
14 Children's services

Children's services aim to meet the care, education and development needs of children, although the emphasis on these broad objectives may differ across the services. Child care is provided to 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 or two before those children commence full time schooling.

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

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.

Supporting tables

Supporting tables for chapter 14 are provided on the CD-ROM enclosed with the Report. The files are provided in Microsoft Excel 97 format as `\Publications\Reports\2003\Attach14A.xls` and in Adobe PDF format as `\Publications\Reports\2003\Attach14A.pdf`.

Supporting tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table 14A.3 is table 3 in the electronic files). These files can be found on the Review web page (<http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/2003/index.html>). Users without Internet access can contact the Secretariat to obtain these tables (see details on the inside front cover of the Report).

14.1 Profile of children's services

Service overview

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 governments;¹
- *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 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 they commence full time schooling (that is, when children are four years old in all jurisdictions except WA where children

¹ In WA, all carers providing care in their own home are licensed and supported by the Department for Community Development, but data on those who are not supported by the department's coordination units are not included in this chapter. NSW and Tasmania license home-based carers who are not part of a family day care scheme, but data on these carers are not included in this chapter.

are five years old), although younger children may also attend in NSW, Queensland, WA, SA and the ACT;

- *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 help fund services, provide 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 families to participate in the social and economic life of the community through the provision of child care services and payments (such as Child Care Benefit);
- developing a quality assurance system for outside school hours care;
- 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 services and some State and Territory funded services;
- helping to enhance the quality of child care by funding the National Childcare Accreditation Council to administer the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) for long day care centres and Family Day Care Quality Assurance for family day care schemes. These quality systems are mandatory for services eligible for government funding;
- providing information, support and training to service providers through funding to organisations; and
- providing operational and capital funding to some providers.

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

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- providing operational and capital funding to non-government service providers;
 - delivering some services directly (especially preschool services);
 - developing new child care and preschool services;
 - licensing and setting standards for children's services providers;
 - monitoring and resourcing licensed and/or funded children's services providers;
 - providing information, support, training and development opportunities for providers;
 - assisting services in enhancing quality by providing curriculum and policy support and advice, as well as training and development for management and staff;
 - planning to ensure the appropriate mix of services is available to meet the needs of the community;
 - providing information and advice to parents and others about operating standards and the availability of services; and
 - providing dispute resolution and complaints management processes.

The major differences in the roles of the different levels of government relate to each level's objectives for children's services. The primary focus of the Commonwealth Government is support for families through payments such as Child Care Benefit, which is payable to families using approved child care services or registered informal carers. State and Territory governments place a greater emphasis on providing educational and developmental opportunities for children, such as preschool services.

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. These are used in addition to the provision of curriculum and policy support and advice, and the training and development of management and staff.

Licensing

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

State and Territory governments are responsible for licensing children's services in their jurisdiction. This responsibility involves setting regulatory requirements and monitoring adherence to these standards. State and Territory governments also undertake activities aimed at quality promotion, such as, publishing curriculum materials and other resources, and undertaking consumer education. The types of service covered by legislation vary across 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. 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.

Accreditation

In 1994, the Commonwealth Government introduced the QIAS to 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 for Child Care Assistance). The Commonwealth introduced a quality assurance scheme for family day care from 1 July 2001. It is also developing quality assurance mechanisms for outside school hours care. In addition, SA and Victoria have implemented quality assurance or improvement systems for preschools, while some other jurisdictions are developing such systems.

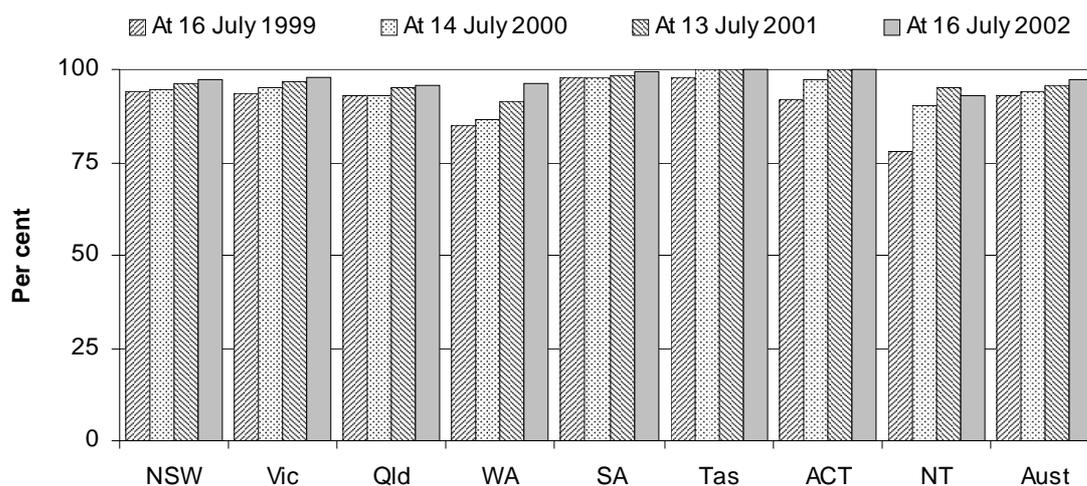
The QIAS system was modified as of 1 January 2002. Revised standards and processes were implemented, and the previous three-tier accreditation review process (whereby centres were accredited for periods of three years, two years or one year) was replaced with a single accreditation period of two and a half years. All centres achieving accreditation under the previous system were transferred to the new single accreditation period.

There were 4136 centres participating in the accreditation process in July 2002: 3774 centres that were fully accredited; 256 centres that were in self study, review or moderation, or awaiting an accreditation decision; and 106 centres that were not accredited (table 14A.2). These centres collectively represent all centre based long day care services receiving Child Care Benefit and the majority of all centre based long day care services operating in Australia.

Nationally, 91.2 per cent of all centres were accredited at 16 July 2002. A further 6.2 per cent of all centres were in the process of self study, review or moderation, or awaiting an accreditation decision and 2.6 per cent were not accredited (derived from table 14A.2). Centres that do not have accreditation must work towards gaining accreditation to retain their eligibility for Child Care Benefit. The Commonwealth Government funds resource and advisory services across the country to assist centres participating in quality assurance systems.

Of those centres that had completed the accreditation process at 16 July 2002, 97.3 per cent were successful. This proportion varied from 100 per cent in Tasmania and the ACT to 92.9 per cent in the NT, and has increased over time in all jurisdictions (except the NT, which had a decrease last year) participating in the process (figure 14.1).

Figure 14.1 **Accredited centres as a proportion of centres fully assessed under QIAS^{a, b}**



^a Figures may change daily and are updated every six weeks following a National Childcare Accreditation Council meeting. ^b Results for Tasmania, the ACT and the NT may be unduly influenced by the relatively small number of services (57, 81 and 45 respectively, at 16 July 2002) participating in the process.

Source: National Childcare Accreditation Council. (unpublished); table 14A.2.

Funding performance standards and outcomes

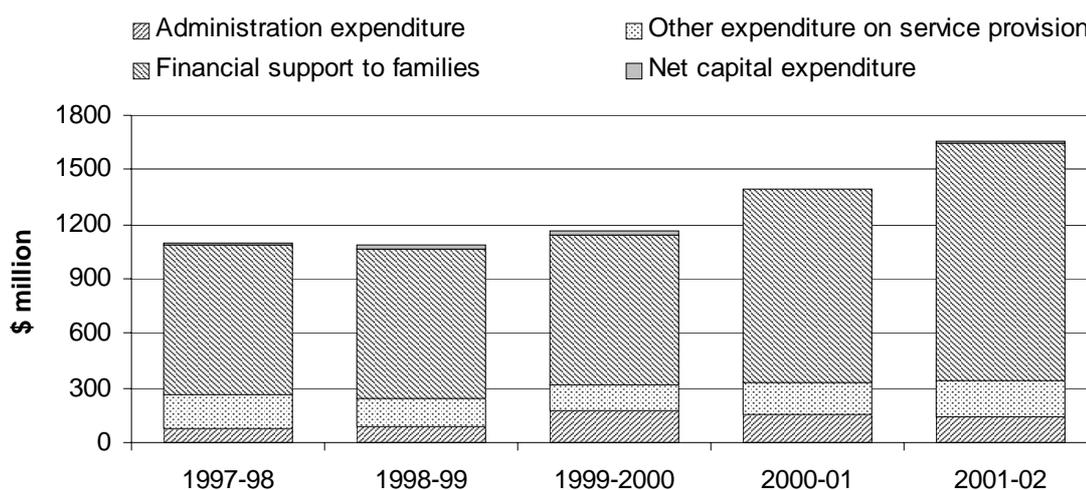
State and Territory governments impose varying requirements for funding children's services. These requirements may include: the employment of higher qualified staff than required by licensing or minimum standards; self assessment of quality; and a demonstration of the delivery of quality educational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

Funding

Commonwealth, State and Territory government expenditure on children's services amounted to approximately \$2.2 billion in 2001-02 (compared with \$1.8 billion in real terms in 1999-2000 and \$2.0 billion in 2000-01) (table 14A.4).

Commonwealth Government expenditure in 2001-02 accounted for approximately \$1.7 billion. The major component of this expenditure was financial support to families through assistance with fees, which accounted for 79.4 per cent (\$1.3 billion). Administration expenditure for national, State and Territory offices accounted for a further 8.7 per cent (\$144 million). Other expenditure on service provision and net capital expenditure accounted for the remaining 11.8 per cent (\$194 million) and 0.2 per cent (\$3 million) respectively (figure 14.2).

Figure 14.2 **Commonwealth Government real expenditure on children's services (2001-02 dollars)**



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

State and Territory government expenditure accounted for approximately \$537 million of total government expenditure on children's services in 2001-02. Recurrent expenditure on service provision comprised around 47.5 per cent (\$255.2 million) of State and Territory government expenditure. Administration, financial support to families and net capital expenditure accounted for 39.3 per cent (\$211.0 million), 8.3 per cent (\$44.8 million) and 4.9 per cent (\$26.3 million) respectively (table 14A.4). In the distribution of total State and Territory government expenditure across all children's service types, the provision of preschool services accounted for the largest proportion (around 77.7 per cent, or \$417.7 million, for those jurisdictions for which data are available) (tables 14A.19, 14A.28, 14A.37, 14A.46, 14A.55, 14A.64, 14A.73 and 14A.82).

The Commonwealth Government provides a small amount of funding to Queensland and WA directly 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.

Size and scope

Child care services

The Commonwealth Government supported approximately 500 000 child care places in 2001-02, providing care for 14.6 per cent of children aged 12 years and younger (tables 14A.1 and 14A.7) — an increase of just over 42 000 places over 2000-01. The majority of Commonwealth child care places were outside school hours care places (46.1 per cent), followed by centre based long day care places (38.8 per cent), family day care places (14.2 per cent), occasional care places (0.6 per cent) and other care places (0.4 per cent) (table 14A.7). State and Territory governments supported at least 207 000 preschool places in 2001-02 (tables 14A.20, 14A.29, 14A.38, 14A.47, 14A.56, 14A.65 14A.74 and 14A.83).

Approximately 850 000 children (24.9 per cent of children aged 12 years and younger) used Commonwealth, State and Territory government funded and/or provided child care in 2001-02 (tables 14.1, 14A.1, 14A.9, 14A.21, 14A.30, 14A.39, 14A.48, 14A.57, 14A.66, 14A.75 and 14A.84). Of these children, at least 575 000 were aged five years and younger. Changes to approaches to data collection and the exclusion of certain services funded by some jurisdictions reduce the comparability of these data across jurisdictions.

