
14 Children's services

Children's services aim to meet the care, education and development needs of children. In this chapter, child care services is the care provided to children aged less than 13 years (that is, 0–12 years), usually by someone other than the child's parents or guardian. Preschool services are the services provided to children mainly in the year or two before they begin full time schooling.

Most of the data in this chapter relate to services that are supported by the Australian, State and Territory governments and provided for children aged less than 13 years. Local governments also plan, fund and deliver children's services. Due to data limitations, the only local government data included are where Australian, State and Territory government funding and licensing are involved. An outline of the chapter is provided below.

A profile of children's services is presented in section 14.1. This provides a context for assessing the performance indicators presented later in the chapter. All jurisdictions have agreed to develop, and aim to report, comparable indicators; a framework of performance indicators is outlined in section 14.2. The data on performance are discussed in section 14.3 and future directions for performance reporting are discussed in section 14.4. The chapter concludes with jurisdictions' comments in section 14.5. Definitions of terms specific to children's services are found in section 14.6. Section 14.7 lists the supporting tables for this chapter. Supporting tables are identified in references throughout the chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table 14A.3 is table 3 in the attachment). Supporting tables are provided on the CD-ROM enclosed with the Report. Section 14.8 lists the references used in this chapter.

Major improvements to reporting on children's services this year include:

- updated data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Child Care Survey and the Australian Government's Census of Child Care Services
- reporting on utilisation rates in centre-based long day care and family day care
- improvements to the comparability of data, for example, the reporting on 'accredited child care services' and 'non-standard hours of care: child care services' is fully comparable.

14.1 Profile of children's services

Service overview

Children's services are provided using a variety of service delivery types that can be grouped into the following six broad categories:

Centre-based long day care — comprises services aimed primarily at 0–5 year olds, 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. Centres typically operate for at least eight hours per day on normal working days, for a minimum of 48 weeks per year.

Family day care — comprises services provided in the carer's home. The care is largely aimed at 0–5 year olds, but primary school children may also receive care before and after school, and during school vacations. Central coordination units in all states and territories organise and support a network of carers, often with the help of local governments.

Occasional care — comprises 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 activities for children and are aimed primarily at 0–5 year olds. Centres providing these services usually employ a mix of qualified and other staff.

Preschool — comprises services usually provided by a qualified teacher on a sessional basis in dedicated preschools. Preschool programs or curricula may also be provided in long day care centres and other settings. These services are primarily aimed at children in the year before they commence full time schooling, although younger children may also attend in all jurisdictions except Victoria. In Victoria, WA and Tasmania, the preschool program is known as kindergarten.

Outside school hours care — comprises services provided for school aged children (5–12 year olds) outside school hours during term and vacations. Care may be provided on student free days and when school finishes early.

Other services — comprise government funded services to support children with additional needs or in particular situations (including children from an Indigenous

or non-English speaking background, children with a disability or of parents with a disability, and children living in regional and remote areas).

Roles and responsibilities

The Australian Government and the State/Territory governments have different, but complementary, roles in supporting children's services. Both levels of government help fund services, provide information and advice to parents and service providers, and help plan, set and maintain operating standards.

The Australian Government's roles and responsibilities for child care include:

- paying Child Care Benefit to families using approved child care services or registered informal carers
- funding the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) to administer quality assurance systems for children's services
- funding organisations to provide information, support and training to service providers
- providing operational and capital funding to some providers.

State and Territory governments' roles and responsibilities vary across jurisdictions. Generally, State and Territory governments are responsible for preschool services. Other roles and responsibilities may include:

- providing operational and capital funding to non-government service providers
- delivering some services directly (especially preschool services)
- developing new child care and preschool services
- licensing and setting standards for children's services providers
- monitoring and resourcing licensed and/or funded children's services providers
- providing information, support, training and development opportunities for children's services 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.

Quality of care

Governments seek to ensure that children's services provide a satisfactory quality of care, through:

- licensing, quality assurance, measuring performance against standards, and outcomes linked to funding
- providing curriculum and policy support and advice
- training and development of management and staff.

Licensing

Providers of children's services must meet legislative and regulatory requirements regarding safety standards, staff qualifications, child/staff ratios, health and safety requirements, and child development, in order to obtain a licence to operate. State and Territory governments set the requirements, monitor performance and administer licences.

The Australian, State and Territory governments have jointly developed national standards for centre-based long day care, family day care and outside school hours care services. These standards express a national view about the level of care all Australians can expect from the different types of child care service available to them. The extent of implementation of these standards vary across jurisdictions.

Quality assurance

The Australian Government has implemented quality assurance systems for Australian Government funded centre-based long day care services, family day care services and outside school hours care services. To be eligible for Child Care Benefit and other funding support, child care services have to register and satisfactorily participate in quality assurance. Quality assurance is designed to build on, and complement, the State and Territory government licensing requirements (where they exist).

The broad objective of the quality assurance systems is to ensure that children in care have stimulating, positive experiences and interactions that nurture all aspects of their development. The quality assurance systems do this by defining good quality child care, providing a way to measure the quality of care provided by the service and identifying areas for ongoing quality improvement. Services participating in the quality assurance system are required to progress through the five step process, outlined in figure 14.1.

Funding

Total Australian, State and Territory government expenditure on children's services was approximately \$2.68 billion in 2005-06, compared with \$2.60 billion (in real terms) in 2004-05 (tables 14A.4, 14A.5, 14A.29, 14A.38, 14A.47, 14A.56, 14A.65, 14A.74, 14A.83, 14A.92).

Australian Government expenditure accounted for 75.4 per cent (\$2.02 billion) of total government expenditure on children's services in 2005-06 (table 14A.4). State and Territory government expenditure on children's services in 2005-06 was approximately \$659.4 million (tables 14A.4, 14A.5, 14A.29, 14A.38, 14A.47, 14A.56, 14A.65, 14A.74, 14A.83, 14A.92).

In the distribution of total State and Territory government expenditure across all children's service types, the provision of preschool services accounted for the largest proportion (83.3 per cent, or \$549.5 million) (table 14A.5).

The Australian Government provides supplementary funding to support the participation of Indigenous children in preschool programs. In 2004, an estimated \$12.5 million was provided to education providers for 7729 full time equivalent Indigenous preschool enrolments (DEST unpublished).

Size and scope

Child care services

The Australian Government supported 588 866 child care places in 2005 — an increase of 4.8 per cent on the number in 2004. The majority of Australian Government supported child care places were outside school hours care places (44.4 per cent), followed by centre-based long day care places (42.0 per cent), family day care places (12.8 per cent), occasional care places (0.5 per cent) and other care places (0.3 per cent) (table 14A.8).

State and Territory governments supported at least 204 932 preschool places in 2005-06 (tables 14A.30, 14A.39, 14A.48, 14A.57, 14A.66, 14A.75, 14A.84 and 14A.93).

In 2005-06, over 111 413 children aged 12 years or younger attended State and Territory government funded and/or provided child care and 788 904 children aged 12 years or younger attended Australian Government approved child care services (tables 14A.10, 14A.31, 14A.40, 14A.49, 14A.58, 14A.67, 14A.76, 14A.85, 14A.94). Some children attend both Australian and State/Territory funded child care

and some services receive funding from both Australian and State/Territory governments.

Preschool services

Preschools provide a range of educational and developmental programs (generally on a sessional basis) to children in the year immediately before they commence full time schooling and also, in some jurisdictions, to younger children.

The age from which children may attend preschool varies across jurisdictions. Victoria contributes funding towards a preschool program for all 4 year old children, which is the year before they begin schooling. In all the other jurisdictions, children may begin preschool at a younger age in some circumstances (for example, Indigenous children, children with English as a second language, gifted children, and children from vulnerable families).

This disparity in the age from which children may access preschool services reduces the comparability of preschool data across jurisdictions. Preschool data are presented for two categories to improve comparability:

- children attending preschool in the year immediately before they commence full time schooling (data that are largely presented on a comparable basis for all jurisdictions)
- younger children attending preschool services.

Approximately 243 557 children attended State and Territory funded and/or provided preschool services in 2005-06. The majority (88.7 per cent, or approximately 216 083 children) were to begin full time schooling the following year (table 14A.11).

Services by management type

Children's services are managed by the government (State, Territory and local), community and private sectors. The management structure of services indicates the involvement of these sectors in the direct delivery of children's services. The limited data on the management type of child care need to be interpreted with care because the scope of data collection varies across jurisdictions. Available data on the management type of preschool services, is more complete than that for child care services, and indicate considerable variation across jurisdictions (table 14.1).

Table 14.1 **Proportion of State and Territory licensed and/or registered children's services, by management type, 2005-06 (per cent)^a**

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic^b</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SAC^c</i>	<i>Tas^d</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NTE^e</i>
Child care								
Community managed ^f	30.5	37.6	35.9	20.0	40.2	51.3	84.1	73.8
Private ^g	66.4	48.2	60.7	76.2	34.9	24.2	15.9	26.2
Government managed	3.1	14.2	3.4	3.8	24.9	24.5	–	–
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Preschool								
Community managed ^f	89.8	74.9	23.2	na	4.9	na	9.2	2.7
Private ^g	10.2	7.9	22.2	na	–	26.1	–	na
Government managed	na	17.1	54.6	100.0	95.1	73.9	92.0	97.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

^a Includes all Australian, State and Territory government supported services. ^b All government managed preschools in Victoria are managed by local government. ^c The majority of government managed services are small occasional care programs attached to government preschools providing a total of 224 FTE places (FTE equals 50 hours per week). ^d Preschools include funded non-government preschools. ^e Preschool services are provided by the Department of Education directly, but a range of management functions are devolved to school councils and parent management committees. ^f Community managed services include not-for-profit services provided or managed by parents, churches or co-operatives. ^g Private for-profit services provided or managed by a company, private individual or non-government school. **na** Not available. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 14A.34, 14A.43, 14A.52, 14A.61, 14A.70, 14A.79, 14A.88 and 14A.97.

14.2 Framework of performance indicators

The framework of performance indicators is based on common objectives for children's services endorsed by the then Community Services Ministers' Advisory Council (CSMAC)¹ (box 14.1). The relative emphasis placed on each objective varies across jurisdictions.

¹ Now known as the Community and Disability Services Ministers' Advisory Council (CDSMAC).

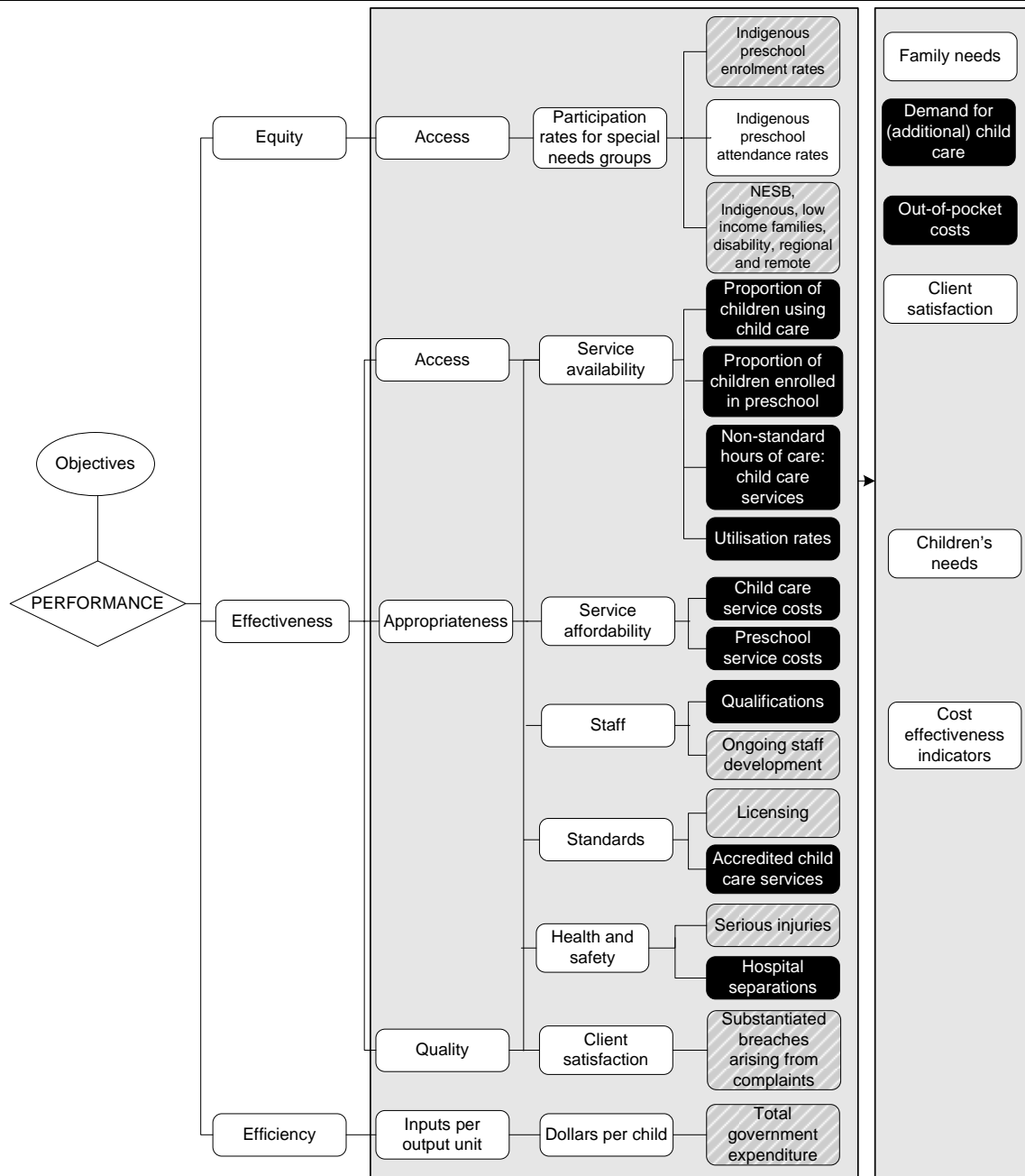
Box 14.1 Objectives for children's services

Children's services aim to:

- meet the care, education and development needs of children in a safe and nurturing environment
- provide support for families in caring for their children
- provide these services in an equitable and efficient manner.

A performance indicator framework consistent with these objectives is summarised in figure 14.2. The framework shows which data are provided on a comparable basis in the 2007 Report. For data that are not considered directly comparable, the text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary. Chapter 1 discusses data comparability from a Report-wide perspective (see section 1.6).

Figure 14.2 Performance indicators for children's services



Key to indicators

- Text** Provided on a comparable basis for this Report subject to caveats in each chart or table
- Text** Information not complete or not directly comparable
- Text** Yet to be developed or not collected for this Report

14.3 Key performance indicator results

Different delivery contexts, locations and types of client may affect the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of children's services. Some of the data available for reporting in this chapter are not comparable across jurisdictions. Appendix A contains contextual information, which may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. Definitions of key terms and indicators are in section 14.6.

Outputs

Equity

Access — participation rates for special needs groups

'Participation rates for special needs groups' is an indicator of equitable access to services (box 14.2).

Box 14.2 Participation rates for special needs groups

'Participation rates for special needs groups' is an output (equity — access) indicator of governments' objective to ensure that:

- all Australian families have equitable access to child care and preschool services
- there is no discrimination between groups
- there is consideration of the needs of those groups which may have special difficulty accessing services.

This indicator is defined as the proportion of children using child care services who are from targeted special needs groups, compared with the representation of these groups in the community. Data are reported separately for child care and preschool services. Targeted special needs groups include children from a non-English speaking background, children from an Indigenous background, children from low income families, children with a disability, and children from regional and remote areas. 'Indigenous preschool enrolment rates' are used as a proxy for 'Indigenous preschool attendance rates' (see figure 14.3).

The representation of special needs groups among children's services users being broadly similar to their representation in the community, may suggest equity of access.

The data indicate that the representation of children in special needs groups among users of Australian Government supported child care is sometimes substantially

different across jurisdictions (table 14.2). It is important to note that due to the unavailability of certain data items, the Australian Government data exclude flexible and innovative services, which are targeted towards children from these groups. At a national level, the patterns for children from special needs groups were:

- children from a non-English speaking background participated in child care at a similar rate (10.7 per cent) to this group's representation in the community (11.2 per cent)
- the representation of children from an Indigenous background among child care users was lower (1.7 per cent) than this group's overall representation in the community (4.6 per cent)
- children from low income families participated in child care at a slightly lower rate (26.4 per cent) than this group's representation in the community (28.7 per cent)
- the representation of children with a disability among child care users was lower (2.7 per cent) than their overall representation in the community (7.7 per cent)
- the proportion of children in regional areas attending child care was lower (29.0 per cent) than the proportion of children who live in regional areas (33.0 per cent)
- the proportion of children in remote areas attending child care was lower (1.0 per cent) than the proportion of children who live in remote areas (3.1 per cent).

