# 3 Early childhood education and care

#### CONTENTS

3.1 Profile of ECEC 3.2

3.2 Framework of performance indicators 3.16

3.3 Key performance indicator results 3.18

3.4 Future directions in performance reporting 3.68

3.5 Definitions of key terms 3.69

3.6 List of attachment tables 3.74

3.7 References 3.78

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| Attachment tables |
| Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by a ‘3A’ prefix (for example, table 3A.1). A full list of attachment tables is provided at the end of this chapter, and the attachment tables are available on the website www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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This chapter reports on the performance of early childhood education and care (ECEC) services, which comprised child care and preschool services. ECEC services aim to meet the care, educational and developmental needs of children.

Most of the data in this chapter relate to services that are supported by the Australian, State and Territory governments. Local governments also plan, fund and deliver ECEC. Due to data limitations, the only local government data included are those which involve Australian, State and Territory government funding and/or licensing.

Improvements to the reporting of ECEC in this edition include:

* changes to the profile section to distinguish services which are government funded from services which are approved, licensed or registered to operate
* an additional measure supporting the ‘staff quality in ECEC’ output indicator — the qualification level of staff in preschool teacher roles
* an additional measure supporting the ‘family work‑related needs for child care’ outcome indicator — the proportion of persons not in the labour force due to caring for children, by child care service related reasons
* an additional basis for reporting the ‘out‑of‑pocket costs of child care’ outcome indicator — for families with one child using 30 hours of care per week.

All abbreviations used in this Report are available in a complete list in volume A: Approach to performance reporting.

## 3.1 Profile of ECEC

### Service overview

The ECEC sector provides families with access to a range of services for children based on children’s age and educational and care needs. ECEC services provide one or more of the following broad service types:

* Child care – refers to formal child care services provided to children aged 0–12 years, including:
* long day care
* family day care
* outside school hours care (OSHC)
* occasional care
* other care (see section 3.5 for definitions).
* Preschool – refers to services delivering a preschool program by a qualified teacher to children, mainly in the year or two before they begin full time schooling. Preschool program names and starting ages for each State and Territory are presented in table 3.1.

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| Table 3.1 Preschool programs in Australia, 2014‑15**a** |
| |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | State/Territory | Program name | Age of entry –  preschool program | Age of entry ‑ school | | NSW | Preschool | Generally aged 4 and 5 | 5 by 31 July | | Vic | Kindergarten | 4 by 30 April | 5 by 30 April | | Qld | Kindergarten | 4 by 30 June | 5 by 30 June | | WA | Kindergarten | 4 by 30 June | 5 by 30 June | | SA | Preschool | 4 by 1 May | 5 by 1 May | | Tas | Kindergarten | 4 by 1 January | 5 by 1 January | | ACT | Preschool | 4 by 30 April | 5 by 30 April | | NT | Preschool | 4 by 30 June | 5 by 30 June | |
| a See table 3A.1 for detailed footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 3A.1. |
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An ECEC service may offer two different service types, such as long day care and OSHC (both child care service types) or long day care (child care) and preschool. All states and territories provide ECEC in an integrated way, but the range of services offered, extent and model of integration differs across states and territories and between service providers.

The most common type of integrated service is preschool delivered within a long day care centre. According to the *National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection* (NECECC), nationally in 2014 73.6 per cent of long day care centres also delivered a preschool service.

In addition to ECEC (preschool and child care), a broader range of integrated services are provided to children and families, including maternal and child health and family support services. The range of integrated services differs according to community need, and integrated ECEC services are more commonly placed in disadvantaged communities, and also provide particular specialised services.

### Roles and responsibilities

The Australian Government and State and Territory governments have different but complementary roles in supporting ECEC. Both levels of government contribute funding to services, provide information and advice to parents and service providers, and help plan, set and maintain operating standards.

#### Australian Government

The Australian Government’s roles and responsibilities for ECEC include:

* paying Child Care Benefit (CCB) to eligible families using approved child care services or registered carers
* paying Child Care Rebate to eligible families using approved child care services
* providing funding to State and Territory governments through the *National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education* (NP UAECE) to support the achievement of universal access to early childhood education
* providing funding and support to implement the National Quality Framework (NQF) through the *National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care* (NP NQAECEC)
* funding organisations to provide information, support and training to service providers
* providing operational and capital funding to some providers.

#### State and Territory governments

State and Territory governments’ roles and responsibilities vary across jurisdictions. Generally, State and Territory governments are responsible for funding and/or providing preschool services. They may solely fund some child care services or contribute to services in receipt of Australian Government funding. They may license or register child care services which are not approved under the NQF. State and Territory governments are responsible for regulating services under the NQF.

State and Territory governments’ roles and responsibilities can include:

* providing a legislative framework in which ECEC services not approved under the NQF are licensed or registered to provide selected services
* approval or licensing, monitoring and quality assessment of services in accordance with the NQF and other relevant regulations
* monitoring and resourcing licensed and approved ECEC providers
* providing operational and capital funding to non‑government service providers
* delivering services directly (especially preschool services)
* developing new ECEC services
* providing information, support, training and development opportunities for ECEC providers
* providing curriculum and policy support and advice, as well as training and development for management and staff
* planning to ensure the appropriate mix of services is available to meet the needs of the community
* providing information and advice to parents and others about operating standards and the availability of services
* providing dispute resolution and complaints management processes.

The arrangements for departmental responsibility for ECEC vary across State and Territory governments. Table 3A.1 provides information on child care services and preschool programs, such as agency responsibility, program names and starting ages.

The Australian Government and State and Territory governments are working cooperatively to undertake national reforms in ECEC. Through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), governments have endorsed a number of major funding agreements and initiatives as part of a wider early childhood reform agenda (box 3.1).

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| Box 3.1 The COAG Early Childhood Reform Agenda |
| The main COAG national reform initiatives linked specifically to early childhood development, education and care and currently operating include:   * the *National Early Childhood Development Strategy — Investing in the Early Years*, is a collaboration between the Australian, State and Territory governments. The strategy broadly covers children from before birth to 8 years of age, and aims to improve outcomes for all children and their families, including reducing inequalities in outcomes between groups of children. The strategy, endorsed by COAG in July 2009, includes a range of long term national reform initiatives in the areas of education and care, health, protection, family support and housing * the NP UAECE covering service delivery in 2015 (replacing the NP UAECE 2013‑14 and the NP ECE 2008–2013). The NP UAECE supports access to a preschool program in the 12 months prior to full time schooling. Performance measurement results published for these arrangements may differ in some cases to those presented in this Report, due to differing definitions adopted for calculating national indicators * the *National Indigenous Reform Agreement* (NIRA) which includes a target to ensure all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 4 years in remote communities have access to early childhood education by 2013 * the NP NQAECEC which incorporates a NQF for Early Childhood Education and Care and a National Quality Standard (NQS) to ensure high quality and consistent ECEC across Australia, including streamlined regulatory approaches, an assessment and rating system and an *Early Years Learning Framework* and a *Framework for School Age Care.*   Further information is available at www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au. |
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### Funding

Total Australian, State and Territory government recurrent and capital expenditure on ECEC services was $8.6 billion in 2014‑15, compared with $7.8 billion (an increase of $745.6 million, or 9.6 per cent in real terms) in 2013‑14. Nationally, the average annual growth rate of real expenditure was 10.6 per cent between 2010‑11 and 2014‑15 (table 3A.3).

Australian Government expenditure accounted for 83.0 per cent ($7.1 billion) of total government expenditure on ECEC services in 2014‑15 (tables 3A.3 and 3A.4). State and Territory government expenditure on ECEC services in 2014‑15 was $1.5 billion, with preschool services accounting for the majority of this expenditure (85.6 per cent, or $1.4 billion nationally) (tables 3A.3 and 3A.5).

Australian Government expenditure of $7.1 billion in 2014‑15 does not include the $356.2 million allocated by the Australian Government to State and Territory governments in 2014‑15 through the NP UAECE (table 3A.6). Australian Government funding provided through the NP UAECE is a contribution to support states and territories to increase preschool participation and attendance rates. States and territories determine distribution of NP UAECE funding, provided they make funding available to support children in all settings that deliver a quality preschool program. NP UAECE funding is included in the $1.5 billion ECEC expenditure by State and Territory governments in 2014‑15 (table 3A.5).

Figure 3.1 summarises services funded in 2014‑15 by Australian or State and Territory governments.

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| Figure 3.1 Summary of ECEC service funding by Australian, State and Territory governments, 2014‑15**a, b** | | |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Funding government | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tasc | ACTc | NT | Aus Gov | | ***Funded child care services*** | | | | | | | | | | | Long day care |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Family day care |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | OSHC |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Vacation care |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Occasional care |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Other cared |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | In home care |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Budget Based Funded |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | ***Funded preschool services***e | | | | | | | | | | | Local government/community preschools |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Preschool program in for profit LDC |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Preschool program in not‑for‑profit LDC |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Preschool program in government school |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Preschool program in non‑government school |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | | | |
|  |  | Government provides funding to at least one of these services |
|  |  | Government does not provide funding to any of these services |
| LDC = long day care. a Refers to services which received any Australian, State or Territory government funding (recurrent or capital funding) in 2014‑15. b Some services may receive funding from both the Australian and State and Territory governments. c 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. In the ACT, childcare services and preschools 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. d Other care services in the NT are 3 year old kindergarten services. e Australian Government funding provided through the NP UAECE is a contribution to support states and territories to increase preschool participation and attendance rates. State and Territory governments are responsible for the provision of preschool education in Australia and each jurisdiction has different arrangements for regulating, funding and delivering services. | | |
| *Source*: Australian, State and Territory governments (unpublished). | | |
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#### Funded child care services

The Australian Government provides the majority of funding to child care services in Australia. In the March quarter 2015 there were 16 966 Australian Government CCB approved child care services in Australia (table 3.2).

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| Table 3.2 Number of Australian Government CCB approved child care services, by service type, 2015**a** |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust | | Long day care | 2 740 | 1 249 | 1 443 | 552 | 344 | 115 | 136 | 77 | 6 656 | | Family day care | 237 | 318 | 115 | 45 | 29 | 11 | 12 | 4 | 771 | | Vacation care | 760 | 455 | 600 | 257 | 268 | 80 | 55 | 40 | 2 515 | | OSHC | 1 963 | 1 852 | 1 285 | 708 | 659 | 163 | 148 | 63 | 6 841 | | Occasional care | 36 | 52 | 8 | 11 | 2 | 4 | 3 | – | 116 | | In home care | 19 | 15 | 21 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 1 | – | 67 | | **Total** | **5 755** | **3 941** | **3 472** | **1 579** | **1 305** | **375** | **355** | **184** | **16 966** | |
| a See table 3A.8 for detailed footnotes and caveats. – Nil or rounded to zero. |
| *Source*: Australian Government Department of Education and Training (unpublished); table 3A.8. |
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All Australian Government expenditure is on CCB approved child care services with the exception of Budget Based Funded child care services (box 3.2).

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| Box 3.2 Budget Based Funded services |
| These services are part of the Australian Government’s Budget Based Funded Programme which provides an Australian Government contribution to the operational costs of child care and early learning and school aged care services in a limited number of approved locations. These services are predominantly located in regional, remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities where the market would otherwise fail to deliver services to meet the needs of children and their families.  A range of service types are funded including crèches, mobile services, Multifunctional Aboriginal Children’s Services and OSHC services. Services reported as Budget Based Funded services are not approved to administer CCB on behalf of families. State and Territory governments may license or register Budget Based Funded services to operate.  In March 2015 there were 304 Budget Based Funded services nationally (38 in NSW, 14 in Victoria, 72 in Queensland, 28 in WA, 39 in SA, 6 in Tasmania and 107 in the NT). Data on the use of Budget Based Funded services are not available and therefore are not reported in this chapter. |
| *Source*: Australian Government Department of Education and Training (unpublished). |
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#### In addition, there are some child care services which do not receive Australian Government funding and are funded only by State and Territory governments (table 3.3).

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| Table 3.3 Number of State and Territory government (only) funded child care services, by service type, 30 June 2015**a** |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust | | Total | na | 94 | 33 | 10 | 115 | 19 | .. | 2 | 273 | |
| a See table 3A.9 for detailed footnotes and caveats. **na** Not available. .. Not applicable. |
| *Source*: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 3A.9. |
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There are also some child care services which operate but do not receive any State and Territory government funding. Examples include some vacation care and occasional care services in NSW, some occasional care services in Tasmania and some 3 year old kindergarten services (i.e. not delivering a preschool program by a qualified teacher) in Victoria. Data on these services are only included in this Report if they receive Australian Government funding (i.e. are CCB approved), are NQF approved or State and Territory government licensed or registered to operate.

#### Funded preschool services

Table 3.4 provides the number of services which deliver a preschool program and receive State and Territory government funding. Information on the type of preschool services which receive State and Territory government funding is included in figure 3.1.

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| Table 3.4 Number of State and Territory government funded preschool services, 30 June 2015**a** |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust | | Total | 865 | 1 195 | 465 | 909 | 389 | 213 | 77 | 120 | 4 233 | |
| a See table 3A.9 for detailed footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 3A.9. |
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Not all services delivering a preschool program receive State and Territory government funding. For example, in NSW preschool programs delivered in for profit and not‑for‑profit long day care centres and in non‑government schools do not receive NSW government funding. In WA there are some preschool programs in government schools and non‑government schools, particularly for 3 year olds which do not receive WA government funding (these services receive local government funding).

### Quality of services

Governments seek to ensure that ECEC services are of a satisfactory quality through:

* approvals, licensing, quality assurance, measuring performance against standards, and funding linked to outcomes
* monitoring compliance with the legislation
* providing curriculum and policy support and advice
* information sessions and sector engagement opportunities.

#### Service approval and licensing

Service approval and licensing requirements establish the foundations for quality of care by stipulating enforceable standards to support the health, safety, welfare and developmental needs of children in approved or licensed education and care services. State and Territory governments are responsible for regulating most ECEC services. These regulatory responsibilities include the approval or licensing, monitoring, assessment and rating of services in accordance with the relevant regulations.

Most long day care, preschool, family day care, vacation care and OSHC services are approved services that fall within the scope of the NQF. NQF approved services are regulated in accordance with the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations. A small number of services continue to be licensed through other relevant legislation in each jurisdiction, for example occasional care and mobile preschools. In addition, some services may require State or Territory based registration to operate (instead of NQF approval or State or Territory licensing).

To operate as an approved education and care service under the NQF, a person or entity must first apply to the relevant State or Territory regulatory authority to become an approved provider. An approved provider must then apply for a service approval to operate an education and care service. To obtain a service approval or license to operate, providers of ECEC services must meet legislative and regulatory requirements in relation to the premises, policies and procedures.

