
Report on Government Services 2022

PART B, SECTION 3: LATEST UPDATE: 7 JUNE 2022

3 Early childhood education and care

LATEST UPDATE 7 JUNE 2022:

Indicator results for:

- ✓ [ECEC participation by selected equity groups, 2021 data](#)
- ✓ [ECEC participation, 2021 data](#)
- ✓ [Parent costs for ECEC services, 2021 data](#)
- ✓ [ECEC outcomes, 2021 data](#)

Context on:

- ✓ [Size and scope, 2021 data](#)

Impact of COVID-19 on data for the Early childhood education and care services section

COVID-19 may affect data in this report in a number of ways. This includes in respect of actual performance (that is, the impact of COVID-19 on service delivery during 2020 and 2021 which is reflected in the data results), and the collection and processing of data (that is, the ability of data providers to undertake data collection and process results for inclusion in the report).

For the Early childhood education and care services section, there has been an increase in funding by the Australian Government in 2020-21 arising from support provided to early education and care services affected by COVID-19.

This section reports on the performance of early childhood education and care (ECEC) services, which comprise child care and preschool services.

The **Indicator Results** tab uses data from the data tables to provide information on the performance for each indicator in the **Indicator Framework**. The same data are also available in CSV format.

[Guide: How to find what you need in RoGS – modified dynamic online presentation \(PDF - 259 Kb\)](#)

Context

Objectives for ECEC services

ECEC services aim to meet the education, care and development needs of children, and meet the needs of families including enabling increased workforce participation, by providing universal access to early childhood education services for eligible children and accessible child care services that:

- are high quality, affordable, flexible and can be implemented across a range of settings
- are delivered in a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment

- target improved access for, and participation by, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Governments aim for ECEC services to meet these objectives in an equitable and efficient manner.

Service overview

The ECEC sector provides a range of services for children based on their age and education, care and development needs. ECEC services provide the following broad service types:

- *Child care services* — provide education and care services to children aged 0–12 years including the following service types: centre based day care; family day care; outside school hours care (OSHC); and other care (see the 'Key terms and references' tab for definitions).
- *Preschool services* — are services that deliver a preschool program. A 'preschool program' is a structured, play-based learning program, delivered by a qualified teacher, aimed at children in the year or two before they commence full time schooling (table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Preschool programs in Australia, 2020-21

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Preschool program</i>		<i>Transition to primary school Foundation year (Year prior to year 1)</i>	
	<i>Program name</i>	<i>Age of entry — preschool program in year before full time schooling (YBFS)</i>	<i>School year</i>	<i>Age of entry</i>
NSW	Preschool	Generally aged 4 and 5	Kindergarten	5 by 31 July
Vic	Kindergarten	4 by 30 April	Preparatory (Prep)	5 by 30 April
Qld	Kindergarten	4 by 30 June	Preparatory (Prep)	5 by 30 June
WA	Kindergarten	4 by 30 June	Pre Primary	5 by 30 June
SA	Preschool	4 by 1 May	Reception	5 by 1 May
Tas	Kindergarten	4 by 1 January	Preparatory	5 by 1 January
ACT	Preschool	4 by 30 April	Kindergarten	5 by 30 April

	Preschool program		Transition to primary school Foundation year (Year prior to year 1)	
State/Territory	Program name	Age of entry — preschool program in year before full time schooling (YBFS)	School year	Age of entry
NT	Preschool	4 by 30 June	Transition	5 by 30 June

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished).

An ECEC service may offer more than one service type, such as centre based day care and OSHC (both child care services). The most common type of integrated service is a preschool program delivered within centre based day care. The range of service types offered differs across states and territories and between service providers.

ECEC services can also provide other non-education services such as maternal and child health services and family support services. The services provided differ according to community need, with more extensive services often being provided in disadvantaged communities.

Roles and responsibilities

The Australian, State and Territory governments have different but complementary roles in ECEC. In 2020-21, the Australian Government's main roles and responsibilities included:

- paying the Child Care Subsidy (CCS)¹ which is generally paid directly to child care providers. The types of child care for which families receive subsidised care are in table 3.2
- providing funding to State and Territory governments to support the achievement of universal access to early childhood education, through the *National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education* (NP UAECE)
- providing operational and capital funding to some providers.

Table 3.2 Summary of ECEC service funding by Australian, State and Territory governments, 2020-21

		<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i> <small>a</small>	<i>ACT</i> <small>b</small>	<i>NT</i> <small>c</small>	<i>Aus Gov</i>
<i>Funded child care services, for service types:</i>	Centre based day care	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
	OSHC	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
	Family day care	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
	In home care	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
<i>Funded preschool services / programs, in:</i>	Local government / community preschools	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
	For-profit centre based day care	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
	Not-for-profit centre based day care	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
	Government school	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
	Non-government school	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗

✓ Government provides funding to at least one of these services.

✗ Government does not provide funding to any of these services.

a In Tasmania, some child care services may receive funding under an annual, small capital grants (minor infrastructure) program. These services are not included in this table unless they also receive recurrent funding. **b** In the ACT, child care services and preschool services outside the government sector may receive support through capital grants, rental subsidies, and funding through budget initiatives. These services are not included in this table unless they also receive recurrent funding. **c** The NT Government also provide funding to 3-year-old kindergarten services.

Source: Australian, State and Territory governments (unpublished).

State and Territory governments' roles and responsibilities vary across jurisdictions but mainly include:

- funding and/or providing preschool services and, in some cases, providing funding to child care services (including some that also receive Australian Government funding)
- providing funding to support the implementation of the NP UAECE
- regulating approved services under the National Quality Framework (NQF) and licensing and/or registering child care services not approved under the NQF
- implementing strategies to improve the quality of ECEC programs
- providing curriculum, information, support, advice, and training and development to ECEC providers.

Local governments also plan, fund and deliver ECEC, but due to data limitations, the only local government data included in this section are those involving Australian, State and Territory government funding and/or licensing.

-
1. The CCS replaced the Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate from 2 July 2018. The Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS) has been introduced to manage the payment and administration of the CCS and is the source of these data. There are some changes to reporting under the CCSS. In particular, the introduction of new categories Centre based day care (a consolidation of long day care and occasional care previously reported separately) and Outside school hours care (a consolidation of outside school hours care and vacation care previously reported separately) and no longer separately identifying Budget based funded services.

Funding

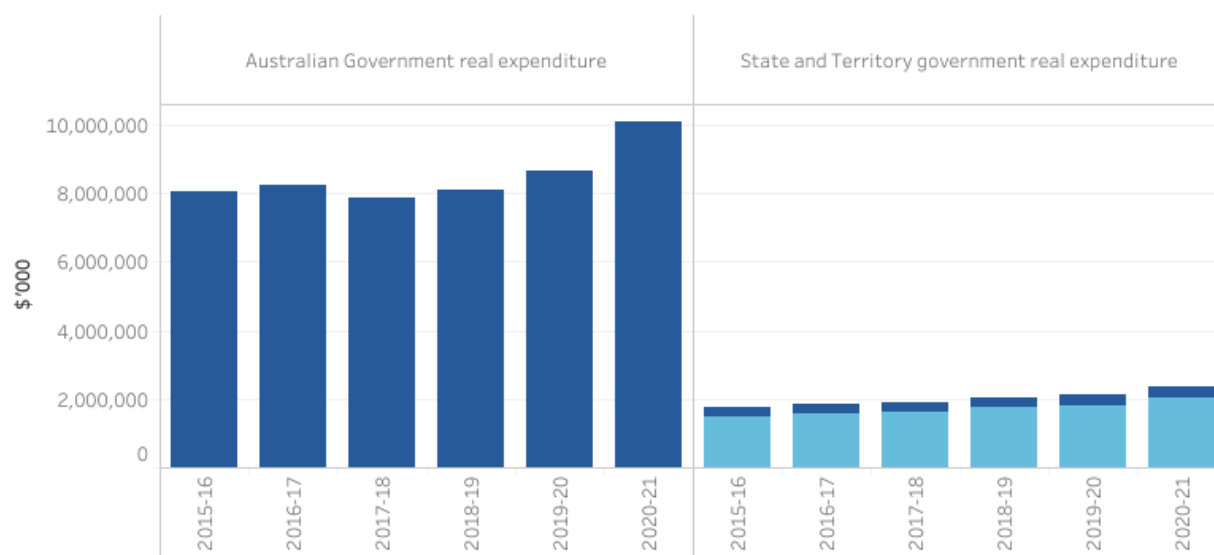
Total Australian, State and Territory real government recurrent and capital expenditure on ECEC services was \$12.4 billion in 2020-21, an increase of 15.6 per cent from 2019-20 which is the largest annual percentage increase in the last 10 years. This largely comprised a 16.7 per cent increase in funding by the Australian Government arising from support provided to early education and care services affected by COVID-19 (table 3A.5). Australian Government expenditure accounted for \$10.1 billion (81.2 per cent) and State and Territory government expenditure \$2.3 billion, with preschool services accounting for 87.0 per cent of the State and Territory government expenditure (figure 3.1).

Australian Government expenditure of \$442.3 million allocated to State and Territory governments in 2020-21 through the NP UAECE (table 3A.7), is included under State and Territory government expenditure.

Select year(s):
Multiple values

Child care services
Preschool services

Figure 3.1 Australian, State and Territory government real recurrent and capital expenditure on ECEC services (2020-21 dollars) (a)



Source: tables 3A.5 & 3A.6

(a) Australian government preschool services expenditure is nil for all years.

Data tables are referenced above by a '3A' prefix and all data (footnotes and data sources) are available for download from the supporting material below (both in Excel and CSV format).

+ a b | e a u

Size and scope

Services delivering ECEC

In 2021², there were 13 589 Australian Government CCS approved child care services in Australia (table 3.3). Some child care services do not receive Australian Government funding and are funded by State and Territory governments only or do not receive any government funding.

