

19th September 2017

Exemplary Early Childhood Educators at Work. Early Childhood Educators Time Use

CSU Ethics approval: CSU-H17014

QUT Ethics approval: 1700000402

SERAP approval: H17014

Researchers:

Professor Frances Press, Charles Sturt University
Professor Linda Harrison, Charles Sturt University
Associate Professor Sandie Wong, Charles Sturt University
Dr Megan Gibson, Queensland University of Technology

Information Letter for Director

Dear Director

Exemplary Early Childhood Educators at Work is a three-year study by researchers from Charles Sturt University (CSU) and the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) into the skills, knowledge and dispositions of great early childhood educators and how organisations support their work. High quality educators are crucial for high quality early childhood care and education and we want to know more about what they do. Lansvale Public School Preschool has been rated as Exceeding by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) and it has achieved a rating of exceeding in every standard and available element. Therefore, we are inviting your service to participate in the first phase of the study.

The aim of the first phase of the study is to document the typical day-to-day work of early childhood educators working in high quality centres.

What participation involves. If you consent to educators at your service participating in the study, they will record what they do using a smartphone 'app' (the 'Early Childhood Random Time Sampling Time Use Diary' (RTS TUD)). To commence the study, they will need to download the RTS TUD application to their smartphone. Educators who do not have a smartphone but who wish to participate in the study, may be able to borrow a smartphone from the research team.

The first time educators fill out the app they will be asked to provide information about the context of their work, such as their qualification level, the type of service they work in, and the age group of children they usually work with. This information is only collected once. No information is collected that personally identifies educators, children, families or names your service via the RTS TUD app.

Then, twice a day at random times of the work day, for 10 of their working days (or for 20 work related responses to the app), educators will be prompted by their phones to record their work activities for the previous hour. These activities are recorded through a series of 'swipes' using pre-coded categories. The app takes between 3-10 minutes to complete (it becomes faster with familiarity). If educators are busy when the phone prompts them, they are not obliged to record activities straight away, but can wait until a more suitable time.

While at work, we inform educators that they must only use their smartphone for the purpose of responding to the prompts, or other work activities deemed legitimate by you as their manager.

What are the risks and benefits associated with the study? The participation of educators in the study is entirely voluntary, even though you consent to their involvement as director. If educators from this service do choose to participate, the research team will provide an information letter for parents to let them know about the study and alert them to the fact that educators will be using smartphones. *Educators consent to participate* by downloading the application and filling out the data when prompted.

If educators have any difficulties with the app or find it confusing to use, they can call or email Sylvia Perdikaris on 0468 352 517 or sperdikaris@csu.edu.au for advice and support. In addition, we will provide a user guide with step by step instructions. Educators can also go on-line to view the app developer's [User Guide](#) for additional support materials and to find answers to frequently asked questions.

We understand that filling out the app for 10 of working days is a big commitment. However, having a large data set is important to establish the validity of the findings and we ask for your support for participants to enter the study with a commitment to responding over this period of time. Nevertheless, *educators can withdraw from the study* at any time without reason or penalty. However, once entered, their data cannot be withdrawn.





This is a unique study. Data from the *EC Random Time-Sampling Time Use Diary* will make a very valuable contribution to our understanding of the work of Australian early childhood educators. In particular, it will shed light on the varied and complex work educators do. We hope that this important data set will contribute to greater recognition of the distinct nature of early childhood education and the skills and knowledge it requires.

What will happen with the data and findings? Data will only be reported in aggregated form. That is, no data that identifies individual educators, families, children or services will be stored or reported. Findings will be disseminated in conference and seminar papers, reports, professional publications and journal articles.

All data will be securely stored on password protected computers.

Research funding. *Exemplary Early Childhood Educators at Work* is funded through the Australian Research Council Linkage scheme (ARC LP160100532) and eight partner organisations: Child Australia, Community Early Learning Australia, Inner West Council (Sydney), the Creche and Kindergarten Association, KU Children's Services, the Independent Education Union (Queensland and Northern Territory Branch), the Independent Education Union (NSW/ACT Branch), and United Voice.

Please do not hesitate to contact any of the research team listed below if you have any questions.

			
Professor Frances Press	Professor Linda Harrison	A/Prof Sandie Wong	Dr Megan Gibson
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Charles Sturt University's Human Research Ethics Committee has approved this project. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this project, you may contact the Committee through the Executive Officer:

The Executive Officer
Human Research Ethics Committee
Tel: (02) 6338 4628
Email: ethics@csu.edu.au

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome. Thank you for considering this invitation. This information sheet is for you to keep.

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Consent form for Director





- I agree that educators working in Lansvale Public School Preschool can be invited to participate in the above research project and I give my consent freely.
- I understand that the project will be conducted as described in the Information Letter, a copy of which I have retained.
- I understand that educators can withdraw from the project at any time and do not have to give any reason for withdrawing.
- I understand that the data provided by educators cannot be withdrawn once it has been entered.
- I understand that the researchers may contact me in the future, in my role as director of Lansvale Public School Preschool to seek consent for educators to be involved in the subsequent phases of the research project. My consent to Lansvale Public School Preschool's engagement in this first phase of the study does not constitute consent for subsequent phases.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction.

Name:

Position:

Signature:

Date:

			
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