The number of NQF approved and State and Territory government licensed or registered services by service type are reported in tables 3.5 and 3.6 respectively.

#### Quality improvement

Since 1 January 2012, the NQF has determined the approach to quality improvement. Box 3.16 provides additional information on the NQF.

The NQS is a key aspect of the NQF and sets a national benchmark for the quality of services, in seven key quality areas for 18 standards. Each standard contains a number of elements that describe the outcomes that contribute to the standard being achieved.

The NQS is accompanied by a national assessment and rating process reporting the quality of each service, against the five rating levels ‘Significant Improvement Required’, ‘Working Towards NQS’, ‘Meeting NQS’, ‘Exceeding NQS’ and ‘Excellent’. The ‘Excellent’ rating can only be awarded by the national body, the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), on application by the approved provider. The other four ratings result from the assessment and ratings process. Until a service is assessed and rated, it is taken to have the prescribed provisional rating of ‘Provisional – Not Yet Assessed’.

#### Funding performance standards and outcomes

State and Territory governments impose varying performance requirements for funding ECEC services. These requirements can include:

* the employment of higher qualified staff than required by licensing or minimum standards
* self‑assessment of quality
* a demonstration of the delivery of quality educational and recreational programs.

### Size and scope

#### NQF approved ECEC services

At 30 June 2015 there were 14 910 NQF approved ECEC services in Australia, delivering 19 535 service types (table 3.5).

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| Table 3.5 Number of NQF approved ECEC services, by service type, 30 June 2015**a** |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  |  | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust | | Long day care | | 2 777 | 1 259 | 1 420 | 635 | 322 | 116 | 129 | 76 | 6 734 | | Family day care | | 324 | 361 | 145 | 62 | 38 | 12 | 18 | 6 | 966 | | Vacation care | | 945 | 476 | 935 | 356 | 286 | 102 | 64 | 38 | 3 202 | | OSHC | | 1 268 | 1 098 | 972 | 419 | 362 | 133 | 102 | 50 | 4 404 | | Occasional care | | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | | Other care | | 27 | 148 | 13 | 24 | 118 | – | 7 | 2 | 339 | | Preschool | | 864 | 1 246 | 1 145 | 18 | 437 | – | 95 | 85 | 3 890 | | **Sum of service types** | | **6 205** | **4 588** | **4 630** | **1 514** | **1 563** | **363** | **415** | **257** | **19 535** | | **Total individual ECEC services** | | **5 104** | **3 977** | **2 790** | **1 104** | **1 153** | **222** | **341** | **219** | **14 910** | |
| a See table 3A.10 for detailed footnotes and caveats. .. Not applicable. – Nil or rounded to zero. |
| *Source*: ACECQA NQAITS (unpublished); table 3A.10. |
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#### State and Territory government licensed or registered ECEC services

A small number of ECEC services also exist which State and Territory governments license or register to operate, but are not approved under the NQF (table 3.6).

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| Table 3.6 Number of State and Territory government licensed or registered ECEC services, by service type, 30 June 2015**a** |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust | | Long day care | – | 28 | 17 | 13 | .. | 4 | – | .. | 62 | | Family day care | – | .. | – | – | .. | – | – | .. | – | | Vacation care | – | 1 | 11 | – | .. | 6 | – | .. | 18 | | OSHC | – | .. | 19 | – | .. | 2 | – | .. | 21 | | Occasional care | 65 | 378 | 36 | – | 87 | 27 | – | .. | 593 | | Other care | 91 | 25 | – | – | 28 | 2 | – | .. | 146 | | Preschool | – | 2 | 13 | 909 | 3 | 215 | – | .. | 1 142 | | **Sum of service types** | **156** | **434** | **96** | **922** | **118** | **256** | **–** | **..** | **1 982** | | **Total individual ECEC services** | **156** | **434** | **66** | **922** | **118** | **250** | **–** | **..** | **1 946** | |
| a See table 3A.11 for detailed footnotes and caveats. .. Not applicable. – Nil or rounded to zero. |
| *Source*: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 3A.11. |
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#### NQF approved ECEC services by management type

ECEC services may be managed by governments (state, territory and local), the community sector, the private sector and non‑government schools. Data on the management type of NQF approved ECEC services are presented in table 3.7.

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| Table 3.7 Proportion of NQF approved ECEC services, by management type, 30 June 2015 (per cent)**a** |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust | | Community | 28.3 | 35.6 | 54.6 | 7.1 | 16.0 | 53.6 | 46.9 | 35.2 | 33.5 | | Private | 38.9 | 41.2 | 38.5 | 64.4 | 20.3 | 28.4 | 21.1 | 16.9 | 39.0 | | Non‑government school | 1.6 | 4.2 | 4.4 | 0.1 | 11.2 | 4.5 | 9.1 | 12.3 | 3.8 | | **Total non‑government** | **68.7** | **81.0** | **97.4** | **71.6** | **47.5** | **86.5** | **77.1** | **64.4** | **76.3** | | Government | 8.8 | 18.9 | 2.2 | 4.0 | 51.9 | 13.5 | 22.6 | 35.6 | 14.0 | | Unknown management type | 22.5 | 0.1 | 0.4 | 24.5 | 0.6 | – | 0.3 | – | 9.7 | | **Total NQF approved ECEC services** | **100.0** | **100.0** | **100.0** | **100.0** | **100.0** | **100.0** | **100.0** | **100.0** | **100.0** | |
| a See table 3A.10 for detailed footnotes and caveats. – Nil or rounded to zero. |
| *Source*: ACECQA NQAITS (unpublished); table 3A.10. |
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#### Services delivering a preschool program

The NECECC provides information on service numbers and usage of preschool programs. NECECC data are not directly comparable to data in earlier sections of this Report. Box 3.3 contains more information on the NECECC.

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| Box 3.3 NECECC |
| The NECECC is conducted annually. The collection date is the first Friday in August each year.  The aim of the NECECC is to provide comparable state and territory data on early childhood education. Data have been compiled according to the national standards outlined in the Early Childhood Education and Care National Minimum Data Set. However, alignment with these standards has not yet been completely achieved by some jurisdictions, and care should be taken when making comparisons across jurisdictions.  The NECECC is derived from data provided by the Australian Government and State and Territory government departments with responsibility for early childhood education.  The scope of the NECECC consists of all service providers delivering a preschool program. A preschool program is defined as a structured, play‑based learning program, delivered by a degree qualified teacher, aimed at children in the year or two before they commence full time schooling, irrespective of the type of institution that provides the program, or whether it is government funded or privately provided.  Programs may be delivered in a variety of service settings including stand‑alone preschools or kindergartens, long day care centres or in association with a school. Long day care centres that do not operate a preschool program are not included. There is still an unknown level of under‑coverage of long day care services which are delivering a preschool program and are not currently captured in the Child Care Management System or state and territory ECEC collections. Continuous improvements to the methodology and coverage of the NECECC are being made to capture the full range of preschool services.  All children who were aged between 3 and 6 years (inclusive) on 1 July in the collection year are included in the NECECC if they were enrolled in a preschool program during the reference period. 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. All paid employees delivering a preschool program at an in‑scope service provider during the reference period are included in the collection. |
| *Source*: ABS (2015a). |
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Nationally in 2014 according to the NECECC there were 8989 services in Australia delivering preschool programs to children from 3 years of age. Of these services, 4709 were delivered from long day care centres and 4280 were delivered from stand‑alone preschools or preschools attached to a school. While the proportion varied across jurisdictions, over half of all preschool services in Australia were delivered by long day care centres (table 3.8).

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| Table 3.8 Number and proportion of preschool services, by service delivery setting and management type, 2014**a** |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  |  | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust | | Preschool services (no.) | | | | | | | | | |  | | LDC with preschool | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Government | | 214 | 74 | 9 | 15 | 47 | – | 6 | – | 365 | | Non‑government | | 1 518 | 988 | 1 308 | 229 | 168 | 15 | 76 | 42 | 4 344 | | **Total LDC with preschool** | | **1 732** | **1 062** | **1 317** | **244** | **215** | **15** | **82** | **42** | **4 709** | | Preschool not delivered in LDC | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Government | | 161 | 231 | 114 | 649 | 350 | 155 | 80 | 126 | 1 866 | | Non‑government | | 692 | 916 | 453 | 251 | 30 | 58 | 5 | 9 | 2 414 | | Community | | 671 | 840 | 406 | – | 3 | – | – | – | 1 920 | | Private for profit | | 3 | 10 | – | – | – | – | – | – | 13 | | Non‑government school | | 18 | 66 | 47 | 251 | 27 | 58 | 5 | 9 | 481 | | **Preschool not delivered in LDC** | | **853** | **1 147** | **567** | **900** | **380** | **213** | **85** | **135** | **4 280** | | **Total preschool services** | | **2 585** | **2 209** | **1 884** | **1 144** | **595** | **228** | **167** | **177** | **8 989** | | Preschool services (proportion) | | | | | | | | | |  | | LDC with preschool | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Government | | 8.3 | 3.3 | 0.5 | 1.3 | 7.9 | – | 3.6 | – | 4.1 | | Non‑government | | 58.7 | 44.7 | 69.4 | 20.0 | 28.2 | 6.6 | 45.5 | 23.7 | 48.3 | | **Total LDC with preschool** | | **67.0** | **48.1** | **69.9** | **21.3** | **36.1** | **6.6** | **49.1** | **23.7** | **52.4** | | Preschool not delivered in LDC | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | Government | | 6.2 | 10.5 | 6.1 | 56.7 | 58.8 | 68.0 | 47.9 | 71.2 | 20.8 | | Non‑government | | 26.8 | 41.5 | 24.0 | 21.9 | 5.0 | 25.4 | 3.0 | 5.1 | 26.9 | | Community | | 26.0 | 38.0 | 21.5 | – | 0.5 | – | – | – | 21.4 | | Private for profit | | 0.1 | 0.5 | – | – | – | – | – | – | 0.1 | | Non‑government school | | 0.7 | 3.0 | 2.5 | 21.9 | 4.5 | 25.4 | 3.0 | 5.1 | 5.4 | | **Preschool not delivered in LDC** | | **33.0** | **51.9** | **30.1** | **78.7** | **63.9** | **93.4** | **50.9** | **76.3** | **47.6** | | **Total preschool services** | | **100.0** | **100.0** | **100.0** | **100.0** | **100.0** | **100.0** | **100.0** | **100.0** | **100.0** | |
| LDC = long day care. a See table 3A.12 for detailed footnotes and caveats. – Nil or rounded to zero. |
| *Source*: ABS (2015) *Preschool Education, Australia, 2014*, Cat. no. 4240.0; table 3A.12. |
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#### Child care service usage

The majority of child care service usage data in this chapter are for Australian Government CCB approved services. A limited amount of data are also available on the usage of the relatively small number of services funded solely by State and Territory governments.

It is important to distinguish the number of child care places provided from the number of children who attend services, because of the episodic nature of some services. For example, many children attend on a part time basis, for some sessions or on some days, so it is possible for one place to accommodate more than one child. Therefore, it is difficult to measure accurately how many children access multiple services. Further, child care usage is not consistent throughout the year as children enter and leave care at different points of the year, depending on the child’s situation. The number of children that have utilised child care across a given year is greater than the number using care at any point in time.

There are no restrictions on the number of CCB approved child care services or places in long day care, family day care and OSHC (including vacation care) that can be approved for the purposes of CCB. There are also no restrictions in most State and Territory government (only) funded child care services on the number of supported places. Data on the number of child care places available in State and Territory government (only) funded services are presented in table 3A.24.

In the March quarter of 2015, 1 188 218 children aged 12 years or younger attended Australian Government CCB approved child care services, an increase of   
6.9 per cent from 2014 (table 3A.18). For jurisdictions who could report data on child care usage for State and Territory government (only) funded child care services in 2015 there were 5346 children attending these services (table 3A.21). Information on service usage in non‑government funded child care services is not available to be included in this Report.

#### Preschool program usage

Preschool services provide a range of preschool programs (generally on a sessional basis) to children in the year or two before they commence full time schooling. Data on preschool program usage in this Report include preschool programs delivered in stand‑alone preschools, preschools attached to a school and long day care centres. A child receiving both long day care and a preschool program from a long day centre is reported in this chapter in data for child care service usage and preschool service usage.

The age from which children can or must attend full time schooling, and therefore the age from which children can attend year before full time schooling (YBFS) preschool programs, varies across jurisdictions and information for each State and Territory is presented in table 3.1. Differences in the age from which children can access preschool programs reduces the comparability of data across jurisdictions. Data on the age of children enrolled in preschool programs are presented in this chapter, and to improve comparability, data are also presented for:

* children enrolled in preschool programs in the YBFS
* 3 year old children enrolled in preschool programs.

In 2014, 289 730 children aged 4 and 5 years were enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS (excluding enrolled children aged 5 years who were also enrolled in the previous year as a 4 year old) (table 3A.25).

In 2014, 44 855 children aged 3 years were enrolled in a preschool program. These data may include both 3 year old children receiving a YBFS preschool program and other 3 year old children receiving a preschool program. Overall, data reported for 3 year olds enrolled in a preschool program may be incomplete due to different reporting arrangements in each jurisdiction.

## 3.2 Framework of performance indicators

The framework of performance indicators for ECEC is based on common objectives for ECEC (box 3.4).

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| Box 3.4 Objectives for ECEC services |
| ECEC services aim to:   * meet the education and care needs of all children in developmentally appropriate ways, in a safe and nurturing environment * provide quality services across a range of settings delivered in an equitable and efficient manner, meeting individual need. |
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The performance indicator framework provides information on equity, efficiency and effectiveness, and distinguishes the outputs and outcomes of ECEC services (figure 3.2). The performance indicator framework shows which data are complete and comparable in the 2016 Report. For data that are not considered directly comparable, text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary. Chapter 1 discusses data comparability and data completeness from a Report‑wide perspective (section 1.6).

In addition to section 3.1, the Report’s Statistical context chapter contains data that may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. These data cover a range of demographic and geographic characteristics (chapter 2).

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| Figure 3.2 ECEC performance indicator framework |
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## 3.3 Key performance indicator results

Different delivery contexts, locations and types of clients can affect the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of ECEC.

Data Quality Information (DQI) is included where available for performance indicators in this Report. The purpose of DQI is to provide structured and consistent information about quality aspects of data used to report on performance indicators, in addition to material in the chapter or sector overview and attachment tables. All DQI for the 2016 Report can be found at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016.

