
3 Children's services

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Attachment tables

Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by a '3A' suffix (for example, table 3A.3). A full list of attachment tables is provided at the end of this chapter, and the attachment tables are available from the Review website at www.pc.gov.au/gsp.

Children's services aim to meet the care, education and development needs of children. In this chapter, child care services are those provided to children aged 0–12 years, usually by someone other than the child's parents or guardian. Preschool services are services provided to children mainly in the year or two before they begin full time schooling. This chapter is included in the 'Early childhood, education and training' section of the Report because of the important links between children's services and education.

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

0–12 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/or licensing are involved.

The major improvements to reporting on children’s services this year include:

- reporting new child care staff tenure data in Australian Government approved child care services sourced from the *National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census 2010*
- improved reporting of contextual information on the management type of children’s services to include the additional category of non-government schools sector
- updated income levels for reporting out-of-pocket costs for child care
- expansion of time series data reporting in some attachment tables
- inclusion of some data quality information (DQI) documentation.

The Child Care Management System (CCMS) is the primary source for Australian Government data for this chapter. Data for a number of indicators are also sourced from the *National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census* (National ECEC Workforce Census) conducted for the first time in 2010 (replacing the *Australian Government Childcare Provider Survey* (AGCCPS) and the *Australian Government Child Care Census*). Box 3.4 contains more information on the *National ECEC Workforce Census* and Australian Government data.

3.1 Profile of children’s services

Service overview

Children’s services are provided using a variety of service delivery models 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 can 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 can 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 that deliver early childhood education programs provided by a qualified teacher that are aimed at children in the year before they commence full time schooling (that is, when a child is 4 years old), although younger or older children can attend in most jurisdictions. Preschool program names and starting ages vary across jurisdictions, and information on the preschool program for each State and Territory is presented in table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Preschool programs in Australia

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Program name</i>	<i>Age of entry</i>
NSW	Preschool	Generally 3 and 4 year olds
Victoria	Kindergarten	4 by 30 April
Queensland	Kindergarten and Pre-Preparatory (Pre-Prep)	4 by 30 June
Western Australia	Kindergarten	4 by 30 June
South Australia	Preschool and Kindergarten	Entry after 4th birthday
Tasmania	Kindergarten	4 by 1 January
Australian Capital Territory	Preschool	4 by 30 April
Northern Territory	Preschool	4 by 30 June, or 3 for Indigenous children in remote areas

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 3A.1.

Outside school hours care — comprises services provided for school aged children (primarily 5–12 year olds) outside school hours during term and vacations. Care can 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 disability or of parents with disability, and children living in regional and remote areas).

Roles and responsibilities

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

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

- paying Child Care Benefit (CCB) to families using approved child care services or registered carers
- paying Child Care Rebate (CCR), formerly the Child Care Tax Rebate (CCTR), to eligible families using approved child care services
- providing funding to State and Territory governments to support the achievement of universal access to early childhood education
- funding the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) to administer quality assurance systems for child care 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 funding and/or providing preschool services. Other roles and responsibilities can include:

- providing a legislative framework in which child care services are provided
- licensing and setting standards for children's services providers
- monitoring and resourcing licensed and/or funded children's services providers
- providing operational and capital funding to non-government service providers
- delivering some services directly (especially preschool services)
- developing new child care and preschool services
- 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.

The arrangements for departmental responsibility for early childhood education and care vary across State and Territory governments. There are also differences across states and territories for early childhood education program names and starting ages. To provide some clarity on these arrangements, table 3A.1 shows basic information on child care and preschool education programs, such as agency responsibility, program names and starting ages.

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

Box 3.1 The COAG Early Childhood Reform Agenda

The main COAG national reform initiatives that are linked specifically to early childhood development, education and care include the following:

- the *National Early Childhood Development Strategy – Investing in the Early Years*, is a collaboration between the Australian, State and Territory Governments. The strategy broadly covers children from before birth to 8 years of age, and aims to improve outcomes for all children and their families, including reducing inequalities in outcomes between groups of children. The strategy was endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) on 2 July 2009. The strategy includes a range of long term national reform initiatives in the areas of education and care, health, protection, family support and housing that seek to improve early childhood outcomes
- the *National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education* aims to achieve universal access to quality early childhood education for all children in the year before full-time school by 2013. These reforms are being implemented progressively from 2009–2013
- the *National Indigenous Reform Agreement*, includes a target to ensure all Indigenous 4 year olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education by 2013. This reform is being implemented progressively from 2009–2013

(Continued next page)

Box 3.1 (Continued)

- the *National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development*, aims to establish 35 new Children and Family Centres (CFCs). The locations for 38 CFCs have been agreed, exceeding the original target of 35. This reform will be implemented progressively until June 2014
- national workforce initiatives to improve the quality and supply of the early childhood education and care workforce
- a *National Quality Framework* (NQF) will be implemented progressively from 1 July 2010. The NQF will incorporate a new National Quality Standard to ensure high quality and consistent early childhood education and care across Australia that also includes streamlined regulatory approaches, a rating system and an *Early Years Learning Framework*. COAG agreed that the NQF will be implemented via the National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care, agreed to by the Australian Government and all State and Territory governments.

The Australian Government will implement the above changes in partnership with each of the State and Territory governments.

Source: COAG (2009a and 2009b); DEEWR (unpublished)

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 funding linked to outcomes
- 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 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 models of child care services available to them. The extent of implementation of these standards varies across jurisdictions.

In 2009 COAG endorsed a National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care. There will be a new National Quality Standard applied to all long day care, family day care, outside of school hours care services and preschools from 1 January 2012. A legislative framework will support the introduction of the NQF and will replace current licensing and regulation in each State and Territory with a uniform national system using a cooperative legislative model. Box 3.15 provides additional information on the NQF.

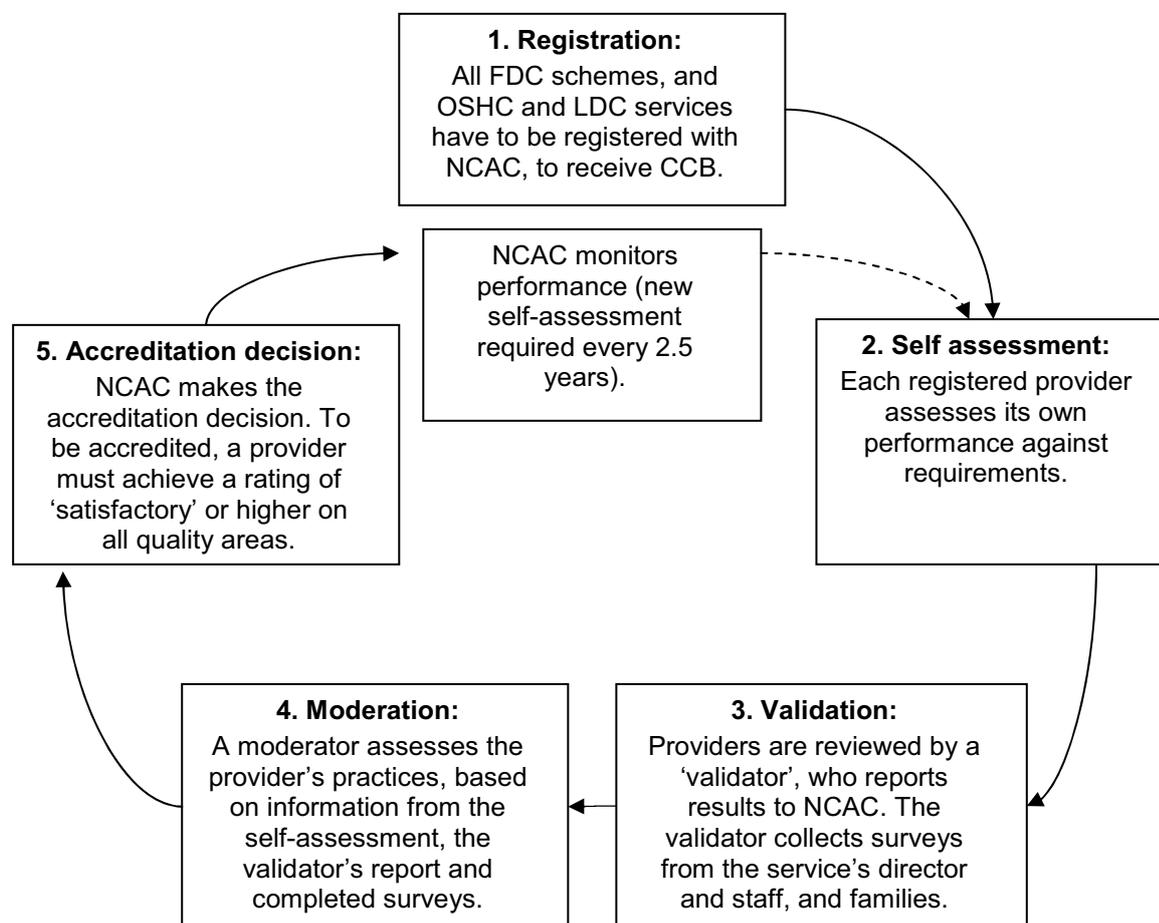
Quality assurance

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 to offer CCB as a fee reduction to parents and obtain some 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. Quality assurance systems do this by defining 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 a five step accreditation process, outlined in figure 3.1.

The new NQF will replace the current child care quality assurance system from 1 January 2012. Box 3.15 provides additional information on the NQF.

Figure 3.1 Accreditation process under National Childcare Accreditation Council quality assurance systems



FDC = Family Day Care schemes. **OSHC** = Outside School Hours Care. **LDC** = Long Day Care services. **CCB** = Child Care Benefit payments.

Source: adapted from National Child Care Accreditation Council (2004a) *Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance: Technical information about the Accreditation Decision Process*, August; (2004b) *Quality Improvement and Accreditation System: Technical Information about the Accreditation Decision Process*, August; (2005) *Family Day Care Quality Assurance: Technical Information about the Accreditation Decision Process*, July.

Funding performance standards and outcomes

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

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

Funding

Total Australian, State and Territory government expenditure on children's services was \$4.7 billion in 2009-10, compared with \$4.6 billion (in real terms) in 2008-09. Nationally, real expenditure increased by 54.0 per cent (\$1.6 billion) between 2005-06 and 2009-10 (table 3A.3).

Australian Government expenditure accounted for 80.7 per cent (\$3.8 billion) of total government expenditure on children's services in 2009-10 (tables 3A.3 and 3A.4). State and Territory government expenditure on children's services in 2009-10 was \$908.1 million (table 3A.5). Total Australian, State and Territory government expenditure on children's services is also available by jurisdiction (tables 3A.3-5, 3A.45, 3A.52, 3A.59, 3A.66, 3A.73, 3A.80, 3A.87 and 3A.94).

In 2009-10, the provision of preschool services accounted for the largest proportion of total State and Territory government expenditure across all children's services models (83.9 per cent, or \$762.1 million) (table 3A.5).

The Australian Government provides supplementary funding to support the participation of Indigenous children in preschool programs. In 2010, an estimated \$11.9 million was provided on a per person and project basis to 1469 preschools. The funding covers 8885 full time equivalent Indigenous preschool enrolments (DEEWR unpublished).

Size and scope

Services by management type

Children's services are managed by governments (State, Territory and local), the community sector, the private sector and non-government schools. 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 services need to be interpreted with care because the scope of data collection varies across jurisdictions. Available data on the management type of preschool services are more complete than that for child care services, and indicate considerable variation across jurisdictions (table 3.2).

Table 3.2 Proportion of State and Territory licensed and/or registered children's services, by management type, 2009-10 (per cent)^{a, b}

	NSW	Vic ^c	Qld	WA	SA ^d	Tas ^e	ACT	NT ^f
<i>Child care</i>								
Community managed	29.5	37.3	35.5	19.5	33.5	45.7	72.8	69.4
Private	67.8	46.3	60.7	78.0	41.2	32.7	19.0	18.8
Non-government schools	na	4.5	0.8	–	–	6.3	8.2	11.8
Government managed	2.6	11.9	2.9	2.6	25.3	15.4	–	–
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>Preschool</i>								
Community managed	70.2	73.3	90.2	na	4.5	–	na	na
Private	20.5	1.8	0.5	na	na	–	na	na
Non-government schools	na	6.8	1.3	na	na	27.4	13.0	3.3
Government managed	9.3	18.1	8.0	100.0	95.5	72.6	87.0	96.7
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 Management type relates to the status of the legal entity of the preschool or child care and does not relate to the profit status. ^c All government managed preschools in Victoria are managed by local government. ^d The majority of government managed child care services in SA are small occasional care programs attached to government preschools. ^e Preschools in Tasmania include funded non-government preschools. ^f Preschool services in the NT are directly provided by the Department of Education and Training, but a range of management functions are devolved to school councils and parent management committees. **na** Not available. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 3A.50, 3A.57, 3A.64, 3A.71, 3A.78, 3A.85, 3A.92 and 3A.99.

Child care services

It is necessary to distinguish between the number of child care places provided and the number of children who attend services. Because of the episodic nature of some services (for example, some children attend only for some sessions or some days) it is possible for one place to accommodate more than one child, as many children attend on a part time basis. The lack of a unique identifier for each child means it is difficult to accurately measure how many children access multiple services.

There is no limit to the number of places in Australian Government approved child care services and for most State and Territory government child care services. Data on services should be considered as only indicative of service capacity.

Data are not available on the total number of Australian Government supported child care places due to the unreliability of these data, although the Australian Government supported at least 327 113 centre-based long day care places in 2010 (table 3A.8). Data on the number of child care places supported by State and Territory governments are presented in tables 3A.46, 3A.53, 3A.60, 3A.67, 3A.74, 3A.81, 3A.88 and 3A.95.

In the March quarter 2010, approximately 874 335 children aged 12 years or younger attended Australian Government approved child care services (table 3A.9). An additional 115 988 children attended State and Territory funded and/or provided child care services (table 3A.11). NSW does not discriminate between child care and preschool services, and children attending preschool services are included in the count for children attending child care.

The difference between the number of places and the number of children attending child care is largely due to more than one child being able to fill one place, as many children attend child care services on a part time basis.

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 can 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 other jurisdictions, children can also 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 can access preschool services reduces the comparability of preschool data across jurisdictions. Data on the age of children enrolled in preschool are presented in this chapter, and to improve comparability, data are also presented for:

- children enrolled in 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 enrolled in preschool services.

There is no limit to the number of places in most State and Territory government funded and/or provided preschool services. Data on services should be considered as only indicative of service capacity. Data on the number of preschool places are presented in tables 3A.46, 3A.53, 3A.60, 3A.67, 3A.74, 3A.81, 3A.88 and 3A.95.

In 2009-10, 213 446 children were enrolled in State and Territory funded and/or provided preschool services (table 3A.13). The majority (88.8 per cent, or

189 489 children) were to begin full time schooling the following year (table 3A.13). Limited data on preschool attendance are available for reporting.

The difference between the number of places and the number of children enrolled in preschool is largely due to more than one child being able to fill one place, as many children attend preschool services on a part time basis.

Non-government preschools

Non-government preschools deliver preschool programs and can be managed by entities from the community sector, the private sector or the non-government schools sector.

Non-government preschool programs can be delivered in stand alone preschools, non-government schools, government schools and child care centres (for example, long day care centres). Non-government preschools are required by State and Territory governments to be licensed and/or registered, and licensing and registration arrangements vary across jurisdictions.

Non-government preschool programs that are government funded are within the scope of this chapter (table 3.3).

Table 3.3 Characteristics of non-government preschools in receipt of government funding, 2010

	NSW ^a	Vic	Qld ^b	WA	SA	Tas ^c	ACT ^d	NT ^e
<i>Management type</i>								
Community sector	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x
Private sector	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x
Non-government schools sector	✓	✓	✓	✓	na	✓	x	✓
<i>Service delivery setting</i>								
Stand alone preschools	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x
Non-government schools sector	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Government schools	✓	✓	na	✓	na	x	x	x
Child care centres	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	x	x
Registration and licensing requirements	R, L	L	L	R	L	R	L	R

X Not government funded. **R** Registered. **L** Licensed.

^a All preschool services in NSW were required to be licensed by July 2010. ^b In Queensland, privately owned preschools were required to be licensed, but did not receive government funding in 2009. From 2010 approved private providers of preschool programs will be eligible to receive State government funding. ^c In Tasmania, non-government preschools can be located in stand alone settings, however there are none currently in existence. ^d Non-government preschools in the ACT are licensed, but not government funded. ^e In the NT, only 4 Catholic Remote Schools receive NT government funding for preschool services. All other non-government preschools do not receive NT Government funding. **na** not available.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished).

Some data are also included on non-government preschools which are licensed, registered and/or approved by State and Territory governments (box 3.5).

3.2 Framework of performance indicators

COAG has agreed six National Agreements (NAs) to enhance accountability to the public for the outcomes achieved or outputs delivered by a range of government services, (see chapter 1 for more detail on reforms to federal financial relations). The agreements include sets of performance indicators, for which the Steering Committee collates annual performance information for analysis by the COAG Reform Council (CRC).

There are no service specific NAs that relate to children's services. However, the *National Indigenous Reform Agreement* (NIRA) establishes specific outcomes for reducing the level of disadvantage experienced by Indigenous Australians, and includes an indicator relating to access to quality early childhood education for Indigenous children. Data developments for reporting against the agreed indicator were underway at the time of preparing this report. It is anticipated that this

indicator will be incorporated into the Children's services chapter for the 2012 Report.

The framework of performance indicators for children's services is based on common objectives for children's services endorsed by the former Community Services Ministers' Advisory Council (CSMAC), now the Community and Disability Services Ministers' Advisory Council (CDSMAC) (box 3.2). The relative emphasis placed on each objective varies across jurisdictions.

