
14 Children's Services

Children's services aim to provide care, and promote children's social, emotional, physical and intellectual development, although the emphasis on these two broad objectives may differ across the services. Child care refers to care of children aged 12 years and younger, by someone other than the child's parents or guardian. Preschool services are provided to children mainly in the year before compulsory full time schooling.

This chapter presents performance information for government funded and/or delivered child care and preschool services. Unless otherwise stated, the data presented in this chapter relate to services provided for children aged 12 years and younger. The data relate to services supported by the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments. Local governments also plan, fund and deliver children's services. However, due to data limitations, this chapter records data on local government activities only where Commonwealth, State and Territory funding was involved. The chapter does not include services that do not receive government funding (unless otherwise noted).

Updates are available for a number of descriptors and performance indicators from the May 1999 Commonwealth Census of Child Care Services¹ (CCCCS) that were unavailable in time for the 2000 Report.

A profile of children's services is presented in section 14.1. This provides a context for assessing the performance indicators presented later in the chapter. All jurisdictions have agreed to develop, and aim to report, comparable indicators, and a framework of performance indicators is outlined in section 14.2. The data are discussed in section 14.3 and future directions for performance reporting are discussed in section 14.4. The chapter concludes with jurisdictions' comments in section 14.5. Definitions of terms specific to children's services are found in section 14.6.

¹ The Commonwealth Census of Child Care Services (CCCCS) is conducted by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS 2000). The purpose of the CCCC, which has been conducted biennially since 1986, is to collect information on the characteristics of children, parents and staff in Commonwealth funded child care services.

Supporting tables for this chapter are provided on the CD-ROM enclosed with the Report. The files are provided in *Microsoft Excel 97* format at \Publications\Reports\2001\Attach14A.xls or in Adobe PDF format at \Publications\Reports\2001\Attach14A.pdf.

Supporting tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an “A” suffix (for example, table 14A.3 is table three in the electronic files).

Supporting tables may be subject to revision. The most up-to-date versions of these files can be found on the Review web page (www.pc.gov.au/service/gsp/2001/). Users without Internet access can contact the Secretariat to obtain up-to-date versions of these tables (details inside the front cover of the Report).

14.1 Profile of children’s services

Service Overview

Types of children’s services include:

- *centre based long day care* — services aimed primarily at 0–5 year olds provided in a centre usually by a mix of qualified and other staff. Educational and recreational programs are provided based on the developmental needs, interests and experience of each child. Centres typically operate for at least eight hours a day on normal working days for a minimum of 48 weeks per year;
- *family day care* — services provided in the carer’s own home. The care is largely aimed at 0–5 year olds, but primary school children may also receive care before and after school, and during school vacations. Central coordination units in all States and Territories organise and support a network of carers, often with the help of local governments²;
- *occasional care* — services usually provided at a centre on an hourly or sessional basis for short periods of time, or at irregular intervals specifically 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

² All carers providing care in the carer’s own home in WA are licensed and supported by the Department of Family and Children’s Services but those who are not supported by coordination units are not represented in the figures in this chapter. New South Wales licenses home based carers who are not part of a family day care scheme and for which data are not included in this chapter.

children and are aimed primarily at 0–5 year olds. Centres providing these services usually employ qualified staff;

- *preschool* — services usually provided by a qualified teacher on a sessional basis in dedicated preschools. Preschool programs or curriculum may also be provided in long day care centres and other settings. These services are primarily aimed at children in the year before commencing compulsory full time schooling (4 years old in all jurisdictions except WA where these children are 5 years old), although in NSW, Queensland, WA, SA and the ACT younger children may also attend;
- *outside school hours care* — services provided for school aged children (5–12 year olds) outside school hours during term and vacations. Care may be provided on student free days and when school finishes early; and
- *other services* — government funded services to support children with additional needs or in particular situations (including children from an Indigenous background, children from non-English speaking backgrounds, children with a disability or of parents with a disability, and children living in remote and rural areas).

Roles and Responsibilities

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

The Commonwealth Government’s roles and responsibilities for child care include:

- assisting low and middle income families with the cost of their child care fees;
- developing family day care and outside school hours care services;
- planning the location of services in conjunction with other levels of government;
- providing information and advice to parents and providers about the availability of Commonwealth funded and some State and Territory funded services;
- helping to enhance the quality of child care by developing and funding a mandatory Quality Improvement and Accreditation System for centre based long day care services eligible for government funding, and developing quality assurance systems for family day care and outside school hours care;
- providing information, support and training to service providers through funding to organisations; and
- providing operational and capital funding to some providers.

The Commonwealth Government directly provides a small amount of funding to Queensland and WA for the preschool year. (For more information see AIHW 1997.) The Commonwealth also provides supplementary funding for the preschool education of children from Indigenous backgrounds.

State and Territory governments' roles and responsibilities vary across jurisdictions, and may include:

- providing operational and capital funding to non-government service providers;
- delivering some services directly (especially preschool services);
- licensing and setting standards for children's services providers;
- monitoring and resourcing licensed and/or funded children's services providers;
- providing information, support, training and development opportunities for providers;
- planning to ensure that 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; and
- providing dispute resolution and complaints management processes.

The major differences in the roles of the different levels of government relate to the objectives of each for children's services. The primary focus of the Commonwealth Government is support for families through funding of children's services. The Commonwealth Government aims to achieve this through payments such as Childcare Assistance and the Childcare Rebate (box 14.1). State and Territory governments place a greater emphasis on providing educational and developmental opportunities for children, and on other forms of family support and service delivery such as preschool services.³

³ The ACT, for example, is involved in the direct delivery of preschool services as well as providing funding for the delivery of occasional care services to support families and children. On the other hand, Queensland is involved in both the direct delivery of preschool services and the funding of the Creche and Kindergarten Association to help groups provide community based kindergartens and preschools. In NSW, the Department of Education and Training provides 77 preschool services in low socioeconomic locations or in locations with high Indigenous populations, while the Department of Community Services provides financial assistance and licenses 843 community or local government operated preschools. The NT directly delivers preschool services, provides operational funding for all child care centres, and assists community based kindergartens and other services. South Australia is primarily involved in the direct delivery of preschool services. Victoria funds organisations to provide preschool services. Tasmania directly delivers kindergarten services through the school system and also provides funding for non-government kindergartens.

Box 14.1 Childcare Assistance and the Childcare Rebate

Until June 2000, Childcare Assistance was paid directly to approved child care service providers on behalf of eligible families. The Childcare Rebate was paid to eligible families to help with work related child care costs of dependent children. Families receiving Childcare Assistance may also be eligible for the Childcare Rebate.

The New Tax System replaces, from 1 July 2000, Childcare Assistance and the Childcare Rebate with the Child Care Benefit. The amount of Child Care Benefit eligible parents receive will depend on the number of children, type and hours of care, and family income.

Quality of Care

Both levels of government are active in maintaining the quality of care provided by children's services. The mechanisms used to maintain quality are accreditation, licensing, and performance standards and outcomes linked to funding.

Accreditation

In 1994, the Commonwealth Government introduced the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System to help improve the quality of Commonwealth funded, centre based long day care services. Centre based long day care centres are required to participate in the system to remain as eligible centres for Child Care Benefit purposes (and previously to have been eligible for Childcare Assistance). The Commonwealth Government is also developing quality assurance mechanisms for family day care and outside school hours care. In addition, SA and Victoria have implemented quality assurance or improvement systems for preschools, while some other jurisdictions are developing them.

Over 4000 centres were participating in the accreditation process in July 2000, either holding a current accreditation decision (3863 centres) or in self study, review or moderation, or awaiting an accreditation decision (167 centres) (table 14A.12). This represents all centre based long day care services receiving Childcare Assistance and the majority of all centre based long day care services operating in Australia.

Nationally, 77 per cent of centres with a current accreditation decision were accredited with three years between reviews in July 2000, 5 per cent were accredited with two years between reviews, 12 per cent were accredited with one year between reviews, and 6 per cent of centres were unaccredited. The majority of these unaccredited centres were working towards accreditation. These proportions

varied across jurisdictions (table 14A.12). However, it should be noted that centres self select the number of years between reviews for which to aim.

Licensing

State and Territory governments are responsible for licensing children's services in their jurisdiction. This involves setting regulatory requirements and monitoring adherence to these standards. State and Territory governments also undertake a range of activities aimed at quality promotion, for example, publication of curriculum materials and other resources, and consumer education. The types of service covered by legislation vary between States and Territories, as do the standards that apply.

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

Funding performance standards and outcomes

State and Territory governments impose varying requirements for funding children's services. These performance standards and outcomes may include the requirement for employment of higher qualified staff than required by licensing or minimum standards, self assessment of quality and a demonstration of the delivery of quality educational and recreational programs.

Funding

Government Expenditure

Total reported expenditure on children's services by Commonwealth, State and Territory governments was approximately \$1.5 billion in 1999-2000 (table 14A.23). Reported expenditure was approximately \$1.4 billion in 1998-99, but these figures are not comparable because some elements of expenditure were not included in all years.

Commonwealth Government expenditure in 1999-2000 was approximately \$1.1 billion (which includes administration expenditure of an estimated \$158 million for national, State and Territory offices, Centrelink and the Health

Insurance Commission, expenditure of around \$4.5 million on the Childcare Rebate for work related care in preschools and expenditure on some other services for families and children) (FaCS unpublished). Financial support to families through assistance with fees for children's services accounted for almost 70 per cent of Commonwealth Government expenditure on children's services in 1999-2000 (table 14A.6).

Recurrent expenditure on service provision comprised the bulk (around 72 per cent) of State and Territory government expenditure on children's services in 1999-2000 (table 14A.23). Administration, capital expenditure and financial support to families accounted for the remainder. Expenditure on provision of preschool services accounted for the largest proportion (around 76 per cent for those jurisdictions for which data are available) of total State and Territory government expenditure across all service types (tables 14A.29, 14A.40, 14A.51, 14A.62, 14A.73, 14A.84, 14A.95 and 14A.106).

The Commonwealth Government directly provides a small amount of funding to Queensland and WA for the preschool year. (For more information see AIHW 1997). The Commonwealth also provides supplementary funding for the preschool education of children from Indigenous backgrounds.

Fees

In June 2000, average weekly fees for centre based long day care ranged from \$155 per week in the NT to \$186 per week in the ACT. The average weekly fees for family day care in May 1999 ranged from \$127 in Queensland to \$163 in the ACT. Average weekly fees for vacation care ranged from \$78 in NSW to \$117 in WA. The average sessional fees for before school hours care ranged from \$3.80 in SA to \$6.00 in NSW, while the average sessional fees for after school hours care ranged from \$7.50 in Victoria to \$10 in the ACT (the length of sessions differ between before and after school hour care, and across jurisdictions) (table 14A.4).

