
3 Children's services

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Attachment tables

Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table 3A.3). A full list of attachment tables is provided at the end of this chapter, and the attachment tables themselves are available on the CD-ROM enclosed with the Report or from the Review website at <www.pc.gov.au/qsp>.

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

Most of the data in this chapter relate to services that are supported by the Australian, State and Territory governments and provided for children aged less than 13 years. Local governments also plan, fund and deliver children's services.

Due to data limitations, the only local government data included are where Australian, State and Territory government funding and/or licensing are involved.

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

- measure and data for 'Indigenous preschool attendance' are reported for the first time
- new indicator, measure and data are reported for 'Australian Government expenditure per child attending approved children's services'
- measure of 'Family needs' has been defined as the proportion of all children in formal care, whose parents were seeking additional formal care for work related reasons. Data for this measure are anticipated to be reported in the 2010 Report.

Additional improvements to the 2009 Report include a change in the calculation of child care service costs from 'average child care fees' to 'median child care fees', and the inclusion of a matrix showing basic information on child care and preschool education programs (such as agency responsibility, program names and starting ages) across State and Territory governments.

The Australian Government Census of Child Care Services (AGCCCS) was discontinued following the 2006 AGCCCS. Replacement data for 2008 have been provided from Australian Government administrative sources for most performance indicators requiring these data (box 3.1). An alternative data collection is yet to be identified for the remaining indicators.

Box 3.1 Australian Government data for 2008

Data for a number of indicators and measures were previously sourced from the Australian Government Census of Child Care Services (AGCCCS), which was discontinued following the 2006 AGCCCS. Data for these indicators and measures for 2008 have been sourced from DEEWR administrative data collected through the Child Care Benefit payments system. The change in the source for these data has affected the comparability of data for 2008 to previous years and time series data should be interpreted with care. Refer to the footnotes to figures and attachment tables for specific information on factors influencing the interpretation of these data.

3.1 Profile of children's services

Service overview

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

Centre-based long day care — comprises services aimed primarily at 0–5 year olds, provided in a centre, usually by a mix of qualified and other staff. Educational, care and recreational programs are provided based on the developmental needs, interests and experience of each child. In some jurisdictions, primary school children may also receive care before and after school, and during school vacations. Centres typically operate for at least eight hours per day on normal working days, for a minimum of 48 weeks per year.

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

Occasional care — comprises services usually provided at a centre on an hourly or sessional basis for short periods or at irregular intervals, for parents who need time to attend appointments, take care of personal matters, undertake casual and part time employment, study or have temporary respite from full time parenting. These services provide developmental activities for children, and are aimed primarily at 0–5 year olds. Centres providing these services usually employ a mix of qualified and other staff.

Preschool — comprises services usually provided by a qualified teacher on a sessional basis in dedicated preschools. Preschool programs or curricula may also be provided in long day care centres and other settings. These services are primarily aimed at children in the year before they commence full time schooling, although younger children may also attend. In Victoria, WA and Tasmania, the preschool program is known as kindergarten. A number of terms are currently used in Queensland to describe the year prior to Preparatory, including Kindergarten and Pre-Preparatory.

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

Other services — comprise government funded services to support children with additional needs or in particular situations (including children from an Indigenous or non-English speaking background, children with a disability or of parents with a disability, and children living in regional and remote areas).

Roles and responsibilities

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

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

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

- licensing and setting standards for children's services providers
- providing a legislative framework in which child care services are provided
- monitoring and resourcing licensed and/or funded children's services providers
- providing operational and capital funding to non-government service providers
- delivering some services directly (especially preschool services)
- developing new child care and preschool services
- providing information, support, training and development opportunities for children's services providers
- providing curriculum and policy support and advice, as well as training and development for management and staff

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- planning to ensure the appropriate mix of services is available to meet the needs of the community
 - providing information and advice to parents and others about operating standards and the availability of services
 - providing dispute resolution and complaints management processes.

The arrangements for departmental responsibility for early childhood education and care vary across state and territory governments. There are also differences across state and territory governments for early childhood education program names and starting ages. To provide some clarity on these arrangements, a matrix showing basic information on child care and preschool education programs, such as agency responsibility, program names and starting ages, has been included in attachment table 3A.1.

Quality of care

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

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

Licensing

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

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

Quality assurance

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

The broad objective of the quality assurance systems is to ensure that children in care have stimulating, positive experiences and interactions that nurture all aspects of their development. The quality assurance systems do this by defining quality child care, providing a way to measure the quality of care provided by the service, and identifying areas for ongoing quality improvement. Services participating in the quality assurance system are required to progress through a five step process, outlined in figure 3.1.

Funding

Total Australian, State and Territory government expenditure on children's services was approximately \$3.3 billion in 2007-08, compared with \$3.2 billion (in real terms) in 2006-07. Nationally, real expenditure increased by 17.8 per cent (\$501.6 million) between 2003-04 and 2007-08 (table 3A.5).

Australian Government expenditure accounted for 79.2 per cent (\$2.6 billion) of total government expenditure on children's services in 2007-08 (table 3A.5). State and Territory government expenditure on children's services in 2007-08 was approximately \$689.7 million. Total Australian, State and Territory government expenditure on children's services is also available by jurisdiction (tables 3A.4, 3A.5, 3A.6, 3A.36, 3A.43, 3A.50, 3A.57, 3A.64, 3A.71, 3A.78 and 3A.85).

In 2007-08, the provision of preschool services accounted for the largest proportion of total State and Territory government expenditure across all children's service models (81.9 per cent, or \$565.1 million) (table 3A.6).

The Australian Government provides supplementary funding to support the participation of Indigenous children in preschool programs. In 2008 an estimated \$13.9 million was provided on a per capita and project basis to 1250 preschools. The funding covers 8900 full time equivalent Indigenous preschool enrolments (DEEWR unpublished).

Size and scope

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

Child care services

The Australian Government supported 668 124 child care places in 2007 — an increase of 8.4 per cent on the number in 2006. The majority of Australian Government supported child care places were outside school hours care places (45.4 per cent), followed by centre-based long day care places (42.8 per cent), family day care places (11.2 per cent), occasional care places (0.4 per cent) and other care places (0.2 per cent) (table 3A.9). In 2007-08, State and Territory governments supported approximately 62 652 places in child care for children aged

12 years or younger (tables 3A.37, 3A.44, 3A.51, 3A.58, 3A.65, 3A.72, 3A.79 and 3A.86).

In 2008, approximately 760 825 children aged 12 years or younger attended Australian Government approved child care services (table 3A.11). An additional 109 037 children attended State and Territory funded and/or provided child care services (tables 3A.38, 3A.45, 3A.52, 3A.59, 3A.66, 3A.73, 3A.80, 3A.87).¹

Preschool services

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

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

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

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

State and Territory governments supported at least 167 686 preschool places in 2007-08 (tables 3A.37, 3A.44, 3A.51, 3A.58, 3A.65, 3A.72, 3A.79 and 3A.86). When counting attendance at preschool, 203 038 children attended State and Territory funded and/or provided services in 2007-08.² The majority (90.5 per cent,

¹ The mismatch between the number of places and the number of children attending child care is largely due to more than one child being able to fill one place, as many children attend on a part time basis. Further, in the State and Territory count, NSW does not discriminate between child care and preschool services, and children attending preschool services are included in the count for children attending child care.

² The mismatch between the number of places and the number of children attending preschool is largely due to more than one child being able to fill one place, as many children attend on a part time basis. Further, NSW counts 'places' in designated preschools only, but includes child care

or 183 782 children) were to begin full time schooling the following year (table 3A.12).

Services by management type

Children's services are managed by the government (State, Territory and local), community and private sectors. The management structure of services indicates the involvement of these sectors in the direct delivery of children's services. The limited data on the management type of child care services need to be interpreted with care because the scope of data collection varies across jurisdictions. Available data on the management type of preschool services is more complete than that for child care services, and indicate considerable variation across jurisdictions (table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Proportion of State and Territory licensed and/or registered children's services, by management type, 2007-08 (per cent)^a

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic^b</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA^c</i>	<i>Tas^d</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT^e</i>
Child care								
Community managed ^f	27.8	34.6	37.0	20.9	35.1	50.7	81.6	71.3
Private ^g	69.5	53.5	59.9	75.2	40.6	32.4	18.4	28.8
Government managed	2.7	11.8	3.1	3.9	24.3	16.8	–	na
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Preschool								
Community managed ^f	80.6	74.2	92.9	na	4.9	na	8.7	–
Private ^g	8.6	8.2	na	na	na	26.7	–	3.6
Government managed	10.8	17.6	7.1	100.0	95.1	73.3	91.3	96.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

^a Includes all Australian, State and Territory government supported services. ^b All government managed preschools in Victoria are managed by local government. ^c The majority of government managed child care services in SA are small occasional care programs attached to government preschools. ^d Preschools in Tasmania include funded non-government preschools. ^e Preschool services in NT are provided by the Department of Education directly, but a range of management functions are devolved to school councils and parent management committees. Preschool data for 2007-08 includes Catholic Mission Schools. ^f Community managed services include not-for-profit services provided or managed by parents, churches or co-operatives. ^g Private for-profit services provided or managed by a company, private individual or non-government school. **na** Not available. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 3A.41, 3A.48, 3A.55, 3A.62, 3A.69, 3A.76, 3A.83 and 3A.90.

services in the 'attendance' count, since these services have preschool programs. Tasmania and the NT do not have a set number of preschool 'places'. Enrolments are not turned away.