Table 14.1 Proportion of children in the population attending Commonwealth, State and Territory government funded and/or provided child care, 2001-02 (per cent)

Age	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA ^a	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
0–5 years	49.1	27.7	40.5	23.7	31.5	35.5	42.7	20.6	37.6
0–12 years	29.7	19.8	27.5	15.3	25.9	22.8	31.2	17.4	24.9

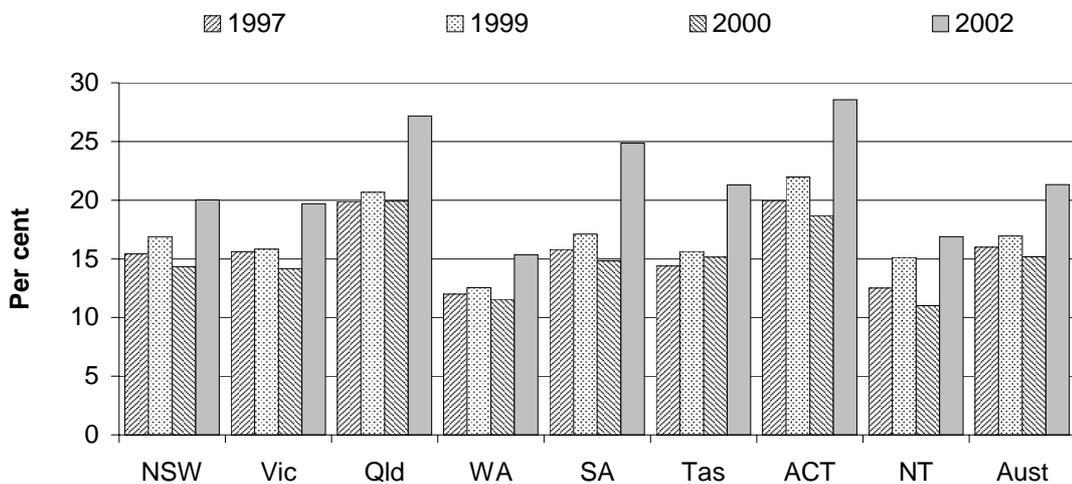
^a Data for WA do not include children attending kindergartens for four year olds provided by the Department of Education who would otherwise be in child care.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (unpublished), *Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories*, Cat. no. 3201.0; ABS (unpublished), *Population Projections 1997 to 2051*, Cat. no. 3222.0; Commonwealth Census of Child Care Services (CCCCS), May 2002 (unpublished), State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 14A.1, 14A.9, 14A.21, 14A.30, 14A.39, 14A.48, 14A.57, 14A.66, 14A.75 and 14A.84.

Approximately 728 500 Child Care Benefit-eligible children aged 12 years and younger (21.0 per cent of all children in this age group) attended Commonwealth Government approved child care in May 2002. Across jurisdictions, the proportion ranged from 28.6 per cent in the ACT to 15.3 per cent in WA (figure 14.3). The majority (475 505 nationally, or 65.3 per cent) of those children were aged five years and younger. In May 2002, 31.1 per cent of children aged five years and younger attended Commonwealth funded and/or provided child care services (tables 14.A1 and 14A.9).

The average hours of attendance for Child Care Benefit-eligible children in Child Care Benefit-eligible services in May 2002 varied considerably across jurisdictions, for all service types. The average attendance per child at centre based long day care centres in 2002 ranged from 28.4 hours a week in the NT to 14.5 hours a week in Tasmania, while the average attendance per child at occasional care services ranged from 10.2 hours a week in Queensland to 7.5 hours a week in Victoria. The average attendance per child at vacation care ranged from 3.9 days a week in the NT to 2.5 days a week in Tasmania (table 14A.8).

Figure 14.3 **Proportion of children aged 0–12 years using Commonwealth approved child care services^{a, b, c, d, e}**



^a Children are defined as persons aged 12 years and younger. ^b Excludes children cared for in neighbourhood model services. ^c Australian total includes children in other Territories. ^d Note that data for 1997, 1999 and 2002 are drawn from the respective CCCCS, while data for 2000 are drawn from Centrelink administrative data. The CCCCS and Centrelink data are not fully comparable and such comparisons need to be treated with care. ^e Data for WA exclude children attending kindergartens for four year olds, provided by the Department of Education, who would otherwise be in childcare.

Source: ABS (unpublished), *Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories*, Cat. no. 3201.0; ABS (unpublished), *Population Projections 1997 to 2051*, Cat. no. 3222.0; CCCCS, May 2002 (unpublished); Centrelink administrative data, August 2000 (unpublished); table 14A.9.

Preschool services

Preschools provide a range of educational and developmental programs (generally on a sessional basis) to children in the year immediately before they commence full time schooling and also, in some jurisdictions, to children aged three years or under (children aged four years 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 they commence schooling. Younger children in NSW, Queensland, WA, SA, Tasmania and the ACT may also access government funded preschool services. In Tasmania, the flexibility to enrol children of pre-kindergarten age is permitted only under limited circumstances (such as for gifted children or children previously enrolled in another State or Territory but who now reside in Tasmania).

Younger Indigenous children living in remote areas also may attend preschools in the NT and Queensland. In SA, a pre-entry program provides one session of preschool a week for ten weeks in the term before preschool, and children from Indigenous backgrounds may attend preschool at three years of age. In the ACT, children from Indigenous backgrounds, children with English as a second language, and 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 a week) at three 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:

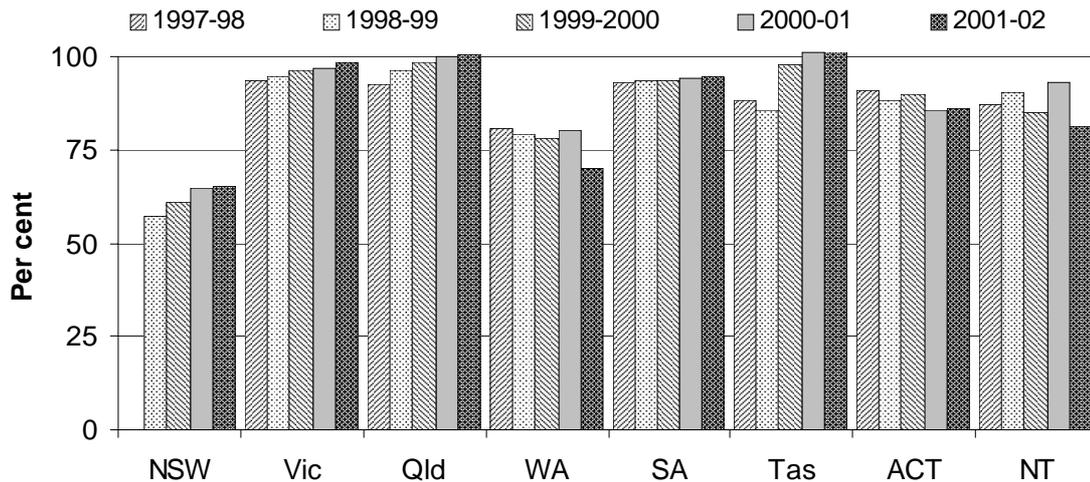
- children attending preschool in the year immediately before they commence full time schooling (data that are largely presented on a comparable basis for all jurisdictions); and
- younger children attending preschool services.

At least 240 000 children attended State and Territory funded and/or provided preschool services in 2001-02. The majority (89.1 per cent, or approximately 214 000 children) were to begin full time schooling the following year (tables 14A.21, 14A.30, 14A.39, 14A.48, 14A.57, 14A.66, 14A.75, 14A.84).

Some jurisdictions differ in their age criterion for access to preschool services; as a result, the following data need to be interpreted with caution. Approximately 84.1 per cent of children of four years of age in 2000-01 attended preschool in the year immediately before they commenced school. Across jurisdictions for which 2001-02 data were available, this proportion ranged from about 100 per cent in Queensland and Tasmania to 65.4 per cent in NSW. There is some double counting

in several jurisdictions, as well as synchronisation issues leading to overestimation of the attendance rates being reported (figure 14.4).

Figure 14.4 Proportion of children in the population who attended State and Territory government funded and/or provided preschool services immediately before the commencement of full time schooling^{a, b, c, d, e, f}



^a The denominator — the population of preschool aged children — is defined as persons aged four years in all States and Territories. ^b 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 in all jurisdictions (except SA, Tasmania and the ACT) because they moved 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. There is no double counting for SA, Tasmania and the ACT because a snapshot is used for each year's data collection (so children appear in only one preschool centre in one year at the time of the snapshot). ^c NSW used a revised method of calculating the number of children receiving child care and preschool services. This new method of calculation will provide clear trend data for each age group for child care and preschool. The data include estimates based on the rate of survey return for each year. NSW data are not comparable with data for other States and Territories. Data for 1997-98 are not comparable with data for future years. ^d Victorian data include some children attending preschool services conducted in a centre based long day care centre. ^e Queensland data include non-government preschool data for the first time in 1997-98. ^f WA data exclude children attending non-government preschools. 2001-02 data are affected by WA's alteration of entry age from five to four years.

Source: ABS (unpublished), *Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories*, Cat. no. 3201.0; ABS (unpublished), *Population Projections 1997 to 2051*, Cat. no. 3222.0; State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 14A.1, 14A.21, 14A.30, 14A.39, 14A.48, 14A.57, 14A.66, 14A.75 and 14A.84.

Younger children in NSW, Queensland, SA and the ACT were able to attend funded preschool services in 2001-02. Approximately 26 100 younger children attended preschool services in that year — around 16.3 per cent of children of three years of age. The participation rate differed across jurisdictions, reflecting variation in policies on access to funded preschool services. The proportion of children of three years of age attending preschool services in 2001-02 was 12.7 per cent in NSW, 21.1 per cent in Queensland, 25.4 per cent in SA (where younger children may attend a pre-entry program for one term in the year before preschool) and 3.1 per

cent in the ACT (tables 14A.1, 14A.21, 14A.30, 14A.39, 14A.48, 14A.57, 14A.66, 14A.75 and 14A.84).

All jurisdictions except NSW and Victoria supplied data on the average hours of attendance for government funded and/or provided preschool services in 2001-02. The average attendance of children in the year immediately before they commenced full time schooling ranged from 12.9 hours a week in Queensland to 10.4 hours a week in Tasmania (tables 14A.20, 14A.29, 14A.38, 14A.47, 14A.56, 14A.65, 14A.74 and 14A.83).

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 Child Care Benefit, for example, gave a high priority to children at risk and 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).

Details of the labour force status of parents whose children using services are shown in table 14A.12. The data were drawn from The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Child Care Surveys conducted in 1996 (ABS 1996) and 1999 (ABS 2000) and reported in the 2002 Report.

Services by management type

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

The data on the management type of child care, which are limited, need to be interpreted with care because the scope of the data collection varies across jurisdictions. Available data on the management type of preschool services in 2000-01, although more complete, also indicate considerable variation across jurisdictions (table 14.2).