Table 3.3 Australian Government Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approved child care services, 2021
by jurisdiction, by service type

		NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Centre based day care	%	67.6	56.6	66.2	58.6	53.7	50.2	62.8	65.4	62.6
Family day care	%	2.8	3.9	3.9	2.8	1.4	3.5	2.5	1.6	3.2
Outside School Hours Care (OSHC)	%	29.4	39.3	29.5	38.2	44.3	46.3	34.4	33.0	34.0
In home care	%	np	np	np	np	np	np	np	np	0.3
Total	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approved child care services	no.	4,943	3,189	2,622	1,252	856	257	285	185	13,589
State and Territory government (only) funded child care service	no.	na	-	27	3	128	12	..	1	171

Source: tables 3A.8 & 3A.9

np Not published. na Not available. .. Not applicable. - Nil or rounded to zero.

Data tables are referenced above by a '3A' prefix and all data (footnotes and data sources) are available for download from the supporting material below (both in Excel and CSV format).



In 2021 there were 12 737 ECEC services in Australia delivering preschool programs (table 3.4). Of these services, 8470 (66.5 per cent) were delivered from centre based day care and the remainder were delivered from stand-alone preschool services or preschool services attached to a school.

Table 3.4 Proportion of ECEC services with a preschool program (per cent), 2021
by jurisdiction, by service delivery setting and management type

		NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust	
Within a preschool service	Government	%	3.8	7.7	7.2	40.6	41.1	44.7	29.7	50.6	15.0
	Non-Government	%	15.9	30.5	19.0	15.3	2.8	17.1	1.1	3.4	18.5
	Community	%	15.4	27.8	16.7	-	0.5	-	-	-	14.5
	Non-Government school	%	0.5	2.5	2.3	15.3	2.3	17.1	1.1	3.4	3.9
	Private	%	0.1	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.1
Total		%	19.8	38.2	26.1	55.9	43.9	61.8	30.8	54.0	33.5
Within centre based day care	Government	%	5.3	3.8	0.9	1.1	7.7	3.5	1.5	7.6	3.7
	Non-Government	%	74.9	58.0	72.9	43.0	48.4	34.7	67.7	38.4	62.8
	Total	%	80.2	61.8	73.9	44.1	56.1	38.2	69.2	46.0	66.5
Within a preschool service		no.	812	1,137	610	931	358	210	81	128	4,267
Within centre based day care		no.	3,298	1,837	1,723	733	458	130	182	109	8,470
All ECEC services with a preschool program		no.	4,110	2,974	2,333	1,664	816	340	263	237	####

Source: table 3A.10
- Nil or rounded to zero.

Data tables are referenced above by a '3A' prefix and all data (footnotes and data sources) are available for download from the supporting material below (both in Excel and CSV format).



Children using ECEC

In 2021³, 1 315 428 (31.8 per cent of) children aged 0–12 years attended Australian Government CCS approved child care services, a slight decrease from 1 317 072 in 2020. The decrease is due to a decrease in attendance of children aged 6–12 years reflecting, at least in part, reduced use of OSHC due to the impacts of COVID-19. Attendance of children aged 0–5 increased and there was also an increase in attendance at centre based day care (tables 3A.14–15).

In 2021, 546 633 children were enrolled in a preschool program, which includes children attending a 3 year old preschool program (table 3A.18)⁴. Of these children, 291 254 were enrolled in a preschool program in the year before full time schooling (YBFS) (table 3A.17). The total enrolment figure provides an estimate of service activity, whilst the state specific YBFS enrolment figure provides an estimate of the cohort for whom the year of preschool is in the year before they are anticipated to attend full time school.

2. Data for 2021 related to Australian Government CCS approved child care services are for the March quarter.
3. Data for 2021 related to Australian Government CCS approved child care services are for the March quarter.
4. Data reported for 3 year olds enrolled in a preschool program may be incomplete due to different reporting arrangements in each jurisdiction.

Indicator framework

The performance indicator framework provides information on equity, efficiency and effectiveness, and distinguishes the outputs and outcomes of ECEC services.

The performance indicator framework shows which data are complete and comparable in this Report. For data that are not considered directly comparable, text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary. [Section 1](#) discusses data comparability and completeness from a Report-wide perspective. In addition to the contextual information for this service area (see Context tab), the Report's statistical context ([Section 2](#)) contains data that may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this section.

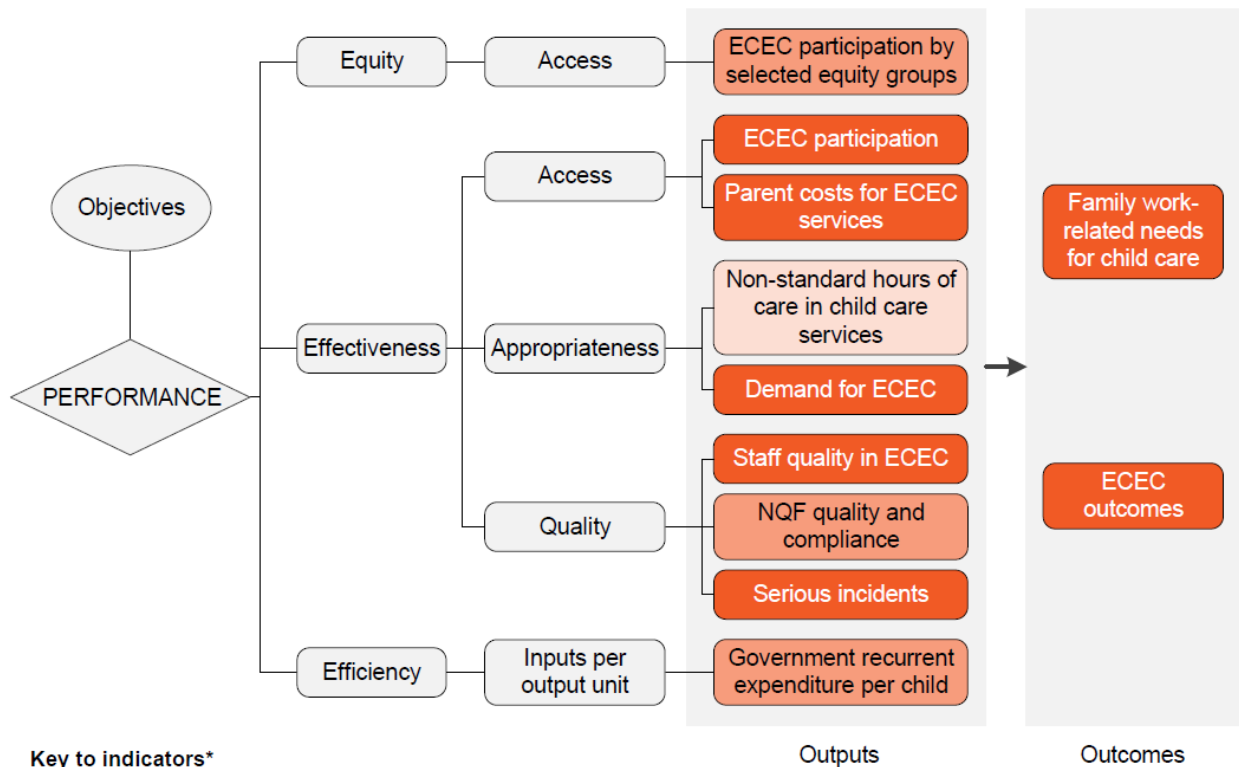
Improvements to performance reporting for ECEC services are ongoing and include identifying data sources to fill gaps in reporting for performance indicators and measures, and improving the comparability and completeness of data.

Outputs

Outputs are the services delivered (while outcomes are the impact of these services on the status of an individual or group) (see section 1). Output information is also critical for equitable, efficient and effective management of government services.

Outcomes

Outcomes are the impact of services on the status of an individual or group (see section 1).



Key to indicators*

- Text Most recent data for all measures are comparable and complete
- Text Most recent data for at least one measure are comparable and complete
- Text Most recent data for all measures are either not comparable and/or not complete
- Text No data reported and/or no measures yet developed

* A description of the comparability and completeness of each measure is provided in indicator interpretation boxes within the section

Indicator results

An overview of the ECEC services performance indicator results is presented. Different delivery contexts, locations and types of clients can affect the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of ECEC services.

Information to assist the interpretation of these data can be found with the indicators below and all data (footnotes and data sources) are available for download from [Download supporting material](#). Data tables are identified by a '3A' prefix (for example, table 3A.1).

All data are available for download as an excel spreadsheet and as a CSV dataset — refer to [Download supporting material](#). Specific data used in figures can be downloaded by clicking in the figure area, navigating to the bottom of the visualisation to the grey toolbar, clicking on the 'Download' icon and selecting 'Data' from the menu. Selecting 'PDF' or 'Powerpoint' from the 'Download' menu will download a static view of the performance indicator results.

1. ECEC participation by selected equity groups

'ECEC participation by selected equity groups' is an indicator of governments' objective to provide ECEC services in an equitable manner, and that there is access for, and participation of, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

'ECEC participation by selected equity groups' is defined by two measures:

- Children using child care, by selected equity group — the proportion of children aged 0–5, 6–12 and 0–12 years enrolled in Australian Government CCS approved child care services who are from selected equity groups, compared with the representation of these groups in the community.
- Preschool program participation, by selected equity groups — the proportion of children aged 4–5 years enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS and the proportion of children aged 3–5 years enrolled in a preschool program, who are from selected equity groups, compared with the representation of these groups in the community.

Selected equity groups include children from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from low-income families (measure 1 only), children from low socioeconomic areas (measure 2 only), children with disability, and children from regional and remote areas. A low socioeconomic area is defined for measure 2 to be children residing in an area with a Socioeconomic Indexes for Areas Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage quintile of 1.

A high or increasing ECEC participation is desirable. If the representation of selected equity groups among ECEC service users is broadly similar to their representation in the community, this suggests equitable access.

Nationally, the representation of children aged 0–5, 6–12 and 0–12 years from selected equity groups in child care services was lower than their representation in the community, except for children from NESB and low-income families (figure 3.2a and table 3A.11).