Table 14.2 Proportion of children (aged 0–12 years) from special needs groups attending Australian Government approved child care services, 2006 (per cent)

<i>Representation</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Aust</i>
Children from non-English speaking backgrounds									
In child care services	16.5	12.5	5.1	6.4	7.9	2.6	9.5	9.1	10.7
In the community ^a	15.0	14.2	4.9	7.2	7.5	1.7	9.5	25.3	11.2
Indigenous children									
In child care services ^b	1.5	0.7	2.1	2.1	2.0	1.0	0.7	11.3	1.7
In the community ^c	4.2	1.1	6.6	6.6	3.5	7.1	2.6	40.9	4.6
Children from low-income families									
In child care services ^d	25.0	26.6	28.3	27.3	29.0	29.2	10.6	17.2	26.4
In the community ^e	28.6	27.0	29.6	31.4	29.0	38.8	12.1	30.6	28.7
Children with a disability									
In child care services	3.2	2.4	2.2	2.5	3.8	2.3	1.9	4.2	2.7
In the community ^f	8.0	6.8	7.6	8.9	8.8	6.2	7.5	np	7.7
Children from regional areas									
In child care services ^b	25.4	25.7	36.2	19.3	18.3	99.4	0.1	79.3	29.0
In the community ^g	28.9	28.4	45.2	24.5	26.8	97.8	0.2	49.5	33.0
Children from remote areas									
In child care services ^b	0.2	–	1.2	3.6	1.9	0.6	..	20.7	1.0
In the community ^h	0.8	0.1	4.5	8.7	4.6	2.2	..	50.5	3.1

^a Data relate to children aged 0–12 years at June 2001, who spoke a language other than English at home, and were obtained from the ABS 2001 *Census of Population and Housing*. ^b These numbers do not include innovative or flexible services that receive direct funding from the Australian Government and are targeted towards children from these groups. ^c Data relate to children aged 0–12 years at June 2005 and were obtained from ABS *Experimental Indigenous population projections*, low series. ^d Data relate to children in child care services from families with a gross annual household income of less than \$33 361 (the cut-off point for receiving the maximum amount of child care benefits as at May 2006). ^e Data relate to children aged 0–12 years from families with a gross annual parental income of less than \$31 755. The Family Tax Benefit and the one-off payment to families, officially referred to as "Family Assistance Legislative Amendment (More help for families — 'One-off' payments)", have been excluded from the calculation of parental income. The data were obtained from the ABS 2003-04 *Survey of Household Income and Housing*. ^f Data are estimated from the ABS 2003 *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers* and relate to children aged 0–12 years. Due to the small sample size, data for NT are not published. ^g Data relate to children aged 0–12 years at June 2005 and were obtained from the ABS *Estimated resident population by Remoteness Area*. The data include Inner Regional Australia and Outer Regional Australia. Caution should be exercised with small proportions, as they are generally less reliable than larger proportions. ^h Data relate to children aged 0–12 years at June 2005 and were obtained from the ABS *Estimated resident population by Remoteness Area*. The data include Remote Australia and Very Remote Australia. Caution should be exercised with small proportions, as they are generally less reliable than larger proportions. .. Not applicable – Nil or rounded to zero. np Not published.

Source: AGCCCS (unpublished); ABS 2001 *Census of Population and Housing* (unpublished); ABS *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2009* (cat. no. 3238.0); ABS 2003-04 *Survey of Household Income and Housing* (unpublished); ABS 2003 *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers* (unpublished); ABS *Estimated Resident Population Collection* (unpublished); table 14A.20.

Previous reports have compared the participation of special needs groups in preschool with the representation of these groups in the community, for children aged 0–12 years. While children aged 0–12 years is an appropriate comparator for child care services (as they include Outside School Hours Care), a more appropriate comparator for preschool services is the 3–5 years age group.

In this report, data on the representation of special needs groups for children aged 3–5 years in government funded preschools are provided in table 14.3. The data provide a broad indication of the relative access to preschool for special needs groups. Data on representation of special needs groups in State and Territory child care and preschools, for children aged 0–12, can be found in attachment tables 14A.35, 14A.44, 14A.53, 14A.62, 14A.71, 14A.80, 14A.89 and 14A.98.

Nationally, the proportion of preschool attendees in 2005-06 who were from special needs groups were generally similar to their representation in the community, though some groups are over represented in some jurisdictions and under represented in others.

Table 14.3 Proportion of children (aged 3–5 years) from special needs groups attending State and Territory funded or provided preschools, 2005-06 (per cent)

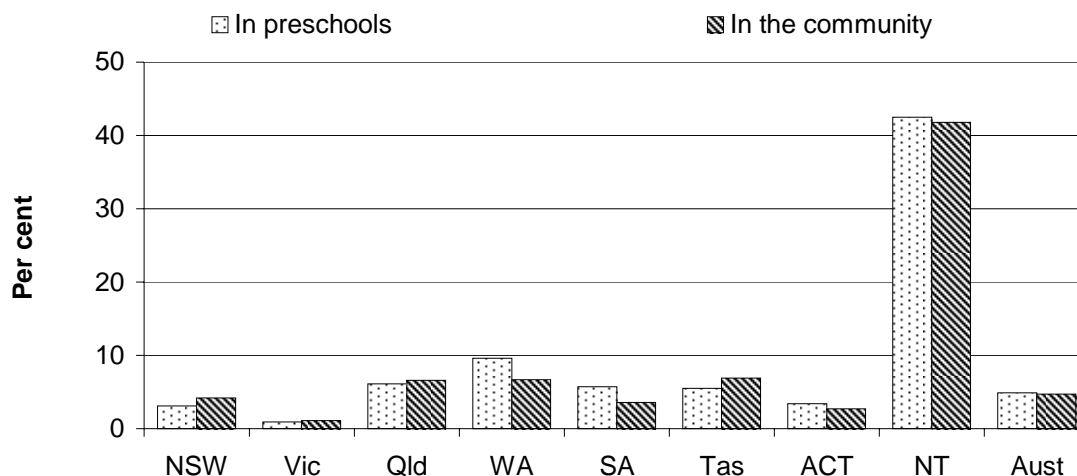
<i>Representation</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Aust</i>
Children from non-English speaking backgrounds									
In preschool services	8.2	13.3	2.8	na	9.4	na	15.1	na	7.0
In the community ^a	16.6	15.6	5.3	7.6	8.1	1.7	10.2	27.0	12.3
Indigenous children									
In preschool services ^b	3.1	0.9	6.1	9.6	5.7	5.5	3.4	42.5	4.9
In the community ^c	4.2	1.1	6.6	6.7	3.6	6.9	2.7	41.8	4.7
Children with a disability									
In preschool services ^d	6.5	10.2	2.0	2.8	15.4	na	4.3	8.4	6.4
In the community ^e	7.7	6.5	8.6	10.2	8.3	7.2	14.3	np	8.0
Children from regional areas									
In preschool services ^b	32.6	31.7	50.7	23.3	29.3	98.2	0.2	45.2	37.2
In the community ^f	28.3	27.8	44.6	24.5	26.5	97.5	0.2	49.2	32.5
Children from remote areas									
In preschool services ^b	1.2	0.2	8.2	9.8	5.8	1.8	..	54.8	4.8
In the community ^g	0.9	0.1	4.8	9.1	4.6	2.5	..	50.8	3.3

^a Data relate to children aged 3–5 years at June 2001, who spoke a language other than English at home, and were obtained from the ABS 2001 *Census of Population and Housing*. ^b These numbers do not include innovative or flexible services that receive direct funding from the Australian Government and are targeted towards children from these groups. ^c Data relate to children aged 3–5 years at June 2005 and were obtained from ABS *Experimental Indigenous population projections*, low series. ^d Data are not directly comparable between jurisdictions because there is no national definition or standard on children with a disability. ^e Data are estimated from the ABS 2003 *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers* and relate to children aged 3–5 years. Due to the small sample size, data for the NT are not published. ^f Data relate to children aged 3–5 years at June 2005 and were obtained from the ABS *Estimated resident population by Remoteness Area*. The data include Inner Regional Australia and Outer Regional Australia. Caution should be exercised with small proportions, as they are generally less reliable than larger proportions. ^g Data relate to children aged 3–5 years at June 2005 and were obtained from the ABS *Estimated resident population by Remoteness Area*. The data include Remote Australia and Very Remote Australia. Caution should be exercised with small proportions, as they are generally less reliable than larger proportions. .. Not applicable. na Not available. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); ABS 2001 *Census of Population and Housing* (unpublished); ABS *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2009* (cat. no. 3238.0); ABS 2003 *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers* (unpublished); ABS *Estimated Resident Population Collection* (unpublished).

Nationally, the proportion of preschool enrolments from Indigenous backgrounds (4.9 per cent) largely reflects the proportion of the population from Indigenous backgrounds (4.7 per cent) (figure 14.3).

Figure 14.3 **Proportion of preschool enrolments of Indigenous children, 2005-06^{a, b, c}**



^a Data relate to children aged 3–5 years at June 2005 and were obtained from ABS *Experimental Indigenous population projections*, low series. ^b Data for the representation in preschool services are from State and Territory enrolment data. ^c All Indigenous data relate to people who self-identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent.

Source: ABS *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2009* (cat. no. 3238.0); State and Territory governments (unpublished).

Effectiveness

Service availability — proportion of children using child care services

An indicator of community access to child care services is the proportion of children in the target population who use the services (box 14.3).

Box 14.3 Proportion of children using child care

‘Proportion of children using child care’ is an output (service availability) indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that all Australian families have equitable access to child care services.

This indicator is defined as the proportion of children using child care services in the target age groups.

A higher proportion of children using the services may 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 may impact on use of care.

Access to children's services differs according to the service type. The workforce and employment status of parents may influence children's access to services. Those services eligible for Child Care Benefit, for example, give a high priority to children at risk and children of parents with work-related child care needs. Occasional care services give priority to parents requiring care to meet other needs (such as to attend appointments, take care of personal matters or have temporary respite from full time parenting). Details of the labour force and employment status of parents whose children use these services are shown in table 14A.15.

Table 14.4 shows the proportion of children in the relevant age groups attending Australian, State and Territory government funded and/or provided child care. Different data collection approaches and the exclusion of certain services funded by some jurisdictions reduce the comparability of these data across jurisdictions.

Table 14.4 Proportion of children using Australian, State and Territory government funded and/or provided child care, 2005-06^{a, b}

Age	NSW ^c	Vic	Qld	WA	SA ^d	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
0–5 years	52.0	29.1	42.8	26.6	35.5	37.6	41.9	24.3	40.1
6–12 years	13.3	14.0	18.0	9.0	23.5	14.3	22.5	14.3	14.9
0–12 years	30.9	20.8	29.0	16.8	28.8	24.6	31.3	19.1	26.2

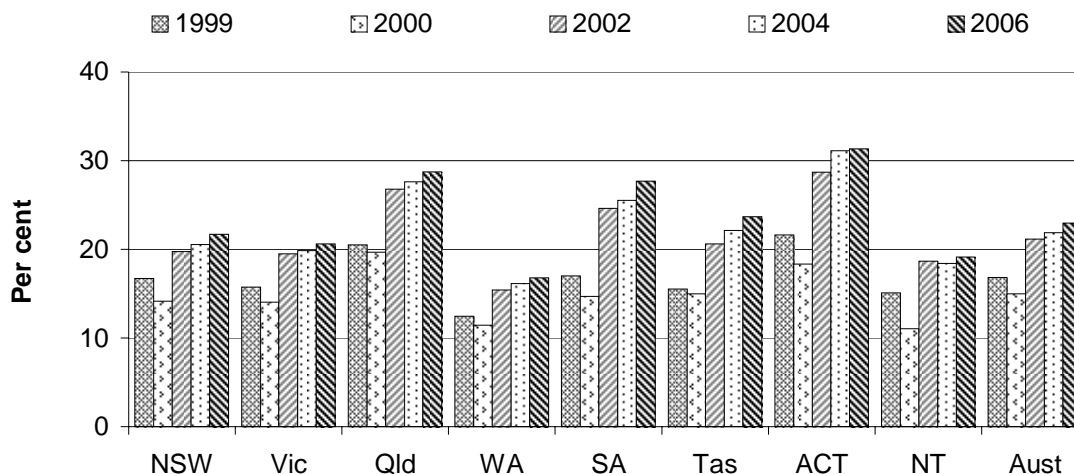
^a Australian Government data are estimated and weighted from the Australian Government Census of Child Care Services (AGCCCS). In 2006, numbers are based on preliminary data and there may be changes to the final data. ^b Population as at June 2006. ^c NSW data are not comparable with data for other states and territories. ^d SA excludes children in non-government preschools.

Source: AGCCCS May 2006 (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) *Australian Demographic Statistics* (unpublished), Canberra; tables 14A.1, 14A.10, 14A.31, 14A.40, 14A.49, 14A.58, 14A.67, 14A.76, 14A.85 and 14A.94.

The majority of children attending Australian Government approved child care in 2006 (approximately 524 348, or 66.5 per cent) were aged 0–5 years (table 14A.10). Nationally, 23 per cent of children aged 0–12 years attended Australian Government approved child care services in 2006 (figure 14.4).

The average hours of attendance in child care in 2006 varied considerably across jurisdictions, for all types of service. Nationally, average attendance per child at centre-based long day care centres was 19.0 hours per week, while the average attendance per child at family day care was 17.7 hours per week. The national average attendance per child at occasional care was 10.3 hours per week and the national average attendance at vacation care during school holidays was 2.5 days per week (table 14A.9).

Figure 14.4 Proportion of children aged 0–12 years using Australian Government approved child care^{a, b, c, d}



^a Excludes children cared for in neighbourhood model services. ^b Data for, 1999, 2002, 2004 and 2006 are drawn from the respective AGCCCS, while data for 2000 are drawn from Centrelink administrative data. The AGCCCS and Centrelink data are not fully comparable and interpretation needs to be made with care. In 2006, AGCCCS numbers are based on preliminary data and there may be changes to the final data. ^c Data for WA exclude children attending Department of Education provided kindergartens for 4 year olds, who would otherwise be in child care. ^d The Australian total includes children in other territories.

Source: AGCCCS May 1999, May 2002, March 2004 and May 2006 (unpublished); Centrelink administrative data August 2000 (unpublished); ABS *Australian Demographic Statistics* (unpublished), Canberra; table 14A.10.

Service availability — proportion of children enrolled in preschool

An indicator of community access to preschool services is the proportion of children in the target population who use the services (box 14.4).

Box 14.4 Proportion of children enrolled in preschool

'Proportion of children enrolled in preschool' is an output (service availability) indicator of governments' objective to ensure that all Australian families have equitable access to preschool services.

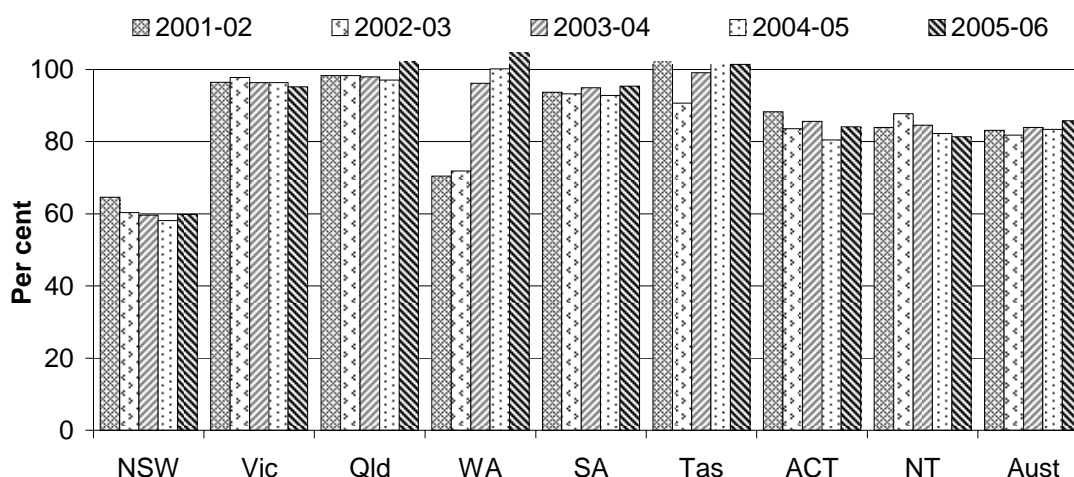
This indicator is defined as the proportion of children using preschool services in the target age groups. Two measures are reported:

- the percentage of children attending preschool in the year before the commencement of full-time schooling
- the percentage of younger children attending preschool.

A higher proportion of children using the services may indicate a higher level of service availability. This indicator does not provide information on parental preferences for using preschool or other factors, such as school starting age, which may impact on use of preschool.

Nationally in 2005-06, 85.7 per cent of children of 4 years of age attended funded and/or provided preschool in the year immediately before they commenced school. There is some double counting in several jurisdictions, as well as issues with synchronisation of data collection times, leading to overestimation of the enrolment rates being reported in some states and territories (figure 14.5).

Figure 14.5 Proportion of children attending State and Territory government funded and/or provided preschool services in the year immediately before the commencement of full time schooling^{a, b, c, d, e, f}



^a The denominator — the population of preschool aged children — is defined as persons aged 4 years in all states and territories. Data for estimated resident population are up to six months out of sequence with the data for children using State or Territory government funded and/or provided preschool services in year before full time school. 'Year before full time school' includes a number of non-4 year olds. ^b There is some double counting of children in NSW, Qld, WA and NT because some children moved in and out of the preschool system throughout the year and some children accessed more than one sessional program. As a result, the number of children reported in preschool exceeds the number of children in the target population. There is no double counting for Victoria, SA, Tasmania and the ACT because a snapshot is used for each year's data collection. ^c NSW data are not comparable with data for other states and territories because the data do not include preschools managed by the NSW Department of Education or the non-government school sector, or children who are receiving a preschool program in a long day care centre. ^d Victorian data include some children attending funded preschool services conducted in centre-based long day care centres and independent schools. ^e WA data for 2001–2003 exclude the non-government sector. Changes to the school entry age (introduced in 2001) have also impacted on numbers. ^f Data for SA exclude children in non-government preschools.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); ABS *Australian Demographic Statistics* (unpublished), Canberra; table 14A.11.

Younger children in NSW, Queensland, SA, the ACT and the NT were able to attend government funded preschool services in 2005-06. For these jurisdictions, around 10.9 per cent of children aged 3 years attended preschool services in that year (approximately 27 474 children). Participation in 2005-06 differed across jurisdictions, in part due to variation in policies on access to funded preschool services (table 14A.11).

All jurisdictions except NSW and Victoria provided data on the average hours of attendance for government funded and/or provided preschool services in 2005-06. For those jurisdictions that provided data, the average attendance of children in the year immediately before they commenced full time schooling was at least 11 hours per week (tables 14A.48, 14A.57, 14A.66, 14A.75 and 14A.84).

Service availability — non-standard hours of care in child care services

An indicator of the community's access to flexible child care services is the proportion of child care services offering 'Non-standard hours of care' (box 14.5).

Box 14.5 Non-standard hours of care: child care services

'Non-standard hours of care: child care services' is an output (service availability) indicator of governments' objective to ensure government funded and/or provided child care services meet the needs of all users.