Table 14.2 **Proportion of State and Territory licensed and/or registered children's services, by management type, 2001-02 (per cent)^a**

	NSW	Vic ^b	Qld	WA	SA	Tas ^c	ACT	NT ^d
Child care								
Community managed ^e	30.4	95.8	36.5	59.9	43.4	53.6	86.1	100.0
Private ^f	69.6	0.9	63.5	36.0	29.2	20.3	13.9	–
Employer sponsored	–	na	na	–	–	–	–	–
Government managed	–	3.3	na	4.1	27.4	26.1	–	–
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Preschool								
Community managed ^e	90.3	63.8	24.0	9.4	4.8	..	8.0	–
Private ^f	9.7	21.7	17.9	na	–	22.0	–	–
Employer sponsored	–	na	na	–	–	..	–	–
Government managed	–	14.5	58.1	90.6	95.2	78.0	92.0	100.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

^a Excludes Commonwealth supported services. ^b All government managed preschools in Victoria are managed by local government. ^c Preschools include funded non-government preschools. ^d 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. ^e Community managed services include not-for-profit services provided or managed by parents, churches, or co-operatives ^f Private for-profit services provided or managed by a company, private individual or a non-government school. **na** Not available. **..** Not applicable. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 14A.24, 14A.33, 14A.42, 14A.51, 14A.60, 14A.69, 14A.78 and 14A.87.

14.2 Framework of performance indicators

The framework of performance indicators is based on common objectives for children's services across Australia (box 14.1). The relative emphasis placed on each objective varies across jurisdictions.

Box 14.1 Objectives for children's services

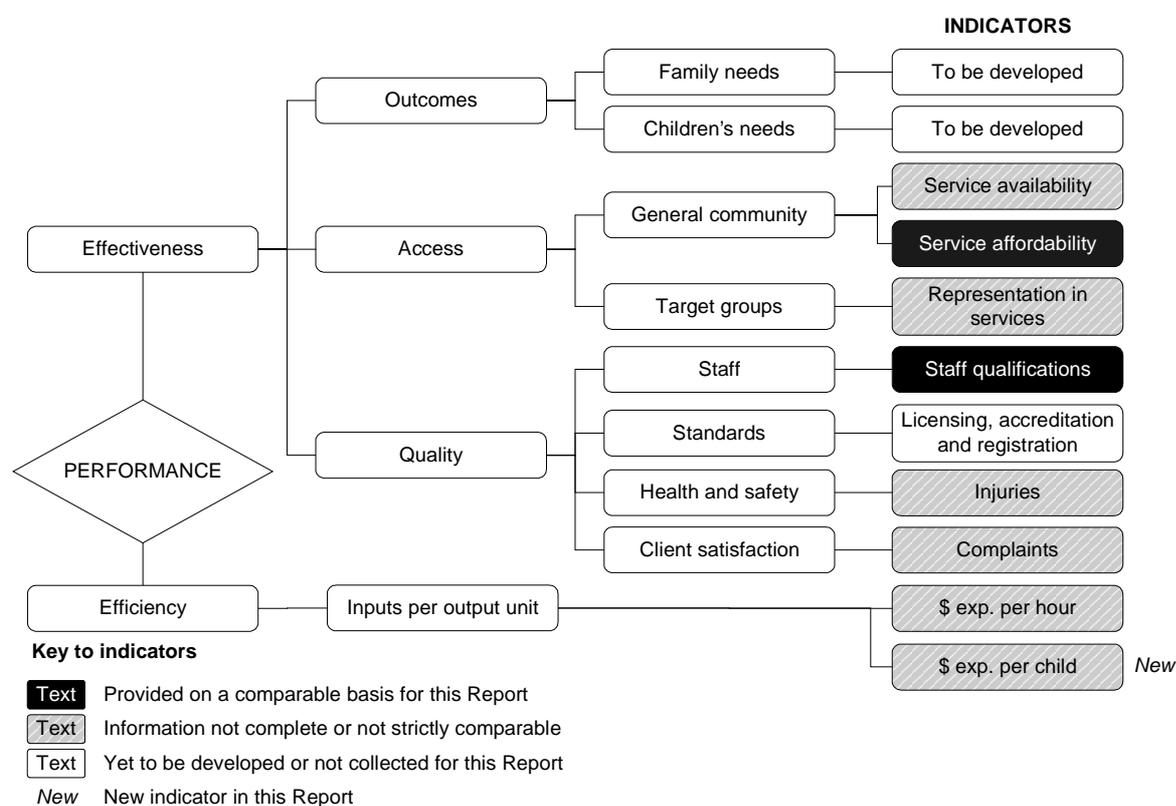
Children's services aim to:

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

A performance indicator framework consistent with these objectives is summarised in figure 14.5. The framework shows which data are comparable in the 2003 Report. For data that are not considered strictly comparable, the text includes

relevant caveats and supporting commentary. Chapter 1 discusses data comparability from a Report wide perspective (see section 1.6).

Figure 14.5 Performance indicators for children's services



New and refined indicators

The performance indicator framework has been improved for the 2003 Report to ensure it remains consistent with the agreed objectives for children's services. It includes two new indicators for the first time:

- a quality indicator for staff qualifications; and
- a proxy efficiency indicator for State and Territory expenditure per child.

Among other work on improvements to the framework, the Working Group is developing a quality indicator for licensing, accreditation and registration, and additional efficiency indicators. Refinement of the financial and nonfinancial data counting rules and the collection process is expected to contribute to improved comparability of data across jurisdictions in future reports.

In conjunction with the introduction of the proxy efficiency indicator for State and Territory expenditure (figure 14.15) and the development of further efficiency measures, the Steering Committee agreed to delete the indicator of administrative efficiency for the States and Territories for the 2003 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. Most 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.

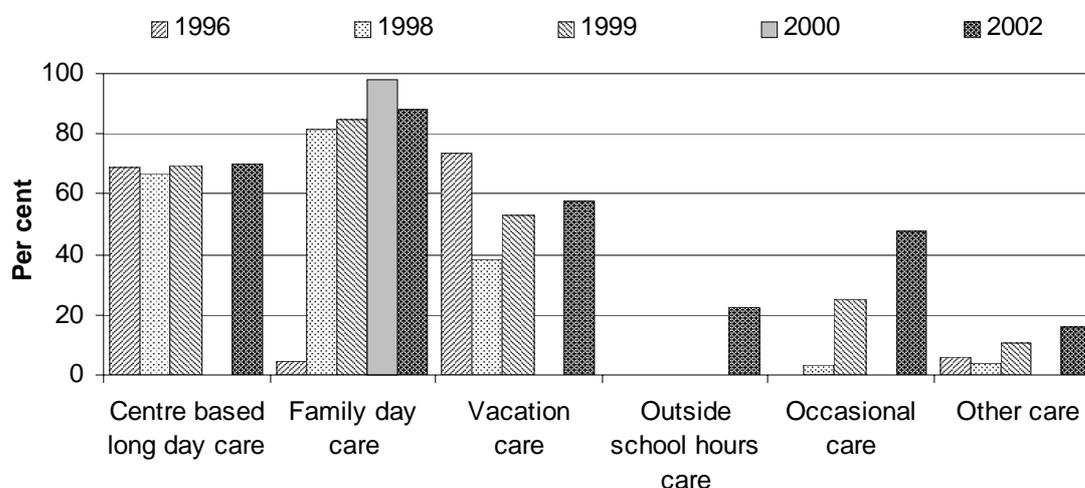
Effectiveness

Access of general community — service availability

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 14.5.

The 2002 Commonwealth Census of Child Care Services (CCCCS) found that 87.8 per cent of family day care services nationally provided non-standard hours of care in May 2002 (table 14A.13). Centre based long day care had the next highest proportion (70.5 per cent), followed by vacation care (57.7 per cent), occasional care (47.7 per cent), outside school hours care (22.5 per cent) and other care (16.1 per cent) (figure 14.6).

Figure 14.6 Proportion of Commonwealth approved child care services providing nonstandard hours of care, by service type^{a, b}



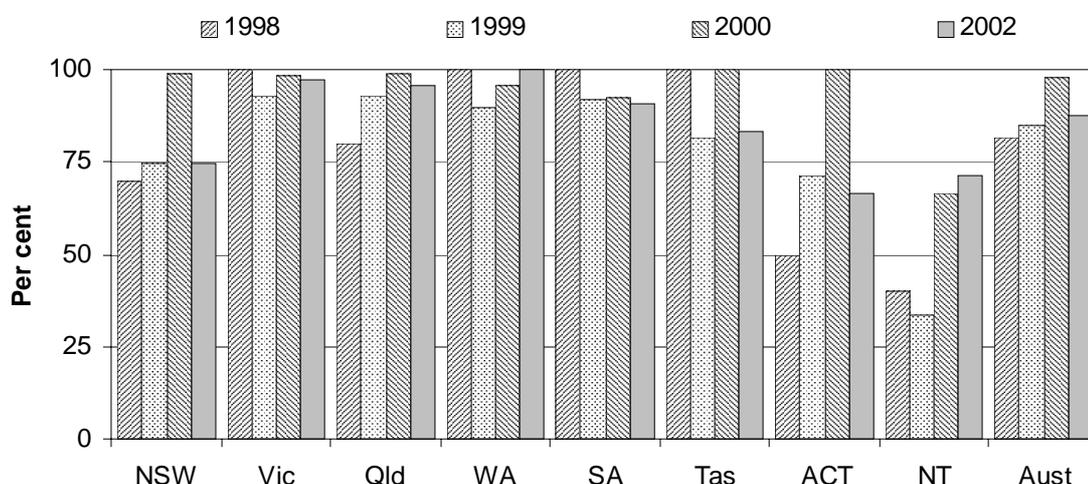
^a Only family day care can be reported for 2000-01. ^b Comparison between 2002 data and data for other years is not possible due to different data collection methods and time frames.

Source: CCCCS, August 1997, May 1999 and May 2002 (unpublished); Centrelink administrative data, August 2000 (unpublished); table 14A.13.

In Victoria, Queensland, WA and SA, more than 90 per cent of family day care schemes offered nonstandard hours in May 2002. In NSW, Tasmania, the ACT and the NT less than 90 per cent of these schemes offered nonstandard hours of care (figure 14.7).

Limited data were available on the proportion of services not included in the CCCCS that were offering nonstandard hours of care. Three jurisdictions were able to provide data on nonstandard hours of preschool for 2001-02: 69.4 per cent of preschools in NSW (table 14A.25) and 66.3 per cent of preschools in SA (table 14A.61). 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 (see footnotes to table 14A.61).

Figure 14.7 Proportion of Commonwealth approved family day care services providing nonstandard hours of care^a



^a Comparison between 2002 and other years is not possible due to different data collection methods and time frames.

Source: CCCCS, August 1997, May 1999 and May 2002 (unpublished); Centrelink administrative data, August 2000 (unpublished); table 14A.13.

Access of general community — service affordability

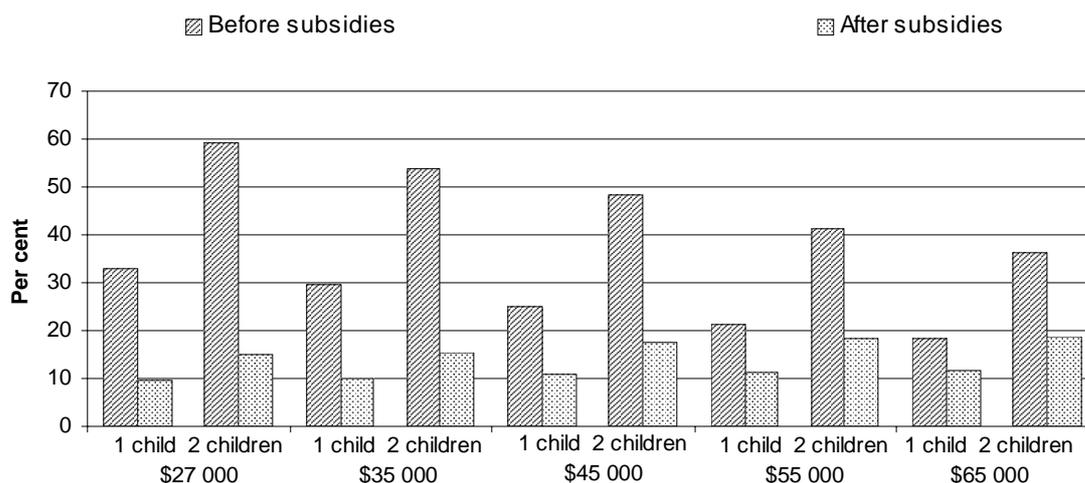
This indicator measures out-of-pocket child care costs as a proportion of weekly disposable income at July 2002 before and after the payment of child care subsidies. Care needs to be exercised when interpreting results because a variety of factors may influence fees.