Box 3.2 Objectives for children's services

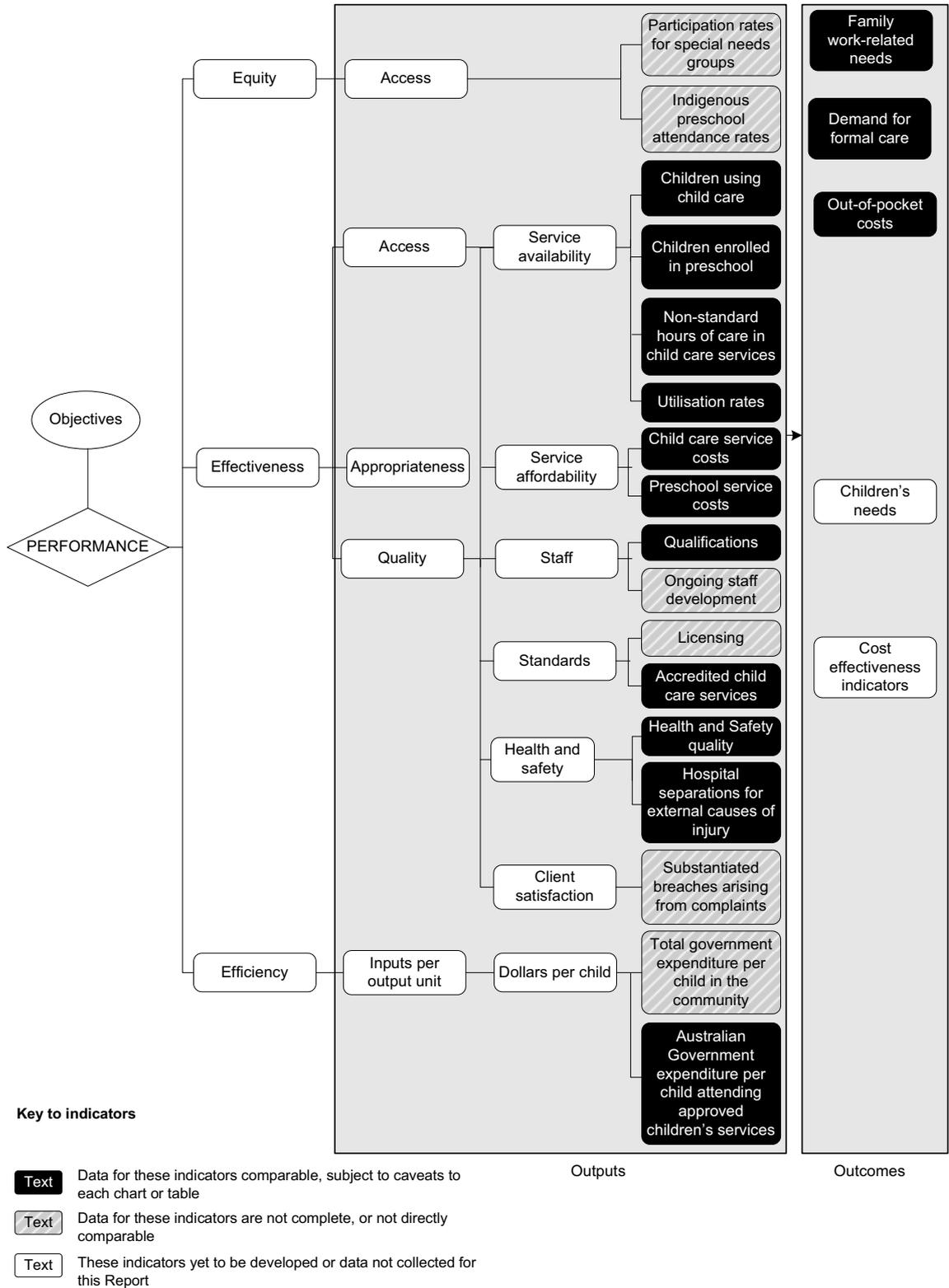
Children's services aim to:

- meet the care and education needs of all children in developmentally appropriate ways, in a safe and nurturing environment
- provide support for families in caring for their children
- provide these services across a range of settings in an equitable and efficient manner.

A performance indicator framework consistent with these objectives is shown in figure 3.2. The framework shows which data are provided on a comparable basis in the 2011 Report. For data that are not deemed directly comparable, the text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary. Chapter 1 discusses data comparability from a Report-wide perspective (see section 1.6).

The Report's statistical appendix 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) (appendix A).

Figure 3.2 Performance indicators for children's services



3.3 Key performance indicator results

Different delivery contexts, locations and types of clients can 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 can assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. Definitions of key terms and indicators are in section 3.6.

Outputs

Outputs are the services delivered (while outcomes are the impact of these services on the status of an individual or group) (see chapter 1, section 1.5).

Equity

Access — participation rates for special needs groups

'Participation rates for special needs groups' is an indicator of governments' objective to ensure that services are provided in an equitable manner to all special needs groups in the community, and that there is consideration of the needs of those groups which can have special difficulty in accessing services (box 3.3).

Box 3.3 Participation rates for special needs groups

'Participation rates for special needs groups' is defined as the proportion of children using child care and preschool 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 (for 0–5 and 6–12 year olds) and preschool services (3–5 year olds). Targeted special needs groups include children from a non-English speaking background, Indigenous children, children from low income families, children with disability, and children from regional and remote areas.

If the representation of special needs groups among children's services users is broadly similar to their representation in the community, this can indicate equity of access. Therefore, a higher participation rate is desirable.

Data reported for this indicator are not directly comparable.

Data quality information for this indicator is under development.

Data for participation by special needs groups using Australian Government approved child care services for 2009-10 were drawn from the National ECEC Workforce Census 2010 and DEEWR administrative systems. Box 3.4 contains more information on the census.

Box 3.4 Australian Government National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census

The *National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census* (National ECEC Workforce Census) was conducted in 2010 and is an initiative of the Australian Government in partnership with State and Territory governments. The information collected aims to provide comprehensive, current and nationally consistent data on access to early childhood education and care services, and staff qualifications and experiences.

This National ECEC Workforce Census replaces the Australian Government Child Care Provider Survey (AGCCPS) conducted in 2008-09 and the Australian Government Census of Child Care services (AGCCC) conducted in earlier years, as the source of non-administrative data available from the Australian Government.

The National ECEC Workforce Census collected information on children with special needs and staff in Australian Government approved child care services. The same information was collected in the AGCCPS and the AGCCC, although different methodologies were used. Variations in collection methodologies and different weighting methods affect the comparability of data across the collections. Therefore comparisons across time should be made with caution.

Source: DEEWR (2010).

At a national level, patterns for children from special needs groups attending Australian Government approved child care varied:

- Children from a non-English speaking background aged 0–12 years participated in child care at a lower rate (13.7 per cent) than this group’s representation in the community (18.8 per cent). This was also the case for both the 0–5 age group and the 6–12 age group.
- Indigenous children aged 0–12 years participated in child care at a lower rate (1.9 per cent) than their representation in the community (4.4 per cent). This was also the case for both the 0–5 age group and the 6–12 age group.
- Children aged 0–12 years from low income families participated in child care services at a similar rate (23.9 per cent) to their representation in the community (23.2 per cent). Children aged 0–5 years participated in child care services at a higher rate than their representation in the community and children in the age

group 6–12 years participated at a lower rate than their representation in the community.

- Children aged 0–12 years with disability had a lower representation in child care (2.6 per cent) compared with their representation in the community (7.7 per cent). This was also the case for both the 0–5 age group and the 6–12 age group.
- Children aged 0–12 years from regional areas participated in child care services at a lower rate (28.0 per cent) to their representation in the community (33.0 per cent). This was also the case for both the 0–5 age group and the 6–12 age group.
- Children aged 0–12 years from remote areas participated in child care at a lower rate (0.9 per cent) to their representation in the community (3.0 per cent). This was also the case for both the 0–5 age group and the 6–12 age group (tables 3.4 and 3A.14).

Data on representation of special needs groups in State and Territory funded and/or provided child care for children aged 0–12 are presented in table 3A.16.

Table 3.4 Proportion of children aged 0–12 years from special needs groups attending Australian Government approved child care services, 2010 (per cent)^{a, b, c, d}

	<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>
<i>Children from non-English speaking backgrounds</i>									
In child care services	19.7	17.4	6.5	9.6	7.8	3.3	12.9	10.8	13.7
In the community, 2006	23.2	21.7	11.9	15.5	13.7	7.2	16.2	36.8	18.8
<i>Indigenous children</i>									
In child care services	2.1	0.6	2.9	2.1	1.4	1.5	0.9	9.4	1.9
In the community, 2006	4.1	1.2	6.2	5.6	3.3	6.5	2.3	39.2	4.4
<i>Children from low income families</i>									
In child care services	24.1	24.0	24.9	22.7	24.1	24.8	8.8	14.4	23.9
In the community, 2007-08	24.5	23.1	20.9	21.0	26.6	33.8	10.8	18.9	23.2
<i>Children with disability</i>									
In child care services	3.3	2.2	2.0	2.2	3.6	2.1	1.9	2.8	2.6
In the community, 2003	8.0	6.8	7.6	8.9	8.8	6.2	7.5	np	7.7
<i>Children from regional areas</i>									
In child care services	26.0	23.6	32.4	20.6	18.7	100.4	1.1	79.9	28.0
In the community, 2006	28.8	28.2	45.6	24.7	26.6	97.7	0.2	51.0	33.0
<i>Children from remote areas</i>									
In child care services	0.2	–	1.2	3.3	1.8	0.6	–	20.2	0.9
In the community, 2006	0.7	0.1	4.4	8.6	4.4	2.0	..	50.3	3.0

^a Data on children in child care services represent the population of children attending child care in 2010. Data on representation in the community are reported for different years due to the availability of data and are sourced from either the ABS *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2003*, the *2006 Census of Population and Housing* or the *Survey of Income and Housing 2007-08*. ^b Data on child care services for 2010 are not directly comparable with previous years data (presented in table 3A.15) due to a change in data source. Refer to box 3.4 and table 3A.15 for more information. ^c See table 3A.15 for complete footnotes and definitions.

^d Data in italics have relative standard errors above 25 per cent, and need to be used with caution. – Nil or rounded to zero. .. Not applicable. np Not published.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished) administrative data collection and *National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census, 2010 (preliminary data)*; ABS (unpublished) *Survey of Income and Housing 2007-08*, Cat. no. 6523.0, *2006 Census of Population and Housing*, Cat. no. 2031.0, and *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2003*, Cat no. 4430.0; table 3A.15.

Data on the representation of special needs groups for children in State and Territory government funded and/or provided preschools are provided in table 3.5. For jurisdictions that were able to provide data, the patterns for children from special needs groups in preschool varied:

- For jurisdictions where data were available (NSW, Victoria, Queensland, SA and ACT), the representation of children aged 3–5 years from a non-English speaking background was 10.6 per cent. Nationally, 18.7 per cent of children aged 3–5 years in the community were children from a non-English speaking background.
- Nationally, the representation of Indigenous children aged 3–5 years in preschool (5.3 per cent) was higher than their representation in the community (4.5 per cent) though this varies across jurisdictions.
- For jurisdictions where data were available (all except Tasmania), the representation of children with a disability aged 3–5 years was 6.1 per cent. Nationally, 8.0 per cent of children aged 3–5 years in the community had a disability.
- For jurisdictions where data were available (all except the ACT), children aged 3–5 years from regional areas participated in preschool at a lower rate (28.9 per cent) compared with their representation in the community (32.3 per cent) nationally, although this varied across jurisdictions.
- Nationally, children aged 3–5 years from remote areas participated in preschool at a higher rate (4.0 per cent) to their representation in the community (3.2 per cent), although this varied across jurisdictions (table 3.5).

Data on the representation of special needs groups in preschool in the year before full time school are presented in table 3A.16.

Table 3.5 Proportion of children (aged 3–5 years) from special needs groups enrolled in State and Territory funded or provided preschools, 2009-10 (per cent)^{a, b, c}

<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^d</i>
Children from non-English speaking backgrounds									
In preschool services	11.1	17.1	3.8	na	11.4	na	21.0	na	10.6
In the community, 2006	23.2	21.6	11.6	15.6	13.5	7.2	16.1	38.7	18.7
Indigenous children									
In preschool services	4.9	1.3	7.8	9.3	6.3	5.2	3.2	43.2	5.3
In the community, 2006	4.1	1.2	6.4	5.8	3.5	6.4	2.3	41.8	4.5
Children with disability									
In preschool services ^e	5.5	6.2	6.0	3.1	13.8	na	4.5	4.0	6.1
In the community, 2003	7.7	6.5	8.6	10.2	8.3	7.2	14.3	np	8.0
Children from regional areas									
In preschool services	31.3	23.9	40.2	19.5	26.3	98.3	na	44.4	28.9
In the community, 2006	28.0	27.5	45.1	24.5	26.2	97.7	0.1	48.2	32.3
Children from remote areas									
In preschool services	1.2	0.1	12.4	8.3	5.7	1.7	..	55.6	4.0
In the community, 2006	0.7	0.1	4.7	9.0	4.4	2.0	..	53.1	3.2

^a Data on children in preschool services represent the population of children enrolled in preschool in 2009-10. Data on representation in the community are reported for different years due to the availability of data and are sourced from the ABS *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2003*, *2006 Census of Population and Housing* and the *Survey of Income and Housing 2007-08*. ^b See table 3A.16 for complete footnotes and definitions. ^c Data exclude innovative or flexible services that receive direct funding from the Australian Government and are targeted towards children from these groups. Data on preschool services can include some children aged 3 years or 5 years for all jurisdictions. Preschool data in the NT include some children aged greater than 5 years. ^d Data for Australia for children from non-English speaking backgrounds, children with disability and children from regional areas, in preschool, are the total of the sum of the states and territories for which data are available, and should not be interpreted as national data. Data for Australia for children from remote areas in preschool and Indigenous children in preschool, and data on the representation in the community represent all states and territories and can be interpreted as national data. ^e Data on children with a disability are not directly comparable because the definition of disability varies across jurisdictions. **na** Not available. **np** Not published. **..** Not applicable.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); ABS (unpublished) *2006 Census of Population and Housing*, Cat. no. 2031.0 and *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2003*, Cat. no. 4430.0; table 3A.16.

Access — Indigenous preschool attendance rates

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

Box 3.5 Indigenous preschool attendance rates

'Indigenous preschool attendance rates' is defined as the number of Indigenous children absent from non-government preschools, as a proportion of all Indigenous children enrolled in non-government preschools. A child is deemed absent if they missed one or more of the sessions they were enrolled in during the reference week. Attendance rates are measured by absentee rates.

A low or decreasing absentee rate indicates a high or increasing rate of attendance at preschools, and is desirable.

Preschool attendance is not compulsory. Non-government preschools include preschool programs delivered in government funded, registered, licensed and/or approved services, and these arrangements vary across jurisdictions. Preschool programs operated by commercial providers are excluded. Data on Indigenous preschool attendance rates are limited to Indigenous children enrolled in non-government preschools, as Indigenous children enrolled in government preschools are not available (DEEWR unpublished).

Data reported for this indicator are not complete.

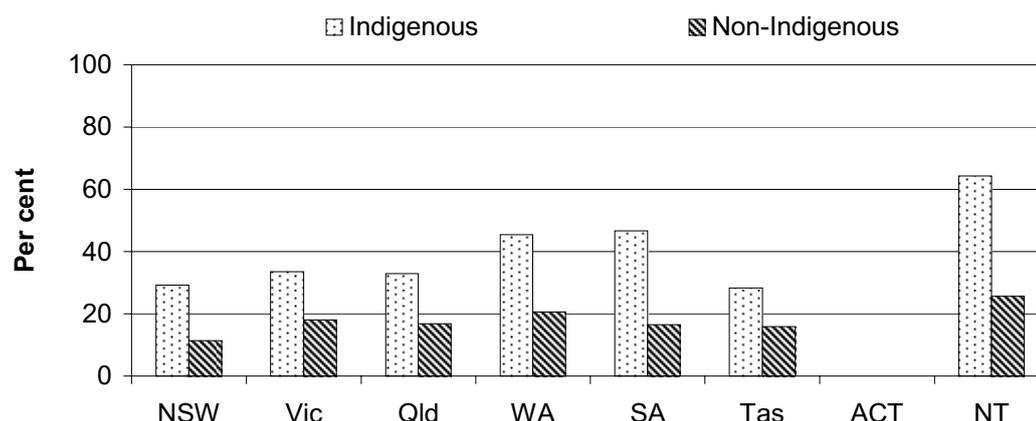
Data quality information for this indicator is under development.

Indigenous preschool enrolments provide a broad indication of access to preschool. Data on Indigenous preschool enrolments were provided for all jurisdictions. Nationally in 2009-10, 11 407 Indigenous children were enrolled in State and Territory government funded and/or provided preschool. Of these Indigenous children, at least 6030 were enrolled in preschool in the year before full time school (table 3A.16). Data on Indigenous children's representation in preschool compared with their representation in the community are presented in table 3.5. Data on Indigenous children enrolled in preschool for the period 2005-06 to 2009-10 are presented in 3A.17.

'Indigenous preschool attendance rates' provides a broad indication of the participation of Indigenous children in preschools. These data are sourced from the National Preschool Census (NPC) and relate only to non-government preschools. These data can overlap with the preschools data provided by State and Territory governments and are therefore not directly comparable with other preschool data included in this Report. The NPC collected data from 98.1 per cent of the 3314 non-government preschools in scope for the 2009 NPC (DEEWR unpublished). This represents approximately 68.0 per cent of all government and non-government preschools, though this proportion varies considerably across jurisdictions (from 6.9 per cent in the Northern Territory, to 100.0 per cent in Victoria) (table 3A.18). Data for jurisdictions with a small number of non-government preschools should be interpreted with care.

In 2009 for jurisdictions where data were available (all except ACT), non-attendance by Indigenous children was higher than non-attendance by non-Indigenous children (figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3 Enrolled children absent from non-government preschools, 2009^{a, b, c, d, e}



^a Data on attendance are limited to non-government preschools, and exclude government preschools. At the national level, approximately 68 per cent of children are in preschools deemed to be non-government, though this percentage varies across jurisdictions: 90 per cent in NSW, 100 per cent in Victoria, 93 per cent in Queensland, 27 per cent in WA, 18 per cent in SA, 26 per cent in Tasmania, 17 per cent in the ACT, and 7 per cent in the NT. Preschool attendance data for jurisdictions with a small proportion of non-government preschools should be interpreted with care. ^b Preschool attendance is not compulsory. ^c Attendance was measured during the week of 3–7 August 2009. Children are counted as absent if they are absent for one or more of the sessions that they were enrolled in during this week. Absences due to illness can be higher during winter than at other times of the year. ^d Data for non-Indigenous children are derived from data on Indigenous children and all children. ^e ACT Indigenous data and non-Indigenous data were not published for 2009 due to privacy reasons, therefore, the Australian total was also not published.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished) *National Preschool Census 2010*; table 3A.18.

Effectiveness

Service availability — children using child care

‘Children using child care’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that all Australian families have equitable access to child care services (box 3.6).

Box 3.6 Children using child care

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

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

Children using child care is defined by two measures

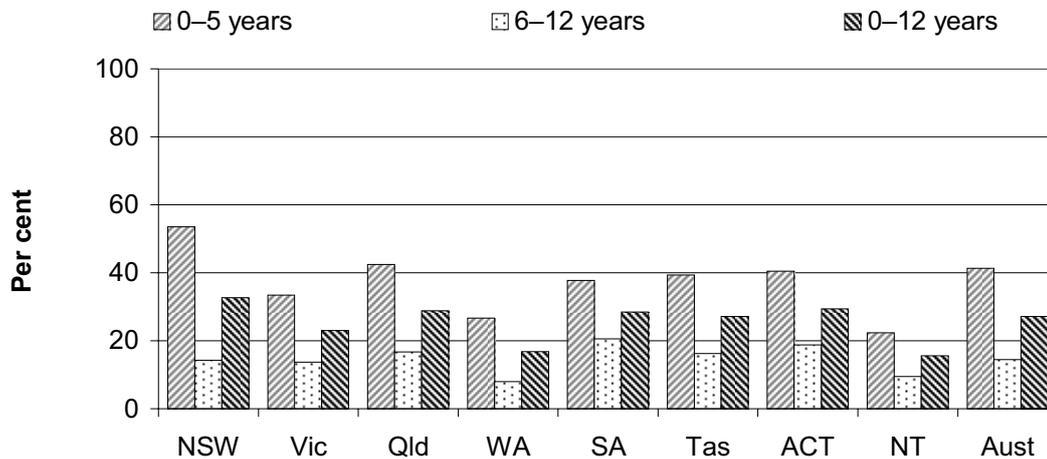
- the proportion of children using Australian Government approved plus State and Territory government funded and/or provided child care
 - data for this measure are not directly comparable.
- the proportion of children aged 0-12 years using Australian Government approved child care
 - data for this measure are comparable.

Data quality information for this indicator is under development.

The employment status of parents can influence children's access to services, depending on the service model. Those services eligible for CCB, for example, must follow the Australian Government's 'priority of access' guidelines when filling vacant places. The guidelines give a high priority to children at risk and children of parents with work-related child care needs (see section 3.6 for more detail). Details of the employment status of parents whose children use these services are shown in table 3A.19.