3.2 Framework of performance indicators

The framework of performance indicators is based on common objectives for children's services endorsed by the then Community Services Ministers' Advisory Council (CSMAC)³ (box 3.2). The relative emphasis placed on each objective varies across jurisdictions.

Box 3.2 Objectives for children's services

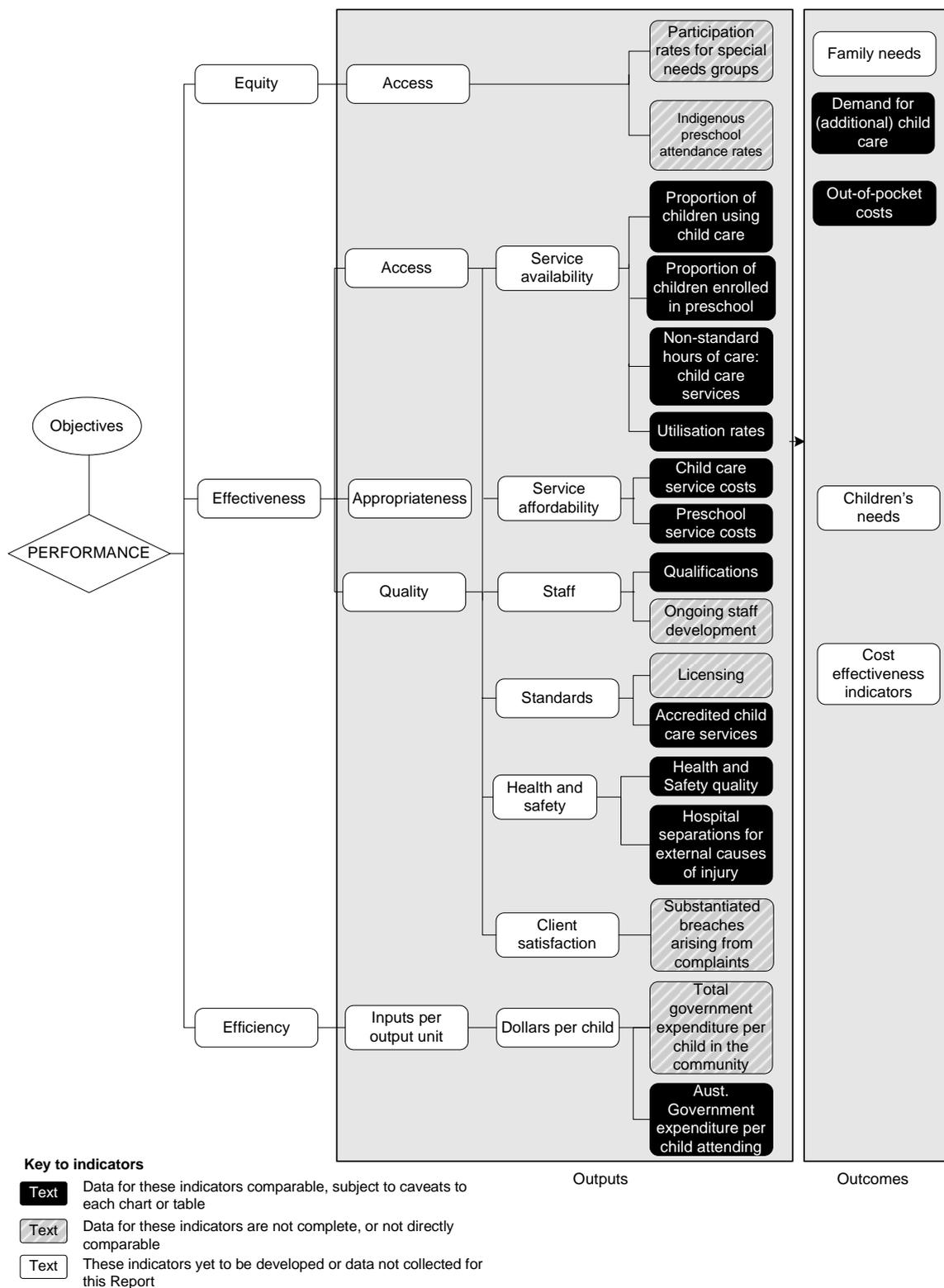
Children's services aim to:

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

A performance indicator framework consistent with these objectives is shown in figure 3.2. The framework shows which data are provided on a comparable basis in the 2009 Report. For data that are not considered directly comparable, the text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary. Chapter 1 discusses data comparability from a Report-wide perspective (see section 1.6).

³ Now known as the Community and Disability Services Ministers' Advisory Council (CDSMAC).

Figure 3.2 Performance indicators for children's services



3.3 Key performance indicator results

Different delivery contexts, locations and types of clients may affect the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of children’s services. Some of the data available for reporting in this chapter are not comparable across jurisdictions. Appendix A contains contextual information, which may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. Definitions of key terms and indicators are in section 3.6.

Outputs

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

Equity

Access — participation rates for special needs groups

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

Box 3.3 Participation rates for special needs groups

‘Participation rates for special needs groups’ is defined as the proportion of children using child care services who are from targeted special needs groups, compared with the representation of these groups in the community. Data are reported separately for child care (for 0–5 and 6–12 year olds) and preschool services (3–5 year olds). Targeted special needs groups include children from a non-English speaking background, Indigenous children, children from low income families, children with a disability, and children from regional and remote areas.

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

Therefore, a higher participation rate is desirable.

Data reported for this indicator are not directly comparable. Updated data for childcare services were not available for this Report.

Data for participation by special needs groups using Australian Government approved child care services were previously sourced from the AGCCCS, which

was discontinued following the 2006 AGCCCS. Anticipated replacement data (for 2008) for this indicator were not available for the 2009 Report. Data for 2006 can be found in the attachment tables and the 2008 Report.

Data on the representation of special needs groups for children aged 3–5 years in government funded preschools are provided in table 3.2. The data provide a broad indication of the relative access to preschool for special needs groups. Nationally, the patterns for children from special needs groups in preschool varied.

- Children from non-English speaking backgrounds had a lower representation in preschools (9.9 per cent) than in the community (18.7 per cent).
- Indigenous children's representation in preschools varied across jurisdictions, though at the national level, they participated at a similar proportion (4.9 per cent) to their representation in the community (4.5 per cent).
- The proportion of children with a disability was lower in preschools (6.6 per cent) compared to their representation in the community (8.0 per cent).
- The proportion of children from regional areas attending preschool was higher (35.8 per cent) compared to their representation in the community (32.3 per cent).
- The proportion of children from remote areas attending preschool varied across jurisdictions, though nationally they participated at a similar rate (4.1 per cent) to their representation in the community (4.2 per cent) (table 3.2).

Data on representation of special needs groups in State and Territory child care and preschools, for children aged 0–12, can be found in attachment table 3A.24.

Table 3.2 Proportion of children (aged 3–5 years) from special needs groups attending State and Territory funded or provided preschools, 2007-08^a

<i>Representation</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Aust</i>
Children from non-English speaking backgrounds									
In preschool services ^c	10.1	17.1	4.7	na	10.5	na	8.1	na	9.9
In the community ^b	23.2	21.6	11.6	15.6	13.5	7.2	16.1	38.7	18.7
Indigenous children									
In preschool services ^c	3.7	1.0	7.7	9.1	6.2	5.2	2.7	43.5	4.9
In the community ^b	4.1	1.2	6.4	5.8	3.5	6.4	2.3	41.8	4.5
Children with a disability									
In preschool services ^{c, d}	6.3	6.1	7.4	3.1	15.5	na	4.4	5.3	6.6
In the community ^b	7.7	6.5	8.6	10.2	8.3	7.2	14.3	np	8.0
Children from regional areas ^e									
In preschool services ^c	31.4	28.5	89.5	23.6	29.0	98.3	1.0	45.5	35.8
In the community ^b	28.0	27.5	45.1	24.5	26.2	97.7	0.1	48.2	32.3
Children from remote areas ^e									
In preschool services ^c	1.3	0.1	10.5	8.7	5.8	1.7	..	54.5	4.1
In the community ^b	1.0	0.1	6.2	11.8	5.8	2.6	..	68.2	4.2

^a See table 3A.24 for complete footnotes and definitions. ^b Data showing representation in the community are sourced from the ABS 2006 Census of Population and Housing, except for 'children with a disability', which are sourced from the ABS 2003 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers. Data for children in the community aged 3–5 years are different to the data for children in the community aged 0–12 years included in table 3A.24. ^c These numbers do not include innovative or flexible services that receive direct funding from the Australian Government and are targeted towards children from these groups. Data on preschool services may include some children aged 3 years or 5 years for all jurisdictions. Preschool data in the NT may include some children aged greater than 5 years in very remote areas. ^d Data are not directly comparable between jurisdictions because there is no national definition or standard on children with a disability. ^e Regional and remote areas based on the Australian Standard Geographical Classification of Remoteness Areas (ASGC) (ABS 2001). Regional areas include inner regional and outer regional areas. Remote areas include remote, very remote and migratory areas. **na** Not available. **np** Not published. **..** Not applicable.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); ABS (unpublished), derived from *2006 Census of Population and Housing*; ABS (unpublished), derived from *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2003*; table 3A.24.