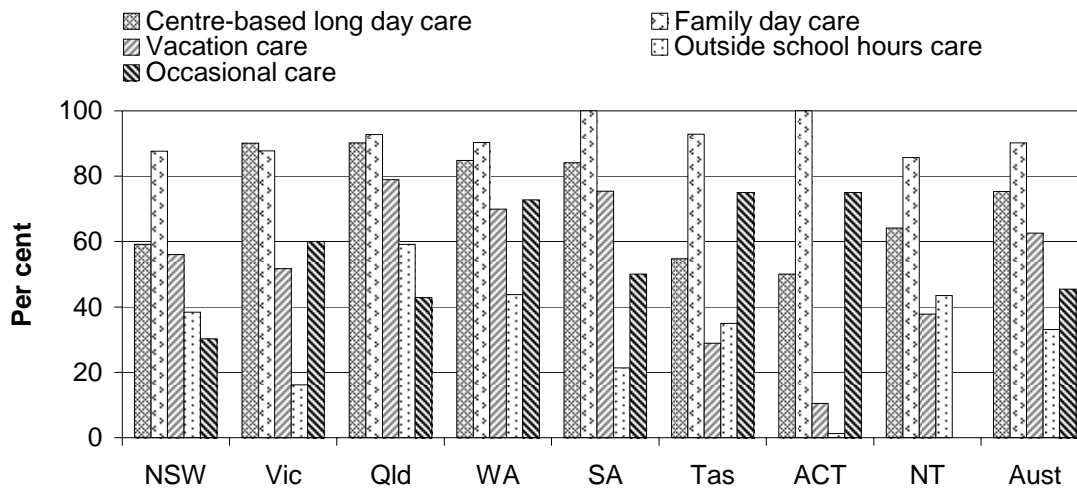
This indicator is defined as the number of child care services providing non-standard hours of care divided by the total number of services. Data are reported by service type.

A higher proportion of services providing non-standard hours of care may 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. It also provides no information on how closely available non-standard hours services match the needs of users.

Provision of non-standard hours of care may 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. Figure 14.6 shows the proportion of services that provided non-standard hours of care by service type.

Figure 14.6 Australian Government approved child care services providing non-standard hours of care, by service type, 2006^a



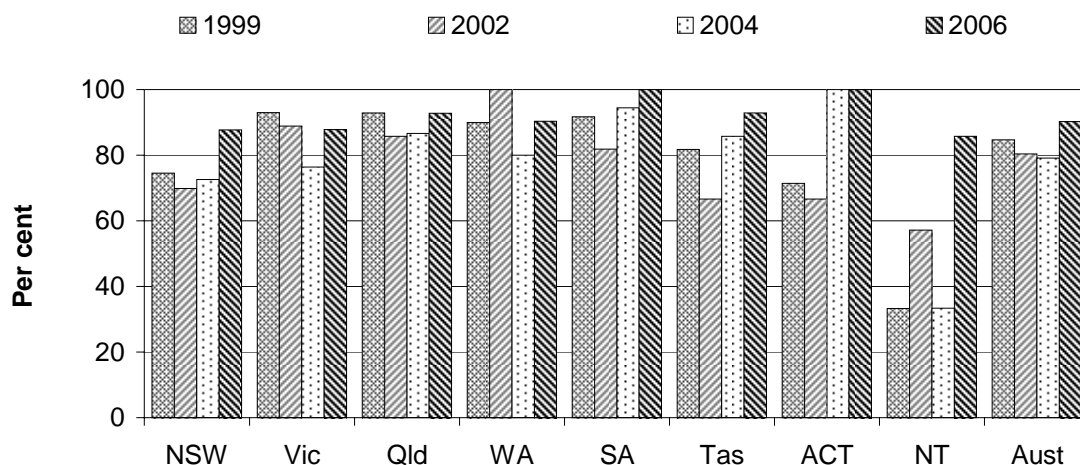
^a Data are estimated and weighted from the AGCCCS. In 2006, numbers are based on preliminary data and there may be changes to the final data.

Source: AGCCCS May 2006 (unpublished); table 14A.16.

The provision of non-standard hours of care by Australian Government approved family day care schemes in different jurisdictions is shown in figure 14.7.

Limited data are available on services not included in the Australian Government Census of Child Care Services (AGCCCS) that were offering non-standard hours of care. New South Wales and SA were able to provide data on the proportion of their preschools that offered non-standard hours in 2005-06 (tables 14A.35 and 14A.71).

Figure 14.7 **Australian Government approved family day care services providing non-standard hours of care^a**



^a Data are estimated and weighted from the AGCCCS. In 2006, numbers are based on preliminary data and there may be changes to the final data.

Source: AGCCCS May 1999, May 2002, March 2004 and May 2006 (unpublished); table 14A.16.

Service availability — utilisation rates

‘Utilisation rates’ is an indicator of equitable and adequate access to children’s services (box 14.6).

Box 14.6 Utilisation rates

‘Utilisation rates’ is an output (service availability) indicator of governments’ objective to ensure all Australian families have equitable and adequate access to children’s services.

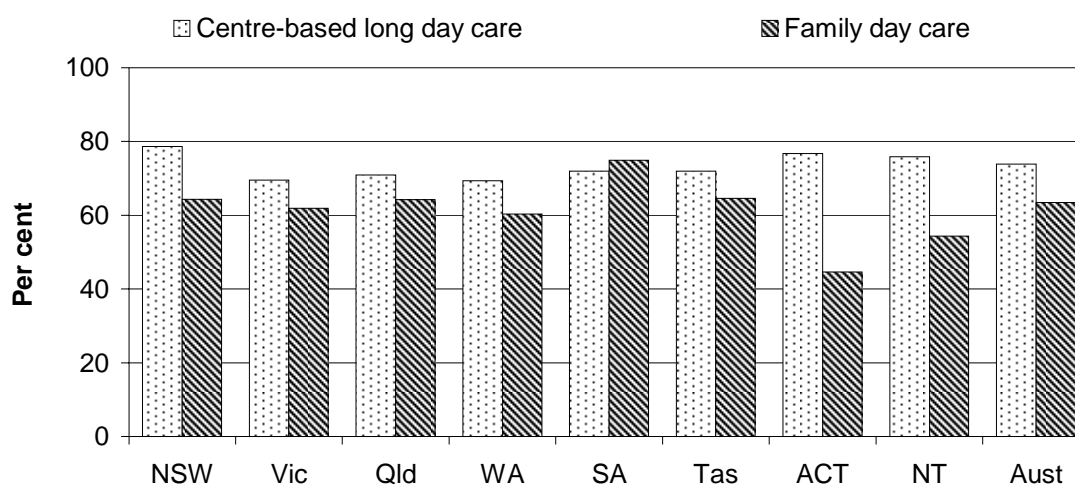
Utilisation refers to the level of usage of a service and can be measured in a number of ways, including vacancy levels and capacity to provide more hours of care. Utilisation rates can also measure how efficiently existing assets are being used. Although governments do not always directly own or operate children’s services, the level of utilisation may be relevant where governments provide targeted capital or operational funding to establish or maintain services. The indicator on utilisation rates of children’s services is calculated as the total child hours paid for as a percentage of total available hours, for centre-based long day care and family day care.

The desirable level of utilisation will depend on a number of factors. High levels of utilisation may be desirable as a measure of efficiency in situations where a community does not require additional services. An alternative view of high utilisation rates is that services are less accessible as there is less spare capacity.

The utilisation rates in Australian Government approved centre-based long day care and family day care services in different jurisdictions are shown in figure 14.8.

Nationally, utilisation rates were generally higher for centre-based long day care (73.8 per cent) than for family day care (63.5 per cent) in 2006.

Figure 14.8 Utilisation rates, centre-based long day care and family day care, 2006 (per cent)^{a, b}



^a Data are estimated and weighted from the AGCCCS. In 2006, numbers are based on preliminary data and there may be changes to the final data. ^b Family day care data exclude in-home care.

Source: AGCCCS May 2006 (unpublished); table 14A.17.

Service affordability — child care service costs

An indicator of the affordability (and thus accessibility) of children's services is the 'child care service cost', represented by average weekly fees for child care services (box 14.7).

Box 14.7 Child care service costs

'Child care service costs' is an output (service affordability) indicator of governments' objective to ensure all Australian families have equitable access to children's services regardless of their financial circumstances.

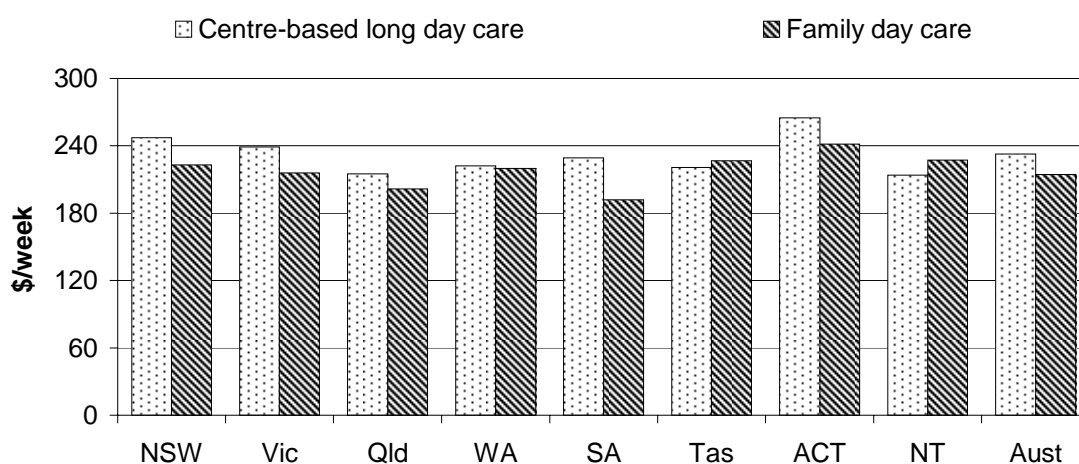
This indicator is defined as average weekly fees for 50 hours of care by service type.

Provided the service quality is held constant, lower service costs are more desirable.

Fee data need to be interpreted with care because fees are independently set by service providers. Charging practices, including fees, are commercial decisions made by individual services, so there is significant variation in the fees charged by services. Fee variation 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.

Nationally, average weekly fees for 50 hours of care in 2006 were higher for centre-based long day care services (\$233) than for family day care (\$214), as shown in figure 14.9.

Figure 14.9 Average fees charged by Australian Government funded child care services, 2006 (\$/week)^{a, b, c, d}



^a Average fees based on 50 hours of care in the Census reference week. ^b Data are estimated and weighted from the AGCCCS. In 2006, numbers are based on preliminary data and there may be changes to the final data. ^c Family day care data exclude in-home care. ^d Family day care fee includes parent levy.

Source: AGCCCS May 2006 (unpublished); table 14A.26.

Service affordability — preschool service costs

'Preschool service costs' is an indicator of the affordability and accessibility of preschool services (box 14.8).

Box 14.8 **Preschool service costs**

'Preschool service costs' is an access (service affordability) indicator of governments' objective that all Australian families have equitable access to children's services regardless of their financial circumstances.

This indicator is defined as the weekly cost of preschool per child (after subsidies received by families). Data are reported as the median weekly cost per child.

Provided the service quality and quantity is held constant, lower weekly costs represents more affordable preschool.

Various factors influence preschool costs and care needs to be exercised when interpreting results.

- There may be differences between jurisdictions in the number of hours and sessions attended by children each week.
- Preschool services are provided by a mix of providers (community, private and government). Differences in charging practices, including fees, may be due to commercial or cost recovery decisions made by individual services. Fee variation can also occur as a result of charges for additional services such as meals and materials.
- Fees may reflect higher land values and rental fees charged in major cities.
- Some jurisdictions provide targeted fee relief that lowers fees for some children.

Further detail about the mix of providers of preschool (community, private and government) is provided in tables 14A.34, 14.A.43, 14A.52, 14.A61, 14.A70, 14.A79, 14.A88 and 14.A97.

Preschool service costs per child may also depend on the time spent in preschool. Of the 257 100 children attending preschool in the reference week in 2005:

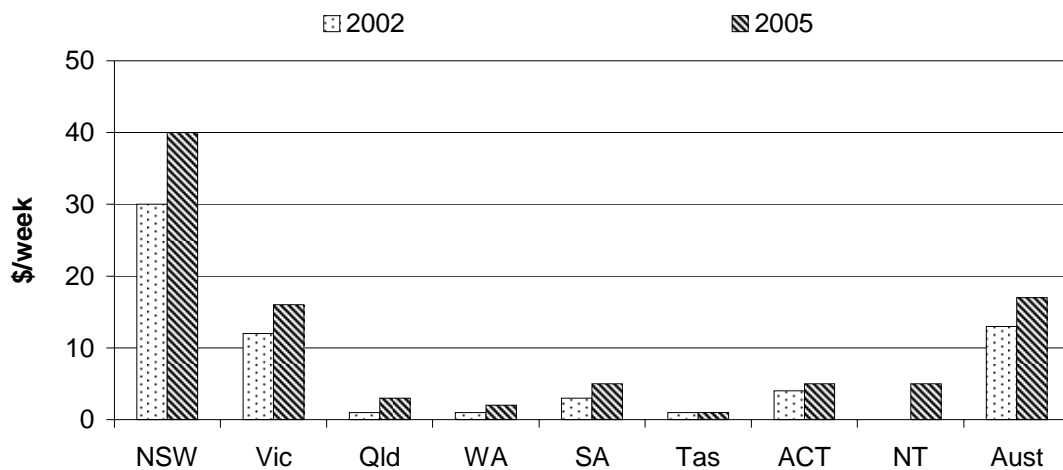
- 10.6 per cent attended preschool for less than five hours per week
- 21.3 per cent attended for between five and nine hours per week
- 40.7 per cent attended for between 10 and 14 hours per week
- 19.2 per cent attended for between 15–19 hours per week
- 8.2 per cent attended for more than 20 hours per week (ABS 2006).

Data for this indicator were obtained from the ABS 2005 *Child Care Survey*. This is a household-based survey, with parents responding to questions about use of child care and preschool services. Some children attend a preschool program within another child care setting, for example in a long day care service, where the costs would generally be higher than in preschool. It is expected that in most of these cases, the parent would report the type of service as (for example) a long day care

centre, rather than preschool, but in some instances the parent may report the type of service as preschool. Box 14.19 includes further information about the 2005 Child Care survey.

Nationally, the median cost (the middle value in the distribution of fees paid per child) of preschool per child in 2005 was \$17 per week. In 2002, the median costs were \$13 per week (figure 14.10). Table 14A.27 provides additional information on the preschool service costs for children by cost range for selected jurisdictions.

Figure 14.10 Children who attended preschool, median weekly cost per child (after subsidies), 2002, 2005^{a, b, c, d, e}



^a Net costs per child after subsidies have been received. Some children attending preschool services may be eligible for the minimum rate of the Child Care Benefit. ^b The estimates are not based on standardised measures of child age, hours of service provided or preschool service delivery mechanisms. ^c In Victoria and NSW, a fee subsidy is paid directly to services to reduce fees paid by eligible families such as those holding approved concession cards or meeting specified income thresholds. ^d The estimates for Tasmania and the ACT have a relative standard error between 25 per cent and 50 per cent and should be used with caution. ^e For 2005, the estimates for Queensland, WA, Tasmania and NT have high relative standard errors and should be used with caution.

Source: ABS 2002, 2005 *Child Care Surveys* (unpublished); table 14A.27.

Quality

An important focus of Australian, State and Territory governments is to set and maintain appropriate quality standards in child care and preschool services. Indicators of the quality of children's services are the proportion of qualified staff, the rate of ongoing staff development, the extent of licensing, the proportion of services that have achieved quality accreditation, the number of serious injuries, and the number of substantiated breaches arising from complaints. These data need to be treated with caution because there are differences in reporting across jurisdictions.

Staff— qualifications

Staff qualifications are an indicator of staff quality (box 14.9).

Box 14.9 Qualifications

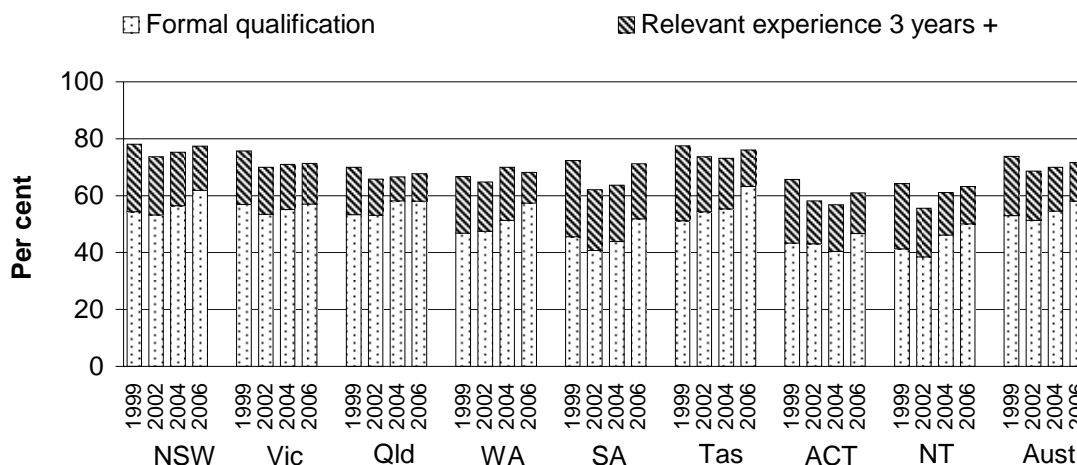
‘Qualifications’ in children’s services is an output (staff) indicator of governments’ objective to ensure staff in government funded or provided children’s services are able to provide services which meet the needs of children. In particular this means ensuring staff have the training and experience to provide a safe and nurturing environment that fulfils the educational and development needs of children.

This indicator is defined as the proportion of primary contact staff with relevant formal qualifications or three or more years of relevant experience.

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 this is desirable.

Nationally, there were 84 379 primary contact staff employed in Australian Government approved child care in 2006 (table 14A.13). The proportion of primary contact staff with relevant formal qualifications or three or more years of relevant experience across jurisdictions over this period is reported in figure 14.11.