Nationally, 27.2 per cent of children aged 0–12 years attended Australian approved and State and Territory government funded and/or provided child care in 2009-10. Of children aged 0–5 years and 6–12 years, 41.4 per cent and 14.5 per cent respectively attended Australian government approved and State and Territory government funded and/or provided child care in 2009-10 (figure 3.4). Nearly all of these children (88.3 per cent) attended Australian Government approved child care services (table 3A.11).

Figure 3.4 **Proportion of children using Australian Government approved plus State and Territory government funded and/or provided child care, 2009-10^{a, b, c}**

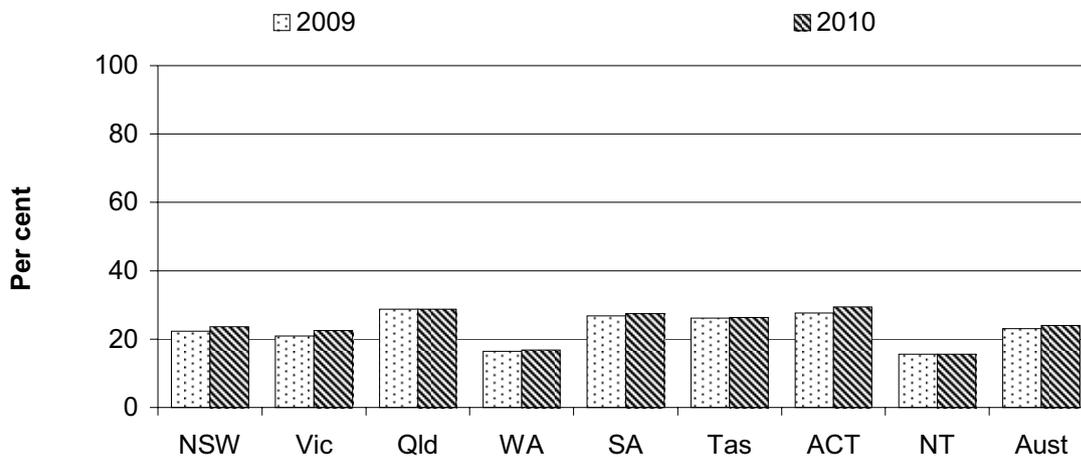


^a The population measure is the estimated resident population as at 31 December 2009. The Australian total includes children in other territories. ^b All NSW licensed and funded long day care centres offer a preschool program. Due to the integrated nature of early childhood education and care in NSW, children attending either service are counted in both categories, resulting in a potential over count. Therefore the NSW proportion of children using child care are not comparable with other jurisdictions. ^c Due to the non-comparability of NSW data, the Australian total needs to be interpreted with caution.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); ABS (unpublished) *Australian Demographic Statistics*, Cat. no. 3101.0; tables 3A.2 and 3A.11.

Nationally in 2010, 24.0 per cent of all 0–12 year olds attended Australian Government approved child care (figure 3.5). The majority of children attending Australian Government approved child care in 2010 (616 611, or 70.5 per cent) were aged 0–5 years (table 3A.9). In 2010, 48.1 per cent of all 2 year olds, 55.8 per cent of all 3 year olds, and 48.6 per cent of all 4 year olds attended Australian Government approved child care (table 3A.10).

Figure 3.5 Proportion of children aged 0–12 years using Australian Government approved child care^{a, b, c}



^a The population measure is the estimated resident population as at 31 December. ^b For 2009 each child attending child care is counted once, even if they attend more than one type of care. For 2010 data children are counted once for each type of care they use. ^c Attendance in 2009 is counted as the number of children attending approved care in all services except Vacation Care during the week 23–29 March 2009. The week in which vacation care attendance was measured varied due to different vacation care periods across Australia. 2010 attendance data relate to the March quarter 2010.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished); ABS (unpublished) *Australian Demographic Statistics*, Cat. no. 3101.0; tables 3A.2 and 3A.9.

The average hours of attendance in child care in 2010 varied considerably across jurisdictions, for all service models. Nationally, average attendance per child at centre-based long day care centres was 25.7 hours per week, while the average attendance per child at family day care was 19.3 hours per week. Nationally, the average attendance per child at occasional care was 11.2 hours per week, the average attendance per child at outside school hours care was 7.4 hours per week, and the average attendance at vacation care during school holidays was 29.3 hours per week (table 3A.12).

Service availability — children enrolled in preschool

‘Children enrolled in preschool’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that all Australian families have equitable access to preschool services (box 3.7).

Box 3.7 Children enrolled in preschool

'Children enrolled in preschool' is defined as the proportion of children enrolled in preschool services in the target age groups. Three measures are reported:

- the proportion of children enrolled in preschool in the year before the commencement of full time schooling (where 'children aged 4 years' is used as a proxy for 'children in the year before full time schooling')
- the proportion of younger children enrolled in preschool
- the proportion of children enrolled in preschool, by age.

A high or increasing proportion of children enrolled in services can indicate a high or increasing level of service availability.

The preschool starting age for children varies across states and territories. A higher proportion of children enrolled at a particular age can reflect the preschool starting age in a particular jurisdiction.

Participation in preschool is not compulsory. This indicator does not provide information on parental preferences for using preschool, or other factors, such as school starting age, which can affect use of preschool.

Care needs to be taken in interpreting this indicator as it may be influenced by double counting of children enrolled due to:

- children moving interstate during a preschool year
- children attending multiple providers to access an appropriate amount of care
- children attending multiple service types
- children attending preschool for greater than one year.

These factors can lead to an overestimation of enrolment in some states and territories (for example, where enrolment rates exceed 100 per cent).

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

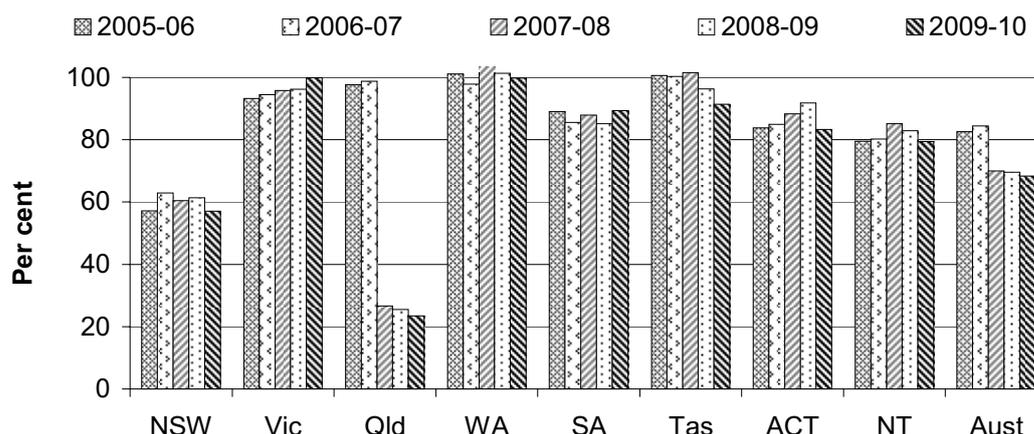
Data quality information for this indicator is under development.

Data for the proportion of children enrolled in preschool in the year before full time school are based on the number of 4 year old children in the population, even though older or younger children can be enrolled in preschool. This can result in an overestimation of the proportion of children enrolled in preschool in the year before full time school.

Nationally in 2009-10, 68.4 per cent of children in the year immediately before they commenced full time school were enrolled in government funded and/or provided preschool services (figure 3.6). The national total for preschool enrolments from 2007-08 are not directly comparable with earlier years due to the cessation of Queensland government provided preschool and the introduction of a Preparatory

Year in Queensland from 2007. The national average from 2007-08 will therefore be lower than in previous years.

Figure 3.6 Proportion of children in year before commencement of full time schooling enrolled in State and Territory government funded preschool^{a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h}



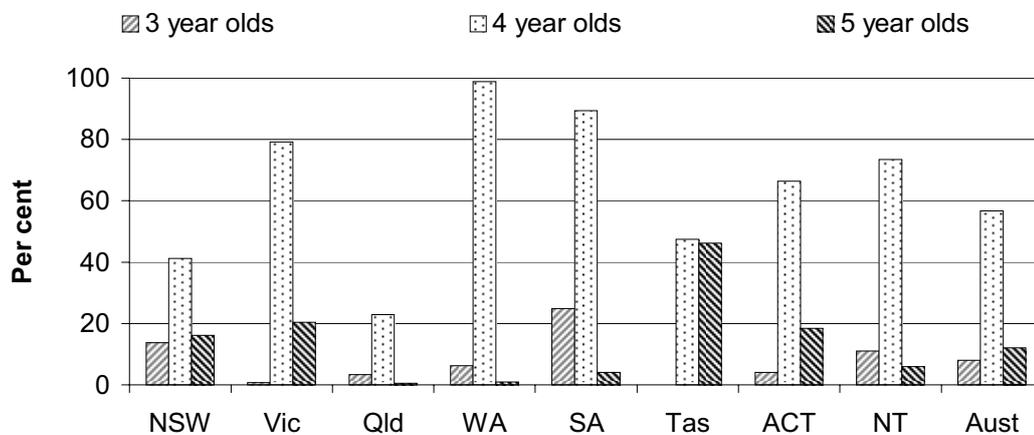
^a The preschool starting age varies across jurisdictions (table 3.1). Differences in school starting age and years of schooling across jurisdictions can affect the proportion of children in preschool services. ^b Four year old children enrolled in preschool is a proxy for children in preschool in the year before full time school. Some children of other ages are included. ^c To calculate the proportions in this figure, enrolment data (from State and Territory governments) are divided by the number of 4 year olds in each jurisdiction (using ABS estimated resident population at 31 December). The enrolment data and population data are estimated at different times of the year. ^d There is some double counting of children in NSW, Queensland (from 2007-08) and WA 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 may exceed the number of children in the target population. ^e NSW data include children aged 4 years to 5 years, 11 months enrolled in and attending licensed State funded preschool programs. Children attending unfunded preschools and preschool programs in other licensed children's services in NSW cannot be discretely counted and are excluded. Children in the non-government school sector are also excluded. Data from 2006-07 include preschools managed by the NSW Department of Education and Training. ^f In Victoria between 3 and 4 per cent of children each year are assessed as being eligible for a second year of funded kindergarten and therefore entry into the first year of school is delayed. ^g Queensland data from 2007-08 include Indigenous Community Pre-Preparatory and C&K community kindergarten services. Data for C&K community kindergarten services in 2008-09 are not comparable with data for previous years. ^h NT preschool data from 2006-07 include Catholic Remote schools.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); ABS (unpublished) *Australian Demographic Statistics*, Cat. no. 3101.0; tables 3A.2 and 3A.13.

Nationally in 2009-10, 23 207 younger children were enrolled in government funded preschool services. The proportions of younger children participating in 2009-10 differed across jurisdictions, in part due to variation in policies on access to funded preschool services (table 3A.13).

All jurisdictions were able to provide data on the age of children enrolled in preschool. Although the preschool starting age varies across jurisdictions (table 3.1), the majority of children enrolled in preschool in 2009-10 were 4 years old for each jurisdiction reporting (table 3A.13). Figure 3.7 shows the proportions of all 3 year olds, 4 year olds and 5 year olds enrolled in preschool, and these proportions vary across jurisdictions.

Figure 3.7 Proportions of 3, 4 and 5 year old children enrolled in State and Territory government funded and/or provided preschool, by age, 2009-10^{a, b, c}



^a The starting age for preschool varies across jurisdictions. ^b Although 3 year old children can attend preschool in Tasmania, data were not available for 2009-10. ^c Data for Australia are the total of the sum of the states and territories for which data are available.

Source: State and Territory Governments (unpublished); table 3A.13.

All jurisdictions except NSW and Victoria provided data on the average hours of attendance for government funded and/or provided preschool services in 2009-10. For those jurisdictions that provided data for 2009-10, the average attendance of children in the year immediately before they commenced full time schooling was between 11 and 14 hours per week (tables 3A.60, 3A.67, 3A.74, 3A.81, 3A.88 and 3A.95).

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

‘Non-standard hours of care in child care services’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure government funded and/or provided child care services meet the needs of all users (box 3.8).

Box 3.8 Non-standard hours of care in child care services

'Non-standard hours of care in child care services' 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 model. Definitions of 'standard hours' and 'non-standard hours' are presented in section 3.6 'Definitions of key terms' and indicators.

A high or increasing proportion of services providing non-standard hours of care can suggest a greater flexibility of services to meet the needs of families.

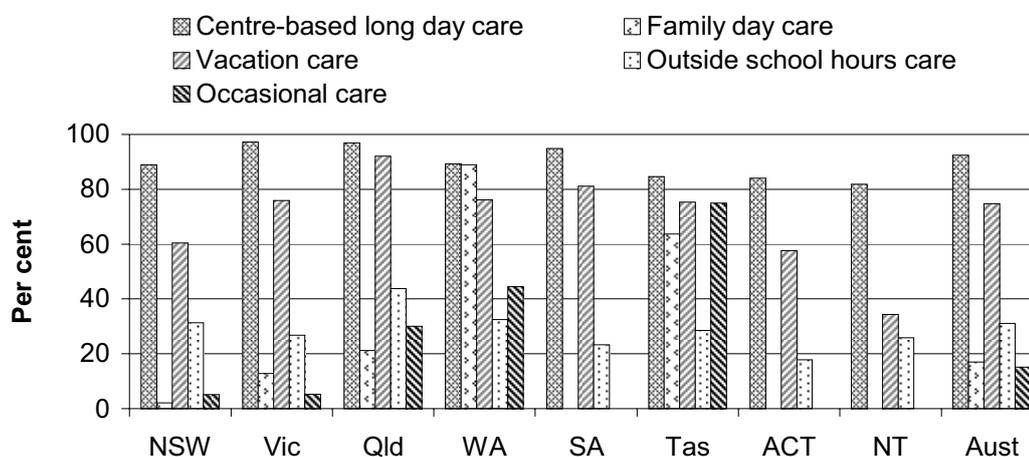
This indicator does not provide information on the demand for non-standard hours of care. Further, it provides no information on how non-standard hours services meet the needs of users.

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2011

Provision of non-standard hours of care can be influenced by a range of factors, such as costs to services and parents, demand for care, availability of carers, and compliance with occupational and health and safety requirements. Figure 3.8 shows the proportion of services that provided non-standard hours of care by service model.

Figure 3.8 **Australian Government approved child care services providing non-standard hours of care, by service model, 2010^a**



^a A small number of family day care and outside school hours care services provided non-standard hours of care in SA, the ACT and the NT in the March quarter of 2010. Due to the small number of services, the proportion of services offering non-standard hours of care can vary over time and these data are not published for these jurisdictions.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished); table 3A.20.

Limited data are available on State and Territory government funded and/or provided child care services that offer non-standard hours of care (see table 3A.21). NSW, Queensland and SA provided data on the proportion of preschools that offered non-standard hours of care in 2009-10 (table 3A.21).

Service availability — utilisation rates

‘Utilisation rates’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure all Australian families have equitable and adequate access to children’s services (box 3.9).

Box 3.9 Utilisation rates

'Utilisation rates' is defined as the total child hours paid for as a percentage of total available hours, for centre-based long day care and family day care. 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 can be relevant where governments provide targeted capital or operational funding to establish or maintain services.

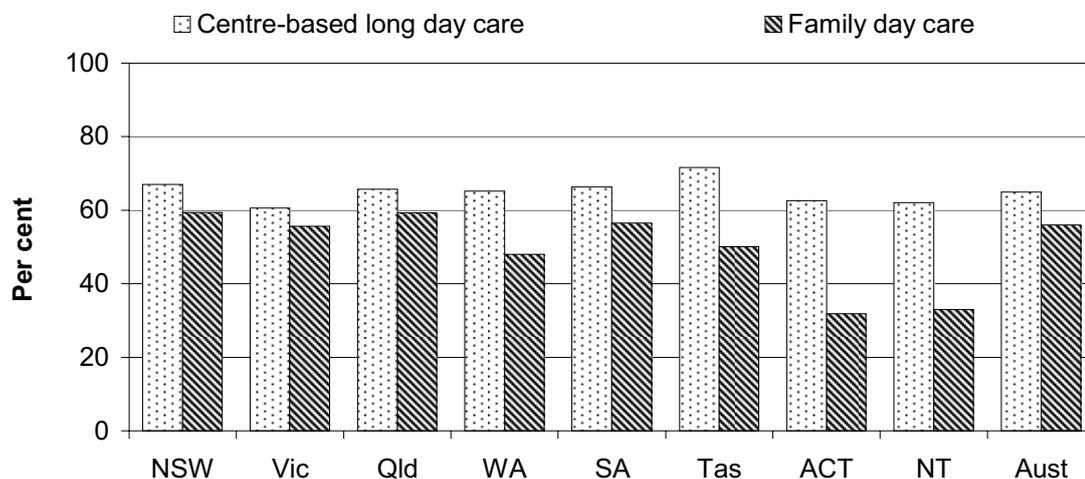
The desired level of utilisation will depend on a number of factors. High levels of utilisation can be desirable as a measure of efficiency in situations where a community does not require additional services. An alternative view of high utilisation rates is that services are less accessible as there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

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Data quality information for this indicator is under development.

The utilisation rates in Australian Government approved centre-based long day care and family day care services across jurisdictions are shown in figure 3.9. Nationally, utilisation rates were higher for centre-based long day care (64.9 per cent) than for family day care (56.0 per cent) in 2010.

Figure 3.9 **Utilisation rates, Australian Government approved centre-based long day care and family day care, 2010 (per cent)^{a, b}**



^a Data on utilisation rates presented in the 2009 Report, and subsequent reports are not comparable with data presented in earlier Reports, due to a change in data source. ^b It is assumed that family day care services were open for 35 hours per week and centre-based long day care services were open for 50 hours per week.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished); table 3A.22.

Service affordability — child care service costs

‘Child care service costs’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure all Australian families have equitable access to children’s services irrespective of their financial circumstances (box 3.10).

Box 3.10 Child care service costs

‘Child care service costs’ is defined as the median weekly cost for 50 hours of care by service model. Median costs represent the middle value of the range of costs.

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

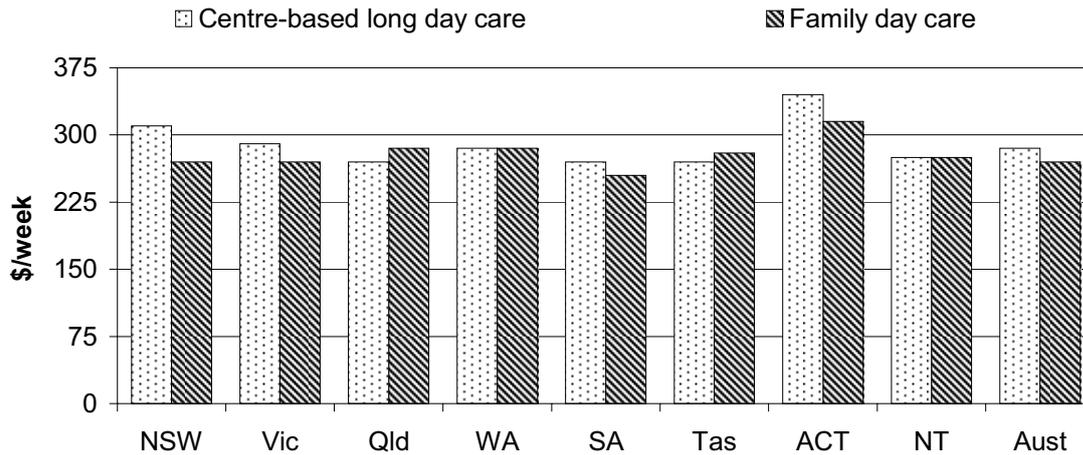
Cost data need to be interpreted with care because fees are independently set by service providers. Charging practices, including fees, are commercial decisions made by individual services, so there is significant variation in the fees charged by services. Variation in costs occurs as a result of factors including State and Territory licensing requirements, award wages, and whether fees include charges for additional services such as nappies and meals.