Out-of-pocket costs are estimated for families with one child in care and families with two children in care, for five indicative levels of gross annual family income. 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 and family day care at May 2002.

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 May 2002 and an annual gross family income of \$27 000 spent 9.5 per cent of their weekly disposable income on child care (compared with 33.0 per cent before payment of child care subsidies). By contrast, families with one child in care and an annual gross family income of \$65 000 spent 11.8 per cent of their weekly disposable income on child

care (compared with 18.4 per cent before payment of child care subsidies) (figure 14.8).

Figure 14.8 Out-of-pocket costs of child care for families with children in full time centre based long day care, as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family income, 2002^{a, b}



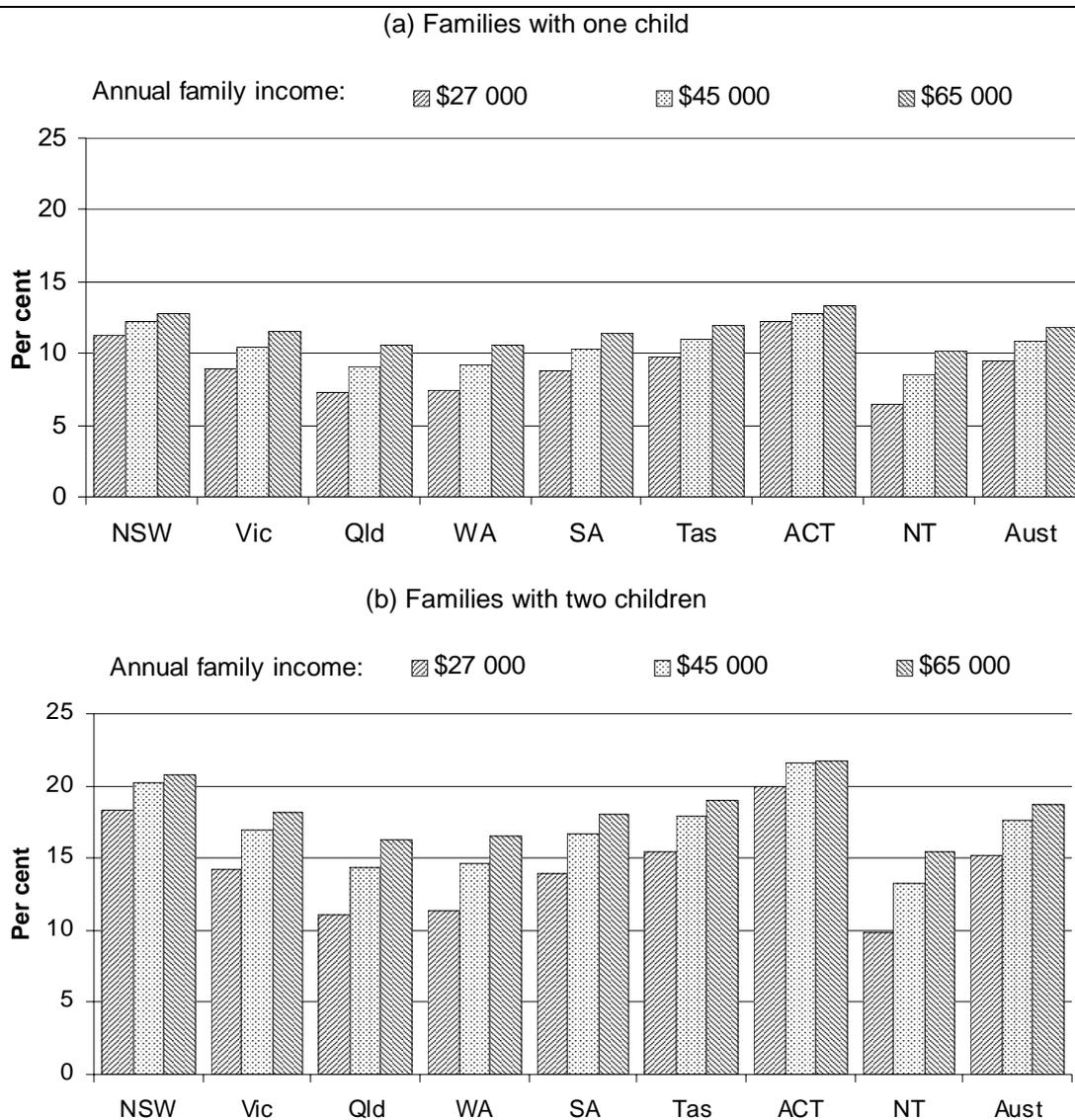
^a Disposable income calculations are based on 1 July 2002 tax and payment parameters. Calculations are modelled on dual-income couple families (60:40 income split) with one or two dependent children aged under five years. ^b Out-of-pocket cost calculations are based on May 2002 average fees.

Source: CCCCS, May 2002 (unpublished); table 14A.14.

For families with two children in full time centre based long day care, the proportion of weekly disposable income spent on child care ranged from 18.8 per cent for those on annual incomes of \$65 000 (compared with 36.1 per cent before child care subsidies) to 15.2 per cent for those on annual incomes of \$27 000 (compared with 59.1 per cent before child care subsidies) (figure 14.8).

Across jurisdictions, out-of-pocket costs after subsidies for centre based long day care for families with gross annual incomes of \$27 000 and one child in care ranged from 12.2 per cent of weekly disposable income in the ACT to 6.5 per cent in the NT. Out-of-pocket costs after subsidies for families with gross annual incomes of \$65 000 and one child in care ranged from 13.3 per cent of weekly disposable income in the ACT to 10.1 per cent in the NT (figure 14.9a).

Figure 14.9 Out-of-pocket costs for centre based long day care (net of subsidies), as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family income, 2002^{a, b}

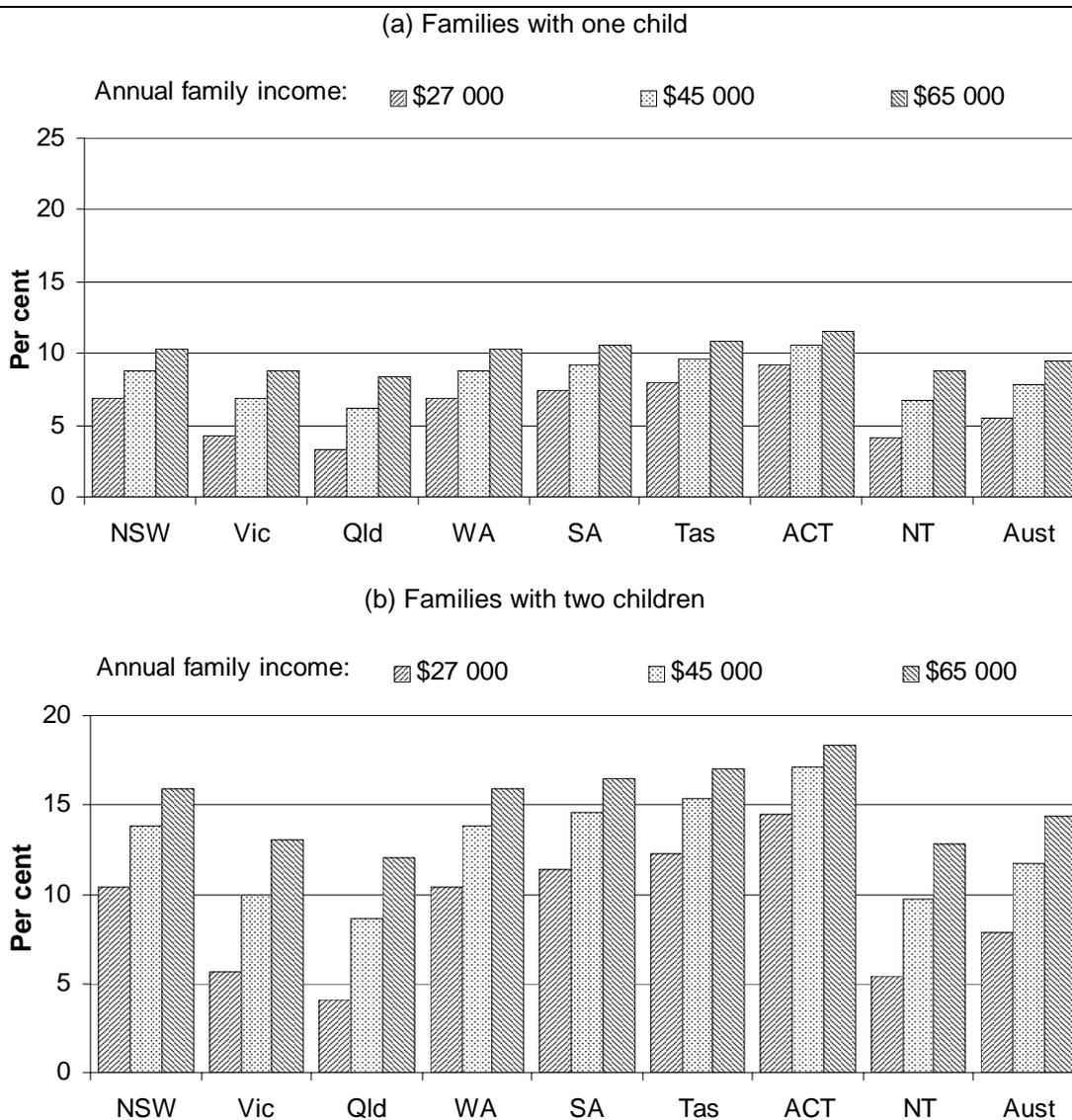


^a Disposable income calculations are based on 1 July 2002 tax and payment parameters. Calculations are modelled on dual-income couple families (60:40 income split) with one or two dependent children aged under five years. ^b Out-of-pocket cost calculations are based on May 2002 average fees.

Source: CCCCS, May 2002 (unpublished); table 14A.14.

For families with two children and a gross annual income of \$27 000, the out-of-pocket costs for centre based long day care ranged from 19.9 per cent of weekly disposable income in the ACT to 9.8 per cent in the NT. For families with two children in care and a gross annual income of \$65 000, the proportion of weekly disposable income spent on child care ranged from 21.7 per cent in the ACT to 15.5 per cent in the NT (figure 14.9b).

Figure 14.10 Out-of-pocket costs for family day care (net of subsidies), as a proportion of weekly disposable income, by gross annual family income, 2002^{a, b}



^a Disposable income calculations are based on 1 July 2002 tax and payment parameters. Calculations are modelled on dual-income couple families (60:40 income split) with one or two dependent children aged under five years. ^b Out-of-pocket cost calculations are based on May 2002 average fees.

Source: CCCCS, May 2002 (unpublished); table 14A.15.

The out-of-pocket costs for family day care (net of subsidies) as a proportion of weekly disposable income for a family with a gross annual income of \$27 000 and one child in full time care in May 2002 ranged from 9.2 per cent in the ACT to 3.3 per cent in Queensland (figure 14.10a). The corresponding proportion for families with two children in care ranged from 14.5 per cent in the ACT to 4.1 per cent in Queensland (figure 14.10b).