Nationally, the representation of children enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS who are from selected equity groups is higher than their representation in the community for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from regional areas. The representation of children who are from low socioeconomic areas, children from remote areas, children from NESB and children with disability is lower than their representation in the community (figure 3.2b).

For children aged 3–5 years, representation of selected equity groups in a preschool program is lower than their representation in the community, other than children from regional areas (whose representation is higher) (table 3A.12).

- (measure 1) Data are comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions.
- (measure 1) Data are complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.

Select year(s)
(applies to figure 3.2a):
Multiple values

Select age group
(applies to figure 3.2a):

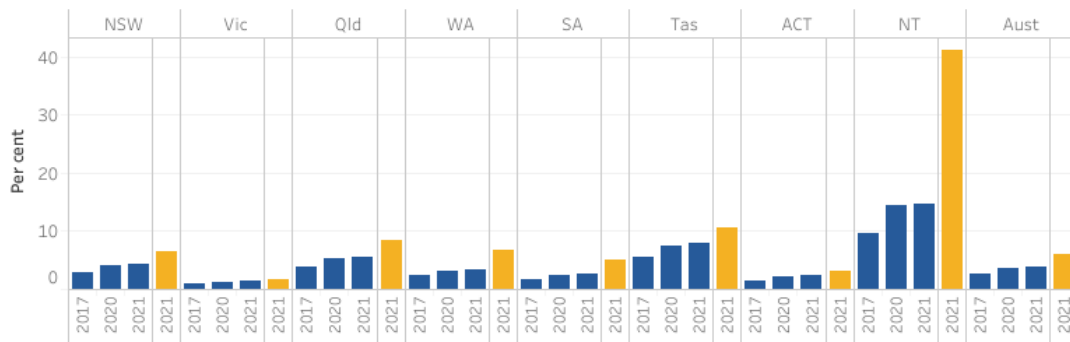
- 0-5 years old
- 6-12 years old
- 0-12 years old

Select equity group (applies to figure 3.2a):

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- Children from low-income families
- Children from regional areas
- Children from remote areas

■ In child care services ■ In the community; at 30 June

Figure 3.2a Measure 1: **Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0-12 years old attending CCS approved child care services compared with their representation in the community** by jurisdiction, by year (a), (b), (c)



Source: table 3A.11

(a) For Children from remote areas: Victorian data are zero for Representation in the community and Representation in child care services. There are no remote areas in the ACT. (b) The most recent year of data for children from NESB and children with disability is 2016. (c) See data tables 3A.11 for information on non-publication of data on selected equity groups for individual jurisdictions.

- (measure 2) Data are not comparable across jurisdictions for NESB children and children with disability (comparable for all other selected equity groups).
- (measure 2) Data are incomplete for the current reporting period for NESB. All required 2020 NESB data are not available ..

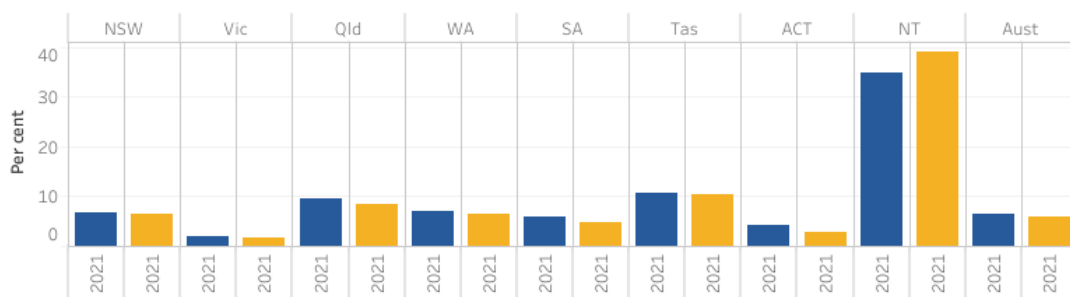
Select year(s)
(applies to figure 3.2b):
All

Select equity group (applies to figure 3.2b):

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- Children from low socioeconomic areas
- Children from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB)
- Children from regional areas
- Children from remote areas
- Children with disability

■ Proportion of all children in preschool programs ■ Representation in the community; at 30 June

Figure 3.2b Measure 2: **Proportion of children enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS who are from selected equity groups compared with children aged 4-5 years in the community** by jurisdiction, by year (a), (b)



Source: table 3A.13

(a) For Children from remote areas, there are no remote areas in the ACT. (b) See data table 3A.13 for information on non-publication of data on selected equity groups for individual jurisdictions.

2. ECEC participation

'ECEC participation' is an indicator of governments' objective to ensure that ECEC services are accessible.

'ECEC participation' is defined by two measures:

- Children using child care — the proportion of children who are enrolled in Australian Government CCS approved child care services by age group (0–5, 6–12 and 0–12 years)
- Preschool program participation — the proportion of children who are enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS. To be considered as enrolled, the child must have attended the preschool program for at least one hour during the reference period, or be absent due to illness or extended holiday leave and expected to return. State and Territory data are based on the location of the child's residence.

A higher or increasing proportion of children participating in ECEC services is desirable. However, this indicator can be difficult to interpret as this indicator does not provide information on parental preferences for using child care and preschool.

Nationally in 2021, 31.8 per cent of children aged 0–12 years attended Australian Government CCS approved child care, slightly higher than 2020 and up from 26.2 per cent in 2012. Attendance by children aged 0–5 years has increased from 2020 with a fall in attendance by children aged 6–12 years (figure 3.3a). The decrease in attendance by children aged 6–12 years was in OSHC, likely reflecting, at least in part, reduced use due to the impacts of COVID-19 (table 3A.15).

The average hours of attendance in Australian Government CCS approved child care in 2021 varied considerably across jurisdictions for all service types (table 3A.16). Nationally, average attendance per child was 31.0 hours per week for centre-based day care and 23.5 hours per week for family day care, but considerably less for OSHC (10.3 per cent). The average hours of attendance across service types in 2021 is similar to that for 2020 (table 3A.16).

Nationally in 2021, 87.2 per cent of children were enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS, up from 84.7 per cent in 2020 but down from 87.7 per cent in 2019 (figure 3.3b).

Compared to all children, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children had a higher enrolment rate in the YBFS (96.4 per cent) (tables 3A.17 and 3A.20). The majority of all children and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children that were enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS were enrolled for at least 15 hours per week (96.8 per cent and 96.7 per cent respectively) (tables 3A.19 and 3A.21).

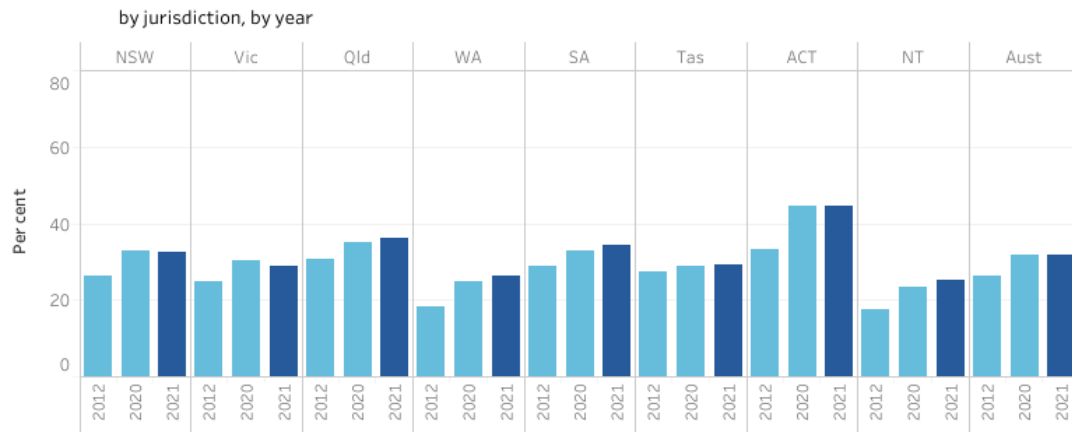
■ (all measures) Data are comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time (from 2016 onwards for the second measure).

■ (all measures) Data are complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.

Select year(s) (applies to figure 3.3a):
Multiple values

Select age group (applies to figure 3.3a):
○ 0-5 years old
○ 6-12 years old
● 0-12 years old

Figure 3.3a Measure 1: Proportion of Children attending Australian Government CCS approved child care services, 0-12 years old

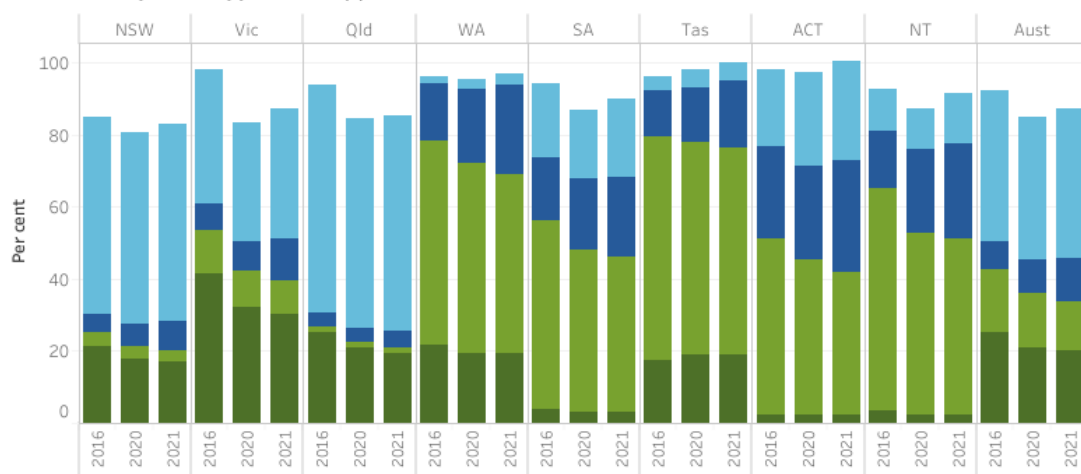


Source: table 3A.14

Select year(s) (applies to figure 3.3b):
Multiple values

Sector:
■ Preschool program within Centre Based Day Care
■ Multiple services
■ Preschool program within a preschool service — Government preschool services
■ Preschool program within a preschool service Non-Government preschool services

Figure 3.3b Measure 2: Proportion of children enrolled in a preschool program in the state-specific YBFS by sector, by jurisdiction (a)



Source: table 3A.17

(a) Multiple services: children enrolled in multiple preschool services or children enrolled in a preschool service and centre based day care service.