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Data quality information for this indicator is under development.

Nationally, median weekly cost for 50 hours of care in 2010 were higher for centre-based long day care (\$285) than for family day care (\$270) (figure 3.10).

Figure 3.10 Median cost of Australian Government approved child care services, 2010 (\$/week)^{a, b, c}



^a Median costs are based on 50 hours of care in the reference week. ^b Family day care data exclude in-home care. ^c Family day care fee includes parent levy.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished); table 3A.23.

Median weekly costs paid to Australian Government approved long day care services, by remoteness area are presented in table 3A.24. Nationally in 2010, the median weekly cost of long day care in major cities and inner regional areas was higher than in more remote areas (\$285 and \$270 respectively). The median weekly costs varied across jurisdictions.

Service affordability — preschool service costs

‘Preschool service costs’ is an indicator of governments’ objective that all Australian families have equitable access to children’s services regardless of their financial circumstances (box 3.11).

Box 3.11 Preschool service costs

'Preschool service costs' 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. Median costs represent the middle value of the range of costs.

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

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

- there can 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, can 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 can reflect higher land values and rental fees charged in major cities
- some jurisdictions provide targeted fee relief that lowers fees for some children.

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Data quality information for this indicator is under development.

Data for preschool service costs for 2008 were obtained from the ABS 2008 *Childhood Education and Care Survey* (CEaCS). The CEaCS is a household survey, with parents responding to questions about use of child care and preschool services. Some children attend a preschool program within a child care setting, for example in a long day care service, where the costs would generally be higher than in preschool. It is expected that in most of these cases, the parent would report the service model as (for example) a long day care centre, rather than preschool, but the parent might report the service model as preschool. In addition to issues around self-reporting, some services included in the CEaCS are not necessarily funded by governments. Refer to box 3.12 for additional information on the CEaCS.

Box 3.12 ABS Childhood Education and Care Survey

The ABS *Childhood Education and Care Survey* (CEaCS) was conducted for the first time in June 2008, as a supplement to the Labour Force Survey, and integrated the ABS Child Care Survey (last conducted in 2005) with a new topic on Early Years Learning. The CEaCS collected information on 3.5 million children aged 0–12 years living in a sample of private dwellings (ABS 2009).

Consistent with the earlier ABS child care surveys, the CEaCS collected information on families' requirements for formal care (or additional formal care) for their children, but some changes were introduced for the CEaCS. The CEaCS focused on families' current requirements for formal care (rather than requirements for formal care in the previous four weeks), collected in the child care surveys, collected more information on the steps taken to obtain formal care, whether the families would have used formal care if it became available, and the types of alternative care arrangements families have made.

Estimates from the surveys are subject to sampling variability. They can 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 higher 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 oversupply and undersupply of child care places can be specific to particular areas, including small and remote communities.

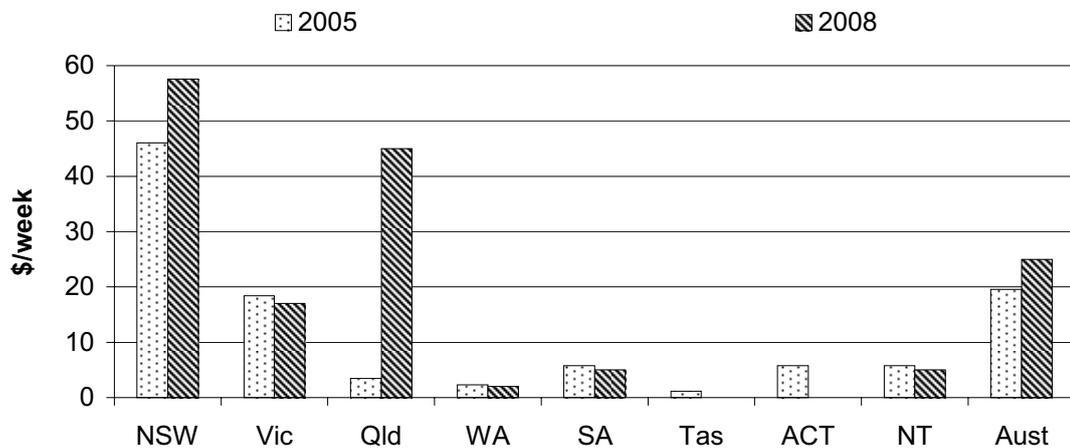
Further detail about the mix of providers of preschool (community, private and government) is provided in tables 3A.50, 3A.57, 3A.64, 3A.71, 3A.78, 3A.85, 3A.92 and 3A.99.

Preschool service costs per child can also depend on the time spent in preschool. Of the 268 000 children usually attending preschool in 2008:

- 30 per cent attended for less than 10 hours per week
- 47 per cent attended for between 10 and 14 hours per week
- 23 per cent attended for 15 hours or more per week (ABS 2009).

Nationally, the median cost of preschool per child in 2008 was \$25 per week (after subsidies). After adjusting for inflation, the median cost for 2005 (in 2007-08 dollars) was \$20 per week (figure 3.11). Additional information on the preschool service costs for children by cost range are presented in table 3A.25.

Figure 3.11 Children who attended preschool, real median weekly cost per child (after subsidies) (2007-08 dollars)^{a, b, c, d, e}



^a Data for Tasmania and the ACT for 2008 were not available separately due to small numbers, but are included in the Australian total. ^b The 2005 *Child Care Survey* collected data based on preschool arrangements in the previous 4 weeks. The 2008 CEaCS collected data based on usual preschool arrangements. Data for 2005 and 2008 are not directly comparable, and care should be taken in interpreting these data. ^c There can be differences between jurisdictions in the number of hours and sessions attended by children each week. Preschool services are provided by a different mix of providers (community, private and government). Differences in charging practices, including fees, can 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. ^d The increase in costs in Queensland is largely due to the cessation of State school provided preschool when the Preparatory Year was introduced in Queensland schools from 2007. This means community kindergartens are the main provider of government funded preschool in 2008 and parent fees apply to this service. ^e There may be variations in weekly cost reported for 2005 from the 2010 Report, as data have been adjusted into 2007-08 dollars based on the revised GDP deflator for the 2011 Report (table AA.26).

Source: ABS (unpublished) *Child Care Survey 2005* and *Childhood Education and Care Survey 2008*; Cat. no. 4402.0; table 3A.26.

Data on the median weekly cost of preschool by remoteness area are presented in table 3A.27. Nationally in 2009, the median weekly cost of preschool in major cities and inner regional areas was \$27 (after subsidies). These median weekly costs varied across jurisdictions.

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 of services
 - the proportion of services that have achieved quality accreditation
 - the number of injuries requiring hospitalisation suffered while in care
 - child care services' performance against the NCAC's quality principles related to health and safety
 - the number of substantiated breaches arising from complaints.

Data for these indicators relating to quality in this report need to be treated with caution because there are differences in reporting across jurisdictions.

Staff— qualifications

'Qualifications' in children's services is an 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 (box 3.13).

Box 3.13 Qualifications

The definition of 'Qualifications' relates to primary contact staff with relevant formal qualifications or three or more years of relevant experience.

A relevant formal qualification relates to the highest level of qualification that a staff member has completed in an early childhood education and care related field at a Certificate level III or above.

Some studies and research (for example, OECD 2006) have shown a link between a higher proportion of qualified and experienced primary contact staff and a higher quality service, suggesting that this is desirable.

Staff qualifications are a proxy indicator of staff quality.

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

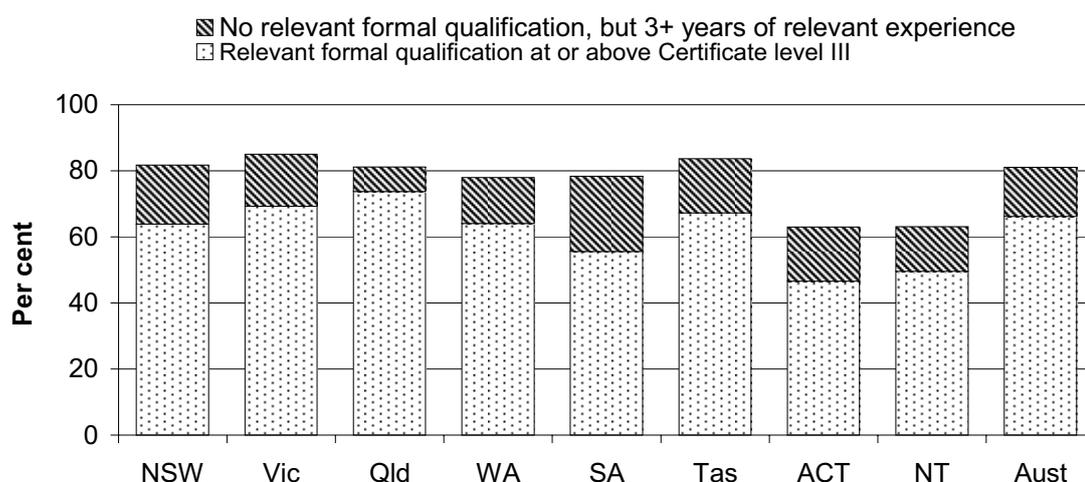
Data quality information for this indicator is under development.

Data on full time equivalent staff, family day carers and unpaid staff employed by Australian Government approved child care services are presented in table 3A.28.

Nationally, there were 87 282 paid primary contact staff employed by Australian Government approved child care services in 2010 (table 3A.29). Nationally, 66.2 per cent of paid primary contact staff in 2010 held a relevant formal qualification at

or above Certificate level III, and a further 14.8 per cent had three or more years relevant experience. The proportion of paid primary contact staff with relevant formal qualifications or three or more years of relevant experience varied across jurisdictions in 2009-10 (figure 3.12).

Figure 3.12 Paid primary contact staff employed by Australian Government approved child care services, by relevant qualification, 2010^a



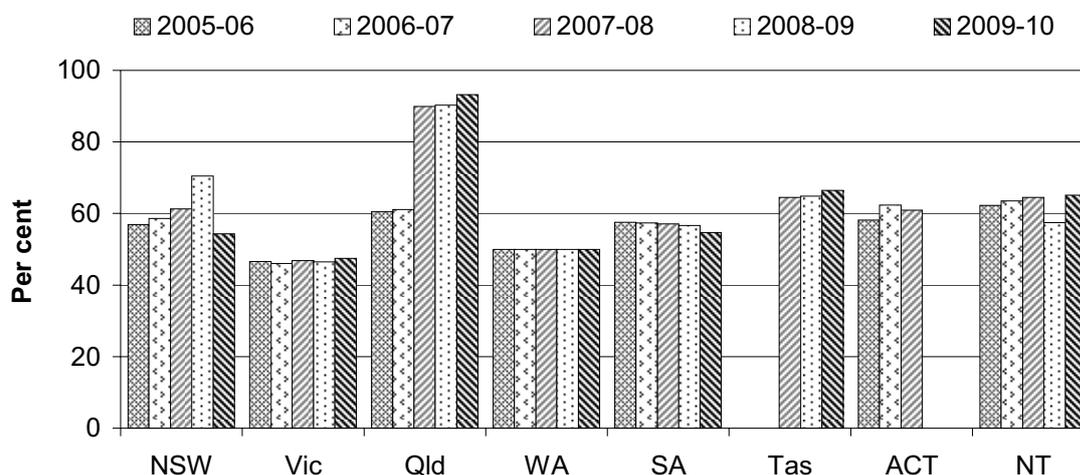
^a Data for 2010 are weighted data drawn from the National ECEC Workforce Census and are not directly comparable with data for previous years (presented in table 3A.29) due to a change in data source. Refer to box 3.4 and table 3A.29 for more information.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished) *National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census, 2010* (preliminary data); table 3A.29.

Nationally, the majority of paid primary contact staff with relevant formal qualifications in approved Australian Government child care services held a certificate III or IV or a diploma or advanced diploma (44.4 per cent and 40.9 per cent, respectively) (table 3A.30). Of the 8546 (or 14.8 per cent) paid primary contact staff with a bachelor degree or above, 83.3 per cent held university qualifications in the field of early childhood education (table 3A.30).

The proportion of preschool primary contact staff employed by preschool services that received funding from State and Territory governments with a relevant formal qualification is reported in figure 3.13.

Figure 3.13 Paid primary contact staff with a relevant formal qualification at or above Certificate level III, employed by State and Territory funded and/or managed preschools^{a, b, c, d, e, f}



^a All preschool services in NSW, Queensland, SA and the ACT must have at least two staff, of whom one must have a formal qualification. ^b In Victoria, all preschool services must have at least two staff, of whom one must have a relevant early childhood teaching qualification. The proportion of qualified teachers is less than 50 per cent because a teacher can deliver a funded kindergarten program at more than one location. ^c Queensland data from 2007-08 relate to staff with formal qualifications in Indigenous Community Pre-Preparatory schools and C&K community kindergarten services. Data for 2008-09 C&K community kindergarten services are not comparable with data for previous years, as these data include only staff working during the census week. Data for previous years related to employed staff and included staff who were on leave or absent in the census week. The 2008-09 census had a response rate of 93.6 per cent for preschools, and data for 2008-09 are potentially under-reported. ^d In WA, all preschool teachers must have a formal qualification. The data assume that every teacher has an aide. Qualifications of aides are unknown, reported as not applicable and are assumed to be zero in the calculation of the proportion. ^e Data prior to 2007-08 for Tasmania and data for 2008-09 and 2009-10 for the ACT were not available. ^f All preschool teachers in the NT are qualified teachers.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 3A.49, 3A.56, 3A.63, 3A.70, 3A.77, 3A.84, 3A.91 and 3A.98.

Ongoing staff development

‘Ongoing staff development’ in children’s services is an 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. Ongoing development of the skills and competencies of child care and preschool staff is another proxy indicator of staff quality (box 3.14).

Box 3.14 Ongoing staff development

'Ongoing staff development' is defined as the proportion of staff who undertook relevant in-service training in the previous 12 months.

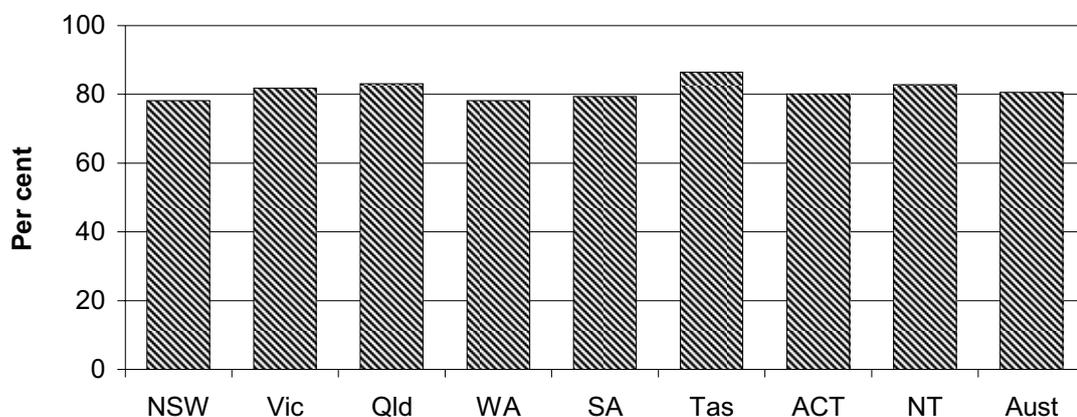
A high or increasing rate of in-service training suggests a relatively high or increasing quality of service. This indicator does not provide information on whether the development undertaken by staff is adequate or sufficiently applicable to child care or preschool to improve the quality of the service provided.

Data for this indicator are not directly comparable.

Data quality information for this indicator is under development.

Nationally in 2009-10, 80.6 per cent of paid primary contact staff in Australian Government approved child care services undertook relevant in-service training in the previous 12 months (figure 3.14).

Figure 3.14 **Proportion of paid primary contact staff in Australian Government approved child care services who undertook relevant in-service training in previous 12 months, 2010^a**



^a Data for 2010 were drawn from the National ECEC Workforce Census and are not directly comparable with data for previous years (presented in table 3A.31) due to a change in data source. Refer to box 3.4 and table 3A.31 for more information.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished) *National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census, 2010* (preliminary data); table 3A.31.

NSW, Victoria and Queensland also provided data on the proportion of preschool staff undertaking training in 2009-10 (tables 3A.49, 3A.56 and 3A.63).

Data are also provided across each State and Territory relating to staff tenure in Australian Government approved child care services for 2010 (table 3A.32).

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.

Under the new *National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care* (box 3.1), COAG agreed to the establishment of a jointly governed National Quality Framework for early Childhood Education and Care and Outside School Hours Care, which will replace existing separate licensing and quality assurance processes (box 3.15).

Box 3.15 National Quality Framework

On 7 December 2009 COAG endorsed a National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care (NQF) (see also box 3.1). The NQF will be a uniform national system jointly governed by the Commonwealth and states and territories.

The new framework aims to raise quality and enable continuous improvement in early childhood education and care through:

- a National Quality Standard (NQS)
- a new rating system to complement the NQS
- streamlined regulatory system
- a new national body governed jointly by the Commonwealth and the states and territories (the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority).

Implemented progressively from 1 July 2010, the NQS will be fully operational by 1 January 2012, and will be applied to all long day care, family day care, outside school hours care services and preschools, with the gradual introduction over subsequent years of improved ratios and qualifications. The National Quality Standard comprises guiding principles, quality areas, standards and elements. There are seven quality areas:

- educational program and practice
- children's health and safety
- physical environment
- staffing arrangements, including staff-to-child ratios and qualifications
- relationships with children

(Continued next page)

Box 3.15 (Continued)

- collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- leadership and service management.

A cooperative legislative framework will support the introduction of the NQF. State and Territory governments will be responsible to ensure consistency and create the new national body. The states and territories will also be responsible for the regulation and administration of the new system that integrates quality assurance with current licensing arrangements.

The national body will oversee the NQS and its application across jurisdictions nationally to ensure that services are meeting the new requirements.

Source: COAG (2009a); DEEWR (2010 and unpublished)

Standards — licensing

‘Licensing’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure government funded or provided children’s services meet the minimum standards deemed necessary to provide a safe and nurturing environment, and to meet the educational and development needs of children. State and Territory governments are responsible for licensing children’s services in their jurisdictions (box 3.16). The following licensing and standards information presented in this Report relate to current arrangements and will be replaced by January 2012 by the new system under the NQF (box 3.15).

Box 3.16 Licensing

‘Licensing’ 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, where licensing is indicative of regulatory control over services.

A high or increasing proportion of licensed services suggests the potential for a higher quality of 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.

Data for this indicator were not available for the 2011 Report.

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 a further outcome of accreditation.

Licensed children's services can 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. The extent of implementation of these current standards varies across jurisdictions.

The service models covered by legislation vary across jurisdictions (table 3.6).

Table 3.6 State and Territory licensing of children's services, 2010^a

<i>Service model</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic^b</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA^c</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT^d</i>
Centre-based long day care	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
Occasional care	L	L	L	L	G/L	L	L	L
Family day care schemes/agencies	L	L	L	X	G/L	L	L	X
Family day care carers	R	..	R	L	R	R	..	X
Outside school-hours care	R	L	L	L	R	L	L	X
Home-based care	L	..	X	X	L	L	..	X
Other care ^e	X	..	X	X	L	L	L	X
Preschool/kindergarten ^f	L/G	L	L/G	G	G	G/R	L/G	G/R

L = Services require a licence to operate. **R** = Services require registration or approval to operate. **G** = Services are provided by State/Territory governments. **X** = Services do not require licence, registration or approval to operate, but can be required to meet regulatory standards.