Figure 14.11 **Paid primary contact staff employed by Australian Government approved child care services, by qualification^{a, b, c, d}**

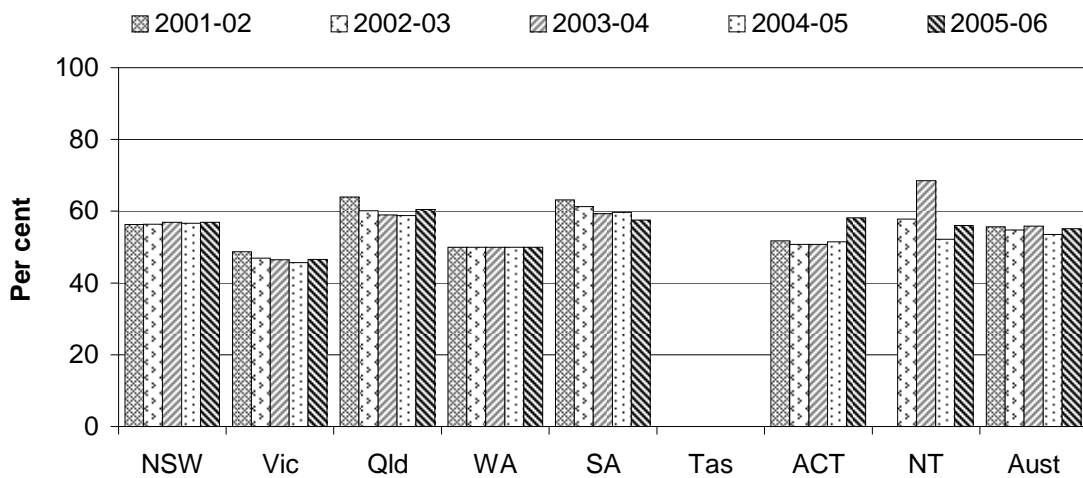


^a There may be double counting of staff where staff work in more than one centre. ^b The ‘Three or more years relevant experience’ category excludes staff with a relevant formal qualification. ^c Data for some years do not cover all services, which limits the comparability over time. ^d Data are estimated and weighted from the AGCCCS. In 2006, numbers are based on preliminary data and there may be changes to the final data.

Source: AGCCCS May 1999, May 2002, March 2004 and May 2006 (unpublished); table 14A.13.

Some data are available on the qualifications of staff employed by preschool services that received funding from State and Territory governments. The proportion of preschool primary contact staff with a relevant formal qualification is reported in figure 14.12. The comparability of these data is limited, however, by the different licensing and funding arrangements across jurisdictions.

Figure 14.12 Paid primary contact staff with a relevant formal qualification employed by State and Territory funded and/or managed preschools^{a, b, c}



^a All preschool services in NSW, Victoria and Queensland must have at least two staff, of whom one must have a relevant formal qualification. ^b In WA, all preschool teachers must have a formal qualification. The data assumes that every teacher has an aide. Qualifications of aides are unknown and so reported as zero. ^c Data for Tasmania and some years in the NT are not available.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 14A.33, 14A.42, 14A.51, 14A.60, 14A.69, 14A.78, 14A.87 and 14A.96.

Ongoing staff development

Ongoing development of the skills and competencies of child care and preschool staff is an indicator of staff quality (box 14.10).

Box 14.10 Ongoing staff development

'Ongoing staff development' in children's services is an output (staff) indicator of governments' objective to ensure staff in government funded or provided children's services are able to provide services that meet the needs of children. In particular, this means ensuring staff have the training and experience to provide a safe and nurturing environment that fulfils the educational and development needs of children.

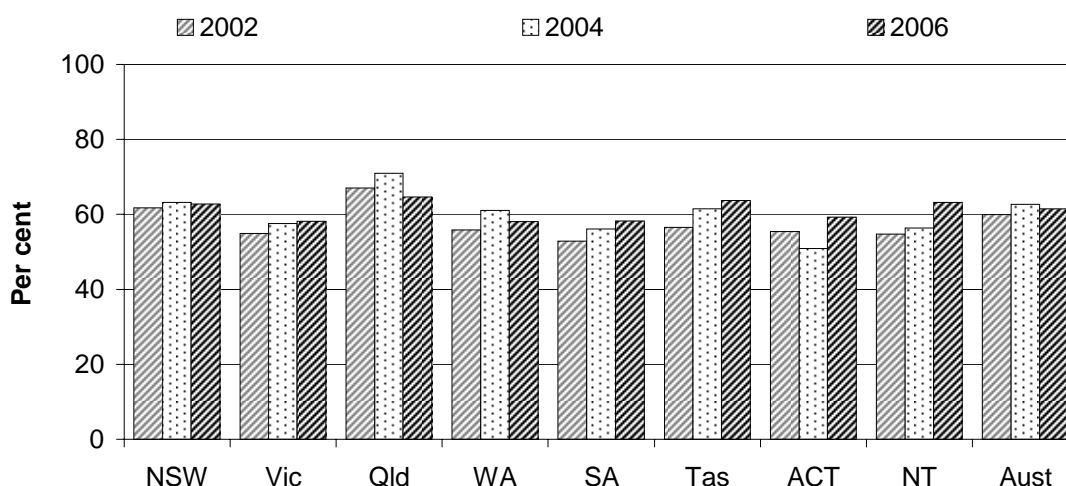
This indicator is defined as the proportion of staff who undertook relevant in-service training in the previous 12 months.

A high rate of in-service training suggests a relatively high quality of service.

This indicator does not provide information on whether the ongoing development undertaken by staff is adequate or sufficiently relevant to improve the quality of the service provided.

Nationally, more than 60 per cent of paid staff working in Australian Government child care services in 2006 undertook relevant in-service training in the previous 12 months (figure 14.13). Limited data are available on training by paid child care and preschool staff employed by State and Territory funded and/or managed service providers. New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and the ACT were able to provide data on the proportion of preschool staff undertaking training in 2005-06 (tables 14A.33, 14A.42, 14A.51 and 14A.87).

Figure 14.13 Staff in Australian Government child care services who undertook relevant in-service training in previous 12 months^{a, b, c}



^a There may be double counting of staff where staff work in more than one centre. ^b Data for some years do not cover all services, which limits the comparability over time. ^c Data are estimated and weighted from the AGCCCS. In 2006, numbers are based on preliminary data and there may be changes to the final data.

Source: AGCCCS May 2002, March 2004 and May 2006 (unpublished); table 14A.14.

Standards

The Australian Government and the State and Territory governments support the quality of care provided by children's services through:

- accreditation and licensing
- provision of curriculum and policy support and advice
- training and development of management and staff.

Standards — licensing

State and Territory governments are responsible for licensing children's services in their jurisdiction (box 14.11).

Box 14.11 Licensing

'Licensing' is an output (standards) indicator of governments' objective to ensure government funded or provided children's services meet the minimum standards considered necessary to provide a safe and nurturing environment, and to meet the educational and development needs of children.

This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. Descriptive information is reported for some jurisdictions as an interim measure. This information includes the number of licensed services.

A higher proportion of licensed services may indicate a higher level of regulatory control over services.

This indicator does not provide information on the degree to which 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 undertaking consumer education.

State and Territory licensing requirements establish the foundations for quality of care by stipulating enforceable standards to support the health, safety, welfare and development needs of children in formal child care settings. Accreditation of services is built on this platform.

Licensed children's services may include centre-based long day care, occasional care, preschools, family day care services and outside school hours care. Australian, State and Territory governments have developed national standards for centre-based long day care, family day care services and outside school hours care. Jurisdictions refer to these standards when writing regulations. The extent of implementation of these standards varies across Australia.

The types of service covered by legislation vary across jurisdictions (table 14.5).

Table 14.5 State and Territory licensing of children's services, 2006

<i>Service type</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>
Centre-based long day care ^a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Occasional care ^b	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Family day care schemes/agencies ^c	✓	x	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	x
Family day care carers ^d	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x	x
Outside school-hours care	x	x	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	x
Home-based care ^e	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓	x	x
Other care ^f	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x
Preschool/kindergarten ^g	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓

^a In the ACT and Victoria, services are licensed as centre-based children's services. ^b In SA, occasional care services operated by community groups or individuals are licensed. Government-operated occasional care is not licensed, but must operate to licensing standards. ^c In Qld, family day care schemes are licensed as home-based care. ^d Family day care providers in WA are individually licensed. Family day carers in NSW, Queensland and Tasmania are not required to be licensed, provided they are registered through a family day care scheme. In SA, Family Day Care providers are regulated by approvals and cannot advertise unless approved by the State. ^e In SA, baby sitting agencies must be licensed if they are referring nannies and babysitters to parents to care for children in the child's own home. In Qld, stand-alone care provided in a home is not licensed, but is required to meet a set of minimum standards. ^f NSW has the capacity to approve child minding services in retail shopping centres under the *Children's Services Regulation 2004*. NSW is also moving towards regulation of out of school hours services. Under the *Child Care Act 2001*, Tasmania has the capacity to licence other forms of care, for example, in-home child care and nanny agencies. ^g In Qld, preschool services delivered in community based kindergartens are licensed. In SA, preschools are operated by the State Government, independent schools or as licensed child care centres. In Tasmania, kindergartens not in government schools are registered with the Schools Registration Board. In ACT, playschools and independent preschools are licensed. In the NT, independent preschools and kindergartens for 3 year olds are licensed.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished).

Standards — accredited child care services

The NCAC administers quality assurance systems for long day care centres, family day care schemes and outside school hours care services across Australia (box 14.12).

Box 14.12 Accredited child care services

‘Accredited child care services’ is an output (standards) indicator of governments’ objective to ensure government funded or provided child care services meet the standards considered necessary to provide a safe and nurturing environment, and to meet the educational and development needs of children. Accredited services have been independently evaluated against a series of national quality standards for the specific child care service type.

This indicator is defined as the number of child care services that are accredited by NCAC as a proportion of services fully assessed. Data are reported for centre-based long day care services, family day care schemes and outside school hours care services.

A higher proportion of centres that have been accredited is more desirable.

This indicator does not provide information on the degree to which accreditation translates into higher quality service outcomes.

To become accredited under NCAC quality assurance systems, service providers are required to achieve and maintain the quality standards set out for each service type. NCAC has developed the following standards:

- the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) for centre-based long day care centres
- Family Day Care Quality Assurance (FDCQA) for family day care schemes
- Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance (OSHCQA) for outside school hours care services.

The standards include the expected performance against a variety of ‘quality areas’, depending on the type of service. For example, the QIAS details performance against the following seven ‘quality areas’:

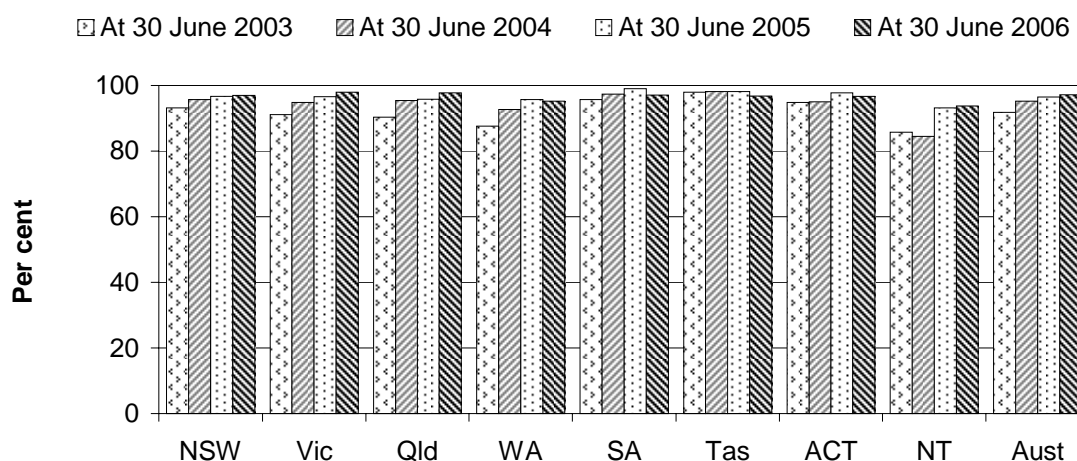
- staff relationships with children and peers
- partnerships with families
- programming and evaluation
- children’s experiences and learning
- protective care and safety
- health, nutrition and wellbeing
- managing to support quality.

The NCAC accreditation systems are Australian Government initiatives linked to Child Care Benefit funding. All centre-based long day child care services are

required to participate in the QIAS to be eligible for approval for Child Care Benefit purposes, and the majority of centre-based long day child care services participate.

Nationally, of the 5043 centres registered to participate in the QIAS at 30 June 2006, 4308 centres had received an accreditation decision (table 14A.2). Of the centres assessed, 97.2 per cent (4187 centres) were successful in achieving accreditation (figure 14.14). The centres that do not meet accreditation standards (121 centres) are required to submit another self study report to NCAC within six months of the date of NCAC's accreditation decision. At 30 June 2006, a further 735 centres (14.6 per cent of those registered to participate in QIAS) were in self study, review or moderation, or awaiting an accreditation decision (table 14A.2).

Figure 14.14 Accredited centres as a proportion of centres fully assessed under the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System^{a, b}



^a Figures may change daily and are updated every six weeks following an NCAC meeting. ^b Results for Tasmania, the ACT and the NT may be unduly influenced by the relatively small number of services (89, 94 and 56 respectively at 30 June 2006) participating in the process.

Source: NCAC (unpublished); table 14A.2.

Family day care schemes have submitted self-study reports since July 2002, with 284 out of 318 schemes accredited at 30 June 2006. Thirty-three schemes were not accredited and one was in self study, validation or moderation, or awaiting an accreditation decision (table 14A.2).

All services providing before school, after school and vacation care were required to register with NCAC by 30 September 2003. At 30 June 2006, there were 3025 outside school hours care services registered to participate in OSHCQA (table 14A.2). Of the 1062 services that had received an accreditation decision at 30 June 2006, 86.3 per cent (917 services) were successful in achieving

accreditation. A further 1963 services had not yet completed the accreditation process.

Health and safety — serious injuries

‘Serious injuries’ is an indicator of child care services’ success in providing a safe environment (box 14.13).

Box 14.13 Serious injuries

‘Serious injuries’ is an output (health and safety) indicator of governments’ objective to ensure children’s services meet the care, educational and development needs of children in a safe and nurturing environment.

This indicator is defined as the number of serious injuries per registered or licensed service provider. A serious injury is defined as an injury requiring hospitalisation or a visit to, or by, a medical doctor.

A higher rate of injury does not provide information on whether a jurisdiction has lower service safety and quality, or a more effective reporting and monitoring regime. All else being equal, a low injury rate may indicate a high level of safety.

Data on the number of serious injuries and the number of serious injuries per registered or licensed service provider were limited for 2005-06. Although most jurisdictions could provide some information, the small incident numbers, different approaches to defining serious injuries and differences in data collection approaches mean that jurisdictions’ data cannot be directly compared. Tables 14A.36, 14A.45, 14A.54, 14A.90 and 14A.99 provide a breakdown of the available information for NSW, Victoria, Queensland, the ACT and the NT.

Health and safety — hospitalisations for external causes of injury occurring in children’s services

At present, jurisdictions do not have comparable administrative collections on serious injuries occurring in children’s services. One source of comparable information is hospitalisations data. ‘Hospital separations for external causes of injury’ is a proxy indicator of children’s services’ success in providing a safe environment (box 14.14).

Box 14.14 Hospital separations for external causes of injury

'Hospital separations for external causes of injury' is an output (health and safety) indicator of governments' objective to ensure that children's services meet the care, educational and developmental needs of children in a safe and nurturing environment.

This indicator is defined as the number of hospital separations for children aged 0–4 years resulting from an external cause of injury occurring in 'school' expressed as a proportion of total hospital separations for children aged 0–4 years resulting from an external cause of injury.

Low or decreasing hospitalisations for external causes of injury for children aged 0–4 years occurring in a 'school' may indicate better performance towards achieving the objective of providing the care, educational and development needs of children in a safe and nurturing environment.

Limiting the data to children aged 0–4 reduces the likelihood that the 'school' place of occurrence includes children in full time compulsory schooling, which children generally attend when they are 5 years old or more. For children in the older age group it is not possible to separate injuries that occur in a children's service from those that occur in a full time formal school setting, and so they are excluded from the indicator.

For children aged 0–4 years, the term 'school' incorporates a range of formal children's services settings including kindergarten, preschool and centre-based child care services. Family day care services, which are typically provided in the carer's home, are not likely to be covered by this term. External cause refers to the environmental event, circumstance or condition that causes the injury. Persons admitted to hospital as a result of a pre-existing existing illness or condition (such as asthma), are excluded.

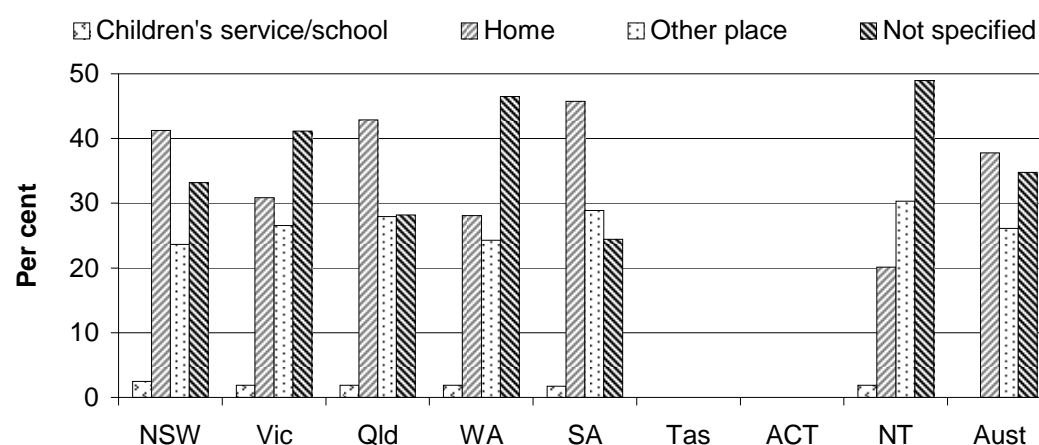
All hospital separation data need to be interpreted with care. Nationally, no place of occurrence was reported for 34.8 per cent of hospitalisations of children aged 0–4 years in 2004-05. As a result, this indicator should be interpreted as the minimum proportion of hospital separations for an external cause of injury that occurred in children's services.