3. Parent costs for ECEC services

'Parent costs for ECEC services' is an indicator of governments' objective to ensure that ECEC services are affordable.

'Parent costs for ECEC services' is defined by three measures:

- Child care service costs — the median weekly cost for 50 hours of Australian Government CCS approved centre based day care and family day care. Costs are before the reduction due to the CCS or Child Care Rebate.
- Child care costs as a proportion of weekly disposable income — the proportion of weekly disposable income that families spend on centre based day care and family day care before and after the payment of child care subsidies, for families with two income earners with a 60:40 income split and gross annual income of \$35 000, \$55 000, \$75 000, \$95 000, \$115 000, \$135 000, \$155 000, \$175 000, \$195 000 and \$215 000. This proportion is reported for families with one child attending centre based day care or family day care for 30 hours
- Preschool program costs — the median hourly cost of a preschool program (after subsidies), per child enrolled aged 4 and 5 years.

Median costs represent the middle value of the range of costs.

Provided the service quality is held constant, lower median service costs are desirable. While a similar proportion of income spent across income groups suggests a more equitable outcome, families who use more care per week are expected to face higher out-of-pocket costs.

Various factors influence ECEC costs and care needs to be exercised when interpreting results, as:

- fees are set independently by ECEC service providers and there is significant variation in the fees across services
- costs are influenced by a number of factors including NQF approval requirements, award wages, and whether fees include charges for additional services such as nappies and meals, as well as localised issues such as, land values and rental costs, rates, and other localised costs of living
- median costs data may reflect particular scenarios of ECEC use and family income level, so do not reflect the out-of-pocket costs by families at varying levels of income or care usage
- for preschool program costs, there are a mix of providers (community, private and government). Differences in charging practices can be due to commercial or cost recovery decisions made by individual services. Some preschool programs, particularly those offered at government preschool services, have no tuition fees.

The median weekly cost for 50 hours of care in 2021 was higher for centre based day care (\$540) than for family day care (\$530) (figure 3.4). Median weekly costs differ across remoteness areas. In 2021, the median weekly cost of centre based day care in major cities and inner regional areas (\$543) was higher than in outer regional and remote areas (\$500) (table 3A.22).

Nationally in 2021, child care subsidies reduced the out-of-pocket costs for 30 hours of day care for all family income categories. However, the subsidies had a greater impact (as a proportion of family

income) for lower income families, reducing the variation in the child care costs across income categories (table 3A.23).

Across jurisdictions in 2021, the out-of-pocket costs after subsidies for families with one child in 30 hours of child care, as a proportion of weekly disposable income (after subsidies), were similar for centre based day care and family day care (table 3.5a). Out-of-pocket costs for both centre based day care and family day care were generally higher for middle and higher income levels as a proportion of gross family income than lower income levels (table 3A.23).

Nationally, the median cost per hour for a preschool program (after subsidies) per child was \$2.00, similar to 2020 but down from \$2.63 in 2019 and equal lowest cost for the six years of reported data (table 3.5b). Median hourly costs differ across remoteness areas. In 2021, the median hourly cost of preschool programs (after subsidies) in major cities was \$2.39, compared to \$1.44 in regional areas (table 3A.25).

■ (all measures) Data are comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time.

■ (all measures) Data are complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.

Select year (applies to figure 3.4):

2021

■ Centre based day care

■ Family day care

Figure 3.4 Measure 1: Median weekly cost of 50 hours of Australian Government CCS approved child care services; by selected service types (\$/week), 2021 (2020-21 dollars) by jurisdiction, by selected service type



Source: table 3A.22

Select family income category (applies to table 3.5a):

\$75 000

Table 3.5a Measure 2: Out-of-pocket costs of child care for families with one child in 30 hours child care; as a proportion of weekly disposable income, gross family income \$75 000, 2021 by jurisdiction, by selected service type

		NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Before child subsidies	Centre based day care %	24.2	24.0	22.0	23.8	23.2	21.7	26.4	21.5	23.5
	Family day care %	24.3	23.6	23.7	23.4	22.6	24.5	25.7	22.6	23.8
After child subsidies	Centre based day care %	4.1	4.0	3.7	4.0	3.9	3.6	4.5	3.6	4.0
	Family day care %	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.8	4.1	5.0	3.8	4.0

Source: table 3A.23

Select year(s) (applies to table 3.5b):

Multiple values

Select sector (applies to table 3.5b):

- Preschool program within a preschool service
- Preschool program within Centre Based Day Care
- All with a preschool program

Table 3.5b Measure 3: Median hourly cost of a preschool program (after subsidies) per child enrolled aged 4 and 5 years; by sector, All with a preschool program by jurisdiction, by year

		NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
\$/hr	2021	2.70	1.54	3.22	-	1.08	0.86	3.11	-	2.00
	2020	2.57	2.46	2.99	-	-	-	-	-	2.03
	2016	4.27	2.89	2.62	-	-	-	2.31	-	2.82

Source: table 3A.24

- Nil or rounded to zero.

4. Non-standard hours of care in child care services

'Non-standard hours of care in child care services' is an indicator of governments' objective to ensure that government funded child care services are accessible and flexible.

'Non-standard hours of care in child care services' is defined as the proportion of Australian Government CCS approved child care services that provide non-standard hours of care, by service type. Definitions of 'standard hours' and 'non-standard hours' are provided in the 'Key terms and references' tab.

A high or increasing proportion of services providing non-standard hours of care can suggest greater flexibility of services to meet the needs of families. That said, this indicator does not provide information on demand for non-standard hours of care or whether available non-standard hours services meet the needs of users.

Provision of non-standard hours of care can be influenced by a range of factors, such as costs to services and parents, demand for care, availability of carers, and compliance with legislative requirements.

In March 2021, 41.5 per cent of all CCS approved child care services provided non-standard hours of care. CCS approved services mainly provided non-standard hours of care before 7am on weekdays. Nationally in 2021, 65.0 per cent of in-home care services provided non-standard hours of care, followed by family day care with 51.1 per cent, OSHC with 42.1 per cent and centre based day care with 40.7 per cent (table 3.6).

■ Data are comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions but not over time. Data collected from the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS) are not comparable with earlier years data under the Child Care Management System (CCMS).

■ Data are complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.

Select year:

2021

Table 3.6 Proportion of Australian Government CCS approved child care services that are available during non-standard hours (per cent), 2021

	by jurisdiction, by service type (a)								
	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
Centre based day care	16.9	49.9	75.2	50.7	55.9	25.4	6.2	14.7	40.7
Family day care	50.4	42.4	56.9	45.7	100.0	66.7	42.9	66.7	51.1
OSHC	33.9	31.5	77.0	51.0	44.1	9.0	2.3	24.5	42.1
In home care	78.6	71.4	55.6	40.0	50.0	-	100.0	..	65.0
Total services	22.5	43.3	74.9	50.6	52.1	21.1	6.2	18.6	41.5

Source: table 3A.26

.. Not applicable. - Nil or rounded to zero. na Not available.

(a) Data for 2019 are not available due to data quality issues arising from the implementation of the CCSS in 2018.

✦ + a b | e a u

5. Demand for ECEC

'Demand for ECEC' is an indicator of governments' objective to ensure that ECEC services are accessible.

'Demand for ECEC' is defined as the proportion of children aged 0–12 years for whom additional formal child care or preschool services were currently required.

Additional care currently required refers to children who were already attending formal child care or preschool and parents wished for them to attend more, as well as children who did not attend any formal child care or preschool and parents wished for them to attend.

An increasing proportion of children with expressed need for additional ECEC may suggest that additional services are required. However, caution should be used when interpreting these data as they are not intended to represent the 'unmet demand' for formal child care or preschool services. The data do not identify the likelihood that a parent will take steps to access the care or preschool they require, or place their child in this care or preschool. Various factors including cost, location and the perceived suitability or quality of the service will have an influence on whether parents take these steps.

In 2017, 9.3 per cent of 0–12 year olds required additional formal child care or preschool (figure 3.5). This comprised 5.6 per cent who had used formal child care or preschool in the past week, 1.4 per cent who had used only informal child care, and 2.3 per cent who had not used any child care or preschool (table 3A.27). However, of those that reported requiring additional services, less than one-third had applied for them.

