



FAQs about the 7 September National Shut-down

1.

I am the only union member at my centre. How can I take part in the National Shut-down?

Shutting down is not something you can do on your own - it means union members working together, and discussing this with your whole centre team, your Director, your families and your community networks. You're joining a national movement! So you'll need to start by talking to your fellow educators, asking them to join your union and support each other to get this done! We've prepared a kit of resources to help you do that.

2.

If our centre shuts down, what happens to vulnerable children or children of essential workers?

We will never put children at risk. This is why it's so important for union members to work together in your centre team to plan with families so that you can participate in the national shut-down. Most families can plan alternative arrangements, just as they have had to do with recent centre closures due to COVID outbreaks or other emergencies – but it's important we give them as much notice as possible! This could mean working with other services in your network or making other contingency plans as a centre team.

Talk to your fellow union members to get ideas and find out what they are doing [here](#) at [Early Educators United](#).

3.

What if my Centre Director/Area Manager/Employer refuses to allow us to shut down?

Taking part in a national shut-down can definitely take some hard conversations! If your management see only one or two educators wanting to take action, it will be easier for them to stop you. If your management does not understand the reasons for your action, or can't see that you have a solid plan to make it work, then it will be easier for them to try to say No. But there is strength in numbers! If you all stand together in your union, and you talk to your families together to get their support, you can then go to your management with a clear plan. This is what union members in other sectors – aged care, school education, health care – have done, and now it's early educators' turn!!

4.

Can I get in trouble for taking part in the national shut-down?

Being union means looking out for each other. The more members at your centre who are taking part, the harder it is for any individual to be singled out. Remember – there is strength and safety in numbers! Being a union member also means you have access to advice, support and the full resources of 150,000 United Workers Union members all around Australia! If you are concerned, contact your union organiser, speak to your delegate or call the union office.

5.

My centre management is supporting us to shut down our centre! Is it illegal for them to pay us for 7 September, even if we close for half or all of the day?

The Fair Work Act does not stop employers from paying workers for doing things other than their normal duties if they wish. For example:

- Some employers take their staff to a Christmas lunch during their paid time.
- Employers often send workers to training or forums during their work time.

Other employers are agreeing to provide annual leave or unpaid leave for educators to take part in the shut-down.

6.

We are discussing shutting down our centre for the full day. What events and rallies can we take part in?

Centres won't be taking part in the national shut-down just for educators to stay at home - members are organising rallies at 3pm in different locations all around the country! Stay tuned to find out about transport, locations, venues and times [here](#) or go to bigsteps.org.au/shut-down-the-sector/ as they are confirmed closer to the date.

7.

We are in a regional or rural area. If our centre is shut down on 7 September, how can we take part in the events on the day?

There will be events and rallies planned outside capitals and major cities. To find out what is the closest event to you, check [here](#) or go to bigsteps.org.au/shut-down-the-sector/ Or if you would like to plan an event or a celebration of your own – in a local venue or part, to invite families and supporters, we'd love to hear about it at bigsteps@unitedworkersunion.org.au The more noise we make, across the country, the harder it will be for the Federal Government to ignore our voices!