In 2004-05, there were 28 448 injuries to children aged 0–4 years that resulted in a hospital admission in Australia (table 14A.28). Males accounted for approximately 55.7 per cent of these admissions. In total, the most common causes of injury to children aged 0–4 years were falls (24 per cent), complications of medical and surgical care (19 per cent) and exposure to mechanical forces (18 per cent). (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare unpublished). Males and females generally experienced similar causes of injury.

Place of occurrence was recorded for 65.2 per cent of hospitalisations for children aged 0–4 years in 2004-05 (table 14A.28). Of those injuries for which a place of occurrence was recorded in 2004-05, 59.1 per cent occurred in the child's home. This reflects the fact that children in this age group spend the majority of their time

in the home and about half do not attend formal care. Across jurisdictions, around 2 to 3.5 per cent of injuries were reported as occurring at a ‘school’ (which includes day nursery, centre-based child care, and public or private kindergartens and preschools) (figure 14.15).

Figure 14.15 Hospital separations for external causes of injury for children aged 0–4 years, by place of occurrence as a proportion of the total, 2004-05^{a, b, c, d, e}



a 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 existing illness or condition, such as asthma, are excluded. **b** A hospital separation is an episode of care for a person admitted to a hospital. **c** Separations without an external cause and those for which care type was reported as newborn with no qualified days, and records for hospital boarders or posthumous organ procurement are excluded. **d** Data are withheld for injuries in Tasmania and the ACT due to the small number of injuries reported. Data on the number of accidents occurring in children’s services at a national level in 2004-05 are also withheld, as a consequence. **e** Due to the high levels of non-reporting for place of occurrence, all hospital separations data need to be interpreted with care.

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare *Australian Hospital Statistics 2004-05* (unpublished); table 14A.28.

Client satisfaction — monitoring and inspection regimes

All states and territories set standards of expected performance of children’s services, based on the relevant legislation, regulation and/or licensing conditions. The jurisdictions monitor performance against the standards in order to ensure high-quality services are delivered to the community. Table 14.6 provides an overview of the monitoring and inspection regimes that operate in the jurisdictions.

Table 14.6 shows that there are broad commonalities in the monitoring and inspection regimes across jurisdictions. However, there is variability in the recording of breaches and a variety of penalties applied for breaches. This has

hindered the reporting of comparable data across jurisdictions for monitoring and inspection.

Table 14.6 **State and Territory monitoring and inspection regimes, for licensed children's services 2005-06**

<i>Monitoring activities</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld^a</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>
<i>Proactive monitoring:^b</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Required frequency of inspections	Annual	Annual	Biannual	At least once per licence period (3 years)	Biannual	Quarter	Quarter	Biannual
Estimated share announced visits ^c	75%	7%	46%	55%	70%	99%	60%	80%
Estimated share unannounced inspections ^d	25%	93%	54%	45%	30%	1%	40%	20%
<i>Reactive monitoring:^e</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Data provided on substantiated breaches arising from complaints ^f	x	✓	x	✓	x	✓	✓	✓
<i>Sanctions for breaches:^g</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Under-performing services incur follow-up or more frequent inspections	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Number of prosecutions initiated against services during 2005-06 ^h	–	1	–	2	–	–	–	–

^a Information for Queensland excludes state and non-state preschools, but includes kindergartens.

^b '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. ^c Announced visits are scheduled with the service provider, and include, but are not limited to, consultative and advisory meetings ^d 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. ^e A 'reactive monitoring' regime may be triggered by either a complaint or a service's failure to comply with legislative requirements. ^f See detailed data in attachment tables 14.A46, 14.A64, 14A.82, 14A.91, 14A.100. ^g Jurisdictions may apply a wide range of actions to underperforming services. These actions may include administrative and/or statutory sanctions, including prosecution. Not all sanctions are included in this table. ^h 'Prosecutions' refer to all prosecutions against services that are brought under the relevant children's services Act in each jurisdiction. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished).

Client satisfaction — substantiated breaches arising from complaints

‘Substantiated breaches arising from complaints’ is an indicator of community satisfaction with child care services (box 14.15). Breaches identified as a result of normal monitoring and inspection visits are excluded from these data.

Box 14.15 Substantiated breaches arising from complaints

‘Substantiated breaches arising from complaints’ is an output (client satisfaction) indicator of governments’ objective to ensure government funded or provided children’s services meet the needs and expectations of users.

This indicator is defined as the number of substantiated breaches arising from complaints divided by the total number of registered or licensed services. Results are presented by service type. Data on the proportion of substantiated breaches arising from complaints against which action was taken are also reported.

A higher rate of complaints does not provide information on whether a jurisdiction has lower service safety and quality, or a more effective reporting and monitoring regime. All else being equal, a higher rate of breaches arising from complaints may suggest a lower quality service

Complaints data need to be interpreted with care, because:

- some jurisdictions give priority to developing client groups who are well informed, as part of improving their service delivery. Clients who are well informed may be more likely to make a complaint than are clients without access to this information
- 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.

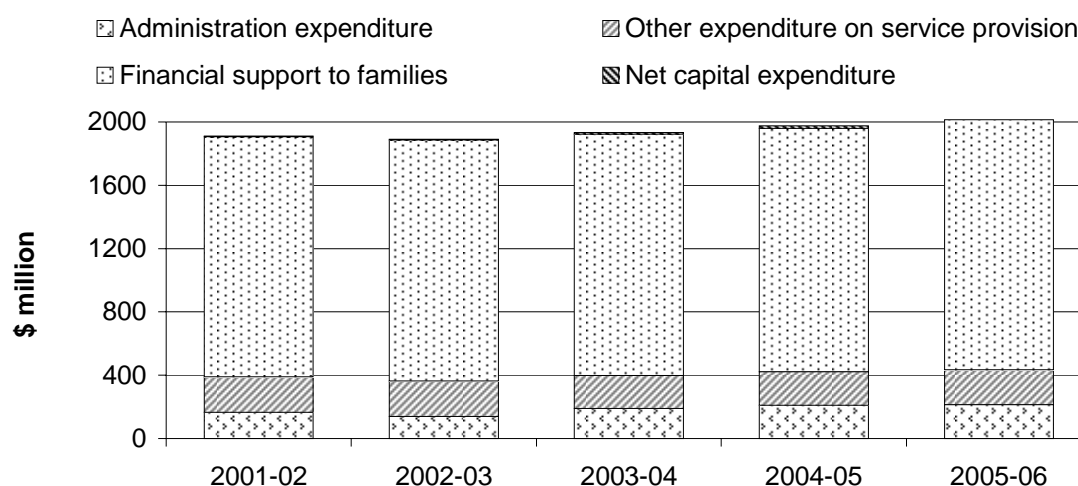
Breaches of legislation, regulations or conditions can relate to a broad range of requirements. Some requirements have serious implications for the quality of care provided to children (such as requirements to undertake criminal record checks for staff and requirements to install smoke detectors). Other requirements 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.

Victoria, WA, Tasmania, the ACT and the NT provided data on the number of substantiated breaches arising from complaints and allegations of regulation breaches made to the State and Territory government regulatory bodies in 2005-06 (tables 14.A46, 14.A64, 14A.82, 14A.91 and 14A.100).

Efficiency

Australian Government expenditure accounted for 75.4 per cent (\$2.02 billion) of total government expenditure on children's services in 2005-06. The major component of Australian Government expenditure was financial support to families through assistance with fees, which accounted for 78.2 per cent (\$1.58 billion) of Australian Government expenditure on children's services. Other expenditure on service provision² accounted for a further 10.9 per cent (\$219.9 million), and administration expenditure and net capital expenditure accounted for the remaining 10.6 per cent (\$214.6 million) and 0.3 per cent (\$6.6 million) respectively (figure 14.16).

Figure 14.16 Australian Government real expenditure on children's services (2005-06 dollars)



Source: Department of Family, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) (unpublished); table 14A.4.

State and Territory government expenditure on children's services in 2005-06 was approximately \$659.4 million, of which other expenditure on service provision comprised around 50.1 per cent (\$330.5 million). Administration expenditure, net capital expenditure and financial support to families accounted for 43.8 per cent (\$288.6 million), 3.3 per cent (\$21.8 million) and 3 per cent (\$19.5 million) respectively (tables 14A.4, 14A.7, 14A.29, 14A.38, 14A.47, 14A.56, 14A.65, 14A.74, 14A.83, 14A.92).

²'Other expenditure on service provision' includes all recurrent expenditure on government funded and/or provided child care and preschool services. It also includes one-off, non-capital payments to peak agencies who support child care and preschool service providers.

Differences in reported efficiency results across jurisdictions may 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 the expenditure is shown in table 14A.6.

Inputs per output unit — total government expenditure (dollars per child)

Total government expenditure (Australian Government and State and Territory governments) on children's services per child aged 0–12 years in Australia is a proxy indicator of efficiency (box 14.16).

Box 14.16 Total government expenditure

'Total government expenditure' per child is an output (efficiency) indicator of governments' objective to maximise the availability and quality of services through the efficient use of taxpayer resources.

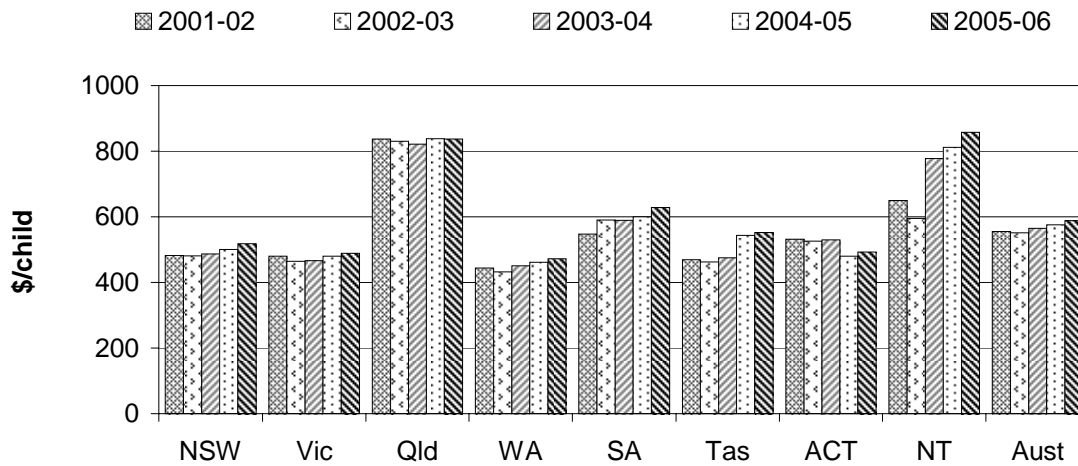
This indicator is defined as Australian Government expenditure and State and Territory governments expenditure on children's services per child aged 0–12 years in Australia. All Australian Government expenditure reported for this indicator is provided for child care services, whereas State and Territory government expenditure covers both child care and preschool services.

Expenditure data per child is reported separately for the Australian Government and State and Territory government, as well as a combined expenditure figure per child.

All efficiency data need to be interpreted with care. Changes in expenditure per child could represent changes in government funding policy. While high or increasing unit costs may reflect deteriorating efficiency, they may also reflect increases in the quality or quantity of service provided. Similarly, low or declining expenditure per child may reflect improving efficiency or lower quality or quantity. Provided the level and quality of, and access to, services remains unchanged, lower expenditure per child can indicate greater efficiency of government expenditure.

After adjusting for inflation to calculate the 'real' value of expenditure in previous years, Australian Government expenditure on children's services at a national level increased between 2001-02 and 2005-06 (figure 14.17).

Figure 14.17 Australian Government real expenditure on children's services per child aged 0–12 (2005-06 dollars)^{a, b}



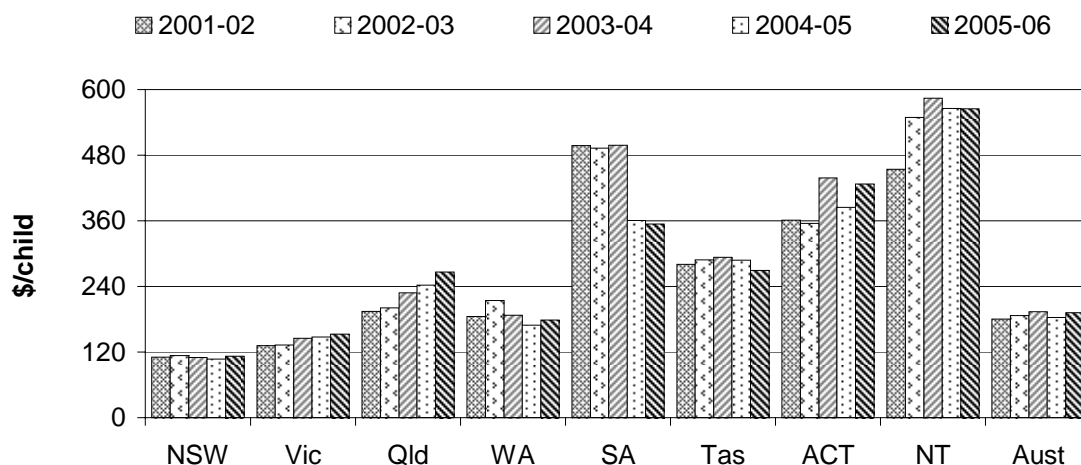
^a Includes administration expenditure, other expenditure on service provision, financial support to families and net capital expenditure on child care services. ^b The Australian total includes a component of expenditure that cannot be disaggregated by State and Territory.

Source: FaCSIA (unpublished); ABS *Australian Demographic Statistics* (unpublished); table 14A.21.

Data were sought from all State and Territory governments on their expenditure by service type. Incomplete data and changes in collection method, however, make it difficult to compare expenditure across jurisdictions and over time. Unit cost data for children's services do not yet contain an estimate of user cost of capital.

Figure 14.18 shows the variation in total real expenditure per child aged 0–12 years by State and Territory governments over the period 2001-02 to 2005-06.

Figure 14.18 State and Territory government real expenditure on children's services per child aged 0–12 (2005-06 dollars)^{a, b, c, d, e}

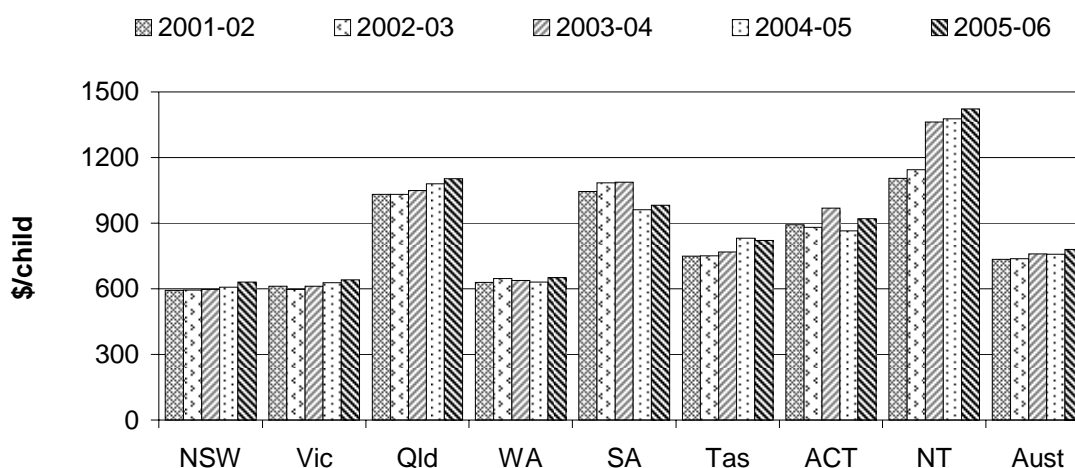


^a Includes administration expenditure, other expenditure on service provision, financial support to families, and net capital expenditure on child care and preschool services. ^b The increase in Queensland expenditure for 2004-05 is the result of improved reporting processes. This specifically captures information relating to a newly developed output of Child Care Policy and Services, and includes previously unreported information, namely indirect costs, head office overheads and expenditure on policy advice and development. ^c WA expenditure for 2001-02 declined in response to the changes in the school entry age and the associated move to full time schooling for pre-year 1 children. ^d WA data for 2003-04 and 2004-05 exclude expenditure on the non-government sector. ^e The decrease in SA expenditure per child aged 0–12 years in 2004-05 and 2005-06 is due to the exclusion of all Australian Government contributions, which SA currently administers, from the total state/territory real expenditure on children's services.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); ABS *Australian Demographic Statistics* (unpublished); table 14A.22.

Figure 14.19 shows the combined expenditure from both the Australian Government and the State and Territory governments per child aged 0–12 years over the period 2001-02 to 2005-06.

Figure 14.19 **Total government real expenditure on children's services per child aged 0–12 (2005-06 dollars)^{a, b}**



^a Includes administration expenditure, other expenditure on service provision, financial support to families, and net capital expenditure on child care and preschool services from both Australian Government (for child care services only) and State and Territory Governments (for child care services and preschool services).

^b See notes to figure 14.18 for further detail on State and Territory governments' expenditure data.

Source: FaCSIA (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); ABS Australian Demographic Statistics (unpublished), tables 14A.21 and 14A.22.

Outcomes

Family needs

'Family needs' is an indicator of the outcomes of children's services (box 14.17).

Box 14.17 Family needs

'Family needs' in children's services is an outcome (effectiveness) indicator of governments' objective to provide children's services that provide support for families in caring for their children.

This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. Data, however, were not available for the 2007 Report.

Demand for (additional) child care

'Demand for additional child care services' is an indicator of the success of children's services in meeting the needs of the community (box 14.18).

Box 14.18 Demand for (additional) child care

'Demand for (additional) child care' provides an outcome indicator of governments' objective to ensure children's services meet the requirements of all Australian families. Expressed need for child care indicates the extent to which children's services are not meeting demand by families.

The indicator is defined as the proportion of children aged under 12 years for whom additional services were required in the four weeks before the survey interview.

A lower proportion of children for whom additional services were required indicates demand by families is being met to a greater extent.