The proportion of weekly disposable income spent on child care for a family with a gross annual income of \$65 000 and one child in full time family day care ranged from 11.6 per cent in the ACT to 8.3 per cent in Queensland, while the corresponding proportion for a family with the same income and two children in full time family day care ranged from 18.4 per cent in the ACT to 12.0 per cent in Queensland (figure 14.10b).

Access of target groups — representation in services

Data on the representation of children from some special needs groups in Commonwealth approved child care services are available for 1997, 1999 and 2002 from the CCCCS, and for August 2000 from Centrelink administrative data. These two data sources are not directly comparable because there are differences in their collection methods.² The variations are particularly distorting for data on children from Indigenous backgrounds, and for NT data.

The available data indicate that the proportion of children in special needs groups in Commonwealth supported child care is sometimes substantially different across jurisdictions. This variation largely reflects jurisdictional differences in the representation of children from the special needs groups in the community (table 14.3).

The proportion of child care attendees from a non-English speaking background ranged from 16.6 per cent in NSW (where representation of children from a non-English speaking background in the population was 20.4 per cent) to 2.4 per cent in Tasmania (where the representation in the population was 2.6 per cent). Of note for the data on children from a non-English speaking background is the large difference between their representation in the population of the NT (29.4 per cent) and their representation in child care (8.1 per cent) — a difference that may be correlated with the representation of Indigenous attendees and children in the population (table 14.3).

The proportion of child care attendees from an Indigenous background in May 2002 ranged from 9.9 per cent in the NT (where the representation of Indigenous children in the population was 41.6 per cent) to 0.5 per cent in Victoria (where the

² The CCCCS data are collected from Commonwealth approved child care services based on enumeration from services. The CCCCS includes all children attending Commonwealth Government supported services, and there will be double counting where a child attends more than one service. Centrelink administrative data are collected from customers when they claim Child Care Benefit. As such, the data collection is restricted to customers who are eligible for Child Care Benefit. There is no double counting where children attend more than one service because Centrelink assigns each child a unique reference number.

representation in the population was 1.1 per cent). Nationally, the representation of children from Indigenous background among children accessing child care services was lower than this group's overall representation in the community (table 14.3).

Table 14.3 Proportion of children from special needs groups attending Commonwealth approved child care services, 2002 (per cent)

Representation	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA ^a	SA	Tas	ACT ^b	NT ^b	Australia	
									2001	2002
<i>Children from non-English speaking backgrounds</i>										
In child care services	16.6	12.3	6.0	7.4	6.3	2.4	11.1	8.1	na	10.9
In the community ^c	20.4	19.9	7.1	11.0	11.2	2.6	13.1	29.4	15.6	na
<i>Children from Indigenous backgrounds</i>										
In child care services	1.5	0.5	2.5	1.7	1.3	1.2	0.7	9.9	na	1.6
In the community ^c	4.1	1.1	6.6	6.5	3.4	7.1	2.3	41.6	4.6	na
<i>Children from a single parent family</i>										
In child care services ^d	16.8	17.6	20.6	20.6	21.1	18.5	14.6	17.0	na	18.6
In the community ^c	17.5	16.3	19.9	18.1	19.5	20.9	16.5	20.5	18.0	na
<i>Children with a disability</i>										
In child care services	2.4	2.3	2.1	1.6	3.4	2.3	2.1	2.3	na	2.3
In the community ^e	6.6	6.6	8.3	10.3	9.6	7.1	na	na	7.6	na
<i>Children from rural and remote areas</i>										
In child care services	22.6	22.9	23.1	22.5	19.5	47.2	–	51.7	na	22.9
In the community ^f	29.0	28.0	36.9	30.6	30.2	39.9	0.2	59.8	30.7	na

^a WA data do not include those children who attend kindergartens for four year olds provided by the Department of Education. ^b Data on children with a disability in the community were not available for publication. ^c Data relate to children aged 0–14 years and were obtained from the ABS 2001 Census of Population and Housing. ^d No information on the number of children from single parent families was available for mobile and toy libraries, occasional care neighbourhood models, occasional care, Aboriginal playgroups and vacation care. ^e Data relate to children aged 0–14 years at June 1998 and were obtained from the ABS 1998 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers. ^f Data relate to children aged 0–14 years at June 1996, and were obtained from the ABS 1996 Census of Population and Housing. **na** Not available. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: ABS 1997 and 2002, *Census of Population and Housing* (unpublished); ABS (*Disability, Ageing and Carers: Summary Tables, Australia, 1998*, Cat. no. 4430.1.40.001; *Disability, Ageing and Carers: Summary Tables, New South Wales, 1998*, Cat. no. 4430.2.40.001; *Disability, Ageing and Carers: Summary Tables, Victoria, 1998*, Cat. no. 4430.3.40.001; *Disability, Ageing and Carers: Summary Tables, Queensland, 1998*, Cat. no. 4430.4.40.001; *Disability, Ageing and Carers: Summary Tables, South Australia, 1998*, Cat. no. 4430.5.40.001; *Disability, Ageing and Carers: Summary Tables, Western Australia, 1998*, Cat. no. 4430.6.40.001; *Disability, Ageing and Carers: Summary Tables, Tasmania, 1998*, Cat. no. 4430.7.40.001; *Disability, Ageing and Carers: Summary Tables, Australian Capital Territory, 1998*, Cat. no. 4430.8.40.001; *Disability, Ageing and Carers: Summary Tables, Northern Territory, 1998*, Cat. no. 4430.9.40.001) CCCCS, May 2002 (unpublished); table 14A.16.

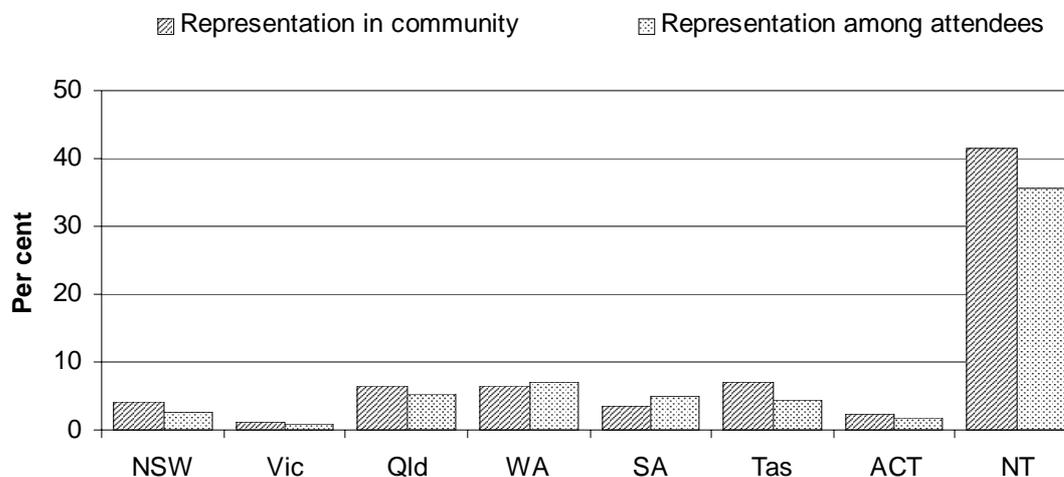
The representation of children from single parent families among attendees of Commonwealth supported child care in May 2002 ranged from 21.1 per cent in SA (where their representation in the population was 19.5 per cent) to 14.6 per cent in the ACT (where their representation in the population was 16.5 per cent) (table 14.3).

The proportion of child care attendees with a disability varied from 3.4 per cent in SA (9.6 per cent in the community) to 1.6 per cent in WA (10.3 per cent in the community) (table 14.3).

The proportion of child care attendees from rural and remote areas in May 2002 ranged from 51.7 per cent in the NT (where their representation in the population was 59.8 per cent) to 19.5 per cent in SA (where their representation in the population was 30.2 per cent). The ACT does not have child care attendees from rural areas (the ACT does not contain any areas classified as remote). Across all jurisdictions, except Tasmania, the representation of children from rural and remote areas among children accessing child care was lower than their overall representation in the community (table 14.3).

Data on the proportion of preschool attendees from the specified special needs groups are less extensive for all jurisdictions. All jurisdictions could provide data on Indigenous children attending preschools in 2001-02. Across jurisdictions, the proportion of Indigenous children attending preschools in 2001-02 was broadly similar to their representation in the community. The proportion ranged from 35.4 per cent in the NT (where the representation of Indigenous children in the community was 41.6 per cent) to 0.8 per cent in Victoria (where their representation in the community was 1.1 per cent) (figure 14.11). The proportion of preschool attendees from Indigenous backgrounds varied across jurisdictions, but has been relatively constant over time within jurisdictions (figure 14.12).

Figure 14.11 Proportion of preschool attendees from Indigenous backgrounds, 2001-02^{a, b}



Representation	Unit	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
In community	%	4.1	1.1	6.6	6.5	3.4	7.1	2.3	41.6
Among attendees	%	2.7	0.8	5.3	7.2	5.0	4.3	1.8	35.4

^a Comparisons between the representation of Indigenous children among preschool attendees and their representation in the community need to be treated with caution because there are definitional differences and differences in the base population. ^b Excludes younger children attending preschool and all children attending non-government preschools.

Source: ABS 2002, *Census of Population and Housing* (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 14A.25, 14A.34, 14A.43, 14A.52, 14A.61, 14A.70, 14A.79 and 14A.88.

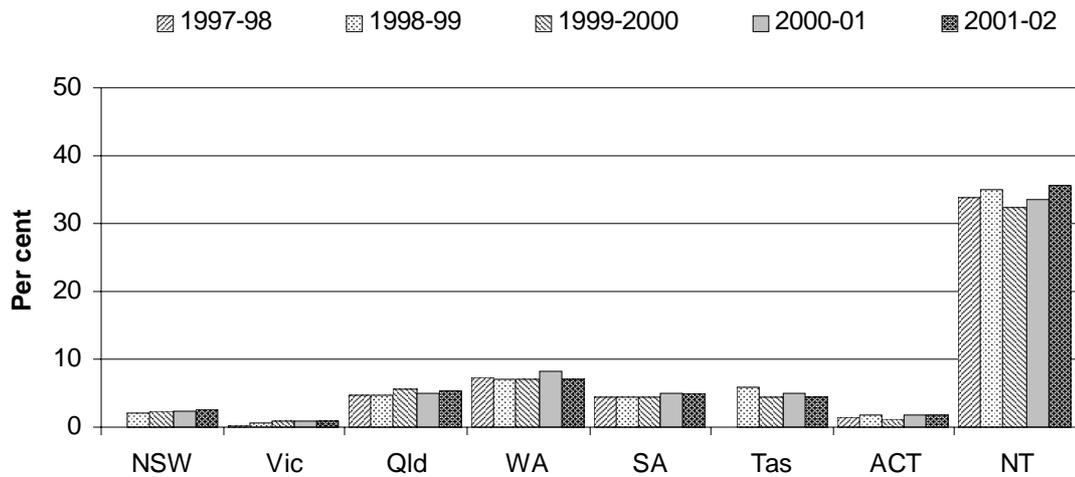
Data on the representation of other special needs groups among government funded preschool attendees are limited for 2001-02.