Most of the jurisdictions provided data on preschool fees in 1999-2000. The definitions and methods used to collect these data vary; for example, some jurisdictions have provided data on the hourly fee while others have provided data on a weekly or annual fee, so these data are not comparable across jurisdictions.

The range of fees charged for preschool services varied widely across jurisdictions and, in some cases, within jurisdictions. Queensland is an example of the latter group where preschool services operated by the Creche and Kindergarten Association in Queensland charged average hourly fees of \$1.95 for children in the year immediately before commencing compulsory full time schooling and \$1.80 per

hour for younger children, while preschool services provided by Education Queensland were free. In some jurisdictions, such as Tasmania and the NT, preschool services were provided in 1999-2000 at no compulsory cost to parents. In other jurisdictions, fees were not compulsory but were usually paid in respect of the majority of children (SA and the ACT) or varied depending on the provider of preschool services (table 14.1).

Table 14.1 Preschool fees/voluntary contributions, 1999-2000^a

<i>State and Territories</i>	<i>Fees/Voluntary contribution</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<i>Fees</i>		
NSW	\$1.86 per hour	The average hourly fee for children attending Department of Community Services preschools in the year immediately before commencing full time schooling and for younger children. Fees were not payable in Department of Education and Training preschools.
Victoria	\$1.15 per hour	Median hourly fee for children in stand-alone preschools in the year before immediately commencing compulsory full time schooling.
Queensland	\$1.95 per hour	Average hourly fee in community based preschools and kindergartens by children attending preschool in the year immediately before commencing full time schooling. The average hourly fee paid by younger children was \$1.80. Preschool services provided by Education Queensland were free. No data are available for non-State preschools.
<i>Voluntary Contribution</i>		
WA	\$0.08 per hour	In the year before commencing compulsory full time schooling a voluntary annual contribution of \$9 is requested. In the preceding year a voluntary annual contribution of \$44 is requested (equating to \$0.08 per hour).
SA	\$0.45 per hour	Average voluntary contribution for children attending four sessions of preschool in the year immediately before commencing school. The average voluntary contribution for younger children was \$0.35 per hour.
ACT	\$0.47 per hour	Voluntary contribution for children both in the year before school and for younger children.
NT	\$3.50 per week/\$0.28 per hour	Voluntary contribution for children attending preschool in the year before commencing compulsory full time schooling.

^a Definitions and methods used to collect these data vary. These data are not comparable across jurisdictions. No fees were payable for Tasmanian Department of Education kindergartens.

Source: States and Territories.

Size and Scope

Child care services

The Commonwealth, State and Territory governments supported at least 486 000 child care places (providing places for at least 19 per cent of children aged 12 years

and younger) and 158 000 preschool places in 1999-2000. The majority of these child care places were centre based long day care places (44 per cent), followed by outside school hours care (including vacation care) places (39 per cent) and family day care places (14 per cent) (tables 14A.3, 14A.28, 14A.39, 14A.50, 14A.61, 14A.72, 14A.83, 14A.94 and 14A.105).

At least 671 000 children (20 per cent of children aged 12 years and younger) had access to Commonwealth, State and Territory government funded and/or provided child care in 1999-2000 (tables 14A.2, 14A.26, 14A.37, 14A.48, 14A.59, 14A.70, 14A.81, 14A.92 and 14A.103). Of these children, at least 482 000 were aged 5 years and younger. Changes to approaches to data collection and the exclusion of certain services funded by some jurisdictions reduce the comparability of these figures across jurisdictions (table 14.2).

Table 14.2 Proportion of children in the population attending Commonwealth, State and Territory government funded and/or provided child care, 1999-2000 (per cent)^a

<i>Age</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA^b</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Aust</i>
0-5 years	43.7	22.0	32.2	19.2	23.0	26.9	35.1	18.5	31.4
0-12 years	24.5	15.9	21.2	12.5	18.1	17.1	24.5	15.1	19.8

^a Footnotes shown in source tables. ^b WA figures do not include attendance in Family Day Care which is regulated and supported by the State but is not attached to Commonwealth funded schemes.

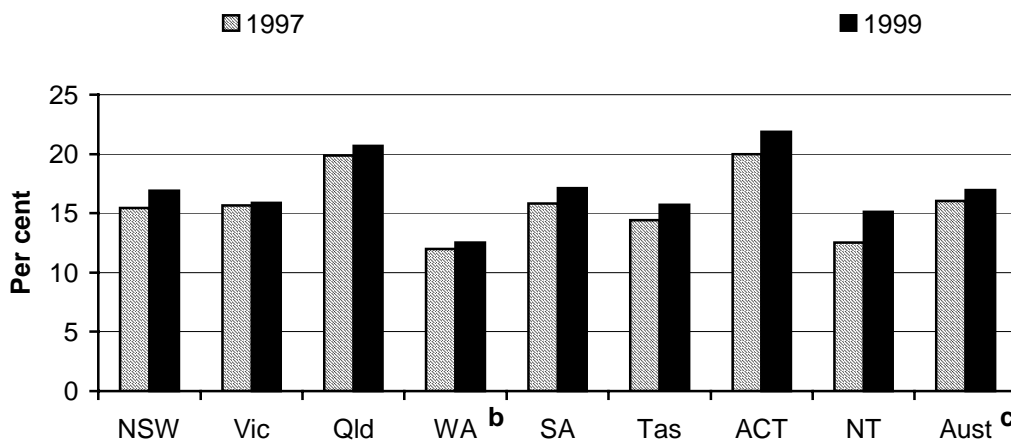
Sources: tables 14A.1, 14A.2, 14A.26, 14A.37, 14A.48, 14A.59, 14A.70, 14A.81, 14A.92 and 14A.103.

The CCCCS is the most complete data set on child care and, as such, indicates the relative participation in child care across jurisdictions. The CCCCS includes most child care services receiving Commonwealth Government assistance. State and Territory governments may also support many of these services. The service types included in the 1999 CCCCS were centre based long day care, family day care, outside school hours care, occasional care and other services.

Almost 575 000 children aged 12 years and younger (16.9 per cent of all children in this age group) attended Commonwealth Government supported child care in May 1999. Across Australia, the share ranged from 12.5 per cent in WA to 21.9 per cent in the ACT (figure 14.1). The majority (over 387 400) of those children were aged 5 years and younger. Thus, in 1999-2000, 25.2 per cent of children aged 5 years and younger attended Commonwealth funded and /or provided child care services (tables 14A.1 and 14A.2).

The proportion of children in the population attending child care included in the CCCCS increased in all jurisdictions between 1997 and 1999. Nationally, the proportion rose from 16.0 per cent to 16.9 per cent (figure 14.1).

Figure 14.1 Proportion of children in the population attending services included in the Commonwealth Census of Child Care Services^a



^a Children are defined as persons aged 12 years and younger. ^b Does not include children cared for in Neighbourhood Model services. ^c Includes children in other Territories.

Sources: tables 14A.1 and 14A.2.

The CCCCS also collects data on variations in average hours of attendance at child care across Australia.

The average hours of attendance in child care in 1999 varied considerably across Australia, for all service types. In that year, the average hours of attendance per child at centre based long day care centres ranged from 13.9 hours per week in Tasmania to 27.6 hours per week in the NT, while the average hours of attendance at occasional care services ranged from 5.4 hours per week in the NT to 9 hours per week in Tasmania. The average attendance per child at vacation care ranged from 2.4 days per week in Tasmania to 3.8 days per week in the NT in 1999 (table 14A.5).

Preschool Services

Preschools provide a range of educational and developmental programs, generally on a sessional basis, to children in the year immediately before commencing full time compulsory schooling, and in some jurisdictions, also to younger children 3 years of age or under (or 4 years of age or under in WA). The age from which children may attend preschools varies across jurisdictions. Children in Victoria, Tasmania, the ACT and the NT are usually funded by government to attend preschool in the year before commencing schooling. Younger children in NSW, Queensland, WA, SA and the ACT may also access government funded preschool services.

Younger Indigenous children living in remote areas may also attend preschools in the NT and Queensland. In SA, a pre-entry program provides one session of preschool per week for 10 weeks in the term before commencing preschool and children from Indigenous backgrounds may attend preschool at 3 years of age. In the ACT, children from Indigenous backgrounds, children with English as a second language, children with a hearing impairment and/or whose parents have a hearing impairment may be eligible for early entry into preschool (for 5.25 hours per week) at 3 years of age.

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

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

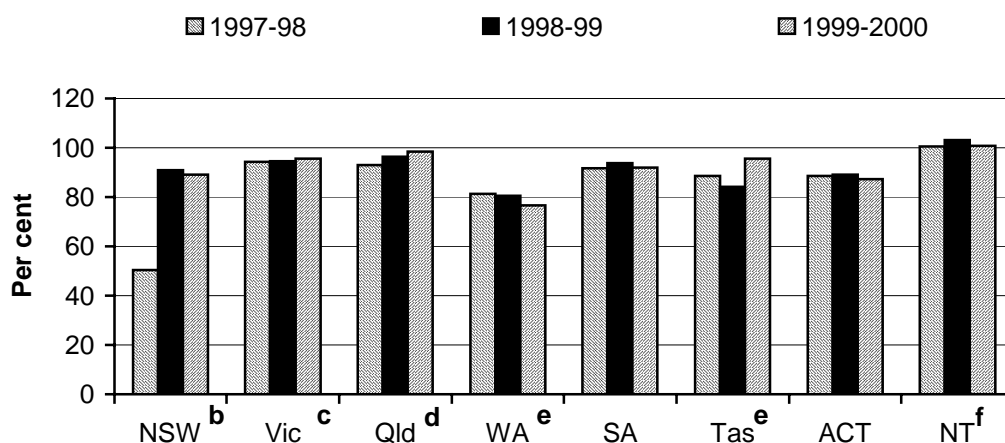
Approximately 241 160 children attending preschool services in 1999-2000 were to begin compulsory full time schooling the following year. This represented nearly 83 per cent of all children attending preschool services in Australia in 1999-2000.

Some jurisdictions differ in their age criterion for access to preschool services; as a result the following data should be interpreted with caution. Approximately 92 per cent of children who are 4 years of age (5 years of age in WA) in the population attended preschool in the year immediately before commencing school in 1999-2000. Across the jurisdictions for which 1999-2000 data were available, this proportion ranged from 77 per cent in WA to 98 per cent in Queensland, and 101 per cent in the NT. There is some double counting of children in the figures as evidenced by the result in the NT where data relates to the full year rather than for a specific date and reflects children moving in and out of the preschool system (figure 14.2).