Data for this indicator were obtained from the ABS 2005 *Child Care Survey*. Box 14.19 includes further information about the 2005 survey.

Box 14.19 ABS Child Care Survey

The ABS Child Care Survey is conducted every three years throughout Australia, as a supplement to the Labour Force Survey. The latest survey was conducted in June 2005.

Information was collected in relation to children aged 0–12 years living in a sample of private dwellings (in previous surveys, the age group covered was children aged 0–11 years). In each selected household, detailed information about each child's child care was collected for a maximum of two children. Data were collected for approximately 10 200 children in total.

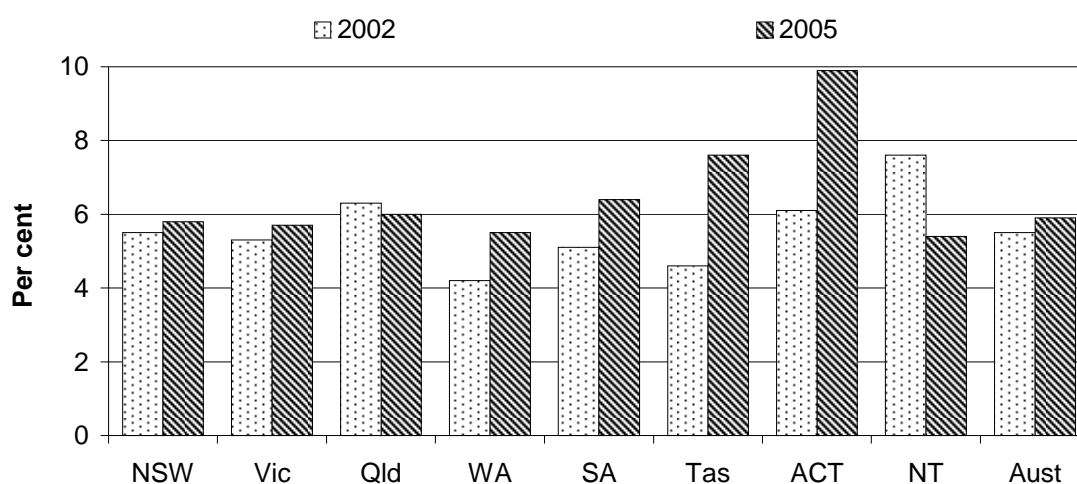
The survey included information about whether parents' needs for child care were met. Those families not already using child care or preschool services were asked whether there was any time in the previous four weeks when they wanted to use any child care or preschool services for their child but did not. Those families already using child care or preschool services were asked a similar question to determine whether they had wanted to use any more services in the previous four weeks.

Estimates from the surveys are subject to sampling variability. They may differ from estimates that would have been produced by a census. Estimates for the smaller jurisdictions are based on small sample sizes and, consequently, are subject to high sampling error. Data for Tasmania, the ACT and the NT, in particular, need to be interpreted with caution.

Aggregated survey data also need to be interpreted with care generally, because over and undersupply of child care places can be specific to particular areas, including small and remote communities. Further, the data will not reflect changes in population in some areas since June 2005.

Nationally, no additional child care or preschool services were required in the previous four weeks for the majority (94.1 per cent) of children aged under 12 years in 2005. This figure has remained relatively steady since 2002, when 94.5 per cent did not require additional services in the previous four weeks (figure 14.20). In 2005, additional child care services were required for approximately 184 500 children aged under 12 years. A further 4100 children aged under 12 years required additional preschool services in the previous four weeks (table 14A.24).

Figure 14.20 **Proportion of children aged under 12 years for whom additional formal child care was required, 2002, 2005^a**

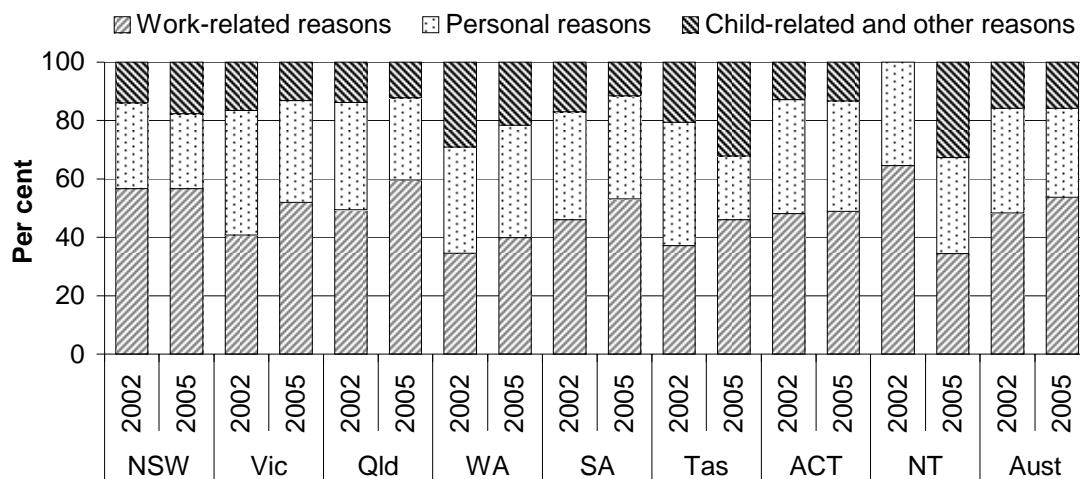


^a Estimates for the smaller jurisdictions are based on small sample sizes and, consequently, are subject to high sampling error. Data for Tasmania, the ACT and the NT, in particular, need to be interpreted with caution.

Source: ABS 2002, 2005 *Child Care Survey* (unpublished); table 14A.23.

Nationally, work-related reasons were the most commonly cited for needing additional formal care in 2005 (53.7 per cent of children aged 0–11 in 2005 compared with 48.4 per cent in 2002). Personal reasons for needing additional formal care were reported for 30.5 per cent of children aged 0–11 years in 2005, compared with 35.8 per cent in 2002 (figure 14.21). The category ‘child-related and other reasons’ was steady, reported for 15.8 per cent of children in both 2002 and 2005 (table 14A.24).

Figure 14.21 **Children aged under 12 years who required additional child care services by main reason required, 2002, 2005^a**

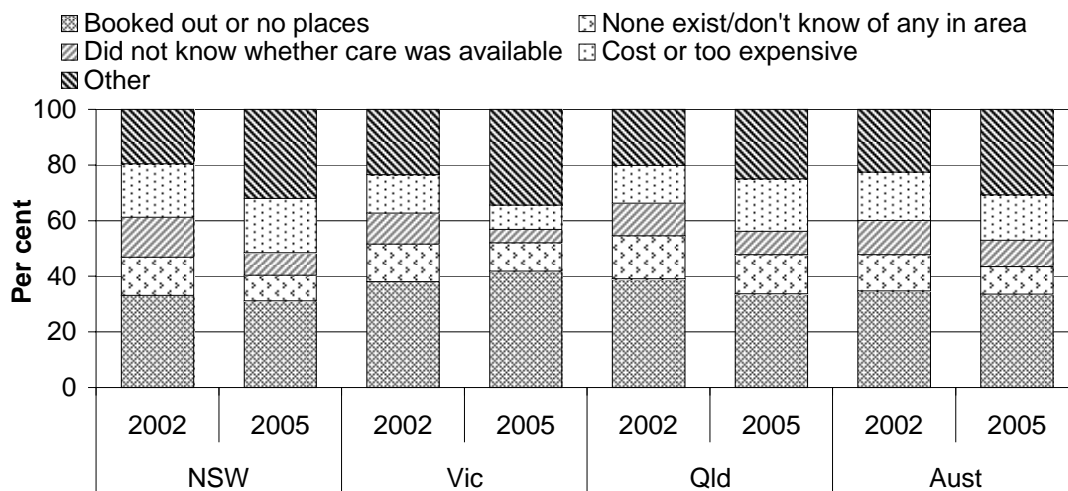


^a Estimates are based on small sample sizes and, consequently, are subject to high sampling error. Data for Tasmania, the ACT and the NT, in particular, need to be interpreted with caution.

Source: ABS 2002, 2005 *Child Care Survey* (unpublished); table 14A.24.

Parents who required additional child care services in the past 4 weeks, but were unable to access extra services, were asked about the barriers to access. The most commonly cited reason for not using the additional services required in the previous four weeks was a lack of available places ('booked out or no places') (table 14A.25). In 2005, this reason was reported for 33.6 per cent of children aged 0–11 years, a similar proportion to 2002 (34.8 per cent). 'No services exist/don't know of any in area' was reported for 9.9 per cent of children, compared with 12.9 per cent in 2002. 'Did not know whether care was available' was reported for 9.4 per cent of children in 2005, compared with 12.4 per cent in 2002. The cost of services was given as the reason for not using the additional services required in the previous four weeks for 16.4 per cent of cases in 2005, similar to 17.3 per cent in 2002 (figure 14.22).

Figure 14.22 Children aged under 12 years by main reason additional child care services not used, 2002, 2005^{a, b}



^a Due to the high sampling error, data for WA, SA, Tasmania, the ACT and the NT were suppressed. They are included in the Australian total. ^b 'Other' includes 'other service related' reasons, 'child-related' reasons and 'other' reasons why additional services were not used.

Source: ABS 2002, 2005 *Child Care Survey* (unpublished); table 14A.25.

Out-of-pocket costs

'Out-of-pocket costs' of child care is an indicator of the affordability and accessibility of child care services (box 14.20).

Box 14.20 Out-of-pocket costs

'Out-of-pocket costs' is an outcome indicator of governments' objective that all Australian families have equitable access to children's services regardless of their financial circumstances.

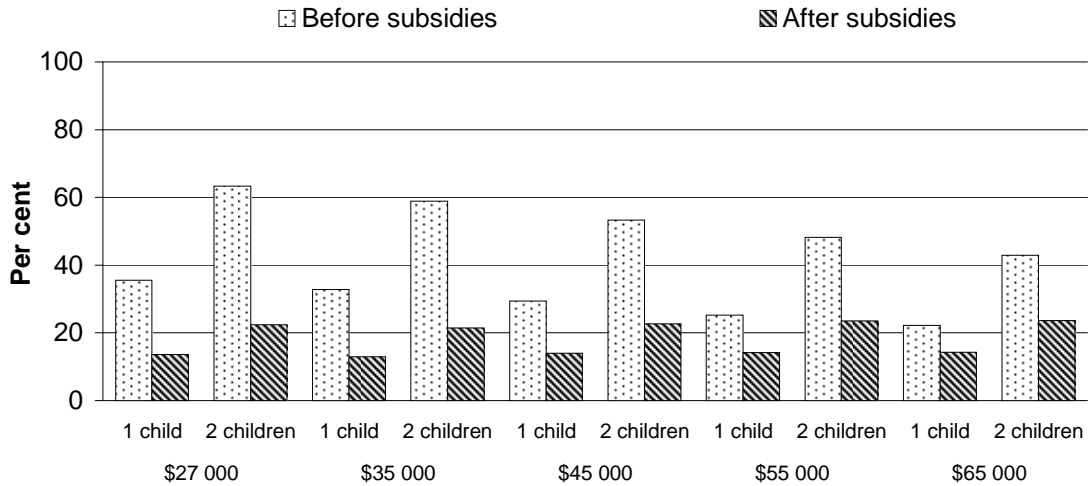
This indicator is defined as the proportion of weekly disposable income that representative families spend on child care services before and after the payment of child care subsidies. Data are estimated for families with a 60:40 income split and gross annual income of \$27 000, \$35 000, \$45 000, \$55 000 and \$65 000. Families are assumed to have either one or two children who attend full time care (equal to 50 hours per child per week) in centre-based long day care and family day care.

Lower out-of-pocket costs 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.

Care needs to be exercised when interpreting results, however, because a variety of factors may influence child care fees.

After the payment of child care subsidies, out-of-pocket costs as a proportion of weekly family income in 2006 was generally similar across income bands compared to the case before subsidies were paid (figure 14.23).

Figure 14.23 Out-of-pocket costs of child care for families with children in full time centre-based long day care, as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family income, 2006^{a, b, c}

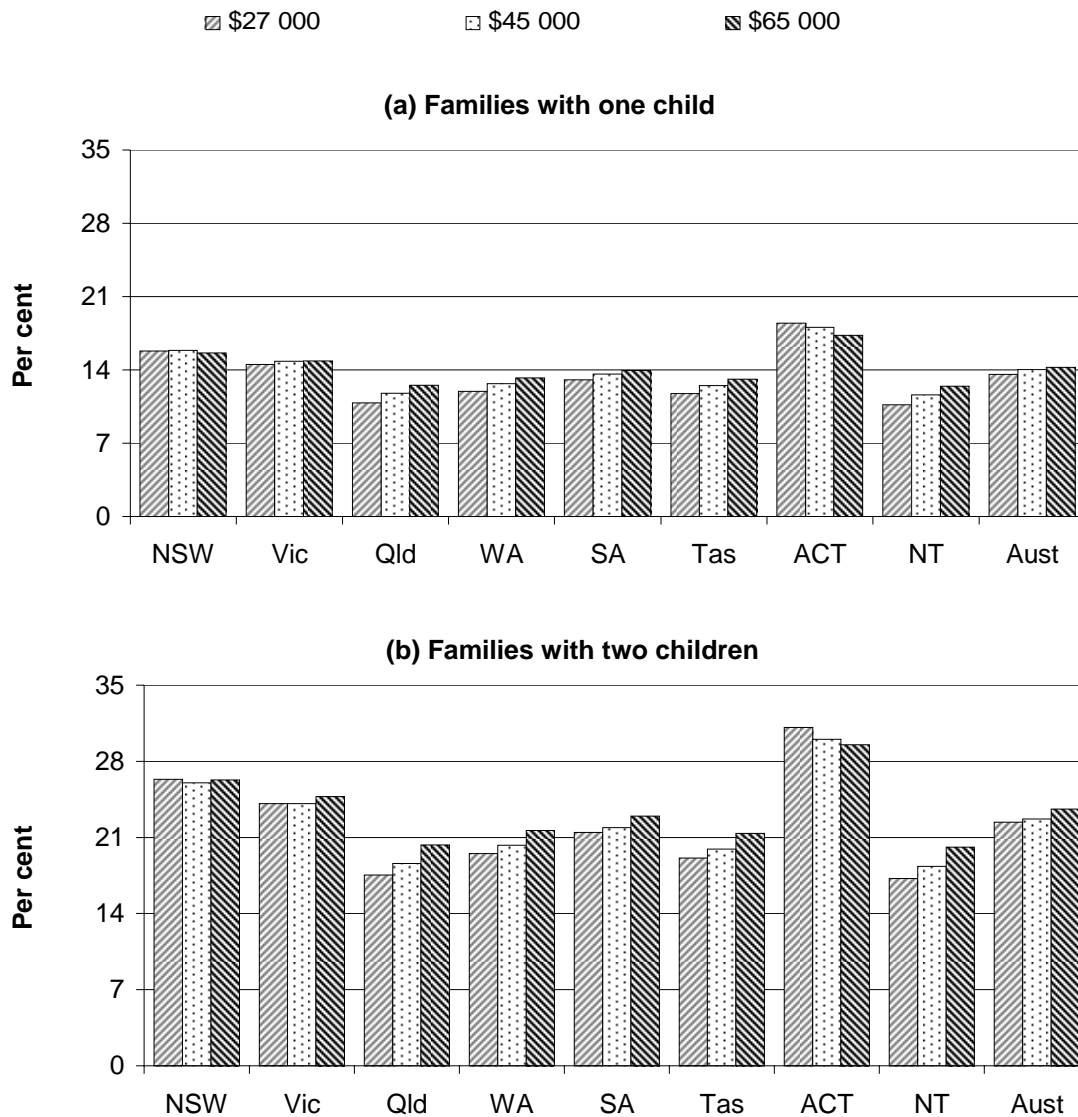


^a Disposable income calculations are based on 20 March 2006 social security rates, Child Care Benefit and taxation parameters. Calculations are modelled on dual income couple families (60:40 income split) with one or two dependent children aged under 5 years. ^b Out-of-pocket cost calculations are based on May 2006 average fees. ^c Data are based on estimated and weighted fee data from the AGCCCS. In 2006, numbers are based on preliminary data and there may be changes to the final data.

Source: AGCCCS May 2006 (unpublished); table 14A.18.

Figure 14.24 shows out-of-pocket costs (after subsidies) in 2006 for centre-based long day care for families with one child and with two children in care across jurisdictions. Out-of-pocket costs (after subsidies) for family day care in 2006 are shown in figure 14.25.