^a Children's services are regulated in accordance with the requirements of the relevant legislation in each jurisdiction. ^b Since May 2009 all Outside School Hours Care and Family Day Care Services in Victoria are required to be licensed. ^c WA licenses individual carers, regardless of whether they belong to a scheme, and schemes are not licensed. ^d In the NT, Family Day Care Schemes will be required to be licensed by 31 March 2011, Home based carers and Short term or one off care will be required to be registered by 31 December 2011, and OSHC services will be required to be licensed by 31 December 2013. ^e Other care refers to all other government regulated care, for example, nannies, playschools and in-home care. Jurisdictions can licence some, but not all, types of other care services. ^f NSW is progressively introducing regulation of school-based services. The NSW Department of Education and Training provides preschools in 100 government schools. In Tasmania, kindergartens not in government schools are registered with the Schools Registration Board. .. Not applicable.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished).

State and Territory governments also engage in monitoring and inspecting children's services. All states and territories monitor performance against the standards set for children's services, in order to ensure that high quality services are delivered to the community. Table 3.7 provides an overview of the monitoring and inspection regimes that operate across jurisdictions.

There are broad commonalities in the monitoring and inspection regimes across jurisdictions. However, there is variability in the recording of breaches and a variety of penalties applied for breaches. This has hindered reporting of comparable data across jurisdictions for monitoring and inspection.

Table 3.7 State and Territory monitoring and inspection regimes, for licensed children's services, 2009-10

<i>Monitoring activities</i>	<i>Unit</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>Proactive monitoring^a</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Required frequency of inspections ^b		Annual	Risk based	Annual	Annual	At least once a year	Quarter	Quarter	Biannual
Estimated share announced visits ^c	%	75	6	67	55	5	93	60	80
Estimated share unannounced inspections ^d	%	25	94	33	45	95	7	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 2009-10 ^h	no.	7	3	–	5	na	–	–	–

^a Proactive monitoring refers to the ongoing program of visits/inspections to services that are determined by legislation and/or the monitoring policies in each jurisdiction. ^b In WA, from July 2007, licensed services receive an annual visit. During the first two years of the licence period, the majority of these visits are unannounced. The increase in announced visits in 2009-10 is due to a large number of licenses expiring in 2009-10 as license renewal requires a full announced visit. In SA, the required frequency of inspections is dependent on the type of licensed service. ^c Announced visits are scheduled with the service provider including but 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 can be triggered by either a complaint or a service's failure to comply with legislative requirements. ^f See detailed data in attachment tables 3A.51, 3A.58, 3A.65, 3A.72, 3A.79, 3A.86, 3A.93 and 3A.100. ^g Jurisdictions can apply a wide range of actions to underperforming services. These actions can include administrative and/or statutory sanctions including prosecution. Not all sanctions are included. ^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. na Not available.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished).

Standards — accredited child care services

‘Accredited child care services’ is an indicator of the Australian Government’s objective to ensure government funded or provided child care services meet the standards deemed 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 model. The NCAC administers quality assurance systems for centre-based long day care, family day care schemes and outside school hours care services across Australia (box 3.17).

Box 3.17 Accredited child care services

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

A high or increasing proportion of services that have been accredited is desirable.

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

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Data quality information for this indicator is under development.

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

- the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) for centre-based long day care
- 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 service model. For example, the QIAS assesses centre-based long day care performance against the following seven ‘quality areas’:

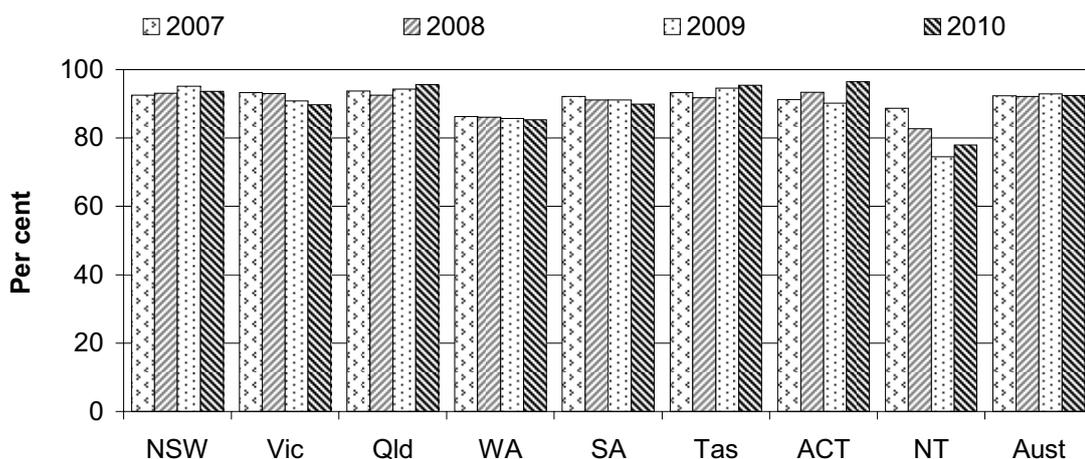
- staff relationships with children and peers
- partnerships with families
- programming and evaluation

- 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 where successful participation is required to allow child care services to offer CCB fee reduction to parents. All centre-based long day child care services are required to participate in the QIAS to be eligible for approval for CCB purposes, and the majority of centre-based long day child care services participate.

Nationally, of the 5904 centres registered to participate in the QIAS at 30 June 2010, 4312 centres had received an accreditation decision (table 3A.33). Of the centres assessed, 92.4 per cent (3985 centres) were successful in achieving accreditation (figure 3.15). The centres that did not meet accreditation standards (327 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 2010, a further 1592 centres (27.0 per cent of those registered to participate in QIAS) were in self-study, review or moderation, or awaiting an accreditation decision (table 3A.33).

Figure 3.15 Accredited centres as a proportion of centres fully assessed under the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System^{a, b}



^a Data at 30 June in each year. Figures can fluctuate during the course of the year. ^b Results for Tasmania, the ACT and the NT can be influenced by the relatively small number of services participating in the process. See table 3A.33 for numbers of services.

Source: NCAC (unpublished); table 3A.33.

Nationally, 324 family day care schemes were registered with NCAC at 30 June 2010. Of these, 295 schemes had received an accreditation decision. Of the schemes assessed, 94.2 per cent (278 services) were accredited. At 30 June 2010, 17 schemes were not accredited and 29 were in self-study, validation or moderation, or awaiting an accreditation decision (table 3A.33).

At 30 June 2010, there were 3546 outside school hours care services registered to participate in OSHCQA (table 3A.33). Of the 2974 services that had received an accreditation decision at 30 June 2010, 97.1 per cent (2888 services) were successful in achieving accreditation. A further 572 services were in self-study, validation or moderation, or awaiting an accreditation decision (table 3A.33).

Health and safety — health and safety quality

‘Health and safety quality’ in children’s services is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure children’s services meet the care, educational and development needs of children in a safe and nurturing environment (box 3.18).

Box 3.18 Health and safety quality

‘Health and safety quality’ is defined by three measures.

One measure for family day care:

- the proportion of family day care schemes that achieved satisfactory or above ratings for the NCAC health, hygiene, nutrition, safety and wellbeing quality area.

Two measures for long day care:

- the proportion of long day care centres that achieved satisfactory or above ratings for the NCAC protective care and safety quality area
- the proportion of long day care centres that achieved satisfactory or above ratings for the NCAC health, nutrition and wellbeing quality area.

A lower proportion of centres receiving satisfactory or above ratings does not provide information on the actual health and safety of children in these centres. All else being equal, a higher proportion for the above measures can indicate that children’s services are meeting the needs of children in a safe and nurturing environment.

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Data quality information for this indicator is under development.

Data for this indicator were obtained from the NCAC. The following points should be noted in interpreting health and safety quality, whereby:

- data presented cover family day care schemes and long day care centres

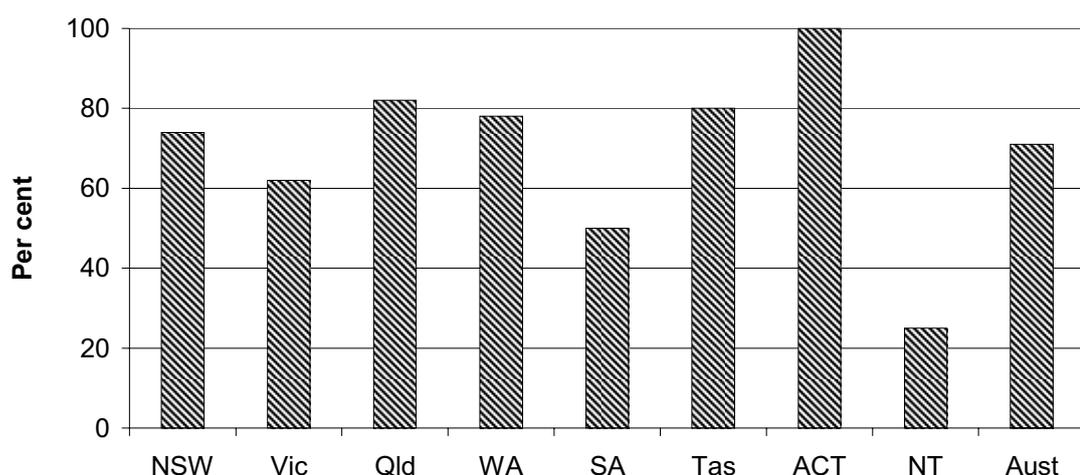
- data do not include preschool/kindergarten services, as NCAC assessments are limited to child care services
- data are only presented for those services that have undergone accreditation in the 12 month reporting period (services are only accredited once during any 2.5 year period).

For family day care, the quality area ‘health, hygiene, nutrition, safety and wellbeing’ includes the following principles on which an assessment is made:

- the environments provided for children are safe
- food and drink are nutritious and culturally appropriate
- the health and safety of all children are protected
- nappy changing, toileting and bathing are positive experiences for children
- children’s needs for rest, sleep and comfort are supported
- current State or Territory legislation relating to child protection and wellbeing is implemented consistently.

Nationally, in 2009-10, 71.0 per cent of family day care schemes achieved satisfactory or above ratings for the health, hygiene, nutrition, safety and wellbeing quality area (figure 3.16).

Figure 3.16 Proportion of family day care schemes that achieved satisfactory or above ratings for NCAC health, hygiene, nutrition, safety and wellbeing quality area, 2009-10^{a, b}



^a Data are presented only for those services that have undergone accreditation in the 12 month reporting period (services are only accredited once during any 2.5 year period). ^b Results can be influenced by the relatively small number of services participating in the process. See table 3A.34 for numbers of services.

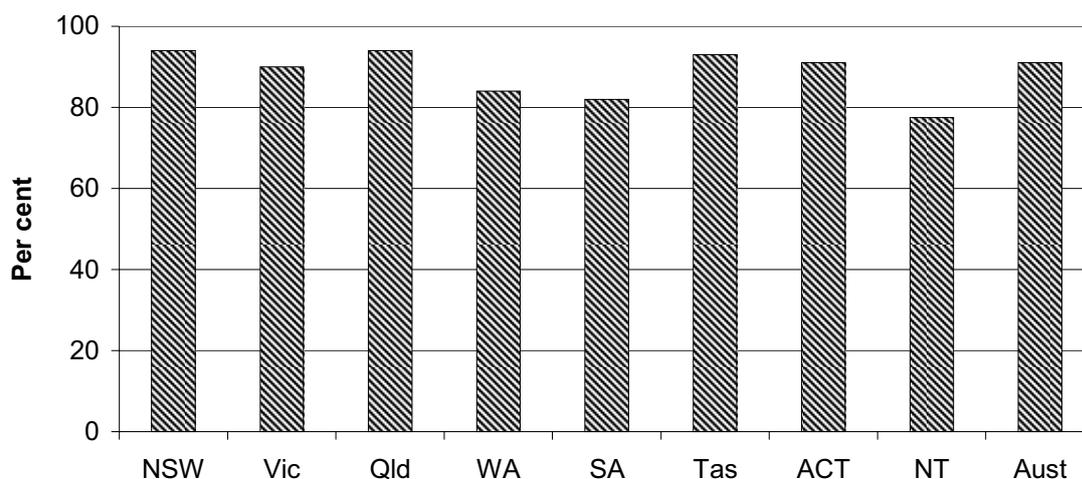
Source: NCAC (unpublished); table 3A.34.

For long day care, the quality area ‘protective care and safety’ includes the following principles on which an assessment is made:

- staff act to protect each child
- staff supervise children at all times
- staff ensure that potentially dangerous products, plants and objects are inaccessible to children
- the centre ensures that buildings and equipment are safe
- the centre promotes occupational health and safety.

Nationally, in 2009-10, 91.0 per cent of long day care centres achieved satisfactory or above ratings for the protective care and safety quality area (figure 3.17).

Figure 3.17 Proportion of long day care centres that achieved satisfactory or above ratings for NCAC protective care and safety quality area, 2009-10^{a, b}



^a Data are presented only for those services that have undergone accreditation in the 12 month reporting period (services are only accredited once during any 2.5 year period). ^b Results can be influenced by the relatively small number of services participating in the process. See table 3A.34 for numbers of services.

Source: NCAC (unpublished); table 3A.34.

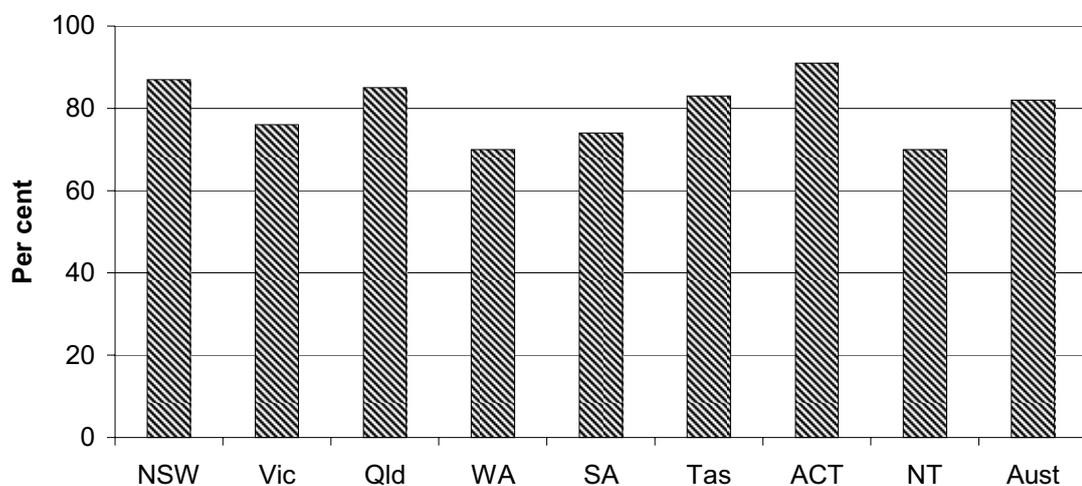
For long day care, the quality area ‘health, nutrition and wellbeing’ includes the following principles on which an assessment is made:

- staff promote healthy eating habits
- staff implement effective and current food safety and hygiene practices
- staff encourage children to follow simple rules of hygiene
- staff ensure toileting and nappy changing procedures are positive experiences

- staff support each child’s needs for rest, sleep and comfort
- the centre acts to control the spread of infectious diseases and maintains records of immunisations.

Nationally, in 2009-10, 82.0 per cent of long day care centres achieved satisfactory or above ratings for the health, nutrition and wellbeing quality area (figure 3.18).

Figure 3.18 Proportion of long day care centres that achieved satisfactory or above ratings for NCAC health, nutrition and wellbeing quality area, 2009-10^a



^a Data are presented only for those services that have undergone accreditation in the 12 month reporting period (services are only accredited once during any 2.5 year period). ^b Results can be influenced by the relatively small number of services participating in the process. See table 3A.34 for number of services.

Source: NCAC (unpublished); table 3A.34.

Health and safety — hospital separations for external causes of injury

‘Hospital separations for external causes of injury’ (occurring in children’s services) is a proxy 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 (box 3.19).

Box 3.19 Hospital separations for external causes of injury

'Hospital separations for external causes of injury' is defined as the number of hospital separations for children aged 0–4 years resulting from an external cause of injury occurring in 'school' 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' can indicate better performance towards achieving the objective of providing the care, educational and development needs of children in a safe and nurturing environment.

All hospital separation data need to be interpreted with care. Nationally, no place of occurrence was reported for 34.3 per cent of hospitalisations of children aged 0–4 years in 2008-09 (table 3A.35). As a result, this indicator should be interpreted as the minimum number of hospital separations for an external cause of injury that occurred in children's services.

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Data quality information for this indicator under development.

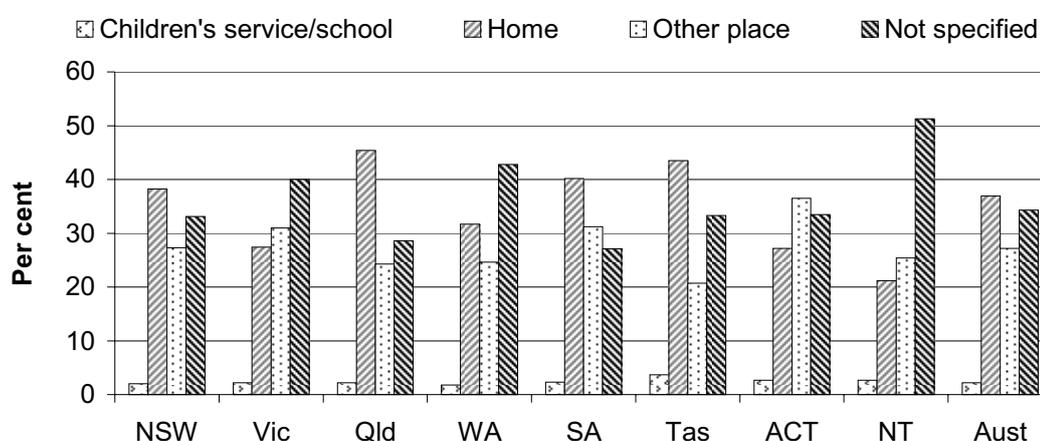
Limiting the data to children aged 0–4 years reduces the likelihood that the 'school' place of occurrence includes children in full time compulsory schooling, which children generally attend when they are 5 years old or more. For children in the older age group it is not possible to separate injuries 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. The data can capture children who were injured at these services without necessarily attending them. Family day care services, which are typically provided in the carer's home, are not likely to be covered under 'schools'. External cause refers to the environmental event, circumstance or condition that causes the injury. People admitted to hospital as a result of a pre-existing illness or condition (such as asthma), are excluded.

In 2008-09, there were 31 846 injuries to children aged 0–4 years that resulted in a hospital admission in Australia (table 3A.35). Males accounted for approximately 58.2 per cent of these admissions. In total, the most common causes of injury to children aged 0–4 years were falls (29.0 per cent), complications of medical and surgical care (21.0 per cent) and exposure to mechanical forces (20.9 per cent) (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) unpublished). Males and females generally experienced similar causes of injury.

Nationally, in 2008-09, 36.9 per cent of injuries requiring hospitalisation occurred in the child's home. This reflects that children in this age group spend the majority of their time in the home and about half do not attend formal care. Across available jurisdictions, on average 2.2 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 3.19).