Younger children in NSW, Queensland, WA, SA and the ACT were able to attend funded preschool services in 1999-2000. Approximately 50 000 younger children attended preschool services in that year, or around 19.2 per cent of children 3 years of age (4 years of age in WA). This participation differed across jurisdictions, reflecting variation in the jurisdictions' policies on access to funded preschool services. The proportion of children 3 years of age in the population attending preschool services was 20 per cent in NSW, 22 per cent in Queensland, 24 per cent in SA (where younger children may attend a pre-entry program for one term in the year before preschool) and 3 per cent in the ACT. The proportion of children 4

years of age in the population who attended preschool services in WA was 65 per cent (tables 14A.1, 14A.26, 14A.48, 14A.59, 14A.70 and 14A.92).

Figure 14.2 Proportion of total children in the population who attended State and Territory government funded or provided preschool services immediately before the commencement of compulsory full time schooling^a



^a The denominator — the population of preschool aged children — is defined as persons aged 4 years in all States and Territories except WA, where preschool aged children are defined as persons aged 5 years. The data are sourced from the ABS. ^b Data for 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000 are not directly comparable. Data for 1997-98 exclude preschool services delivered in centre based long day care centres. Data for 1998-99 include children aged 4 years and over using preschool services operated by the Department of Community Services and the Department of Education and Training, and children aged 4 years attending government funded or provided child care (excluding vacation care). ^c Includes some children attending preschool services conducted in a centre based long day care centre. ^d Included non-government preschool data for the first time in 1997-98. ^e Excludes children attending non-government preschools. ^f Data for 1997-98 were for the calendar year ending 1997; data for 1998-99 were for the calendar year ending 1998. There is some double counting of children as they move in and out of the preschool system throughout the year; as a result, the number of children in preschool exceeds the number of children in the target population.

Source: tables 14A.1, 14A.26, 14A.37, 14A.48, 14A.59, 14A.70, 14A.81, 14A.92 and 14A.103.

All jurisdictions except Victoria supplied data on the average hours of attendance for government funded and/or provided preschool services in 1999-2000. The average hours of attendance of children in the year immediately before commencing compulsory full time schooling ranged from 10.4 hours per week in Tasmania to 24 hours per week in WA (tables 14A.28, 14A.39, 14A.50, 14A.61, 14A.72, 14A.83, 14A.94 and 14A.105).

Staff qualifications and experience

Nationally, the proportion of staff with formal qualifications (including those studying for qualifications) in Commonwealth funded and/or provided child care

was 68 per cent in 1999. Seventeen per cent of staff had no formal qualifications but three years full time experience. The remaining 15 per cent of staff had no formal qualifications and less than three years full time experience. There was an increase in the number of staff with formal qualifications, and a fall in staff with no formal qualifications and less than three years full time experience between 1997 and 1999 in all jurisdictions (tables 14A.8 and 14A.9).

Some additional data were available for some services receiving funding from State and Territory governments only. Across those jurisdictions for which 1999-2000 data were available, the proportion of staff with formal qualifications in child care services not included in the CCCCS ranged from 46 per cent in Tasmania to 72 per cent in SA. The proportion of preschool staff with formal qualifications ranged from 47 per cent in Victoria to 65 per cent in SA and 100 per cent in WA and the NT (although the latter refers only to teaching staff in preschools provided under the Education WA 5 year old program and by the NT Department of Education) (tables 14A.27, 14A.38, 14A.49, 14A.60, 14A.71, 14A.82, 14A.93, 14A.104).

Employment status of parents

Access to children's services differs according to the service type. The workforce status of parents is one factor that may influence children's access to services. Those services that were eligible for Childcare Assistance, for example, gave highest priority to children of parents with work related child care needs. Occasional care gives priority to parents requiring care to meet other requirements (such as to attend appointments, to take care of personal matters or to have temporary respite from full time parenting).

According to ABS survey data (ABS 2000), nationally, 73 per cent of children (defined as children younger than 12 years of age) in child care in 1999 came from families with both parents in the workforce — down slightly from 74 per cent in 1996. Of those children attending preschools, 49 per cent came from families with both parents in the workforce, the same proportion as in 1996 (table 14A.10).

Across jurisdictions for which reliable data were available, the proportion of children in child care with both parents in the workforce in 1999 ranged from 69 per cent in NSW to 77 per cent in SA. The proportion of children attending preschool services with both parents in the workforce in 1999 for jurisdictions for which reliable data were available ranged from 40 per cent in SA to 54 per cent in Queensland (table 14A.11). These data are based on survey estimates and caution should be used when interpreting these figures.

Services by management type

Children's services are managed by the government (State, Territory and local), community and private sectors. Information on the management type of services indicates the involvement of these various sectors in the direct delivery of children's services.

The data on the management type of child care, which are limited, should be interpreted with care because the scope of the data collection varies across jurisdictions. More complete data were available on the management type of preschool services in 1999-2000, which also indicate considerable variation between jurisdictions (table 14.3).

Table 14.3 **Proportion of total children's services, by management type, 1999-2000 (per cent)**

	NSW ^a	Vic ^b	Qld	WA ^c	SA	Tas ^d	ACT ^e	NT ^f
Child care								
– Community managed ^g	36.5	97.2	51.6	61.6	-	55.5	84.1	86.2
– Private	na	na	44.0	32.4	-	24.5	15.9	13.8
– Employer sponsored	na	na	-	-	-	-	-	-
– Government managed	63.5	2.8	4.4	5.9	100.0	20.0	-	-
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Preschool								
– Community managed ^g	64.1	61.4	40.8	na	4.2	-	4.7	8.5
– Private	-	23.5	0.5	na	-	19.1	-	-
– Employer sponsored	-	-	-	na	-	-	-	-
– Government managed	35.9	15.1	58.7	na	95.8	80.9	95.3	91.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	na	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

^a Data excludes Commonwealth services. ^b Community managed includes not for profit occasional care provided by parents, churches, government and non-government schools, and private individuals. All government managed preschools in Victoria are managed by local government. ^c Data on preschool services are not available because the services are administered by the Education Department of WA. ^d Preschools include funded non-government preschools ^e Includes licensed but not funded and/or provided 'other care' services. ^f Preschool services are provided by the Department of Education directly, but a range of management functions are devolved to school councils and parent management committees. ^g Includes not for profit services managed by parents. **na** Not available. - Nil or rounded to zero.

Sources: tables 14A.30, 14A.41, 14A.52, 14A.63, 14A.74, 14A.85, 14A.96 and 14A.107.

14.2 Framework of performance indicators

The framework of performance indicators is based on a number of common objectives for children's services across Australia (box 14.2). The relative emphasis placed on each objective varies across jurisdictions.

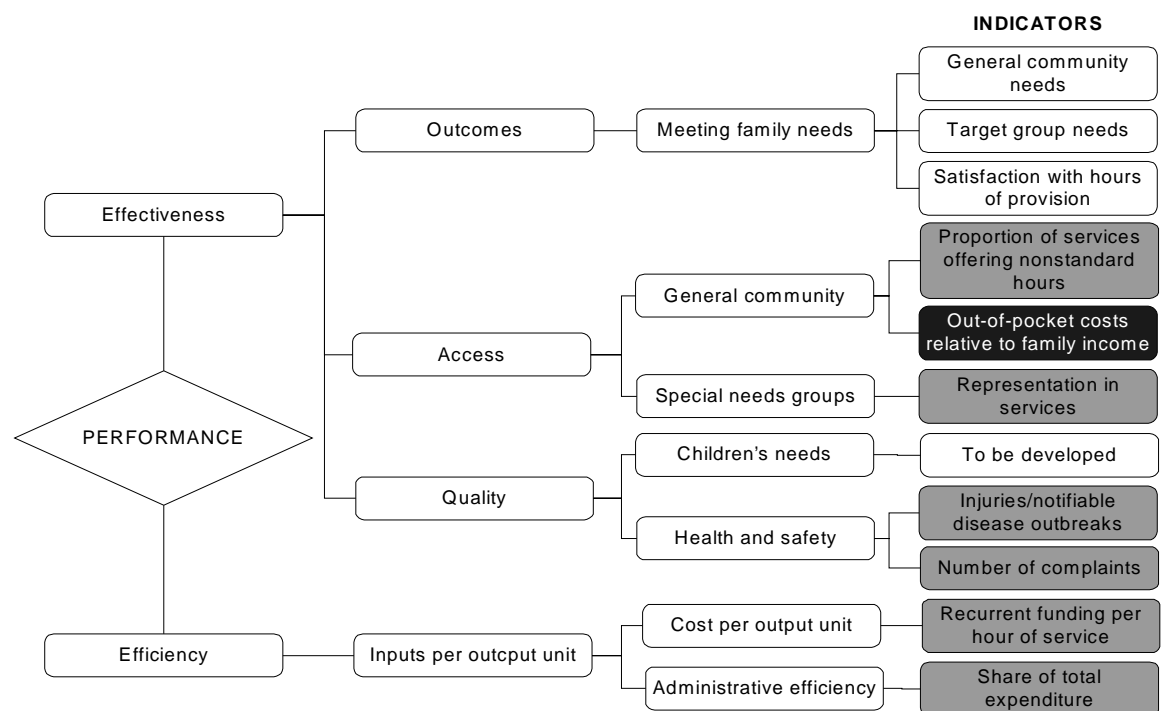
Box 14.2 Objectives for children’s services

Children’s services aim to:

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

A performance indicator framework consistent with these objectives is summarised in figure 14.3.

Figure 14.3 Performance indicators for children’s services



Key to indicators

- Text** Provided on a comparable basis for this report
- Text** Information not complete or not strictly comparable
- Text** Yet to be developed or not collected for this Report

14.3 Key performance indicator results

Different delivery contexts, locations and types of client may affect the effectiveness and efficiency of children’s services. Much of the data available for

reporting in this chapter are not comparable across jurisdictions. Appendix A contains contextual information, which may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter.