Access — Indigenous preschool attendance rates

'Indigenous preschool attendance rates' is an indicator of governments' objective to ensure that services are provided in an equitable manner to all special needs groups in the community, and that there is consideration of the needs of those groups which may have special difficulty in accessing services (box 3.4).

Box 3.4 Indigenous preschool attendance rates

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

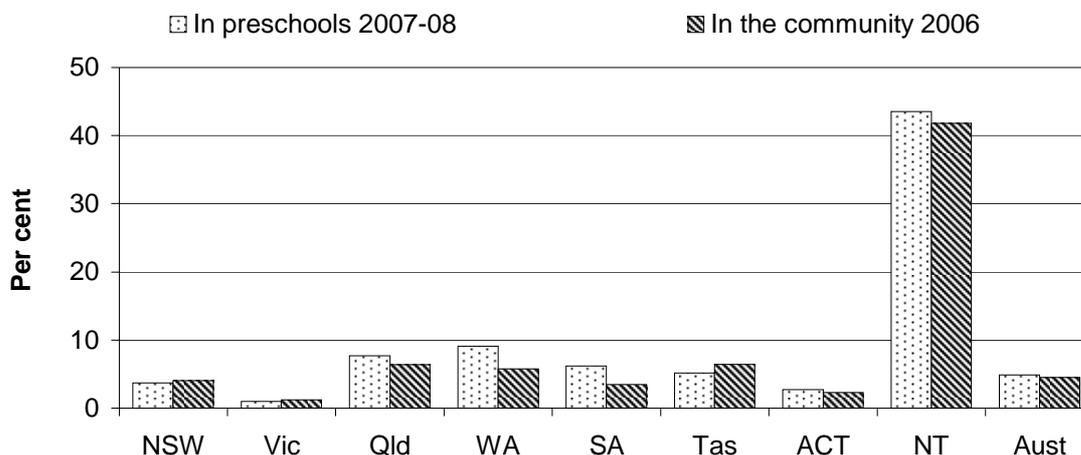
Attendance rates are measured by absentee rates. A low absentee rate indicates a higher rate of attendance at preschools, and is desirable.

Preschool attendance is not compulsory, and data are limited to Indigenous children enrolled in non-government preschools.

Data reported for this indicator are not complete, as they do not include Indigenous children enrolled in government preschools.

'Indigenous preschool enrolment rates' provides a broad indication of access to preschools. Indigenous enrolments in government and non-government preschools between 2003-04 and 2007-08 increased slightly in almost all jurisdictions, and nationally are similar to Indigenous children's representation in the community (figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3 Proportion of Indigenous children aged 3–5 years, in the community and enrolled at preschools ^{a, b, c, d}



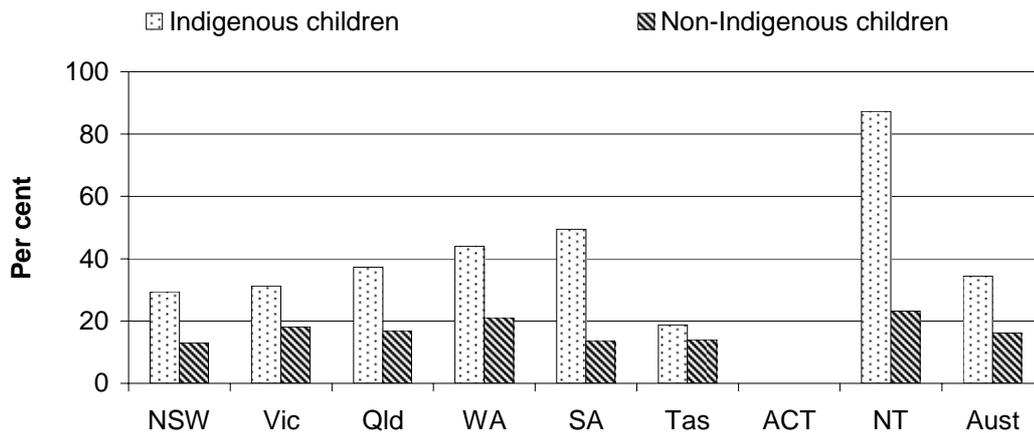
^a Data showing representation in the community are sourced from the ABS 2006 *Census of Population and Housing*. ^b Data for the representation in preschool services are from State and Territory enrolment data. ^c All Indigenous data relate to people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin who self identify or are identified by a parent or guardian to be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin. ^d The ABS Census Post Enumeration Survey has estimated an undercount of Indigenous people in the 2006 Census, and the estimates of the proportional representation in the community of Indigenous children should be treated with caution.

Source: ABS (unpublished), derived from 2006 *Census of Population and Housing*; State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 3A.24.

‘Indigenous preschool attendance rates’ provide a broad indication of the participation of Indigenous children in preschools. These data are sourced from the National Preschool Census (NPC) and relate only to non-government preschools. These data may overlap with the preschools data provided by State and Territory governments and are therefore not directly comparable with other preschool data included in the Report. The National Preschool Census collected data from 3248 of the 3274 non-government preschools in scope for the 2007 NPC (which represents approximately 70 per cent of all government and non-government preschools) (DEEWR unpublished).

Nationally in 2007, non-attendance by Indigenous children (34.5 per cent) was significantly higher than non-attendance by non-Indigenous children (16.2 per cent) (figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4 **Enrolled children absent from non-government preschools, 2007** a, b, c, d, e, f



a Data on attendance are limited to non-government preschools, and exclude government preschools. At the national level, around 70 per cent of children are in preschools considered to be ‘non-government’, though this percentage varies across jurisdictions. **b** Preschool attendance is not compulsory. **c** Attendance measured during the week of 30 July–3 August 2007. Children are counted as absent if they miss one or more of the sessions that they were enrolled in during this week. Absences due to illness may be higher during winter than at other times of the year. **d** ‘Non-Indigenous children’ has been derived by subtracting ‘Indigenous children’ from ‘all children’. **e** Data are suppressed for the ACT due to the small number of Indigenous children enrolled in non-government preschools. **f** The Australian totals include jurisdictions for which data are published only.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished), *National Preschool Census 2007*; table 3A.25.

Effectiveness

Service availability — proportion of children using child care services

‘Proportion of children using child care’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that all Australian families have equitable access to child care services (box 3.5).

Box 3.5 Proportion of children using child care

‘Proportion of children using child care’ is defined as the proportion of children using child care services in the target age groups.

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

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

The employment status of parents may influence children’s access to services, depending on the service model. Those services eligible for CCB, for example, must follow the Australian Government’s ‘priority of access’ guidelines when filling vacant places. The guidelines give a high priority to children at risk and children of parents with work-related child care needs (see section 3.6 for more detail). Details of the employment status of parents whose children use these services are shown in table 3A.16.

Nationally, 24.6 per cent of children aged 0–12 years attended Australian approved and State and Territory government funded and/or provided child care in 2007-08 (table 3.3). Nearly all of these children (87.5 per cent) attended Australian Government approved child care services (figure 3.5). The majority of children attending Australian Government approved child care in 2008 (484 721, or 63.7 per cent) were aged 0–5 years (table 3A.11).

