
6 The family day care workforce

Key points

- Family day care (FDC) educators provide education and care for children in the educators' own homes. They operate within FDC schemes overseen by coordination units, which are usually managed by a community or government organisation.
 - Nationally there are about 12 000 FDC educators and 1500 FDC coordination unit employees.
- The number of places available in FDC has declined in real terms and relative to long day care in recent years.
- Demand for FDC educators and coordinators is not expected to increase as a result of the National Quality Standard (NQS). However, as jurisdictional FDC regulations vary, the effect of the NQS will also vary.
 - Increased staff-to-child ratios for children under school age in some jurisdictions have the potential to lead to fee increases and might reduce demand for coordinators. Potentially, the viability of the most marginal FDC schemes in jurisdictions where ratios will need to increase may be threatened.
 - There is likely to be a large reduction in the regulatory burden for FDC educators in Western Australia, with smaller reductions in other jurisdictions. This is largely because FDC approval to operate and subsequent assessment and rating against the NQS will occur at the scheme level.
- Commission modelling indicates that the early childhood education and care reforms agreed by COAG could result in small reductions in the FDC workforce, reflecting higher unit costs and a reduction in demand for FDC in response to modest fee increases.
- The availability of flexible, relevant and affordable training options will be important in maintaining worker supply, particularly in rural and remote locations.
- Some pedagogical leadership by teachers employed in FDC coordination units is desirable for the delivery of the Early Years Learning Framework and the Framework for School-Age Care where children above school age attend the FDC service.

6.1 Provision of family day care

Family day care (FDC) services provide education and care for children in the homes of FDC educators. The FDC workforce is made up of educators and coordinators; educators account for a large majority of the total FDC workforce (table 6.1). FDC educators are usually private contractors, and provide education and care largely aimed at children from birth to five years of age. Primary school children may also attend FDC before and after school, or during school holiday periods.

Table 6.1 The family day care workforce^a

	1999	2002	2004	2006	2010 ^b
FDC educators	12 700	13 245	12 864	11 926	12 060
FDC coordination unit staff ^c	1 600	1 729	1 786	1 753	1 515
FDC total	14 300	14 974	14 650	13 679	13 575

^a 2008 data are not available as a result of the Australian Government Census of Child Care Services (AGCCCS) finishing in 2006. ^b Estimate includes volunteer staff. ^c Coordination unit staff include service directors, coordinators, field workers and general administrative staff.

Sources: DEEWR (2008); Productivity Commission estimates based on unpublished data from the 2010 National ECEC Workforce Census.

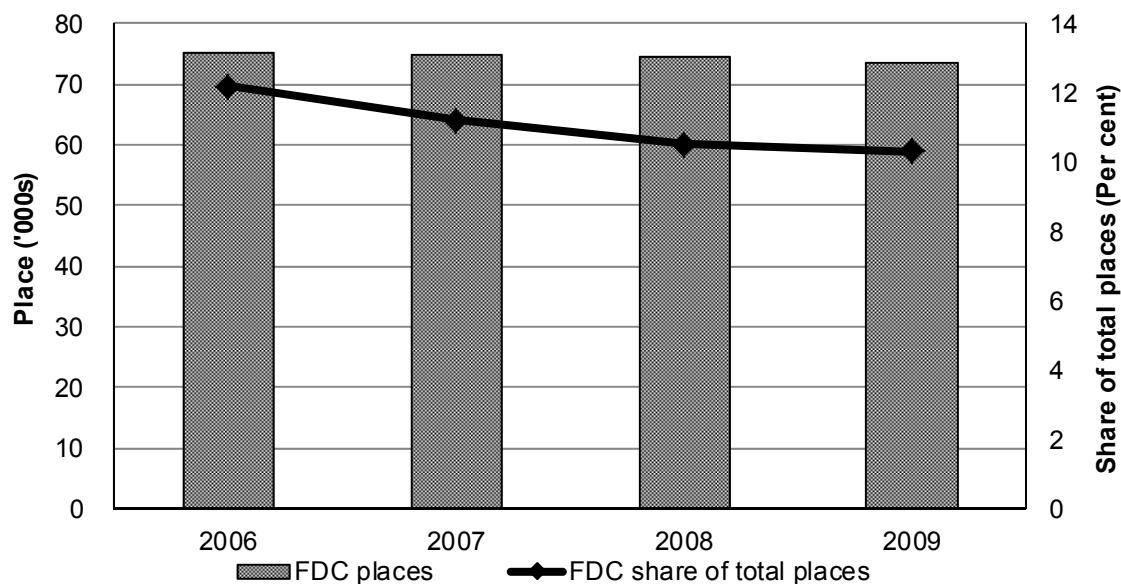
FDC educators operate within FDC service networks, also known as schemes. These schemes are usually managed by community-based organisations, local government, charities or for-profit organisations (Community Child Care Co-operative, sub. 53). In South Australia, the Department for Education and Child Development is the sole sponsor for all FDC schemes (COAG 2009h).

