

## Instructions

This form should be used to lodge a complaint to the ACT Regulatory Authority in circumstances where your complaint alleges possible offences and/or engage a risk to the safety, health and wellbeing of children or a child attending an education and care service.

The completed form should be forwarded to [complaintsCECA@act.gov.au](mailto:complaintsCECA@act.gov.au)

The Authority is obligated to protect personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Australian Privacy Principles contained in the Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012. Information provided in this form would only be shared subject to the information sharing provisions under the relevant Legislation.

## Direct Complaint Form - Online

Date completing form:	1 March 2021
Time completing form:	17:00
Your full name:	P01 p01
Contact details: (phone and email)	P03 P03 P01 p01
Service to which the complaint relates?	Blinky Bill Gowrie – 15 Jeffries Street Gowrie ACT 2904
Has the complaint been raised directly with the service? If <i>yes</i> what was the response? If <i>not</i> why?	Yes. The service said they were aware of the issue(s) and were working towards rectifying them – this has not occurred in a sufficient, timely or professional manner. Children are at risk in this centre due to negligence and poor management.
Complainant's relationship to the service (how long have you had an association <i>parent/educator</i> for)?	My son has attended this centre for approximately 18 months. There are a number of ongoing issues that have never been addressed by management. The centre (Blinky Bill Gowrie) has gone through approximately five centre managers during this time (18 months) and a high number of staff turnover.

Date/time of incident/ issue to which the complaint relates. If unknown, approximate timeframes?

On 26 August 2020, an educator at Blinky Bill was involved in an incident whereby he is alleged to have thrown a child into a fence.

Blinky Bill management did not notify parents at the centre of this incident until 1 September 2020, after ACT Police had conducted their initial investigation. My son was not directly involved in this incident, but had been the subject of misconduct by this educator during his time at the centre (2020).

The educator involved in the above incident was known to be inappropriate with kids prior to this incident and on one occasion I witnessed this educator yelling at another child. None of the other educators present at the time intervened, and it appears the other educators did not report this misconduct to the centre manager at the time. It took a member of the public who witnessed the incident on 26 August 2020 to come forward and report the matter to the authorities.

There appears to be a culture at Blinky Bill of allowing “misconduct” and “inappropriate staff actions” to go unattended for lengthy time periods.

I personally had made a number of verbal complaints to management (late 2020) who dismissed my complaints, such as but not limited to:

- Staff sitting on their mobile phones and not tending to children.
- Children hitting one another with heavy/sharp objects and left crying unattended and no intervention by educators to stop the dangerous behaviour by children.
- Children with dirty nappies, noses, illness and poor hygiene not being attended to.
- Children being left alone in a room while educators were outside.
- Poor dieting choices, often cooking cakes/treats on a daily basis.
- Educators advising that there are black spots and they cannot always tend to children when they are hurt.
- My son being the target of biting, hitting and violence from other children in the centre.
- My son being the target of abuse by a centre educator.

My son has now adopted a negative attitude and poor behaviour when at Blinky Bill. **P01** goes to another centre

(Trinity Early Learning) two days per week and does not behave badly, however, when at Blinky Bill he is allowed to behave in a rough manner with minimal to no intervention.

From September 2020, Blinky Bill's centre manager (P01) resigned and a new centre manager commenced (P01). The new centre manager (P01) left shortly after and a temporary manager stepped in (P01). There were a lot of casuals employed with minimal communication to parents about the coming and going of staff. Another new centre manager commenced late January 2021 (P01).

On Friday 26 February 2021, I received a phone call regarding my son, P01, and his care at Blinky Bill during January 2021. An educator, P01 "P01", who has been employed by the centre in January 2021 was on suspension for pulling a child's hair. The area manager contacted me to advise, that upon review of CCTV footage, P01 (along with six other children) were observed, over a number of days, being the victim of abuse by the educator P01.

In P01's case, P01 had pulled him by the ear and shouted in his ear and on another occasion, P01 dragged P01 off the couch by his legs and forced him to sit in Group time despite P01 being visibly upset.

