Welcome Newsletter

By now you would have received an invitation to participate in the Exemplary Early Childhood Educators at Work research project. This research project focuses on the wonderful and largely undervalued workforce that is responsible for high quality early childhood programs in Australia.

Data collection from long day care and preschool services across Australia started in 2017. To date we have collected over 3000 hours of data from over 250 educators via the use of our random time sampling phone app (RTSTUD). We have also spoken with over 100 educators about their practices as exemplary educators in focus groups and interviews.

By investigating the work that exemplary educators do, the project aims to inform strategies to better attract, prepare, recognise, support and retain a high-quality early childhood workforce into the future.

Our research team bring with them extensive expertise, experience and skills. They all have a strong interest in the early childhood workforce; and a strong track record of collaboration with the early childhood field.

We continue to offer exemplary early childhood services the opportunity to contribute to the data collection through the use of the random time sampling phone app (RTSTUD). The larger the number of participants, the more robust and valuable the research data becomes.

The benefits of joining the project

The project will provide an evidence base to inform:

- pay equity determinations
- professional standards for early childhood educators
- the recruitment of suitable candidates into educator courses who have realistic expectations of the profession
- the content of vocational and university courses, to better prepare educators for their future roles
- the content of continuing professional development to support educators to move towards exemplary practice
- management strategies to strengthen professional supports and organisational conditions that foster high quality ECE

The three phases of the Exemplary Early Childhood Educators at Work research project

Three phases of data collection ensure breadth and depth in our data, capturing the individual, professional and organisational dimensions of exemplary educators’ work.

Phase one: Data collection from the RTSTUD app will stop at the end of 2019. The investigators will then analyse all the data that educators have shared with us from the past 3 years. We are inviting you into this phase now!

Phase two: Focus groups and interviews with educators have already been completed. We gained incredible insight practices and understandings about being an exemplary educator. This data is currently being analysed.

Phase three: Case studies commence in 2020 and will involve field visits to centres. This phase allows us to study in great detail the day-to-day work of exemplary educators.

How to participate in the research project

You would have received an email inviting you to join the project. Please sign and return the consent form that was sent to you with this invitation. If you have misplaced it, please let us know and we can forward another one to you. Please contact Kim via email: kim.crisp@qut.edu.au
Why was your centre chosen?

Eligibility for the study is very limited. Using ACECQA ratings, we have handpicked early childhood services that have exceeded all standards and elements in the National Quality Standard Assessment and Rating process. This is an incredible result and something that we are sure your centre is very proud of. Your service and educators were assessed at the highest level.

Some frequently asked questions

Do all educators need to participate?
Participation is voluntary. While it would be great to have as many educators in the service completing the smart phone app, we understand that not all educators at your service may want to participate.

Does the whole team have to do it at the same time?
No, you can decide how your service completes the RTSTUD app. Most centres have been doing it together as a team (this helps to stay motivated) and others have been rolling it out slowly. We are happy for you to work out the best arrangement for your service.

How long will this take?
The RTSTUD app will seek to gather 20 entries per user. For a full time educator, this is 10 days (2 notifications per day). For part time staff, this will take longer. If the app ‘beeps’ on a non-work day, you simply indicate that you are not at work by pressing a button.

What if I miss a notification?
That’s ok. We understand that there will be times when you are away from work, or unable to access the app because you are with the children. The app will send you three reminders at 10 minutes intervals and if you haven’t been able to fill it out, it will simply reset and try again at another time.

Is there a cutoff date for participation?
Centres should start as soon as they feel ready and comfortable. The app will be available until the end of the year.

Who can be involved?
All educators with the appropriate mandated level of qualifications, who are working directly with the children on a regular basis. This includes educators across all qualifications.

I don’t know if I have the time to do this
We understand that you already have a lot of responsibilities and that most educators are time poor. This is why the app was created. Entering data into the app should take less than 5 minutes. Taking the time to enter data about what you have been doing for the past hour, will actually provide documented evidence on just how busy early childhood educators are!

What help is available if I have a question or get stuck?
We are available to help you work through any issues or ‘hiccups’ before and during your participation period.

Once your centre has consented to participation, you will receive a detailed ‘User guide’ and a code for a demonstration / trial app before you commence the official data collection. This will allow you to become familiar with the app.

We are more than happy to speak individually to services and talk about your needs and how we can best support your involvement. Many centres that have participated, indicated that using the app was a catalyst for rich reflective professional conversations within the team.

The Exemplary Early Childhood Educators at work BLOG

CLICK ABOVE TO CHECK IT OUT. YOU’LL FIND OUR PAST NEWSLETTERS, CONFERENCE SLIDES, INFORMATION AND OTHER ARTICLES RELATING TO OUR PROJECT.

https://exemplaryeducators.wordpress.com/

Thank you to the centres who have already consented
If you have consented to participate already and have received your paperwork, we would like to thank you for giving your time and energy to this groundbreaking project. We hope that you find the experience rewarding.

Contact us for more information
Please contact Kim for a chat or more information on 0468 358 364 or via email kim.crisp@qut.edu.au