FDC schemes are managed by coordination units. Their role includes organising and supporting FDC educators within their scheme (AIHW 2009a), administering the child care benefit and child care rebate fee subsidies, and monitoring the progress of children in FDC (FDCA nda).

Coordination unit staff include service directors, coordinators, assistant coordinators (field workers) and administrative staff. Service directors provide management, leadership and governance to service staff. Directors and coordinators also provide pedagogical leadership to FDC educators (section 6.4).

The number of FDC places has fallen slightly in recent years. Between 2006 and 2009, the number of FDC places declined by about 2 per cent, with a similar decline in FDC as a share of total places (figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1 **Places provided by Australian Government approved family day care schemes, 2006–09^{a, b}**



^a Since the uncapping of approved places in 2006, services are not required to report their approved places to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. Approved places information is not available for all services, and where it is available, services are free to offer care above or below their previously approved figure, up to the limit of their licence. Accordingly, places should be considered indicative of service capacity. ^b FDC includes in-home care places.

Source: SCRGSP (2011a).

Role of family day care

Despite its relative decline, FDC remains an important part of the early childhood education and care (ECEC) landscape and is likely to continue to be so for the foreseeable future. According to the Municipal Association of Victoria, '[f]amily day care continues to meet a range of social outcomes that are important to Australian society' (sub. DR156, p. 6).

FDC operates as both a substitute for long day care (LDC) and a complement to preschool. In 2010, 46 per cent of FDC schemes provided a 'wrap-around' service for preschool, with children attending preschool offsite during booked hours (DEEWR ndf).

Some parents might have a preference for FDC for their child, even when other care options are available. Family Day Care Australia (FDCA), the national representative body for FDC, considered that parents might prefer FDC for their child because of the consistency of having one educator, a small group setting, family environment and flexible delivery options (sub. 61).

In some jurisdictions, FDC can also be a more affordable option for families. When measured as a proportion of weekly disposable income net of subsidies, FDC is a cheaper option than LDC for families in New South Wales, Victoria and the ACT, but is more expensive in other jurisdictions (SCRGSP 2011a).

As part of the range of flexible delivery options available in FDC, some schemes may offer overnight and weekend services. A small number of FDC schemes may also provide emergency foster care services. Schemes usually develop specific policies and procedures for overnight and foster care services to guide the actions of educators in these circumstances.

About a quarter of FDC educators are from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds (DECS 2010). The Government of South Australia noted that FDC is:

... a way for individuals (mainly women) to become economically independent and can be a valuable pathway for women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds. (sub. 66, p. 7)

Family day care in rural and remote locations

In some locations, FDC might be a more practical and efficient service than LDC. For instance, in certain locations it might be difficult, either because of low population density or fluctuating demand, to make an LDC centre cost effective due to its larger overheads.

