B Child care, education and training sector overview

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| Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this Indigenous Compendium by an ‘A’ prefix (for example, in this sector overview, table BA.1). As the data are directly sourced from the 2014 Report, the Compendium also notes where the original table, figure or text in the 2014 Report can be found. For example, where the Compendium refers to ‘2014 Report, p. B.1’, this is page 1 of the Child care, education and training sector overview of the 2014 Report, and ‘2014 Report,  table BA.1’ is table 1 of attachment BA of the 2014 Report. A list of attachment tables referred to in the Compendium is provided at the end of this chapter, and the full attachment tables are available from the Review website at www.pc.gov.au/gsp. |
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The Child care, education and training (CCET) sector overview in the *Report on Government Services 2014* (2014 Report) provides contextual and cross-sector information relating to child care, education and training services in Australia. Data are reported for Indigenous Australians for a subset of the performance indicators reported in that sector overview — those data are compiled and presented here.

This sector overview provides an introduction to the Child care, education and training (CCET) chapters of this Report: Early childhood education and care (chapter 3), School education (chapter 4) and Vocational education and training (chapter 5). It provides an overview of the CCET sector, presenting both contextual information and high level performance information.

Major improvements in reporting in the CCET sector this year are identified in each of the service-specific CCET chapters.

### Indigenous data in the Child care, education and training sector overview

The CCET sector overview in the 2014 Report contains the following information on Indigenous Australians:

1. children developmentally on track on the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI)
2. participation in higher education, 2012
3. full time participation in employment, education or training, 2011
4. completion of year 12 or equivalent, or certificate level II or above, 2011
5. population of 20–64 year old population who have qualifications at or above certificate III, 2011
6. proportion of 20–64 year old population with or working towards post school qualification in certificate III, IV, diploma and advanced diploma 2011.

### Policy context

The Australian, State and Territory governments are working cooperatively to undertake national reforms in the child care, education and training sector. In 2008, the importance of early childhood development and education and training was formally acknowledged when Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to a range of aspirations for the sector. To achieve agreed COAG aspirations, governments have endorsed a number of major funding agreements and initiatives. The broadest of these COAG initiatives are outlined in box B.1, with additional detail in the service specific chapters. There are also a range of State and Territory based policy initiatives across the Child care, education and training sector that support these broader COAG initiatives.

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| Box B.1 COAG initiatives in the CCET sector |
| * The *National Early Childhood Development Strategy* aims to improve outcomes for all children and their families, and includes the following initiatives: * the *National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education* which aims to achieve universal access to quality early childhood education for all children in the year before full time school by June 2013 * a new *National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education* for the period July 2013 to December 2014 to support universal access to and improved participation by children in quality early childhood education in the year before full time schooling, with a focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged children * the *National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development* * the *National Quality Framework* (NQF) which incorporates a new *National Quality Standard* to ensure high quality and consistent care across Australia. The NQF will be implemented via the *National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care* * workforce initiatives for the early childhood education and care workforce. * The *National Education Agreement* (NEA) covers school education, consisting of objectives and outcomes for all schools and school systems, including the roles and responsibilities of the Australian and State and Territory governments and a framework for performance reporting. * The *National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development* (NASWD) sets out the commitment between the Australian government and the State and Territory governments to work towards increasing the skill levels of all Australians. * The *National Indigenous Reform Agreement* (NIRA) provides an integrated framework for closing the gap in Indigenous disadvantage, based on the seven building blocks of early childhood schooling, health, economic participation, healthy homes, safe communities, and governance and leadership. * The Australian Government and State and Territory governments have also agreed to a number of National Partnerships and other agreements related to education and training, including: * The *Smarter Schools National Partnership* which incorporates: the *National Partnership on Literacy and Numeracy*; the *National Partnership on Low Socio‑Economic Status School Communities;* and the *National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality* |
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| Box B.1 (continued) |
| * The National Partnership Agreement on the Nation Building and Jobs Plan: Building Prosperity for the Future and Supporting Jobs Now, which facilitates payments by the Australian Government for the Building the Education Revolution * The Digital Education Revolution * The Trade Training Centres in Schools Program * The National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions * The National Partnership Agreement for Productivity Places Program   Further information on COAG National Agreements and National Partnerships is available at www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au. |
| *Source:* COAG (2009) |
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*Factors affecting engagement in the CCET sector*