Parents of the affected children were asked to attend the centre (Blinky Bill) at 18:00 on 26 February 2021 to talk to ACT Policing about the incidents involving their children.

Other incidents of abuse were –

- P01 inappropriately touching and kissing children
- P01 hitting children
- P01 dragging kids by clothes, arms or legs around the centre
- And more...

The major concern with the above, is that other educators at Blinky Bill who were present during these incidents did not report the matter to management. It took a review of CCTV footage for these matters to be known and brought to our attention. This is highly unacceptable and unprofessional.

We pay \$140 per day and expect our children are in a safe and caring environment. Not the subject of abuse and neglect.

	<p>Although the matter has been referred to ACT Policing for further investigation, and P01 has to attend Tuggeranong Police Station to provide a witness statement (by a 3 year old) on Wednesday 3 March 2021, the centre has not informed or notified other parents at this centre of these incidents. Other parents are unaware of this serious misconduct and abuse by an employee at the centre.</p> <p>Although the centre has a new centre manager (P01) who commenced recently and today stated her intent to improve the overall conduct of employees in the centre, this does not mitigate the risks to children that presently exist, noting the centre stated the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They are struggling to operate with a 1 to 11 ratio.</li> <li>- There are blind spots in the centre and yard, and educators cannot always see the children.</li> <li>- There are a high number of incidents relating to child safety in this centre.</li> <li>- Children are not attended to and are left unsupervised, and are often hurting one another with objects such as cricket bats and sticks.</li> </ul> <p>On Wednesday 24 February 2021, I witnessed a child being struck in the face by another child with a heavy object. As the child was screaming and crying on the floor. I watched two educators ignore the child and not tend to her. I had to intervene and ask if they were going to help the child – then they did.</p> <p>There is an extremely high staff turnover at Blinky Bills over the 18 months that my son attended this centre. There is a lack of care or safety afforded to the children, and a number of very unprofessional staff members working in this centre. There have now been two separate educators, within six months, who have been involved in serious abuse of children in their care.</p>
<p>If delay in reporting, reasons for delay?</p>	<p>After the first incident, I felt the centre would be on top of rectifying the issues ASAP and ensure the safety of children in their care. Since August 2020, the centre has had an extremely high turnover of staff and now a second incident involving physical abuse by an educator has occurred. I do not believe the centre is dealing with these serious issues in an adequate</p>

	or effective manner, so I am reporting the matter for the safety of the children remaining at this centre.
Name of children (in full if possible) involved in the incident/ issue to which the complaint relates?	<p>P01 p01</p> <p>There are at least another six children involved – P01 and P01 are two of these kids.</p> <p>However, incidents involving these children were captured on CCTV. It is unknown what has occurred that was not previously captured on CCTV or that has lapsed since the centre only keeps footage for 30 days.</p>
Age of Children (DOB if possible and relevant?)	P01 – P02 – 3 years old.
Name of educator(s), staff member(s) or other persons involved?	<p>p01, P01 P01, P01, P01 P01, P01.</p> <p>P01 “P01” who committed the abusive actions.</p>
<p>Details of the incident/issue:</p> <p><i>Consider details such as:</i></p> <p><i>What happened?</i></p> <p><i>Where did it happen?</i></p> <p><i>Has it ever happened before?</i></p> <p><i>Has it happened to anyone else?</i></p> <p><i>Who was present?</i></p> <p><i>Who was involved?</i></p> <p><i>Have you discussed the incident/issue with anyone else?</i></p> <p><i>Has any action been taken?</i></p>	<i>As stated above</i>
Did you make any notes at the time, or send any emails? Are you prepared to provide a copy?	The centre has provided CCTV footage to ACT Policing.
If necessary would you be prepared to make a statement?	Yes.

Is there any other information (documents, memos, emails etc) that you may have that would substantiate the allegation(s)?

We have requested a full copy of all information pertaining to **P01**, such as incident reports, CCTV footage and the witness statement to ACT Police. We would be happy to provide these.

We withdrew **P01** from care at Blinky Bills effective immediately following being notified of this incident on 26 FEB 2021.