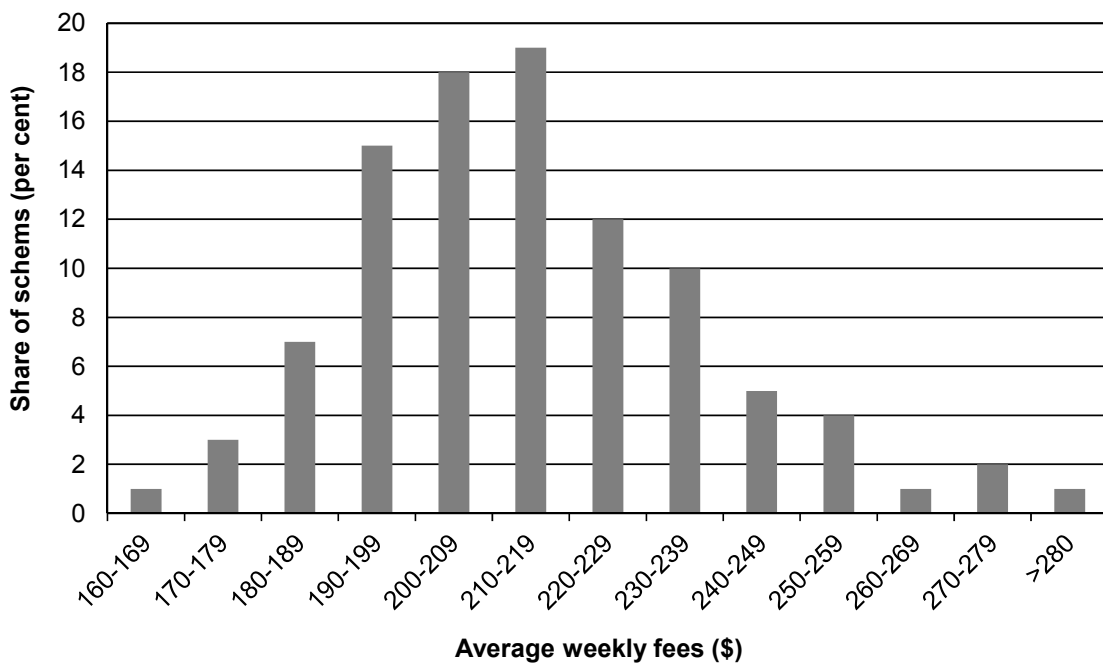
FDC is more prevalent in rural and remote locations. In the major cities of Australia, about 5 per cent of children in formal ECEC attend FDC, but in inner regional, outer regional and remote areas this proportion increases to over 18 per cent (ABS 2009c). FDCA suggested that the relative popularity of FDC in rural and remote areas is due to greater flexibility of care delivery and wider geographical dispersion of FDC services (sub. 61). (See chapter 9 for further discussion of the ECEC workforce in rural and remote areas.)

Regulatory changes introduced by the National Quality Standard (NQS) might further support the feasibility of FDC in remote locations. Under the NQS, a qualified early childhood teacher is required in all LDC services, whereas there is no requirement for the involvement of teachers in the delivery of FDC. This will support the operation of FDC schemes in areas where qualified early childhood teachers are difficult to recruit.

Family day care fees and family day care educator income

In most cases, the fees charged for FDC are directly linked to FDC educator income. With the exception of a small number of FDC educators in Victoria and the ACT who are employed by their scheme and paid a wage, most FDC educators are private contractors (FDCA ndb). As a result, fees for FDC are usually set by the individual educators and might vary according to location, the worker's qualifications, the hours of care and the age of the child (Care for Kids 2011) (figure 6.2). Competitive fee pressure from other FDC educators and LDCs is also likely to influence the fee set by any individual provider.

Figure 6.2 **Average weekly fees of family day care schemes, 2006^a**



^a Average weekly fees are calculated on the basis of 50 hours of care in the census week and include an administration levy where charged.

Source: DEEWR (2008).

Family day care coordination unit wages

Staff in FDC coordination units, including service directors, coordinators and assistant coordinators, are employed by the scheme operators, which are often community or government organisations. The primary award for coordination unit staff is the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award

2010.¹ This award sets the minimum wage for most staff employed by FDC schemes, as it applies in all cases where the primary function of the employer is FDC coordination (table 6.2). The classifications of FDC service director and coordinator also appear in the Children’s Services Award 2010, with coverage dependent on the function of the employer (AIRC 2009).

Table 6.2 Modern award minimum wages for family day care coordinators

	<i>Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010</i>	<i>Children’s Services Award 2010</i>
	\$/hour	\$/hour
Assistant coordinator (field worker)	21.50	..
Coordinator	24.16	22.24
Director	27.21	25.65 ^a

^a For a director of an FDC service of no more than 30 early childhood staff. Under the Children’s Services Award 2010, FDC service director minimum wages are set according to the number of educators in the service, with the directors of larger services receiving a higher minimum wage. .. Not applicable.

Sources: Children’s Services Award 2010; Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010.

The extent to which award wages are the prevailing wage in FDC coordination units is uncertain. Some FDC coordinators have expressed dissatisfaction with their wages:

I have worked in child care for the past 16 years. I have multiple qualifications and have attended myriad training, networking and continuous improvement opportunities. I manage a scheme of 54 carers, six staff and over 600 enrolled children, and attract an hourly wage of just \$24 per hour. I feel really disheartened that despite being passionate about quality child care and spending many hours training and supervising carers and families, I am still paid less than many occupations with much less responsibility. (FDCA 2009, p. 7)

In some cases, FDC coordinators employed in coordination units managed by local governments attract a higher wage than the modern award provides (FDCA 2009). This is because FDC coordinators working for local governments usually have their pay set by collectively negotiated agreements, like other local government employees. For instance, the Moreton Bay Regional Council Enterprise Bargaining Certified Agreement 2011 sets the minimum wage for an FDC coordinator position at \$29.89 per hour, nearly 20 per cent above the modern award FDC coordinator minimum wage.