A key challenge across the CCET sector is to address the achievement and attainment gaps of the lowest performing students. A range of factors are associated with performance inequality, including socioeconomic disadvantage, geography and Indigenous status.

Research by Jackiewicz et al. (2011) regarding access of Indigenous families to government-approved childcare services in Australia identifies the following key barriers to engagement with childcare services: lack of available childcare places (including the availability of what families consider to be culturally appropriate services), lack of transport to childcare services, affordability of childcare (including uncertainty about government subsidies), and at times, limited understanding of the potential benefits of childcare for development in the early years and childcare’s role in providing support to families.

Indigenous Australians overall have a lower level of participation in education and training than non-Indigenous Australians. In addition to facing issues affecting the broader population, Indigenous-specific reasons for non‑attendance in school education have been proposed. These Indigenous-specific issues relate to a lack of recognition by schools of Indigenous culture and history, failure to engage fully with parents and carers of Indigenous children and the Indigenous community, and ongoing disadvantage in many areas of the daily lives of Indigenous Australians (AIHW 2010).

The Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey conducted in 2001 and 2006 found that, when the period of compulsory education ends, the proportion of Indigenous children who no longer attend school is substantially higher than that for non-Indigenous children. Of those Indigenous children who left school soon after the period of compulsory education, one-third were neither working nor undertaking any form of education (SCRGSP 2009).

**Service-sector objectives**

Australia’s CCET sector has a range of objectives, some of which are common across all sector components, while others are more specific to a particular sub‑sector. Specific objectives of early childhood education and care, school education, VET and higher education service areas are detailed in box B.2.

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| Box B.2 Objectives of the Child care, education and training sector |
| The objectives for early childhood education and care (2014 Report, box 3.2) are 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.   The objectives of school education services (2014 Report, box 4.1), as reflected in the national goals for schooling agreed by education Ministers in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (and consistent with the *National Education Agreement*) are that (1) Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence and (2) All young Australians become: successful learners; confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens.  The objectives of VET services (2014 Report, box 5.3), as reflected in the *National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development* are to ensure all working age Australians have the opportunity to develop the skills and qualifications needed, including through a responsive training system, to enable them to be effective participants in and contributors to the modern labour market. VET services aim to assist individuals to overcome barriers to education, training and employment, and to be motivated to acquire and utilise new skills. VET also aims to ensure Australian industry and businesses develop, harness and utilise the skills and abilities of the workforce, and to provide opportunities for Indigenous Australians to acquire skills to access viable employment.  The objectives of higher education services, as reflected in the *Commonwealth Higher Education Support Act 2003*, include contributing to the development of cultural and intellectual life in Australia, and appropriately meeting Australia’s social and economic needs for a highly educated and skilled population. |
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### Sector performance indicator framework

This sector overview is based on a sector performance indicator framework   
(figure B.1). This framework is made up of the following elements.

* Sector objectives — three sector objectives are a précis of the key commitments agreed to by COAG, including the *National Partnership on Early Childhood Education*, the *National Education Agreement* and the *National Agreement on Skills and Workforce Development*. Although these goals are based on outcomes in these commitments, wording has been amended for relevance to the CCET sector overview reporting (figure B.1).
* Sector-wide indicators — three sector-wide headline indicators reflect activity across the sector. Several measures support each indicator.
* Information from the service-specific performance indicator frameworks that relate to Child care, education and training services. Discussed in more detail in chapters 3, 4 and 5, the service-specific frameworks provide comprehensive information on the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of these services.

