

Melbourne's super lockdown puts early and middle childhood services at risk of permanent closure

Panicked early and middle childhood services face the possibility of permanent closure, with peak body Community Child Care Association calling for government support to be extended.

The future of thousands of early and middle childhood services hangs in the balance now that the only children allowed to attend will be the very vulnerable or those of permitted workers.

“Government transition payments may not be enough to keep the sector afloat as parents pull their children out of the system,” says Community Child Care Association Executive Director Julie Price.

“At the peak of the first wave, attendance fell to as little as five to ten per cent. Now, services that have struggled to get back on their feet will face rock-bottom attendances.”

“To top that off, 40+ early and middle childhood services across Victoria are currently closed because of COVID-19. They're struggling to pay up to \$9,000 for deep cleaning, and are losing tens of thousands of dollars in income.”

“Government must act now or the community risks losing the early and middle childhood services they rely on, especially high quality not-for-profits, which comprise just under half of the sector.”

Community Child Care Association is calling on the Victorian Government to:

- Fully subsidise kindergarten programs in long day care centres to support learning from home for Term 3
- Allow early and middle childhood services that are forced to close because of a positive COVID-19 case to access the Business Support Fund, which will relieve their shutdown costs

Community Child Care Association is calling on the Commonwealth Government to:

- Extend the 15% Additional Viability Support Payment to all early and middle childhood service types in Metropolitan Melbourne as they drop below 40% attendance rates
- Provide clear advice to early and middle childhood services in Metropolitan Melbourne around the fee waiver, now that many children will not be permitted to attend



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- Provide additional support to early and middle childhood services that are eligible for the Additional Viability Support Payment through the Community Child Care Fund if the Child Care Subsidy represented less than 40% of their total revenue in the reference week, as these services are facing immense financial stress
- Extend the 15% Additional Viability Support Payment to all outside school hours care services across regional Victoria until the end of September, as they now face a return to stage 3 restrictions
- Provide a guarantee that additional support provided to early and middle childhood services will ensure employment and income for educators

Ms Price says, “Educators have already lost JobKeeper. Additional government support will mean that their income is guaranteed and they can hold on to their jobs. It will also ensure that services remain afloat and will be there for the families that count on them once this crisis is over.”

For more information or to arrange an interview with Community Child Care Association’s Executive Director, Julie Price, contact Daniela Kavoukas on 0413 452 312



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