### Outputs

Outputs are the services delivered (while outcomes are the impact of these services on the status of an individual or group) (see chapter 1, section 1.5). Output information is also critical for equitable, efficient and effective management of government services.

### Equity

#### Access — Participation rates for special needs groups in child care

‘Participation rates for special needs groups in child care’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that services are provided in an equitable manner to all special needs groups in the community, and that there is consideration of the needs of those groups that can have special difficulty in accessing services (box 3.5).

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| Box 3.5 Participation rates for special needs groups in child care |
| ‘Participation rates for special needs groups in child care’ is defined as the proportion of children aged 0–5, 6–12 and 0–12 years attending Australian Government CCB approved child care services who are from targeted special needs groups, compared with the representation of these groups in the community.  Targeted special needs groups include children from non‑English speaking backgrounds (NESB), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from low income families, children with disability, and children from regional and remote areas.  A high or increasing participation rate is desirable. If the representation of special needs groups among child care service users is broadly similar to their representation in the community, this suggests more equitable access.  Data reported for this measure are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions, but a break in series means that data prior to 2010 are not comparable to data from 2010 * complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. All required 2013 or 2015 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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The most recent data for participation in Australian Government CCB approved child care services by children from NESB and children with disability are from the *National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census* (NECECWC) *2013* (box 3.6)*.* Annual data for participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from low income families and children from regional and remote areas are available from Department of Education and Training administrative systems.

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| Box 3.6 Australian Government NECECWC |
| The NECECWC was conducted in 2010 and 2013. The census aims to provide comprehensive and nationally consistent data on access to ECEC services, and staff qualifications and experience. This chapter presents data from the 2013 NECECWC, which was an initiative of the Australian Government. The next NECECWC is scheduled to be conducted in 2016.  The NECECWC replaced the Australian Government Child Care Provider Survey and the Australian Government Census of Child Care Services, both conducted in earlier years. The NECECWC collected similar information to the previous collections, although variations in collection methods and different weighting methods affect the comparability of data across the collections. Therefore comparisons across time should be made with caution. |
| *Source*: Australian Government Department of Education and Training (unpublished). |
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Nationally, representation of children aged 0–12 years from special needs groups in child care services was lower than their representation in the community for all special needs groups except children from low income families (table 3.9). This was also the case for children in these groups aged 0–5 years and 6–12 years (table 3A.13). The largest difference was for 0–12 year old children in low income families with their representation in child care around 7 percentage points higher than their representation in the community.

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| Table 3.9 Proportion of children aged 0–12 years attending Australian Government CCB approved child care services who are from special needs groups, compared with their representation in the community (per cent)**a** |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | NSW | Vic | | Qld | | WA | | SA | | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust | | *Children from NESB* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | In child care services, 2013 | 21.3 | 24.8 | 9.0 | | | 13.4 | | 10.4 | | 3.5 | 16.0 | 10.6 | 17.3 | | In the community, 2011 | 23.7 | 23.4 | 13.2 | | | 18.0 | | 15.7 | | 7.3 | 19.2 | 40.0 | 20.0 | | *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | In child care services, 2015 | 2.2 | 0.8 | 3.1 | | | 2.1 | | 1.4 | | 4.6 | 1.1 | 7.7 | 2.1 | | In the community, 2014 | 5.4 | 1.6 | 7.9 | | | 6.3 | | 4.5 | | 9.4 | 2.8 | 41.4 | 5.5 | | *Children from low income families* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | In child care services, 2015 | 23.7 | 27.0 | 24.8 | | 21.2 | | 22.4 | | 25.1 | | 11.2 | 13.5 | 24.0 | | In the community, 2013‑14 | 17.8 | 17.6 | 16.6 | | 11.9 | | 18.5 | | 24.8 | | 6.1 | 9.0 | 16.8 | | *Children with disability* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | In child care services, 2013 | 3.8 | 2.5 | 2.4 | | | 2.1 | | 4.2 | | 2.4 | 2.8 | 4.7 | 3.0 | | In the community, 2012 | 6.8 | 6.3 | 6.4 | | | 7.4 | | 6.7 | | 9.3 | 7.0 | 4.0 | 6.7 | | *Children from regional areas* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | In child care services, 2015 | 19.6 | 16.7 | 28.6 | | | 13.7 | | 16.8 | | 100.5 | 0.3 | 81.1 | 22.0 | | In the community, 2014 | 25.2 | 23.7 | 35.9 | | | 17.6 | | 23.8 | | 98.2 | 0.4 | 51.6 | 27.6 | | Children from remote areas | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | In child care services, 2015 | 0.2 | – | 1.1 | | | 3.7 | | 2.3 | | 0.8 | .. | 19.1 | 0.9 | | In the community, 2014 | 0.6 | 0.1 | 3.5 | | | 6.8 | | 3.9 | | 1.8 | .. | 48.4 | 2.6 | |
| a See box 3.5 and table 3A.14 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. .. Not applicable. – Nil or rounded to zero. |
| *Source*: Australian Government Department of Education and Training (unpublished) administrative data collection and *National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census, 2013;* ABS (unpublished) *2011 Census of Population and Housing;* ABS (unpublished) *Household Income and Income Distribution, Australia, 2013‑14,* Cat. no. 6523.0; ABS (unpublished) *Microdata:* *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia, 2012*, Cat. no. 4430.0.30.002; ABS (2014) *Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001 to 2026* *(Series B),* Cat. no. 3238.0; ABS (2014) *Australian Demographic Statistics, Jun 2014,* Cat. no. 3101.0; ABS (unpublished) *Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia, 2014*, Cat. no. 3235.0; table 3A.14. |
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Data on representation of special needs groups in State and Territory government funded child care for children aged 0–12 years are presented in table 3A.15.

#### Access — participation rates for special needs groups in preschool

‘Participation rates for special needs groups in preschool’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that services are provided in an equitable manner to all special needs groups in the community and that there is consideration of the needs of those groups that can have special difficulty in accessing services (box 3.7).

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| Box 3.7 Participation rates for special needs groups in preschool |
| ‘Participation rates for special needs groups in preschool’ is defined by two measures:   * the proportion of children aged 3–5 years enrolled in a preschool program who are from targeted special needs groups, compared with the representation of these groups in the community. Targeted special needs groups include children from NESB, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability and children from regional and remote areas * the proportion of children aged 4 and 5 years enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS who are disadvantaged, compared with the representation of children who are disadvantaged in the community. Children who are disadvantaged are defined as residing in an area with a Socio‑Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) Index of Relative Socio‑economic Disadvantage (IRSD) quintile of 1. The SEIFA IRSD quintile of 1 is used as a proxy for the most disadvantaged. The use of SEIFA IRSD as a proxy for disadvantage needs to be interpreted with care as it pertains to the area in which the child resides, rather than to the child specifically.   A high or increasing proportion of children from special needs groups and children who are disadvantaged enrolled in a preschool program is desirable. If the representation of special needs groups and disadvantage among children enrolled in a preschool program is broadly similar to their representation in the community, this suggests equitable access.  Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions for the special needs groups: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from regional and remote areas. Data are not comparable across jurisdictions for the special needs groups: NESB and children with disability. Data are comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time for children who are disadvantaged * complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period for children who are disadvantaged and most special needs groups. All required 2014 data are available for all jurisdictions for children who are disadvantaged but incomplete for the current reporting period for the NESB special needs group. All required NESB data were not available for WA and the NT.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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##### Proportion of children aged 3–5 years enrolled in a preschool program who are from targeted special needs groups, compared with their representation in the community

Nationally, representation of 3–5 year old children from special needs groups enrolled in a preschool program was lower than their representation in the community for all groups except children from regional areas (table 3.10).

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| Table 3.10 Proportion of children aged 3–5 years enrolled in a preschool program who are from special needs groups, compared with their representation in the community (per cent)**a** |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | NSW | Vic | | Qld | | WA | | SA | | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust | | *Children from NESB* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | In a preschool program, 2014 | 19.4 | 13.3 | 7.6 | | | na | | 11.2 | | 2.8 | 29.6 | na | 11.1 | | In the community, 2011 | 23.7 | 23.4 | 13.2 | | | 17.7 | | 15.4 | | 7.4 | 19.6 | 39.3 | 20.0 | | *Children with disability* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | In a preschool program, 2014 | 10.4 | 3.9 | 4.0 | | | 3.0 | | 14.2 | | 4.5 | 6.1 | 8.5 | 6.0 | | In the community, 2012 | 6.2 | 6.9 | 4.2 | | | 7.1 | | 9.2 | | 9.0 | 4.7 | np | 6.2 | | *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | In a preschool program, 2014 | 4.7 | 1.4 | 4.9 | | 5.9 | | 6.5 | | 8.6 | | 2.3 | 35.4 | 4.6 | | In the community, 2014 | 5.3 | 1.7 | 8.0 | | 6.1 | | 4.6 | | 9.6 | | 2.9 | 38.7 | 5.5 | | *Children from regional areas* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | In a preschool program, 2014 | 29.2 | 23.5 | 33.0 | | | 17.5 | | 22.9 | | 98.2 | 2.8 | 53.2 | 27.9 | | In the community, 2014 | 25.0 | 23.7 | 35.6 | | | 17.2 | | 23.6 | | 98.2 | 0.5 | 50.8 | 27.4 | | Children from remote areas | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | In a preschool program, 2014 | 0.8 | – | 2.8 | | | 7.0 | | 4.0 | | 1.8 | .. | 46.5 | 2.4 | | In the community, 2014 | 0.6 | 0.1 | 3.5 | | | 6.9 | | 3.9 | | 1.8 | .. | 49.2 | 2.6 | |
| a See box 3.7 and table 3A.16 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. **na** Not available... Not applicable. – Nil or rounded to zero. **np** Not published. |
| *Source*: ABS (unpublished) *Microdata:* *Preschool Education, Australia, 2014*, Cat. no. 4240.0.55.003; ABS (unpublished) *2011 Census of Population and Housing*; ABS (unpublished) *Microdata:* *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia 2012,* Cat. no. 4430.0.30.002, ABS 2014, *Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001 to 2026 (Series B),* Cat. no. 3238.0 and ABS (unpublished) *Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia, 2014,* Cat. no. 3235.0; State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 3A.16. |
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Data on the representation of special needs groups in a preschool program in the YBFS are presented in table 3A.16.

##### Proportion of children aged 4 and 5 years enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS who are disadvantaged, compared with their representation in the community

Nationally in 2014, 17.6 per cent of 4 and 5 year old children enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS resided in an area with a SEIFA IRSD quintile of 1. This is lower than the 19.5 per cent of 4 and 5 year olds in the community residing in an area with a SEIFA IRSD quintile of 1 (figure 3.3).

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| Figure 3.3 Proportion of children aged 4 and 5 years enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS who are disadvantaged, compared with their representation in the community, 2014**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 3.3 Proportion of children aged 4 and 5 years enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS who are disadvantaged, compared with their representation in the community, 2014  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 3.7 and table 3A.17 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: Derived from ABS (2015) *Preschool Education, Australia, 2014,* Cat. no. 4240.0; (unpublished) *Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia, 2014*, Cat. no. 3235.0; table 3A.17. |
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Data on the proportion of children attending a preschool program who are disadvantaged are presented in table 3A.17.

### Effectiveness

#### Access — children using child care

‘Children using child care’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that all families have equitable access to child care services (box 3.8).

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| Box 3.8 Children using child care |
| ‘Children using child care’ is defined by three measures:   * the proportion of children who are attending Australian Government CCB approved child care services by age group (0–5, 6–12 and 0–12 years) * the proportion of children who are attending Australian Government CCB approved and State and Territory government funded child care services by age group (0–5, 6–12 and 0–12 years) * average hours of attendance per week for 0–12 year olds at Australian Government CCB approved child care services by service type.   A higher or increasing proportion of children using the services can indicate a higher level of service availability. This indicator does not provide information on parental preferences for using child care, or other factors, such as school starting age, which can affect use of child care.  Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time but are not comparable across jurisdictions for Australian Government CCB approved and State and Territory government funded child care. Data are comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time for children aged 0–12 years using Australian Government CCB approved child care services and average hours of attendance * incomplete for the current reporting period. All required 2015 data were not available for State and Territory government funded child care services for NSW, Vic, WA and the NT. All required 2015 data are available for children attending Australian Government CCB approved child care services and average hours of attendance.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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The employment status of parents can influence children’s access to services, depending on the service type. Those services eligible for CCB, for example, must follow the Australian Government’s ‘priority of access’ guidelines when filling vacant places. The guidelines give a high priority to children at risk and children of parents with work‑related child care needs (section 3.5 contains more detail). Details of the employment status of parents whose children use these services, for 2008, 2011 and 2014, are shown in table 3A.29.

##### Proportion of children who are attending Australian Government CCB approved child care services, by age group (0–5, 6–12 and 0–12 years)

Nationally in 2015, 30.6 per cent of all children aged 0–12 years attended Australian Government CCB approved child care (figure 3.4). This is an increase from 29.0 per cent in 2014. Proportions increased for both the 0–5 year olds and 6–12 year olds from 2014 to 2015 (table 3A.18). The majority of 0–12 year old children attending Australian Government CCB approved child care services in 2015 (781 426, or 65.8 per cent) were aged 0–5 years (table 3A.18). Data on attendance by single year of age up to 4 years is in table 3A.19.

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| Figure 3.4 Proportion of children aged 0–12 years who are attending Australian Government CCB approved child care services**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 3.4 Proportion of children aged 0–12 years who are attending Australian Government CCB approved child care services  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 3.8 and table 3A.18 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: Australian Government Department of Education and Training (unpublished); ABS (unpublished) *Australian Demographic Statistics*, *Dec 2014 (and previous editions),* Cat. no. 3101.0; table 3A.18. |
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Contextual information on the breakdown of 0–12 year old children attending Australian Government CCB approved child care services by service type is provided in table 3A.20. Over half (55.6 per cent) of children attending Australian Government CCB approved child care services receive a long day care service, whilst over a quarter (27.3 per cent) receive an OSHC service.

##### Proportion of children who are attending Australian Government CCB approved and State and Territory government funded child care services, by age group (0–5, 6–12 and 0–12 years)

Nationally in 2015, 30.8 per cent of children aged 0–12 years attended an Australian Government CCB approved service or a State and Territory government funded service. Amongst children aged 0–5 years, 42.9 per cent attended and amongst children aged 6–12 years, 19.9 per cent attended (figure 3.5). Of those children aged 0–12 years that attended a child care service, nearly all (99.6 per cent) attended an Australian Government CCB approved child care service. This is due to the majority of child care services in Australia being Australian Government CCB approved. The state and territory proportions may be understated because some State and Territory governments cannot report the usage of services funded only by State and Territory government (table 3A.22).

