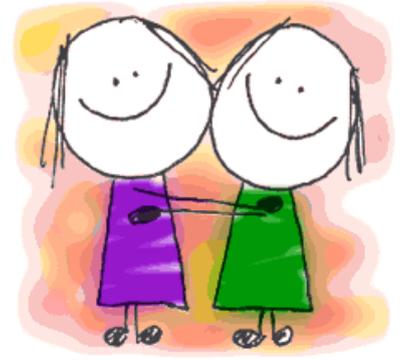


# OSHCsa

## update

'A Place To Belong'



### Wasn't it hot?!



Now that the children are back at school in the middle of the day, aren't you glad **not** to be religiously watching the weather forecast wondering whether you will have to cancel excursions?! We had a VERY hot vac care and this meant many services had to make programming decisions. Do you cancel that excursion or not?

There are a number of factors to take into consideration when deciding whether to cancel an excursion due to hot weather. Undertaking a risk assessment will assist educators to make the right decision. Even though it is hot outside, the children might not be exposed to the heat for any length of time? For example if the buses are air conditioned and the movie cinema is fully air conditioned and the children don't have a lengthy walk to get there, it should be no different to being at an air conditioned service (or even better). So the questions you might ask as part of a thorough risk assessment might include:

- Do the children have to walk for more than a few minutes?
- Are the buses air conditioned?
- Have you checked with the bus company to ensure you are getting a bus with working air conditioning? (This doesn't need to be done on a 30 degree day to the local movies, but would be essential on a 40 degree day to Victor Harbor.)
- Is the venue you are going to air conditioned?
- Have you checked with the venue the day before to ensure the air conditioning is working properly? (Once again not so important on a 30 degree day, but more so on a 40 or 45 degree day).
- Is the temperature at your location going to be the same as your service location? For example some days the temperature at Victor Harbor is noticeably cooler than in Adelaide, but other days it is the same.
- If the excursion is a swimming one, will staff members or non-swimming children be comfortable if the temperature is exceedingly hot? In this instance it may be possible to shorten the excursion or take along spray bottles to keep any non-swimmers cool.
- Will there be equipment at your location which children might get burnt on (such as slides)?
- Is it in an area prone to bushfires?
- If it is outdoor, is there any likelihood of lightning?
- Will the children still enjoy the excursion if it is very hot?
- Can you call the bus company at short notice to collect you early if the weather becomes uncomfortable?

It can be difficult making a decision about cancelling excursions due to hot weather. Families will pressure you to cancel. Children will pressure you to go ahead as planned. Keep a cool head and systematically go through a risk assessment to find out the best plan of action. If the children are going to be in air conditioned places most of the day – and you have checked that the air conditioning is in working order, there is really no reason to cancel. Some families may not understand this, so it is always good to put out a brief note outlining the measures you have undertaken to ensure the excursion is still safe and enjoyable for all. Alternatively if you undertake this process and realise there may be a risk the children (or adults) could become overheated then perhaps you should reconsider the excursion, and once again outline your reasons for children and families.



# Who or What is OSHCsa?

# OSHCsa

OSHCsa is all about collaboration and bringing the sector together to become a stronger unit. The aim is that OSHC directors and educators have each other for support. OSHCsa is about canvassing the knowledge and experience in the sector and sharing it with others so that we don't work in isolation in our services. OSHCsa is you and me. A group of OSHC directors have volunteered to be on the management board of OSHCsa and they make decisions on behalf of the members. In 2013 we had just over 100 members.



There are a number of benefits of being an OSHCsa member, but the main reason people join is to ensure they are in the loop and can keep abreast of what's going on. The OSHCsa Board prides itself on keeping well informed of the latest issues and ensuring the correct information is going out to the sector. Due to OSHC always being 'a little different' to the other streams of child care, there are often confusing and complicated issues to work through - and different Governments and organisations can give out conflicting information. Minimum qualifications for OSHC personnel and preschool children in OSHC services are just a couple of examples of this.