This sector overview provides an overview of relevant performance information. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 and their associated attachment tables provide more detailed information.

COAG has agreed six National Agreements to enhance accountability to the public for the outcomes achieved or outputs delivered by a range of government services (see chapter 1 for more detail on reforms to federal financial relations).

The NEA and the NASWD cover the areas of education and skill development and indicators in the National Indigenous Reform Agreement establish specific outcomes for reducing the level of disadvantage experienced by Indigenous Australians. These agreements include sets of performance indicators, for which the Steering Committee collates performance information for analysis by the COAG Reform Council (CRC). Performance indicators reported in this sector overview are aligned with education and training performance indicators in the NEA and the NASWD. The NEA, including its performance framework, was reviewed in 2012 resulting in changes that have been reflected in this Report, as relevant. Iterative updates were also made to the NASWD, and they are reflected in this Report, as relevant.

Figure B.1 Child care, education and training sector performance indicator framework

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| Figure B.1 Child care, education and training sector performance indicator framework  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |

*Source*: 2014 Report, figure B.5, p. B.22.

### Sector-wide indicators

This section includes high level indicators of CCET outcomes. Many factors are likely to influence outcomes — not solely the performance of government services. However, these outcomes inform the development of appropriate policies and delivery of government services.

*School readiness*

‘School readiness’ is an indicator of governments’ broad objectives that all children have access to the support, care and education throughout early childhood that equips them for life and learning, delivered in a way that actively engages parents, and meets the workforce participation needs of parents (box B.3).

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| Box B.3 **School readiness** |
| School readiness includes two measures:   * Transition to primary school, defined as the proportion of children developmentally on track on four or more domains of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI). * Early learning (home based), a proxy measure, defined as the number of days per week that a parent/guardian told stories, read to a child or listened to a child read for children aged 3–8 years.   School readiness refers to the level of development at which a child can fulfil schooling requirements, and can be described in terms of a range of factors including a child’s emotional and social competence, language and cognitive skills, and resilience.  Even if the child appears to be ready for primary school, the actual transition to school represents a major change in the child’s life. Children displaying higher levels of development are more likely to make a successful transition to primary school and have higher levels of achievement compared with those who have difficulty making this transition (AIHW 2011; NSW DoCS 2003).  Transition to primary school  Transition to primary school is one measure of school readiness. This measure reports the proportion of children developmentally ‘on track’ on four or more (of five) AEDI domains. Children who are considered developmentally on track possess adequate language and cognitive skills — those who have results above the 25th percentile. |
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| Box B.3 **(continued)** |
| The five AEDI domains include: language and cognitive skills; physical health and well‑being; social competence; emotional maturity and communication skills and general knowledge. These domains are all inter‑related aspects of school readiness (see box 3.28 in the Early childhood education and care chapter for more information on the AEDI). Further information on AEDI results are available at the website www.aedi.org.au.  Early learning  A supportive home learning environment through shared learning activities between the parent/carer and the young child, including reading to children on a regular basis, is a key requirement to assist young children to reach cognitive development milestones. Home literacy activities have been found to improve children’s reading, vocabulary, general information and letter recognition skills when entering school. Parent/carer education levels may also influence a supportive home learning environment  (AIHW 2011; McTurk et al. 2011).  Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time and across jurisdictions * complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. All required data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2014. |
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*Transition to primary school*

Nationally in 2012, 69.1 per cent of children were developmentally on track on four or more domains of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) as they entered school, compared with 67.4 per cent in 2009 (table BA.7). In 2012, the proportion of Indigenous and non-Indigenous children who were developmentally on track on four or more domains of the AEDI was 47.7 per cent and 70.3 per cent respectively. These proportions vary across jurisdictions (figure B.2). In 2009, the proportion of Indigenous and non-Indigenous children who were developmentally on track on four or more domains of the AEDI was 42.5 per cent and 68.6 per cent respectively (table BA.7). Table BA.7 includes proportions of students who were on track in one or more, two or more, three or more, and all five domains for 2012 and 2009.