Figure 3.19 Hospital separations for external causes of injury for children aged 0–4 years, proportion by place of occurrence, 2008-09^{a, b, c, d}



^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 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 Due to the high levels of non-reporting for place of occurrence, all hospital separations data need to be interpreted with care.

Source: AIHW (unpublished) *Australian Hospital Statistics 2008-09*; table 3A.35.

Client satisfaction — substantiated breaches arising from complaints

'Substantiated breaches arising from complaints' is an indicator of governments' objective to ensure government funded or provided children's services meet the needs and expectations of users (box 3.20).

Box 3.20 **Substantiated breaches arising from complaints**

'Substantiated breaches arising from complaints' 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 model. Data on the proportion of substantiated breaches arising from complaints against which action was taken are also reported. One complaint can include multiple breaches. Breaches identified as a result of normal monitoring and inspection visits are excluded from these data.

All else being equal, a lower or decreasing rate of breaches arising from complaints can suggest a higher quality service. A high or increasing 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.

Complaints data need to be interpreted with care, because:

- clients who are well informed can be more likely to make a complaint than are clients without access to this information. Some jurisdictions give priority to developing client groups who are well informed, as part of improving their service delivery
- the number of approved care providers or parent users per service differs in each service across states and territories
- complaints management systems vary across jurisdictions.

Data reported for this indicator are neither directly comparable nor complete.

Data quality information for this indicator is under development.

Breaches of legislation, regulations or conditions vary in circumstance and severity. Some breaches can have serious implications for the quality of care provided to children (such as requirements to undertake criminal record checks for staff and requirements to install smoke detectors). Other breaches do not necessarily directly affect the quality of care (such as requirements to display licensing information). Similarly, action taken by regulatory authorities in response to a breach can range from a requirement to comply within a specified time frame through to licensing action or prosecution.

Victoria, WA, Tasmania and the ACT 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 2009-10 (tables 3A.58, 3A.72, 3A.86, 3A.93).

Efficiency

Differences in reported efficiency results across jurisdictions can reflect differences in counting and reporting rules for financial data and in reported expenditure (which are partly due to different treatments of various expenditure items). Information on the comparability of expenditure is shown in table 3A.6 and information on the treatment of assets is shown in table 3A.7.

Inputs per output unit — total government expenditure per child in the community

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

Box 3.21 Total government expenditure per child in the community

‘Total government expenditure per child in the community’ is defined as Australian Government expenditure and State and Territory government expenditure on children’s services per child in the community aged 0–12 years. Data are presented as dollars per child in the community. 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.

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 can reflect deteriorating efficiency, they can also reflect increases in the quality or quantity of service provided. Similarly, low or declining expenditure per child can reflect improving efficiency or lower quality or quantity. Provided the level and quality of, and access to, services remains unchanged, lower expenditure per child can indicate greater efficiency of government expenditure.

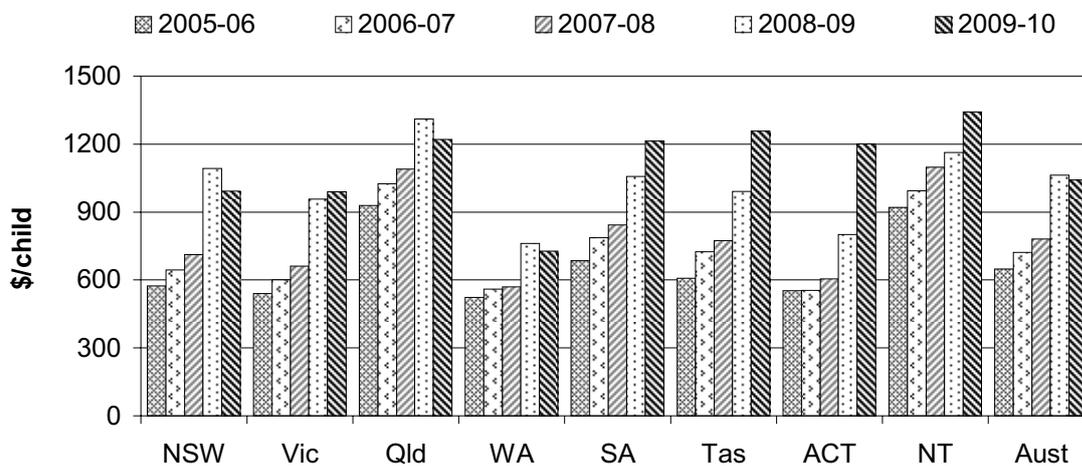
Data reported for this indicator are not complete and not directly comparable.

Data quality information for this indicator is under development.

Expenditure data per child are reported separately for the Australian Government and each State and Territory government, as well as total expenditure per child.

After adjusting for inflation to calculate the value of expenditure in previous years, Australian Government expenditure on children’s services per child in the community at a national level increased by 60.6 per cent between 2005-06 and 2009-10, from \$649 to \$1042 (figure 3.20).

Figure 3.20 Australian Government real expenditure on children's services per child in the community aged 0–12 years (2009-10 dollars)^{a, b, c, d}



a Estimated resident population as at 31 December. The Australian total includes children in other territories. **b** Includes administration expenditure, other expenditure on service provision, financial support to families and net capital expenditure on child care services. **c** The Australian total includes a component of expenditure that cannot be disaggregated by State and Territory. **d** Expenditure for 2006-07 to 2009-10 includes payment of CCTR. Prior to 2006-07, CCTR was paid as a rebate through the tax system.

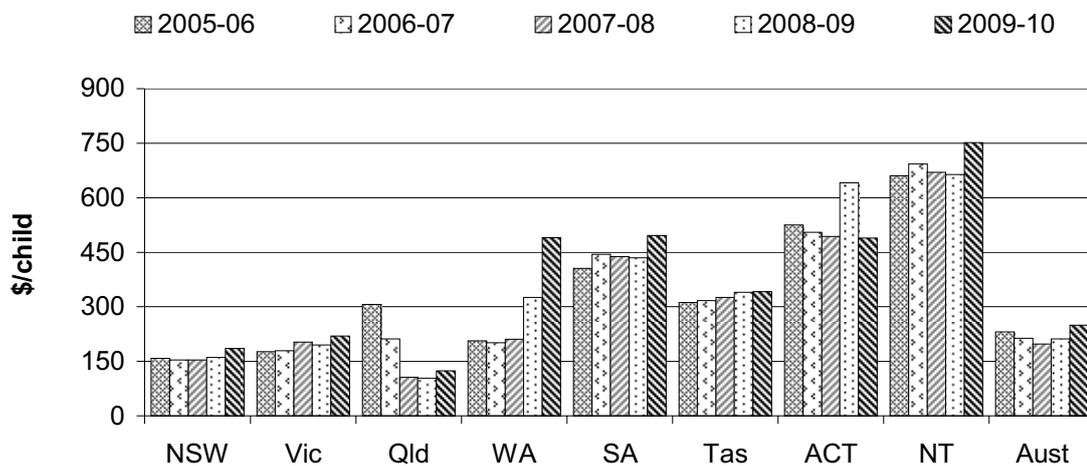
Source: DEEWR (unpublished); ABS (unpublished) *Australian Demographic Statistics*, Cat. no. 3101.0; tables 3A.2 and 3A.36.

Additional time series data from 2001-02 are presented for Australian Government real expenditure on Children's services per child in table 3A.36.

Data were supplied by all State and Territory governments on their expenditure for both child care and preschool services. Differing collection methods and changes to policies 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.

Nationally in 2009-10, State and Territory government expenditure was \$249 per child (figure 3.21).

Figure 3.21 State and Territory government real expenditure on children's services per child in the community aged 0–12 years (2009-10 dollars)^{a, b, c}



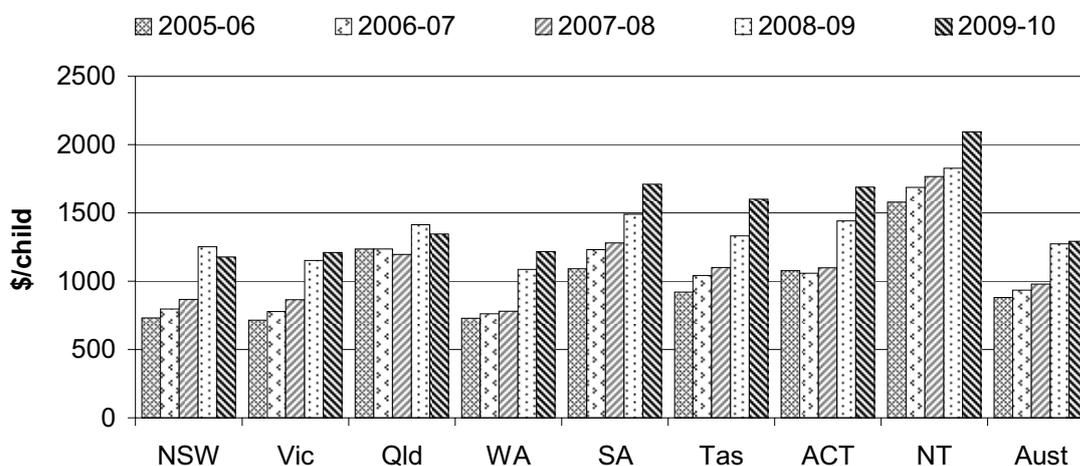
^a Includes administration expenditure, other expenditure on service provision, financial support to families, and net capital expenditure on child care and preschool services. ^b The apparent reduction in Queensland expenditure per child between 2005-06 and 2006-07 is due to only 6 months' data on State preschools being included in 2006-07. The reduction in 2007-08 Queensland expenditure data is due to the cessation of Queensland Government preschools in December 2006 and the introduction of the Preparatory Year in schools from January 2007. ^c ACT expenditure in 2009-10 decreased due to a decreased level of capital works in preschool services.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); ABS (unpublished) *Australian Demographic Statistics*, Cat. no. 3101.0; tables 3A.2 and 3A.37.

Additional time series data from 2001-02 are presented for State and Territory government real expenditure on children's services in table 3A.37.

Figure 3.22 shows the combined expenditure from both the Australian Government and the State and Territory governments per child in the community aged 0–12 years over the period 2005-06 to 2009-10. Nationally the combined expenditure was \$1291 in 2009-10.

Figure 3.22 Total government real expenditure on children’s services per child in the community aged 0–12 years (2009-10 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 figures 3.20 and 3.21 for further detail on the Australian Government’s and State and Territory governments’ expenditure data.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); ABS (unpublished) *Australian Demographic Statistics*, Cat. no. 3101.0; tables 3A.2, 3A.36 and 3A.37.

Inputs per output unit — Australian government expenditure per child attending children’s services

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

Box 3.22 Australian Government expenditure per child attending approved children's services

'Australian Government expenditure per child attending approved children's services' is defined as Australian Government expenditure per child aged 0–12 years attending Australian Government approved child care services in Australia.

Provided the level and quality of, and access to, services remains unchanged, lower expenditure per child can indicate greater efficiency of government expenditure.

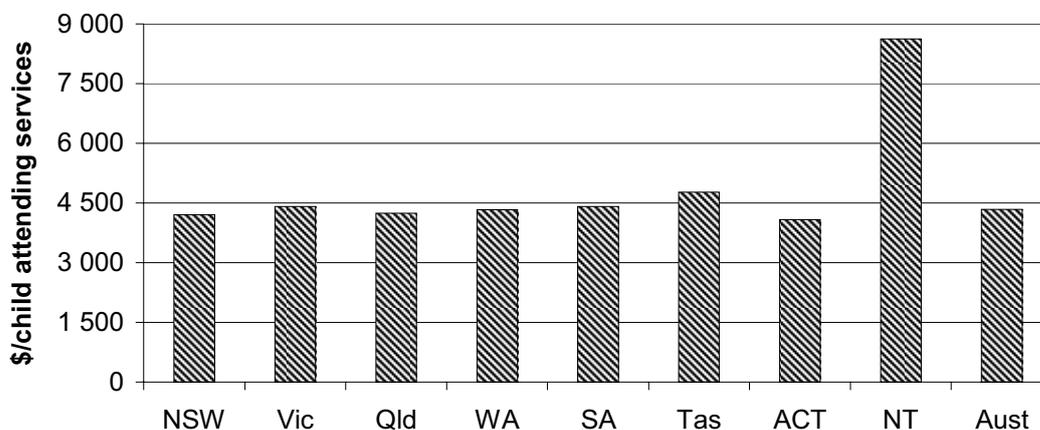
All efficiency data need to be interpreted with care. Changes in expenditure per child could represent changes in government funding policy. While high or increasing unit costs can reflect deteriorating efficiency, they can also reflect increases in the quality or quantity of service provided. Similarly,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

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Data quality information for this indicator is under development.

Figure 3.23 shows expenditure by the Australian Government on each child aged 0–12 years attending Australian Government approved child care services. Nationally in 2009-10, Australian Government expenditure per child attending approved child care services was \$4342 (figure 3.23).

Figure 3.23 Australian Government expenditure per child aged 0–12 years attending Australian Government approved child care services, 2010^{a, b, c, d}



^a Includes expenditure for some children aged greater than 12 years, including Indigenous children and children with special needs. ^b Data for 2010 are drawn from DEEWR administrative data and are not directly comparable with data reported for previous years. See table 3A.38 for more information. ^c Children can use more than one type of care. For 2010 data, children are counted once for each type of care they use. ^d Attendance data relate to March quarter 2010.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished); table 3A.38.

Outcomes

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

Family work-related needs

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

Box 3.23 Family work-related needs

'Family work related needs' is defined as the proportion of children aged 0–12 years in families participating in the labour force for whom formal care, or additional hours of formal care, was required for work-related reasons but was unable to be accessed.

Families participating in the labour force include single parent families where the lone parent is employed or unemployed, and couple families where both parents are employed or unemployed.

A lower or decreasing proportion indicates more families work-related needs for formal care, or additional hours of formal care, are being met.

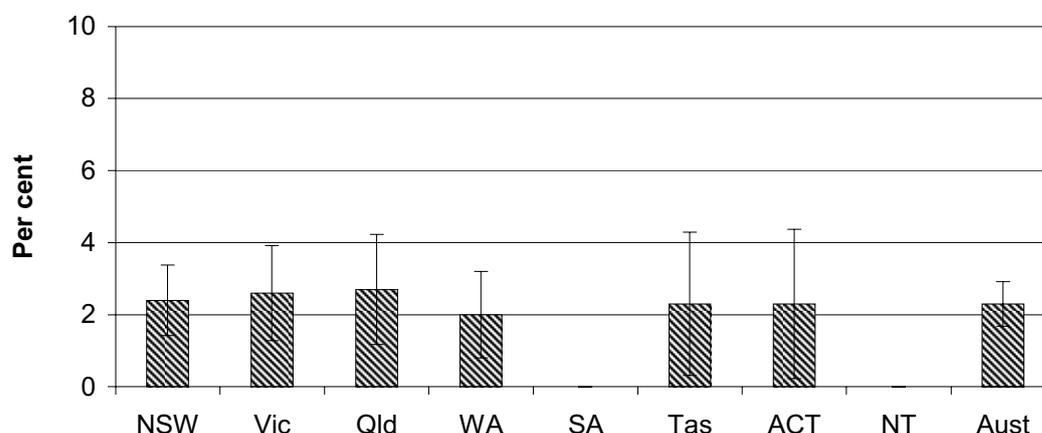
This measure addresses the need for families to participate in the labour force without child care impeding this participation. Development is underway to investigate other measures of 'meeting families needs'.

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2011

Data for this indicator were obtained from the *ABS 2008 Childhood Education and Care Survey* and are reported in attachment table 3A.39. Box 3.12 includes further information about the *2008 Childhood Education and Care Survey*. Nationally, 2.3 per cent of children aged 0–12 years from working families required formal care, or additional formal care for work related reasons, but were unable to access this additional formal care (figure 3.24).

Figure 3.24 Proportion of children aged 0–12 years in working families who required any/additional formal care for work related reasons but were unable to access this care, 2008^{a, b, c}



^a Data for SA and the NT were not available separately from the ABS due to small numbers, but are included in the Australian total. ^b Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^c Any/additional formal care includes current requirements for a child care service for: children who do not currently use any child care; children who need additional child care services; or children who require a different type of service other than the child care service being used.

Source: ABS (unpublished) *Childhood Education and Care Survey, 2008*, Cat. no. 4402.0; table 3A.39.

Demand for formal care

‘Demand for formal care’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure children’s services meet the requirements of all Australian families. Expressed need for formal care or additional formal care indicates the extent to which children’s services are not meeting demand by families (box 3.24).

Box 3.24 Demand for formal care

‘Demand for formal care’ is defined as the proportion of children aged 0–12 years for whom formal care or additional formal care services was required but was unable to be accessed. Formal care includes child care and preschool services.

A low or decreasing proportion of children for whom additional services are required indicates demand by families is being met to a greater extent.

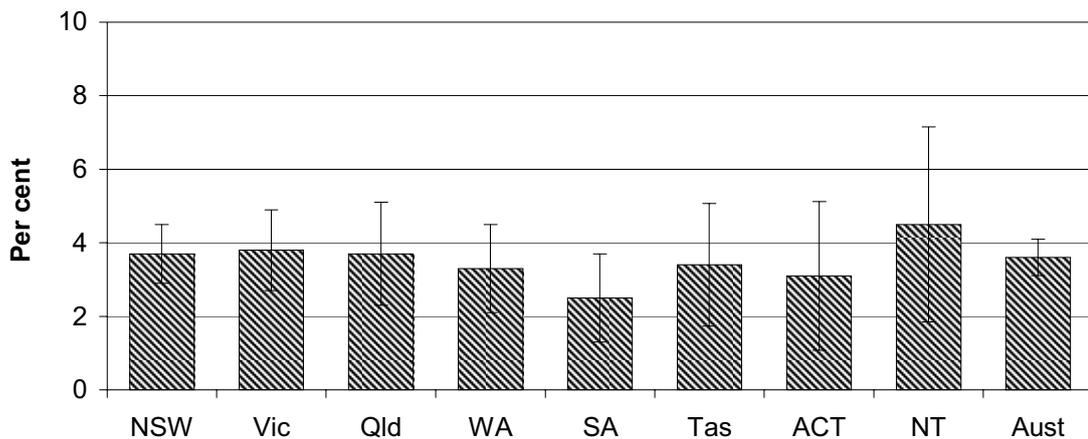
Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2011

The 2008 CEaCS collected data on whether formal care or additional formal child care or preschool were required currently, or in the future. Nationally in 2008, formal care or additional child care or preschool services were required, but were unable to be accessed for 3.6 per cent of children aged 0–12 years (figure 3.25). In 2008, formal care or additional child care services were required for approximately 89 300 children aged 0–12 years, and additional preschool services were required for 36 400 children (table 3A.40).

Data on demand for formal child care from the 2005 ABS *Child Care Survey* are presented in tables 3A.39 and 3A.40. The 2005 survey collected data on additional formal care required in the previous four weeks, and are not directly comparable with data from 2008.

Figure 3.25 Proportion of children aged under 12 years who required but were unable to access any/additional formal child care or preschool, 2008^{a, b, c}



^a Error bars represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. ^b As data for this indicator are based on the ABS *Childhood Education and Care Survey* it has some limitations as a measure of unmet demand (box 3.12). ^c Any/additional formal child care or preschool includes current requirements for a child care or preschool service for: children who do not currently use any child care or preschool; children who need additional child care or preschool services; or children who require a different type of service other than the child care or preschool service currently being used.

Source: ABS (unpublished) *Childhood Education and Care Survey 2008*, Cat. no. 4402.0; table 3A.40.

Nationally, work-related reasons were most commonly cited for needing any/additional formal child care or preschool in 2008 (46.9 per cent of children aged 0–12 years), personal reasons were cited for 10.7 per cent of children and other reasons were cited for 42.3 per cent (table 3A.41). Data for 2005 are also presented in table 3A.41.

