JODIE HARRISON MP

LABOR SHADOW MINISTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION NEEDS COVID-19 CONTROL GUIDANCE

Following today's announcement that 260 council run early childhood education centres will receive funding to continue operating, Labor is calling on the Berejiklian Government to introduce clear virus control guidelines for childcare centres, to protect families and educators.

The discovery of a COVID-19 cluster at the Rose of Sharon childcare centre in Blacktown - 7 cases in staff, 6 cases in children and 12 secondary cases - demonstrates that childcare facilities have the potential to be a source of community transmission of the virus.

Labor Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education Jodie Harrison said: "The Berejiklian Government needs to ensure any centre caring for children has tough infection control measures in place.

"We know children can catch COVID-19 and if we are going to keep our long day care centres, preschools and family day care providers operating, the Berejiklian Government must act to protect the safety of employees, parents and children.

The Berejiklian Government has currently provided no clear directions to early childhood education services.

"There are no guidelines to help navigate social distancing in a childcare setting. Have you ever tried to keep a 3 year old 1.5 metres away from someone they want to play with?" Ms Harrison said.

"If we're keeping these centres open to support frontline and essential workers, we need to ensure that childcare centres don't become a backdoor to infecting nurses, doctors, teachers and police."

Ms Harrison welcomed news that hundreds of early childhood education centres and thousands of childhood education workers were given a reprieve from forced closures.

"Councils had run out of funding and were being forced to stand staff aside and close centres. The Berejiklian Government pushed them to the brink. It shouldn't have taken the sector to fall off a cliff for the Berejiklian Government to act."

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