One of the greatest benefits of being an OSHCsa member is having access to an online networking site where directors and their educators can ask any question they like or share resources or follow what other people are doing in their services. Each year the board tries to ascertain what the sector needs and provide support in this way. A couple of years ago we provided professional development but there was less demand for this last year as the sector seemed a little sick of training and PD. And, there is always so much out there already. OSHCsa will still consider providing sessions where there is a need or demand, but it will be more in the form of a panel of experienced OSHC directors sharing what they are doing in their services, rather the more formal training. This year OSHCsa will continue to deliver quarterly e-newsletters to its members – and attempt to dispel the confusion in the sector over many issues. Our newsletters are always OSHC specific as they are written by experienced and knowledgeable OSHC directors and always consider the OSHC point of view. (If you are a member and not getting our emails please email us at [oshcsa@gmail.com](mailto:oshcsa@gmail.com) to check if we have your correct email address.)

The bonus of OSHCsa is that it is comprised of OSHC directors currently working in the sector (and a few support agency personnel) so they understand the issues and know OSHC really well. The downside of OSHCsa is that it is comprised of OSHC directors currently working in the sector....and they are already very busy within their own services. These people are passionate about OSHC but sometimes time poor and have very few resources, so please consider this when viewing us as some organisation somewhere in a large office. We don't have an office – we operate out of a variety of OSHC services around Adelaide. Therefore it sometimes takes a while to get things done. But we definitely get things done. Here are some of the things we have achieved over the last year, or are currently still working on:

- Quarterly e-newsletters
- Very active online networking groupsite
- Two OSHCsa representatives attended two national meetings with the National peak body – NOSHSA (National Out of School Hours Services Association) to collaborate on issues and lobby government.



## Who or What is OSHCsa Continued....

- Productivity Commission Submission addressing issues which impact on OSHC services in SA (this submission may be found on the OSHCsa website)
- Joint project with DECD to produce 10 ClassMovies from 10 different OSHC services. This project will provide the sector with valuable video footage of school age children at play.
- Currently working on a research project with DECD to uncover the standard amount of Non-contact time required to operate OSHC services in SA.
- Recruiting and supporting hub co-ordinators to run quarterly hub meetings
- In 2014 we are working on a project to connect rural and remote services to a hub meeting via web cams.
- In 2014 we are working with NOSHSA to help services participate in Action Research Projects to deliver much needed research into the OSHC sector.
- Board members sit on several advocacy groups to put forward the OSHC view. These include Quality Improvement Group and NQA Stakeholder Advisory Group.
- Our website is evolving . In 2014 we aim to load resources, tools cool activities and recipes onto the Members Only section—sorry for the delay in this coming.

You may not be aware of the advocacy role OSHCsa is undertaking but we believe it is very important to the sector so that an OSHC voice is always heard. This is an even stronger voice when connected to NOSHSA. Please support OSHCsa – the best way to do this is to become a member in 2014 or convince your management committee that joining up is a priority!

Thank you to the following board members in 2013:

Jonathon Measday, *Keithcot Farm OSHC*  
Belinda Dickson, *Burton OSHC*  
Maria Cronin, *St Brigid's OSHC*  
Sheryl Godfrey, *Portside OSHC*

Francine Schiller, *East Adelaide OSHC*  
Helen Jones, *TAFESA*  
Tania Maple, *Kersbrook OSHC*  
Cassandra Figg, *St Pius X OSHC*

Mandy Richardson, *OSHCsa Chairperson*

## Would you like to be involved in a research project?

Have you ever wished you could research an issue in OSHC to promote better outcomes for OSHC services?? Now is your chance....

The National Outside Schools Hours Services Association (NOSHSA) is looking for OSHC service providers to participate in action research projects to inform practice in OSHC services across Australia. This is funded through the Australian Government Child Care Flexibility Trials. This joint partnership is hoping action research in services might uncover better ways for families to access OSHC and to help build a sustainable and responsive sector.

This opportunity will not only explore research to

inform the sector but help upskill personnel in OSHC services around the process of quality improvement. Participants will spend four full day workshops with Dr Jennifer Cartmel, honing their research skills and focusing on their chosen topics and also be involved in a research symposium.

Further information and full application forms are included with this mail out. If you are having trouble narrowing your research topic you can submit the paperwork to NOSHSA with your service details and as much detail about your topic or ideas as you have. Good Luck!



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