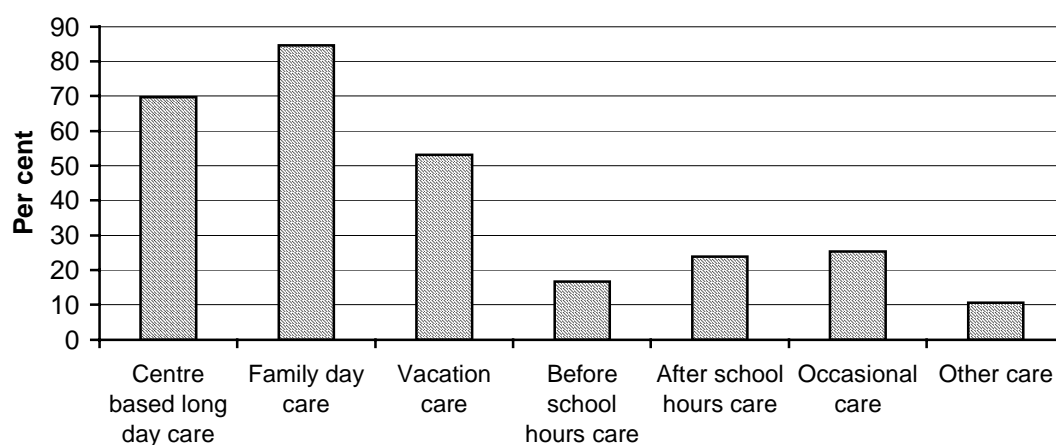
Effectiveness

Access of general community — services offering nonstandard hours

An indicator of community access to children's services is the proportion of services offering nonstandard hours of care. What constitutes nonstandard hours varies across service types and a full explanation can be found in the definitions section in table 14.8.

Nationally, 84.7 per cent of family day care services provided nonstandard hours of care in 1999 — the highest proportion across all service types. Centre based long day care had the next highest proportion at 69.8 per cent (figure 14.4).

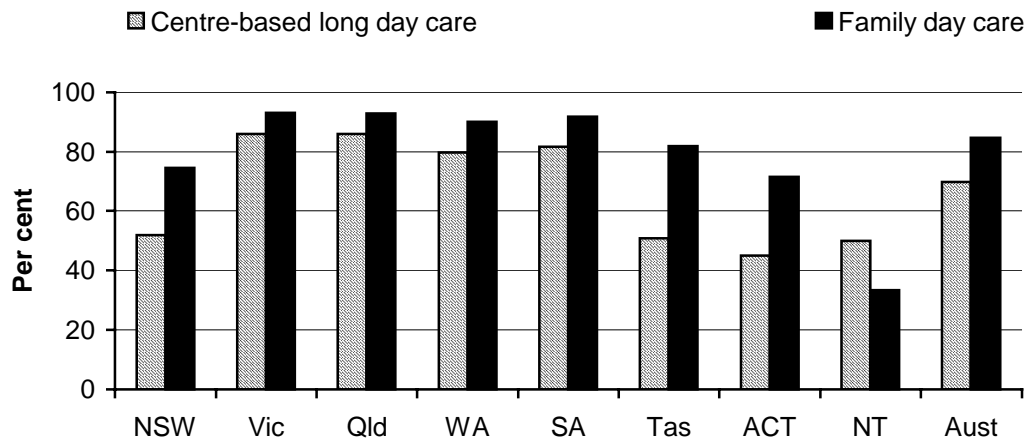
Figure 14.4 **Proportion of services included in the Commonwealth Census of Child Care Services providing nonstandard hours of care, by service type, May 1999**



Source: table 14A.13.

Across jurisdictions, the proportion of family day care providers offering nonstandard hours ranged from 33.3 per cent in the NT to 93.0 per cent in Victoria in 1999. For centre based long day care services in 1999, the proportion offering nonstandard hours of care ranged from 44.9 per cent in the ACT to 86.0 per cent in Victoria and Queensland in 1999 (figure 14.5).

Figure 14.5 **Proportion of selected services included in the Commonwealth Census of Child Care Services providing nonstandard hours of care, May 1999**



Source: table 14A.13.

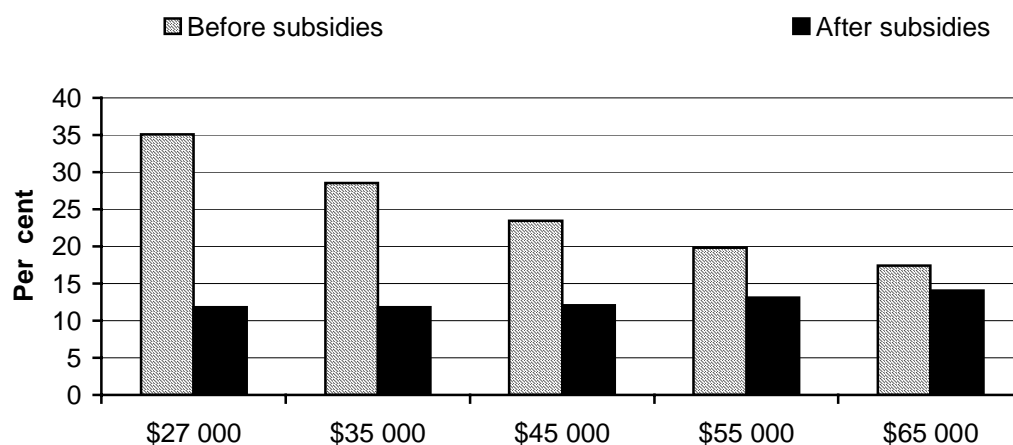
Limited data were available on the proportion of services not included in the CCCCS offering nonstandard hours. Three jurisdictions were able to provide data on nonstandard hours of preschool for 1999-2000. The proportion of preschools offering nonstandard hours was zero per cent in the ACT, 52.9 per cent in NSW and 69 per cent in SA. In SA, preschools are encouraged to offer back to back preschool services to assist parents, particularly in country regions where the need to travel long distances would make it impractical for children to attend preschool more frequently (table 14A.14).

Access of general community — out-of-pocket costs relative to family income

This indicator measures out-of-pocket child care costs as a proportion of weekly disposable income as at March 2000 before and after the payment of child care subsidies. This calculation is undertaken for families with one child in care and two children in care for five indicative levels of gross annual family income. Currently only data for centre based long day care and family day care services are available, with data for other service types expected to become available over time. The calculation is based on children attending full time care (equal to 50 hours per child per week) in centre based long day care as at March 2000 and family day care as at May 1999. Childcare Assistance and the Childcare Rebate are based on April 1999 parameters.

After the payment of child care subsidies, out-of-pocket costs as a proportion of weekly family income increase with gross annual family income. Nationally, families with *one* child in full time centre based long day care at March 2000 and an annual gross family income of \$27 000 spent 12 per cent of their weekly disposable income on child care. By contrast, families with one child with an annual gross family income of \$65 000 spent 14 per cent of their weekly disposable income on child care (figure 14.6).

Figure 14.6 **Out-of-pocket costs of child care for families with one child in full time centre based long day care, as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family incomes^a**



^a Disposable incomes and fees as at March 2000 while Childcare Assistance and the Childcare Rebate are as at April 1999.

Source: table 14A.19.

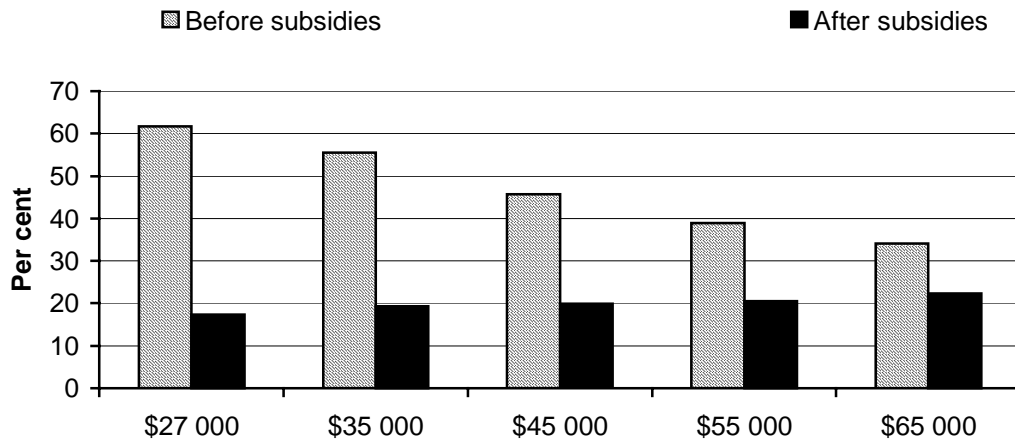
For families with *two* children in centre based full time long day care, the proportion ranged from 17 per cent for those on annual incomes of \$27 000 to 22 per cent for those on annual incomes of \$65 000 (figure 14.7).

Across jurisdictions, out-of-pocket costs for centre based long day care for families with disposable incomes of \$27 000 and *one* child in care ranged from 10 per cent in Queensland and the NT to 14 per cent in the ACT. For families with an annual gross family income of \$65 000, the proportion ranged from 12.5 per cent in the NT to 16 per cent in the ACT (table 14.4).

For families with *two* children and disposable income of \$27 000, the out-of-pocket costs for centre based long day care ranged from 14 per cent in Queensland and the NT to 21.7 per cent in the ACT. For families with an annual gross family income of

\$65 000, the out-of-pocket costs ranged from 19 per cent in the NT to 26 per cent in the ACT (table 14.4).

Figure 14.7 **Out-of-pocket costs of child care for families with two children in full time centre based long day care, as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family incomes^a**



^a Disposable incomes as at March 2000 while Childcare Assistance and the Childcare Rebate are as at April 1999.

Source: table 14A.19.

Table 14.4 **Out-of-pocket costs of child care for families with children in full time centre based long day care (after the payment of subsidies), as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family incomes (per cent)^a**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
One child in care									
\$27 000	13	12	10	11	12	13	14	10	12
\$35 000	13	12	10	11	12	13	14	10	12
\$45 000	13	12	11	11	12	13	14	11	12
\$55 000	14	13	12	12	13	14	15	11	13
\$65 000	15	14	13	13	14	15	16	13	14
Two children in care									
\$27 000	19	17	14	16	18	19	22	14	17
\$35 000	21	19	17	18	20	21	23	16	19
\$45 000	21	20	18	19	20	21	23	17	20
\$55 000	22	20	18	19	21	22	24	18	21
\$65 000	24	22	20	21	23	24	26	19	22

^a Attendance based on each child attending 50 hours of centre based long day care per week. Fees are at March 2000. Childcare Assistance and the Childcare Rebate payments are at April 1999. Disposable income refers to the amount of income after income tax and includes non-child care government benefits and rebates, as at March 2000.

Source: table 14A.20.

The out-of-pocket costs for family day care (net of subsidies) as a proportion of weekly disposable income for a family with an annual income of \$27 000 and with *one* child in full time care in May 1999 ranged from 6 per cent in Victoria and Queensland to 11 per cent in SA, Tasmania and the ACT (table 14.5). The corresponding proportion for families with *two* children ranged from 7 per cent in Victoria and Queensland to 16 per cent in the ACT.

