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National Child Safety Review: Options for a National Model of Information Sharing

The federal government's [National Child Safety Review](#) of policy options under the National Quality Framework is a step towards better child safety in early childhood education (ECE).

Evidence of harm to [children in ECE](#) highlights the government's obligations, under [Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), to strengthen its efforts and investment in safeguarding measures, and to insist on best practice from all ECE employers across the sector.

A national model of information sharing

Effective information sharing can help prevent individuals known to pose a risk from gaining access to children in early education settings. However, clear safeguards must be in place to ensure that any sharing of staff information is limited to appropriate parties and used solely for child protection and legitimate purposes.

To eliminate both serious and low-level unacceptable behaviours, staff must have access to stronger structural supports, including specific professional development that addresses child safety and the thresholds for reportable conduct.

IEU key priorities

Amongst other recommendations [contained in our review submission](#), the IEU calls for the following measures to be implemented, either prior to, or concurrently with, the introduction of information-sharing provisions:

- Clear definitions and guidance on inappropriate conduct, thresholds and reporting lines.
- Child safety training programs for all staff directly interacting with children, as well as short and accessible training programs tailored for Approved Providers and Management Committees.
- Strong protections to ensure procedural fairness and confidentiality in cases involving prohibitions, suspensions, or enforceable undertakings.

Implications for the ECE sector

In preparation for regulatory change, mandatory reporting obligations, misconduct thresholds and professional development in ECE must be improved to a standard equal to those in schools. Staff training should be in paid time to ensure equitable access for all ECE employees.

Our union's broader guiding principles must also underpin any reforms to ensure the interdependent goals of child safety and staff wellbeing. These include: stronger legal obligations on employers to uphold child safety; adequate resourcing and working conditions; consistent use of [workload assessment tools](#) tailored to ECE; updated policies and strategies to deal with evolving tech-facilitated abuse; and genuine employee consultation through participatory planning and decision making.