Parents who required any/additional formal child care and preschool services, but were unable to access extra services, were asked about the barriers to access. Cost was reported as a barrier to access for 22.5 per cent of children aged 0–12 years, ‘no services exist/don’t know of any in area’ was reported for 12.8 per cent of children, and lack of available places (‘booked out or no places’) was reported for 4.7 per cent of children in 2008. ‘Other reasons’ were cited for 59.9 per cent of children aged 0–12 years who required, but did not use, additional formal child care or preschool (table 3A.42).

Out-of-pocket costs

‘Out-of-pocket costs’ is an indicator of governments’ objective that all Australian families have equitable access to children’s services irrespective of their financial circumstances (box 3.25).

Box 3.25 Out-of-pocket costs

‘Out-of-pocket costs’ is defined as the proportion of weekly disposable income that 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 \$35 000, \$55 000, \$75 000, \$95 000, \$115 000 and \$135 000. 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.

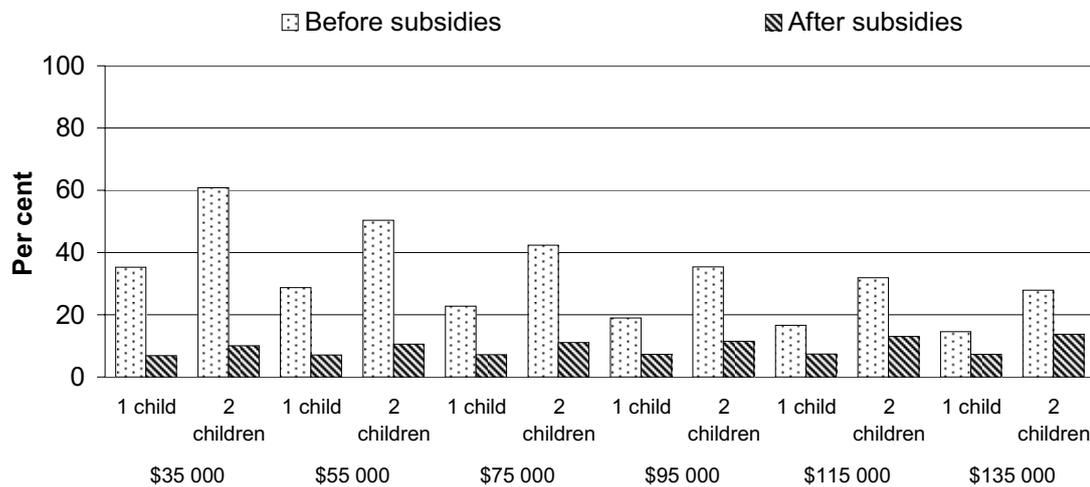
Care needs to be exercised when interpreting results, because a variety of factors (including for example rates, rental costs, localised costs of living) can influence child care costs.

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Data quality information for this indicator is under development.

Nationally, out-of-pocket costs as a proportion of weekly family income after subsidies in 2010 showed less variation across income bands than before subsidies were taken into account (figure 3.26).

Figure 3.26 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, 2010^a

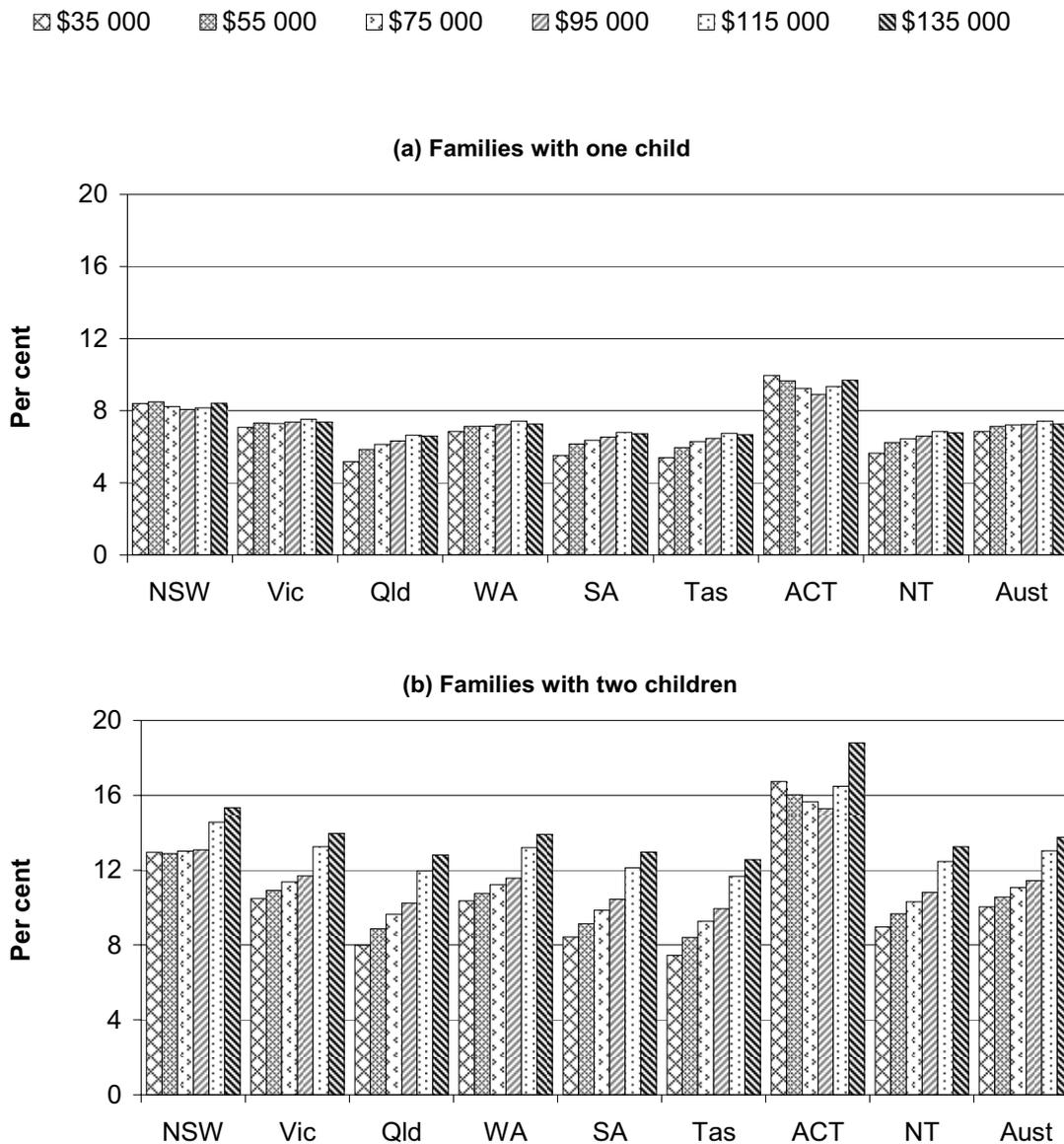


^a Data for 2010 are not directly comparable with data in previous reports due to a change in income categories. Refer to table 3A.43 for more information.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished); table 3A.43.

Figure 3.27 shows out of pocket costs (after subsidies) in 2010 for centre-based long day care for families with one child and with two children in care across jurisdictions. Nationally, for centre-based long day care, the out-of-pocket costs (after subsidies) for families with one child was between 6.8 per cent and 7.4 per cent of weekly disposable income, and between 10.0 per cent and 13.8 per cent of weekly disposable income for families with two children (figure 3.27).

Figure 3.27 Out-of-pocket costs for centre-based long day care (after subsidies), as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family income, 2010^a

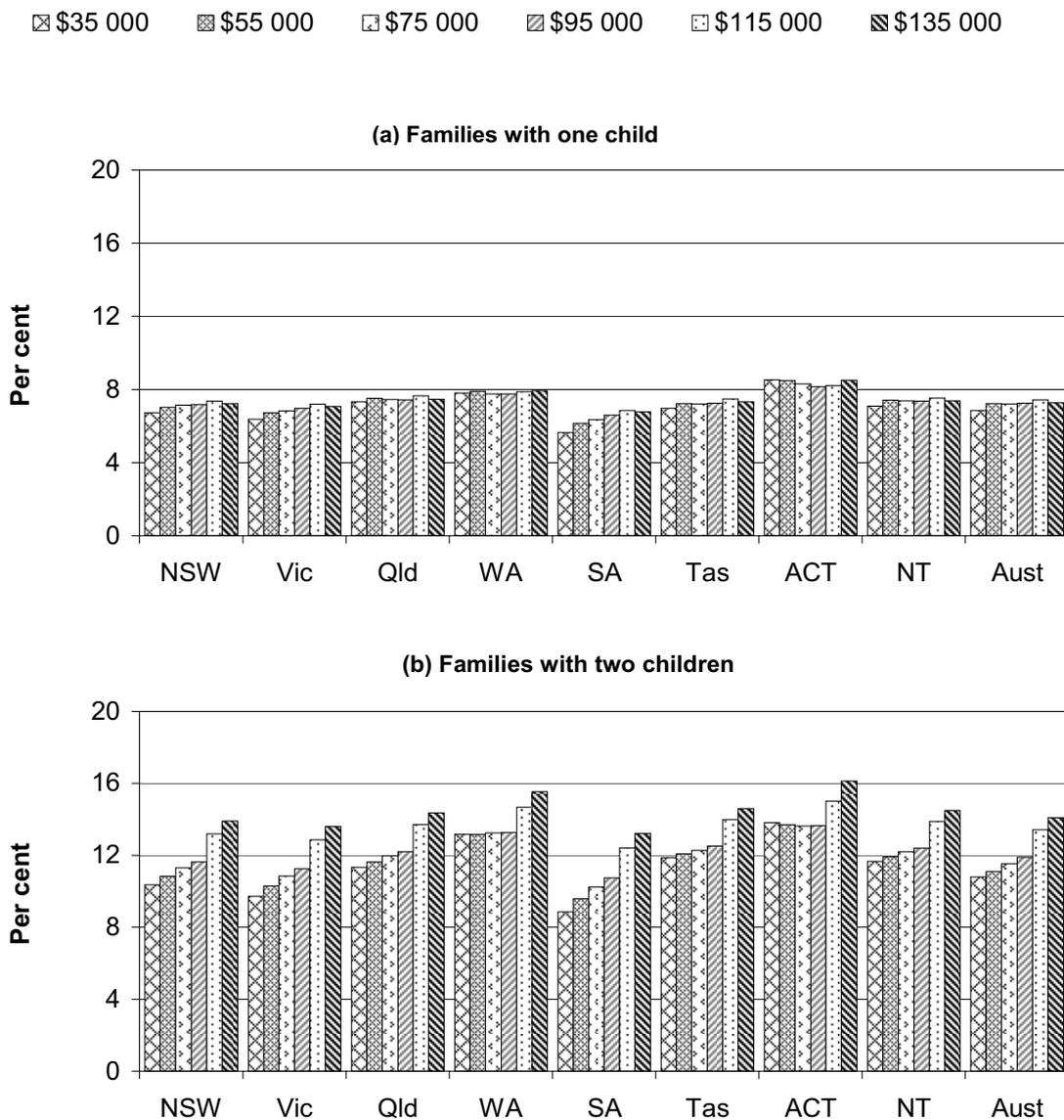


^a Data for 2010 are not directly comparable with data in previous reports due to a change in income categories. Refer to table 3A.43 for more information.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished); table 3A.43.

Out-of-pocket costs (after subsidies) for family day care in 2010 are shown in figure 3.28. Nationally, for family day care, the out-of-pocket costs (after subsidies) for families with one child was between 6.8 per cent and 7.4 per cent of weekly disposable income, and between 10.8 per cent and 14.1 per cent of weekly disposable income for families with two children (figure 3.28).

Figure 3.28 Out-of-pocket costs for family day care (after subsidies), as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family income, 2010^a



^a Data for 2010 are not directly comparable with data in previous reports due to a change in income categories. Refer to table 3A.44 for more information.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished); table 3A.44.

Children's needs

'Children's needs' is an 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 (box 3.26).

Box 3.26 Children's needs

'Children's needs' has been identified for development and reporting in future.

Development work is focused on outcomes measures for children's needs in the areas of:

- learning and development
- health and safety
- social and emotional wellbeing.

Development is underway to investigate a broad set of measures for children's needs using data from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (box 3.27) and/or the Australian Early Development Index (box 3.28).

Box 3.27 Longitudinal Study of Australian Children

The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) is a longitudinal study on a discrete cohort of children, that aims to examine the impact of Australia's unique social, economic and cultural environment on children growing up in Australia today (AIFS 2005a).

The LSAC was initiated and is funded by FaHCSIA, with the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) having responsibility for the design and management of the study.

The sampling unit for the LSAC is the child. During 2004, the study recruited a sample of 5107 infants (children aged 0-1 year at the time) and 4983 children (children aged 4-5 years at the time) (see AIFS 2005a for more details).

LSAC and outcomes for children

The LSAC Outcome Index, attached to each infant and child in the study, is a composite measure that indicates how children are developing across physical, social/emotional and learning domains of competence. It provides a means of summarising the development of children across multiple domains, and wherever possible incorporates both positive and negative outcomes (see AIFS 2005b for more details).

The LSAC Outcome Index is currently being investigated as a possible measure of the developmental outcomes of infants/children in child care/preschool, compared with those infants/children who are not in child care/preschool.

Box 3.28 Australian Early Development Index

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) is a population measure of how children in a community are developing by the time they reach school age. It is an adapted version of the Canadian Early Development Instrument, and measures five domains: physical health and well-being; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive skills (school based); and communication skills and general knowledge.

The AEDI provides valuable information about early childhood development at the local population level and, along with other relevant data, enables governments and communities to target services, resources and infrastructure. It has been endorsed by COAG as a national progress measure of early childhood development.

The Australian Government has committed a total of \$24.5 million to 30 June 2011 for the national data collection of the AEDI, and is delivering it in cooperation with the Centre for Community Child Health in Melbourne and the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research in Perth.

The first national collection of the AEDI took place between May and July 2009 on 261 203 children (97 per cent of the estimated five year old population) in their first year of full time school. The initial results were released in December 2009 through the national report, *A Snapshot of Early Childhood Development in Australia* and community level maps, and showed that the majority of children were doing well against each of the five developmental domains. However, 23.5 per cent of children were reported as developmentally vulnerable against one or more domain/s, and 11.8 per cent of children developmentally vulnerable against two or more domains. In May 2010, AEDI community profiles were released, providing a detailed report for communities to help explain their AEDI results.

A small community data collection was undertaken between May and August 2010 to maximise the number of communities where AEDI data is available. The final national release of these results will be in early 2011.

Additional information on the AEDI, including access to the National Report, community level maps and community profiles, are available at the website www.aedi.org.au.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished).

Cost-effectiveness

'Cost-effectiveness' is an indicator of children's services being provided in an effective and efficient manner (box 3.29).

Box 3.29 Cost effectiveness

'Cost effectiveness' in children's services is an 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 were not available for the 2011 Report.

3.4 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 sector 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:

- expanding reporting against the quality indicator of staff qualifications
- completing the quality indicators for licensing of services
- developing a quality indicator for health and safety in preschool services
- developing indicators to measure the extent to which children's services meet children's needs.

Improving the completeness and comparability of data

Potential new sources of information

Several new sources of information and policy developments may influence future reports:

- The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs endorsed the *National Early Childhood Education and Care Information Agreement* on 6 November 2009. The Agreement provides a framework for cooperation between the Australian, State and Territory Governments and information agencies to develop the information base required for the COAG early childhood reform agenda and will also contribute to the development of an evidence base for assessing outcomes and informing future policy development. The Agreement is an important step in national efforts to improve the quality and reliability of early childhood education and care data.
- An Early Childhood Education and Care National Minimum Data Set (ECEC NMDS) has been developed, which provides a framework for collecting a set of nationally comparable data for child care and preschool services. The ECEC NMDS was developed by the AIHW, under the guidance of the Early Childhood Data Sub Group (ECDSG) — a working group that operates under the auspices of the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs.
- Together with the States and Territories the ABS is working on the establishment of a National ECEC Data Collection (*Preschool Education Australia*) based on the ECEC NMDS outlined above, with a transitional release due to be published in early 2011.
- The developments under the COAG agreed National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care.
- The LSAC is a longitudinal study that aims to examine the impact of Australia's unique social, economic and cultural environment on children growing up in Australia today (box 3.27).
- The AEDI measures young children's development (box 3.28).

COAG developments

Report on Government Services alignment with National Agreement reporting

It is anticipated that future editions of the Children's services chapter will align with applicable NIRA indicators. Further reporting changes might result from future developments in NA reporting.

Outcomes from review of Report on Government Services

COAG endorsed recommendations of a review of the Report in December 2009. Those recommendations implemented during 2010 are reflected in this Report.

Further recommendations will be reflected in future reports, including implementation of Independent Reference Group and Steering Committee recommendations arising from the 'Review of the general performance indicator framework' and the 'Review of the performance indicators and their associated measures'. The 2012 Report and later editions will continue:

- lengthening time series data in attachment tables
- developing data quality information documents for performance indicators
- developing mini-case studies.

3.5 Jurisdictions' comments

This section provides comments from each jurisdiction on the services covered in this chapter.

Australian Government comments

“

The Australian Government is implementing a range of early childhood education and care initiatives, in partnership with the states and territories through COAG. Funding is focused on improving the quality, access and affordability of early childhood education and child care; access to early childhood education; and lifting workforce qualifications and supply. Major initiatives include:

- assisting eligible parents through the Child Care Rebate to cover up to 50 per cent of out of pocket child care expenses, to a maximum of \$7500 per child per year, in addition to assistance provided through Child Care Benefit
- arrangements for 37 of 38 early learning and care centres (including six Autism-specific centres) have been announced, with nine centres operational
- establishing 38 Children and Family Centres across Australia by June 2014, up from the 35 agreed to by COAG through the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development. The Australian Government has provided \$293 million to establish the Children and Family Centres
- implementing the universal access to early childhood education commitment under the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education, including the development of an Indigenous Universal Access Strategy.
- establishing a National Information Agreement on Early Childhood Education and Care (NIA ECEC) that aims to improve the collection, sharing and reporting of ECEC information, and includes an annual national ECEC data collection, being compiled by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, that draws on administrative datasets, in accordance with new national data standards
- investing \$24.5 million until June 2011 to nationally implement the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI)
- progressive implementation of the National Quality Framework for early childhood education and care from 1 July 2010, including development of key materials to support implementation and communications activities to inform families and the sector of the reforms
- investing around \$127 million over four years to increase the supply and quality of the early childhood workforce and the development of an Early Years Workforce Strategy
- development of a draft *Educator's Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF), to assist implementation of the EYLF and development of nationally consistent and quality early childhood education programs. Improvements to the quality of service provision, quality standards and a jointly governed unified national system to replace current licensing and quality assurance processes are underway.

”

New South Wales Government comments

“ The NSW Government’s early childhood services policy focuses on the importance of the early years of life through a system that provides 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.

During 2009-10, the NSW Government has invested considerable effort in implementing the National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for the Early Childhood Education and Care (NQA ECEC) and the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education (NP ECE).

Since the signature of the National Partnership Agreement on the NQA in December 2009, the NSW Government has worked closely with the Australian Government and other States and Territories to develop the legislative and regulatory parameters for the new system, the draft tools for assessing and rating services, as well as other aspects of the system.