The proportion for a family on an annual income of \$65 000 with *one* child in full time family day care ranged from 10 per cent in Victoria, Queensland and the NT to 13 per cent in SA, Tasmania and the ACT, while the corresponding proportion for a family on the same income with *two* children ranged from 15 per cent in Victoria and Queensland to 21 per cent in the SA and ACT (table 14.5).

Table 14.5 Out-of-pocket costs of child care for families with children in full time of family day care (after the payment of subsidies), as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family incomes (per cent)^a

	<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>
One child in care									
\$27 000	9	6	6	9	11	11	11	7	7
\$35 000	9	7	7	10	11	11	11	8	8
\$45 000	10	8	8	10	11	11	12	9	9
\$55 000	11	9	9	11	12	12	12	9	10
\$65 000	12	10	10	12	13	13	13	10	11
Two children in care									
\$27 000	12	7	7	13	15	15	16	8	10
\$35 000	15	10	10	15	17	17	18	11	12
\$45 000	16	12	12	16	18	18	19	13	14
\$55 000	17	14	14	17	19	19	19	15	15
\$65 000	18	15	15	19	21	20	21	16	17

^a Attendance based on each child attending 50 hours of centre based long day care per week. Fees are at May 1999. Childcare Assistance and the Childcare Rebate payments are at April 1999. Disposable income refers to the amount of income after income tax and includes non-child care government benefits and rebates, as at March 2000.

Source: table 14A.21.

Access of special needs groups to children's services

Data on the representation of children from special needs groups in child care were available for all jurisdictions on a comparable basis from the CCCCS. The proportion of these children in Commonwealth supported child care was sometimes substantially different across jurisdictions. This variation largely reflected variation in the representation of children from the special needs groups in the community (table 14.6).

The representation of children from Indigenous backgrounds, those with a disability, and those from rural and remote areas in child care in 1997 to 1999 was lower than their representation in the community in all jurisdictions where the information was available.

The proportion of child care attendees from an Indigenous background ranged from 0.6 per cent in Victoria (where their representation in the population was 0.9 per cent) to 10.4 per cent in the NT (where their representation in the population was 35.9 per cent) (table 14.6).

The representation of children from single parent families among attendees of government funded child care was greater than their representation in the community in all jurisdictions except the NT. Nationally, children from single parent families represented 18.9 per cent of government funded child care attendees in 1999 and 15.7 per cent of children in the community.

The proportion of child care attendees from rural and remote areas ranged from 18.2 per cent in SA (where their representation in the population was 30.2 per cent) to 37.3 per cent in the NT (where their representation in the population was 59.8 per cent). The ACT does not have child care attendees from rural and remote areas (table 14.6).

Data on the proportion of preschool attendees from the specified special needs groups are less extensive for all jurisdictions. The most complete 1999-2000 data available relate to the representation of children from Indigenous backgrounds (excluding children who attended preschools for Indigenous children funded by the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs). The proportion of Indigenous children attending preschools in 1999-2000 was broadly similar to their representation in the community. The proportion ranged from 0.7 per cent in Victoria (where representation of Indigenous children in the community was 0.9 per cent) to 34.5 per cent in the NT (where representation in the community was 35.9 per cent) (figure 14.8)

Changes in the proportion of preschool attendees from Indigenous backgrounds varied across jurisdictions over recent time (figure 14.9).

Table 14.6 Proportion of child care attendees from special needs groups included in the Commonwealth Census of Child Care Services, 1999 (per cent)^a

Representation	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia	
									1997	1999
Children from non-English speaking backgrounds ^b										
Representation										
in the services	15.3	12.2	6.2	7.7	6.0	2.2	10.6	7.5	10.7	10.7
in the community ^c	11.5	11.0	4.0	4.7	6.1	0.9	9.5	5.7	12.6	8.5
Children from Indigenous backgrounds ^b										
Representation										
in services	1.4	0.6	2.1	2.1	1.2	0.7	0.8	10.4	1.6	1.5
in the community ^d	3.3	0.9	5.5	5.3	2.8	5.4	1.9	35.9	3.7	3.7
Children from a single parent family ^e										
Representation										
in services	17.0	18.2	21.3	20.7	21.2	19.3	16.3	14.9	19.0	18.9
in the community ^d	15.9	14.4	16.7	15.4	16.9	16.9	15.4	18.9	15.7	15.7
Children with a disability ^f										
Representation										
in services	2.3	2.2	1.9	1.9	3.9	2.2	1.6	1.5	2.0	2.3
in the community ^g	6.6	6.6	8.3	10.3	9.6	7.2	na ⁱ	na ⁱ	7.6	7.6
From rural and remote areas ^{b, h}										
Representation										
in services	21.6	21.2	22.8	20.7	18.2	23.7	–	37.3	21.3	21.2
in the community ^{d, j}	29.0	28.0	36.9	30.6	30.2	39.9	0.2	59.8	30.7	30.7

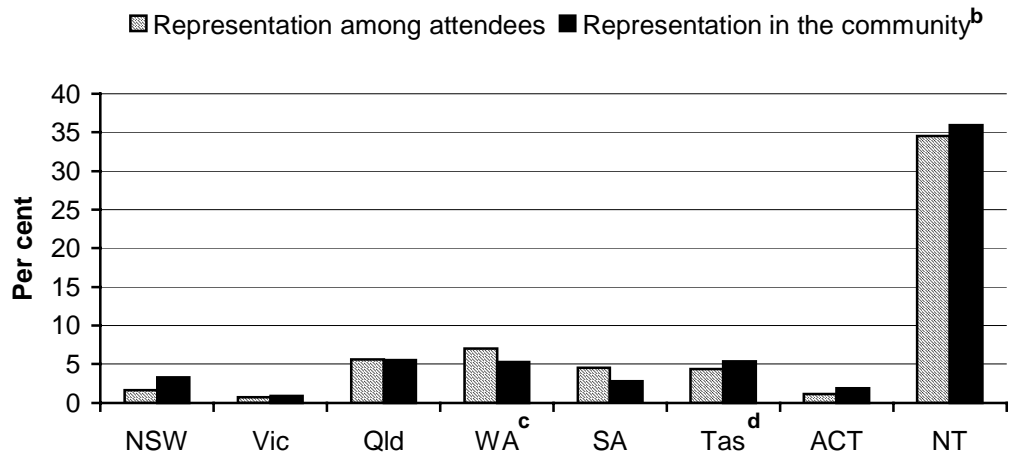
^a At May 1999. Excludes children attending Aboriginal playgroups. ^b Includes vacation care, which overlapped outside school hours care. ^c Data were obtained from the 1999 ABS Child Care, Australia survey. Caution should be exercised in interpreting State and Territory results as they are subject to sampling errors (with that for Tasmania between 25 and 50 per cent). ^d Data were obtained from the 1996 ABS Census of Population and Housing. ^e There was no information on the number of children from single parent families available for mobiles, occasional care neighbourhood models, occasional care, Aboriginal playgroups and vacation care. ^f The number of children with disabilities using child care excludes those children whose parents had a disability. ^g Data on children with a disability were obtained from the 1998 ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, and refer to children aged 14 years and younger. Population data are estimated residential population at June 1998. ^h Excludes occasional care neighbourhood models for which data were not available. ⁱ Data on children with a disability were not available for publication. ^j Relates to children aged 14 years and younger.

Source: table 14A.16.

Data on the representation of other special needs groups among government funded preschool attendees are limited for 1999-2000. The share of these groups in the community is at table 14.6.

- Children from non-English speaking backgrounds represented 4.0 per cent of children attending preschool in NSW, 11.2 per cent in Victoria, 9.0 per cent in SA, and 8.4 per cent in the ACT (table 14A.32, 14A.43, 14A.76 and 14A.98).

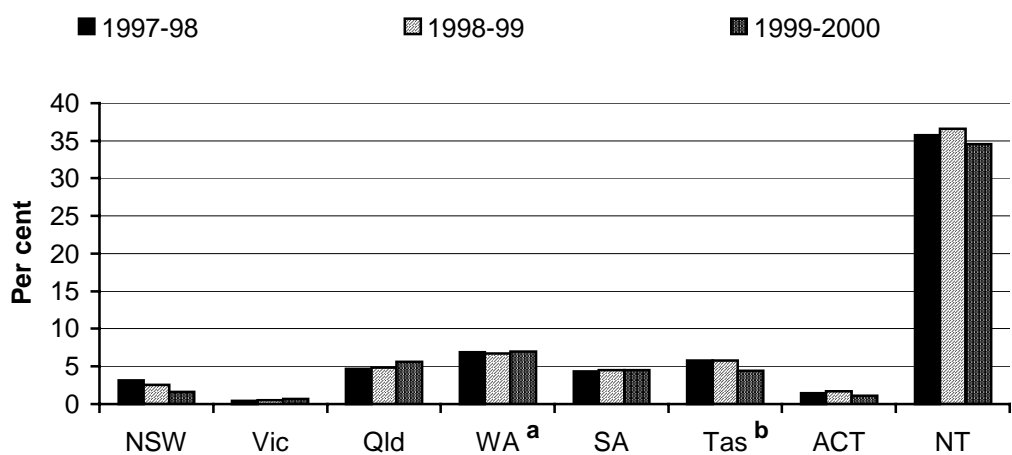
Figure 14.8 Proportion of preschool attendees from Indigenous backgrounds, 1999-2000^a



^a Comparisons between the representation of Indigenous children in attendees of preschool services and their representation in the community should be treated with caution because there are definitional differences and differences in the base population. ^b Data were obtained from the 1996 ABS Census of Population and Housing. ^c Excludes younger children attending preschool and children attending non-government preschools. ^d Excludes children attending non-government preschools.

Sources: tables 14A.32, 14A.43, 14A.54, 14A.65, 14A.76, 14A.87, 14A.98 and 14A.109.

Figure 14.9 Proportion of preschool attendees from Indigenous backgrounds (per cent of attendees)



^a Excludes younger children attending preschool and children attending non-government preschools.

^b Excludes children attending non-government preschools.

Sources: tables 14A.32, 14A.43, 14A.54, 14A.65, 14A.76, 14A.87, 14A.98 and 14A.109.