¹ The Western Australian Government has chosen not to join the national workplace relations system, so sole traders, partnerships, other unincorporated entities and non-trading corporations in Western Australia remain in the state award system (FWA 2010).

6.2 Effect of the National Quality Standard on demand for family day care educators and coordinators

The NQS introduces new regulatory requirements for staff-to-child ratios in FDC and the qualifications of FDC staff. The effects of the new requirements will vary by jurisdiction.

In Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and the ACT, regulated ratios already comply with the NQS (table 6.3). However, in New South Wales, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory, there will be a reduction in the number of children below school age that an individual FDC educator can care for at any one time.

Table 6.3 Minimum staff-to-child ratios in family day care^a

	<i>Staff-to-child ratio</i>
National Quality Standard	1:7 (maximum of 4 below school age) by 1 January 2014
NSW	1:7 (maximum of 5 below six years of age)
Vic	1:7 (maximum of 4 below school age)
Qld	1:7 (maximum of 4 below school age)
SA	1:7 (maximum of 4 below school age)
WA	Maximum of 7 children who have not commenced a secondary school program; of whom not more than 5 are below school age
Tas	1:7 (maximum of 4 under five years of age, while an educator with a Certificate III in Children's Services can care for 5 children under five years of age)
NT	1:7 (maximum of 2 under three years of age) by March 2011
ACT	1:7 (maximum of 4 below school age)

^aJurisdictional ratios apply under current regulations. The new National Quality Standard staff-to-child ratios will apply in all jurisdictions from 1 January 2014.

Source: COAG (2009h).

The draft regulations for the NQS allow variations in staff-to-child ratios for individual FDC educators in rural and remote locations where no alternative ECEC services are available. They also allow for the employment of family day care assistants, who can work alongside educators or replace them in emergencies (ACECQA 2011).

In addition, the NQS requires that all FDC educators either have or are working towards a Certificate III in Children's Services, or another appropriate qualification, by 1 January 2014. Coordinators will be required to hold a Diploma of Children's Services, or equivalent. In Victoria, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, the NQS will institute qualification requirements for FDC staff for the first time. In

other jurisdictions, there are varying degrees of change in minimum qualification requirements for both educators and coordinators (table 6.4).

Table 6.4 Minimum qualification requirements in family day care^a

<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>FDC educator</i>	<i>FDC coordinator</i>
National Quality Standard	All FDC educators hold (or are working towards) a Certificate III in Children's Services by 1 January 2014	All coordinators have a Diploma of Children's Services by 1 January 2014.
NSW	Nil	Each FDC coordination unit must employ a qualified authorised supervisor holding either a certificate, diploma or degree in ECEC and with at least 12 months full-time experience
Vic	Nil	Nil
Qld	Nil	Diploma or other 2-year qualification in an ECEC relevant area of study
SA	New FDC educators must hold a Certificate III in Children's Services ^b	Nil
WA	Nil	Nil
Tas	Nil, but if an educator cares for more than 4 children under five years of age they must hold (or be working towards) a Certificate III in Children's Services	All coordinators must hold a minimum of a 2-year full-time or equivalent post-secondary qualification in ECEC
NT	Nil	Nil
ACT	Nil	One staff member with a diploma or degree-level ECEC qualification for every three coordinators in each FDC scheme

^a Jurisdictional qualification requirements apply under current regulations. The new National Quality Standard requirements will apply in all jurisdictions from 1 January 2014. ^b FDC educators approved prior to the introduction of this requirement in 2004 may still retain a Certificate II in Children's Services as the highest required level of qualification.

Source: COAG (2009h).

The changes to ratios and qualification requirements are likely to affect FDC fees. In some jurisdictions, the change in staff-to-child ratios will mean FDC educators can provide services to fewer children under school age. Some educators will no longer be allowed to care for all the children who are currently enrolled, if there are more than four children under school age. This is likely to lead to a decline in educators' incomes, which are directly linked to the number of children in care. Educators may raise fees for other children attending in order to maintain their income.

While cost increases in FDC, in isolation, would tend to reduce demand for services, any cost increases in FDC must be considered relative to cost increases in other ECEC services. For instance, in cases where families view FDC and LDC as substitute services, if LDC fees increase at a faster rate than those for FDC, demand

for FDC services and qualified FDC staff would be expected to increase. The Brotherhood of St Laurence stated that:

Implementing the quality reforms and minimum qualification requirements for all FDC staff is likely to increase the direct cost to families of accessing FDC. Nevertheless FDC is likely to continue to be a lower cost alternative [in Victoria] to long day care (LDC), which may result in more families using FDC as an alternative to LDC. (sub. DR182, p. 4)

Conversely, if the cost of FDC rises relative to LDC, this may lead to some families substituting LDC for FDC, reducing demand for FDC services and FDC educators and coordinators. This outcome is more likely to occur in those jurisdictions where there will be a reduction in the number of children below school age that an individual FDC educator can care for at any one time.

