

# Raising concerns about early childhood education and outside school hours care services



If you have concerns about an early childhood education service (preschool, long day care, family day care, mobile service) or an outside school hours care service, you're encouraged to raise them directly with the director, manager or staff members from the service in the first instance.

If the service can't resolve the issue, you can contact the NSW Department of Education. The department regulates early childhood education and outside school hours care services and works to ensure that children are kept safe and have access to quality education and care.

Contact the department immediately on 1800 619 113 if you're concerned there's a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of children. This includes complaints about neglect, physical, sexual or emotional harm or abuse. Your call can be anonymous if you wish.

## Raising concerns with your service

Your service is obliged to deal with and respond to your complaint and must notify the department within 24 hours if your complaint alleges that:



A child's health, safety or wellbeing has been compromised



The National Law or Regulations have not been met

When approaching your service to make a complaint, you should:

- o **Ask to see** the service's written procedures on managing complaints.
- o **Think about** what would be an acceptable outcome for you and your child.
- o **Ask questions** about the circumstances of the topic or issue you wish to discuss.
- o **Be informed** – check the relevant legislation and the service's policies or guidelines.

If you have a question about what a service needs to do to meet the requirements of the National Law or Regulations, contact the department on 1800 619 113 or via [ececd@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:ececd@det.nsw.edu.au)

## Raising concerns with the NSW Department of Education

If your complaint hasn't been resolved or if the matter isn't appropriate to raise with your service, you can contact the department.

The department can assist with concerns about:



A service's physical environment



The quality of education at a service



Interactions between staff and children including inappropriate behaviours or discipline



A service operating without approval

To make a complaint call 1800 619 113 or email [ececd@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:ececd@det.nsw.edu.au)

## How the department will respond

When the department receives a complaint, we will:

- o Acknowledge your complaint immediately if it concerns a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or children, or within 5 working days for other complaints.
- o Provide you with a reference number.
- o Investigate your complaint – this may involve further discussions with you, contacting the service, inspecting the service, formally interviewing staff at the service or seizing evidence.
- o Provide you with an outcome generally within 20 working days, if not sooner.

Some complaints may take longer to investigate than 20 working days. We'll email you if this is the case.

All notifications to the department are treated confidentially. Your identity cannot be disclosed unless you give written consent or a court grants leave for this to occur.

If your complaint raises concerns about the health, safety or wellbeing of a child, the department may notify other agencies including the Office of the Children's Guardian, the Department of Communities and Justice or the Police.

## Other types of complaints

To make a complaint about service fees or business practices, please contact the NSW Department of Fair Trading on 13 32 20 or visit [fairtrading.nsw.gov.au](http://fairtrading.nsw.gov.au)

To make a complaint about the Child Care Subsidy or other Australian Government programs please contact the Australian Government's Department of Education, Skills and Employment on 1300 667 276 or visit [dese.gov.au](http://dese.gov.au)

