

From: P01-P01
To: CECA
Subject: WorkSafe ACT - Complaint relating to childcare ratios
Date: Monday, 8 May 2023 4:21:44 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

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EDU

OFFICIAL

Good afternoon,

A complaint has been raised to WorkSafe ACT (00311243) that appears to indicate alleged ratio concerns at an ACT childcare centre.

The details of this complaint appear to sit outside the scope of WorkSafe ACT and may better sit with CECA.

The complaint has also been raised anonymously.

Please see below for your consideration:

I am writing to bring to your attention some serious concerns regarding Noah's Ark Early Learning Centre (ELC) in Rivett, ACT, concerns which the current centre management have failed to take actions to address or at worst have been ignoring.

Noah's Ark ELC has been chronically understaffed for quite some time and is not complying with legislated child to educator ratios. Moreover, Noah's Ark ELC has not been paying staff overtime, has been offering incentives for staff not to take sick or other unexpected leave, and has not provided adequate training on new forms and procedures.

Ratios

Despite the legislated child to educator ratio, in the last month the centre has consistently failed to maintain the required staffing levels, leading to overcrowding, and potentially unsafe conditions for the children and staff.

The support staff who say they are part of 'under the roof' ratios rarely assist with working directly with children, which may be putting children at risk and compromising the quality of care provided. Noah's Ark ELC's implementation of 'under the roof' ratios is not consistent with the legislation.

Overtime

Staff regularly stay back after 6 pm to complete allocated work. This work is unable to be completed when children are still in the rooms but it is expected to be completed before centre closure. Noah's Ark ELC do not pay overtime if staff stay past 6 pm to complete their allocated duties. This practice has been occurring for quite some time. This is a breach of the employment standards and a violation of workers' rights.

Inappropriate Sick Leave Management

Recently Noah's Ark ELC has implemented a policy that discourages staff from making medical appointments during work hours, in direct violation of workers' rights. Frontline staff have been discussing amongst themselves how they can manage their medical appointments and not upset management. This is not good enough!

Recently, Noah's Ark ELC had implemented a rewards program for the rooms with the least amount of 'unexpected leave', which includes sick, carer's and personal leave. The winning room was allocated \$500 to go towards upgrades. This type of incentive encourages staff members not to take sick leave and may lead to staff members coming into work when they are not feeling well, which could put the children at risk.

Inadequate training on new forms and procedures

In the last month, the centre has been introducing new forms and procedures without providing adequate training. This has led to frustration amongst frontline staff and could easily lead to mistakes and oversights that could further compromise the safety and well-being of the children.

Higher number of staff resignations

There seems to be a higher than normal number of staff resignations from Noah's Arc ELC. This includes staff who have been working at the centre for greater than 5 years. This has led to a skills deficit, contributed to low staff morale, and has exacerbated the already problematic child-to-educator ratios.

Call for investigation.

As a regulatory body, I urge you to take immediate action and investigate the matter thoroughly to ensure that the centre is adhering to the required child-to-educator ratio and providing adequate support to children. I also urge you to investigate the failure to pay overtime, inappropriate leave management and inadequate staff training, all of which are serious violations of early childhood education and employment standards

If you have any questions, please let me know.

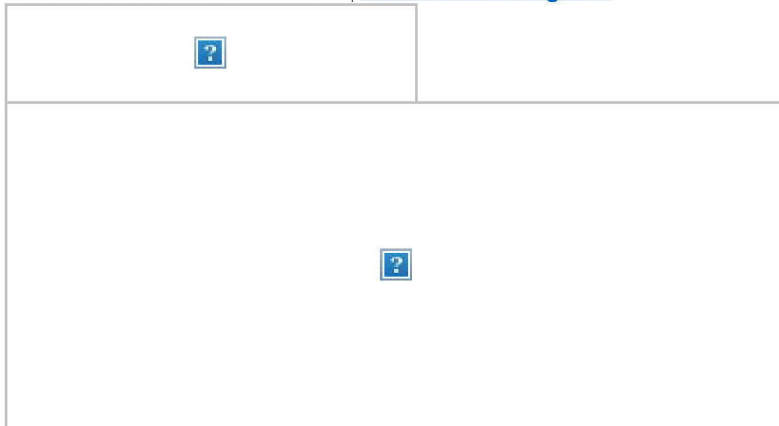
Regards,

POP01 Assistant Director – Psychological Safety

P: (02) **POP03** E: **POP01**

Office of the Work Health and Safety Commissioner

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