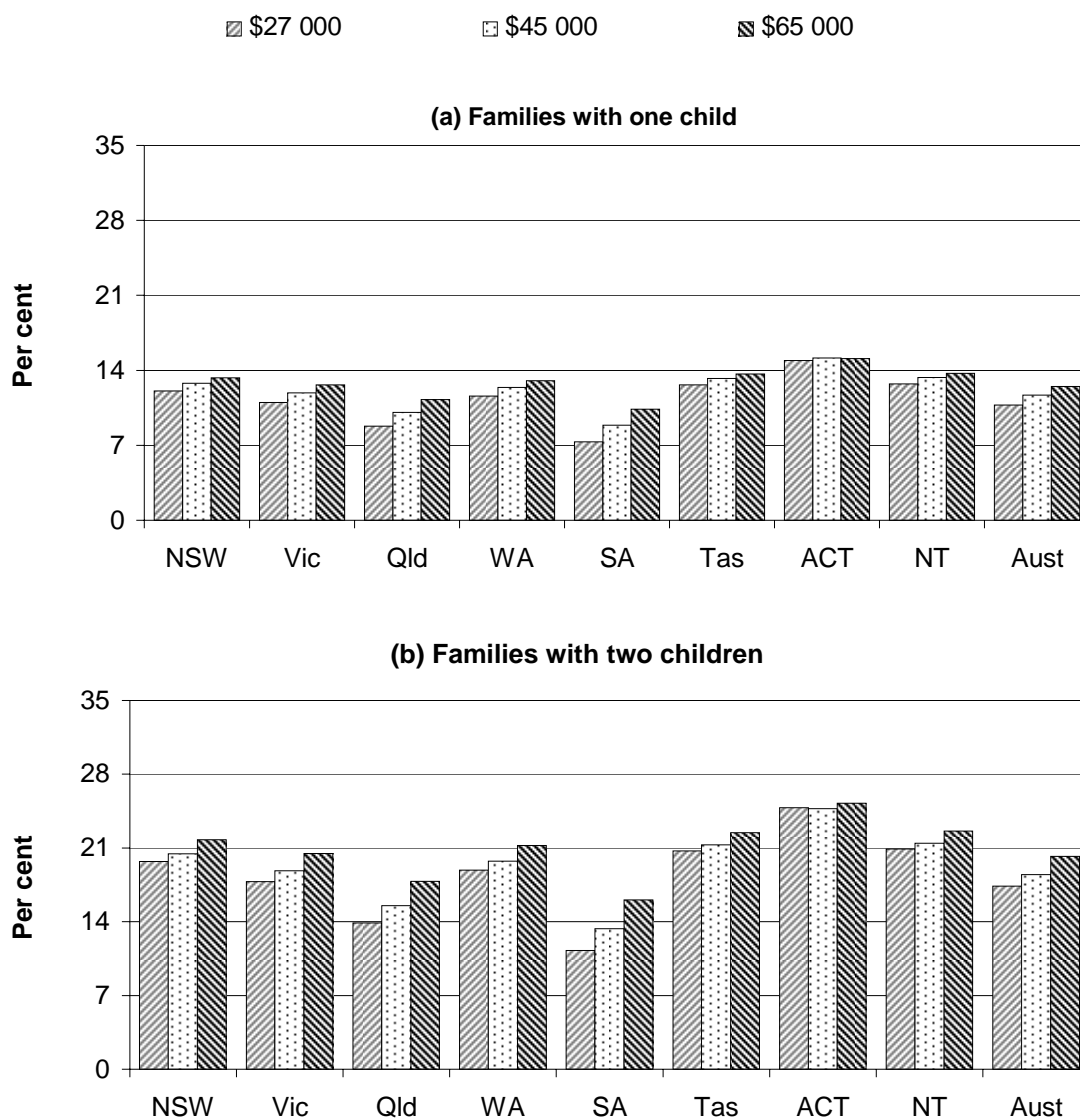
Figure 14.24 **Out-of-pocket costs for centre-based long day care (after subsidies), as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family income, 2006^{a, b, c, d, e}**



^a Disposable income calculations are based on 20 March 2006 social security rates, taxation parameters and non-child care benefits, rebates and Medicare. Calculations are modelled on dual income couple families (60:40 income split) with one or two dependent children aged under 5 years. ^b Disposable income figures do not include Child Care Benefit nor have child care out-of-pocket costs been deducted. ^c Average weekly amount paid assumes full-time (50 hours per week) child care used by each child. ^d Care needs to be exercised when interpreting results because a variety of factors may influence fees and the level may not be fully comparable across jurisdictions. ^e Data are based on estimated and weighted fee data from the AGCCCS. In 2006, numbers are based on preliminary data and there may be changes to the final data.

Source: AGCCCS May 2006 (unpublished); table 14A.18.

Figure 14.25 **Out-of-pocket costs for family day care (after subsidies), as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family income, 2006^{a, b, c, d, e, f}**



^a Disposable income calculations are based on 20 March 2006 social security rates, taxation parameters and non-child care benefits, rebates and Medicare. Calculations are modelled on dual income couple families (60:40 income split) with one or two dependent children aged under 5 years. ^b Disposable income figures do not include Child Care Benefit nor have child care out-of-pocket costs been deducted. ^c Average weekly amount paid assumes full-time (50 hours per week) child care used by each child. ^d Care needs to be exercised when interpreting results because a variety of factors may influence fees and the level may not be fully comparable across jurisdictions. ^e Excludes in-home care. ^f Data are based on estimated and weighted fee data from the AGCCCS. In 2006, numbers are based on preliminary data and there may be changes to the final data.

Source: AGCCCS May 2006 (unpublished); table 14A.19.

Client satisfaction

‘Client satisfaction’ is an outcome indicator of children’s services meeting users needs (box 14.21).

Box 14.21 Client satisfaction

‘Client satisfaction’ is an outcome indicator of governments’ objective to ensure children’s services meet the needs and expectations of all users.

This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. Data, however, were not available for the 2007 Report.

Children’s needs

‘Children’s needs’ is an outcome indicator of children’s services meeting children’s needs (box 14.22).

Box 14.22 Children’s needs

‘Children’s needs’ in children’s services is an outcome (effectiveness) indicator of governments’ objective to provide children’s services that meet the care, education and development needs of children, in a safe and nurturing environment.

This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. Data, however, were not available for the 2007 Report.

Cost-effectiveness

‘Cost-effectiveness’ is an outcome indicator of children’s services meeting family needs (box 14.23).

Box 14.23 Cost effectiveness

‘Cost effectiveness’ in children’s services is an outcome (cost effectiveness) indicator of governments’ objective to provide children’s services in an effective and efficient manner.

This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. Data, however, were not available for the 2007 Report.

14.4 Future directions in performance reporting

The Steering Committee is committed to improving the comparability, completeness and overall quality of reported data for all indicators included within the performance indicator framework.

Improving reporting of existing indicators

Changes in the children's services industry have required jurisdictions to revise collection methods, and these revisions have reduced the comparability of data across years and across jurisdictions. Further work is planned to improve the consistency and comparability of performance information across jurisdictions. It will take some time before these improvements are reflected in the chapter.

Future indicator development

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

- developing an access indicator for Indigenous preschool attendance
- revising the quality indicators for health and safety, and substantiated breaches arising from complaints
- developing indicators to measure the extent to which children's services meet family needs, including investigating an outcome indicator of client satisfaction
- developing indicators to measure the extent to which children's services meet children's needs
- completing the quality indicators for licensing, accreditation and registration
- improving the government expenditure efficiency indicators
- conducting a rolling revision of all indicators within the framework.

Improving the completeness and comparability of data

National Minimum Data Set

The National Community Services Information Management Group (NCSIMG) has developed a National Minimum Data Set (NMDS) for children's services. The NMDS provides a framework for collecting a set of nationally comparable data and assists the development of comparable performance indicators and descriptors. It

covers information about the organisations that provide child care and preschool services, the characteristics of workers delivering these services and the characteristics of the children who attend them.

The data items in the NMDS have been pilot tested and were endorsed by the NCSIMG in 2005. The project has since received funding from CDSMAC to conduct a cost benefit analysis of the various implementation options. This analysis is expected to be completed by June 2007.

Data collection

Consistency in the data collected by State and Territory governments is an important goal to improve data comparability. There is still room for improvement in the data collection process. One way of improving comparability is to collect data in a (preferably common) sample week that is representative of a typical standard week (and does not include any public holidays) in each State and Territory.

Another way to improve the consistency of data is to use common definitions. Although the children's service NMDS is yet to be implemented, several jurisdictions are reviewing their statistical collections and incorporating definitions from the NMDS where possible. As the NMDS definitions are more widely adopted in jurisdictions' separate collections, there will be better comparability of data across jurisdictions.

The Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) National Reform Agenda Human Capital Stream includes indicative outcomes about early childhood development. The Steering Committee will monitor the implementation of the National Reform Agenda, including any data developments that are relevant to children's services.

14.5 Jurisdictions' comments

This section provides comments from each jurisdiction on the services covered in this chapter. Appendix A contains data that may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. These data cover a range of demographic and geographic characteristics, including age profile, geographic distribution of the population, income levels, education levels, tenure of dwellings and cultural heritage (including Indigenous and ethnic status).

Australian Government comments

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The Australian Government, in consultation with the states and territories, has developed the National Agenda for Early Childhood to better coordinate and guide future initiatives in the provision of services for families and children across all levels of government. There are four key action areas: healthy families with young children; early learning and care; supporting families and parenting; and creating child-friendly communities. The Australian Government endorsed the National Agenda in December 2005, and it is currently with the state and territory jurisdictions for endorsement.

In the 2006-07 Budget, the Australian Government announced major changes to child care including:

- the uncapping of Outside School Hours Care and Family Day Care (FDC) places. This means that 99 per cent of child care places are uncapped
- the removal of the limit of one FDC service to a region. Services are now free to operate in any area and FDC carers can register with the service of their choice
- \$50.8 million over four years for the Child Care Compliance Strategy. This initiative will reduce incorrect child care payments to services and families by focussing on education of families and services on their obligations for approved funding and targeting services committing fraud
- increased funding for Jobs, Education and Training (JET) Child Care Fee Assistance, which provides extra help with the cost of approved child care for eligible parents on income support who are undertaking activities such as job search, work, study or rehabilitation. JET Child Care Fee Assistance helps low income parents enter or re-enter the workforce by covering most of the cost of child care fees.

A substantial investment was announced for the new Child Care Management System to better meet the needs of families, service providers and the government. This initiative will standardise and simplify Child Care Benefit (CCB) administration, including the capability to lodge CCB data electronically.

State and Territory based Professional Support Co-ordinators have been established to nationally focus professional support to child care services. Indigenous Professional Support Units also provide advice, support and training to Indigenous-run childcare services and work collaboratively with other service providers to ensure that all child care is culturally appropriate and accessible for Indigenous children and families. Sixty-seven regionally based Inclusion Support Agencies have also been established to coordinate assistance to child care services to build their skills and capacity to include children with additional needs into child care.

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New South Wales Government comments

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The central feature of the NSW Government's Early Childhood Services Policy is its focus on the importance of the early years of life through a system of good quality children's services that are responsive to the needs of children, regardless of their age or service type attended, and in the context of their families and the communities in which they live.

The NSW Government supports a wide range of children's services, including preschools, long day care, occasional care, mobile services, family day care, home based care and vacation care. This support is provided through initiatives including funding, licensing, training and research.

Children's services have been recognised for the benefits they provide for children's healthy development, and for early intervention benefits. Early childhood experiences crucially affect the health and wellbeing of children, and the attainment of further competence at later ages. NSW continues to implement strategies to improve access to and participation in children's services for all children, especially those with additional needs.

The NSW regulatory framework recognises the integrated nature of early childhood education and care. All licensed early childhood services are required by regulation to provide an education program tailored to each child's intellectual, physical, social and emotional development and employ appropriately qualified teaching staff.

For this reason, the structure of the children's services chapter continues to pose difficulties in comparing the performance of NSW with that of other jurisdictions. The chapter is based on distinguishing preschool from child care, which does not reflect the integrated delivery of early childhood education in NSW. NSW urges caution in use or interpretation of these data in relation to the number of children that access a preschool program.

Preschools are an integral part of children's services in NSW. The Government has conducted a comprehensive review of preschool services resulting in the NSW Preschool Investment and Reform Plan.

The NSW Government Plan aims for every four year old in NSW to have access to a quality preschool program. To achieve this, the NSW Government has made a significant investment in strengthening and expanding the services that are available to children in their year prior to school. This investment was announced in the NSW 2006-07 budget, with a total investment in preschool programs over the first four years of \$85 million.

The Plan seeks to strengthen existing community-based services, provide extra places in high need localities and improve access use for disadvantaged families and children. The financial investment will be underpinned by a reform program designed to make the preschool sector more flexible and ultimately more viable. It will also ensure consistency of service across preschools in NSW.

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Victorian Government comments

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In 2005-06 the Department of Human Services undertook a range of initiatives outlined in *A Fairer Victoria*. This included investment of \$101.8 million to improve child and family support services, create a new Office for Children, make kindergarten programs more available in childcare centres, better protect children from abuse and boost support for families most in need of additional assistance.

The Department of Human Services established a register of outside school hours care services and family day care schemes as the first step in moving to regulate these services and commenced work on reviewing the Children's Services Regulations 1998.

Minor capital grants were allocated to community based childcare centres, kindergartens and outside school hours care programs, totalling \$5.9 million.

The 2006-07 Budget provided:

- \$6.2 million in 2006-07 to improve pay and conditions for the State's kindergarten teachers and to improve the quality of kindergarten services for the future. This funding supports the development of a new classification structure to help attract new graduates and introduce a new validation process to assess the skills of kindergarten teachers before they move to higher classifications. This is part of the \$31.2 million wage outcome over four years reached in December 2005
- \$12.5 million over four years allocated to maintain the supplementation of per capita grants to kindergartens to cover the impost of the new wage structure and indexation on fees. This funding will help make kindergarten fees more affordable for families
- \$668 000 over two years to develop new service delivery and quality regulations for outside school hours care and family day care services
- \$7.2 million to contribute to the establishment of children's centres in the six fastest growing municipalities in the State, as part of the *Growing Communities, Thriving Children* initiative.

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Queensland Government comments

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The Queensland Government continues to promote, support and monitor the provision of high quality services for children and families.

Recognising the important role that early childhood education and care services play in the delivery of family support services, the Office for Children was established, drawing together the child care and family support programs of the Queensland Department of Communities. Planning began on the development of a whole of government framework for prevention and early intervention, and exploration of new models of integrated children's services continued, including planning for the development of four integrated early years centres.

The department continues to work collaboratively with the child care sector to enhance and streamline the legislative standards. This has included undertaking a review of the transport provisions in the legislation and implementing an amendment to the Child Care Regulation 2003 and the Queensland Development Code: Part 22 – Child Care Centres. The amendments streamline and clarify legislative requirements and enhance the simplicity and measurability of building standards.

In addition, school age care services have been licensed for the first time in Queensland. To support these services in meeting the licensing standards almost \$370 000 was allocated to 370 services for equipment upgrades.

A significant achievement of the Queensland Government has been the child care training initiatives which, by June 2006, had assisted 2720 child care staff (including trainees and apprentices) to become qualified. Of these graduates, 105 were Indigenous child care professionals working in Far North Queensland. In 2005-06 a key focus of the Child Care Training Plan was to assist staff working in school age care services to complete an approved qualification.

In 2005 and 2006 trials for the implementation of a preparatory year of schooling continued, representing a major reform to the provision of early childhood education in Queensland. In 2007, after 33 years of providing high quality preschool education, Queensland's sessional preschool programs in State and non-State schools will be replaced by the full-time, non-compulsory preparatory year. The Queensland Government will invest up to \$350 million in capital works in both State and non-State schools to implement the preparatory year. The preparatory year will be a school-based provision recognised as the first year of school and will be governed by education legislation and regulations. The community kindergarten sector will move to a targeted one year provision for children in the year prior to the preparatory year. The Queensland Government will continue to support pre-school education through the provision of targeted funding for the community kindergarten sector and funding for pre-preparatory education in identified Indigenous communities.

The Queensland Government continues in its commitment to using data and research to inform planning and decision making and is working towards enhancing the availability, integrity and comparability of data for future reports.

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Western Australian Government comments

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In 2006, the Department for Community Development implemented new child care regulations under the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*.

The implementation of the new regulations will be completed in two stages. Stage one has involved improvements that flowed from the commencement of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*. The second stage will cover complex issues such as staffing, group sizes, transport and infrastructure. A Child Care Regulations Consultative Committee will provide advice on the further development of the regulations and the consultation process.

The State Government provided additional funding of \$3.6 million over four years into the Child Care Licensing and Standards Unit to allow for an increased emphasis on compliance. The additional funding allowed for: the appointment of a director, a senior legal officer, a new information and reporting officer, increases to the number of licensing staff; and the implementation of an investigation and prosecution team.

The Child Care Advisory Committee reports to the Minister for Community Development and focuses on child care regulations, processes for regulatory changes, and service delivery to Indigenous, rural and remote communities.

The Department completed its 2004-05 contract with the Australian Government to provide training for the outside school hours care sector to implement the *Child Care Services Quality Assurance Program*. A further contract of \$253 060 was awarded for July 2005 to November 2006.

The Department of Education and Training provides access to an 11-hour per week, free, universal kindergarten program for eligible children. The kindergarten year is the first of two pre-compulsory years of schooling with most children attending both years. Twenty eight Aboriginal kindergartens provide culturally appropriate programs with an emphasis on literacy, numeracy and family and community involvement.

The *Western Australian Curriculum Framework* defines the outcomes of schooling for all students from kindergarten to year 12, and is mandated for all schools. For government schools, the *Outcomes and Standards Framework* is used to plan, monitor and improve children's progress and achievements. In the pre-compulsory years the focus is on social, emotional, physical, literacy and numeracy development and learning within an integrated, interactive program.

Other initiatives include: the Home-School Links strategy to build positive relationships between teachers and parents/caregivers; the Pre-primary Profile project to support continuity of education between home, pre-compulsory and compulsory schooling; and the Fundamental Movement Skills project which encourages children's participation in physical activity.

The Literacy and Numeracy Review Taskforce was established this year to improve the literacy and numeracy levels of all students. The Taskforce will consult with the community before presenting its final report.

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South Australian Government comments

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The Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) continued to meet the challenges of providing responsive, high quality early childhood services for children and their families during 2005-06.

In June 2005, the Government announced the establishment of 10 new Children's Centres for Early Development and Parenting. Each Children's Centre will work with the community to improve health, learning, development, care and wellbeing for children from birth to age eight and their families through responsive, inclusive and integrated programs and services. Three Children's Centres are currently operational with a further three due for completion during 2006. By 2011 at least 20 Children's Centres will be established.

As part of the Early Years Literacy Program, additional funding was provided to preschools with an average enrolment of more than eight Aboriginal three year olds. The provision of this resource was aimed at building upon the learning of Aboriginal three year olds, providing additional professional learning and research opportunities, recognising and promoting current effective practices, and developing sustainable teaching and learning approaches to support the literacy learning of these children.

The Learning Together program continued to increase the number of families engaged in its programs aimed at addressing social, economic and educational inequality. In the 2005-06 State Budget a further \$4.2 million over the next four years was committed by the Government to support the five existing Learning Together early intervention programs delivering expert help for parents and young children at risk.

DECS continued to facilitate access to and participation in preschools for children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds through its "Preschool Bilingual Program". During 2005-06, 644 children received bilingual support each term.

A new facility to cater to the special needs of more than 70 students with disabilities officially opened in Adelaide's south. The new facility houses the South Australian School for the Vision Impaired and Kilparrin Teaching and Assessment School and Services. The facility has been designed for students with vision and other sensory impairment and additional disabilities.