Figure B.2 Proportion of children developmentally on track on four or more domains of the Australian Early Development Index as they enter school, 2012**a, b, c**

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a Data are reported from a population measure of young children’s development based on a teacher‑completed checklist. b Children who score above the 25th percentile (in the top 75 per cent) of the AEDI population are classified as developmentally ‘on track’. AEDI cut-offs have been set for each domain. The cut-offs have been created on the basis of all children who participated in the AEDI nationally. c The AEDI also reports against five domains: language and cognitive skills; physical health and well‑being; social competence; emotional maturity and communication skills; and general knowledge which are all inter-related aspects of school readiness.

*Source*: Centre for Community Child Health and Telethon Institute for Child Health Research A Snaphot of Early Childhood Development in Australia — AEDI National Report 2012 (2013), Canberra; DEEWR (unpublished) *Australian Early Development Index*; table BA.7; 2014 Report, figure B.6, p. B.25.

#### Participation

‘Participation’ is an indicator of governments’ objectives to develop the talents and competencies of the population through the education and training system, to enable them to have the learning and skills required to participate in the productive economy (box B.4).

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| Box B.4 **Participation** |
| There are five measures against the participation indicator.   * Participation in education and training by sector’ (school education, TAFE, Higher education, other education and training), defined as the proportion of the population aged 15-24 years participating in education and training by sector. * ‘School leaver participation in full time post school education and training’, defined as the proportion of 17-24 year old school leavers participating in full time post school education and training. * ‘School leaver destination by sector’, defined as the proportion of school leavers who have left school by destination (Higher education, TAFE or other study, not enrolled). * ‘Participation in higher education by selected groups’, defined as the proportion of the population participating in higher education by selected disadvantaged groups. * ‘Full time participation in employment, education or training by Indigenous status’, defined as the proportion of the population participating in full time employment, education or training.   Holding other factors constant, higher or increasing participation in the early childhood, education, training and higher education sector suggests an improvement in educational outcomes through greater access.  The level of participation in education and training varies across jurisdictions for many reasons. These include different age/grade structures, starting ages at school, minimum leaving age and the level of service provision. In addition, there are influences beyond the direct control of governments, such as labour market changes, population movements, urbanisation and socioeconomic status.  The level of participation in education, training or work can indicate the proportion of the population at risk of marginal participation (or non-participation) in the labour market. Young people who are not participating full time in education, training, work or some combination of these activities are more likely to have difficulty making a transition to full time employment by their mid 20s (ACER 2005, FYA 2008).   * comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time and across jurisdictions * complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. All required data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2014. |
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*Participation in higher education by selected groups*

In higher education, there is an under-representation of people from regional areas of Australia, people with disability, people from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and Indigenous Australians, compared with their representation in the community (figure B.3).

Figure B.3 Participation in higher education by selected groups, compared with their representation in the community, 2012**a, b, c**

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a Students can be included in more than one selected group. b Participation percentages are derived from Department of Industry (DoI) 2012 Higher Education Statistics. For derivation of ‘representation in the community’ data, see table BA.23. c Figure B.3 presents a broad pattern of participation. However, the proportion of people from selected groups in the community (which cover all ages), do not have the same age profile as people engaged in higher education study. Therefore, figure B.3 might overstate the disparity between the participation of people from selected groups in higher education and their representation in the community, among people of a similar age profile.

*Source*: DoI (Department of Industry) *2012 Statistics publications*; ABS 2009 *Survey of Disability and Carers.* Cat. no 4430.0; ABS 2013, *Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2011-12*, Cat. no. 3218.0; ABS 2013, *Australian Demographic Statistics, March 2013,* Cat. no. 3101.0; table 2A.15, table BA.23 and 2014 Report, table 2A.12; 2014 Report, figure B.10, p. B.31.

