

NAPCAN welcomes Queensland Government's significant investment in a safer early childhood education sector

Friday 22 August 2025

The Queensland Government has announced a significant investment into strengthening safeguards within the early childhood education sector. National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) has been re-engaged to provide programs and training focused on the prevention of child abuse and neglect. This evidence-based early childhood guidance program equips educators with critical information, tools and strategies to embed protective behaviour practices into early learning environments – a safeguard which equips services with necessary skills to identify risks, and to take early interventions against potential harm.

As a result of the Queensland Government's investment in NAPCAN's Safer Communities for Children – Protective Behaviours program, this training will remain freely available to childhood educators across the state until 2027. NAPCAN warmly thanks the Queensland Government for their continued commitment to protecting children, and acknowledges this will enable stronger safeguarding practices as well as capacity-building within Queensland's early childhood workforce.

"This is the kind of forward thinking that is critical to creating safer environments where every child can thrive," says Leesa Waters, NAPCAN CEO. "When early childhood educators are equipped to identify and deal with potential risks before any harm is done, this gives families the confidence of knowing that, when they drop their kids off, the service that is responsible for their care is taking active steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their kids. The fact that this prevention training is free of charge, thanks to this funding, means that this prevention training is accessible to services of all sizes and in locations all across the state."

The Safer Communities for Children – Protective Behaviours program builds the capacity of early childhood educators to embed child-safe practices into their services, including through:

- Strengthening their ability to recognise grooming behaviours
- Providing knowledge around how to support disclosures with care and confidence
- Training services to develop clear reporting pathways, including mandatory and regulatory requirements
- Providing staff with consistent language and strategies across classrooms and services
- Equipping services with resources and pathways for engaging families in child-safe conversations.

"It has been a privilege to engage in these important conversations with more than 1000 early years educators across Queensland during the Protective Behaviours pilot, and am deeply grateful that the Government's ongoing support means Queensland educators will have access to child-safe tools statewide through to 2027," says Sarnia Ralston, NAPCAN Queensland Manager.

Today, Education Ministers from across the country met in Sydney to discuss strengthening safeguards within the early childhood education sector. Speaking to the ABC last week on the current proposal for a national Working with Children register, Leesa Waters said, "I don't think we can see it soon enough",

while cautioning that more steps are needed to embed protection initiatives within the sector. The Queensland Government's investment in this training is a positive example of how states can better support safety and consistent strategies within their childhood sectors.

"This program is designed to support consistent safety strategies across the early childhood education sector, which can and should be done on a national level," says Waters. "This is a great time for other state and territory governments to be looking at how they can adopt this prevention program within their own jurisdictions. We look forward to working proactively with other state and territory governments as they work towards implementing greater safeguards within their own early childhood sectors."

Contact:

Kirsty Sier

NAPCAN Communications Manager

0435 075 085

kirsty.sier@napcan.org.au