staff or child who has a temperature over 38 degrees.
  - b. Any staff or child who indicates any breathing difficulty for example, wheezing, gasping for air (except for those who may have known and documented respiratory conditions).
  - c. Any staff or child who has been outside of Australia within the last 14 days.
  - d. Any staff member, child or family who has returned to a state or territory where self-isolation border measures are in place. This does not include staff or families who cross affected interstate borders for work, school or medical purposes.
  - e. Any staff or child who has been in contact with a person who has a confirmed case of COVID-19.
  - f. Risk minimisation strategies must be implemented for staff who are defined as vulnerable or have care responsibilities for a vulnerable person. Vulnerable is defined as:
    - i. Suffering from a chronic medical condition
    - ii. Suffering from a chronic autoimmune condition
    - iii. Aged 70 years or older
    - iv. High risk pregnancy
  
2. The following rules apply if a child or staff member who is currently attending the centre, has been diagnosed with a confirmed case of COVID-19. Currently attending is defined as a person who has attended the centre in the last 14 days.

**The case must be confirmed by the state or territory health authority before action is taken and when directed:**

- a) All parents and staff must be informed immediately.
- b) The centre must be closed immediately while contact tracing is completed.
- c) All relevant departments and regulatory bodies must be notified.
- d) A well-established industrial cleaning company must complete cleaning in line with the state or territory health authority instruction.
- e) Centres must comply and follow the advice of the relevant health department. The advice of the state or territory health authority overrides all other regulatory bodies.

## **What if an employee does not feel safe with the practices at their centre?**

If a staff member is concerned that their centre is not complying with these guidelines, then we want to know about it.

We are all in this together. We want everyone to feel safe.

We would encourage you to raise any issues with your Centre Director. If the issues cannot be resolved immediately, then we encourage either or both of you to contact our Safe Work team on our dedicated COVID-19 hotline -1300 376 583.

No one will get into trouble; we just want to make sure that you and your centre team are getting all the support that you need to do your job effectively and safely.

You are incredibly important to us.