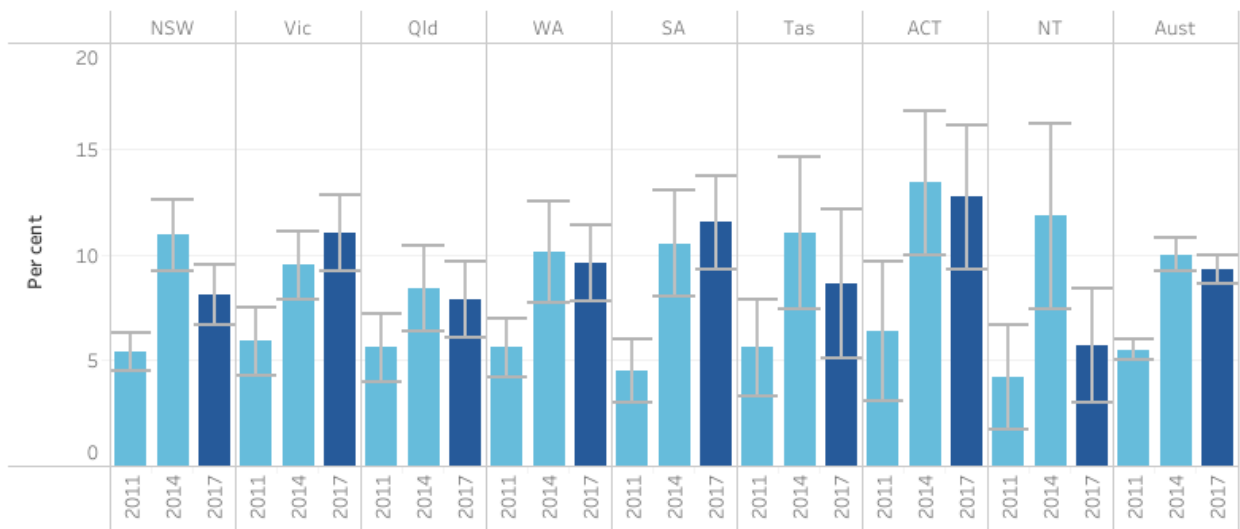
When looking at the reasons why additional care was required, 3.7 per cent required additional formal child care due mainly to a work related reason (table 3A.27). Results for 2017 are similar to 2014.

A higher proportion of children aged 0–5 years require additional child care (15.8 per cent) compared to all children aged 0–12 years (9.3 per cent) (tables 3A.27-28). Results for 2017 are similar to 2014.

- Data are comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time.
- Data are complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.

Select year(s):
All

Figure 3.5 Proportion of children 0-12 years old For whom additional formal child care or preschool was required by jurisdiction, by year



Source: table 3A.27

+ a b l e a u

6. Staff quality in ECEC

‘Staff quality in ECEC’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that ECEC services are high quality.

'Staff quality in ECEC' is defined by two measures:

- The proportion of paid primary contact staff employed by Australian Government CCS approved child care services with a relevant formal qualification (at or above Certificate level III), or three or more years of relevant experience.
- The proportion of teachers accessible to preschool programs (across all services, not just CCS approved services) who are at least three year university trained and early childhood qualified.

Some studies and research (for example, Huntsman [2008], OECD [2006], and Warren and Haisken-DeNew [2013]) have shown a link between education levels of ECEC staff and children's learning outcomes, suggesting that a high or increasing proportion is desirable.

In 2016, 81.5 per cent of the 129 884 paid primary contact staff employed by Australian Government CCB approved child care services had a relevant formal qualification (at or above Certificate level III), or three or more years of experience (table 3.7). Of all paid primary contact staff, 31.5 per cent held Certificate III or IV, 31.9 per cent held a diploma or advanced diploma, and 12.8 per cent held a bachelor degree or above (table 3A.29).

■ (all measures) Data are comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time for paid primary contact staff employed by Australian Government CCS approved child care services.

■ (all measures) Data are complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. All required 2016 data (for the first measure) and 2014 data (for the second measure) are available for all jurisdictions. As these data are prior to the CCS implementation in 2018, data on child care services relate to Child Care Benefit (CCB) approved child care services. The most recent data (for the second measure) are for 2014 and are available in previous Reports.

Select year(s):

All

Table 3.7 Measure 1: Paid primary contact staff employed by Australian Government CCB approved child care services, With a relevant formal qualification (at or above Certificate level III); or three or more years of relevant experience
by jurisdiction, by year

		NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
2016	%	81.6	86.5	77.9	79.8	82.8	86.0	73.3	71.1	81.5
2013	%	83.3	86.9	82.5	77.0	82.2	86.6	62.7	68.2	82.6
2010	%	81.8	85.1	81.1	78.1	78.3	83.7	63.1	63.0	81.1

Source: table 3A.29

7. NQF quality and compliance

'NQF quality and compliance' is an indicator of governments' objectives to ensure that ECEC services are high quality and are delivered in a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment.

'NQF quality and compliance' is defined by two measures:

- Achievement of National Quality Standard (NQS) — defined as the proportion of NQF approved services with a quality rating, whose overall NQS rating is: 'Meeting NQS', 'Exceeding NQS' or 'Excellent'.

Services receive an overall rating of Meeting NQS if they are rated as Meeting or Exceeding NQS in all seven quality areas. Services receive an overall rating of Exceeding NQS if four or more quality areas are rated as Exceeding NQS, including two of the four following quality areas: Quality Area 1, Quality Area 5, Quality Area 6 and Quality Area 7. The Excellent rating can only be awarded by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), on application by the Approved Provider (ACECQA 2019) (see the 'Key terms and references' tab for further information on NQS achievement).

A high proportion of services that achieve the NQS suggests a high quality of service provision.

- Confirmed breaches — defined as the number of confirmed breaches by NQF approved services, per 100 NQF approved services.

A confirmed breach is when a regulatory authority finds that a provider, nominated supervisor or family day care educator has failed to abide by relevant legislation, regulations or conditions at an NQF approved service.

Breaches vary in circumstance and severity. Some breaches can have serious implications for the quality of care provided to children (such as requirements to undertake criminal record checks for staff and requirements to install smoke detectors). Other breaches do not necessarily directly affect the quality of care (such as requirements to display NQF approval information).

All else being equal, a low or decreasing rate of confirmed breaches can suggest a higher quality service. A high or increasing rate of confirmed breaches does not necessarily mean that a jurisdiction has lower service safety and quality, as it might mean it has a more effective reporting and monitoring regime.

The majority of ECEC services are approved and regulated under the NQF, including child care services (centre based day care, family day care, vacation care and OSHC) and preschool services. As at 30 June 2021, there were 16 452 NQF approved ECEC services nationally — up from 16 107 the year before (table 3A.30). Some ECEC services are licensed and/or registered to operate by State and Territory governments, but are not approved under the NQF, including occasional care and mobile preschools (State and Territory governments, unpublished).

At 30 June 2021, 93.4 per cent of NQF approved services had received a quality rating, with 15.9 per cent of services assessed or reassessed in the previous 12 months (table 3A.30). Overall, a higher proportion of centre based day care services (93.6 per cent) have received a quality rating than family day care services (89.3 per cent) (table 3A.30).

Of the NQF approved services that had been rated, 86.1 per cent achieved the NQS (57.8 per cent met, 28.1 per cent exceeded, and 0.2 per cent were excellent) — up from 81.3 per cent at 30 June 2020 (figure 3.6).

The proportion of NQF approved services with a rating level that achieved the NQS was highest for quality areas 5 (relationships with children — 97.1 per cent), 6 (Collaborative partnerships with families and communities — 96.7 per cent) and 4 (staffing arrangements — 96.2 per cent). The quality area with the lowest proportion of services that achieved the NQS was quality area 1 (educational program and practice — 90.0 per cent) (table 3A.32).

Nationally in 2020-21, there were 164.1 confirmed breaches per 100 NQF approved services, continuing the annual increase in rates for the five years of available data. The highest rate was for family day care (494.5 breaches per 100 services), though this rate is lower than that in 2020 (table 3.8).

Data on actions taken by regulatory authorities in response to confirmed breaches were not available for this Report arising from a change in IT systems by the Australian Childhood Education and Care Quality Authority.

■ (measure 1) Data are comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time.

■ (measure 1) Data are complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.

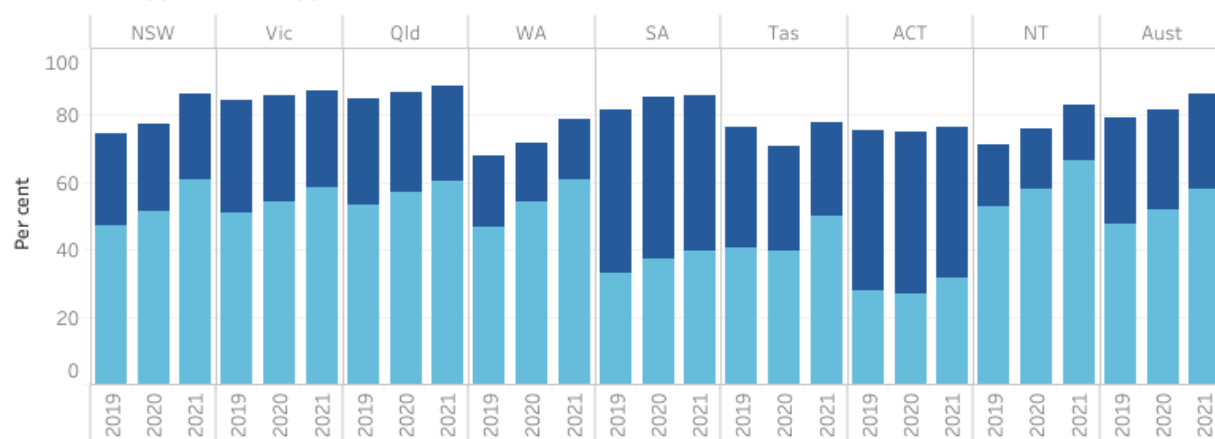
Select year(s) (applies to figure 3.6):

Multiple values

■ Exceeding NQS (including Excellent)

■ Meeting NQS

Figure 3.6 Measure 1: Proportion of NQF approved services with a quality rating, whose quality rating is Meeting or Exceeding NQS (including Excellent) by jurisdiction, by year



Source: table 3A.31

■ (measure 2) Data are not comparable across jurisdictions due to differences in administrative and reporting procedures, but are comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time.

■ (measure 2) Data are complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.

Measure 2: Confirmed breaches per 100 NQF approved servic..