In conjunction with the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology, DECS launched the Upskills program, a joint initiative aimed at increasing the supply of diploma qualified staff in long day care centres. The program enabled 91 child care workers to commence traineeships in the Diploma of Children's Services.

The fourth "Our Children the Future" conference was held in June 2005. This early years conference was held in Adelaide over three days. Over 1200 participants from local, interstate and international destinations attended the conference.

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Tasmanian Government comments

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Over the past five years the Tasmanian Government has gradually been moving away from a model of service provision focussed on the priorities of single Agencies or departments, towards a whole-of-government approach informed by the needs of communities and individuals. In relation to children's services, the key Agencies are increasingly working together to meet the needs of children and families.

Of particular note is the strategic focus on the early years in both the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education and their close collaboration in a number of early childhood development initiatives.

Ongoing work is focussing on developing an overall whole-of-government strategic plan articulating overarching policy goals and developing a shared vision and priorities for action in the early years.

The implementation of the *Child Care Act 2001* is continuing with all centre based care class 1 (0–5 years), approved registration bodies (Family Day Care Schemes) and centre based care class 2 (5–12 years) services licensed. The latter are currently in Stage 2 of a three stage implementation of licensing standards. In consultation with the sector, In-Home Child Care licensing standards have been developed for both the service providers and the carers. These will be implemented in 2006-07 and are understood to be the first of their kind across the nation. Work is continuing with adjunct care services to develop the conditions under which they are exempted from the requirement to be licensed under the Act.

Following amendments to the Act late in 2005, new processes for the assessment of fitness and propriety for child care personnel have also commenced. In addition to streamlining previous processes, the amendments have introduced the concept of a 'responsible person', that is, those persons providing advice and making decisions on behalf of the child care service, who are not the licensee, owner/operator or person-in-charge.

The biggest challenge faced by the Child Care Unit and the sector is the lack of qualified staff further exacerbated by the increasing number of child care services. The Department is continuing to consider both short and long-term strategic ways to assist services in this crisis: through working in consultation with other organisations and peak bodies and implementing funding options, such as mentorship and scholarships and a new initiative, 'Skills to Care', which focuses on supporting newly qualified workers in senior roles and succession planning for child care service management positions.

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Australian Capital Territory Government comments

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The ACT Government has a vision for the children of Canberra that encourages and supports them to reach their full potential. The ACT Children's Plan is the whole of government policy framework for children up to 12 years of age that guides decisions about policies, programs and services for the period 2004-2014. The ACT Children's Plan Community Network Forum was established in 2005 as a forum to foster partnerships between the ACT government and the community in implementing the ACT Children's Plan.

The Children's Services Unit within the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support has responsibility for the licensing and monitoring of children's services in the ACT to ensure they meet the requirements of the Children and Young People Act 1999. These services include centre-based children's services, school age care, family day care, independent preschools and playschools. Funding is also provided to assist with a range of children's services programs.

The Office for Children, Youth and Family Support (the Office) within the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services works in partnership with the community to provide care and protection services to children and young people, and family and community support to meet the needs of the people of Canberra. Services include provision of appropriate care and protection strategies for children and young people, youth justice services, family support activities, and the monitoring and licensing of children's services.

The Office is committed to improving the care and protection of children and young people and actively promotes children and young people's participation in a range of community activities. A strategic focus of the Office is to embed child centred practice in the way it works to support children and families. Children's Services is working collaboratively to support vulnerable children and families through a range of innovative early intervention programs.

The Department of Education and Training is responsible for providing preschool services for all eligible children in the year immediately prior to their entry to school. The ACT Government initiative to increase preschool provision from 10.5 hours to 12 hours per week was supported by a commitment of \$8 million over three years, commencing in 2004. This initiative was fully implemented in 2006 with all preschools offering 12 hours of preschool in either a full day (2 x 6 hours) or half day (3 x 4 hours) program designed to support parental choice.

The ACT Department of Education and Training has developed a new curriculum framework for Preschool to Year 10 which is being trialled and validated in 2007 for implementation in 2008.

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Northern Territory Government comments

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The Territory has a number of characteristics that have resulted in unique approaches to providing children’s services in the NT. These characteristics include a small and young population dispersed across one-sixth of the national landmass, a high proportion of the children 0–12 are Indigenous (about 40 per cent) of which 75 per cent live in small remote communities and towns, diseconomies of scale, and environments ranging from desert to tropical climates.

The NT is increasingly focusing attention on improving the health and wellbeing of Indigenous children, supporting families and communities to care for and protect children, strengthening early learning and promoting service integration, quality and viability.

Comparability for reporting purposes continues to be difficult. For example, the data consistently show lower participation levels of Indigenous children in child care services, however the data do not include participation in other children’s services and activities such as innovative child care centres, JET creches, mobile services and playgroups which are preferred service models in many Indigenous communities.

New legislation, which gives emphasis to prevention and early intervention measures to promoting children’s wellbeing and development, has been drafted. This legislation includes provisions for the regulation of a broader scope of children’s services as well as contemporary approaches to investigation and response to child maltreatment.

The NT Government provides access to universal preschool education for four year-old children, and for some three year-olds. At five years of age, children commonly attend all-day universally available transition education. Trials of earlier age of entry to transition and preschool education is continuing across the Territory, enabling children turning four by 30 June to enrol in trial sites in term 1.

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14.6 Definitions of key terms and indicators

Administration expenditure	All expenditure by the departments responsible for the provision of licensing, advice, policy development, grants administration and training services. Responsible departments include those that administer policy for, fund and license/accredit child care and preschool services in each jurisdiction.
Centre-based 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. Centres typically operate for at least eight hours per day on normal working days, for a minimum of 48 weeks per year.
Child care	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 service are centre-based long day care, family day care, outside school hours care (vacation, before/after school hours and 'pupil free days' care), occasional care and other 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	Families who are receiving the maximum rate of Child Care Benefit.
Children from non-English speaking backgrounds	Children living in situations where the main language spoken is not English.
Children's services	All government funded and/or provided child care and preschool services (unless otherwise stated).
Counting rules	Prescribed standards, definitions and mathematical methods for determining descriptors and performance indicators for monitoring government services.
Disability related care	Care of children who have a developmental delay or disability (including an intellectual, sensory or physical impairment), or who have parent(s) with a disability.
External cause (of injury)	The environmental event, circumstance or condition that causes an injury.
Family day care	Services provided in the carer's home. The care is largely aimed at 0–5 year olds, but primary school children may also receive care before and after school, and during school vacations. Central coordination units in all states and territories organise and support a network of carers, often with the help of local governments.
Financial support to families	Any form of fee relief paid by governments to the users of children's services (for example, Child Care Benefit).
Formal child care	Organised care provided by a person other than the child's parent or guardian, usually outside of the child's home — for example, centre-based long day care, family day care, outside school hours care, vacation care and occasional care (excluding babysitting).
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 or more], primary teaching, other teaching, nursing [including mothercraft nursing], psychology and social work). Some jurisdictions do not recognise one year certificates.

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 children’s 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.
Government funded or/and provided	All government financed services — that is, services that receive government contributions towards providing a specified service (including private services eligible for Child Care Benefit) and/or services for which the government has primary responsibility for delivery.
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.
Indigenous Children	Children of Indigenous descent who identify as being Indigenous and are accepted as such by the community in which they live.
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 Child Care Benefit for Registered Care) is provided. Such care is unregulated in most states and territories.
In-home care	Care 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 may 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • management or financial training • training for additional needs children (such as children with a 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).
Licensed services	Those 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.
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 falls below threshold capitalisation levels, depreciation or costs associated maintaining, renting or leasing equipment.

Non-standard hours of care	<p>Defined by service type as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • centre-based long day care — providers of service for more than 10 hours per day on Monday to Friday and/or service on weekends • preschool — providers of service for more than six hours per day • family day care — providers of service for more than 50 hours per week and/or service overnight and/or on weekends • vacation care — providers of service for more than 10 hours per day • before school hours care — providers of service for more than two hours before school • after school care — providers of service for more than three hours after school • occasional care — providers of service for more than eight hours per day • other — providers of service for more than 10 hours per day.
Occasional care	<p>Services usually provided at a centre on an hourly or sessional basis for short periods or at irregular intervals for parents who need time to attend appointments, take care of personal matters, undertake casual and part time employment, study or have temporary respite from full time parenting. These services provide developmental activities for children and are aimed primarily at 0–5 year olds. Centres providing these services usually employ a mix of qualified and other staff.</p>
Other expenditure on service provision	<p>Includes all recurrent expenditure on government funded and/or provided child care and preschool services except administration and financial support to families. It includes one-off, non-capital payments to peak agencies that support child care and preschool service providers.</p>
Other services	<p>Government funded services to support children with additional needs or in particular situations (including children from an Indigenous or non-English speaking background, children with a disability or of parents with a disability, and children living in regional and remote areas).</p>
Outside school hours care	<p>Services provided for school aged children (5–12 year olds) outside school hours during term and vacations. Care may be provided on student free days and when school finishes early.</p>
Preschools	<p>Services usually provided by a qualified teacher on a sessional basis in dedicated preschools. Preschool programs or curricula may also be provided in long day care centres and other settings. These services are primarily aimed at children in the year before they commence full time schooling (that is, when children are 4 years old in all jurisdictions), although younger children may also attend in most jurisdictions.</p>
Primary contact staff	<p>Staff whose primary function is to provide care and/or preschool services to children.</p>
Real expenditure	<p>Actual expenditure adjusted for changes in prices. Adjustments were made using the GDP price deflator and expressed in terms of final year prices.</p>
Recurrent expenditure	<p>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).</p>

Regional and remote areas	<p>Geographic location is based on the ABS's Australian Standard Geographical Classification of Remoteness Areas, which categorises areas as 'major cities', 'inner regional', 'outer regional', 'remote', 'very remote' and 'migratory'. 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 (ABS 2001).</p> <p>The 'regional' classification used in this chapter was derived by adding data for inner regional and outer regional areas. The 'remote' classification was derived by adding data for remote, very remote and migratory areas.</p> <p>In previous reports, geographic location data was based on the rural, remote and metropolitan areas classification (DPIE and DSH 1994).</p>
Serious injury Service	<p>Injury requiring hospitalisation or a visit to (or by) a doctor.</p> <p>The type of service provided. Preschool service, for example, is a package of educational and developmental services received by a child in the year or two before full time schooling. Preschool services may be provided by either a preschool service provider or a child care service provider.</p>
Service type	<p>The categories for which data were collected, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • centre-based long day care • family day care • outside school hours care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – vacation care – before/after school care • occasional care • 'other' care • preschool services.
Special needs group	<p>An identifiable group within the general population who may have special difficulty accessing services. Special needs groups for which data are reported in this chapter include: children from a non-English speaking background, Indigenous children, children from low income families (Australian Government child care only), children with a disability, and children from regional or remote areas.</p>
Substantiated breach arising from a complaint	<p>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 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.</p>
Vacation care	<p>Care and developmental activities provided for school age children during school vacation periods.</p>

14.7 Supporting tables

The files containing the supporting tables are provided in Microsoft Excel format as \Publications\Reports\2007\Attach14A.xls and in Adobe PDF format as \Publications\Reports\2007\Attach14A.pdf. The files containing the supporting tables can also be found on the Review web page (www.pc.gov.au/gsp). Users without access to the CD-ROM or Internet can contact the Secretariat to obtain the supporting tables (see contact details on the inside front cover of the Report).

All jurisdictions data

Table 14A.1	Estimated resident population, children aged 12 years and younger ('000)
Table 14A.2	Progress in the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System, Family Day Care Quality Assurance, and Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance, Australia (number)
Table 14A.3	Australian Government real expenditure on children's services (2005-06 dollars) (\$'000)
Table 14A.4	Total government real expenditure on children's services (2005-06 dollars) (\$'000)
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Table 14A.6	Comparability of expenditure — items included, 2005-06
Table 14A.7	Treatment of assets by children's services agencies, 2005-06
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Table 14A.18	Out-of-pocket costs of child care for families with children in full time centre-based long day care, as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family incomes, May 2006 (per cent)

Table 14A.19	Out-of-pocket costs of child care for families with children in full time family day care, as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family incomes, May 2006 (per cent)
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Table 14A.27	Children who attended preschool, weekly cost per child (after subsidies), 2002, 2005
Table 14A.28	Hospital separations for external cause of injuries, persons aged 0–4 years, all hospitals, by place of occurrence

Single jurisdiction data – NSW

Table 14A.29	State Government real expenditure on child care and preschool services, New South Wales (2005-06 dollars) (\$'000)
Table 14A.30	Characteristics of child care and preschool services not included in the Australian Government Census of Child Care Services, New South Wales
Table 14A.31	Children aged 0–12 years using State Government funded and/or provided child care and preschool services, by age, New South Wales
Table 14A.32	Staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, New South Wales
Table 14A.33	Paid staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, by qualification and experience, New South Wales
Table 14A.34	Licensed and/or registered service providers, by management type, New South Wales
Table 14A.35	Service availability during non-standard hours and participation by target groups, New South Wales
Table 14A.36	Number of serious injuries sustained per registered or licensed service provider, New South Wales
Table 14A.37	Substantiated breaches arising from complaints about State Government registered or licensed service providers, New South Wales

Single jurisdiction data – Vic

- Table 14A.38** State Government real expenditure on child care and preschool services, Victoria (2005-06 dollars) (\$'000)
- Table 14A.39** Characteristics of child care and preschool services not included in the Australian Government Census of Child Care Services, Victoria
- Table 14A.40** Children aged 0–12 years using State Government funded and/or provided child care and preschool services, by age, Victoria
- Table 14A.41** Staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, Victoria
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- Table 14A.43** Licensed and/or registered service providers, by management type, Victoria
- Table 14A.44** Service availability during non-standard hours and participation by target groups, Victoria
- Table 14A.45** Number of serious injuries sustained per registered or licensed service provider, Victoria
- Table 14A.46** Substantiated breaches arising from complaints about State Government registered or licensed service providers, Victoria

Single jurisdiction data – Qld

- Table 14A.47** State Government real expenditure on child care and preschool services, Queensland (2005-06 dollars) (\$'000)
- Table 14A.48** Characteristics of child care and preschool services not included in the Australian Government Census of Child Care Services, Queensland
- Table 14A.49** Children aged 0–12 years using State Government funded and/or provided child care and preschool services, by age, Queensland
- Table 14A.50** Staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, Queensland
- Table 14A.51** Paid staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, by qualification and experience, Queensland
- Table 14A.52** Licensed and/or registered service providers, by management type, Queensland
- Table 14A.53** Service availability during non-standard hours and participation by target groups, Queensland
- Table 14A.54** Number of serious injuries sustained per registered or licensed service provider, Queensland
- Table 14A.55** Substantiated breaches arising from complaints about State Government registered or licensed service providers, Queensland

Single jurisdiction data – WA

- Table 14A.56** State Government real expenditure on child care and preschool services, Western Australia (2005-06 dollars) (\$'000)
- Table 14A.57** Characteristics of child care and preschool services not included in the Australian Government Census of Child Care Services, Western Australia

Table 14A.58	Children aged 0–12 years using State Government funded and/or provided child care and preschool services, by age, Western Australia
Table 14A.59	Staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, Western Australia
Table 14A.60	Paid staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, by qualification and experience, Western Australia
Table 14A.61	Licensed and/or registered service providers, by management type, Western Australia
Table 14A.62	Service availability during non-standard hours and participation by target groups, Western Australia
Table 14A.63	Number of serious injuries sustained per registered or licensed service provider, Western Australia
Table 14A.64	Substantiated breaches arising from complaints about State Government registered or licensed service providers, Western Australia

Single jurisdiction data – SA

Table 14A.65	State Government real expenditure on child care and preschool services, South Australia (2005-06 dollars) (\$'000)
Table 14A.66	Characteristics of child care and preschool services not included in the Australian Government Census of Child Care Services, South Australia
Table 14A.67	Children aged 0–12 years using State Government funded and/or provided child care and preschool services, by age, South Australia
Table 14A.68	Staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, South Australia
Table 14A.69	Paid staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, by qualification and experience, South Australia
Table 14A.70	Licensed and/or registered service providers, by management type, South Australia
Table 14A.71	Service availability during non-standard hours and participation by target groups, South Australia
Table 14A.72	Number of serious injuries sustained per registered or licensed service provider, South Australia
Table 14A.73	Substantiated breaches arising from complaints about State Government registered or licensed service providers, South Australia

Single jurisdiction data – Tas

Table 14A.74	State Government real expenditure on child care and preschool services, Tasmania (2005-06 dollars) (\$'000)
Table 14A.75	Characteristics of child care and preschool services not included in the Australian Government Census of Child Care Services, Tasmania
Table 14A.76	Children aged 0–12 years using State Government funded and/or provided child care and preschool services, by age, Tasmania
Table 14A.77	Staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, Tasmania

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- Table 14A.78** Paid staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, by qualification and experience, Tasmania
- Table 14A.79** Licensed and/or registered service providers, by management type, Tasmania
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Single jurisdiction data – ACT

- Table 14A.83** State Government real expenditure on child care and preschool services, Australian Capital Territory (2005-06 dollars) (\$'000)
- Table 14A.84** Characteristics of child care and preschool services not included in the Australian Government Census of Child Care Services, Australian Capital Territory
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Single jurisdiction data – NT

- Table 14A.92** State Government real expenditure on child care and preschool services, Northern Territory (2005-06 dollars) (\$'000)
- Table 14A.93** Characteristics of child care and preschool services not included in the Australian Government Census of Child Care Services, Northern Territory
- Table 14A.94** Children aged 0–12 years using State Government funded and/or provided child care and preschool services, by age, Northern Territory
- Table 14A.95** Staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, Northern Territory
- Table 14A.96** Paid staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, by qualification and experience, Northern Territory
- Table 14A.97** Licensed and/or registered service providers, by management type, Northern Territory

Table 14A.98	Service availability during non-standard hours and participation by target groups, Northern Territory
Table 14A.99	Number of serious injuries sustained per registered or licensed service provider, Northern Territory
Table 14A.100	Substantiated breaches arising from complaints about State Government registered or licensed service providers, Northern Territory

14.8 References

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