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| Figure 3.5 Proportion of children who are attending Australian Government CCB approved and State and Territory government funded child care services, by age group, 2015**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 3.5 Proportion of children who are attending Australian Government CCB approved and State and Territory government funded child care services, by age group, 2015  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 3.8 and table 3A.22 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: Australian Government Department of Education and Training (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); ABS (unpublished) *Australian Demographic Statistics, Dec 2014*, Cat. no. 3101.0; table 3A.22. |
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Additional information is provided in table 3A.21 on children attending services which receive only State and Territory government funding (i.e. they are not Australian Government CCB approved).

##### Average hours of attendance per week for 0–12 year olds at Australian Government CCB approved child care services, by service type

The average hours of attendance in Australian Government CCB approved child care in 2015 varied considerably across jurisdictions, for all service types. Nationally, average attendance per child was above 25 hours per week for long day care, family day care, vacation care and in home care (27.9 hours, 30.9 hours, 28.3 hours and 26.1 hours respectively). For OSHC and occasional care average attendance was considerably less at 9.4 hours per week and 11.6 hours per week respectively (figure 3.6).

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| --- |
| Figure 3.6 Average hours of attendance per week for 0–12 year olds at Australian Government CCB approved child care services, by service type, 2015**a, b** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 3.6 Average hours of attendance per week for 0–12 year olds at Australian Government CCB approved child care services, by service type, 2015  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a NT data for occasional care and in home care are zero. b See box 3.8 and table 3A.23 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: Australian Government Department of Education and Training (unpublished) administrative data collection; table 3A.23. |
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From 2014 to 2015, average hours remained fairly similar for all care types (table 3A.23).

Additional information is provided in table 3A.24 on average hours of attendance per week at services which receive only State and Territory government funding.

#### Access — children enrolled in preschool

‘Children enrolled in preschool’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that all families have equitable access to preschool services (box 3.9).

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| Box 3.9 Children enrolled in preschool |
| Children enrolled in preschool’ is defined by three measures:   * the proportion of 4 year old children who are enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS, calculated as the number of children aged 4 and 5 years enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS as a proportion of children aged 4 years * as above, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children * as above, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children by remoteness area (national only). [*This aligns with one of two measures in the NIRA*].   YBFS data exclude children aged 5 years old who were enrolled in a preschool program in the previous year as a 4 year old (to provide an estimate of a single year cohort for the population that will transition to full time schooling in the following year). 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.  The 4 year old population estimates used in these measures are sourced from ABS estimated resident population and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population estimates.  A high or increasing proportion of children enrolled in preschool can indicate a high or increasing level of service availability, and is desirable. However, this indicator can be difficult to interpret as:   * the preschool program starting age for children varies across states and territories. A higher proportion of children enrolled at a particular age can reflect the preschool program starting age in a particular jurisdiction (see table 3A.1) * preschool enrolment data are under‑reported due to service non‑response, particularly long day care centres providing a preschool program * participation in a preschool program is not compulsory. This indicator does not provide information on parental preferences, or other factors, which can affect preschool use * an overestimation of enrolment in some states and territories (for example, where enrolment rates exceed 100 per cent) may occur as the measures are based on 4 and 5 year old enrolled population as a proportion of the 4 year old resident population. Overestimation may also result from children: moving interstate during a preschool program year; enrolled in a jurisdiction different to the one in which they live; attending multiple providers to access an appropriate amount of care; attending multiple service types and/or attending a preschool program for more than one year.   Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time. Data are not on a jurisdiction basis (national only) for data by remoteness area so comparability is not applicable for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS, by remoteness area * complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. All required 2014 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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##### Proportion of 4 year old children who are enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS

Nationally in 2014, 95.1 per cent of 4 year old children were enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS. This is an increase from 90.9 per cent in 2013 and 86.2 per cent in 2012 (figure 3.7).

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| Figure 3.7 Proportion of 4 year old children enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 3.7 Proportion of 4 year old children enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 3.9 and table 3A.25 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: Derived from ABS (2013, 2014 and 2015) *Preschool Education, Australia, 2012, 2013 and 2014,* Cat. no. 4240.0;ABS (2012, 2013 and 2014) *Australian Demographic Statistics*, *Jun 2012, 2013 and 2014,* Cat. no. 3101.0; table 3A.25. |
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Data are included on children enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS by weekly hour ranges. Nationally, the majority of children (84.5 per cent) were enrolled for at least   
15 hours per week (table 3A.26).

##### Proportion of 4 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS

Nationally in 2014, 75.4 per cent of 4 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS. This proportion has increased from 73.9 per cent in 2013 and 65.0 per cent in 2012 (figure 3.8).

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| Figure 3.8 Proportion of 4 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 3.8 Proportion of 4 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 3.9 and table 3A.28 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: Derived from ABS (2013, 2014 and 2015) *Preschool Education, Australia, 2012, 2013 and 2014,* Cat. no. 4240.0;ABS (2014) *Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001–2026,* Cat. no. 3238.0; table 3A.28. |
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Data are included on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS by weekly hour ranges. Nationally, the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in a preschool program (87.5 per cent) were enrolled for at least 15 hours per week (table 3A.29).

##### Proportion of 4 year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS, by remoteness area

In 2014, the enrolment rate was highest in remote areas (82.4 per cent), followed my regional areas (76.5 per cent) and major cities (70.0 per cent). However, the enrolment rate increased from 2013 to 2014 in major cities and regional areas (up 3.3 and 2.6 percentage points respectively), but decreased in remote areas (down 2.6 percentage points) (table 3A.27).

#### Access — children attending preschool

‘Children attending preschool’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that all families have equitable access to preschool services (box 3.10).

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| Box 3.10 Children attending preschool |
| ‘Children attending preschool’ is defined by three measures:   * the proportion of 4 year old children who are attending a preschool program in the YBFS, calculated as the number of children aged 4 and 5 years attending a preschool program in the YBFS as a proportion of children aged 4 years. The 4 year old population data are sourced from ABS population estimates * as above, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children by remoteness areas (national only). The 4 year old population data are sourced from ABS projected population estimates. [*This aligns with one of two measures in the NIRA*] * the proportion of children enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS who are attending by Indigenous status.   YBFS data exclude children aged 5 years old who attended a preschool program in the previous year as a 4 year old (to provide an estimate of a single year cohort for the population that will transition to full time schooling in the following year). A child is considered to be attending a preschool program if the child was enrolled and present for at least one hour during the reference period. This explains similar enrolment and attendance data in some jurisdictions.  A high or increasing proportion of children attending a preschool program can indicate a high or increasing level of service availability, and is desirable. However, this indicator should be interpreted with caution, as:   * the preschool program starting age for children varies across states and territories. A higher proportion of children attending at a particular age can reflect the preschool program starting age in a particular jurisdiction (see table 3A.1) * preschool attendance data are under‑reported due to service non‑response, particularly long day care centres providing a preschool program * participation in a preschool program is not compulsory. This indicator does not provide information on parental preferences, or other factors, which can affect preschool use * an overestimation of attendance in some states and territories (for example, where attendance rates exceed 100 per cent) may occur as the measures are based on 4 and 5 year old attending population as a proportion of the 4 year old resident population. Overestimation may also result from children: moving interstate during a preschool program year; attending in a jurisdiction different to the one in which they live; attending multiple providers to access an appropriate amount of care; attending multiple service types and/or attending a preschool program for more than one year.   Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time. Data are not on a jurisdiction basis (national only) for data by remoteness area so comparability is not applicable for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are attending a preschool program in the YBFS, by remoteness area * complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. All required 2014 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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##### Proportion of 4 year old children who are attending a preschool program in the YBFS

Nationally in 2014, 91.4 per cent of 4 year old children were attending a preschool program in the YBFS. This is an increase from 88.7 per cent in 2013 and 83.8 per cent in 2012 (figure 3.9).

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| Figure 3.9 Proportion of 4 year old children attending a preschool program in the YBFS**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 3.9 Proportion of 4 year old children attending a preschool program in the YBFS  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 3.10 and table 3A.31 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: Derived from ABS (2013, 2014 and 2015) *Preschool Education, Australia, 2012, 2013 and 2014,* Cat. no. 4240.0;ABS (2012, 2013 and 2014) *Australian Demographic Statistics, Jun 2012, 2013 and 2014,* Cat. no. 3101.0; table 3A.31. |
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Across all jurisdictions in 2014, the average attendance of children at a preschool program in the YBFS was between 14.8 and 20.3 hours per week (table 3A.32). Details of the employment status of parents whose children attended preschool services are shown in table 3A.30.

##### Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are attending a preschool program in the YBFS, by remoteness area

National data on the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children attending a preschool program in the YBFS are presented by remoteness areas (major cities; inner/outer regional areas; remote/very remote areas) in table 3A.35. In 2014, the attendance rate was highest in regional areas (72.3 per cent) followed by remote areas (70.1 per cent) and major cities (66.1 per cent) — the first of the three reporting years that the attendance rate has not been highest in remote areas, reflecting a decrease in the attendance rate in remote areas from 74.9 per cent in 2013 and in an increase in the attendance rate in non‑remote areas (table 3A.35).

##### Proportion of children enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS who are attending, by Indigenous status

Nationally in 2014, 92.5 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS were attending. In comparison, 96.3 per cent of non‑Indigenous children enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS were attending   
(figure 3.10).

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| Figure 3.10 Proportion of children enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS who are attending, by Indigenous status, 2014**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 3.10 Proportion of children enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS who are attending, by Indigenous status, 2014  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 3.10 and table 3A.37 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: ABS (unpublished) *Microdata:* *Preschool Education, Australia, 2014,* Cat. no. 4240.0.55.003; table 3A.37. |
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#### Access — 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 meet the needs of all users (box 3.11).

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| Box 3.11 Non‑standard hours of care in child care services |
| ‘Non‑standard hours of care in child care services’ is defined as the proportion of Australian Government CCB 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 section 3.5.  A high or increasing proportion of services providing non‑standard hours of care can suggest a greater flexibility of services to meet the needs of families.  This indicator does not provide information on the demand for non‑standard hours of care. Further, it provides no information on whether available non‑standard hours services meet the needs of users.  Data reported for this measure are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. All required 2015 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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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 occupational and health and safety requirements. Nationally in 2015, 36.7 per cent of long day care services, 33.7 per cent of family day care services, 23.2 per cent of vacation care services, 16.8 per cent of OSHC services, 4.6 per cent of occasional care services and 47.0 per cent of in home care services provided non‑standard hours of care (figure 3.11).

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| Figure 3.11 Australian Government CCB approved child care services providing non‑standard hours of care, by service type,  2015**a, b** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 3.11 Australian Government CCB approved child care services providing non standard hours of care, by service type,  2015   More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a NT data for occasional care and in home care are not available. Data for occasional care are zero for NSW, Queensland, WA, SA, Tasmania and the ACT. bSee box 3.11 and table 3A.38 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: Australian Government Department of Education and Training (unpublished); table 3A.38. |
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#### Access — Service availability

‘Service availability’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that all families have equitable and adequate access to ECEC services (box 3.12).

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| Box 3.12 Service availability |
| The Steering Committee has identified ‘service availability’ for development and future reporting, to replace the ‘utilisation’ indicator from earlier reports. Measures and data are yet to be identified for ‘service availability’. |
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#### Access — service affordability — child care service costs

‘Child care service costs’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that all families have equitable access to ECEC, irrespective of their financial circumstances (box 3.13).

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| Box 3.13 Child care service costs |
| ‘Child care service costs’ is defined as the median weekly cost for 50 hours of Australian Government CCB approved long day care and family day care. Median costs represent the middle value of the range of costs.  Provided the service quality is held constant, lower service costs are desirable.  Cost data need to be interpreted with care, because fees are set independently by service providers. Charging practices, including fees, are commercial decisions made by individual services, so there is significant variation in the fees across services. Variation in costs occurs as a result of factors including State and Territory licensing requirements, award wages, and whether fees include charges for additional services such as nappies and meals.  Data reported for this measure are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. All required 2015 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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Nationally, the median weekly cost for 50 hours of care in 2015 was higher for long day care ($400) than for family day care ($341) (figure 3.12). The median weekly cost increased by 4.9 per cent in real terms for long day care from 2014 to 2015 and decreased by 0.7 per cent for family day care over the same period (table 3A.39).

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| Figure 3.12 Median cost of Australian Government CCB approved child care services, by selected service types, 2015**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 3.12 Median cost of Australian Government CCB approved child care services, by selected service types, 2015  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 3.13 and table 3A.39 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: Australian Government Department of Education and Training (unpublished); table 3A.39. |
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Median weekly costs paid to Australian Government CCB approved long day care services, by remoteness area are presented in table 3A.40. Nationally in 2015, the median weekly cost of long day care in major cities and inner regional areas ($400) was higher than in outer regional and remote areas ($373).

#### Access — service affordability — preschool service costs

‘Preschool service costs’ is an indicator of governments’ objective that all families have equitable access to ECEC irrespective of their financial circumstances (box 3.14).

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| Box 3.14 Preschool service costs |
| ‘Preschool service costs’ is defined as 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 and quantity is held constant, lower hourly costs represent more affordable preschool.  Various factors influence preschool costs and care needs to be exercised when interpreting results, as:   * preschool programs are provided by 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 preschools, have no tuition fees * fees can reflect higher land values and rental fees charged in major cities * some jurisdictions provide targeted fee relief that lowers fees for some children.   Data reported for this measure are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. All required 2014 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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Nationally, the median cost per hour for a preschool program (after subsidies) per child was $2.20 in 2014, an increase from $2.14 in 2013 (table 3.11). Preschool is free for children attending a government preschool in WA, SA, Tasmania, the ACT and the NT.

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| Table 3.11 Median hourly cost of a preschool program (after subsidies), per child enrolled aged 4 and 5 years (2014‑15 dollars)**a** |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust | | Median cost per hour ($) | | | | | | | | | | | 2013 | 3.26 | 2.14 | 2.24 | – | – | – | – | – | 2.14 | | 2014 | 3.60 | 2.20 | 1.90 | – | – | – | – | – | 2.20 | |
| a See box 3.14 and table 3A.41 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. – Nil or rounded to zero. |
| *Source*: ABS (unpublished) *Microdata:* *Preschool Education, Australia, 2013 and 2014*; Cat. no. 4240.0.55.003; tables 3A.41 and 3A.7. |
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Additional information on the hourly cost of preschool programs for children by cost range for 2014 is presented in table 3A.43.

Data on the median hourly cost of preschool programs by remoteness area are presented in table 3A.42. Nationally in 2014, the median hourly cost of preschool in major cities was $2.50 (after subsidies), compared to $1.70 in regional areas and zero in remote areas.