- Children from non-English speaking backgrounds represented 12.0 per cent of children attending preschool in Victoria, 8.8 per cent in SA, 8.4 per cent in the ACT, 6.6 per cent in NSW and 0.7 per cent in Queensland (tables 14A.25, 14A.34, 14A.43, 14A.61 and 14A.79).
- The proportion of preschool attendees from single parent families was 14.4 per cent in SA, 11.6 per cent in Victoria, 8.8 per cent in NSW and 1.0 per cent in Queensland (tables 14A.25, 14A.34, 14A.43 and 14A.61).
- Children with a disability represented 14.7 per cent of preschool attendees in SA, 10.2 per cent in NSW, 4.6 per cent in the ACT, 3.9 per cent in Victoria and 0.9 per cent in Queensland (tables 14A.25, 14A.34, 14A.43, 14A.61, and 14A.79).
- The proportion of preschool attendees from rural and remote areas was 61.4 per cent in Tasmania, 43.3 per cent in the NT, 33.9 per cent in WA, 33.2 per cent in

both SA and NSW, 27.5 per cent in Queensland and 0.7 per cent in the ACT (tables 14A.25, 14A.34, 14A.43, 14A.52, 14A.61, 14A.70, and 14A.79).

The representation of these special target groups in the general community is provided in table 14.3.

Figure 14.12 **Proportion of preschool attendees from Indigenous backgrounds^a**



Year	Unit	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
1997-98	%	na	0.4	4.7	7.3	4.3	na	1.4	33.7
1998-99	%	2.0	0.5	4.8	7.1	4.5	5.8	1.7	34.9
1999-2000	%	2.3	0.8	5.6	6.9	4.5	4.4	1.1	32.2
2000-01	%	2.3	0.8	5.1	8.1	5.0	4.9	1.9	33.6
2001-02	%	2.7	0.8	5.3	7.2	5.0	4.3	1.8	35.4

^a Excludes younger children attending preschool and children attending non-government preschools. **na** Not available.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 14A.25, 14A.34, 14A.43, 14A.52, 14A.61, 14A.70, 14A.79 and 14A.88.

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 are staff qualifications, the number of serious injuries, and the number of substantiated complaints per registered or licensed service, by service type. These data need to be treated with caution because there are differences in reporting among jurisdictions.

Staff — staff qualifications

Nationally, the proportion of staff with formal qualifications (including those studying for qualifications) in Commonwealth approved child care was 54.8 per cent in 2002. A further 17.0 per cent had no formal qualifications but three or more years of relevant experience. The remaining 28.3 per cent had no formal qualifications and less than three years experience. The proportion of staff with formal qualifications varied across jurisdictions, ranging from 58.4 per cent in Victoria to 41.1 per cent in the NT (figure 14.13). In all jurisdictions except SA, the number of staff with formal qualifications increased between 1997 and 2002 (table 14A.11).

Figure 14.13 Paid primary contact staff employed by Commonwealth approved child care services, by qualification, May 2002^{a, b, c}

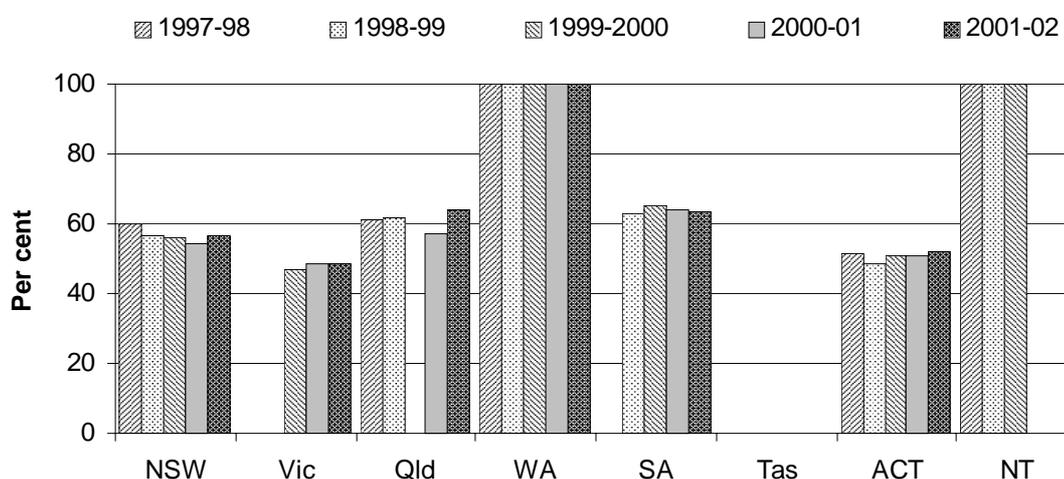


^a Excludes Aboriginal play groups, mobile and toy libraries and the occasional care neighbourhood model. ^b 'Three years or more relevant experience' category does not include staff with a relevant formal qualification. ^c 'Fewer than three years relevant experience' category does not include staff with a relevant formal qualification (but does include staff training for a qualification).

Source: CCCCS, May 2002 (unpublished); table 14A.11.

Some data are available for preschool services receiving funding from State and Territory governments only. The comparability of these data is limited by the different licensing and funding arrangements across jurisdictions. Across those jurisdictions for which 2001-02 data are available, the proportion of staff in preschool services with relevant formal qualifications ranged from 100.0 per cent in WA (where all contact staff must be qualified) to 48.7 per cent in Victoria (where only one of the two staff must be qualified) (figure 14.14).

Figure 14.14 Proportion of paid primary contact staff employed by State/Territory funded and/or managed preschool service providers with a relevant formal qualification^a



^a All funded preschool services in Victoria and Queensland must have at least two staff, one of whom must have a relevant formal qualification. All primary contact staff for preschools in WA must be qualified.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 14A.23, 14A.32, 14A.41, 14A.50, 14A.59, 14A.68, 14A.77 and 14A.86.

Health and safety — injuries

Data on the number of serious injuries and the number of serious injuries per registered or licensed service provider were limited for 2001-02. Although most jurisdictions were able to provide some information, the small numbers of incidents involved and differences in the data collection approaches by jurisdictions mean direct comparisons are problematic. Tables 14A.26, 14A.35, 14A.44, 14A.53, 14A.62, 14A.71, 14A.80 and 14A.89 provide a breakdown of the available information for each jurisdiction.

Client satisfaction — complaints

All jurisdictions except NSW³ provided data on the number of substantiated complaints and alleged breaches of regulations made to the State and Territory government regulatory bodies for 2001-02 (tables 14A.27, 14A.36, 14A.45, 14A.54, 14A.63, 14A.72, 14A.81 and 14A.90).

³ NSW is developing a new information system in line with its new legislation. Data on substantiated complaints are expected to be available for future reports.

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

- 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
- variation 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 otherwise may be managed at a scheme level in other States and Territories and, as such, may not be reported.

Efficiency

Differences in the indicator results across jurisdictions may reflect differences in counting and reporting rules for financial data and in reported expenditure, which are partly due to different treatments of various expenditure items. Some information on the extent of the comparability of the expenditure is shown in table 14A.5.

Cost per output unit

The levels of government input per unit of output(s) (unit costs) are proxy indicators of efficiency. The indicators used here are:

- Commonwealth government recurrent expenditure per hour of service; and
- State and Territory real total expenditure on children's services per child (0–12 years).

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.

Commonwealth Government recurrent expenditure per hour for centre based long day care services in 2001-02 ranged from \$3.44 an hour in Queensland to \$1.47 an hour in the ACT. For both centre based long day care and family day care, such expenditure was higher in all jurisdictions compared with 1997-98 levels. Funding

per hour of outside school hours care in 2001-02 was equal to or higher than that in 1997-98 in all jurisdictions except the NT (table 14.4).

Table 14.4 **Commonwealth Government real recurrent expenditure per hour of service (2001-02 dollars) (\$/hour)^a**

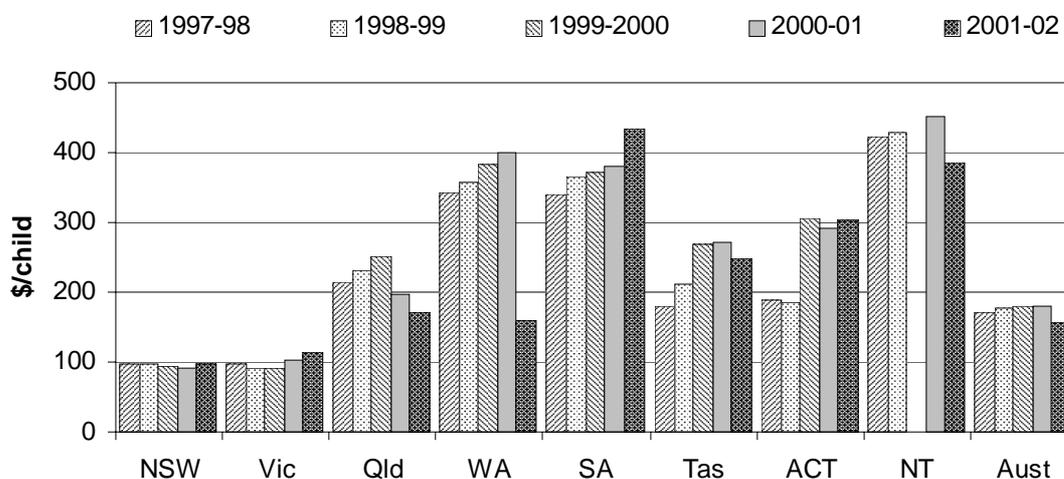
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>
Centre based long day care								
1997-98	1.96	1.97	2.29	2.05	2.14	1.99	1.45	1.99
1999-2000	1.83	2.04	2.31	2.14	2.05	1.89	1.34	1.84
2001-02 ^b	2.68	2.81	3.44	3.04	3.01	2.92	1.47	2.80
Family day care								
1997-98	2.41	2.61	2.63	2.91	3.06	2.79	2.45	2.43
1999-2000	2.63	2.86	2.86	3.20	3.99	3.01	2.55	1.86
2001-02 ^b	3.73	4.18	3.82	4.73	3.87	4.34	3.70	4.80
Outside school hours care ^c								
1997-98	1.88	1.52	1.72	1.92	1.67	2.16	1.73	1.72
1999-2000	1.07	1.25	1.45	1.40	1.33	1.45	0.98	1.29
2001-02 ^b	3.05	2.91	2.88	3.25	3.67	3.24	1.92	1.66
Occasional care								
1997-98	4.02	1.61	2.31	3.94	4.42	2.34	2.15	11.28
1999-2000	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
2001-02 ^b	3.11	3.08	2.48	3.05	3.61	4.65	2.28	na

^a Excludes administration expenditure. ^b Estimated from preliminary data from May 2002 CCCCS and, as such, is subject to change ^c Data for 1999-2000 include vacation care. For 1997-98, data have been revised to provide a consistent series and, therefore, are not comparable with figures reported in the 2000 Report. **na** Not available.

Source: CCCCS, August 1997, May 1999 and May 2002 (unpublished); table 14A.17.

The indicator for State and Territory total expenditure per child (0–12 years) in the jurisdiction is a new indicator for the 2003 Report, and the data are presented in figure 14.15. Expenditure for 2001-02 ranged from \$433.60 per child for SA to \$96.50 per child in NSW (table 14A.18).

Figure 14.15 **Total State/Territory real expenditure on children's services per child (0–12 years) in the jurisdiction (2001–02 dollars)^{a, b}**



^a Includes administration expenditure, other expenditure on service provision, financial support to families and net capital expenditure on child care and preschool services. ^b The drop in WA expenditure for 2001-02 is in response to the changes in the school entry age and the associated move to full time schooling for pre year one children.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 14A.18.