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- The proportion of preschool attendees from single parent families was 5.7 per cent in NSW, 11.8 per cent in Victoria and 14.5 per cent in SA (table 14A.32, 14A.43 and 14A.76).
 - Children with a disability represented 3.6 per cent of preschool attendees in NSW, 3.7 per cent in Victoria, 1.9 per cent in WA, 13.8 per cent of preschool attendees in SA and 7.1 per cent in the ACT (table 14A.32, 14A.43, 14A.65, 14A.76 and 14A.98).
 - The proportion of preschool attendees from rural and remote areas was 13.5 per cent in NSW, 32.2 per cent in SA, 37.5 per cent in Tasmania, 0.4 per cent in the ACT and 30.0 per cent in the NT (table 14A.32, 14A.76, table 14A.87, 14A.98 and 14A.109).

Quality

An important focus of Commonwealth, 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 used in this chapter are the number of serious injuries, the number of notifiable outbreaks of disease, and the number of substantiated complaints per registered or licensed service, by service type. These data should be treated with caution because there are differences in reporting between jurisdictions. Work on other indicators — unmet demand for children's services, and meeting parents' and children's needs — will be pursued in the future.

The data on quality are limited for 1999-2000. All jurisdictions provided some information on the number of serious injuries to children in children's services for 1999-2000 (tables 14A.34, 14A.45, 14A.56, 14A.67, 14A.78, 14A.89, 14A.100 and 14A.111 for the breakdown between services).

Only NSW and the ACT provided information on the number of notifiable outbreaks of disease per government provided, registered or licensed service for 1999-2000 (tables 14A.35 and 14A.101).

All jurisdictions except NSW⁴ provided data on the number of substantiated complaints and alleged breaches of regulations made to the State and Territory government regulatory bodies for 1999-2000 (tables 14A.47, 14A.58, 14A.69, 14A.80, 14A.91, 14A.102, 14A.113).

The results for the substantiated complaints indicator should be interpreted with caution. The limitations of this indicator include:

⁴ NSW is developing a new information system in line with its new legislation and data on substantiated complaints are expected to be available for future Reports.

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- the priority that some jurisdictions give to developing well-informed client groups as part of improving their service delivery (a limitation in that well-informed clients may be more likely to make a complaint than clients without access to this information);
 - differences in the number of approved care providers or parent users per service in each service across States and Territories; and
 - variance in complaints management systems across jurisdictions. In SA, for example, the department is the sole sponsor of Family Day Care and deals with all complaints that may otherwise be managed at a scheme level in other States and Territories and, as such, may not be reported.

Efficiency

Differences in counting and reporting rules for financial data and in reported expenditure, partly due to different treatment of various expenditure items, may be reflected in differences in the indicator results across jurisdictions. Some information on the extent of the comparability of the expenditure is shown in table 14A.22.

Unit cost

A proxy indicator of efficiency is the level of government inputs per unit of output (unit cost). The indicator used here is government expenditure per hour of service. Data were sought from all governments on their expenditures by service type. Incomplete data and changes in collection method however, make it difficult to compare expenditure across jurisdictions and over time. Unit cost data for children's services do not yet contain an estimate of user cost of capital.

Data on Commonwealth Government recurrent expenditure by service type for 1999-2000 in each jurisdiction are available and are comparable across jurisdictions (table 14.7). Commonwealth Government recurrent expenditure per hour for centre based long day care services in 1999-2000 ranged from \$1.31 per hour in the ACT to \$2.25 per hour in Queensland. For family day care, such expenditure was higher in all jurisdictions except the NT compared with 1997-98. Funding per hour of outside school hours care was lower in 1999-2000 than 1997-98 in all jurisdictions. Commonwealth Government recurrent funding per hour of occasional care was not available for 1999-2000.

Table 14.7 Commonwealth Government real recurrent expenditure per hour of service (1999-2000 dollars)^a

		<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>
Centre based long day care	1997-98	1.91	1.92	2.23	2.00	2.09	1.95	1.42	1.95
	1999-00	1.78	1.99	2.25	2.09	2.00	1.84	1.31	1.79
Family day care	1997-98	2.35	2.55	2.57	2.84	2.98	2.72	2.39	2.37
	1999-00	2.57	2.79	2.79	3.12	3.89	2.94	2.49	1.82
Outside school hours care ^b	1997-98	1.83	1.49	1.68	1.87	1.63	2.11	1.69	1.68
	1999-00	1.04	1.22	1.41	1.36	1.29	1.42	0.96	1.26
Occasional care	1997-98	3.92	1.57	2.25	3.84	4.31	2.28	2.10	11.00
	1999-00	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na

^a Expenditure excludes administration expenditure. ^b Outside school hours care for 1999-2000 includes vacation care. Data for outside school hours care in 1997-98 have been revised to provide a consistent series and is therefore not comparable with figures reported in the 2000 Report.

Source: table 14A.18.

Very limited State and Territory data on recurrent expenditure per hour of service on services not included in the CCCCS for 1999-2000 were available for inclusion in this report. Only the ACT could provide reliable data on recurrent expenditure per hour of service, for occasional care and preschool. Recurrent expenditure per hour on occasional care in the ACT was \$2.07 in 1999-2000. Recurrent expenditure per hour on preschool in the ACT was \$4.45 in 1999-2000. Recurrent expenditure could not be separated between children in the year before compulsory schooling and younger children. Some information on recurrent expenditure and on hours of service for other jurisdictions can be found in the attachment (tables 14A.19, 14A.28, 14A.29, 14A.39, 14A.40, 14A.50, 14A.51, 14A.61, 14A.62, 14A.72, 14A.73, 14A.83, 14A.84, 14A.94, 14A.95, 14A.105 and 14A.106).

Administration and regulation cost

Another measure of efficiency is administration and regulation expenditure as a proportion of total expenditure. This expenditure can include the costs of activities relating to the planning, policy development, resource management, quality assurance and regulation of children's services. The extent to which these costs are included in the data varies, and allocations of the costs of departmental overheads may also differ across jurisdictions. Thus, comparisons across jurisdictions and over time should be made with caution.

Estimated administration costs accounted for 15 per cent of total Commonwealth Government expenditure in 1999-2000 (table 14A.7). As discussed earlier, the roles of the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments differ in relation to funding and delivery of children's services. In particular, State and Territory governments

have an important role in licensing services and monitoring standards. For this reason, it is not appropriate to compare the administration and regulation costs of the Commonwealth Government and those of the State and Territory governments. Differences in State and Territory government licensing arrangements also limit the comparability of administration and regulation costs across States and Territories.

All jurisdictions except Victoria provided some information on administrative expenditure. The definition of administrative expenditure varies across jurisdictions and can be found in the footnote to the source tables. Six jurisdictions provided data on administration and regulation expenditure as a proportion of total government expenditure on child care in 1999-2000.

- In NSW, administration and regulation costs for child care represented 23.1 per cent of total (table 14A.29).
- In Queensland, administration and regulation costs (including administration expenditure for the outside school hours care activities for young people program which targets children 13–15 years of age) represented 21.7 per cent of the total (table 14A.51).
- In WA, administration and regulation costs represented 77 per cent of the total. This figure includes regulation and monitoring of providers including non-scheme family day carers, providing support advice and training, planning and providing information and advice to parents (table 14A.62).
- In Tasmania, administration and regulation costs (including umbrella departmental costs) represented 45.4 per cent of the total (table 14A.84).
- In the ACT, administration and regulation costs represented 22.4 per cent of the total (table 14A.95).
- In the NT, administration and regulation costs represented 21.5 per cent of the total (table 14A.106).

Two jurisdictions provided data on administration and regulation expenditure as a proportion of total government expenditure on preschool services in 1999-2000.

- In NSW, administration and regulation costs represented 4.7 per cent of the total (table 14A.29).
- In the ACT, administration and regulation costs represented 4.6 per cent of the total (table 14A.95).

Three jurisdictions provided data on administration and regulation expenditure as a proportion of total government expenditure on both child care and preschool services in 1999-2000.

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- In NSW, administration and regulation costs represented 10.3 per cent of total government expenditure (table 14A.29).
 - In SA, administration and regulation costs represented 5.6 per cent of total government expenditure (table 14A.73).
 - In the ACT, administration and regulation costs represented 8.4 per cent of total government expenditure (table 14A.95).

14.4 Future directions in performance reporting

The challenges for reporting the performance of children's services include improving:

- the appropriateness and completeness of the indicator set;
- the comparability and accuracy of the data set;
- the measurement of unit costs; and
- the reporting of access to mainstream services of children from Indigenous and other target groups (including children from rural /remote).

Improving the appropriateness and completeness of the indicator set

Further work will be undertaken in 2001 to improve the data for inclusion in the chapter.

New indicators that may reflect the extent to which services meet some aspects of parents' needs have been suggested for future Reports. These include:

- the proportion of service delivery locations/sites with co-located services (for example, a facility that provides centre based long day care, sessional preschool services and occasional care as separate entities);
- the number of services that a family uses; and
- participation in services by family income.

Further work to improve indicators on client satisfaction with the service provided as the next step to the consultancy undertaken in August 1999 to investigate the feasibility of using consumer views in performance indicators for children's services (see SCRCSSP 2000) has also been suggested.

Improving the content of the data set

The National Community Services Information Management Group's Children's Services Working Group, under the auspices of the Community Services Ministers' Council, is developing a national minimum data set for children's services. The development will increase comparability in children's services data and assist the development of measurable performance indicators and descriptors.

The next CCCCS is scheduled to be conducted in 2001. Processes for refining definitions, estimating methods and counting rules are continuing. Further work is planned to improve the consistency and comparability of performance information across jurisdictions. Revisions of some data reduce data comparability across years. Similarly, changes in the children's services industry have required jurisdictions to revise collection methods, and these revisions also reduce data comparability across years and jurisdictions. It will take some time before all improvements are reflected in the chapter.

National consistency in the timing of data collected by State and Territory governments was noted in the 2000 Report as an important goal for the Steering Committee. This would require the timing of data to relate to a standard sample week, which is a typical week in August (that is, a week that does not include any public holidays). Although most State and Territory governments currently collect data on this basis, changes to data collection methods will mean that the timing of data reported by each jurisdiction may vary in future Reports.

14.5 Jurisdictions' comments

This section provides comments from each jurisdiction on the services covered in this chapter. Appendix A contains detailed statistics and short profiles on each State and Territory, which may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. The information covers aspects such as age profile, geographic distribution of the population, income levels, education levels, tenure of dwellings and cultural heritage (such as Indigenous and ethnic status).

Commonwealth Government comments

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Included in this year's report are data from the 1999 Census of Child Care Services which was conducted in May 1999 but was not available in time for last year's Report.

The Commonwealth notes that the changing of the publication date for this Report has had an impact on the ability of all jurisdictions to provide meaningful and comparable data this year.

Work is progressing across jurisdictions on developing a national minimum data set for children's services for the National Community Services Information Management Group.

Development of a new performance framework for reporting on children's services is a high priority for the next year.