### Quality

An important focus of Australian, State and Territory governments is to set and maintain appropriate quality standards in ECEC services.

#### Staff — staff quality in ECEC

‘Staff quality in ECEC’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that staff employed by ECEC services are able to provide services that reflect national qualification requirements under the NQF and in doing so meet the needs of children, although not all services fall in scope of the NQF (box 3.16). In particular, this means ensuring staff have the training and experience to provide a safe and nurturing environment that fulfils the educational and developmental needs of children (box 3.15).

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| Box 3.15 Staff quality in ECEC |
| ‘Staff quality in ECEC’ is defined by three measures:   * the proportion of paid primary contact staff employed by Australian Government CCB approved child care services, by relevant formal qualifications, or three or more years of relevant experience. A relevant formal qualification relates to the highest level of qualification that a staff member has completed in an ECEC related field at a Certificate level III or above * the proportion of workers delivering preschool programs who are at least three year university trained and early childhood qualified. Workers delivering preschool programs are defined as ECEC workers who are employed, and paid, by an ECEC service provider as a principal/director/coordinator/teacher‑in‑charge, group leader/teacher, assistant/aide or other contact worker to deliver a preschool program. Workers are counted as early childhood qualified with the following fields of qualification: teaching (early childhood related), teaching (primary), teaching (other) and other early childhood related * the proportion of teachers delivering preschool programs who are at least three year university trained and early childhood qualified. Teachers are defined using the following worker roles: principal/director/coordinator/teacher‑in‑charge and group leader/teacher.   At least three year university trained includes: ‘Bachelor degree (3 years or equivalent)’, ‘Bachelor degree (4 years pass and honours)’, ‘Graduate diploma/certificate and above’.  Some studies and research (for example, OECD 2006) have shown a link between a higher proportion of qualified and experienced primary contact staff and a higher quality service, suggesting that a high or increasing proportion is desirable.  Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time for paid primary contact staff employed by Australian Government CCB approved child care services and teachers delivering preschool programs. Data for workers delivering preschool programs are comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time but are not comparable across jurisdictions * complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. All required 2013 and 2014 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for paid primary contact staff employed by Australian Government CCB approved child care services is under development. Data quality information for workers and teachers delivering preschool programs is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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##### Proportion of paid primary contact staff employed by Australian Government CCB approved child care services, by relevant formal qualifications, or three years or more relevant experience

Data for this measure are from the NECECWC and new data are available every three years. The most recent data for this measure are for 2013. Contextual data on full time equivalent staff, family day carers and unpaid staff employed by Australian Government CCB approved child care services are presented in table 3A.44.

Nationally in 2013, there were 99 655 paid primary contact staff employed by Australian Government CCB approved child care services (table 3A.45), of whom 82.6 per cent had a relevant formal qualification or three or more years relevant experience. This comprised 74.1 per cent with a relevant formal qualification at or above Certificate level III and 8.5 per cent with no relevant formal qualification, but three or more years of relevant experience (figure 3.13).

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| Figure 3.13 Paid primary contact staff employed by Australian Government CCB approved child care services with relevant qualification or three or more years of experience, 2013**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 3.13 Paid primary contact staff employed by Australian Government CCB approved child care services with relevant qualification or three or more years of experience, 2013  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 3.15 and table 3A.45 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: Australian Government Department of Education and Training, *National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census*, *2013;* table 3A.45. |
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Nationally in 2013, the majority of paid primary contact staff with relevant formal qualifications in Australian Government CCB approved child care services held a certificate III or IV, or a diploma or advanced diploma (44.4 per cent and 40.1 per cent, respectively) (table 3A.46). Of the 11 477 (or 15.5 per cent) paid primary contact staff with a bachelor degree or above, 82.8 per cent held university qualifications in the field of early childhood education (table 3A.46).

Nationally in 2013, 80.9 per cent of paid primary contact staff in Australian Government CCB approved child care services undertook relevant in‑service training in the previous   
12 months (table 3A.47).

Additional contextual data on staff tenure in Australian Government approved child care services are reported in table 3A.48. Additional contextual data on staff numbers, qualifications and in‑service training in State and Territory government funded (only) child care services are available in table 3A.49 and 3A.50.

##### Proportion of workers delivering preschool programs who are at least three year university trained and early childhood qualified

Nationally in 2014, there were 43 120 workers delivering preschool programs, of whom 40.5 per cent were at least three year university trained and early childhood qualified (figure 3.14).

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| Figure 3.14 Proportion of workers delivering preschool programs who are at least three year university trained and early childhood qualified, 2014**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 3.14 Proportion of workers delivering preschool programs who are at least three year university trained and early childhood qualified, 2014  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 3.15 and table 3A.51 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: ABS (unpublished) *Microdata:* *Preschool Education, Australia, 2014,* Cat. no. 4240.0.55.003; table 3A.51. |
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Data on workers who are at least early childhood certificate, diploma or advanced diploma level qualified and four year university trained and early childhood qualified are also presented in table 3A.51. Additional contextual data on staff numbers and in‑service training in State and Territory funded (only) preschool services are available in tables 3A.49 and 3A.50.

##### Proportion of teachers delivering preschool programs who are at least three year university trained and early childhood qualified

Nationally in 2014, there were 18 993 teachers delivering preschool programs, of whom 88.2 per cent had teacher qualifications (i.e. at least three year university trained in field of early childhood) (figure 3.15).

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| Figure 3.15 Proportion of teachers delivering preschool programs who are at least three year university trained and early childhood qualified, 2014**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 3.15 Proportion of teachers delivering preschool programs who are at least three year university trained and early childhood qualified, 2014  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 3.15 and table 3A.52 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: ABS (unpublished) *Microdata:* *Preschool Education, Australia, 2014,* Cat. no. 4240.0.55.003; table 3A.52. |
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Nationally, the proportion of teachers delivering preschool programs who are four year university trained and early childhood qualified was 61.2 per cent (table 3A.52).

### Standards

Under the NP NQAECEC, COAG has established a jointly governed NQF for ECEC, which replaced previous separate licensing and quality assurance processes (box 3.16).

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| Box 3.16 National Quality Framework |
| On 7 December 2009 COAG endorsed a NQF (see also box 3.2). The NQF is a uniform national system jointly governed by the Australian Government and States and Territory governments.  The new framework aims to raise quality and enable continuous improvement in ECEC through a national applied law regulatory scheme that includes:   * a NQS * a new rating system to complement the NQS * a streamlined regulatory system * ACECQA — the national body responsible for providing oversight of the new system and ensuring consistency of approach.   The NQF came into effect from 1 January 2012 and applies to long day care, family day care, and OSHC services and preschools, with the gradual introduction over subsequent years of improved ratios and qualifications. The NQS comprises guiding principles, quality areas, standards and elements. There are seven quality areas:   * Educational program and practice * Children’s health and safety * Physical environment * Staffing arrangements * Relationships with children * Partnerships with families and communities * Leadership and service management.   The NQF creates a jointly governed uniform national approach to the regulation and quality assessment of education and care services. It replaces the previously separate state and territory licensing and national quality assurance processes for those services under the NQF. ACECQA oversees the NQS and its application across jurisdictions to ensure that it is implemented in a nationally consistent way. |
| *Source*: Australian Government Department of Social Services (2015 and unpublished). |
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#### Standards — service approvals and licensing

‘Service approvals and licensing’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that ECEC services meet the minimum standards deemed necessary to provide a safe and nurturing environment, and to meet the educational and developmental needs of children. State and Territory governments are responsible for service approvals of ECEC services under the NQF and for licensing those out of scope of the NQF in their jurisdictions (box 3.17).

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| Box 3.17 Service approvals and licensing |
| ‘Service approvals and licensing’ is defined as complying with regulations covering operational requirements, such as the number of children services can care for, safety standards and the qualification of carers. It has been identified for development and reporting in future. Descriptive information is reported in the interim on State and Territory monitoring and inspection regimes for NQF approved and State and Territory government licensed or registered services. The profile section also includes descriptive information on the number and type of services approved and licensed by State and Territory governments.  This indicator does not provide information on the degree to which service approvals and licensing translates into higher quality service outcomes above the minimum standards of care. State and Territory governments also undertake other activities aimed at the promotion of quality, such as publishing curriculum materials and other resources, and providing education to the sector.  Data for this indicator are not available for the 2016 Report. |
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State and Territory governments monitor and inspect NQF approved and State and Territory government licensed or registered ECEC services. Table 3.12 provides an overview of the monitoring and inspection regimes that operate across jurisdictions.

There are broad commonalities in the monitoring and inspection regimes across jurisdictions. However, variability in the recording of breaches and the penalties applied for breaches affects comparability and has hindered comparable reporting across jurisdictions for monitoring and inspection.

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| Table 3.12 State and Territory monitoring and inspection regimes, for NQF approved and State and Territory government licensed or registered ECEC services, 2014‑15 |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Monitoring activities | Unit | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | | Proactive monitoringa |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | Required frequency of inspections |  | na | Risk based | .. | 1‑3 years depending on prior rating | na | Various based on the principle of earned autonomy | Yearly | Annual | | Estimated share announced visitsb | % | 33 | 42 | 80 | 31 | 55 | 70 | 75 | 70 | | Estimated share unannounced inspectionsc | % | 68 | 58 | 20 | 69 | 45 | 30 | 25 | 30 | | Reactive monitoringd |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | Data on substantiated breaches arising from complaintse |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | Sanctions for breachesf |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | Under‑performing services incur  follow‑up or more frequent inspections |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | Prosecutions initiated against services during 2014‑15g | no. | 2 | 1 | – | 8 | na | – | – | – | |
| a Proactive monitoring refers to the ongoing program of visits/inspections to services that are determined by legislation and/or the monitoring policies in each jurisdiction. b Announced visits are scheduled with the service provider including but not limited to consultative and advisory meetings. Assessment and rating visits under the NQS are included. c Unannounced inspections of services are used to assess performance against licence conditions including, but not limited to, investigations of complaints. Unannounced inspections allow the operation of the service to be monitored under normal operational circumstances. d A reactive monitoring regime can be triggered by either a complaint or a service’s failure to comply with legislative requirements.e See detailed data in tables 3A.61 and 3A.62. f Jurisdictions can apply a range of actions to underperforming services, which can include administrative and/or statutory sanctions including prosecution. Not all sanctions are included. g Prosecutions refer to all prosecutions against services that are brought under the National Law or the relevant children’s services Act in each jurisdiction. **na**Not available. .. Not applicable. –Nil or rounded to zero. |
| *Source*: State and Territory governments (unpublished). |
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#### Standards — achievement of the NQS

‘Achievement of the NQS’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that ECEC services meet the standards deemed necessary to provide a safe and nurturing environment, and to meet the educational and developmental needs of children (box 3.18).

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| Box 3.18 Achievement of the NQS |
| ‘Achievement of the NQS’ is defined as the proportion of NQF approved services with a quality rating, whose overall rating is Meeting NQS or Exceeding NQS.  Services that receive an overall rating of Meeting NQS can be rated as Meeting NQS in all seven quality areas (see box 3.16 for areas) or have a mix of quality areas rated Meeting NQS and Exceeding NQS.  To determine a rating for each quality area within a service, first all 58 elements, located across the 18 standards, are assessed as being ‘met or not met. If all elements in a standard are met, the standard will be rated as Meeting NQS or Exceeding NQS. Each quality area is then rated by calculating the rating of all of the standards within that quality area. If all standards are met, the quality area will be rated as Meeting NQS. If at least two of the standards are rated Exceeding NQS and all other standards are met, the quality area will be rated Exceeding NQS. A large number of services have a rating of Working Towards NQS as the NQS sets a higher benchmark for all children’s education and care services. Services are expected to work towards meeting the higher benchmark.  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 (ACECQA 2013). Services with an overall rating of Exceeding NQS can apply to ACECQA to be awarded an Excellent rating. Services with an overall rating of Excellent are included in data for services with an Exceeding NQS rating.  A high proportion of services with quality areas Meeting NQS or Exceeding NQS suggests a high quality of service to children and parents.  Data reported for this measure are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. All required data as at 30 June 2015 are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
| *Source*: ACECQA (2013). |
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Data on the numbers and proportions of NQF approved services with a quality rating by service type are provided in table 3.13. Nationally, 62.7 per cent of NQF approved services had received a quality rating at 30 June 2015. A higher proportion of centre‑based care services received a quality rating than family day care services.

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| Table 3.13 NQF approved services with a quality rating, by service type, 30 June 2015**a** |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | Unit | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust | | *NQF approved services with a quality rating* | | | | | | | | | | | | Centre‑based care | no. | 3 242 | 2 725 | 1 759 | 356 | 381 | 167 | 219 | 157 | 9 006 | | Family day care | no. | 99 | 143 | 64 | 15 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 341 | | **Total** | **no.** | **3 341** | **2 868** | **1 823** | **371** | **384** | **175** | **224** | **161** | **9 347** | | *NQF approved services* | | | | | | | | | | | | Centre‑based care | no. | 4 780 | 3 616 | 2 645 | 1 042 | 1 115 | 210 | 323 | 213 | 13 944 | | Family day care | no. | 324 | 361 | 145 | 62 | 38 | 12 | 18 | 6 | 966 | | **Total** | **no.** | **5 104** | **3 977** | **2 790** | **1 104** | **1 153** | **222** | **341** | **219** | **14 910** | | *NQF approved services with a quality rating* | | | | | | | | | | | | Centre‑based care | % | 67.8 | 75.4 | 66.5 | 34.2 | 34.2 | 79.5 | 67.8 | 73.7 | 64.6 | | Family day care | % | 30.6 | 39.6 | 44.1 | 24.2 | 7.9 | 66.7 | 27.8 | 66.7 | 35.3 | | **Total** | **%** | **65.5** | **72.1** | **65.3** | **33.6** | **33.3** | **78.8** | **65.7** | **73.5** | **62.7** | |
| a See box 3.18 and table 3A.53 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*:ACECQA (2015 and unpublished) *NQF Snapshot Q2 2015;* table 3A.53. |
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##### Proportion of NQF approved services with a quality rating, whose overall rating is Meeting NQS or Exceeding NQS

Nationally at 30 June 2015, of the 62.7 per cent of NQF approved services that received a quality rating, 66.5 per cent met or exceeded the NQS overall (38.2 per cent met, 28.3 per cent exceeded) (figure 3.16).

