Welcome to the *Regulations Update*, a newsletter produced by the Regulations Implementation Branch of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. This newsletter will be distributed quarterly to all licensed children’s services in Victoria, with the primary aim of providing regular news and information to assist services to better understand the requirements of the *Children’s Services Act 1996* and the *Children’s Services Regulations 2009*.

The commencement of the new legislation on 25 May 2009 marked a new era for children’s services. On this date, family day care (FDC) and outside school hours care (OSHC) services became regulated for the first time in Victoria. To date over 1100 OSHC services and 79 FDC services have applied for a licence in addition to the 2833 standard and limited hours services that already have a children’s service licence.

It is important that services obtain a copy of the current *Children’s Services Act 1996* and the *Children’s Services Regulations 2009* as these must be available at the premises of a children’s service at all times. Copies of the Act printed before 25 May 2009 are now out of date and the 1998 Regulations have expired.

Resources, including Questions and Answers about the new legislation, may be found on the Department’s website at [www.education.vic.gov.au/licensedchildservices](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/licensedchildservices). In addition, new resources that are being developed will be linked to this website as they become available.

A significant feature of the new legislation is the setting of minimum standards for the provision of care and education in all centre based and family day care services in Victoria. The new legislation promotes quality in early childhood education and care, through the improvement of child/staff ratios for children under three and by increasing the level and mix of staff and carers’ training and qualifications. The legislation contains transitional provisions allowing time for services to comply with some of the new requirements. This is in line with the Government’s continuing commitment to improve outcomes for young children as set out in *Victoria’s Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development: One Year On* which may be found at [www.education.vic.gov.au/blueprint](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/blueprint).

**Early Childhood Workforce Strategy**

On 27 November 2009, the Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development, Maxine Morand MP, released *Victoria’s Early Childhood Workforce Strategy*. The Strategy describes the Government’s vision for the early childhood workforce; a highly skilled, professional early childhood workforce that supports the health, learning, and development of all Victorian children.

The Strategy sets out the short–term and long–term actions the Government will take to achieve its vision. Immediate actions respond to the current workforce challenges. These include the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education commitment to universal access to 15 hours of early childhood education by 2013 and the workforce requirements arising from the amendment of the *Children’s Services Act 1996* and the *Children’s Services Regulations 2009*.

**Copies of the Act and the Regulations**

It is important that services obtain a copy of the current *Children’s Services Act 1996* and the *Children’s Services Regulations 2009* as these must be available at the premises of a children’s service at all times. Copies of the Act printed before 25 May 2009 are now out of date and the 1998 Regulations have expired.

Services may have either printed or electronic versions of the Act and Regulations. Online versions are available at [www.education.vic.gov.au/licensedchildservices](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/licensedchildservices) and hard copies may be purchased from Information Victoria:

- In person from 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne
- By telephoning 1300 366 356
The actions announced as part of the Strategy include:

- an Early Childhood Qualifications Fund to support existing early childhood educators to attain higher qualifications
- an Early Childhood Incentive Fund to attract early childhood educators to services in hard-to-staff areas
- professional learning focussed on the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) Practice Principles and the priorities for professional learning identified in the Blueprint.
- a range of actions to attract a broader range of people to work in early childhood
- support for Aboriginal Victorians to gain an early childhood qualification.

Update for staff members and carers without an early childhood qualification or training
The Children’s Services Regulations 2009 require all staff members and family day carers who care for or educate children to:

- hold a Certificate III in Children’s Services, or a qualification or training that the Secretary of the Department is satisfied is substantially equivalent or superior to a Certificate III in Children’s Services or
- be a qualified staff member or a teaching staff member or
- hold a primary school teaching qualification.

More information about the option to complete a professional development course in lieu of completing minimum training will be provided on the Department’s website. Further information may also be sought by emailing csnr@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Victoria’s Early Childhood Workforce Strategy provides existing staff without an early childhood qualification or training with a range of options to obtain their Certificate III qualification:

Scholarships of up to $1000 are currently available to existing staff undertaking the Certificate III. For application forms go to www.education.vic.gov.au/careers.