##### Full time participation in employment, education or training (by Indigenous status)

Full time participation in employment, education or training (school education, vocational training and higher education) for age groups 15–19; 20–24; 25–29;   
and 15–64 years are presented in 2014 Report, figure B.11.

Nationally in 2011, non‑Indigenous 17–24 year olds had higher rates of engagement in full time employment, education or training (74.0 per cent) than Indigenous   
17–24 year olds (39.4 per cent) (figure B.4).

Figure B.4 Proportion of 17–24 year olds engaged in full time employment, education or training, by Indigenous status, 2011**a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i**

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a People who were identified as studying at a school institution are excluded from the calculation (numerator and denominator). b The Census does not collect level of current study, but does collect institution attended, therefore, all people identified as studying (excluding those studying at a school institution) are included in the calculations for this indicator. This may include some people in non-formal education or school level education. c People whose labour force status was not stated and who were not identified as studying full time are excluded. People whose student status was not stated and who were not identified as employed full time are also excluded. d People whose labour force status could not be determined between full time or part time employed and who were not identified as studying are excluded. People who had stated attending an educational institution (but whose student status was not stated) and who were identified as not employed are excluded. e People who did not state their labour force status and did not state their student status are excluded. f Australia includes ‘Other territories’. g Excludes people who did not state their Indigenous status. h People who were engaged in a combination of education or training and employment but whose full time/part time student status or their full time/part time employment status was not identified are included in ‘Total Fully Engaged’. i While there are no sampling data quality issues associated with Census data (for example, confidence intervals), there are other forms of non-sampling data quality issues such as undercounting that need to be taken into account when interpreting data.

*Source*: ABS (unpublished) *2011 Census of Population and Housing*; table BA.26; 2014 Report, figure B.13,   
p. B.34.

#### Attainment

‘Attainment’ is an indicator of governments’ objective for people to possess adequate skills to enable them to contribute to society and the economy (box B.5).

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| Box B.5 Attainment |
| Attainment is defined by five measures:   * ‘Level of highest qualification completed’, defined as the level of highest qualification completed of the working age population. * ‘Completion of year 12 or equivalent, or certificate level II or above’, defined as the proportion of population completing year 12 or equivalent, or certificate II or above (by Indigenous status). * ‘Completion of year 12 or equivalent, or certificate III or above’, defined as the proportion of population completing year 12 or equivalent, or certificate level III or above. * ‘Population who have qualifications at certificate level III or above’, defined as the proportion of 20-64 year olds who have qualifications at or above certificate III. This measure is also reported by Indigenous status. * ‘Achievement of foundation skills (literacy and numeracy)’ defined as the proportion of adults achieving literacy, numeracy and technology competencies according to the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies.   An important objective of the education system is to add to the skill base of the population, with the benefits of improving employment, worker productivity and economic growth.  Educational attainment is used as a proxy indicator for the stock of skills. Holding other factors constant, a higher or increasing attainment level indicates an improvement in educational outcomes.  However, attainment should be interpreted with caution. It understates the skill base because it does not capture skills acquired through partially completed courses, courses not leading to a formal qualification, or informal learning (including training and experience gained at work). Industry endorsed skill sets are also an important consideration for industry in course design. Skill sets recognise part qualifications and groups of competencies, but data on skill sets are not available for this Report.  Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time and across jurisdictions * complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. All required data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2014. |
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##### Completion of year 12 or equivalent, or Certificate level II or above

Nationally in 2011, 86.0 per cent of non‑Indigenous 20–24 year olds had completed year 12 or equivalent, or gained a qualification at Certificate II or above, compared with 53.9 per cent of Indigenous 20–24 year olds (figure B.5).

