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Health promotion and practice in Australian childcare centres

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People in Melbourne has been experienced the longest and strictest lockdown in the world. On the other hand, the childcare centres and services are essential elements that need to remain open and continue for essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the recommendation from the WHO, children do not need to wear masks. Furthermore, educators and teachers are not required to wear a face mask while communicating, educating, or caring for young children in the centres. Besides, social distancing rules do not apply to childcare classrooms under the current policies in Victoria, Australia. This study aims to understand two situations: 1) the way to protect children from the COVID-19 pandemic in order to operate the childcare centres effectively, and 2) investigate the practices for children's health and safety. The purposive sampling strategy was employed to recruit five childcare educators in Melbourne. Based on the qualitative research method and general inductive approach, semi-structured interview sessions, focus group activity, and member checking interview sessions were employed. The finding and results indicated that: 1) follow policy and procedure, 2) handwashing practice, 3) environmental cleaning, and 4) educators' hygienic practice in centre, were the top-four themes from the participants. The outcomes of this study provide recommendations to childcare centre stakeholders, government departments, and policymakers for the potential developments in the promotion of health and practice that aims to protect our youngest learner health and safety in the childcare service.

Biography

Leung, Yuk Lan is a Transnational Education Manager at University Preparation College, Australia. She completed her doctorate at Northeastern University, United States. Her research interests are in pedagogy, curriculum, children's health and wellbeing, environmental education in sustainability, and leadership in early childhood education. She has published more than 27 academic works in journals, book chapters, and conferences. She was invited as an advisor for a three-year project of "Pre-school Children: Health Promoting Kindergarten" in Hong Kong.

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