From 2011, the Victorian Training Guarantee will enable all eligible staff to obtain a subsidised place in a Certificate III in Children’s Services course. The Government will establish a panel of preferred providers to deliver Certificate III training tailored to the needs of individual employers. The Early Childhood Qualifications Fund will provide support through scholarships and backfill for staff to undertake their study requirements.

Staff can obtain advice on how their current skills and experience can count towards a qualification through a Skills Store. Information about Skills Stores, including their locations, is available at www.skills.vic.gov.au/recognising_your_skills.

Exemptions
On 20 September 2009, the Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development granted a number of exemptions from the Children’s Services Regulations 2009. Exemption notices were published in the Victoria Government Gazette Number G41 on 8 October 2009. For details visit www.gazette.vic.gov.au.

Exemptions provide for a range of circumstances where a specified children’s service or type of children’s service is having genuine difficulty meeting certain requirements of the Children’s Services Act 1996 and the Children’s Services Regulations 2009. The ability to grant an exemption in exceptional circumstances has enabled services to operate and deliver flexible and accessible services, particularly across rural Victoria.

Further information about exemptions will be provided on the Department’s website when available. Services may also contact a Children’s Services Adviser at the relevant regional office of the Department.
Current early childhood teacher scholarships and incentives

**Early Childhood Teacher Scholarships for Pathways Students** provide support for staff working in long day care who hold a Diploma in Children’s Services to upgrade their qualification to an early childhood teacher qualification. Recipients receive financial support of up to $6000 and access to literacy support. Employers are eligible for reimbursement of costs to release their staff member for up to 20 days to undertake study requirements. At the completion of their studies recipients are required to work as an early childhood teacher in a funded kindergarten program in a long day care centre for a minimum of two years.

**Incentives for Early Childhood Teachers in Rural Sessional Kindergarten** provide a financial incentive of up to $6000 to early childhood teachers who commenced employment in a funded kindergarten program in rural Victoria no earlier than April 2009. Recipients are required to work as an early childhood teacher in a funded kindergarten program in rural Victoria for a minimum of two years.

**Incentives for Early Childhood Teachers in Long Day Care** provide a financial incentive of up to $12,000 to early childhood teachers who commenced employment in a funded kindergarten program in a long day care centre no earlier than April 2009. Recipients are required to work as an early childhood teacher in a funded kindergarten program in a long day care service for a minimum of two years.

Approved qualifications and training

Approved qualifications and training that will be added to next version of the Government Gazette are listed below.

**Qualified Staff Member – Children’s services**
- Advanced Certificate in Child Care – any RTO previously registered to deliver this qualification in Victoria – Awarded prior to 25 May 2009
- Diploma in Social Science (Child Care Services) – University of Melbourne – Awarded prior to 25 May 2009
- Diploma in Arts (Child Care Studies) – University of Melbourne – Awarded prior to 25 May 2009

**Early Childhood – Teaching Staff Member**
- Bachelor of Early Childhood Education – University of Melbourne – no date specified
- Graduate Diploma in Children’s Services – Monash University – prior to 25 May 2009

**Qualified Staff Member – Children’s Services – OSHC**
- Diploma of Community Services (Children’s Services Course Code CHC50399) where the person has specialised in Out of School Hours Care – any Registered RTO registered to deliver the Diploma of Community Services – from January 2000

**Certificate III – Children’s Services**
- Certificate IV in Out of School Hours Care – any RTO registered to deliver
- Certificate IV in Out of School Hours Care – from January 2002
- Certificate IV in Children’s Services (Outside School Hours Care) – any RTO registered to deliver Certificate IV in Children’s Services (Outside School Hours Care) – from January 2008

Anaphylaxis management training

All children’s services are required to have an anaphylaxis management policy in place. A revised anaphylaxis model policy is now available on the Department’s website at www.education.vic.gov.au/anaphylaxis.