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| Figure 3.16 Proportion of NQF approved services with a quality rating, by overall quality rating level, 30 June 2015**a, b,** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 3.16 Proportion of NQF approved services with a quality rating, by overall quality rating level, 30 June 2015  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a The percentages for Significant Improvement Required are zero for Victoria, WA, SA, Tasmania and the ACT, 0.2 per cent for NSW and 0.1 per cent for Queensland and Australia. b See box 3.18 and table 3A.53 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: ACECQA (2015) *NQF Snapshot Q2 2015;* table 3A.53. |
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As all seven quality areas have to have at least met the NQS for the service to receive an overall rating of having met the NQS, data are also reported by individual quality area to show differences between areas that may affect the overall rating.

Nationally at 30 June 2015, the proportion of NQF approved services with a rating level who met or exceeded the NQS was highest for quality areas 4 (staffing arrangements – 91.2 per cent), 5 (relationships with children – 90.4 per cent) and 6 (partnerships with families and communities – 89.0 per cent). The quality area with the lowest proportion of services having met or exceeded the NQS was quality area 1 (educational program and practice – 75.1 per cent) (tables 3A.54–60).

#### Standards — substantiated breaches arising from complaints

‘Substantiated breaches arising from complaints’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that ECEC services meet the needs and expectations of users (box 3.19).

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| Box 3.19 Substantiated breaches arising from complaints |
| ‘Substantiated breaches arising from complaints’ is defined as the number of substantiated breaches arising from complaints per 100 NQF approved services, by service type.  All else being equal, a low or decreasing rate of substantiated breaches arising from complaints can suggest a higher quality service. A high or increasing rate of substantiated breaches does not necessarily mean that a jurisdiction has lower service safety and quality, it might mean it has a more effective reporting and monitoring regime.  In this report, a substantiated breach arising from a complaint is an expression of concern about an ECEC service, made to the regulatory authority, which constitutes a failure by the service to abide by the State or Territory legislation, regulations or conditions. This concern is investigated and subsequently considered to have substance by the regulatory body.  Breaches data need to be interpreted with care, because:   * one complaint can lead to, or be linked to, multiple breaches * breaches identified as a result of normal monitoring and inspection visits are excluded from these data * clients who are well informed can be more likely to make a complaint than less informed clients. Some jurisdictions give priority to developing client groups who are well informed, as part of improving their service delivery * the number of approved care providers or parent users per service differs in each service across states and territories * complaints management systems vary across jurisdictions.   Data reported for this measure are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions but a break in series means that data for 2014‑15 are not comparable to data for 2013‑14 (in the previous Report) * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2014‑15 data were available.   Data quality information for this indicator is under development. |
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Breaches of legislation, regulations or conditions 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 licensing information). Similarly, action taken by regulatory authorities in response to a breach can range from a requirement to comply within a specified time frame through to licensing action or prosecution. The data for this indicator are from the National Quality Agenda Information Technology System (NQAITS) for services approved under the NQF.

Nationally in 2014‑15, there were 13 substantiated breaches arising from complaints per 100 NQF approved services (table 3.14). Breaches by service type are available in table 3A.61.

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| Table 3.14 Substantiated breaches arising from complaints per 100 NQF approved services, 2014‑15**a** |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust | | No. | 23 | 9 | 9 | 11 | 5 | – | 8 | 5 | 13 | |
| a See box 3.19 and table 3A.61 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: ACECQA and State and Territory governments (unpublished) NQAITS; table 3A.61. |
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Additional data on the proportion of substantiated breaches against which action was taken are provided in table 3A.61. Nationally in 2014‑15, action was taken against 65.7 per cent of substantiated breaches arising from complaints.

Data are also available on substantiated breaches arising from complaints in State and Territory government licensed or registered services in table 3A.62.

#### Health and safety — hospital separations for external causes of injury

‘Hospital separations for external causes of injury’ (occurring in ECEC) is a proxy indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that ECEC services meet the care, educational and developmental needs of children in a safe and nurturing environment (box 3.20).

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| Box 3.20 Hospital separations for external causes of injury |
| ‘Hospital separations for external causes of injury’ is defined as the number of hospital separations for children aged 0–4 years resulting from an external cause of injury occurring in ‘school’ as a proportion of total hospital separations for children aged 0–4 years resulting from an external cause of injury. For children aged 0–4 years, ‘school’ incorporates a range of formal ECEC settings including kindergarten, preschool and centre‑based child care services.  Low or decreasing hospitalisations for external causes of injury for children aged 0–4 years occurring in a ‘school’ can indicate better performance towards achieving the objective of providing the care, educational and developmental needs of children in a safe and nurturing environment.  All hospital separation data need to be interpreted with care. Nationally, no place of occurrence was reported for some hospitalisations of children aged 0–4 years. As a result, this indicator should be interpreted as the minimum number of hospital separations for an external cause of injury that occurred in ECEC services.  Data reported for this measure are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. All required 2013‑14 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is under development. |
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Limiting the data to children aged 0–4 years reduces the likelihood that the ‘school’ place of occurrence includes children in full time compulsory schooling, which children generally attend when they are aged 5 years or over. For children in the older age group, it is not possible to separate injuries that occur in ECEC from those that occur in a full time school setting, so they are excluded from the indicator.

The data can capture children who were injured at these ‘school’ services without necessarily attending them. Family day care services, which are typically provided in the carer’s home, are not likely to be covered under ‘schools’. External cause refers to the environmental event, circumstance or condition that causes the injury. People admitted to hospital as a result of a pre‑existing illness or condition (such as asthma) are excluded.

Nationally in 2013‑14, of the 36 835 injuries to children aged 0–4 years that resulted in a hospital admission, 2.6 per cent were reported as occurring at ‘school’ — a similar proportion to previous years (table 3A.63 and figure 3.17). The largest proportion were reported as occurring at home (34.0 per cent), reflecting that children in this age group spend the majority of their time in the home and about half do not attend formal care. For boys and girls, falls were the most common cause of hospitals separations at ‘school’, followed by exposure to mechanical forces (AIHW unpublished).

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| Figure 3.17 Hospital separations for external causes of injury for children aged 0–4 years, proportion by place of occurrence, 2013‑14**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 3.17 Hospital separations for external causes of injury for children aged 0–4 years, proportion by place of occurrence, 2013-14  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 3.20 and table 3A.63 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished) *Australian Hospital Statistics 2013‑14*; table 3A.63. |
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### Efficiency

Differences in reported efficiency results across jurisdictions can reflect differences in counting and reporting rules for financial data and in reported expenditure (which are partly due to different treatments of various expenditure items). Information on the comparability of expenditure is shown in table 3A.7.

#### Inputs per output unit — total government recurrent expenditure on ECEC per child in the community

‘Total government recurrent expenditure on ECEC per child in the community’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to maximise the availability and quality of services through the efficient use of public resources (box 3.21).

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| Box 3.21 Total government recurrent expenditure on ECEC per child in the community |
| ‘Total government recurrent expenditure on ECEC per child in the community’ is defined as combined Australian Government and State and Territory government recurrent expenditure on ECEC per child aged 0–12 years in the community.  All efficiency data should be interpreted with care. 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.  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. Expenditure data per child are reported separately for the Australian Government and each State and Territory government, as well as total expenditure per child.  Government expenditure includes recurrent expenditure on child care and preschool services. Unit cost data for ECEC do not contain an estimate of user cost of capital.  Data reported for this measure are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time but are not comparable across jurisdictions * complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. All required 2014‑15 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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Nationally in 2014‑15, Australian Government recurrent expenditure was $1824 per child, increasing from $1244 in 2010‑11 (table 3A.64). Australian Government real recurrent expenditure on child care per child has increased each year in the past ten years, except from 2008‑09 to 2009‑10 (table 3A.64).

Data were supplied by all State and Territory governments on their expenditure for ECEC (both child care and preschool services). Differing collection methods and changes to policies make it difficult to compare expenditure across jurisdictions and over time. Nationally in 2014‑15, State and Territory government recurrent expenditure was $365 per child, increasing from $275 in 2010‑11 (table 3A.65).

Figure 3.18 shows the combined real recurrent expenditure on ECEC from both the Australian Government and the State and Territory governments per child in the community aged 0–12 years in 2014‑15. Nationally, the combined recurrent expenditure on ECEC per child was $2188 in 2014‑15, an increase of $670 since 2010‑11 (figure 3.18).

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| Figure 3.18 Total government real recurrent expenditure on ECEC per child aged 0–12 years**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 3.18 Total government real recurrent expenditure on ECEC per child aged 0–12 years  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 3.21 and table 3A.66 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: Australian Government Department of Education and Training (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); ABS (unpublished) *Australian Demographic Statistics*, *Dec 2014 (and previous editions*), Cat. no. 3101.0; tables 3A.66 and 3A.77. |
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#### Inputs per output unit — Australian Government recurrent expenditure per child attending CCB approved child care

‘Australian Government recurrent expenditure per child attending CCB approved child care’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to maximise the availability and quality of services through the efficient use of taxpayer resources (box 3.22).

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| Box 3.22 Australian Government recurrent expenditure per child attending CCB approved child care |
| ‘Australian Government recurrent expenditure per child attending CCB approved child care’ is defined as Australian Government recurrent expenditure per child aged 0–12 years attending Australian Government CCB approved child care services.  Efficiency data should be interpreted with care. 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 unit costs can reflect improving efficiency or lower quality or quantity. Provided the level and quality of, and access to, services remain unchanged, lower recurrent expenditure per child can indicate greater efficiency of government expenditure.  Data reported for this measure are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. All required 2014‑15 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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Nationally in 2014‑15, Australian Government recurrent expenditure per child attending CCB approved child care services was $5951 (table 3A.67).

### Outcomes

Outcomes are the impact of services on the status of an individual or group (see chapter 1, section 1.5).

#### Family work‑related needs for child care

‘Family work‑related needs for child care’ is an indicator of governments’ objective for child care to provide support for families in caring for their children, to allow the needs of the family to be met (box 3.23).

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| Box 3.23 Family work‑related needs for child care |
| ‘Family work‑related needs for child care’ is defined by two measures:   * The proportion of children aged 0–12 years in families for whom additional formal child care was currently required for work‑related reasons   Additional care currently required refers to children who were already attending formal child care and parents wished for them to attend more, as well as children who did not attend any formal child care and parents wished for them to attend. A mainly work‑related reason for currently requiring additional care includes the categories ‘work’, ‘looking for work’ and ‘work‑related study or training’.  A low or decreasing proportion may indicate more families’ work‑related needs for additional formal child care, are being met. Caution should be used when interpreting these data as they are not intended to represent the ‘unmet demand’ for formal child care. Expressed need for additional formal child care does not necessarily indicate whether the current additional need has been met or will be met. 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.   * The proportion of people aged 15 years and over not in the labour force due to caring for children, by child care service related reasons   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 only some. Also, due to the subjective nature of self‑reporting, care should be taken when interpreting the data, particularly for child care service related reasons.  Data for these measures include 95 per cent confidence intervals (in the form of error bars in figures and percentages in tables).  Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. All required 2014 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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##### Proportion of children aged 0–12 years in families for whom additional formal child care was currently required for work‑related reasons

Data for this measure were obtained from the ABS *Childhood Education and Care Survey* (CEaCS). Box 3.24 includes further information about the CEaCS.

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| Box 3.24 ABS Childhood Education and Care Survey |
| The *Childhood Education and Care Survey* (CEaCS) is a three‑yearly survey, most recently conducted in June 2014. The CEaCS collects a range of information on children aged 0–12 years and their families living in a sample of private dwellings.  Estimates from the surveys are subject to sampling variability. Estimates for the smaller jurisdictions are based on small sample sizes and are subject to higher sampling error, in particular data for Tasmania, the ACT and the NT. Aggregated survey data also need to be interpreted with care, because oversupply and undersupply of child care places can be specific to particular areas, including small and remote communities.  In addition, the CEaCS is a household survey, with parents responding to questions on use of services. Some children attend a preschool program within a child care setting, for example in a long day care service, where the costs would generally be higher than in a stand‑alone preschool. To ensure that parents are referring to a preschool program, state‑specific wording is used in the questionnaire to reflect the common terminology for preschool, the questions are restricted to children aged 3 to 6 years, and parents are asked to state the name of the preschool their child attended. |
| *Source*: ABS (2015b). |
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Nationally in 2014, 3.6 per cent of 0–12 year old children currently required additional formal child care due mainly to a work‑related reason of the family. This is a small increase from 2.7 per cent in 2011, but overall indicates that the majority of families with children aged 0–12 years do not require additional formal child care for work‑related reasons (figure 3.19). The proportion should not be interpreted as ‘unmet demand’ because families responding that they currently require additional child care does not indicate whether they have accessed, or would take steps to access, the additional care they say they require –the required care may be accessible, but they may choose not to use it.

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| Figure 3.19 Proportion of children aged 0–12 years for whom additional formal child care was currently required for mainly work‑related reasons**a, b** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 3.19 Proportion of children aged 0–12 years for whom additional formal child care was currently required for mainly work related reasons  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a 2014 data for the ACT and 2011 data for the NT are not published due to small numbers, but are included in the Australian total. b See box 3.23 and table 3A.69 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: ABS (unpublished) *Microdata:* *Childhood Education and Care, Australia, June 2011 and 2014*, Cat. no. 4402.0.55.001; table 3A.69. |
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##### Proportion of people aged 15 years and over not in the labour force due to caring for children, by child care service related reasons

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 only some. Data from this survey provide the self‑reported main reason respondents state when asked why they are not in the labour force due to caring for children.

Nationally in 2014, 280 300 people aged 15 years and over reported that they were not in the labour force due to caring for children (table 3A.70). Of these people, around half reported that a child care service related reason was why they were not in the labour force. The most common child care service related reason was cost of child care (30.8 per cent) (table 3.15). The remaining half of respondents reported a non‑service related reason. In particular, 33.2 per cent said the main reason was they prefer to look after the children and 17.8 per cent reported that the children were too young or too old (table 3A.70).