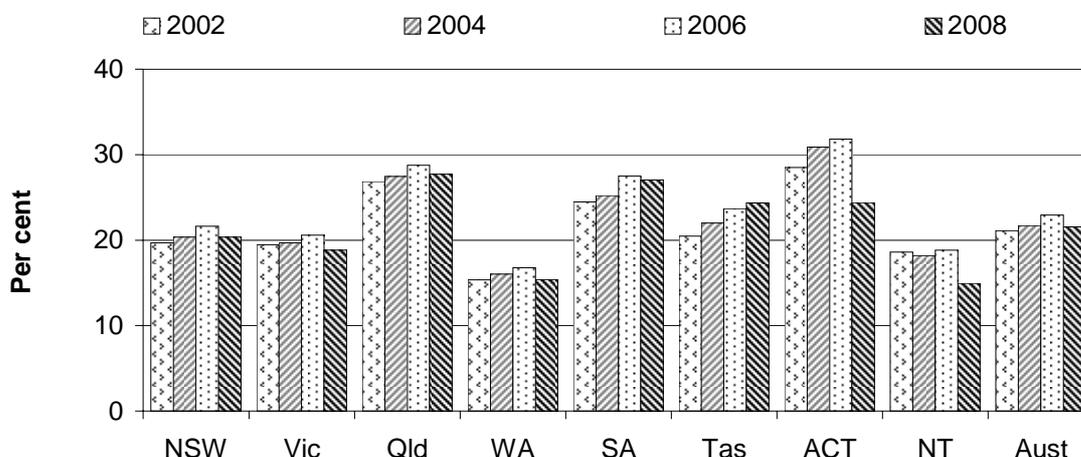
Table 3.3 **Proportion of children using Australian Government approved plus State and Territory government funded and/or provided child care, 2007-08^{a, b}**

Age	NSW ^c	Vic	Qld	WA ^d	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
0–5 years	46.8	25.9	37.5	22.4	32.8	34.5	20.3	18.1	35.4
6–12 years	14.5	13.0	19.9	9.5	24.1	17.6	18.2	12.1	15.5
0–12 years	29.3	19.0	27.9	15.4	28.0	25.3	24.4	14.9	24.6

^a Estimated resident population as at 31 December 2007. The Australian total includes children in other territories. ^b Australian Government data for 2008 are drawn from DEEWR administrative data collected through the CCB payments system. Data for 2008 are not comparable to previous years due to a change in the source for data collection. See box 3.1 and table 3A.11 for more information. ^c As NSW does not differentiate between children in child care and children in preschools, children attending either service are counted in both categories. This overcount means that NSW data are not comparable with data for other states and territories. ^d WA data for child care services provided by the WA Government are not available.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); ABS (unpublished), derived from *Australian Demographic Statistics*, Cat. no. 3101.0; tables 3A.2, 3A.11, 3A.38, 3A.45, 3A.52, 3A.59, 3A.66, 3A.73, 3A.80, 3A.87.

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



^a Data for 2002, 2004 and 2006 are drawn from the respective AGCCCS, while data for 2008 are drawn from DEEWR administrative data collected through the CCB payments system. Data for 2008 are not comparable to previous years due to the change in the source for data collection. ^b Children attending approved services in 2002, 2004 and 2006 may be counted more than once if attending more than one service during the reference week. Children attending approved services in 2008 are counted once, even if attending more than one type of service during the reference week. ^c Attendance counted as the number of children attending approved care in all services except Vacation Care during the week 18-24 February 2008, 8-14 May 2006, 22-28 March 2004 and 13-19 May 2002. Vacation care attendance was measured during week 21-27 January 2008. For 2002, 2004 and 2006 the week in which vacation care attendance were measured varied due to different vacation care periods across Australia. ^d Population measure is the Estimated Resident Population as at 31 December. ^e The Australian total includes children in other territories. ^f Excludes children cared for in neighbourhood model services.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished); FaCSIA (unpublished), derived from *Australian Government Census of Child Care Services 2002 and 2004*; DEEWR (unpublished), derived from *Australian Government Census of Child Care Services 2006*; ABS (unpublished), derived from *Australian Demographic Statistics*, Cat. no. 3101.0; table 3A.11.

The average hours of attendance in child care in 2008 varied considerably across jurisdictions, for all service models. Nationally, average attendance per child at centre-based long day care centres was 26.1 hours per week, while the average attendance per child at family day care was 19.7 hours per week. Nationally, the average attendance per child at occasional care was 11.4 hours per week, the average attendance per child at outside school hours care was 9.0 hours per week, and the average attendance at vacation care during school holidays was 30.1 hours per week (table 3A.10).

Service availability — proportion of children enrolled in preschool

‘Proportion of children enrolled in preschool’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure that all Australian families have equitable access to preschool services (box 3.6).

Box 3.6 Proportion of children enrolled in preschool

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

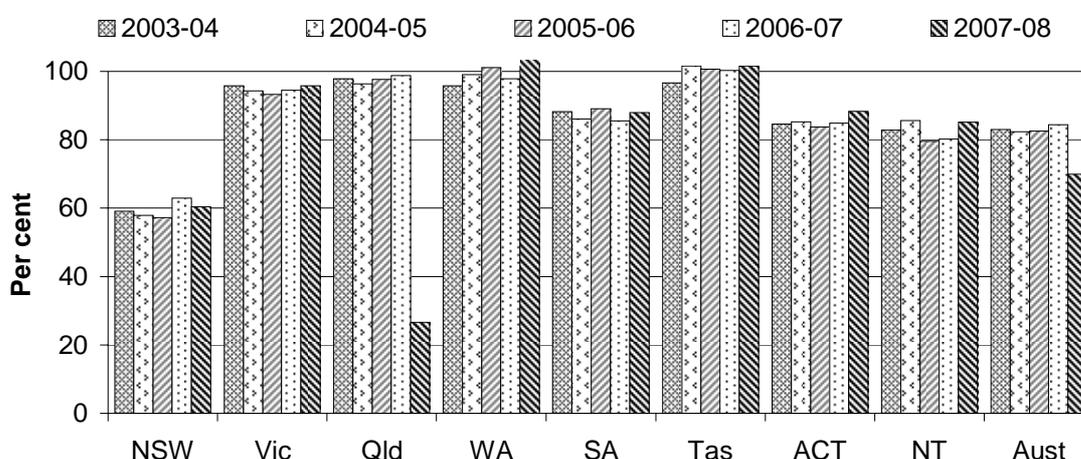
- the percentage of children attending preschool in the year before the commencement of full time schooling. 'Children aged 4 years' is used as a proxy for 'children in the year before full time schooling'.
- the percentage of younger children attending preschool.

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

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Nationally in 2007-08, 69.9 per cent of children enrolled in preschool were in the year immediately before they commenced full time school. There is some double counting in several jurisdictions, as well as issues with synchronisation of data collection times for preschool enrolments and population estimates. This may lead to an overestimation of enrolment in some states and territories (for example, where enrolment rates exceed 100 per cent) (figure 3.6). The national total for preschool enrolments in 2007-08 is not directly comparable to previous years due to the cessation of preschool and the introduction of a Preparatory Year in Queensland from 2007. The national average for 2007-08 will therefore be lower than in previous years.

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



a The figure shows the proportion of 4 year old children (a proxy for 'children in the year before fulltime school') enrolled in preschool services using data collected from State and Territory enrolment figures. The enrolment figures are divided by the number of 4 year olds in each jurisdiction, using ABS estimated resident population. The two datasets are estimated at different times of the year, and may be out of sequence with each other. Some non-4 year olds may also be included in the enrolment figures. **b** There is some double counting of children in NSW, Qld (for the period 2003-04 to 2006-07) and WA because some children moved in and out of the preschool system throughout the year and some children accessed more than one sessional program. As a result, the number of children reported in preschool exceeds the number of children in the target population. **c** NSW data only covers children in licensed funded preschools – children attending unfunded preschools and preschool programs in other licensed children's services are not shown as these data cannot be discretely counted. NSW data for 2006-07 include for the first time preschools managed by the NSW Department of Education. NSW data do not include the non-government school sector in any of the years. The count for preschool attendance includes children aged from 4 to 5 years, 11 months attending funded child care services. **d** Victorian data include 9015 eligible four year old children attending funded preschool services conducted in centre-based long day care centres. **e** Data for Queensland in 2007-08 include Indigenous Community Pre-Preparatory and Crèche and Kindergarten enrolments. Preparatory Year data are included in data on school children. **f** Data for SA include all children aged 4 years in state funded preschool services. Data in previous Reports included children aged 4 years and above in state funded preschool services, and data were revised for the 2009 Report. **g** NT preschool data for 2006-07 and 2007-08 include Catholic Mission Schools.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); ABS (unpublished), derived from *Australian Demographic Statistics*, Cat. no. 3101.0; table 3A.12.

Younger children in all jurisdictions except WA and Tasmania attended government funded preschool services in 2007-08. For all jurisdictions, excluding WA and Tasmania, around 7.3 per cent of children aged 3 years attended preschool services in that year (approximately 19 256 children). Participation in 2007-08 differed across jurisdictions, in part due to variation in policies on access to funded preschool services (table 3A.12).

All jurisdictions except NSW and Victoria provided data on the average hours of attendance for government funded and/or provided preschool services in 2007-08. For those jurisdictions that provided data for 2007-08, the average attendance of

children in the year immediately before they commenced full time schooling was between 11 and 13 hours per week (tables 3A.51, 3A.58, 3A.65, 3A.72, 3A.79 and 3A.86).

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

‘Non-standard hours of care: child care services’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure government funded and/or provided child care services meet the needs of all users (box 3.7).

Box 3.7 Non-standard hours of care: child care services

‘Non-standard hours of care: child care services’ is defined as the number of child care services providing non-standard hours of care divided by the total number of services. Data are reported by service model. Definitions of ‘standard hours’ and ‘non-standard hours’ are presented in section 3.6 ‘Definitions of key terms’.