Select year(s)

(applies to table 3.8a and 3.8b):

Multiple values

Select Jurisdiction (applies to table 3.8b):

NSW

Table 3.8a **National** (a)

	2016-17	2017-18	2019-20	2020-21
Centre based day care		155.3	182.3	200.0
Vacation care		7.5	6.6	7.0
OSHC		81.5	91.5	100.1
Other care		2.3	0.5	1.6
Preschool		42.8	46.0	53.2
Family day care		295.9	690.5	494.5
All service types	97.9	125.7	156.1	164.1

Source: table 3A.33

Table 3.8b **NSW** (a)

	2016-17	2017-18	2019-20	2020-21
Centre based day care		172.7	238.1	327.6
Vacation care		5.9	9.6	16.6
OSHC		80.9	146.8	197.7
Other care		-	-	-
Preschool		66.0	91.4	141.1
Family day care		294.7	1,563.6	1,150.3
All service types	71.0	144.9	245.2	310.1

Source: table 3A.33

.. Not applicable. - Nil or rounded to zero.

(a) Data by service type are not available for 2016-17.

8. Serious incidents

'Serious incidents' is an indicator of governments' objective to ensure that ECEC services are delivered in a safe environment.

'Serious incidents' is defined as the number of serious incidents that have occurred at NQF approved services, per 100 NQF approved services. Serious incidents are incidents that seriously compromise the health, safety or wellbeing of children attending an ECEC service.

The scope of the serious incidents indicator is NQF approved services. Under regulation, an NQF approved service must notify the regulatory authority (within 24 hours) of any serious incident that involves a child that was being educated and cared for by an ECEC service.

Serious incidents includes any incidents: involving the death of a child; involving serious injury or trauma to, or illness of, a child; where the attendance of emergency services was sought (or ought reasonably to have been sought); and where a child has been locked in/out, removed from the premises in contravention of regulations, or is unaccounted for — see the 'Key terms and references' tab.

A low or decreasing rate of serious incidents may suggest safer ECEC services. Caution should be used in interpreting results within and across jurisdictions as variations may be affected by differences in the number of children (or hours of service delivery) per service. Nationally comparable data are not currently available on the number of children enrolled (or hours of service delivery provided) in NQF approved services. It should also be noted that the rate of serious incidents reflects the reporting practices of approved providers which can vary.

Nationally in 2020-21, there were 125.2 serious incidents per 100 NQF approved services, up from 103.3 in 2019-20, and the highest for the five years of available data (figure 3.7). The majority related to incidents involving the serious injury or trauma to, or illness of, a child (78.9 per cent of all serious incidents) followed by incidents where the attendance of emergency services was sought (or ought reasonably to have been sought) (11.5 per cent) (table 3A.34).

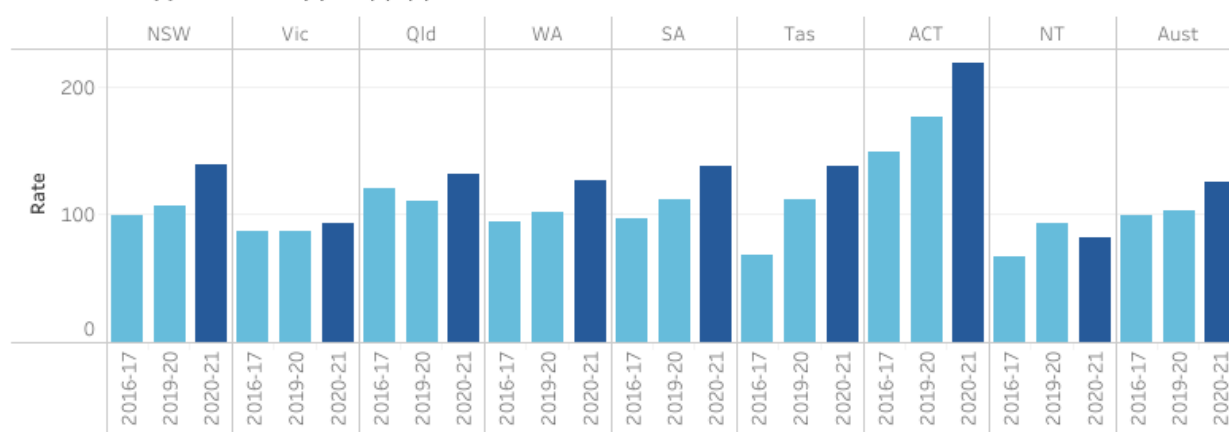
- Data are comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time.
- Data are complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.

Select year(s):
Multiple values

Select service type:

- Centre based day care
- Vacation care
- Family day care
- OSHC
- Other care
- Preschool
- All service types

Figure 3.7 Serious incidents per 100 NQF approved services, All service types
by jurisdiction, by year (a), (b)



Source: table 3A.34

(a) There were no serious incidents in Other care with the exception of WA in 2020-21, no serious incidents in Preschool in Tasmania (these services are not covered by the NQF legislation) and no serious incidents in Vacation care in the NT in 2020-21. (b) See table 3A.34 for information on non-publication of data for individual jurisdictions.

+ a b | e a u

9. Government recurrent expenditure per child

'Government recurrent expenditure per child' is an indicator of governments' objective for ECEC services to be efficient.

Government recurrent expenditure per child is defined by two measures:

- Total government recurrent expenditure on ECEC per child in ECEC — the combined Australian Government and State and Territory government recurrent expenditure on ECEC per child in ECEC (children in child care and preschool services).
- Australian Government recurrent expenditure per child attending CCS approved child care — the Australian Government recurrent expenditure per child aged 0–12 years attending Australian Government CCS approved child care services.

Efficiency data should be interpreted with care because:

- changes in expenditure per child could represent changes in government funding policy. While high or increasing unit costs can reflect deteriorating efficiency, they can also reflect increases in the quality or quantity of service provided. Similarly, low or declining expenditure per child can reflect improving efficiency or lower quality or quantity. Provided the level and quality of, and access to, services remain unchanged, lower expenditure per child can indicate greater efficiency of government expenditure
- differences in reported efficiency results across jurisdictions can reflect differences in definitions and counting and reporting rules.

All Australian Government recurrent expenditure reported for this indicator is provided for child care services, whereas State and Territory government recurrent expenditure covers both child care and preschool services.

In 2020-21, combined Australian Government and State and Territory government real recurrent expenditure on ECEC per child in ECEC was \$8458, an increase of 16.0 per cent since 2019-20 (figure 3.8).

Contextual data on the combined government recurrent expenditure on ECEC per child in the community is reported in table 3A.36.

Australian Government real recurrent expenditure per child attending CCS approved child care services was \$7675 in 2020-21, up from 2019-20 (\$6569) (table 3.9).

(measure 1) Data are not comparable across jurisdictions, but are comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time from 2016-17 onwards. Data are not directly comparable with prior years due to changes in coverage and methodologies affecting the National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection (NECECC).

(measure 1) Data are complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.

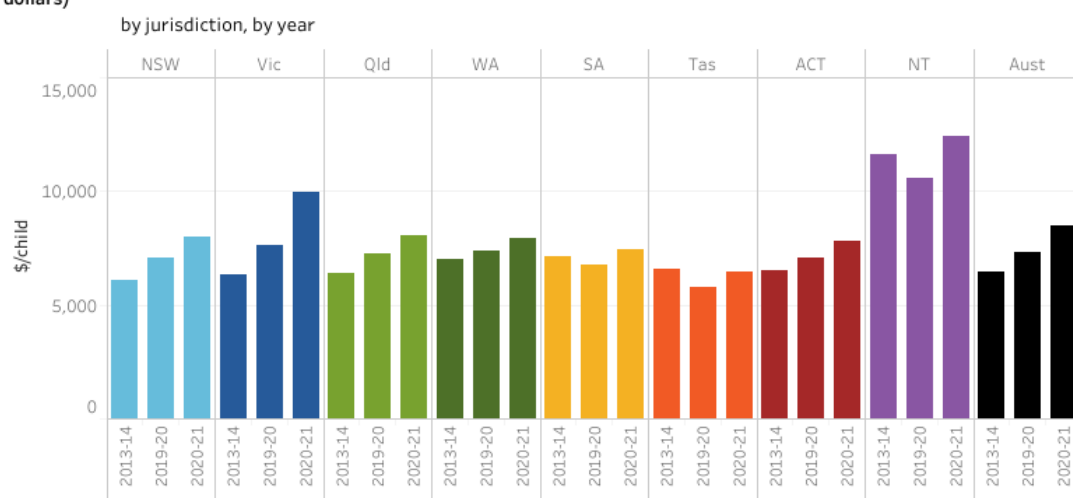
Select year(s) (applies to figure 3.8):

Multiple values

Jurisdiction:

NSW Vic Qld WA SA Tas ACT NT Aust

Figure 3.8 Measure 1: Australian; State and Territory recurrent government expenditure on ECEC services per child (2020-21 dollars)



Source: table 3A.35

(measure 2) Data are comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time.

(measure 2) Data are complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.

Select year(s) (applies to table 3.9):

Multiple values

Table 3.9 Measure 2: Australian Government recurrent expenditure on child care services per child aged 0-12 years old attending CCS approved child care services (\$/child) (2020-21 dollars)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
2020-21	7,411	9,062	7,617	6,794	5,945	5,953	6,858	9,059	7,675
2019-20	6,609	6,967	6,757	6,057	5,238	5,239	6,164	6,712	6,569
2011-12	5,570	5,539	5,482	5,548	5,557	5,665	5,370	9,552	5,580

Source: table 3A.37

10. Family work-related needs for child care

'Family work-related needs for child care' is an indicator of governments' objective for ECEC services to meet the needs of families, including enabling increased workforce participation.

'Family work-related needs for child care' is defined as the proportion of people aged 15 years and over not in the labour force due to caring for children, who report the main reason for not being in the labour force as child care service-related.

A relatively small or decreasing proportion of people not in the labour force due to caring for children who report the main reason for not being in the labour force as child care service-related may indicate that services are meeting the needs of families. However, there are a number of factors which affect the labour force participation decisions of people responsible for caring for children, of which child care service-related reasons are a subset. Also, due to the subjective nature of self-reporting, care should be taken when interpreting the data, particularly for child care service-related reasons.

The ABS data used for reporting against this indicator are collected in February of each year.

Of the 272 000 people aged 15 years and over who in 2021 reported that they were not in the labour force due to caring for children, 32.1 per cent reported this was due to a childcare service-related reason (figure 3.9).