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| Table 3.15 Proportion of persons aged 15 years and over not in the labour force due to caring for children, by child care service related reasons (per cent), 2014**a** |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Aust | | Cost or too expensive | 28.0 ± 5.9 | 32.2 ± 5.9 | 32.0 ± 10.7 | 30.3 ± 7.6 | 38.8 ± 12.2 | 35.1 ± 13.1 | 22.5 ± 21.9 | 39.4 ± 13.0 | 30.8 ± 3.4 | | No child care in locality | 5.7 ± 3.6 | 3.0 ± 2.5 | 3.9 ± 5.0 | 4.5 ± 4.2 | 5.0 ± 6.0 | np | – | np | 4.4 ± 1.9 | | No child care available at all | 2.5 ± 2.5 | 3.4 ± 2.6 | 4.9 ± 5.9 | np | – | np | – | np | 3.0 ± 1.6 | | Booked out or no places at all | np | np | np | np | np | np | np | np | 1.8 ± 1.3 | | Quality of child care unsuitable | np | np | np | np | np | np | np | np | 1.1 ± 1.0 | | Other child care reasons | 7.9 ± 4.1 | 7.1 ± 3.7 | 12.4 ± 8.3 | 4.8 ± 4.3 | 5.0 ± 6.0 | np | np | – | 7.9 ± 2.4 | | **Total child care reasons** | **46.9 ± 6.0** | **49.4 ± 6.0** | **54.8 ± 10.5** | **44.1 ± 7.8** | **52.5 ± 11.9** | **na** | **na** | **60.6 ± 12.9** | **49.0 ± 3.6** | |
| a See box 3.23 and table 3A.70 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. **na** Not available. – Nil or rounded to zero. **np** Not published. |
| *Source*: Derived from ABS (2015) *Persons Not in the Labour Force, Underemployed Workers and Job Search Experience, Australia, February 2014*, Cat. no. 6226.0.55.001; table 3A.70. |
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#### Demand for ECEC

**‘**Demand for ECEC’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that ECEC services meet the requirements of all Australian families (box 3.25).

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| Box 3.25 Demand for ECEC |
| ‘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 service availability will be required in the future.  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. Expressed need for additional formal child care or preschool services does not necessarily indicate whether the current additional need has been met or will be met. 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.  Data for this measure include 95 per cent confidence intervals (in the form of error bars in figures).  Data reported for this measure are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. All required 2014 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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Nationally in 2014, additional formal child care or preschool was currently required for 10.0 per cent of 0–12 year olds. This is an increase from 5.5 per cent in 2011 (figure 3.20).

In 2014, the 10.0 per cent of 0–12 year olds for whom additional formal child care or preschool was currently required comprised 5.6 per cent that used formal child care or preschool in the last week, 2.3 per cent that used only informal child care, and 3.1 per cent that did not use any child care or preschool (table 3A.71). This table also provides data on additional formal child care or preschool currently required for 0–5 year olds, and their current use of care or preschool.

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| Figure 3.20 Proportion of children aged 0–12 years who currently required additional formal child care or preschool**a** |
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| a See box 3.25 and table 3A.71 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: ABS (unpublished) *Microdata:* *Childhood Education and Care, Australia, June 2011 and 2014*, Cat. no. 4402.0.55.001; table 3A.71. |
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Data reporting the main reason for currently requiring additional formal child care or preschool in 2011 and 2014 are included in table 3A.72. This table also provides information on whether additional child care or preschool currently required was available upon application and whether would use it if it became available within the next four weeks.

#### Out‑of‑pocket costs of child care

‘Out‑of‑pocket costs of child care’ is an indicator of governments’ objective that all Australian families have equitable access to ECEC irrespective of their financial circumstances (box 3.26).

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| Box 3.26 Out‑of‑pocket costs of child care |
| ‘Out‑of‑pocket costs of child care’ is defined as the proportion of weekly disposable income that families spend on long day care and family day care before and after the payment of child care subsidies, for families 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 50 hours (full time) long day care or family day care per week and for families with one child attending 30 hours per week long day care or family day care.  The data on a 50 hour basis do not necessarily reflect the reality for a large proportion of families who use less than 50 hours of child care per week. In the March quarter 2015 the national average for long day care was 27.9 hours attendance per week per child and 30.9 hours for family day care (see table 3A.23). Nationally in the March quarter 2015, only 7.9 per cent of children attended long day care for 50 hours or more and 10.3 per cent attended 50 hours or more family day care (Australian Government Department of Education and Training unpublished). As 30 hours of child care per week more closely reflects the average use per week than 50 hours, the analysis on the basis of 30 hours of care may provide a more meaningful measure of out‑of‑pocket costs currently faced by families.  Lower out‑of‑pocket cost for child care as a proportion of weekly disposable income (after child care subsidies) represents more affordable child care. Similar percentages across income groups suggest a more equitable outcome. Families who use more care per week (i.e. 50 hours rather than 30 hours) are expected to face higher out‑of‑pocket costs.  Care needs to be exercised when interpreting results, because a variety of factors (for example, rates, rental costs and localised costs of living) can influence child care costs. Also, data reflect particular scenarios of child care use and family income level so do not reflect out‑of‑pocket costs by families with different levels of income or care usage.  Data reported for this measure are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. All required 2015 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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Nationally for both 50 and 30 hours of long day care, there was less variation in out‑of‑pocket costs across selected income bands after subsidies than before subsidies were taken into account. For the income levels presented in figure 3.21, the out‑of‑pocket costs after subsidies in 2015 were between 7.6 and 11.1 per cent of weekly disposable income for 50 hours and 4.5 and 6.0 per cent for 30 hours of long day care.

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| Figure 3.21 Out‑of‑pocket costs of Australian Government CCB approved child care for families with one child in 50 and 30 hours long day care, as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family income, Australia, 2015**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 3.21 Out of pocket costs of Australian Government CCB approved child care for families with one child in 50 and 30 hours long day care, as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family income, Australia, 2015  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 3.26 and tables 3A.73 and 3A.75 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: Australian Government Department of Education and Training (unpublished); tables 3A.73 and 3A.75. |
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In 2015, for the selected income levels presented in figure 3.22, the out‑of‑pocket costs after subsides for families with one child in 50 hours long day care varied across states and territories from 6.6 to 15.8 per cent of weekly disposable income. In comparison, the out‑of‑pocket costs for 30 hours of long day care varied across states and territories from 3.9 to 8.8 per cent (figure 3.22).

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| Figure 3.22 Out‑of‑pocket costs for one child in 50 and 30 hours Australian Government CCB approved long day care (after subsidies), as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family income, 2015**a** |
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| a See box 3.26 and tables 3A.73 and 3A.75 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: Australian Government Department of Education and Training (unpublished); tables 3A.73 and 3A.75. |
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Nationally, the out‑of‑pocket costs after subsidies for family day care in 2015 were between 7.1 and 9.6 per cent of weekly disposable income for 50 hours and 3.6 and 5.1 per cent for 30 hours family day care (figure 3.23). In 2015, for the selected income levels presented in figure 3.23, the out‑of‑pocket costs (after subsides) for families with one child in 50 hours family day care varied across states and territories from 6.6 to 13.5 per cent of weekly disposable income, and for families with one child in 30 hours of family day care varied from 2.8 to 6.3 per cent.

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| Figure 3.23 Out‑of‑pocket costs for one child in 50 and 30 hours Australian Government CCB approved family day care (after subsidies), as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family income, 2015**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 3.23 Out of pocket costs for one child in 50 and 30 hours Australian Government CCB approved family day care (after subsidies), as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family income, 2015  (a) 50 hours  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image.  Figure 3.23 Out of pocket costs for one child in 50 and 30 hours Australian Government CCB approved family day care (after subsidies), as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family income, 2015  (a) 30 hours  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 3.26 and tables 3A.74 and 3A.76 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: Australian Government Department of Education and Training (unpublished); tables 3A.74 and 3A.76. |
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#### ECEC outcomes

‘ECEC outcomes’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide ECEC that meets the care, educational and developmental needs of children, in a safe and nurturing environment (box 3.27).

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| Box 3.27 ECEC outcomes |
| ‘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).  Developmental vulnerability is an outcome reported by the AEDC. In 2009, when the AEDC was first completed nationally, a series of cut‑off scores was established for each of the five domains. Children falling below the 10th percentile were considered ‘developmentally vulnerable’. These 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 reported as developmentally vulnerable who received ECEC is desirable. In particular, a lower proportion of children reported as developmentally vulnerable who received some ECEC compared to children who did not receive any ECEC may indicate more positive development outcomes for children who receive some ECEC.  ECEC experience is just one factor contributing to AEDC results. A range of other factors also have an impact on development outcomes including parental and family circumstances and the take‑up of services such as health, allied health and parenting support. Also, the quality of data reported for whether a child attended an ECEC service is dependent on the teacher’s knowledge of the child’s previous experience. The data do not account for the extent to which children received ECEC (i.e. how many hours per week) or over how many years it was provided.  Data reported for this measure are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. All required 2012 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016. |
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This indicator uses data from the AEDC 2012. Box 3.28 contains information on the AEDC.

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| Box 3.28 Australian Early Development Census |
| The AEDC is a population based measure of how children have developed by the time they start school across five areas of early childhood development: physical health and wellbeing; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive skills; and communication skills and general knowledge. Until 1 July 2014 the AEDC was known as the Australian Early Development Index.  The AEDC has been endorsed by COAG as a national progress measure of early childhood development and all Australian governments have agreed to use the AEDC results to inform early development policy and investments.  The Australian Government and State and Territory governments are working in partnership with The Royal Children’s Hospital Centre for Community Child Health in Melbourne, the Murdoch Children’s Research Institute and the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research in Perth, to deliver the AEDC. The Social Research Centre managed the 2012 data collection. In 2011, the Australian Government made a commitment to collect these data every three years, representing an investment of $28 million per collection cycle.  The first national collection of the AEDC took place between May and July 2009, with data collected on 97.5 per cent of the estimated five year old population (261 203 children) in their first year of full time school. The 2012 data collection took place from 1 May 2012 to 31 July 2012. Data were collected on 289 973 children, covering almost 7500 schools and almost 16 500 teachers. AEDC 2012 results represent 96.5 per cent of Australian children enrolled to begin school in 2012.  The Child care, education and training sector overview in this Report includes AEDC data on the proportion of children on track in at least four domains as they entered school in 2012.  Additional information on the AEDC, including access to the 2012 National Report, 2012 Summary Report, community maps and community profiles, are available on the AEDC website www.aedc.gov.au |
| *Source*: Australian Government Department of Education (2014 and unpublished). |
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While ECEC experience is just one factor contributing to AEDC results, children who received some ECEC were less likely to be developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains (19.8 per cent nationally), compared to children who did not receive any ECEC (35.1 per cent nationally) (figure 3.24).

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| Figure 3.24 Proportion of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains of the AEDC by ECEC experience, 2012**a** |
| |  | | --- | | Figure 3.24 Proportion of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains of the AEDC by ECEC experience, 2012  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. | |
| a See box 3.27 and table 3A.77 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats. |
| *Source*: Australian Government Department of Education and Training (unpublished) *Australian Early Development Census 2012*; table 3A.77. |
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Further measures may be developed in the future using data from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) (box 3.29).

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| Box 3.29 Longitudinal Study of Australian Children |
| The LSAC is a longitudinal study on a cohort of children that aims to examine the impact of Australia’s unique social, economic and cultural environment on children growing up in Australia today (AIFS 2005a). The LSAC was initiated and is funded by the Department of Social Services, with the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) having responsibility for the design and management of the study.  During 2004, the study recruited a sample of 5107 infants (children aged 0–1 year at the time) and 4983 children (children aged 4–5 years at the time) (see AIFS 2005a for more details).  LSAC and outcomes for children  The LSAC Outcome Index, attached to each infant and child in the study, is a composite measure that indicates how children are developing across physical, social/emotional and learning domains of competence. It provides a means of summarising the development of children across multiple domains and, wherever possible, incorporates both positive and negative outcomes (see AIFS 2005b for more details).  The LSAC Outcome Index is being investigated as a possible measure of the developmental outcomes of infants/children in child care and preschool, compared with those infants/children who are not in child care or preschool. |
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#### Cost effectiveness

‘Cost effectiveness’ is an indicator of ECEC being provided in an effective and efficient manner (box 3.30).

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| Box 3.30 Cost effectiveness |
| ‘Cost effectiveness’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide ECEC in an effective and efficient manner.  This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. Data are not available for the 2016 Report. |
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## 3.4 Future directions in performance reporting

### Improving reporting of existing indicators

Further work is planned to improve the consistency and comparability of performance information across jurisdictions. Possible improvements in data quality may occur from future developments in the NECECC and an increasing proportion of approved services assessed and rated against the NQS.

### Future indicator development

The Steering Committee will continue to improve the appropriateness and completeness of the performance indicator framework. Future work on indicators will focus on:

* reporting on child care and preschool service availability
* developing indicators to measure the extent to which ECEC services meet children’s needs
* developing a cost effectiveness indicator.

Data developments in future reports may be influenced by:

* developments under the *National Information Agreement on Early Childhood Education and Care* that commenced on 6 November 2009. The Agreement provides a framework for cooperation between the Australian, State and Territory governments and information agencies to develop the information base required for the COAG early childhood reform agenda
* developments under the COAG agreed NP NQAECEC development of ongoing national data collections, including the LSAC (box 3.29).