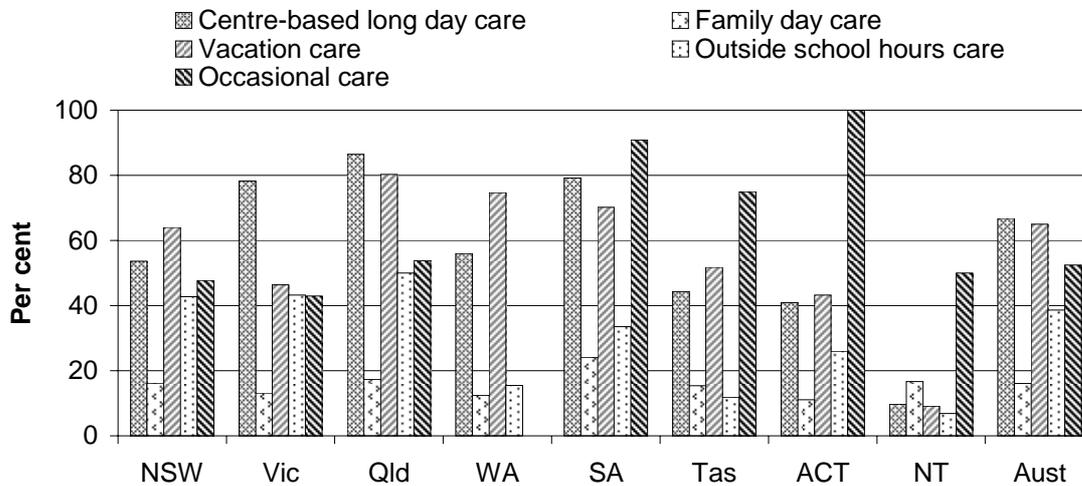
A higher proportion of services providing non-standard hours of care may suggest a greater flexibility of services to meet the needs of families.

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

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Provision of non-standard hours of care may be influenced by a range of factors, such as costs to services and parents, demand for care, availability of carers, and compliance with occupational and health and safety requirements. Figure 3.7 shows the proportion of services that provided non-standard hours of care by service model.

Figure 3.7 Australian Government approved child care services providing non-standard hours of care, by service model, 2008



Source: DEEWR (unpublished); table 3A.17.

Limited data are available on services not included in the Australian Government data set that were offering non-standard hours of care (see table 3A.18).

All states and territories were asked to provide data on the proportion of their preschools that offered non-standard hours of care in 2007-08. Only NSW and SA were able to provide data on this item (table 3A.18).

Service availability — utilisation rates

‘Utilisation rates’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure all Australian families have equitable and adequate access to children’s services (box 3.8).

Box 3.8 Utilisation rates

'Utilisation rates' is defined as the total child hours paid for as a percentage of total available hours, for centre-based long day care and family day care.

Utilisation refers to the level of usage of a service and can be measured in a number of ways, including vacancy levels and capacity to provide more hours of care. Utilisation rates can also measure how efficiently existing assets are being used. Although governments do not always directly own or operate children's services, the level of utilisation may be relevant where governments provide targeted capital or operational funding to establish or maintain services.

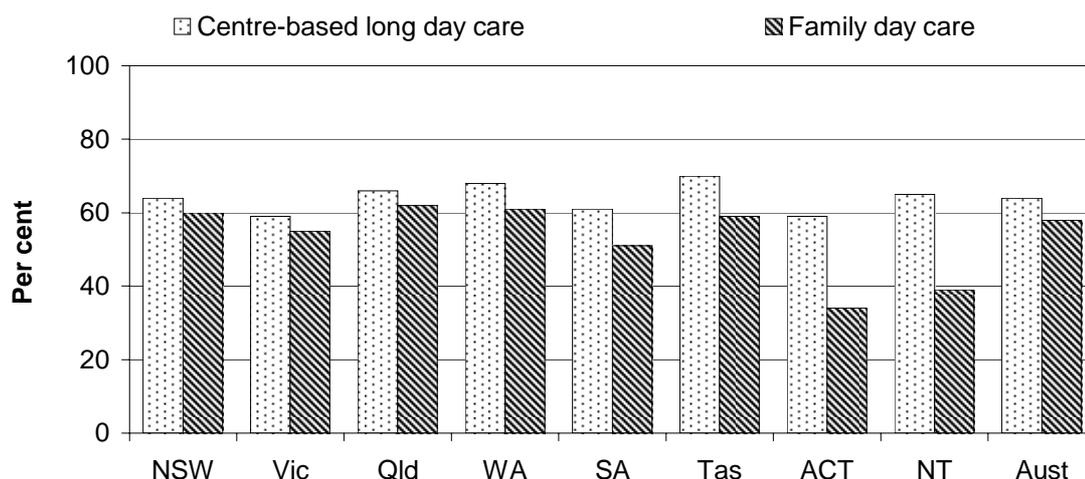
The desirable level of utilisation will depend on a number of factors. High levels of utilisation may be desirable as a measure of efficiency in situations where a community does not require additional services. An alternative view of high utilisation rates is that services are less accessible as there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

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

The utilisation rates in Australian Government approved centre-based long day care and family day care services in different jurisdictions are shown in figure 3.8.

Nationally, utilisation rates were higher for centre-based long day care (64.0 per cent) than for family day care (58.0 per cent) in 2008.

Figure 3.8 Utilisation rates, centre-based long day care and family day care, 2008 (per cent)^{a, b, c}



^a Data for 2008 are drawn from DEEWR administrative data collected through the CCB payments system and are not comparable to data reported for previous years. See box 3.1 and table 3A.19 for more information. ^b Data on services operating hours were not available for the 2008 data collection and it was assumed that family day care services were open for 35 hours per week and centre-based long day care services open for 50 hours per week. ^c Family day care data exclude in-home care.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished); table 3A.19.

Service affordability — child care service costs

‘Child care service costs’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure all Australian families have equitable access to children’s services regardless of their financial circumstances (box 3.9).

Box 3.9 Child care service costs

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

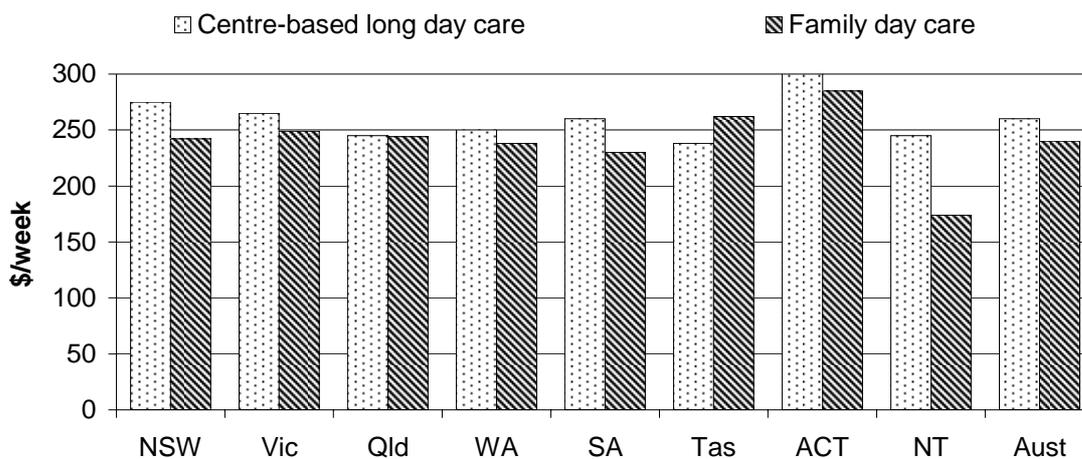
Provided the service quality is held constant, lower service costs are more desirable.

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

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Nationally, median weekly fees for 50 hours of care in 2008 were higher for centre-based long day care services (\$260) than for family day care (\$240), as shown in figure 3.9.

Figure 3.9 Median fees charged by Australian Government approved child care services, 2008 (\$/week)^{a, b, c}



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

Source: DEEWR (unpublished); table 3A.32.

Service affordability — preschool service costs

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

Box 3.10 Preschool service costs

‘Preschool service costs’ is defined as the weekly cost of preschool per child (after subsidies received by families). Data are reported as the median weekly cost per child. Median fees represent the middle value of the range of fees.

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

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

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

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Data for this indicator were obtained from the ABS 2005 *Child Care Survey* and are reported in attachment table 3A.33. Box 3.22 includes further information about the 2005 Child Care survey. Data from the ABS 2008 *Childhood Education and Care Survey* are anticipated to be available for inclusion in the 2010 Report.

Further detail about the mix of providers of preschool (community, private and government) is provided in tables 3A.41, 3A.48, 3A.55, 3A.62, 3A.69, 3A.76, 3A.83 and 3A.90.

Quality

An important focus of Australian, State and Territory governments is to set and maintain appropriate quality standards in child care and preschool services. Indicators of the quality of children’s services are:

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

These data need to be treated with caution because there are differences in reporting across jurisdictions.

Staff— qualifications

'Qualifications' in children's services is an indicator of governments' objective to ensure staff in government funded or provided children's services are able to provide services which meet the needs of children. In particular, this means ensuring staff have the training and experience to provide a safe and nurturing environment that fulfils the educational and development needs of children. Staff qualifications are a proxy indicator of staff quality (box 3.11).