Administrative efficiency

Another measure of efficiency is administration and regulation expenditure as a proportion of total expenditure. As noted earlier, the Steering Committee agreed to discontinue reporting of administrative efficiency for State and Territory governments, given the differences in licensing arrangements and the varying extent to which different jurisdictions could include the costs of other activities (such as planning, policy development, resource management, quality assurance and regulation) in the reported data. For the Commonwealth Government, however, estimated administration costs accounted for 8.7 per cent of its expenditure on children's services in 2001-02 (derived from table 14A.3).

14.4 Future directions in performance reporting

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

Future indicator development

The Children's Services Working Group will continue to improve the appropriateness and completeness of the performance indicator framework. Future work on indicators will focus on:

- indicators to measure the extent to which children's services meet family needs;
- the development of indicators to measure the extent to which children's services meet children's needs;
- the development of a more appropriate indicator of service affordability;
- the completion of a quality indicator for licensing, accreditation and registration; and
- a rolling revision of all indicators within the framework.

Options for reporting on service appropriateness in future reports will also be investigated. While these areas have been identified as requiring further work, the improvements to the chapter and progress on performance reporting will not be limited to these indicators.

Improving reporting of existing indicators

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. Changes in the children's services industry have required jurisdictions to revise collection methods, and these revisions reduce data comparability across years and across jurisdictions. It will take some time before all improvements are reflected in the chapter. The Children's Services Working Group will also continue to explore options for reporting against the two quality indicators introduced in the 2003 Report.

Improving the completeness and comparability of data

National minimum data set

The National Community Services Information Management Group's (NCSIMG) Children's Services Data Working Group, under the auspices of the Community Services Ministers' Council, is developing a national minimum data set for children's services. When completed, this will provide a framework for the collection of a minimum set of nationally comparable data and assist the development of measurable performance indicators and descriptors.

The first stage of the national minimum data set is well advanced. The national minimum data set manual was submitted to the NCSIMG for information in November 2001. Pilot testing of the framework was carried out in all States and Territories in August and September 2002, addressing issues related to the collection, comprehensiveness and comparability of the proposed data items.

Data collection

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

Data availability

The CCCCS is the most complete national data set on child care and, as such, indicates the relative participation in child care across jurisdictions. The CCCCS is conducted biennially by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services to collect information on the characteristics of users and providers of Commonwealth funded child care services. State and Territory governments may also support many of these services.

Prior to 2001 the CCCCS collected information on all Commonwealth funded services. The 2001 CCCCS, however, was limited to a survey of family day care services and did not cover centre based long day care, outside school hours care, vacation care and occasional care services. Some 2001 data for these other services were sourced from Centrelink administrative data for the 2002 Report. The return to a full CCCCS census for 2002 means all services are again reported from the same source in the 2003 Report. Comparison of 2001 data with other years is constrained by the relative quality and compatibility of the data from the different sources.

14.5 Jurisdictions' comments

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

Commonwealth Government comments

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In recognition of the importance of high quality data on child care across jurisdictions, the Commonwealth ensured that preliminary data from the May 2002 CCCCS were available in time for this year's Report. The Commonwealth also continued to work with all jurisdictions on developing a national minimum data set to collect consistent and comparable national data on children using government funded and/or licensed child care and preschool services.

Pilot testing of the proposed data elements for inclusion in the first stage of the data set was conducted in all States and Territories from August 2002. The aim of pilot testing was to test the data items in the widest range of service delivery settings possible to ascertain their potential to produce nationally consistent, comparable and comprehensive data. The pilot test report is currently being drafted. Future work will be directed towards the development of stage two data items, and the model and timing for data collection.

Ensuring that child care is flexible and responsive to the needs of Australian families is a priority for the Commonwealth Government.

Under the Government's Stronger Families and Communities Strategy, a number of child care measures were recently introduced to help families find the right mix between their work, community and parenting roles, including:

- incentives to encourage private operators to establish child care centres in rural and remote locations;
- expanding in-home child care, where care is provided in the child's home;
- enabling other providers, including private operators to run Commonwealth funded outside school hours care and family day care services; and
- the implementation of a quality assurance system for family day care and the development of a quality assurance system for outside school hours care. These complement the existing quality assurance system in place for long day care.

The redevelopment of the Child Care Broadband, which funds a number of programs for child care services, and support for service provision, also commenced in 2002. The redevelopment will ensure the best use of the funds that are available and make it possible to maximise opportunities to respond to priorities in child care. The re-development will be achieved through extensive consultations with the children's services sector and will focus on improving flexibility and support, balancing viability and flexibility, as well as ensuring a better deal for children and families with specific needs.

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New South Wales Government comments

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The structure of the children's services chapter poses difficulties in comparing the performance of NSW with that of other jurisdictions and in accurately reporting NSW data. The chapter is based on service type classifications of pre-school and child care, which suits the way children's services are structured in most jurisdictions but not in NSW.

All licensed early childhood centres are required by regulation to provide an education program tailored to each child's intellectual, physical, social and emotional development and to employ appropriately qualified teaching staff. In this environment all licensed centres provide a pre-school program. This is very different from the situation in other States.

While data have been provided to meet the requirements of the chapter, NSW urges caution in any use or interpretation of these data in relation to the numbers of children that access a preschool program.

NSW has recently launched the State Curriculum Framework, which provides a contemporary evidence based practice tool for early childhood professionals in support of best outcomes for children.

In 2002, NSW also commenced implementation of more flexible funding arrangements to support some 9000 children with additional needs to attend prior to school services. A web site (www.parenting.nsw.gov.au) was also established to provide expert advice and information on parenting topics.

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Victorian Government comments

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Of the 2722 licensed children's services, approximately 2032 locations receive State Government funding to provide children's services, including preschool, occasional care and TAFE long day care services. New initiatives have been introduced in 2001-02 to enhance children's services.

The "Best Start" initiative is a prevention and early intervention project that aims to improve the health, development, learning and wellbeing of all Victorian children from pregnancy through transition to school (usually taken to be eight years of age). This will be achieved by supporting communities, parents and service providers to improve universal local early years services so that they are more responsive to local need.

In response to the 2001 Review of the Issues that Impact on the Delivery of Preschool Services to Children and Their Families, the introduction of a Group Employer Models of management, which will group individual preschool services together under a single employer, has commenced.

As part of a \$10.25 million initiative over three years, \$5.5 million has been paid to community based, non-profit preschools, long day care and occasional care services for capital works to meet the premises requirements of the transitional provisions of the *Children's Services Act 1996* and the *Children's Services Regulations 1998* (the Regulations).

\$2 million has been paid in community equipment and maintenance grants to community based, non-profit long day care and out of school hours care services to maintain existing facilities, purchase new equipment and provide staff training. This is part of a \$6.25 million initiative over three years.

A study grants scheme has been established to assist child care staff in Neighbourhood Houses obtain a qualification recognised under the Regulations. \$100 000 has been allocated each year for two years to fund this initiative.

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Queensland Government comments

“ The Queensland Government continues to work towards a child care system for Queensland children and families that is responsive, sustainable and of a high quality through implementation of the Queensland Child Care Strategic Plan 2000–05.

A key step in implementing the Strategic Plan has been the development of a new regulatory framework. In 2001–02, the Department of Families undertook a statewide consultation strategy on an exposure draft of the proposed new legislation. Feedback from this process assisted in finalising the Bill which was unanimously passed by the Parliament on 24 October 2002. The *Queensland Child Care Act 2002* represents a strengthened regulatory framework for the provision of child care services in Queensland, increasing qualification requirements for child care workers and including the licensing of school-age care services for the first time.

The Queensland Child Care Industry Plan 2002–05, launched in March 2002, represents an important milestone in the development of effective partnerships between key stakeholders of the child care industry. It aims to strengthen the sector, improve service delivery and promote a positive image of both child care services and workers by focusing on the three critical areas of human resources and training, research and information technology.

In implementing the Industry Plan the Department of Families funded the National Centre for Vocational Education Research to conduct research into the training and employment patterns and trends in the Queensland child care industry. The research will explore issues related to employment trends within the industry, the availability and suitability of training and the retention of qualified staff. Factors and strategies that support the retention of qualified staff will be identified as part of the final report, expected in December 2002.

Implementation of the Child Care and Family Support Hub Strategy continued in 2001–02, bringing the total number of funded hubs to 24 across the State. This funding assists services to deliver integrated child care and family support services in their communities and enhance access to existing and new services for families. Included are two hubs, established in the Indigenous communities of Doomadgee and Aurukun, that offer a range of child care and family support services such as playgroup, parent education and health and other specialist services.

Under the Child Care Statewide Training Strategy, child care workers in Queensland have access to subsidised training to improve their skill levels and gain qualifications. Since inception in November 2001 over 3,000 child care workers have taken up this opportunity. In addition, Education Queensland conducted consultations on the implementation of a preparatory year of schooling. Trials for the preparatory year will commence in 2003. ”

Western Australian Government comments

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The new structure for the Department for Community Development is currently being implemented. In addition to an increased focus on community development and strengthening families the Department is placing increased emphasis on the early years and developing closer collaborative relationships with other government departments, the not-for-profit sector, communities and business.

As part of this process the Department is aligning its licensing and support functions. The new structure for licensing is based on a risk management framework and will be implemented early in 2003.

The new Community Services (Outside School Hours Care) Regulations 2002 were gazetted on 28 August 2002. The Department for Community Development is currently providing centres catering for school aged children with information and training to assist them meet the new standards when they come into effect in August 2003. Financial support to upgrade premises and purchase equipment is being provided to not-for-profit services. The regulations address key elements of operation and set minimum standards to ensure the health, safety and developmental wellbeing of children in services.

The Department is currently developing new legislation and a single Act will replace three of the four Acts under which the Department for Community Development now operates. This has created the opportunity to redraft the Children's Services Part of the *Community Services Act 1972* to reflect the changes that have occurred in the child care industry since the child care licensing provisions were legislated in 1987.

At the same time any discrepancy in the standards in the care and education systems has been addressed with the ministers for education and community development reaching an agreement on similar standards for children aged 3–6 years in care and education environments.

The introduction of the new school entry age, four half day sessions for kindergarten children and five full days for pre-primary has had an impact on long day care services. The industry reports an increased demand for places for babies, toddlers and the younger four year olds who would previously have had a place in a kindergarten program.

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South Australian Government comments

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A new Education and Children's Services department was formed following a State election in March 2002. At this time the incoming government made a commitment to making education a top priority for South Australia. This commitment was reflected in immediate budget allocations for education and children's services. Over the next four years the increase in funds will be used to provide a raft of new and ongoing initiatives.

These new commitments underscore the new Government's understanding of the importance of the early years and its previous history of support for children's services while in government. The development of new ways to support young children who are at greatest risk of disengagement from early childhood care and education is a key priority. Children from birth to three years of age are the focus of the new Learning Together program that is now unfolding in five locations across South Australia. These new projects will explore new and improved ways for children's services, schools and family support organisations to link with and support families with very young children. Links with other levels of government and with other agencies such as child health providers are key features of these projects.

These new projects complement ongoing work on integrating children's services and the first years of school through new leadership and governance models. Access to child care in small rural communities will improve as further new rural child care services are developed in partnership with the Commonwealth.

Per capita expenditure by the State government in South Australia remains at a high level. However the children's services sector is under increasing pressure, as demand for care continues to outstrip supply and as children's services providers in child care centres and out of school hours programs face increasing difficulty in training and recruiting qualified staff. The shortage of subsidised child care places is a Commonwealth responsibility, but the State is interested in pursuing improved planning and coordination of children's services and in supporting workforce planning initiatives that will address the chronic shortage of trained staff in parts of the children's services sector.