Demand for educators may rise where families have a strong preference for FDC due to its unique characteristics (FDCA, sub. 61). New educators may be required to enter the market to cater for families who will no longer be able to use their existing FDC provider, as a result of the changes in ratios for children under school age.

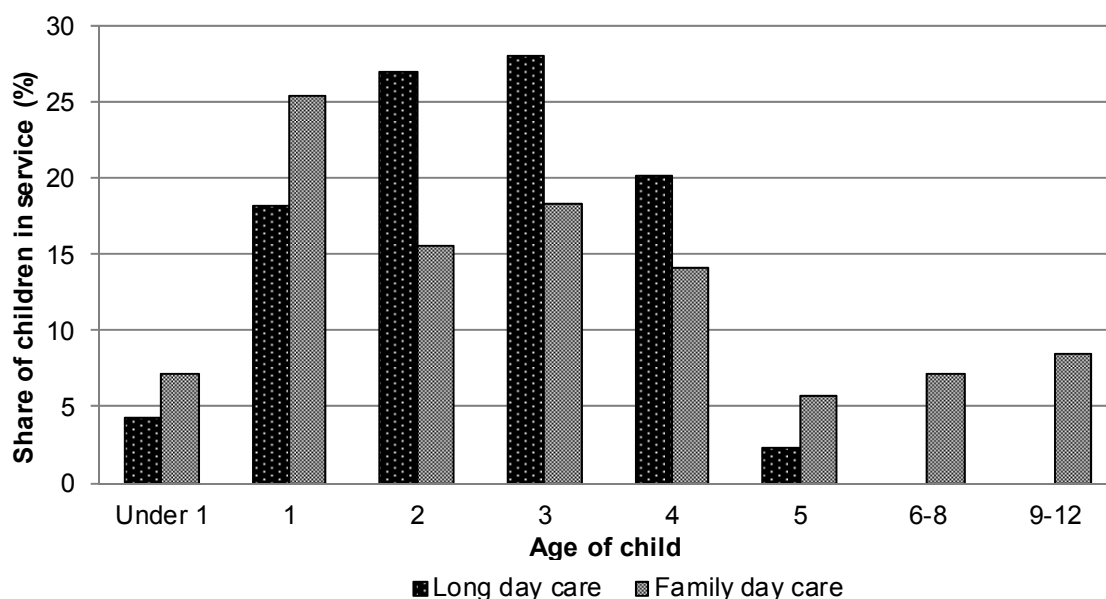
Modelling undertaken for the purposes of this study suggests that the ECEC reforms could result in a slightly smaller FDC workforce than would otherwise have been the case. This is due to the average per child out-of-pocket cost of FDC to parents being around 5 per cent higher than they would have been without the reforms. This compares favourably with LDC, where out-of-pocket expenses are expected to be more than 15 per cent higher than without the reforms. The number of children attending FDC is therefore likely to decline by a smaller margin compared with LDC attendance. More information on the model of the ECEC sector and detailed results for FDC can be found in appendix E.

Family day care educators: jurisdictional differences

In New South Wales, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory, FDC educator incomes will likely decline given the reduction in the number of children below school age that an individual educator can care for at any one time. Children below school age make up the majority of children in FDC (figure 6.3). The NSW Family Day Care Association stated that:

As FDC workers' incomes are directly linked to the number of children in their care, this reduction in the number of children [below school age] an individual FDC worker can care for will result in a reduction in their income. (sub. DR185, p. 4)

Figure 6.3 Early childhood education and care services usually attended, 2008



Source: ABS (2008b).

The NSW Family Day Care Association submitted that the effect of the NQS on the income of FDC educators in New South Wales should be moderated by allowing for an additional two to three years before they must comply with NQS staff-to-child ratios (sub. DR185).

FDCA suggests that the income reduction for FDC educators as a result of an increase in the staff-to-child ratio for children under school age from 1:5 to 1:4 might be as large as 20 per cent and might cause some educators to leave the workforce (FDCA 2010). However, this estimate assumes that all children in the service are below school age and that fees are not raised for the remaining children in the service to offset the income decline. Moreover, FDC services continue to be provided in jurisdictions that already meet the NQS ratios, where educator income will not be affected by the changes:

The COAG [ECEC] reforms bring national consistency based on regulatory arrangements currently operating successfully in four of the eight jurisdictions (Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and the ACT). (DEEWR, sub. DR301, p. 13)

To achieve the National Quality Standard, staff-to-child ratios for children under school age will increase in New South Wales, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory. These changes are likely to lead to cost increases for family day care services in those jurisdictions, which may result in fewer children attending.