Box 3.11 Qualifications

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

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

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

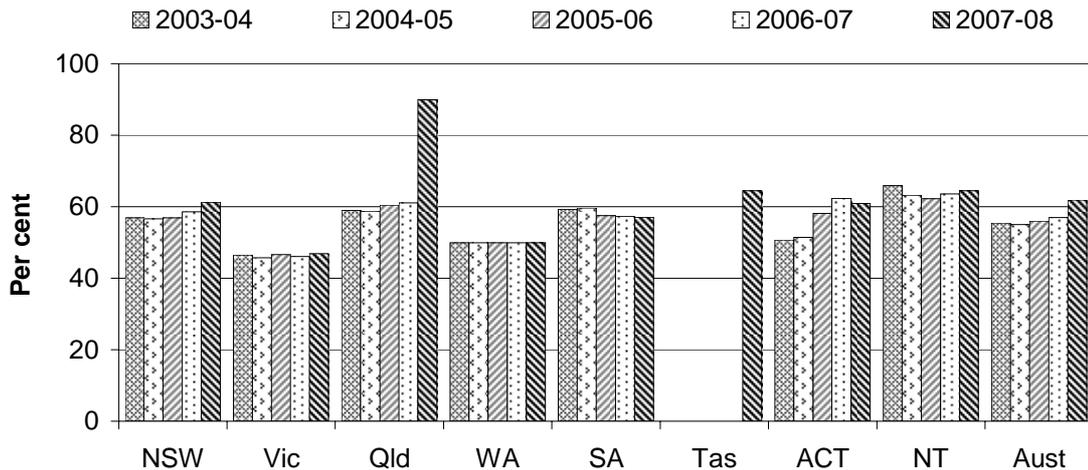
Updated data for this Report were not available.

Data for 'qualifications' were previously sourced from the AGCCCS, which was discontinued following the 2006 AGCCCS. Anticipated replacement data (for 2008) for this indicator were not available. Data for 2006 and previous years are reported in attachment table 3A.14.

Some data are available on the qualifications of staff employed by preschool services that received funding from State and Territory governments. The

proportion of preschool primary contact staff with a relevant formal qualification is reported in figure 3.10.

Figure 3.10 Paid primary contact staff with a relevant formal qualification employed by State and Territory funded and/or managed preschools^{a, b, c, d, e}



^a All preschool services in NSW, Queensland, SA and the ACT must have at least two staff, of whom one must have a relevant formal qualification. ^b In Victoria, all preschool services must have at least two staff, of whom one must have a relevant early childhood teaching qualification. The percentage of qualified teachers is less than 50 per cent because a teacher may deliver a funded kindergarten program at more than one location. ^c The 2007-08 figure in Queensland primarily relates to staff with formal qualifications in the Queensland Crèche and Kindergarten Association (C & K). Prior to 2007-08 the information presented relates to staff in Queensland Government preschools and the C & K. ^d In WA, all preschool teachers must have a formal qualification. The data assume that every teacher has an aide. Qualifications of aides are unknown and so reported as zero. ^e Data for Tasmania for 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07 are not available, but all preschool teachers must have a formal qualification.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); tables 3A.40, 3A.47, 3A.54, 3A.61, 3A.68, 3A.75, 3A.82 and 3A.89.

Ongoing staff development

‘Ongoing staff development’ in children’s services is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure staff in government funded or provided children’s services are able to provide services that meet the needs of children. In particular, this means ensuring staff have the training and experience to provide a safe and nurturing environment that fulfils the educational and development needs of children. Ongoing development of the skills and competencies of child care and preschool staff is another proxy indicator of staff quality (box 3.12).

Box 3.12 Ongoing staff development

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

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

Data for this indicator are not directly comparable.

Updated data for this Report were not available.

Data for 'ongoing staff development' were previously sourced from the AGCCCS, which was discontinued following the 2006 AGCCCS. Anticipated replacement data (for 2008) for this indicator were not available and data for 2006 and previous years are reported in attachment table 3A.15. NSW, Victoria, Queensland and the ACT were able to provide data on the proportion of preschool staff undertaking training in 2007-08 (tables 3A.40, 3A.47, 3A.54 and 3A.82).

Standards

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

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

Standards — licensing

'Licensing' is an indicator of governments' objective to ensure government funded or provided children's services meet the minimum standards considered necessary to provide a safe and nurturing environment, and to meet the educational and development needs of children. State and Territory governments are responsible for licensing children's services in their jurisdictions (box 3.13).

Box 3.13 Licensing

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

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

This indicator does not provide information on the degree to which licensing translates into higher quality service outcomes above the minimum standards of care. State and Territory governments also undertake other activities aimed at the promotion of quality, such as publishing curriculum materials and other resources, and undertaking consumer education.

Data for this indicator are not complete.

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

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

The service models covered by legislation vary across jurisdictions (table 3.4).

Table 3.4 State and Territory licensing of children's services, 2008^a

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

^a Children's services are regulated in accordance with the requirements of the relevant legislation in each jurisdiction. ^b WA licenses individual carers, regardless of whether they belong to a scheme, but schemes are not licensed. ^c In this table, 'other care' refers to all other government regulated care, for example, nannies, playschools and in-home care. Jurisdictions may licence some, but not all, types of 'other care' services. ^d NSW is progressively introducing regulation of school-based services. The NSW Department of Education and Training provides preschools in 100 government schools. In Tasmania, kindergartens not in government schools are registered with the Schools Registration Board.

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

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished).

Standards — monitoring and inspection regimes

All states and territories monitor performance against the standards set for children's services, in order to ensure that high quality services are delivered to the community. Table 3.5 provides an overview of the monitoring and inspection regimes that operate in the jurisdictions.

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

Table 3.5 State and Territory monitoring and inspection regimes, for licensed children's services 2007-08

<i>Monitoring activities</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld^a</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>
<i>Proactive monitoring:^b</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Required frequency of inspections ^c	Annual	Annual	Biannual	Annual	At least once a year	Quarter	Quarter	Biannual
Estimated share announced visits ^d	75%	6%	46%	43%	5%	97%	60%	80%
Estimated share unannounced inspections ^e	25%	94%	54%	57%	95%	3%	40%	20%
<i>Reactive monitoring:^f</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Data provided on substantiated breaches arising from complaints ^g	x	✓	x	✓	x	✓	✓	✓
<i>Sanctions for breaches:^h</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Under-performing services incur follow-up or more frequent inspections	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Number of prosecutions initiated against services during 2007-08 ⁱ	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–

^a Information for Queensland excludes government and non-government preschools, but includes kindergartens. ^b 'Proactive monitoring' refers to the ongoing program of visits/inspections to services that are determined by legislation and/or the monitoring policies in each jurisdiction. ^c In WA, from July 2007, licensed services receive an annual visit. During the first two years of the licence period, these visits are unannounced. The licence renewal visit in the third year is an announced visit. In SA, the required frequency of inspections is dependent on the type of licensed service. ^d Announced visits are scheduled with the service provider, and include, but are not limited to, consultative and advisory meetings. ^e Unannounced inspections of services are used to assess performance against licence conditions, including, but not limited to, investigations of complaints. Unannounced inspections allow the operation of the service to be monitored under normal operational circumstances. ^f A 'reactive monitoring' regime may be triggered by either a complaint or a service's failure to comply with legislative requirements. ^g See detailed data in attachment tables 3A.42, 3A.49, 3A.56, 3A.63, 3A.70, 3A.77, 3A.84, 3A.91. ^h Jurisdictions may apply a wide range of actions to underperforming services. These actions may include administrative and/or statutory sanctions, including prosecution. Not all sanctions are included in this table. ⁱ 'Prosecutions' refer to all prosecutions against services that are brought under the relevant children's services Act in each jurisdiction. – Nil or rounded to zero.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished).

Standards — accredited child care services

'Accredited child care services' is an indicator of the Australian Government's objective to ensure government funded or provided child care services meet the standards considered necessary to provide a safe and nurturing environment, and to meet the educational and development needs of children. Accredited services have

been independently evaluated against a series of national quality standards for the specific child care service model. The NCAC administers quality assurance systems for centre-based long day care, family day care schemes and outside school hours care services across Australia (box 3.14).