The NSW Government has continued work that will align its existing legislative and regulatory frameworks with the National Quality Framework. It passed the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Children’s Services) Bill 2010* which introduces streamlined licensing and approvals processes and expands investigation powers. In late 2010, it also released a public exposure draft of the NSW Children’s Services Amendment Regulation 2010, that will introduce a 1:4 ratio for children under 2 years. From July 2010, NSW extended the regulation and licensing of school-based children’s services to the remaining areas of NSW so that all services will now be in regulatory scope. These measures will all enable a smoother transition to the National Quality Framework when it commences in January 2012.

In 2009-10, the \$21.3 million available through the NP ECE enabled the NSW Government to significantly increase renewable funding to 85 per cent of community preschools, improving access to preschool program places and improve participation for all children, but especially those from Indigenous and disadvantaged backgrounds. 4676 new 15 hour places in preschool programs were created during 2009-10. In 2009, average preschool fees for Aboriginal children and disadvantaged children were significantly below average preschool fees. Over the same period, the attendance rate for Aboriginal children increased by 8.6 per cent and for disadvantaged children by 1.5 per cent.

Due to the integrated nature of early childhood education and care in NSW, the structure of the Children’s Services chapter continues to pose difficulties in comparing the performance of NSW with that of other jurisdictions, and in accurately reporting NSW data. The chapter continues to distinguish preschool services from child care services, whereas in NSW the same regulatory standards for educational programs and early childhood teachers apply across all centre-based and mobile children’s services and there is no regulatory distinction between preschool and long day care.

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Victorian Government comments

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The Victorian Government is committed to strengthening and empowering families to promote better outcomes for every Victorian child. Victoria is making progress in increasing access to high quality early childhood health, education and care services for children and their families.

Outcomes for Victorian children are continuing to improve. The 2009 data from the Australian Early Development Index shows that the majority of Victorian children are developmentally ‘on track’, and that Victorian children are less likely to be developmentally vulnerable in all domains than Australian children more generally.

The number of licensed children’s services in Victoria continued to rise in 2010 including the newly licensed outside school hours care and family day care services. Services’ capacity to comply with legislation has been supported by a range of strategies to promote the delivery of quality programs for children.

The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework is in place to support all early childhood professionals to work with families and with each other to improve outcomes for all Victorian children. The Framework recognises that the learning and development of children takes place in the context of their families, and that families are the first and most important educators of children.

Also implemented is the Transition: A Positive Start to School initiative, which aims to improve children’s and families’ experiences of starting school and to ensure teachers better understand the new children. In 2010, Victoria introduced Transition Learning and Development Statements for sharing information with families and schools about a child’s learning and development in the early years.

Victoria is well advanced in implementing the new National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care, including hosting the enabling legislation for the National Quality Framework. The Framework will ensure nationally consistent regulation and quality requirements across all relevant education and care services.

Work is also well underway on implementing the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education, with a focus on municipal planning, workforce and capital investment, and pilots to inform different models for delivering a 15-hour kindergarten program.

To help meet Victoria’s National Partnership commitments, and in recognition of the importance of a skilled and professional early childhood workforce, an early childhood workforce strategy has been developed to increase the qualifications, professional learning, leadership and recognition of the profession.

To help more children reach their potential, an Early Home Learning Study is now underway. It is directly supporting up to 2000 families with children aged from birth to three over the next three years and promoting the home as a positive learning environment for children in vulnerable families.

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Queensland Government comments

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Under *Toward Q2-Tomorrow's Queensland*, the Queensland Government is committed to providing all children with access to a quality early childhood education, so they are ready for school. To achieve this, Queensland is implementing a range of initiatives to provide all children with access to a kindergarten program.

By 2014, all Queensland children will have access to a quality early education program, delivered by a qualified teacher, in the year before they start Prep. The Queensland and Australian Governments are investing almost \$900 million to deliver universal access to kindergarten, and approximately \$100 million has been provided in 2010, including funding for long day care services to deliver approved kindergarten programs. Specific initiatives being progressed include:

- establishing up to 240 extra kindergarten services by 2014. This investment which includes \$321 million of state funding, will double the capacity of the kindergarten sector, and cater for up to 14 000 additional children to access a kindergarten program
- implementing a new kindergarten funding scheme which includes additional subsidies for services in socio-economically disadvantaged and remote areas, and targeted support for low income families. In addition to supporting existing kindergarten services, under this new scheme, long day care services can apply for funding
- tailoring support for children with additional needs to assist them to access and participate in kindergarten. This support will be responsive to the specific needs of individual children as well as complementing existing government supports
- building the capacity of the early childhood workforce, including supporting existing early childhood staff to upgrade their qualifications so they can teach a kindergarten program, and encouraging new entrants to join the sector
- developing a Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline to define learning expectations to ensure comparability across approved kindergarten programs regardless of the setting and location
- developing strategies to increase participation of disadvantaged children including Indigenous children and children in rural, remote and disadvantaged communities.

Queensland is also continuing to implement the Bound for Success initiative which provides access to a quality early education program for children in discrete Indigenous communities. As part of this initiative, new and refurbished facilities are being established across 35 communities, together with guidelines for early learning programs, and professional development for educators to support culturally appropriate programs. The program was one of 12 finalists in the 2010 Commonwealth Association of Public Administration and Management International Innovations Awards in Malta.

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Western Australia Government comments

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The Department for Communities, the Department of Education and the Department of Education Services are progressing the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Reform Agenda for early childhood education and care. This includes the National Quality Standard, the new assessment and rating system and the nationally agreed legislation and regulations.

The three Departments are very involved in the design, progress and transitional processes to the new national system which will commence on 1 January 2012. This includes the development of the Western Australian version of the *Education and Care Services National Law Bill 2010* and the drafting of the nationally consistent Regulations. The trialling of the new assessment and rating system has now extended to all service types. The Early Years Learning Framework is now endorsed. The draft School Age Care Framework is ready for consultation. Information and professional development sessions about the National Quality Standard and the Frameworks continue for all educators.

There are 526 long day care centres, 26 occasional care centres, 770 family day care services, 242 outside school hours care services and 27 pre-kindys licensed as at 29 October 2010. The Department for Communities' Child Care Licensing and Standards Unit administers the *WA Child Care Services Act 2007* and the related Regulations. This role includes education, support, monitoring and application of sanctions for new and existing service operators.

The *Child Care Services (Rural Family Care) Regulations 2010* came into effect in May 2010. The draft (WA) *Child Care Services Amendments Bill* if passed will carry the licensed child care sector through the transition to the national system.

Pre-compulsory education (kindergarten followed by pre-primary) lays the foundation for compulsory education which commences at Year 1. A total of 857 (601 public and 256 non-government) schools provide a kindergarten program. Children eligible for kindergarten are those who reach the age of 4 years on or before 30 June in any given year. Kindergarten is provided free of compulsory charges in public schools and community kindergartens and is significantly subsidised by the WA government in non-government schools, contributing to high rates of participation in all urban, rural and remote localities.

The WA Curriculum Framework (K-12) outlines learning outcomes for all children and is reflective of the national Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). The emphasis of the early years curriculum is on the development of social, emotional, and physical wellbeing; literacy and numeracy; and nurturing positive attitudes to learning. An integrated and inclusive curriculum is provided through a balance of child initiated and adult-directed learning experiences, a focus on interaction, and planned use of outdoor and indoor learning environments. The Curriculum Framework and the EYLF place the child at the centre of the learning program and enable early childhood teachers to plan and implement quality programs that are integrated and appropriate for each child.

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South Australian Government comments

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The Government of South Australia appointed Minister Weatherill to the newly created Early Childhood Development (ECD) ministerial portfolio in July 2008 in recognition of the need to coordinate and integrate the planning and delivery of services for the care, education, health and wellbeing of young children. In March 2010, Minister Weatherill was also appointed Minister for Education facilitating a seamless approach to early childhood and education services to children from pre-natal to 17 years of age.

South Australia continues to invest significantly in the early years, with 13 of the planned 24 Children’s Centres for Early Childhood Development and Parenting operating. The Government has also committed to establishing a further 10 Children’s Centres over the next four years and another four integrated centres are being developed in conjunction with Aboriginal communities.

South Australia’s Children’s Centres aim to lead the coordination and integration of education, care, health and family support services while developing strong connections to local communities. The community engagement processes are being informed by the Australian Early Development Index which provides new community based information about the development of young children that further supports inter-agency coordination and integration of services for children.

The Executive Committee of Cabinet has identified five medium-term policy priorities, known as the State Reform Agenda, which includes a new policy direction, *South Australia – A child friendly state*. The child friendly state strategy expands on the concept of child friendly cities that has been adopted overseas to develop a linked network of child friendly communities throughout SA.

The Government is committed to the reform of existing education and early childhood services legislation to develop a modern legislative framework. This reform will integrate the new nationally applied laws being implemented by all jurisdictions to underpin the national early childhood education and care quality reform agenda.

Three early childhood education and care National Partnerships (NPs) are being implemented in South Australia. They are the:

- *NP Agreement on Early Childhood Education* which provides every child with access to a preschool program in the year prior to full time schooling, delivered by a four-year university qualified early childhood teacher
- *NP Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care* which establishes a unified and consistent regulatory system to deliver quality preschool, family day care, long day care and out of school hours care.
- *Element one of the Indigenous Early Childhood Development NP Agreement* which provides integrated education, care, and family support programs for four Aboriginal communities.

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Tasmanian Government comments

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Tasmania retains its commitment to the early years education, development and care sector. Following the State election in 2010, a new Children's portfolio was established providing opportunities for greater collaboration across agencies. The Minister for Children's responsibilities include early childhood education and care, Child and Family Centres, the Early Years Foundation and related health and human services for children and young people.

Major initiatives in 2009-2010 included:

- *Child and Family Centres.* An allocation was made of \$76.1 million over 3 years to develop up to 30 Child and Family Centres. The purpose of the centres is to improve the health, well-being, learning and care of Tasmania's very young children by supporting parents and enhancing accessibility of services in the local community. The services relevant to each community are identified through community consultation. In 2009-10, an allocation of \$27.4 million supported the development of the first eight centres. Another eight communities have been identified.
- *Launching into Learning.* An allocation was made of \$4.25 million in 2009-10 to continue the program which supports young children before they formally commence school. This level of funding per annum will continue until 2013-14. There are 115 schools currently involved. The program is already delivering positive results, including reducing the number of children identified 'at risk' and significantly improving children's literacy and numeracy skills. Partnerships and linkages with other agencies are developing and collaborations have led to cooperative work practices especially between schools, Child Health and Parenting and Housing Services.
- *Recognition Project (Early Years Recognition of Child Care Qualifications).* In 2009-10, \$250,000 was provided to target recognition of existing child care skills, providing a qualification pathway for child carers. Thirty six candidates achieved recognition in the first intake with 15 of these completing the Diploma of Children's Services. A second intake is currently in progress. This program ends in 2010-11.
- *Early Years Literacy.* This program continues with \$220 000 per annum to enhance learning opportunities for young people through the provision of books for parents to read to their children.
- *Universal Access to Early Childhood Education.* \$1.5 million was allocated in 2009-10. By June 2010, 66 schools were providing 15 hours of kindergarten. This is on target to meet the requirement for all kindergartens to be providing 15 hours by 2013.

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Australian Capital Territory Government comments

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The ACT Government has been actively engaged in working with the Australian Government and other states and territories to progress the development of the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care.

The ACT Government released the revised ACT Children's Plan on 18 June 2010 with a vision to build Canberra as a child friendly city. The plan is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and aims to:

- provide opportunities for children to influence decisions about their lives, to actively participate in their communities
- promote advocacy, promote and protect children's rights including regular monitoring of the children's health, well-being, learning and development
- to develop services, programs and environments that support children's optimal development and enhance parental, family and community capacity.

The Office for Children Youth and Family Support (OCYFS) within the ACT Department of Disability Housing and Community Services provides early intervention and prevention services, family and community support and care and protection services to children and young people. The Children's Policy and Regulation Unit within OCYFS has responsibility for monitoring and licensing of children's services in the ACT.

The ACT Department of Education and Training continues to provide Preschool Education, Early Intervention programs and Koori Preschool program to all eligible children aged 2–5 years. Preschool education is available for all ACT children 4 years by 30 April. These programs are designed to meet the individual needs of young children and ensure they have the best possible start to their education.

The Koori Preschool Program is a targeted program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–5 years. The Early Intervention Program is designed to support children who have, or are at risk, of a developmental delay or disability.

As part of the ACT Government's commitment to the National Partnership Agreement for Early Childhood Education (Universal Access to Preschool Education) there are 13 Public Preschools currently offering 15 hours of preschool education. The delivery mode differs across sites to meet the needs of local communities. All Public Preschools will offer 15 hours of preschool education by 2013.

The ACT Department of Education and Training is working towards meeting the required workforce qualifications as outlined in the National Quality Framework. This year 28 teachers have undertaken targeted scholarship in Early Childhood Education through the University of Canberra, and 120 preschool assistants have undertaken the Certificate III in Children's Service through the Canberra Institute of Technology.

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Northern Territory Government comments

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The Department of Education and Training is committed to providing access to quality early childhood education and care services for all Territory children and their families. The National Partnerships on Early Childhood Education and National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care and their implementation plans represent key priority areas for the department. The department established a NT Stakeholder Advisory Group to consult on the implementation of these initiatives including Universal Access and the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).

In 2009-10, the NT implemented a range of initiatives for preschools including:

- establishment of 8 pilot programs in urban preschools providing 15 contact hours weekly. Programs were also established in several remote and homelands schools
- construction of 2 early childhood education centres through Australian Government capital works program creating 119 new quality early learning and care places
- establishment of a sixth mobile preschool hub in the Barkly region.

Work is continuing to develop models to pilot increased access to preschools in homeland learning centres, town camps and remote communities.

As part of the National Quality Agenda, the transition of services to the National Quality Standards (NQS) commenced along with testing of the NQS assessment and rating system. Additional resources have been employed to support preschools and all other early childhood education and care services in remote locations to prepare for compliance with the NQS from January 2012.

The department commenced implementing a number of workforce reforms and strategies to support improved health and education outcomes for children aged 0–8 years. This includes development of a NT-wide Early Years Workforce Strategy to increase the number of qualified staff in the early childhood education and care sector.

Throughout the year, training for the EYLF, the new national curriculum framework for children aged 0–5 years was conducted across the NT.

Families as First Teachers is a NT Government funded commitment to strengthen access to, and participation in, services for families with children 0–3 years. Programs have been established at 14 community sites, with progressive implementation in the 20 Territory growth towns and regional areas. In 2009-10 one-off regional grants funded 37 early childhood initiatives across the NT.

The department signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs to provide family support services as part of a \$12.5 million partnership. The NT contribution of \$7.2 million over the next two years will support the establishment and operation of the services.

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3.6 Definitions of key terms and indicators

Administration expenditure	Administration expenditure includes all expenditure by the responsible departments associated with the provision of licensing, advice, policy development, grants administration and training services. Responsible departments include those departments that administer policy for, fund, and license/accredit child care and preschool services in each jurisdiction.
Australian Government approved child care service	A service approved by the Australian Government to receive Child Care Benefit (CCB) on behalf of families.
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 could 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 services	The meeting of a child's care, education and developmental needs by a person other than the child's parent or guardian. The main models of service are centre-based long day care, family day care, outside school hours care (before/after school hours and 'pupil free days' care), vacation 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 at home 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 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 could 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	Financial support to families includes 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], primary teaching, other teaching, nursing [including mothercraft nursing], psychology and social work).
Full time equivalent staff numbers	A measure of the total level of staff resources used. A full time staff member is employed full time and engaged solely in activities that fall within the scope of 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 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin who self identify or are identified by a parent or guardian to be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait islander origin.
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 can be conducted in-house or externally), including training in work or own time but not training towards qualifications included in obtaining formal qualifications. It includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • management or financial training • training for additional needs children (such as children with disability, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children and children from a culturally diverse background) • other child care-related training • other relevant courses (such as a first aid certificate).
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 fall below threshold capitalisation levels, depreciation or costs associated with maintaining, renting or leasing equipment.
Non-standard hours of care	Defined by service model as: <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, for stand alone preschools only • family day care — providers of service for more than 50 hours per week and/or service overnight and/or on weekends • outside school hours care: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – before/after school care (providers of service for more than two hours before school and three hours after school) • vacation care (providers of service for more than 10 hours per day) • 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	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.
Other expenditure on service provision	Expenditure on service provision 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.
Other services	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 disability or of parents with disability, and children living in regional and remote areas).
Other territories	A separate category for data collections, which includes Jervis Bay Territory, the Territory of Christmas Island and the Territory of Cocos (Keeling) Islands.
Outside school hours care	Services provided for children enrolled in schools (4–12 year olds) outside school hours during term and vacations. Care can be provided on student free days and when school finishes early.
Preschool services	Services usually provided by a qualified teacher on a sessional basis in dedicated preschools. Preschool programs or curricula could 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 could also attend in most jurisdictions.
Primary contact staff	Staff whose primary function is to provide child care and/or preschool services to children.

Priority of access	<p>The Australian Government funds child care with a major purpose of meeting the child care needs of Australian families. However, the demand for child care sometimes exceeds supply in some locations. When this happens, it's important for services to allocate available places to those families with the greatest need for child care support. The Government has determined Guidelines for allocating places in these circumstances. These Guidelines apply to centre based long day care, in-home care, family day care and outside school hours care services. They set out the following three levels of priority, which child care services must follow when filling vacant places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • priority 1: a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect • priority 2: a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work/training/study test under section 14 of the Family Assistance Act • priority 3: any other child. <p>Within these main categories priority should also be given to the following children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families • children in families which include a disabled person • children in families on lower incomes • children in families with a non-English speaking background • children in socially isolated families • children of single parents.
Real expenditure	Actual expenditure adjusted for changes in prices. Adjustments were made using the GDP price deflator and expressed in terms of final year prices.
Recurrent expenditure	Expenditure that does not result in the creation or acquisition of fixed assets (new or second hand). It consists mainly of expenditure on wages, salaries and supplements, purchases of goods and services, and the consumption of fixed capital (depreciation).
Regional and remote areas	<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.</p> <p>The 'regional' classification used in the chapter is derived by adding data for inner regional and outer regional areas. The 'remote' classification is derived by adding data for remote, very remote and migratory areas.</p>
Service model	<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"> – before/after school care • vacation care • occasional care • 'other' care • preschool services.

Special needs group	An identifiable group within the general population who can have special difficulty accessing services. Special needs groups for which data are reported in this chapter include: children from a non-English speaking background; Indigenous children; children from low income families (Australian Government child care only); children with disability; and children from regional or remote areas.
Standard hours of care	<p>Defined by service model as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • centre-based long day care — less than or equal to 10 hours per day on Monday to Friday • preschool — less than or equal to six hours per day on Monday to Friday, for stand alone preschools only. • family day care — less than or equal to 10 hours per day on Monday to Friday, where no hours are overnight hours • outside school hours care: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – before/after school care — less than or equal to two hours before school and three hours after school • vacation care — less than or equal to 10 hours per day on Monday to Friday • occasional care — less than or equal to eight hours per day Monday to Friday • other care — less than or equal to 10 hours per day Monday to Friday.
Substantiated breach arising from a complaint	An expression of concern about a child care or preschool service, made orally, in writing or in person to the regulatory authority, which constitutes a failure by the service to abide by the State or Territory legislation, regulations or conditions. This concern is investigated and subsequently deemed to have substance by the regulatory body.

3.7 List of attachment tables

Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an ‘3A’ suffix (for example, table 3A.3). Attachment tables are provided on the Review website (www.pc.gov.au/gsp). Users without access to the website can contact the Secretariat to obtain the attachment tables (see contact details on the inside front cover of the Report).

All jurisdiction data

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