Figure B.5 Proportion of 20–24 year olds who have completed year 12 or equivalent, or gained a qualification at Certificate level II or above, by Indigenous status, 2011**a, b, c, d, e, f**

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a Certificate II level or above includes ‘Certificate I or II nfd’, but excludes ‘Certificate nfd’. b People who did not state if they had a non-school qualification (or whose level of education was inadequately described) and did not have year 12, are excluded from the calculation (numerator and denominator). People who did not state their highest year of school and did not have a qualification at Certificate II level of above, are also excluded. c People who are not stated or inadequately described for both highest year of school and non‑school qualification are excluded. d Excludes people who did not state their Indigenous status. e Australia includes ‘Other Territories’. f While there are no sampling data quality issues associated with Census data (for example, confidence intervals), there are other forms of non-sampling data quality issues such as undercounting that need to be taken into account when interpreting data.

*Source*: ABS (unpublished) *2011 Census of Population and Housing*; table BA.34; 2014 Report, figure B.17,   
p. B.39.

The proportion of the population who have completed year 12 or equivalent, or gained a qualification at Certificate level II or above are presented for 20–24 year olds, by Indigenous status, in table BA.34.

##### Population with qualifications at or above Certificate III (by Indigenous status)

Nationally, in 2011, 29.6 per cent of Indigenous 20–64 year olds had qualifications at or above a Certificate III, compared with 54.8 per cent of non-Indigenous   
20–64 year olds (figure B.6).

Figure B.6 Proportion of 20–64 year olds with qualifications at or above Certificate III, by Indigenous status, 2011**a, b, c, d, e, f**

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a Working age population is defined as people aged 20-64 years. b People whose level of non-school qualification was recorded as Certificate nfd or inadequately described are assumed to have attained below Certificate level III and are therefore excluded from the numerator, but included in the denominator for this indicator. c Not stated responses are excluded from the calculations (numerator and denominator). d Australia includes ‘Other Territories’. e Excludes people who did not state their Indigenous status. f While there are no sampling data quality issues associated with Census data (for example, confidence intervals), there are other forms of non-sampling data quality issues such as undercounting that need to be taken into account when interpreting data.

*Source*: ABS (unpublished) *2011 Census of Population and Housing;* ABS (unpublished) *2006 Census of Population and Housing*; table BA.41; 2014 Report, figure B.22, p. B.44.

The proportions of the population with or working towards a post school qualification are presented by Indigenous status in table BA.45. Nationally in 2011, 40.8 per cent of Indigenous 20–64 year olds had, or were working towards a Certificate III, IV, Diploma or Advance Diploma, compared to 64.6 per cent of non‑Indigenous 20-64 year olds.

### Service-specific performance indicator frameworks

Indigenous reporting on service-specific performance indicator frameworks for early childhood education and care (chapter 3), school education (chapter 4) and vocational education and training (chapter 5) are in the subsequent chapters of this Compendium.

### List of attachment tables

Attachment tables for data within this sector overview are contained in the attachment to the Compendium. These tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by a ‘BA’ prefix (for example, table BA.1 is table 1 in the Early childhood, education and training sector overview attachment). Attachment tables are on the Review website (www.pc.gov.au/gsp).

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| **Table BA.7** | Children developmentally on track on AEDI, 2012 and 2009 |
| **Table BA.23** | Higher education participation by selected groups (per cent) |
| **Table BA.26** | Full time participation in employment, education or training, by Indigenous status (17-24 year olds) (per cent) |
| **Table BA.34** | People aged 20-24 years who have completed year 12 or equivalent or gained a qualification at certificate level II or above, by Indigenous status (per cent) |
| **Table BA.41** | Proportion of 20–64 year old population who have qualifications at or above certificate III, by Indigenous status (per cent) |
| **Table BA.45** | Proportion of 20–64 year old population with or working towards post school qualification in certificate III, IV, diploma and advanced diploma, by Indigenous status (per cent) |

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