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New South Wales Government comments

“ Year 2000 has proved an exciting time for children’s services in NSW. On 26 October, the Minister for Community Services, the Hon. Faye Lo Po’, MP, launched the NSW Government’s Early Childhood Services Policy.

The policy provides a significant landmark by unequivocally featuring children as its primary and major focus. In so doing, the policy frames good outcomes for children in the context of their families and the communities in which they live. The policy sets the platform for the future directions for early childhood services in NSW.

The policy clearly demonstrates NSW’s continued commitment to assist with the provision of a strong community service system providing quality and choice with paramount consideration for the needs of children through partnerships with service providers, families, communities, early childhood professionals and with other government agencies.

The year also saw the second anniversary of the NSW Office of Childcare. A major undertaking for the Office during 2000 involved its work on the pioneering new curriculum framework, which underwent a consultation process involving some 1300 people across the state. The Office was also involved in co-sponsoring the visits of overseas academics Dr Pam Schiller and Dr Fraser Mustard to conferences in NSW. New ventures in the research area commenced on the subjects of flexible models of service delivery and on children’s services as health promotion settings in line with the new policy views espoused by the World Health Organisation.

Additionally, the Office has been active in national and state working and advisory groups and in responding to public inquiries such as the Standing Committee on Law and Justice’s Inquiry Into Crime Prevention Through Social Support. The Office also participated in the OECD Thematic Review of Children’s Services.

Ensuring the delivery of good quality services through the provision of funding continued to be a high priority. Year 2000 saw a number of new initiatives in this regard, including: recognising the importance of play in child development, \$0.5 million and improving the viability of mobile services in isolated rural areas, \$0.25 million.

In relation to this collection, NSW remains of the view that the effectiveness, efficiency and achievements of jurisdictions in this important activity are not well presented due to the way the collection is structured. NSW continues to be optimistic that the work of the Child Care Working Group will lead to a much more usable Report in future editions.

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Victorian Government comments

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The Victorian Government is committed to supporting families in caring for their children in their early years by ensuring that all children are given the opportunity to access high quality children's services. The provision of quality local services for young children and families is seen as being fundamental to the wellbeing of the community.

The Department of Human Services is responsible for licensing children's services in Victoria. As at 30 June 2000, there were approximately 2850 licensed centre-based services providing almost 100 000 places for children aged 0–6 years. In addition, Victoria either funds directly or manages Commonwealth/State Government funding to approximately 1600 agencies providing children's services at approximately 2100 service delivery locations across the State, comprising preschool, occasional child care and TAFE long day care.

A range of providers is responsible for the delivery of these services including committees of management, local government, companies, tertiary education institutions, non-government schools, government schools and private individuals.

Victoria is committed to the development of flexible, integrated services, enabling families to access a range of services at the one location. For example, while the role of the preschool program has remained consistent for a number of years, there is now greater variety in how the program is delivered. Preschool can operate as a stand-alone service, or can be delivered as part of, or along side other forms of part day or long day care or in State primary schools. An increasing number of long day care centres are offering a funded preschool service, with 463 long day care centres (approximately 26 per cent) receiving preschool funding in 2000. As well, the majority of preschool providers also provide other programs such as three year old groups, school age care and/or occasional care.

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring access to preschool education for all eligible Victorian children. To this end, the Victorian Government's Health Card Grant was more than doubled commencing from the beginning of 2000. The Health Card Grant is provided to services for families on low incomes and is used to reduce fees for those families. This has resulted in an increase in the preschool participation rate of 3.6 per cent from February 1999 to August 2000.

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Queensland Government comments

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As in previous years, the Queensland Government continues to demonstrate its commitment to ensuring that Queensland children and families have access to a responsive, high quality and sustainable child care system. Of particular importance in the 1999 – 2000 financial year was the launch of the *Queensland Child Care Strategic Plan 2000 – 2005* in October 1999.

The Plan, which was developed through wide consultation with peak organisations, other government departments, service providers and parents, identifies a vision for child care, as well as priorities and directions for the next five years. Strategies outlined in the Plan focus on improving the integration between child care, education and family support services for families with young children. The Plan details the development of a Child Care Industry Plan, which will serve to support and encourage integration, quality, sustainability and innovation in service provision and foster partnerships between government, service providers and communities.

Another important strategy included in the Plan is the review of the legislative framework, including the development of a new act and regulations for child care services in Queensland. A key element of the reform process is developing legislation that covers a broader range of services, is flexible and further supports innovation in service delivery.

In addition, the Queensland Government continues to fund a range of innovative services to increase the coordination and flexibility of child care services for Queensland children and families. One example is the establishment of a 75 place child care centre on the grounds of the Herston Hospitals Complex in Brisbane. This service is designed to offer extended hours child care for hospital shift workers and provide flexibility for the changing needs of children, families and the community using the facility. Funding has also been provided for the construction and development of an integrated Child and Family Support Centre in Doomadgee, the first pilot Child Care and Family Support Service Hub to be given funding approval in Queensland. The centre will provide child care, family support, community meeting spaces for parenting sessions and office space for the Child Protection Committee.

The Queensland Government remains committed to using data and research to monitor performance, and inform planning and decision making processes. This commitment includes working with other jurisdictions to address the inconsistencies in current reporting arrangements and develop a reporting framework which will enhance the availability, integrity and comparability of data for future reports. Funding has recently been allocated to upgrade the Families Youth and Community Care Queensland (FYCCQ) database for collecting and analysing data related to child care services within the State.

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Western Australian Government comments

“ Family and Children’s Services is the state government department responsible for children’s services (0-12 years) in Western Australia. The funding, support and regulation of children’s services is strategically important in the achievement of the department’s outcomes.

This includes responsibility for ensuring compliance to the Community Services (Child Care) Regulations 1988 which apply to child care for children of pre compulsory school age outside the child’s own home.

Draft standards, which will form the basis of regulations for outside school hours care services, have been developed in consultation with an industry committee. The draft document, which includes a proposed implementation plan, is currently available for public comment. Family and Children’s Services is also examining the current business practices at the Child Care Licensing Unit to determine the impact of the increased workload as a result of the future licensing of outside school hours care services.

Following the positive review of the jointly funded Commonwealth/State Occasional Child Care Program, an expansion of services is under way. It is planned to establish around thirty two new services in rural and remote communities with an emphasis on indigenous communities. The developmental process involved in establishing these services ensures the programs are responsive to local needs and support the philosophy of local ownership.

The viability of long day care services in small communities is a major issue in Western Australia and the department is working closely with the state office of Family and Community Services to develop flexible models of service provision in the Central Wheatbelt region. The challenge is highlighted by the fact that the region has the most widely dispersed population in Western Australia with over half the Wheatbelt population living in communities of less than 200 people.

From 2001 children entering the first year of non compulsory education, kindergarten, must turn four by 30 June 2001. This universally available program will entitle these children to four half day sessions of kindergarten per week within the Education Department of Western Australia. In 2002 this cohort of children will be entitled to five full days of pre-primary education.

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South Australian Government comments

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The Department of Education, Training and Employment is responsible for children's services in South Australia. DETE operates Government preschools covering 92% of the State's four year old children, manages all Family Day Care and most Outside School Hours Care, licenses child care centres and provides occasional care services in 60 of its preschools. As DETE is also responsible for Government schooling, South Australia now provides an integrated approach to education and care from birth to age eight.

This approach has allowed South Australia to focus on the needs of its many small rural communities. Integrated preschool and child care services now operate in small towns across the State, often on school campuses. In very small communities, innovative Family Day Care services operating from approved community venues have been established over the last two years. In communities too small to support a preschool, Government playcentres provide a sessional service.

A new curriculum framework to guide learning in all South Australian children's services has been developed. The South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability (SACSA) Framework integrates school and children's services learning, covering the curriculum to be taught, the standards against which learner achievement will be measured and accountability requirements for Government services. SACSA will be implemented from January 2001.

The South Australian Education and Children's Services Acts have been reviewed and new, integrated legislation is under development. It is envisaged that a single Act will be introduced in 2002, responding to the changing needs of families and facilitating local management of services.

Following changes to Commonwealth funding arrangements and a period of decreased demand for child care, the South Australian Government provided \$1 million to help child care services restructure and minimise centre closures. The State's services have now registered a modest overall increase in demand for the reporting period.

The Government has implemented a range of initiatives promoting child care. A community service message televised across the State promotes child care in centres as a safe, reliable and affordable service which has positive benefits for both parents and children.

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Tasmanian Government comments



Tasmania is committed to facilitating the development and maintenance of a strong, vibrant child care sector that provides quality developmental programs to children.

Child care is now firmly established as part of the Department of Education with many benefits flowing between the child care and education sectors. The integration of child and mainstream education services has resulted in a more cohesive early childhood sector. Initiatives over the past twelve months include: a Review of Early Childhood and progress towards developing a seamless curriculum for 0-8 year old children and a number research projects aimed at improving outcomes in children's learning and staff professional competence.

The Department is currently in the process of developing new child care legislation and standards. The initial documents were developed in consultation with key industry representatives before being released for public consultation. It is expected that the new Bill will be tabled in Parliament early 2001.

In line with its commitment to rural and remote services, the Department has continued to provide funding toward upgrading or extending the premises of a number of occasional care centres and is working with new services to ensure their physical premises not only meet licensing standards but also provide good functionality. The Department is also working closely with the Commonwealth in the development of a flexible delivery model to suit the needs of two different communities in rural Tasmania, including the provision of a mobile service.

A child care specific mentorship program has been provided over the last 12 months and has proven to be very successful with support given to many small centres in rural and remote areas as well as services in cities. It is intended that this peer support program will be further developed. Fifteen scholarships were also awarded last year to assist child care workers obtain formal qualifications. This year the funding allocated for scholarships has been increased two fold and will be available to home based carers as well as centre based carers.

Following recommendations of the Early Childhood Review, it has been determined that school entry age (kindergarten) will be 4 years as of 1 January for both government and non government schools from 2002. This means that any school providing programs for children under 4 years of age will be required to meet child care centre based licensing standards.

Although the Tasmanian Government remains committed to performance measurement, issues remain in relation to the quality of the information and the lack of comparable data between the jurisdictions. The Department of Education is continuing to improve the accuracy of the data obtained but further clarity is required in relation to jurisdictions' responsibilities and interpretation of performance indicators.



Australian Capital Territory Government comments

“ The ACT Government is committed to providing a coordinated family support service system for families with children, through the provision of a range of accessible and appropriate services. Integral to this commitment is the provision of funding to community based organisations to assist with the provision of occasional care services, behaviour management programs for families with young children, and additional staff support for children’s services including children with additional needs where they are not eligible for Commonwealth assistance. These services complement the Commonwealth Children’s Services Programs.