Box 3.14 Accredited child care services

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

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

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

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

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

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

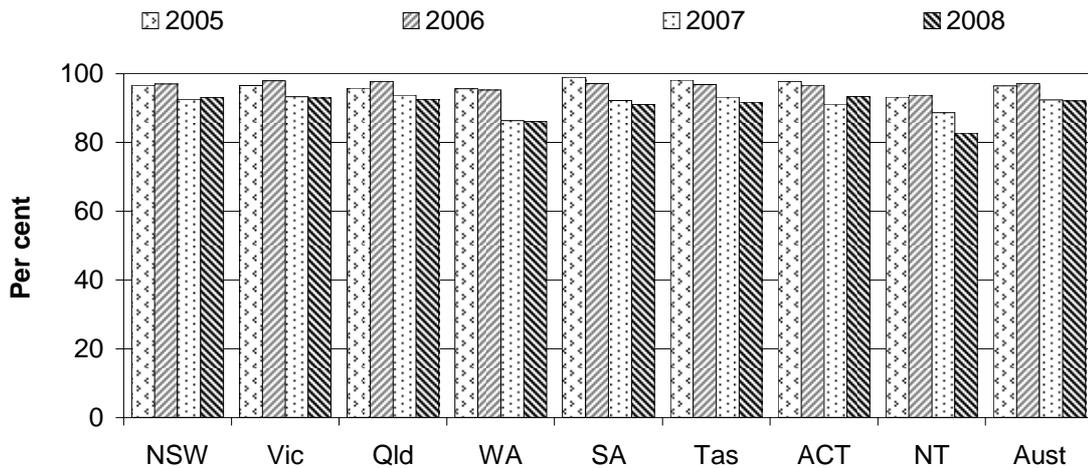
The standards include the expected performance against a variety of ‘quality areas’, depending on the service model. For example, the QIAS details centre-based long day care performance against the following seven ‘quality areas’:

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

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

Nationally, of the 5597 centres registered to participate in the QIAS at 30 June 2008, 4796 centres had received an accreditation decision (table 3A.3). Of the centres assessed, 92.1 per cent (4419 centres) were successful in achieving accreditation (figure 3.11). The centres that do not meet accreditation standards (377 centres) are required to submit another self study report to NCAC within six months of the date of NCAC's accreditation decision. At 30 June 2008, a further 801 centres (14.3 per cent of those registered to participate in QIAS) were in self-study, review or moderation, or awaiting an accreditation decision (table 3A.3).

Figure 3.11 **Accredited centres as a proportion of centres fully assessed under the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System^{a, b}**



^a Data as at 30 June in each year. Figures may change daily and are updated every six weeks following an NCAC meeting. ^b Results for Tasmania, the ACT and the NT may be unduly influenced by the relatively small number of services (78, 85 and 43 respectively at 30 June 2008) participating in the process.

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

Nationally, 316 family day care schemes were registered with NCAC at 30 June 2008. Of these, 295 schemes had received an accreditation decision. Of the schemes assessed, 96.3 per cent (284 services) were accredited. Eleven schemes were not accredited and 21 were in self-study, validation or moderation, or awaiting an accreditation decision (table 3A.3).

At 30 June 2008, there were 3324 outside school hours care services registered to participate in OSHCQA (table 3A.3). Of the 2807 services that had received an accreditation decision at 30 June 2008, 91.7 per cent (2575 services) were

successful in achieving accreditation. A further 517 services were in self-study, validation or moderation, or awaiting an accreditation decision (table 3A.3).

Health and safety — health and safety quality

‘Health and safety quality’ in children’s services is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure children’s services meet the care, educational and development needs of children in a safe and nurturing environment (box 3.15).

Box 3.15 Health and safety quality

‘Health and safety quality’ has one measure for family day care, defined as:

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

This indicator has two measures for long day care, defined as:

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

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

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

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

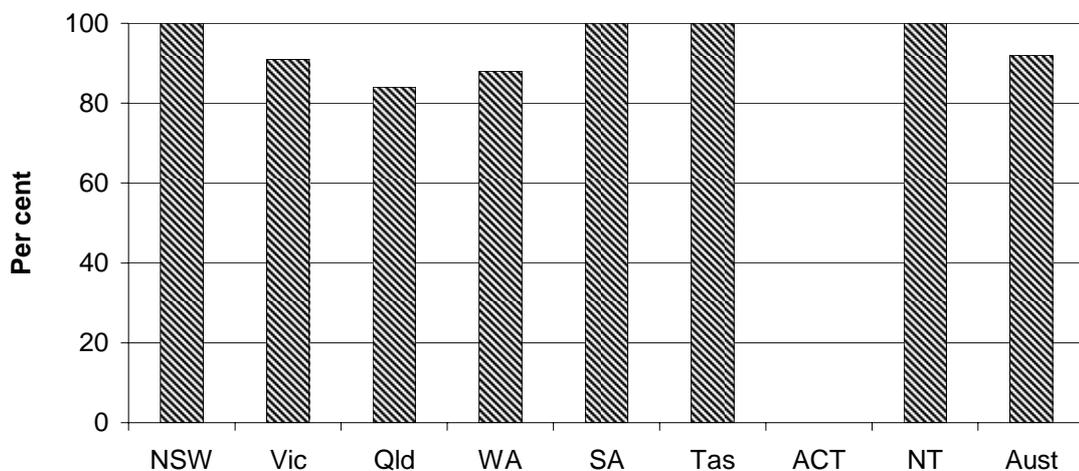
- data presented cover family day care schemes and long day care centres
- data do not include preschool/kindergarten services, as NCAC assessments are limited to child care services
- data are only presented for those services that have undergone accreditation in the 12 month reporting period (services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

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

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

Nationally, in 2007-08, 92.0 per cent of family day care schemes achieved satisfactory or above ratings for the NCAC ‘health, hygiene, nutrition, safety and wellbeing’ quality area (figure 3.12).

Figure 3.12 Proportion of family day care schemes that achieved satisfactory or above ratings for NCAC health, hygiene, nutrition, safety and wellbeing quality area, 2007-08^{a, b}



^a Data are only presented for those services that have undergone accreditation in the 12 month reporting period (services are only accredited once during any 2.5 year period). ^b No ACT family day care schemes were assessed during the period 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008.

Source: NCAC (unpublished); table 3A.35.

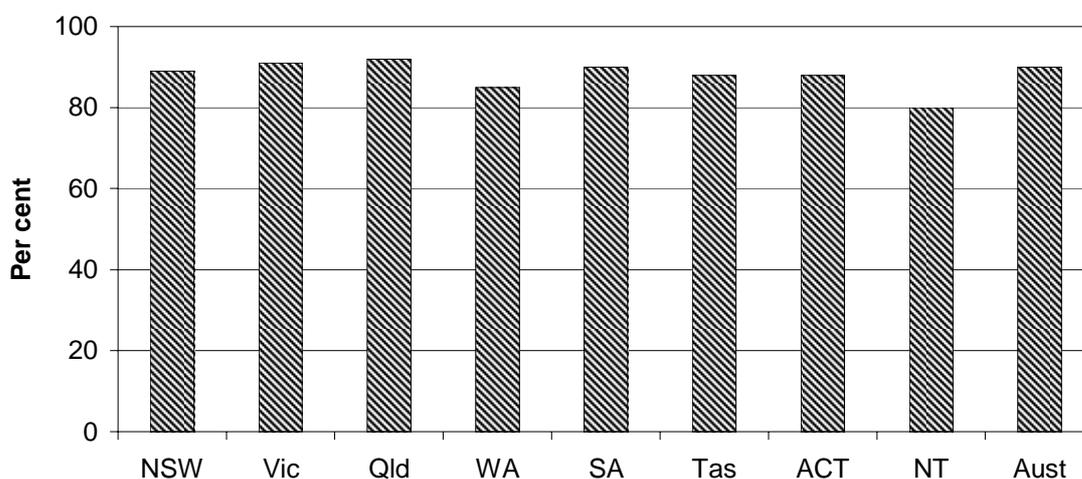
For long day care, the quality area ‘protective care and safety’ includes the following principles for which an assessment is made:

- staff act to protect each child
- staff supervise children at all times

- staff ensure that potentially dangerous products, plants and objects are inaccessible to children
- the centre ensures that buildings and equipment are safe
- the centre promotes occupational health and safety.

Nationally, in 2007-08, 90.0 per cent of long day care centres achieved satisfactory or above ratings for the NCAC 'protective care and safety' quality area (figure 3.13).

Figure 3.13 Proportion of long day care centres that achieved satisfactory or above ratings for NCAC protective care and safety quality area, 2007-08^a



^a Data are only presented for those services that have undergone accreditation in the 12 month reporting period (services are only accredited once during any 2.5 year period).

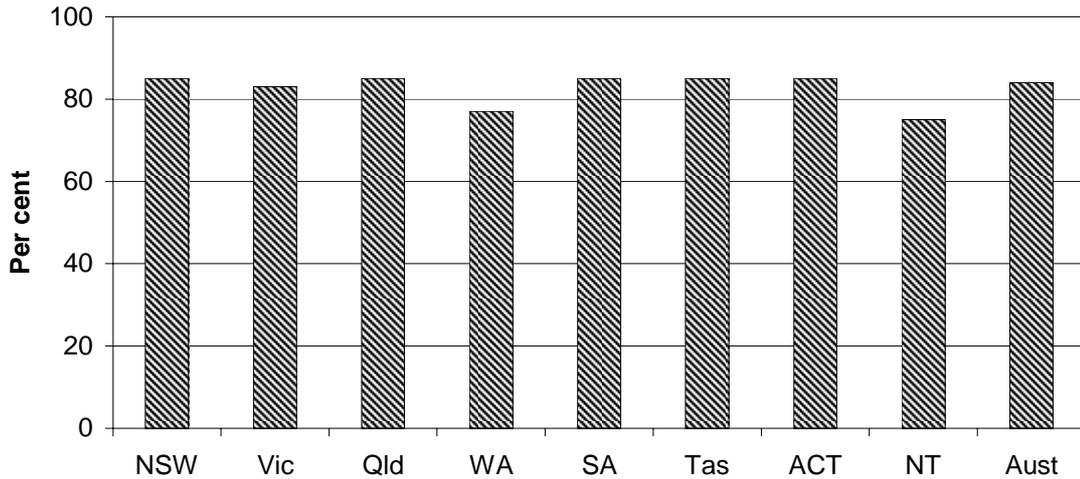
Source: NCAC (unpublished); table 3A.35.