The South Australian government has continued its commitment to quality in the children's services sector. Implementation of the new birth to 18 Curriculum Standards and Accountability Framework has included child care centre staff through Statewide professional development tailored to the needs of that sector and through the participation of child care staff in district professional development networks. This work will be adapted and extended to family day care providers and out of school hours services.

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Tasmanian Government comments

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The Department of Education continues to support the early years through its commitment to child care and education and in ensuring that families have access to high quality, affordable services. The department directly provides all government preschools/kindergartens across the State and provides funding for some non-government kindergartens. It is also responsible for licensing, monitoring, coordinating, funding and resourcing child care services and related programs.

The relationship between child care and education has continued to strengthen, as professionals from both sectors have worked together on the new curriculum framework for 0–8 year olds and on a number of specific projects. New budget initiatives in relation to strengthening families have also resulted in the consideration of using child care buildings as a base for other family support organisations. The number of government and non-government schools with licensed child care services has also increased. This is partly due to the increased facilitation of linkages between the areas, but also the impact of the change to the starting age for both government and non government schools.

In light of the imminent proclamation of the *Child Care Act 2001*, work has been continuing on the revision of child care standards for services currently licensed and the development of new standards for service types which will be licensed for the first time under the new legislation. A licensing review is being undertaken to account for the additional workload under the new *Child Care Act 2001* and to ensure that the process of licensing is as effective as possible and in line with recommended practices.

Like many other States, Tasmanian child care services have had difficulty due to the significant shortage of available qualified carers. Previous initiatives such as the mentorship and scholarship programs are continuing and a new initiative providing funds to support unqualified carers undertaking the recognition process is being implemented. There has also been considerable consultation with the industry about this issue which has resulted in the development of a policy that provides more flexibility for services. Defined parameters are in place so that the qualification requirements are not undermined.

In 2000-03, the focus will be on the implementation of the *Child Care Act 2001* and the related licensing standards, and the development of a Tasmanian child care policy which will provide a solid foundation for future strategic planning.

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Australian Capital Territory Government comments

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The provision of quality children’s services is an investment in the future, providing the foundation for children’s learning and development. The ACT Government, through the Department of Education, Youth and Family Services, supports children’s services to deliver quality programs that give children every chance to realise their full potential.

The Department of Education, Youth and Family Services, in partnership with parent communities, is responsible for providing preschool services for all eligible children in the year immediately before their entry to school. The department is also responsible for licensing and monitoring children’s services in the ACT to ensure that they meet the requirements of the *Children and Young People Act 1999*. These services include centre based children’s services, school age care, family day care, independent preschools and play schools. Funding is also provided to assist with the provision of a range of children’s services programs.

This year has also seen the implementation of Professional Pathways for all permanent teachers in ACT Government preschools. Professional Pathways is a confidential professional appraisal and planning process aimed at providing teachers with meaningful feedback, support and advice. In the Professional Pathways cycle, teachers develop a set of priorities informed by the ACT Government Schools Plan, and the ACT Government Preschools Strategic Plan. Teachers work on these priorities throughout the year with their mentor and peers. Outcomes of the program are very positive. Teachers have highlighted the sense of purpose gained from the program and the benefit of working in small professional groups.

The collaborative work occurring across early childhood services in the ACT, culminated in the inaugural Children’s Services Early Childhood Conference, ‘Making Connections — Children and Change’, which was held in October 2002 during Children’s Week. The focus of the conference was strengthening resilience in children and supporting them through transitions of various kinds. Representatives from the range of early childhood services attended the conference.

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Northern Territory Government comments

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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 wellbeing.

The Territory has a small (195 500) and young population dispersed across one-sixth of the national landmass. About 36 per cent of the 0-12 population are Indigenous children, some 75 per cent of whom live in small remote communities and townships. Diseconomies of scale, an environment ranging from desert to tropical climates, and the particular interests and needs of the population have resulted in unique approaches to providing children’s services in the Northern Territory. Due to this, comparability for reporting purposes continues to be difficult. For example, this Report indicates a considerably lower participation level of Indigenous children in child care services; however, the data does not include participation in other services and activities such as innovative child care centres, play groups and informal care services, preferred service models in a number of communities.

The NT continues to sustain relative affordability for centre based child care services across all income brackets. The NT has the longest average hours of attendance at child care centre 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 nonstandard hours of operation may be due to reduced travel to work times in the major urban areas.

In 2001-02, the focus of the program was on tailoring and diversifying services to better meet family needs. Program development activities included improving the supply of appropriately qualified staff, and strengthening collaboration and service delivery coordination among children’s education, health, disability and care services.

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14.6 Definitions

Table 14.5 Terms

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Administration expenditure	All expenditure by the departments responsible for the provision of 'licensing', 'advice', 'policy development', 'grants administration' and 'training' services. Responsible departments include those departments that are responsible for administering policy, funding and licensing/accreditation of child care and preschool services in each jurisdiction.
Approved preschool care	Preschool care that meets State and Territory government licensing requirements (where such requirements exist).
Centre based long day care	Care for children (usually aged 0–5 years) in a licensed child care centre that is open for a minimum of eight hours per day, five days per week, 48 weeks per year. These centres provide quality all day or part-time care for working families and the general community. Some centres provide care for limited numbers of primary school children before and after school, and during school holidays.
Child care	The meeting of a child's care, education and developmental needs by a person other than the child's parent or guardian. The main types of service are centre based long day care, family day care, outside school hour care (vacation, before/after school hours and 'pupil free days' care), occasional care and other care.
Children	All resident male and female Australians aged 12 years and younger as at 30 June of each year.
Children from Indigenous backgrounds	Children of Indigenous descent who identify as being 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.
Expenditure on assets	Expenditure on the acquisition or enhancement of fixed assets, less trade-in values and/or receipts from the sale of replaced or otherwise disposed of items.
Disability related care	Care of children who have a developmental delay or disability (including intellectual, sensory or physical impairment), or parent(s) with a disability.

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Table 14.5 (Continued)

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Family day care	A network of experienced carers who provide care and developmental activities in their own homes for other people's children. A coordinating unit oversees each family day care scheme, which covers a number of carers in an area. The unit provides support and resources to the carers. Care is flexible and can be tailored to suit each family's needs, including care outside normal working hours and, if needed, overnight care. The number of children per carer is restricted in some States by State licensing requirements.
Financial support to families	Any form of fee relief paid by governments to the users of children's services (for example, the Child Care Benefit).
Formal child care	Organised care provided by a person other than the child's parent or guardian, usually outside of the child's home — for example, centre based long day care, family day care, outside school hours care, vacation care and occasional care (excluding babysitting).
Formal qualifications	Early childhood related teaching degree (three or four years), a child care certificate or associate diploma (two years) and/or other relevant qualifications (for example, a diploma or degree in child care [three years or more], primary teaching, other teaching, nursing [including mothercraft nursing], psychology and social work). Some jurisdictions do not recognise one-year certificates.
Full time equivalent staff numbers	A measure of the total level of staff resources used. A full time staff member is employed full time and engaged solely in activities that fall within the scope of children's services covered in the chapter. The full time equivalent of part time staff is calculated on the basis of the proportion of time spent on activities within the scope of the data collection compared with that spent by a full time staff member solely occupied by the same activities.
Government funded or/and provided	All government financed services — that is, services that receive government contributions towards providing a specified service (including private services eligible for the Child Care Benefit) and/or services for which the government has primary responsibility for delivery.
Informal child care	Child care arrangements provided privately (for example, by friends, relatives, nannies) for which no government assistance (other than the Child Care Benefit) is provided. Such care is unregulated in most States and Territories.
Licensed services	Those services that comply with the relevant State or Territory licensing regulations. These regulations cover matters such as the number of children whom the service can care for, safety requirements and the required qualifications of carers.
Metropolitan areas	Defined as per the publication <i>Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas Classification 1991 Census Edition</i> (DPIE and DSHS 1994). In this publication, metropolitan areas are defined as areas that 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. Jurisdictions used this table to establish the total number of rural and remote places receiving government funding.

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Table 14.5 (Continued)

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Nonstandard hours of care	<p>Nonstandard hours of care by service type are defined as:</p> <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 50 hours a week 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.
Occasional care	<p>Services for parents who need short periods of care for children under school age. They can be used regularly or irregularly while parents shop or attend appointments, for respite from full time parenting, and to provide developmental opportunities for children. Some occasional care services also provide for casual or part time workers.</p>
Operational place	<p>A licensed place (where a licensing system exists, or in receipt of government funding where not licensed) able to accept children at 30 June each year.</p>
Other care	<p>Child care designed to meet the needs of children in particular situations (including children from an Indigenous background, children from non-English speaking backgrounds, children with a disability or whose parents have a disability, and children living in remote and rural areas). These services include multifunctional services, multifunctional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's services, mobiles, and toy libraries.</p>
Other expenditure on service provision	<p>All recurrent expenditure on government funded and/or provided child care and preschool services. It also includes one-off, non-capital payments to peak agencies who support child care and preschool service providers.</p>
Outside school hours care	<p>Outside school hours care provides care for primary school children before and/or after school and, in some services, on 'pupil free days' during the school term. Some outside school hours care services also provide school holiday care or are linked to vacation care services, and provide for primary school children all year. These services are generally located on or near primary schools and offer recreational programs and activities along with time for rest and homework.</p>
Preschools	<p>Educational and developmental programs for children in the year or two before they begin full time school. Traditional preschool services are generally provided on a sessional basis (two to five sessions of 2.5–3 hours in length per week) in dedicated preschools during school terms only. Preschool programs can also be provided in a long day care centre by a qualified early childhood teacher.</p>

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Table 14.5 (Continued)

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
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 that do not receive 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	Expenditure that does not result in the creation or acquisition of fixed assets (new or secondhand). It consists mainly of expenditure on wages, salaries and supplements, purchases of goods and services, and the consumption of fixed capital (depreciation).
Rural and remote areas	Areas defined as per the <i>publication Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas Classification 1991 Census Edition</i> (DPIE and DSHS 1994). This publication assigned a measure of remoteness to each statistical local area in Australia. Jurisdictions were provided with a table showing the classification assigned to each statistical local area. Jurisdictions used 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.
Service	The type of service provided. Preschool service, for example, is a package of educational and developmental services received by a child in the year or two before full time schooling. Preschool services may be provided by either a preschool service provider or a child care service provider.
Service type	The categories for which data were collected, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • long day care; • family day care; • vacation care; • before/after school care (outside school hours care); • occasional care; • 'other' care; and • preschool services.
Substantiated complaint	An expression of concern about a child care or preschool service, made orally, in writing or in person, which constitutes a failure by the service to abide by the State or Territory legislation, regulations or conditions. This concern is investigated and subsequently considered to have substance by the regulatory body.
Vacation care	Care and developmental activities provided for school age children during school vacation periods.

Table 14.6 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.

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Table 14.6 (Continued)

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Definition</i>
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 are 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 Islander background, children from single parent families, children with a disability, and children from remote or rural areas. These results were compared with these groups' representation in the community.
Serious injuries sustained per registered or licensed service	The total number of serious injuries sustained by children divided by the total number of registered or licensed services.
Substantiated complaints per registered or licensed service	The number of substantiated complaints divided by the total number of registered or licensed services. Results are presented separately by service type. The proportion of substantiated complaints against which action was taken is 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.

14.7 References

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 1996, *Child Care Survey 1996*, ABS, Canberra.

— 2000, *Child Care Survey 1999*, ABS, Canberra.

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DPIE (Department of Primary Industries and Energy) 1994 and DSHS (Department of Human Services and Health), *Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas Classification 1991 Census Edition*, AGPS, Canberra.