Family day care coordinators: affects of lower revenue

A reduction in the number of children in FDC may also reduce coordination unit employment. Because coordination units are usually funded on a per-child basis through an administrative levy, reducing the number of children in FDC directly affects coordination unit income. This may in turn reduce the capacity of the coordination unit to achieve quality improvements in the scheme. FDCA noted that:

If the overall number of children attached to a scheme decreases, and if the overall number of carers decreases as a result of the [NQS policy] changes, then income from administrative levies also decreases. The reduction in funding could then mean a loss of positions in the coordination unit which has a flow [on effect] in terms of [coordination units] being able to build and support a quality culture within a scheme, as there are insufficient human resources. (2010, p. 6)

A decline in attendance will also lead to lower government funding for coordination units. FDC coordination units receive operational support payments from the Australian Government through the Community Support Program administered by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. These payments are calculated on the basis of the number of equivalent full-time (EFT) utilised places reported by FDC schemes. If the number of EFT utilised places declines because fewer children are attending a scheme or children are attending for a shorter period of time, operational support payments are adjusted to reflect the change.

Lower attendance may threaten the viability of smaller FDC schemes. If the number of EFT places in a service falls below ten, the government may cease providing operational support funding (DEEWR 2010c).

A reduction in coordination unit revenue will have implications for the effective implementation of the NQS. Coordination unit staff are required to implement new self-assessment and quality planning measures as part of the NQS (FDCA, sub. 61). Reducing coordination unit resources is likely to have a negative effect on their ability to do so.

The NQS requirement for FDC coordinators to be diploma qualified is likely to place additional cost pressures on some schemes. Early Childhood Australia (NSW

Branch) reported that, while overall their members were generally supportive of the NQS for FDC, some were concerned about the continuing viability of some FDC schemes (sub. DR190). As noted by the Brotherhood of St Laurence:

Due to the changes in the National Quality Standard the costs of coordinating and managing budgets of FDC schemes has become increasingly challenging. Higher staff-to-child ratios have meant more FDC educators are required to care for existing levels of children, which means that schemes have to support more FDC educators on the same budgets. Many council-based schemes are scaling down operation or closing completely due to the excessive running and administrative costs of FDC programs. (sub. DR182, p. 4)

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In the case of the most marginal family day care schemes, coordination unit revenue could potentially decline below the minimum threshold required for ongoing operation of the scheme, as fewer children are likely to attend family day care as a consequence of increased costs arising from the reforms.

Change in regulatory burden under the National Quality Standard

The NQS may reduce the regulatory burden faced by FDC educators. Under the new regulations, the approval to operate and the subsequent assessment and rating against the NQS will occur at the scheme level. Coordination units will be regulated to ensure their policies and procedures comply with the NQS while individual FDC educators will not be directly regulated. As part of the NQS regulatory process, a small number of FDC residences will be visited by regulators (DEEWR 2011o).

For the most part, FDC educators will not be required to interact directly with the regulator under the NQS (DEEWR 2011p). This represents a change from current practices in some jurisdictions, particularly Western Australia where FDC educators are currently licensed and regulated individually. The Council of Australian Governments (2009h) estimates that the NQS is likely to lead to regulatory cost savings for FDC educators across all jurisdictions by reducing the time regulators spend visiting FDC educators.

Regulatory waivers for family day care services under the National Quality Standard

NQS provisions allow for temporary and permanent service waivers for ECEC services that cannot fully comply with the NQS, including FDC services. The waivers allow services to continue operating while they are in breach of the NQS requirements. FDC schemes that are unable to ensure all FDC educators hold (or are

working towards) a Certificate III in Children’s Services, or all coordinators hold a Diploma of Children’s Services, can be issued a waiver. These waivers can be either a temporary waiver for 12 months, or a permanent service waiver that provides ongoing exemption from NQS requirements. Permanent and temporary service waivers as they will apply to ECEC services under the NQS are discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

6.3 Effect of the National Quality Standard on the supply of family day care educators and coordinators

While demand for FDC educators and coordinators is not expected to significantly change as a result of the NQS, the number of existing educators and coordinators who must upgrade their qualifications to meet NQS requirements is substantial. In 2010, about 40 per cent of FDC educators held no qualifications in an ECEC-related field, while a further 3 per cent were underqualified by NQS requirements (table 6.5). This equates to 5212 FDC educators nationally who must attain a certificate III to meet the NQS. About 30 per cent of these educators are in New South Wales, 25 per cent are in Queensland and 21 per cent are in Victoria (DEEWR ndf). About 18 per cent of FDC service directors and coordinators were either unqualified, or held a qualification insufficient to meet the NQS minimum coordinator qualification of a Diploma of Children’s Services.