## 3.5 Definitions of key terms

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| **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children** | Children of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin who self‑identify or are identified by a parent or guardian to be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were previously reported as Indigenous children in RoGS. |
| **Administration expenditure** | Administration expenditure includes all expenditure by the responsible departments associated with the provision of licensing, advice, policy development, grants administration and training services. Responsible departments include those departments that administer policy for, fund, and license/accredit child care and preschool services in each jurisdiction. |
| **Budget Based Funded services** | These services are part of the Australian Government’s Budget Based Funded Programme which provides an Australian Government contribution to the operational costs of child care and early learning and school aged care services in a limited number of approved locations. These services are predominantly located in regional, remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities where the market would otherwise fail to deliver services to meet the needs of children and their families.  A range of service types are funded across Australia including crèches, mobile services, Multifunctional Aboriginal Children’s Services and OSHC services. Services reported as Budget Based Funded services are not approved to administer CCB on behalf of families. State and Territory governments may license or register Budget Based Funded services to operate. |
| **Child Care Benefit (CCB) approved** | A child care service approved by the Australian Government to receive Child Care Benefit (CCB) on behalf of families. |
| **Child care services** | The meeting of a child’s care, education and developmental needs by a person other than the child’s parent or guardian. The main types of child care service are long day care, family day care, OSHC (before/after school hours and ‘pupil free days’ care), vacation care, occasional care, other care and in home care. |
| **Children** | All resident male and female Australians aged 12 years or younger at 30 June of each year (unless otherwise stated). |
| **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 CCB. |
| **Children from non‑English speaking backgrounds** | 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. |
| **Family day care** | Services providing small group early childhood education and care 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. |
| **Financial support to families** | Financial support to families includes any form of fee relief paid by governments to the users of ECEC services (for example, CCB). |
| **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). |
| **Full time equivalent staff numbers** | A measure of the total level of staff resources used. A full time staff member is employed full time and engaged solely in activities that fall within the scope of ECEC services covered in the chapter. The full time equivalent of part time staff is calculated on the basis of the proportion of time spent on activities within the scope of the data collection compared with that spent by a full time staff member solely occupied by the same activities. |
| **Hospital separation** | An episode of care for a person admitted to a hospital. It can be a total hospital stay (from admission to discharge, transfer or death) or portions of hospital stays beginning or ending in a change of type of care (for example from acute to rehabilitation) that cease during a reference period. |
| **Informal child  care** | Child care arrangements provided privately (for example, by friends, relatives, nannies) for which no government assistance (other than the minimum rate of CCB for Registered Care) is provided. Such care is unregulated in most states and territories. |
| **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. |
| **In‑service training** | Formal training only (that is, structured training sessions that can be conducted in‑house or externally), including training in work or own time but not training towards qualifications included in obtaining formal qualifications. It includes:   * management or financial training * training for additional needs children (such as children with disability, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children and children from a culturally diverse background * other child care‑related training * other relevant courses (such as a first aid certificate). |
| **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. |
| **Management type** | When the concept relates to data reported using the NQAITS: the kind of management structure the service provider has.  When the concept relates to data reported using the NECECC (Preschool Education, Australia) (based on the National Minimum Data Set): the type of legal or social entity responsible for managing the delivery of an ECEC service.  In both cases the management type categories are: private not for profit – community managed; private not for profit – other organisation, state and territory and local government managed; private for profit; state and territory government schools; independent schools; catholic schools and other. Some services may have a management type of not stated/inadequately described. |
| **National Quality Framework (NQF) approved** | Under the National Quality Framework (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 service: an education and care service other than a family day care service. This includes most long day care, preschool and OSHC services that are delivered at a centre * Family day care service: an education and care service delivered through the use of two or more educators to provide education and care for children in residences, whether or not the service also provides education and care to children at a place other than the residence. |
| **Net 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. |
| **Non‑standard hours of care** | Defined by service type as:   * long day care — service operates before 7am or after 6.30pm on any day Monday to Friday or on weekends (to be considered a service offering non‑standard hours of care just need to meet 1 of these 3 criteria) * family day care — service operates before 7am, or after 6.30pm 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 7am or after 6.30pm 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 7am (before school) or after 6.30pm (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 7am or after 6.30pm 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 7am or after 6.30pm 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** | 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. |
| **Other care** | 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‑CCB approved services). |
| **Other territories** | A separate category for data collections, which includes Jervis Bay Territory, the Territory of Christmas Island and the Territory of Cocos (Keeling) Islands. |
| **Outside school hours care (OSHC)** | 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. |
| **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. Although various delivery models of preschool programs exist across jurisdictions, the YBFS is the term used to describe the ‘preschool’ program cohort.  Preschool programs delivered to children in the year or two before full time schooling are intended to be available for a minimum of 600 hours per calendar year (or 15 hours per week for 40 weeks). 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. |
| **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. |
| **Priority of access** | The Australian Government funds child care with a major purpose of meeting the child care needs of Australian families. However, the demand for child care sometimes exceeds supply in some locations. When this happens, it is important for services to allocate available places to those families with the greatest need for child care support.  The Government has determined Guidelines for allocating places in these circumstances. These Guidelines apply to centre based long day care, in home care, family day care and OSHC services. They set out the following three levels of priority, which child care services must follow when filling vacant places:   * priority 1: a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect * priority 2: a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work/training/study test under section 14 of the Family Assistance Act * priority 3: any other child.   Within these main categories priority should also be given to the following children:   * children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families * children in families which include a disabled person * children in families on lower incomes * children in families with NESB * children in socially isolated families * children of single parents. |
| **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). |
| **Reference period** | The reference period refers to when data are collected during the financial year or point in time. |
| **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. |
| **Service** | 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. |
| **Service type** | 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 (for CCB approved services) * other care (for State and Territory government funded services) * preschool services.   All service type categories are considered child care services, except for preschool services. |
| **Special needs group** | An identifiable group within the general population who can have special difficulty accessing services. Special needs groups for which data are reported in this chapter include: children from NESB; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children; children from low income families (CCB approved child care services only); children with disability; and children from regional or remote areas. |
| **Standard hours of care** | Defined by service type as:   * long day care — service opens at 7am or later and closes at 6.30pm or earlier every day Monday to Friday (does not operate on weekends) * family day care — service operates at 7am or later and no later than 6.30pm every day Monday to Friday (does not operate on weekends or overnight) * vacation care — service operates at 7am or later and no later than 6.30pm every day Monday to Friday * OSHC — service opens at 7am or later (before school) and closes at 6.30pm or earlier (after school) every day Monday to Friday * occasional care — service operates at 7am or later and no later than 6.30pm every day Monday to Friday (does not operate on weekends) * in home care — service operates at 7am or later and no later than 6.30pm every day Monday to Friday (does not operate on weekends)   Also see non‑standard hours of care definition. |
| **State/Territory government (only) funded** | 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) . |
| **State/Territory government licensed** | Services that comply with the relevant State or Territory licensing regulations. These regulations cover matters such as the number of children whom the service can care for, safety requirements and the required qualifications of carers. State/Territory government licensed services are not NQF approved. |
| **Substantiated breach arising from a complaint** | An expression of concern about a child care or preschool service, made orally, in writing or in person to the regulatory authority, which constitutes a failure by the NQF approved or State and Territory licensed service to abide by the national regulations, State or Territory legislation, regulations or conditions. This concern is investigated and subsequently considered to have substance by the regulatory body. |
| **Vacation care** | Services provided for children enrolled in schools (4–12 year olds) during the school holidays. |

## 3.6 List of attachment tables

Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by a ‘3A’ prefix (for example, table 3A.1). Attachment tables are available on the website (www.pc.gov.au/rogs/2016).

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| **Table 3A.1** | Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in Australia, as at 30 June 2015 |
| **Table 3A.2** | Estimated resident population (ERP), children aged 12 years and younger, 31 December (’000) |
| **Table 3A.3** | Total government real expenditure on ECEC (2014‑15 dollars) ($000) |
| **Table 3A.4** | Australian Government real expenditure on child care services (2014‑15 dollars) ($000) |
| **Table 3A.5** | State and Territory government real expenditure on ECEC services (2014‑15 dollars) ($000) |
| **Table 3A.6** | Australian Government funding to State and Territory governments under the NP UAECE |
| **Table 3A.7** | Comparability of expenditure — items included, 2014‑15 |
| **Table 3A.8** | Number of Australian Government Child Care Benefit (CCB) approved child care services, by service type |
| **Table 3A.9** | Number of State and Territory government funded ECEC services, by service type, 30 June 2015 |
| **Table 3A.10** | NQF approved ECEC services, by service type, by management type, 30 June 2015 |
| **Table 3A.11** | State and Territory government licensed or registered ECEC services, by service type, 30 June 2015 |
| **Table 3A.12** | Preschool services, by service delivery setting, by management type |
| **Table 3A.13** | Proportion of children aged 0–5 and 6–12 years attending Australian Government CCB approved child care services who are from special needs groups, compared with their representation in the community (per cent) |
| **Table 3A.14** | Proportion of children aged 0–12 years attending Australian Government CCB approved child care services who are from special needs groups, compared with their representation in the community (per cent) |
| **Table 3A.15** | Proportion of children aged 0–12 years attending State and Territory government (only) funded child care services who are from special needs groups, compared with their representation in the community |
| **Table 3A.16** | Proportion of children aged 3–5 years enrolled in a preschool program who are from special needs groups, compared with their representation in the community, 2014 |
| **Table 3A.17** | Proportion of children aged 4 and 5 years enrolled in and attending a preschool program in the YBFS who are disadvantaged, compared with their representation in the community |
| **Table 3A.18** | Proportion of children who are attending Australian Government CCB approved child care services, by age group (0–5, 6–12 and 0–12 years) |
| **Table 3A.19** | Proportion of children who are attending Australian Government CCB approved child care services, by single year of age and age group, 2015 |
| **Table 3A.20** | Children aged 0–12 years attending Australian Government CCB approved child care services, by service type, 2015 |
| **Table 3A.21** | Children attending State and Territory government (only) funded child care services, by age |
| **Table 3A.22** | Proportion of children who are attending Australian Government CCB approved and State and Territory government funded child care services, by age group (0–5, 6–12 and 0–12 years), 2015 |
| **Table 3A.23** | Average hours of attendance per week of children aged 0–12 years at Australian Government CCB approved child care services, by service type |
| **Table 3A.24** | Characteristics of State and Territory government (only) funded child care services |
| **Table 3A.25** | Children enrolled in a preschool program, by sector, by age |
| **Table 3A.26** | Children aged 4 and 5 years enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS, by weekly hours, by sector, 2014 |
| **Table 3A.27** | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 4 and 5 years enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS, by remoteness area, national only |
| **Table 3A.28** | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in a preschool program |
| **Table 3A.29** | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 4 and 5 years enrolled in a preschool program in the YBFS, by weekly hours, 2014 |
| **Table 3A.30** | Children aged 0–12 years using child care and preschool services, by employment status of parents (per cent) |
| **Table 3A.31** | Children aged 4 and 5 years attending a preschool program in the YBFS, by sector |
| **Table 3A.32** | Average number of hours of attendance at a preschool program per week, by sector |
| **Table 3A.33** | All children aged 4 and 5 years enrolled in and attending a preschool program, by sector |
| **Table 3A.34** | Children aged 4 and 5 years attending a preschool program, by weekly hours, by sector |
| **Table 3A.35** | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 4 and 5 years attending a preschool program in the YBFS, by remoteness area, national only |
| **Table 3A.36** | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children attending a preschool program |
| **Table 3A.37** | Proportion of enrolled children aged 4 and 5 years attending a preschool program in the YBFS, by Indigenous status |
| **Table 3A.38** | Service availability during non‑standard hours for Australian Government CCB approved child care services, by service type (per cent), 2015 |
| **Table 3A.39** | Median weekly cost of 50 hours of Australian Government CCB approved child care services, by selected service types ($/week) (2014‑15 dollars) |
| **Table 3A.40** | Median weekly cost of 50 hours of Australian Government CCB approved long day care services, by remoteness area (2014‑15 dollars) |
| **Table 3A.41** | Median hourly cost of a preschool program (after subsidies) per child enrolled aged 4 and 5 years, by sector ($/hour) (2014­15 dollars) |
| **Table 3A.42** | Median hourly cost of a preschool program (after subsidies) per child enrolled aged 4 and 5 years, by remoteness area ($/hour) (2014­15 dollars) |
| **Table 3A.43** | Hourly cost of a preschool program after subsidies per child enrolled aged 4 and 5 years, by cost range |
| **Table 3A.44** | Staff employed by Australian Government CCB approved child care services |
| **Table 3A.45** | Paid primary contact staff employed by Australian Government CCB approved child care services, by qualification |
| **Table 3A.46** | Qualified paid primary contact staff employed by Australian Government CCB approved child care services, by level of qualification, by field of study, 2013 |
| **Table 3A.47** | Paid primary contact staff in Australian Government CCB approved child care services who undertook relevant in‑service training in previous 12 months |
| **Table 3A.48** | Primary contact staff in Australian Government CCB approved child care services, by tenure in the ECEC sector, 2013 |
| **Table 3A.49** | Staff employed by State and Territory government funded ECEC services |
| **Table 3A.50** | Paid staff employed by State and Territory government funded ECEC services, by qualification, by experience |
| **Table 3A.51** | Workers delivering preschool programs, by level of qualification, by field of early childhood qualification, 2014 |
| **Table 3A.52** | Teachers delivering preschool programs, by level of qualification, by field of early childhood qualification, 2014 |
| **Table 3A.53** | National Quality Framework (NQF) approved services, by service type, by quality rating, 30 June 2015 |
| **Table 3A.54** | NQF approved services with a quality rating, by rating level Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice, 30 June 2015 |
| **Table 3A.55** | NQF approved services with a quality rating, by rating level Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety, 30 June 2015 |
| **Table 3A.56** | NQF approved services with a quality rating, by rating level Quality Area 3: Physical environment, 30 June 2015 |
| **Table 3A.57** | NQF approved services with a quality rating, by rating level Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements, 30 June 2015 |
| **Table 3A.58** | NQF approved services with a quality rating, by rating level Quality Area 5: Relationships with children, 30 June 2015 |
| **Table 3A.59** | NQF approved services with a quality rating, by rating level Quality Area 6: Partnerships with families and communities, 30 June 2015 |
| **Table 3A.60** | NQF approved services with a quality rating, by rating level Quality Area 7: Leadership and service management, 30 June 2015 |
| **Table 3A.61** | Substantiated breaches arising from complaints about NQF approved ECEC services, by service type, 2014‑15 |
| **Table 3A.62** | Substantiated breaches arising from complaints about State and Territory government licensed or registered ECEC services, by service type, 2014‑15 |
| **Table 3A.63** | Hospital separations for external cause of injuries, persons aged 0–4 years, all hospitals, by place of occurrence |
| **Table 3A.64** | Australian Government real recurrent expenditure on child care services per child aged 0–12 years ($/child) (2014­15 dollars) |
| **Table 3A.65** | State and Territory government real recurrent expenditure on ECEC per child aged 0–12 years ($/child) (2014‑15 dollars) |
| **Table 3A.66** | Total government real recurrent expenditure on ECEC per child aged 0–12 years ($/child) (2014‑15 dollars) |
| **Table 3A.67** | Australian Government recurrent expenditure per child aged 0–12 years attending CCB approved child care services ($/child) (2014‑15 dollars) |
| **Table 3A.68** | Children for whom additional formal child care was currently required for mainly work‑related reasons |
| **Table 3A.69** | Persons aged 15 years and over not in the labour force due to caring for children, by main reason not working due to caring for children, 2014 |
| **Table 3A.70** | Children aged 0–5 and 0–12 years by whether additional formal child care or preschool was currently required, by current use |
| **Table 3A.71** | Main reason additional formal child care or preschool was currently required, availability and whether would use it if it became available |
| **Table 3A.72** | Out‑of‑pocket costs of child care for families with one child in 50 hours long day care, as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family income, 2015 (per cent) |
| **Table 3A.73** | Out‑of‑pocket costs of child care for families with one child in 50 hours family day care, as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family income, 2015 (per cent) |
| **Table 3A.74** | Out‑of‑pocket costs of child care for families with one child in 30 hours long day care, as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family income, 2015 (per cent) |
| **Table 3A.75** | Out‑of‑pocket costs of child care for families with one child in 30 hours family day care, as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family income, 2015 (per cent) |
| **Table 3A.76** | Children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains of the AEDC, by ECEC experience, 2012 |
| **Table 3A.77** | General Government Final Consumption Expenditure, chain price index |

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