



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children

**OUR
VISION:
EVERY
YOUNG
CHILD IS
THRIVING
AND
LEARNING**

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 1 August 2023

Early Childhood Australia response to reports former educator charged with offences against children

'Safety from abuse is the highest priority in early childhood education and care and we are devastated to hear of the harm done by a former educator charged with offences against 91 children', said Samantha Page, CEO of Early Childhood Australia (ECA) in response to media reports today.

'Our thoughts are with the children (some who are now young adults) who experienced the abuse, as well as their families and carers; it is a devastating breach of trust.'

We also know that many educators, including colleagues and co-workers, will feel angry and betrayed. The vast majority of people who work in early childhood services are there because they want children to thrive and learn as active citizens with the right to safety, choice and respect. To have a sexual predator working in an early childhood service is abhorrent and a strong reminder that we all need to be diligent about the risk of abuse against children.

The question raised is can more be done to protect children? Our answer is a resounding yes, more must be done – one child harmed is too many. We must work harder to create a culture of child safety both within early childhood services and across our community. We need a whole of system response that enables children, families, teachers and educators to raise their concerns and that is equipped to listen and respond. In particular, we all need to listen – really listen – to children and encourage them to speak up if they feel unsafe or at risk.

What happens next is critical – and this needs to incorporate a balance of transparency and action. Responses need to support greater awareness of grooming behaviours coupled with national systems that support the collection and sharing of information relating to concerns with consistent thresholds across jurisdictions. The National Child Safe Principles and Standards are important safeguards that warrant more support including implementation support and professional learning for educators.



Early Childhood Australia

A voice for young children

**OUR
VISION:
EVERY
YOUNG
CHILD IS
THRIVING
AND
LEARNING**

As a voice for young children, ECA will continue to advocate and work with the relevant authorities, policy maker and early childhood sector to ensure that early childhood education is a safe and secure place where every child is valued, and their safety and well-being is always paramount.

ENDS

Early Childhood Australia is the peak advocacy body for children from birth to eight years, their families and early childhood professionals.