

Information Sheet No.17

Outside School Hours Care

School Age Care Programs

A number of schools operate before and after school care programs. If the P&C association manages the program, that is, employs and pays the staff, it must establish an outside school hours care committee which operates in conjunction with the service workers and users. **At least one member of the P&C Executive**, preferably two, must be on this committee and attend meetings of the committee. The committee must report regularly at P&C meetings. The P&C is responsible for holding adequate insurance cover (including workers compensation) and for paying workers at least minimum award (*The Child Care Industry Award 1992*) rates and for OH&S and taxation matters.

The *Child Care Industry Award 1992* is available on line at www.wagenet.gov.au.

Some School Age Care programs are run by community groups which hire school facilities through the School Board. These groups are required to carry their own insurance.

While services will differ from place to place, they should all aim to provide the highest quality care. The programs should offer a stimulating range of recreation and leisure activities in a safe and caring environment where children can have fun and enjoy themselves. It is important that the P&C Association supports the program by approving expenditure requests as far as possible.

Vacation Care is another school age care service provided by some P&Cs. It is particularly important that the P&C is aware of the range of activities (including excursions) undertaken during vacation care programs. Some of these may not be covered by the P&C insurance scheme. It is vital that the P&C association fully understand its responsibilities in operating such a program.

School Age Care programs must be licensed each year in accordance with the new School Age Care Licence Conditions. These centres are licensed to protect the rights of children, comply with national standards and to ensure a safe, nurturing and developmentally appropriate experience for children. The licensee is usually an incorporated P&C Association or an incorporated Community Service Organisation.

The Children's Policy and Regulation Unit of the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (Office for Children, Youth and Family Support) is responsible for licensing the centres each year. The licence also requires all services to develop policies and procedures for their services. Certain standards are required in relation to the buildings and physical environment, operation procedures, staffing, safety, health and hygiene and programs provided. Further information can be obtained from the Unit on 6207 1114.

Post election 2007:

Under the Howard Coalition Government, new laws were enacted (WorkChoices) which included plans for a major revision of the award system and its replacement by Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs). At the time of writing (January 2007) it is not known whether the Rudd Labor government will make any changes, or when these would occur. Please contact the Workplace Authority (Workplace info line 1300 363) for up-to-date information about the relevance of awards, etc. ★