

# Parents are feeling anxious about men in childcare centres. Stronger rules would make everyone feel safer <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

### Excerpts

Horrific allegations of child sexual abuse in childcare centres across Melbourne have put the role of men in early childhood education back in the spotlight.

Coming after other major media reports of child mistreatment in care, many parents are feeling very anxious about the safety of their children.

Some may be deeply suspicious of men working so closely with children. That caution is totally justified.

But there are many innocent, well-intentioned and caring men working in centres across the country. They're playing a vital role in a sector already plagued by well-documented staff shortages.

Driving them out of the workforce would be a mistake for the sector, for parents and for children.

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### Leaving the sector

But early childhood education has an issue with worker attrition.

This is especially concerning as pre-school for three-year-olds is rolled out in South Australia, Victoria and the ACT, increasing the demand for staff and pressure on services to meet staff ratios and keep children safe.

Against this backdrop, it's crucial we stem the tide of workers leaving the sector, including men.

Unfortunately, men are often the first to leave, especially after cases of sexual abuse at other centres.

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### Keeping children safer

Children who are abused experience lifelong trauma. Keeping them safe at all times should be the number one priority of educators and society at large.

The Melbourne case has left many parents rightly cautious and feeling uncertain about leaving their children in the care of men. We may well see less interest from centres in employing men, as has happened after similar cases in the past.

This would build on existing suspicions parents have of male educators.

There's no easy answer to this. But there are some things that may make early education safer.

The first is to strengthen working with children screening checks, something the Victorian government has already flagged it will do.

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**Related link:** A cautionary tale from Australia <sup>[3]</sup>

**Region:** Australia and New Zealand <sup>[4]</sup>

**Tags:** early childhood educators <sup>[5]</sup>  
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[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/25/07/parents-are-feeling-anxious-about-men-childcare-centres-stronger> [2] <https://theconversation.com/parents-are-feeling-anxious-about-men-in-childcare-centres-stronger-rules-would-make-everyone-feel-safer-260282> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/05/12/cautionary-tale-australia> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/region/australia-and-new-zealand> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9021> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/quality>