In partnership with parent associations, the ACT Government also provides sessional preschool for all four year olds in the year before school.

The *Children and Young People Act 1999* was implemented on 10 May 2000. This Act is the legislative basis upon which children’s services providing care and education at a child care centre or as part of a family day care scheme are licensed.

The implementation of the Act completed the safety net for the provision of children’s services in the ACT, with a key component being the extension of licensing to include Family Day Care Schemes. This significant event has also completed the ACT’s implementation of the agreed National Standards for all children’s services through licensing.

Following the release of the draft strategic plan for preschools in late 1999, the ACT Standing Committee on Education, Community Services and Recreation, invited submissions and comments on the plan during late 1999 and early 2000. The committee reported on the consultation in late 2000.

During the past year the Department of Education and Community Services commenced a Birth – Eight Early Childhood Project. The project’s aim is to develop a document that can be used across all early childhood settings. Starting with the progression of children’s learning, the document will focus on socialisation, literacy and numeracy, and the partnerships with families and communities that are essential for children’s learning in the early years. The document will also provide connections for early childhood settings and put forward a common language and shared understandings about what is important in early childhood in the ACT.

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Northern Territory Government comments

“ Children’s services in the Northern Territory aim to support families in caring for their young children, as a fundamental component in the range of activities and services that enhance the capacity of individuals, families and communities to improve their well-being.

In 1999-2000, the focus of the program was on expanding access to appropriate children’s services in remote Indigenous communities and tailoring services to better meet family needs. Program development activities included framing of a secure framework for the delivery of outside school hours care services, improving the supply of appropriately qualified staff, and establishing stronger collaboration between children’s education, health and care services.

Preschool education expenditure data is a key omission from the chapter this year. This significantly distorts total expenditure on children’s services (as defined for the purpose of the report), as this expenditure represents about 80% of total expenditure.

The NT continues to have the most affordable centre-based child care services across all income brackets, compared with other jurisdictions. This is in part due to payment of an operational subsidy of (currently) \$12.40 per child per week over two years of age, and \$19.40 per child per week under two years of age.

The NT has the longest average hours of attendance at child care centres, occasional care and vacation care services, due in part to high full-time employment levels in the NT relative to other jurisdictions. A low proportion of services offering non-standard hours of operation relative to other jurisdictions may be due to reduced travel to work times in the major urban areas.

The report indicates a considerably lower child care participation level of Indigenous children in child care services. This does not include participation in other services and activities such as playgroups and informal care services, preferred service models in a number of communities.

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14.6 Definitions

Table 14.8 Terms

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Administration expenditure	Direct salaries associated with providing the following support services: licensing, advice, policy development, grants administration and training. Administration expenditure should have been limited to that proportion of expenditure spent on government funded and/or provided services. Administration also includes direct salaries associated with licensing all services.
Approved preschool care	Preschool care that meets State and Territory government licensing requirements (where such requirements exist).
Centre based long day care	Child care provided at a centre, usually by qualified staff. Educational and recreational programs are provided which are based on the development needs, interests and experience of each child.
Child care	Care provided to a child by a person other than the child's parent or guardian.
Children	All resident male and female Australians aged 12 years and younger as at 30 June of each year.
Children from Indigenous backgrounds	Children of Indigenous descent who identify as an Indigenous and are accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives.
Children from non-English speaking backgrounds	Children living in situations where the main language spoken is not English.
Children from single parent families	Dependent children who are resident in households of lone parent (either father or mother) families.
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 had a developmental delay or disability (including intellectual, sensory or physical impairment) or parent(s) with a disability.
Expenditure on assets	Expenditure on major and minor capital works. Expenditure spent on leasing equipment was included as administrative expenditure.
Family day care	Care provided for children in the carer's own home, aimed largely at 0–5 year olds, although primary school children may also receive care before and after school and during school vacations. Central coordination units in all States and Territories organise and support a network of carers.
Financial support to families	Any form of fee relief paid by governments to the users of children's services (for example, Childcare Assistance and the Childcare Rebate).
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 (not including babysitting).

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Table 14.8 (Continued)

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Formal qualifications	Early childhood related teaching degree (three or four years), a child care certificate or associate diploma (two years), and/or other relevant qualifications (for example, a diploma or degree in child care [three years or more], a basic child care certificate [1 year], primary teaching, other teaching, nursing [including mothercraft nursing], psychology and social work). Some jurisdictions do not recognise one year certificates.
Full time equivalent staff numbers (FTE)	This is a measure of the total level of staff resources used. The FTE of a full-time staff member (i.e. employed full-time and engaged solely on activities which fall within the scope of children's services covered in the chapter) is equal to 1.0. The FTE of part-time staff is calculated on the basis of the proportion of time spent on activities within the scope of the data collection for this chapter 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 received government contributions towards providing a specified service (including private services receiving Childcare Assistance and the Childcare Rebate) and/or services for which the government had primary responsibility for delivery.
Informal child care	Child care arrangements provided privately (for example, by friends, relatives, nannies) for which no government assistance was provided other than the Childcare Rebate. It was unregulated in most States and Territories.
Licensed services	Those services that comply with the relevant State or Territory licensing regulations. These cover matters such as the number of children the service can care for, safety requirements and the qualifications of carers.
Metropolitan areas	Defined as per the 1994 Human Services and Health and Department of Primary Industry and Energy publication Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas Classification 1991 Census Edition. In this publication, metropolitan areas are defined as areas which have an urban centre of 100 000 people or more. Jurisdictions were provided with a table indicating the classification assigned to 1996 statistical local areas (SLAs). Jurisdictions used this table to establish the total number of rural and remote places receiving government funding.
Nonstandard hours of care	Nonstandard hours of care by service type were defined as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • centre based long day care — services providing service for more than 10 hours a day on Monday to Friday and/or providing service on weekends; • preschool — services providing service for more than six hours a day ; • family day care — services providing service for more than 10 hours a day on Monday to Friday and/or providing service overnight and/or on weekends; • vacation care — services providing service for more than 10 hours a day; • before school hours care — services providing service for more than two hours before school; • after school care — services providing service for more than three hours after school; • occasional care — services providing service for more than eight hours a day; and • other — services providing service for more than 10 hours a day.

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Table 14.8 (Continued)

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Notifiable outbreaks of disease	Situations where the relevant health department was notified.
Occasional care	Child care usually provided at a centre on an hourly or sessional basis for short periods of time or at irregular intervals specifically 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 are usually delivered by qualified staff and provide developmental activities for children.
Operational place	A licensed place (where a licensing system exists, or in receipt of government funding where not licensed) able to accept children as at 30 June each year.
Other care	Government funded services to support children with additional needs or in particular situations (including children from an Indigenous background, children from non-English speaking backgrounds, children with a disability or of parents with a disability, and children living in remote and rural areas). It includes: multifunctional services; multifunctional Indigenous children's services; mobiles; and toy libraries.
Other expenditure on service provision	Continuing payments to funded and/or provided services and one-off, noncapital payments to peak agencies.
Outside school hours care	Care provided for school aged children (5–12 years old) outside school hours during term and vacations. Care may be provided on student free days and when school finishes early.
Preschools	Services usually provided by a qualified teacher on a sessional basis in dedicated preschools. Preschool programs or curriculum may also be provided in long day care centres and other settings.
Primary contact staff	Staff whose primary function is to provide care and/or preschool services to children.
Program support activities	Administration expenditure associated with the licensing of services not in receipt of government funding.
Real expenditure	Actual expenditure adjusted for changes in prices. Adjustments were made using the GDP (E) price deflator, and expressed in terms of final year prices.
Recurrent expenditure	Gross expenditure on wages, salaries and supplements and purchases of goods and services (both from public enterprises and the private sector). It refers to expenditure that does not result in the creation or acquisition of fixed assets (new or second hand).
Rural and remote areas	Areas defined as per the 1994 Human Services and Health and Department of Primary Industry and Energy publication, <i>Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas Classification 1991 Census Edition</i> . This publication assigned a measure of remoteness to each statistical local area (SLA) in Australia. Jurisdictions were provided with a table showing the classification assigned to each statistical local area in Australia. Jurisdictions were able to use this table to establish the total number of rural and remote places receiving government funding.
Serious injury	Injury requiring a visit to (or by) a doctor, or hospitalisation.

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Table 14.8 (Continued)

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Service	A certain type of activity, such as long day care. A location may offer a number of services, such as both preschool and occasional care services. Services might have been offered at a number of locations, such as after school hours care at different locations.
Service type	The categories for which data were collected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • centre based long day care; • preschools. • Family day care; • Vacation care; • Outside school hours care; • Occasional care; and • 'other' care.
Substantiated complaint	A substantiated complaint is an expression of concern, regarding a child care or preschool service made orally, in writing or in person, which constitutes a failure by the services to abide by the State or Territory legislation, regulations or conditions. This concern is investigated and subsequently considered to have substance by the regulatory body.
Vacation care	Care for school age children over vacation periods only.

Table 14.9 Indicators

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Proportion of services providing nonstandard hours of care	The number of services providing nonstandard hours of care divided by the total number of services, by service type.
Proportion of special needs groups using services relative to their population proportions	The number of children from special needs groups using children's services divided by the total number of children using children's services. Results were presented separately for child care and preschool services with special needs groups divided into children from a non-English speaking background, children from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island background, children from single parent families, children with disabilities, and children from remote or rural areas. These were compared with their representation in the community.
Serious injuries sustained/ notifiable outbreaks of disease per registered or licensed service	The total number of serious injuries sustained by children and total number of notifiable outbreaks of disease divided by the total number of registered or licensed services.

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Table 14.9 (Continued)

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Substantiated complaints per registered or licensed service	The number of substantiated complaints divided by the total number of registered or licensed services. Results were presented separately by service type. The proportion of substantiated complaints against which action was taken was also reported.
Out-of-pocket costs relative to family income for children's services	Modelling undertaken by the Department of Family and Community Services for families with one child and two children respectively in full time care (defined as 50 hours per week for each child) for a range of indicative annual incomes. Out-of-pocket costs are based on the average weekly fee for one child and two children in full time care, and are calculated as a proportion of weekly disposable income, after the payment of child care subsidies. The annual income levels used are: \$27 000, \$35 000, \$45 000, \$55 000 and \$65 000.
Government recurrent expenditure per hour of service	Total government recurrent funding on children's services divided by the total hours of care provided by services receiving government funding.
Administrative expenditure as a proportion of total government expenditure	Total government administrative expenditure divided by total government expenditure.