The most common child care service-related reason provided for not being in the labour force was the cost of child care (26.7 per cent). The most common non-child care service related reason was a preference to look after children (32.0 per cent) or children were 'too young or too old' for child care services (12.2 per cent) (table 3A.38).

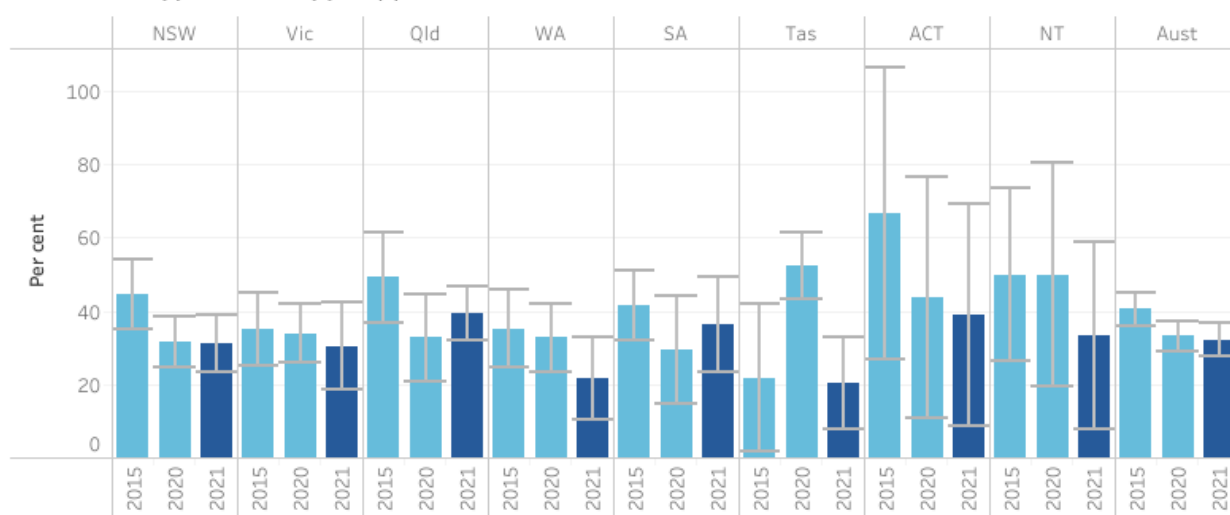
■ Data are comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time.

■ Data are complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.

Select year(s):

Multiple values

Figure 3.9 Proportion of persons not in labour force mainly for childcare service related reasons, aged 15+ years old by jurisdiction, by year (a)



Source: table 3A.38

(a) ACT data in 2019 and NT data in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 have relative standard errors of greater than 50 per cent and are not published. Data are included in Australian totals.

✚ + a b | e a u

11. ECEC outcomes

'ECEC outcomes' is an indicator of governments' objective to provide ECEC services that meet the education, care, and development needs of children.

'ECEC outcomes' is defined as the proportion of children with ECEC experience who are developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC). The AEDC collects data from teachers on the early childhood development of children when they are in their first year of full time schooling. Children are considered developmentally vulnerable in a domain if they score below the 10th percentile. The domains are: language and cognitive skills; physical health and wellbeing; social competence; emotional maturity; and communications skills and general knowledge.

A low proportion of children who received ECEC reported as developmentally vulnerable is desirable and a lower proportion of children who received some ECEC reported as developmentally vulnerable compared to children who did not receive any ECEC could indicate that receiving ECEC leads to better development outcomes. However, results should be interpreted with caution as:

- these data report on the correlation between ECEC experience and development outcomes. The causal impact of ECEC experience on development outcomes cannot be determined from these data

- ECEC experience is just one factor contributing to development. A range of other factors also influence development outcomes, including parental and family circumstances and other services such as health and parenting support
- ECEC experience is reported by the teacher, and therefore, dependent on the teacher’s knowledge of the child’s previous experience
- the data do not include how much ECEC (for example, hours per week) children received
- not all children in the dataset have a complete response for whether or not they attended ECEC.

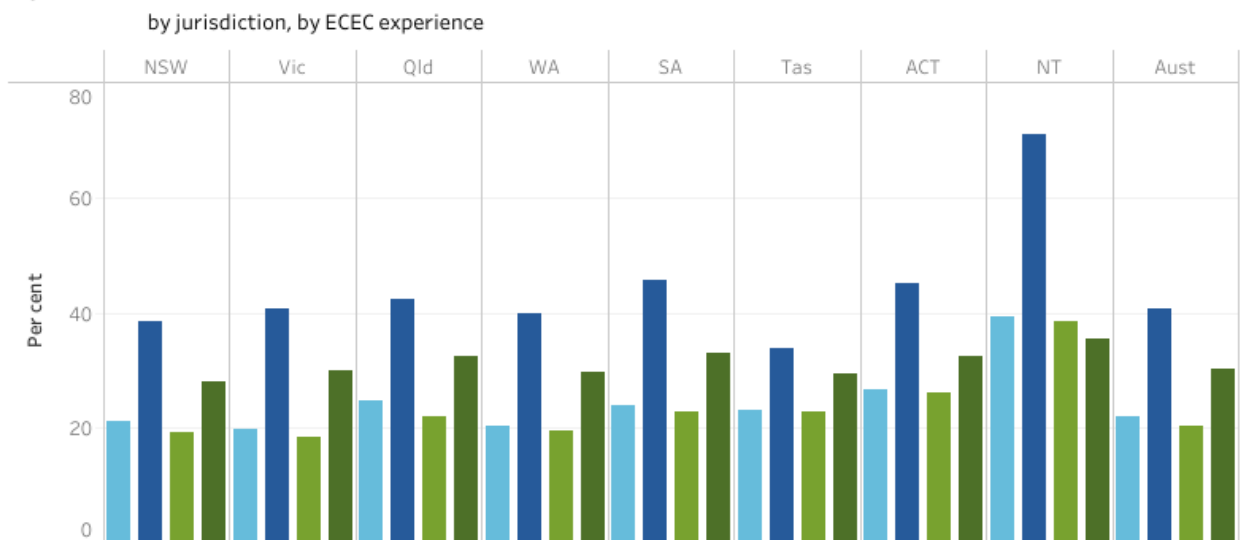
In 2021, 22.0 per cent of children in their first year of full-time schooling were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains — slightly higher than 2018 and the same as 2015 and 2012. Children who received some ECEC were less likely to be developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains (20.3 per cent in 2021, higher than previous years), compared to children who did not receive any ECEC (40.7 per cent in 2021, up from 2018, 2015 and 2012) (figure 3.10).

- Data are comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time.
- Data are complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.

Select year: 2021

- All children
- Did not receive any ECEC
- Received some ECEC
- Unknown ECEC experience

Figure 3.10 Children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains, the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC), 2021



Source: table 3A.39

Indigenous data

Performance indicator data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in this section are available in the data tables listed below. Further supporting information can be found in the 'Indicator results' tab and data tables.

ECEC services data disaggregated for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Table number	Table title
Table 3A.11	Proportion of children attending Australian Government CCS approved child care services who are from selected equity groups, compared with their representation in the community
Table 3A.12	Proportion of children enrolled in a preschool program aged 3 to 5 years old who are from selected equity groups, compared with their representation in the community
Table 3A.13	Proportion of children enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS who are from selected equity groups compared with the representation of children aged 4 to 5 years old in the community
Table 3A.20	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in a preschool program aged in the state-specific YBFS, by remoteness
Table 3A.21	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in a preschool program aged in the state-specific YBFS, by weekly hours

Key terms and references

Key terms

Terms	Definition
Capital expenditure	Expenditure on the acquisition or enhancement of fixed assets, less trade-in values and/or receipts from the sale of replaced or otherwise disposed of items. Capital expenditure does not include expenditure on fixed assets which fall below threshold capitalisation levels, depreciation or costs associated with maintaining, renting or leasing equipment.
Centre based day care	An education and care service other than a family day care service which includes most long day care, preschool and OSHC services that are delivered at a centre.
Children from low-income families	Children in families with gross income (excluding Family Tax Benefit) of less than the annual income threshold for receiving the maximum rate of CCS.
Children from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB)	Children living in situations where the main language spoken at home is not English.
Children with disability	A child that has a need for additional assistance in any of the following areas (learning and applying knowledge, education; communication; mobility; self-care; interpersonal interactions and relationships; other- including general tasks, domestic life, community and social life) compared to children of a similar age, that is related to underlying long term health condition or disability (long term is longer than six months).
Comparability	Data are considered comparable if (subject to caveats) they can be used to inform an assessment of comparative performance. Typically, data are considered comparable when they are collected in the same way and in accordance with the same definitions. For comparable indicators or measures, significant differences in reported results allow an assessment of differences in performance, rather than being the result of anomalies in the data.
Completeness	Data are considered complete if all required data are available for all jurisdictions that provide the service.

Terms	Definition
Family day care	Services providing small group early childhood education and care services for children in the home environment of a registered carer. Family day care is primarily aimed at 0–5 year olds, but primary school children may also receive the service before and after school, and during school holidays. Staff work in partnership with scheme management and coordination unit staff.
Formal child care	Organised education and care provided by a person other than the child’s parent or guardian, usually outside of the child’s home — includes, long day care, family day care, OSHC, vacation care, occasional care (excluding babysitting), other care and in home care.
Formal qualifications	Early childhood-related teaching degree (three or four years), a child care certificate or associate diploma (two years) and/or other relevant qualifications (for example, a diploma or degree in child care [three years], primary teaching, other teaching, nursing [including mothercraft nursing], psychology and social work).
In home care	Education and care service provided by an approved carer in the child’s home. Families eligible for in home care include those where the parent(s) or child has an illness/disability, those in regional or remote areas, those where the parents are working shift work or non-standard hours, those with multiple births (more than two) and/or more than two children under school age, and those with a breastfeeding mother working from home.
Long day care	Services aimed primarily at 0–5 year olds that are provided in a centre, usually by a mix of qualified and other staff. Educational, care and recreational programs are provided based on the developmental needs, interests and experience of each child. In some jurisdictions, primary school children may also receive care before and after school, and during school vacations. Some long day care centres may also provide preschool and kindergarten services (i.e. a preschool program) and OSHC (see relevant definitions). Long day care services may operate from stand-alone or shared premises, including on school grounds.

