



22 August 2025

Communiqué

Education Ministers met in Sydney on Friday 22 August 2025 for a special purpose Education Ministers Meeting on child safety in early childhood education and care (ECEC).

Ministers agreed that dedicated, committed early educators are our greatest asset in caring for, educating, and keeping our children safe.

Strengthening child safety and quality in ECEC

Today it was announced the Australian Government, in coordinated action with state and territories, will invest up to \$189 million to strengthen safety and quality in ECEC settings.

This includes:

- **National Educator Register** – The Commonwealth will invest up to **\$45 million** for a new national register to be established, giving regulators clear oversight of who is working in the sector and where.
A testing phase will commence in December 2025 with the aim of a national rollout from February 2026. It will be built by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).
- **Mandatory national child safety training** – All ECEC staff will be required to complete new national child safety training. This training will be developed by the Australian Centre for Child Protection. Work on this will start immediately and training will roll out from early 2026. The Commonwealth will invest up to **\$21 million** in targeted workforce subsidies to help cover wage costs.
- **CCTV – A national CCTV assessment** will occur in up to 300 services, guided and overseen by experts including the Australian Centre for Child Protection. The Commonwealth will invest up to **\$21 million** for this assessment and the work to establish this will start immediately.
The national CCTV assessment will begin in the last quarter of the year and deliver advice on best practice use and operation of CCTV in services including privacy, storage and other matters. Participation payments will be offered to small and medium sized services participating on a voluntary basis.
- **Ban mobile phones** – From September 2025, the use of personal mobile phones or digital devices capable of taking images or videos while working directly with children will be banned or restricted. All jurisdictions will actively regulate the personal mobile device restrictions.
- **More unannounced spot checks** – An additional 1,600 unannounced visits per year will be carried out by Commonwealth officers and the first of these additional spot checks are expected to commence in November. The Commonwealth will invest **\$73 million** in

compliance actions to lift integrity and safety in ECEC, including to implement new powers that cut off funding to providers that don't meet quality and safety standards.

- **Funding for joint regulatory action** – The Commonwealth will invest around **\$22 million** for joint compliance work and monitoring with states and territories and to improve data exchange.
- **Improved transparency for parents** – The Starting Blocks website will be upgraded to display information about conditions imposed on centres and regulator visits from September. The website will also be updated to show compliance breaches and enforcement actions from November. The Commonwealth will invest **\$2 million** for this work and provide a further **\$5 million** to ACECQA to support families to better understand safety and quality in ECEC.
Services will also be required to physically display meaningful information, including in other languages where appropriate, on compliance and enforcement breaches. Work will commence immediately to determine what information, as well as what legislative changes will be required to implement this, with a progress update to be provided to Education Ministers in October 2025.
- **Tougher penalties** – Fines under the National Law and National Regulations will be tripled.
- **Improving supervision rules** – ACECQA will conduct a rapid assessment of child supervision practices, reporting back to Education Ministers by the end of the year.
- **Regular assessment and rating visits** – States and territories will ensure that all services are assessed on average every three years, with more frequent visits for those rated “Working Towards” the National Quality Standard.

Ministers also agreed to a range of legislative reforms including:

- making the safety, rights and best interests of children the paramount consideration under National Law;
- mandating the national child safety training for all staff, volunteers and students;
- making use of the National Educator Register mandatory from February 2026;
- enabling Regulatory Authorities to proactively share the identity of prohibited individuals and individuals subject to enforceable undertakings with Approved Providers;
- removing the ability to apply for service waivers related to building design to improve adequate supervision of children at all times;
- requiring approved Working With Children Checks prior to commencing any work in ECEC services and mandate notification of any changes to status; and
- extending the limitation period for offences to enable prosecution to be undertaken.

These changes address recommendations from the [Review of Child Safety Arrangements under the National Quality Framework](#) (Child Safety Review), Victoria's [Rapid Child Safety Review](#) and the Early Childhood Education and Care Regulation in the [Independent review into the NSW Early Childhood Education and Care Regulatory Authority](#).

Ministers also agreed to pursue an expedited legislative amendment process (by Victoria) by the end of 2025 to fast-track the implementation of these measures.

These decisions and investments build on work underway by individual jurisdictions to improve child safety in ECEC settings.

- The **NSW Government** is investing **\$55 million** on top of the Regulatory Authority's existing budget to boost frontline staff, further increase on the almost 9,000 visits completed last year, and fund CCTV and technology to protect children and maintain quality services. This builds on proposed reforms including higher fines for breaches, greater transparency for families on the safety record of providers, and the creation of a new standalone regulator with stronger enforcement powers to improve oversight of underperforming services. An independent review by former Deputy Ombudsman Chris Wheeler also called for stronger laws to prioritise child safety and rebuild public trust in early childhood education and care.
- The **Victorian Government** is taking immediate action with an initial investment of **\$42 million** to the sector, establishing a new, nation-leading regulator that will more than double the frequency of compliance checks, beefing up the Social Services Regulator and giving it new powers and removing silos to weed out predators, bringing legislation to immediately suspend individual Working with Children Checks and building a greater culture of speaking up by introducing mandatory child safety training and expanding professional support programs.
- **South Australia** has committed an additional **\$21.8 million** on top of the **\$7.1 million** delivered in 2023, to increase the frequency of assessment and ratings of ECEC services and for increased compliance visits.
- The **Queensland Government**'s recent announcement of an additional **\$12.7 million** over 4 years for the Early Childhood Regulatory Authority. A further \$20 million will be provided for Queensland's early childhood workforce strategy to address challenges particularly in attracting, developing and retaining a highly skilled workforce. There will be a \$3.7 million boost to continue to deliver protective behaviours education, which will empower children and families to stay safe in Queensland.
- In response to the West Australian Government's snap review, the **WA Government** announced **\$1.1 million** to bolster the capacity of the WA Department of Communities' Education and Care Regulatory Unit. Additionally, urgent progression of the Education and Care Services National Application Bill 2025, which represents a major step to align WA's Education and care legislation with the rest of Australia has been prioritised.
- The **Northern Territory Government** will undertake further work to identify opportunities to strengthen child safety in ECEC settings including a particular focus on enhancing mandatory child safety training for all personnel working in early childhood environments.
- In 2024 **Tasmania** committed in excess of **\$240 million** to support the Tasmanian Government's response to its Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's response to institutional child sexual abuse. The initiatives funded in this package include a number of enablers that will support the delivery of the initiatives agreed to improve Early Childhood Learning and Care including:
 - the establishment of the Office of the Independent Regulation and a Childsafe Framework;
 - a reportable conduct scheme;
 - improvements and tightening of our working with children legislation; and
 - removal of barriers to information sharing to protect child safety.

- The **Australian Capital Territory** will continue to build on work already undertaken to improve child safety. The Children's Education and Care Assurance (CECA) regulator will implement a "No card no start" for all new ECEC staff, meaning a WWVP registration is required before any work in a service. CECA has moved to unannounced audits for all services in CECA's annual audit program.

EMM will meet again in October 2025 in Queensland.

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