Table 6.5 Educational attainment of the family day care workforce^a

	<i>FDC educators</i>	<i>FDC service directors and coordinators</i>
	%	%
Bachelor degree	4.5	23.4
Advanced diploma or diploma	16.0	57.9
Certificate III or IV	36.0	8.5
Less than certificate III	3.4	2.1
No ECEC qualification	40.1	7.6

^a Highest level of attained qualification in an ECEC-related field. Does not include qualifications that FDC staff may be currently studying towards but have not yet attained.

Source: Productivity Commission estimates based on unpublished DEEWR data from the 2010 National ECEC Workforce Census.

If currently unqualified FDC educators and coordinators are unable to upgrade their qualifications, this will reduce the supply of the FDC workforce. This might make it difficult for some FDC schemes to comply with the NQS, particularly given that some services already experience recruitment difficulties.

The City of Greater Geelong stated that:

The Family Day Care workforce faces a number of issues shared with other service providers in the child care industry, such as problems with recruitment of new carers and coordination staff (especially in rural and remote areas), remuneration and retention of existing workers, difficulty accessing professional development and training, and a generally low status and standing in the community. (sub. 20, p. 7)

A further reduction in supply may occur if educator incomes in New South Wales, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory fall as a result of a reduction in the number of children under school age an individual educator can care for. This may cause individual educators to exit the FDC workforce. As the NQS establishes the same qualification requirements for FDC and LDC educators, if LDC educator wages increase as a result of the NQS, some FDC educators may decide to work in LDC (see chapter 5 for further discussion of the likelihood of wage increases for LDC educators). This could further reduce the supply of FDC educators. A submission from an FDC educator stated that:

Another reason why educators are leaving [the FDC workforce] is the low wages. They are paid more if they work in a [LDC] centre, with no [service] running costs. Running costs [for an FDC service] include expensive energy and water costs, equipment, paper towels, soap etc, art/craft supplies, toys etc. These have to be absorbed into the educators' wage. (Name withheld, sub. DR281, p. 3)

Family day care workforce training

Cost of and access to training for family day care educators

To prevent any substantial decline in the FDC workforce, training must be both accessible and affordable for FDC educators. FDCA suggests that FDC educators might face difficulties accessing training because of isolation; inability to access online options; language and literacy issues; lack of computer skills; and the length of time since the worker was last involved in formal study (sub. 61). This may affect the supply of FDC educators under the NQS. For instance, the City of Casey submitted that:

If Family Day Care regulations and demands are difficult for educators they may struggle to meet them and therefore will need to leave by choice or as a result of non-compliance. (sub. 35, p. 4)

Relative to the training costs faced by the broader ECEC workforce, the cost of training is often higher for FDC educators. Because they are self employed, FDC educators face considerable costs in lost income if they take time off for training and assessment (Victorian Government, sub. 87). As FDCA noted:

Currently the majority of family day care educators [are] completing their qualifications after commencing work within the sector and hence are studying while working, which would require them to shut down their business [to attend centre-based practicums and assessment]. (sub. 61, p. 8)

The Victorian Family Day Care Educators Association noted that even in cases where training is carried out in the evening or on the weekend in order to minimise income loss to educators and inconvenience to families using FDC services, training is still costly to educators in terms of lost personal time (sub. DR180).

Because there will be a cost to educators involved in upgrading their qualifications, there might be some FDC educators who choose to leave the FDC workforce rather than upgrade their qualifications. The costs of study include both monetary costs such as training fees and equipment and also non-monetary costs such as study time and time spent travelling for study. For some FDC educators, the costs of upgrading their qualifications might outweigh the benefits. About 50 per cent of the FDC workforce reported that cost was a barrier to them upgrading their qualification, while 60 per cent reported that they did not have enough free time for further study (DEEWR ndf).

Some members of the FDC workforce may also choose to bring forward their retirement rather than gain new qualifications. The average age of the FDC workforce is higher than that of the rest of the ECEC sector, and nearly 20 per cent of FDC workers are over 55 (DEEWR ndf).