Terms	Definition
National Quality Framework (NQF)	<p>The NQF came into effect from 1 January 2012 and is a national system jointly governed by the Australian Government and State and Territory governments. It aims to raise quality and enable continuous improvement in ECEC through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an applied law system, comprising the <i>Education and Care Services National Law</i> and the Education and Care Services National Regulations • the NQS — which sets a national benchmark for the quality of services in seven key quality areas • an assessment and quality rating process • national approved learning frameworks • a regulatory authority in each state and territory responsible for the approval, monitoring and quality assessment of services in their state or territory • a national body – ACECQA, which guides the implementation of the NQF and works with regulatory authorities (ACECQA 2018).
NQF approved services	<p>Under the NQF, an approved provider must apply for and be granted a service approval for each education and care service it wants to operate. There are two types of approved services under the NQF: Centre-based care services; and Family day care services.</p>
National Quality Standard (NQS) achievement	<p>NQF approved services are rated against the NQS. Under the NQS, a service's overall quality rating is based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 elements, which are assessed as Met or Not Met • 15 standards, which are rated on the four point scale below • Seven quality areas, which are also rated on the four point scale below. <p>Standards, quality areas and the overall quality rating are assessed on a four point scale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceeding NQS • Meeting NQS • Working Towards NQS • Significant Improvement Required. <p>In addition, a provider with a service that has an overall rating of Exceeding NQS, as well as a rating of Exceeding NQS in all seven quality areas, may choose to apply to ACECQA to be assessed for the Excellent rating.</p> <p>The current version of the NQS commenced in all States and Territories on 1 February 2018. Prior to this, a service's overall quality rating was based on 58 elements across 18 standards and seven quality areas.</p>

Terms	Definition
Non-standard hours of care	<p>Defined by service type as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • long day care — service operates before 7 am or after 6.30 pm on any day Monday to Friday or on weekends (to be considered a service offering non-standard hours of care only need to meet 1 of these 3 criteria) • family day care — service operates before 7 am, or after 6.30 pm on any day Monday to Friday or overnight or on weekends (to be considered a service offering non-standard hours of care only need to meet 1 of these 4 criteria) • vacation care — service operates before 7 am or after 6.30 pm on any day Monday to Friday (to be considered a service offering non-standard hours of care only need to meet 1 of these 2 criteria) • OSHC — service operates before 7 am (before school) or after 6.30 pm (after school) on any day Monday to Friday (to be considered a service offering non-standard hours of care only need to meet 1 of these 2 criteria) • occasional care — service operates before 7 am or after 6.30 pm on any day Monday to Friday or on weekends (to be considered a service offering non-standard hours of care only need to meet 1 of these 3 criteria) • other — service operates before 7 am or after 6.30 pm on any day Monday to Friday or on weekends (to be considered a service offering non-standard hours of care only need to meet 1 of these 3 criteria).
Occasional care	<p>Services usually provided at a centre on an hourly or sessional basis for short periods or at irregular intervals for parents who need time to attend appointments, take care of personal matters, undertake casual and part time employment, study or have temporary respite from full time parenting. These services provide developmental education and care activities for children, and are primarily aimed at 0–5 year olds. Centres providing these services usually employ a mix of qualified and other staff.</p>
Other care	<p>A child care service type in this Report that does not meet any of the other child care service type definitions. It may include services which support children with additional needs or in particular situations (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from NESB, children with disability or of parents with disability, and children living in regional and remote areas). Other care services may include 3 year old preschool (or kindergarten) services (which do not meet the preschool service definition because they are not delivered by a qualified teacher), mobile services, playschools and nannies. Usage of other care services is reported only for State and Territory government funded services (i.e. non-CCS approved services).</p>
Outside school hours care (OSHC)	<p>Services that provide care for school aged children before school, after school, during school holidays, and on pupil free days. OSHC may use stand-alone facilities, share school buildings and grounds and/or share facilities such as community halls.</p>

Terms	Definition
Preschool program	A preschool program is a structured, play-based learning program, delivered by a qualified teacher, aimed at children in the year or two before they commence full time schooling. This definition of a preschool program is the same for all types of institutions that provide it, for all service settings and includes both government funded and privately provided preschool programs. Preschool programs are often referred to by other terms such as early childhood education, early learning or kindergarten.
Preschool services	Services which deliver a preschool program. The preschool service type can be delivered from a range of service settings. Service settings include stand-alone preschools or kindergartens, preschools attached to a school and other service centres, such as long day care centres.
Primary contact staff	Staff whose primary function is to provide child care and/or preschool services to children.
Real expenditure	Actual expenditure adjusted for changes in prices. Adjustments were made using the General Government Final Consumption Expenditure price deflator and expressed in terms of final year prices.
Recurrent expenditure	Expenditure that does not result in the creation or acquisition of fixed assets (new or second hand). It consists mainly of expenditure on wages, salaries and supplements, purchases of goods and services, and the consumption of fixed capital (depreciation).
Regional and remote areas	Regional and remote areas refer to remoteness areas based on the ABS' Australian Statistical Geography Standard. The criteria for remoteness areas are based on the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia, which measures the remoteness of a point based on the physical road distance to the nearest urban centre in each of five size classes. Regional areas includes 'inner regional' and 'outer regional' areas. Remote areas includes 'remote' and 'very remote' areas.
Selected equity group	An identifiable group within the general population who can have special difficulty accessing services. Selected equity groups for which data are reported in this section include: children from NESB; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children; children from low-income families (CCS approved child care services only); children with disability; and children from regional or remote areas.

Terms	Definition
Serious incidents	<p>For the purposes of Education and Care Services National Law, the following are prescribed as serious incidents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the death of a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o while that child is being educated and cared for by an education and care service o following an incident occurring while that child was being educated and cared for by an education and care service b. any incident involving serious injury or trauma to a child occurring while that child is being educated and cared for by an education and care service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o which a reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner o for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital; Example: broken limb. c. any incident involving serious illness of a child occurring while that child is being educated and cared for by an education and care service for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital Example: Severe asthma attack, seizure or anaphylaxis reaction. d. any incident for which emergency services attended e. any circumstance where a child being educated and cared for by an education and care service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o appears to be missing or cannot be accounted for o appears to have been taken or removed from the education and care service premises in a manner that contravenes these Regulations o is mistakenly locked in or locked out of the education and care service premises or any part of the premises.
Service	<p>A service refers to an individual location or establishment providing an ECEC service or services. One service (i.e. location or establishment) may provide more than one ECEC service type, i.e. provide a long day care service and preschool service, or two child care service types.</p>
Service type	<p>Refers to the following categories of ECEC services: long day care; family day care; OSHC; before/after school care; vacation care; occasional care; in home care, and; other care preschool services.</p> <p>All service type categories are considered child care services, except for preschool services.</p>

Terms	Definition
Standard hours of care	<p>Defined by service type as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • long day care — service opens at 7 am or later and closes at 6.30 pm or earlier every day Monday to Friday (does not operate on weekends) • family day care — service operates at 7 am or later and no later than 6.30 pm every day Monday to Friday (does not operate on weekends or overnight) • vacation care — service operates at 7 am or later and no later than 6.30 pm every day Monday to Friday • OSHC — service opens at 7 am or later (before school) and closes at 6.30 pm or earlier (after school) every day Monday to Friday • occasional care — service operates at 7 am or later and no later than 6.30 pm every day Monday to Friday (does not operate on weekends) • in home care — service operates at 7 am or later and no later than 6.30 pm every day Monday to Friday (does not operate on weekends) <p>Also see non-standard hours of care definition.</p>
State/Territory government (only) funded	<p>State and Territory government financed services — in particular, services that only receive State and Territory government contributions towards providing a specified service (i.e. excluding services which receive Australian Government funding).</p>
Vacation care	<p>Services provided for children enrolled in schools (4–12 year olds) during the school holidays.</p>
Year Before Full time Schooling (YBFS)	<p>Preschool programs delivered to children in the YBFS are intended to be available for a minimum of 600 hours per calendar year (or 15 hours per week for 40 weeks) (as per the NP UAECE). Children aged 3 to 6 years may be enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS although the programs are typically delivered to 4 and 5 year olds.</p> <p>The state-specific YBFS population is an age range of children specific to each State or Territory. The state specific YBFS definition takes into account the preschool and school age entry provisions of the state or territory in which the child usually resides and the child's date of birth.</p> <p>YBFS data presented in this Report are not fully comparable with YBFS data prior to 2016, included in previous reports, due to changes in the YBFS methodology.</p> <p>For more information on the state-specific methodology see <i>Preschool Education, Australia</i> , appendix 4 (ABS 2021).</p>

References

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2021, *Preschool Education, Australia, 2020*, Cat. no. 4240.0, Canberra.

ACECQA (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority) 2019, *Guide to the National Quality Framework*, Sydney.

Huntsman, L. 2008, *Determinants of Quality Child Care: A Review of the Research Evidence*, NSW Department of Community Service, Sydney.

OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) 2006, *Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care*, Paris.

Warren, D. and Haisken-DeNew, J.P. 2013, *Early Bird Catches the Worm: The Causal Impact of Pre-school Participation and Teacher Qualifications in Year 3 NAPLAN Cognitive Tests*, Melbourne Institute, University of Melbourne.

Download supporting material

[3 ECEC services data tables \(XLSX - 361 Kb\)](#)

[3 ECEC services dataset \(CSV - 752 Kb\)](#)

See the corresponding table number in the data tables for detailed definitions, caveats, footnotes and data source(s).