The following accredited courses in Anaphylaxis Management training were approved under the Children’s Services Regulations 2009 on 26 August 2009:
- Course in Anaphylaxis Awareness – 21827VIC – VRQA
- Course in First Aid Management of Anaphylaxis – 21659 VIC – VRQA

Information about scholarships and incentives, application documentation and closing dates

Telephone: 1300 651 662
Email: early.years.workforce@edumail.vic.gov.au

Assessing qualifications and training for equivalence

Early Childhood Australia (ECA), Victoria Branch, conducts assessments of qualifications and training for equivalence to an approved qualification or training under the Children’s Services Regulations 2009 via the Qualifications Approval Committee. ECA undertakes these assessments on behalf of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and provides the Department with a recommendation.

For more information visit www.education.vic.gov.au/licensedchildservices or contact ECA at:
Early Childhood Australia (Vic) Inc
GPO Box 2080
Richmond VIC 3121
Telephone: 03 9427 8474
Email: ecavic@earlychildhood.org.au

Anaphylaxis resource kit

The Department has provided an Anaphylaxis Resource Kit to services. This can be used to train staff annually in the use of the adrenaline auto injection device. Services requiring this resource should contact the Licensed Children’s Services Enquiry Line by telephone on 1300 307 415 or by sending an email to licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au
Emergency management and bushfire preparation in licensed children’s services

The Children’s Services Licensing and Regulations Branch has been working with the Portfolio Governance and Improvement Division of the Department in the development of resources to support licensed children’s services in preparation for the approaching bushfire season and more broadly, emergency management.

The Bushfire At–Risk Register for the 2009–10 Bushfire Season has been released. Services have been informed if they are on the register and what this may mean in relation to service closure on declared Code Red Fire Danger Rating days. It is intended that whenever possible three days’ notice of closure will be given.

There are other licensed children’s services facilities currently undergoing further investigation or analysis to determine whether they should be included on the final register. For queries relating to inclusion or omission from the register, email bushfires@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Revised framework for maternal and child health

The Child Health Record documents a child's health and development assessments for use by parents of the child and the Maternal and Child Health Service. This can assist staff members and family day carers to better understand the developmental needs and individual differences of children. Accordingly, the Children’s Services Regulations 2009 enable staff and carers to discuss these records with parents. It is discretionary whether parents show their child’s record to staff. However, if it is sighted, this must be noted in the child’s enrolment record.

The Child Health Record, commonly known as the ‘Blue Book’, is currently undergoing review. The Maternal and Child Health Service has introduced a new approach to the ten Key Ages and Stages consultations provided to parents and children. The new approach sets out new evidence based activities for each of the ten key ages and stages consultations, with additional emphasis on health promotion across a range of domains that address both maternal and child health and wellbeing. For further information telephone 1300 791 423 or send an email to mch@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Regional offices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barwon-South West</td>
<td>237 Ryrie Street Geelong VIC 3220</td>
<td>03 5225 1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Metropolitan</td>
<td>295 Springvale Road Glen Waverley VIC 3150</td>
<td>03 9265 2400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gippsland</td>
<td>64 Church Street Traralgon VIC 3844</td>
<td>03 5177 2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grampians</td>
<td>109 Armstrong Street North Ballarat VIC 3350</td>
<td>03 5337 8444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hume</td>
<td>163 Welsford Street Shepparton VIC 3632</td>
<td>03 5832 1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loddon Mallee</td>
<td>7-15 McLaren Street Bendigo VIC 3550</td>
<td>03 5434 5555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Metropolitan</td>
<td>145 Smith Street Fitzroy VIC 3065</td>
<td>03 9412 5333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Metropolitan</td>
<td>122 Thomas Street Dandenong VIC 3175</td>
<td>03 9213 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Metropolitan</td>
<td>71 Moreland Street Footscray VIC 3011</td>
<td>03 9275 7000</td>
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The new Emergency Management Manual for Licensed Children’s Services is online at www.education.vic.gov.au/bushfires. The manual assists services to consider and prepare for an emergency situation within their service and to prompt a review of their policies and procedures.

An Emergency Management Kit is being mailed to all licensed children’s services.