The cost of training is likely to be higher for FDC educators in remote locations or from CALD backgrounds due to the extra costs imposed by distance and language barriers respectively (CSHISC 2010b). These educators might benefit from specifically targeted training packages.

For instance, the Government of South Australia submitted that:

The Department of Education and Children's Services and TAFE SA are facilitating a Certificate III in Children's Services targeting people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. This program combines the Certificate III in Children's Services with a Certificate in English Language Proficiency. The program trains people from CALD backgrounds to obtain qualifications to work in their own home based child care businesses, including Family Day Care, and in child care centres. The program has been highly successful in delivering successful outcomes for around 90 per cent of participants. (sub. 66, p. 13)

The practical component of certificate III qualifications also creates challenges for some FDC educators. In some cases, registered training organisations providing certificate III training require that students complete a practical element as a unit of competency in an LDC centre (CSHISC 2010b; FDCA, sub. 61). This is likely to be more difficult for FDC educators in remote locations who may have to travel long distances to attend centre-based training.

Providing FDC educators with training options that fit with their existing working arrangements will tend to lower the cost of study. FDCA cited a lack of flexible training options as a significant barrier for FDC educators wishing to undertake training and further professional development (sub. 61). Flexible training options are particularly important for educators in rural and remote locations who might have difficulty accessing conventional training options.

Access to training for family day care coordination unit staff

FDC coordination unit staff may also face difficulties in upgrading their qualifications. This is often because it is difficult for coordination units to find replacement staff for staff members attending training. FDCA noted that:

Coordination unit staff often face difficulties in back-filling positions, due to such factors as the specialised nature of the work role and legislative requirements for minimum contact hours with educators. (sub. 61, p. 7)

Relevant training for the family day care workforce

While the Certificate III in Children's Services and Diploma of Children's Services are intended to provide educators with skills applicable to a variety of ECEC settings, there is a push within the FDC workforce for training with more focus on the unique requirements of FDC.

The Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council, which has responsibility for updating the content of children's services qualifications, recommended:

... enhancing small business skills and new skills for family day care coordinators, and providing better training, assessment and recognition approaches for workers who are sole traders and in many cases from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. (CSHISC 2011, p. 20)

One potential solution to make training more relevant to FDC educators is to increase the number of training electives specific to FDC. Currently only one FDC-specific elective, focused on compliance with FDC administrative

requirements, is included in the Certificate III in Children’s Services. Training of the FDC workforce is further discussed in chapter 10.

6.4 Pedagogical leadership

The upcoming ECEC reforms are unlikely to lead to a significant increase in demand for early childhood teachers in FDC, as the NQS only requires FDC coordinators to have a diploma qualification. However, an important aspect of the NQS is pedagogical leadership in ECEC services. In preschool and LDC services, the pedagogical leader is likely to be a qualified teacher. Without access to pedagogical leadership, it will be difficult for FDC educators to effectively deliver the Early Years Learning Framework and the Framework for School-Age Care.

This has implications for early childhood education, particularly in remote locations where other formal care options are not available. While FDCA notes that there are already some 4-year-qualified teachers working within FDC, it is their aim to increase the number of coordinators with this level of qualification (sub. 61). In 2010, only 3 per cent of the FDC workforce held ECEC teaching qualifications (DEEWR ndf).

Given the nature of FDC, demand for qualified teachers in FDC is likely to be low relative to LDC and preschool. The small group sizes of FDC and the geographic distribution of these groups tends to make it prohibitively expensive for FDC services to offer a preschool program directly. This limits demand for early childhood teachers in FDC. However, attendance at FDC does not necessarily compromise children’s access to preschool. Some parents may make private arrangements for their children to attend preschool, or alternatively, send their children to one of the many FDC schemes that provide a ‘wrap-around’ service to preschool delivered offsite. The practice of FDC schemes facilitating access to preschool delivered offsite is likely to see further growth under the NQS:

... family day care services, to achieve a rating of ‘high quality’ under the National Quality Standard (NQS), will need to provide access to a preschool program for children in the year that is two years before [the child enters] Grade 1. This can be either by directly providing a preschool program, or by facilitating a child’s access to a nearby program. This will provide a clear incentive for parents seeking access to a preschool program for their child to continue to use family day care services. (DEEWR, sub. DR301, p. 13)

Employing additional early childhood teachers in coordination units is likely to be costly and indeed unaffordable in some cases. However, some pedagogical leadership for educators employed in FDC would be desirable for the appropriate delivery of the Early Years Learning Framework and the Framework for School

Age Care where children above school age attend the FDC service. This responsibility will fall on coordination unit staff, further emphasising the need for appropriate training and support for these workers.