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

- staff promote healthy eating habits
- staff implement effective and current food safety and hygiene practices
- staff encourage children to follow simple rules of hygiene
- staff ensure toileting and nappy changing procedures are positive experiences
- staff support each child's needs for rest, sleep and comfort
- the centre acts to control the spread of infectious diseases and maintains records of immunisations.

Nationally, in 2007-08, 84.0 per cent of long day care centres achieved satisfactory or above ratings for the NCAC 'health, nutrition and wellbeing' quality area (figure 3.14).

Figure 3.14 Proportion of long day care centres that achieved satisfactory or above ratings for NCAC health, nutrition and wellbeing quality area, 2007-08^a



^a Data are only presented for those services that have undergone accreditation in the 12 month reporting period (services are only accredited once during any 2.5 year period).

Source: NCAC (unpublished); table 3A.35.

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

'Hospital separations for external causes of injury' is a proxy indicator of governments' objective to ensure that children's services meet the care, educational and developmental needs of children in a safe and nurturing environment (box 3.16).

Box 3.16 Hospital separations for external causes of injury

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

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

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

For children aged 0–4 years, the term 'school' incorporates a range of formal children's services settings including kindergarten, preschool and centre-based child care services. The data may capture children who were injured at these services without necessarily attending them. Family day care services, which are typically provided in the carer's home, are not likely to be covered by this term. External cause refers to the environmental event, circumstance or condition that causes the injury. Persons admitted to hospital as a result of a pre-existing illness or condition (such as asthma), are excluded.

All hospital separation data need to be interpreted with care. Nationally, no place of occurrence was reported for 34.5 per cent of hospitalisations of children aged 0–4 years in 2006-07 (table 3A.34). As a result, this indicator should be interpreted as the minimum number of hospital separations for an external cause of injury that occurred in children's services.

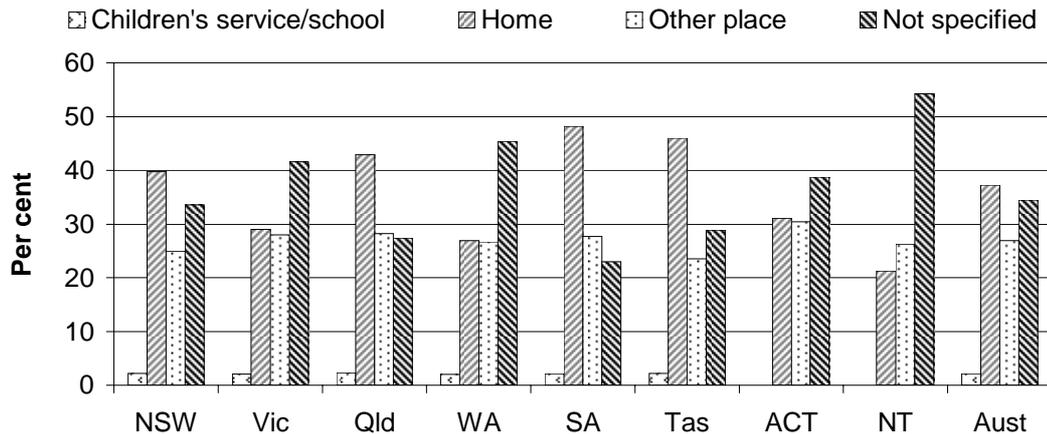
Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

In 2006-07, there were 30 512 injuries to children aged 0–4 years that resulted in a hospital admission in Australia (table 3A.34). Males accounted for approximately 58.5 per cent of these admissions. In total, the most common causes of injury to children aged 0–4 years were falls (29.2 per cent), exposure to mechanical forces (20.8 per cent) and complications of medical and surgical care (20.2 per cent). (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) unpublished). Males and females generally experienced similar causes of injury.

Nationally, in 2006-07, 37.3 per cent of injuries requiring hospitalisation occurred in the child's home. This reflects the fact that children in this age group spend the majority of their time in the home and about half do not attend formal care. Across available jurisdictions, on average 2.0 to 2.3 per cent of injuries were reported as

occurring at a 'school' (which includes day nursery, centre-based child care, and public or private kindergartens and preschools) (figure 3.15).

Figure 3.15 Hospital separations for external causes of injury for children aged 0–4 years, proportion by place of occurrence, 2006-07 ^{a, b, c, d, e}



^a External cause refers to the environmental event, circumstance or condition that causes the injury. People admitted to hospital as a result of a pre-existing existing illness or condition, such as asthma, are excluded. ^b A hospital separation is an episode of care for a person admitted to a hospital. ^c Separations without an external cause and those for which care type was reported as newborn with no qualified days, and records for hospital boarders or posthumous organ procurement are excluded. ^d Data are withheld for injuries occurring in 'children's services/school' in the NT due to the small number of injuries reported. The data presented for Australia does not include NT. ^e Due to the high levels of non-reporting for place of occurrence, all hospital separations data need to be interpreted with care.

Source: AIHW (unpublished), derived from *Australian Hospital Statistics 2006-07*; table 3A.34.

Client satisfaction — substantiated breaches arising from complaints

'Substantiated breaches arising from complaints' is an indicator of governments' objective to ensure government funded or provided children's services meet the needs and expectations of users (box 3.17).

Box 3.17 Substantiated breaches arising from complaints

‘Substantiated breaches arising from complaints’ is defined as the number of substantiated breaches arising from complaints divided by the total number of registered or licensed services. Results are presented by service model. Data on the proportion of substantiated breaches arising from complaints against which action was taken are also reported. Breaches identified as a result of normal monitoring and inspection visits are excluded from these data.

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

One complaint can include multiple breaches.

Complaints data need to be interpreted with care, because:

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

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

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

Victoria, WA, Tasmania, the ACT and the NT provided data on the number of substantiated breaches arising from complaints and allegations of regulation breaches made to the State and Territory government regulatory bodies in 2007-08 (tables 3A.49, 3A.63, 3A.77, 3A.84 and 3A.91).

Efficiency

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

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

‘Total government expenditure per child in the community’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to maximise the availability and quality of services through the efficient use of taxpayer resources (box 3.18).

Box 3.18 Total government expenditure per child in the community

‘Total government expenditure per child in the community’ is defined as Australian Government expenditure and State and Territory government expenditure on children’s services per child in the community aged 0–12 years. All Australian Government expenditure reported for this indicator is provided for child care services, whereas State and Territory government expenditure covers both child care and preschool services.

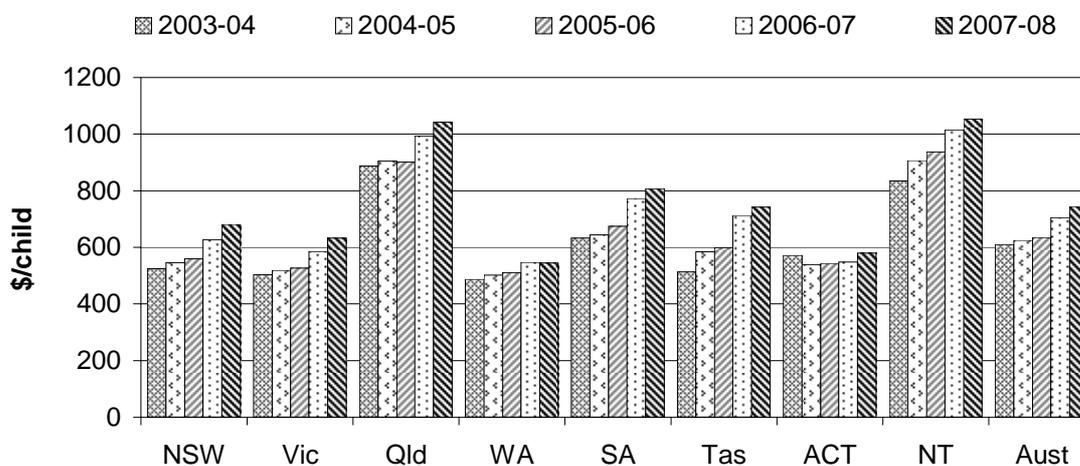
Expenditure data per child is reported separately for the Australian Government and State and Territory government, as well as a combined expenditure figure per child.

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

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

After adjusting for inflation to calculate the ‘real’ value of expenditure in previous years, Australian Government expenditure on children’s services per child in the community at a national level increased by 22.0 per cent between 2003-04 and 2007-08, to \$744 (figure 3.16).

Figure 3.16 Australian Government real expenditure on children's services per child in the community aged 0–12 (2007-08 dollars)^{a, b, c, d}



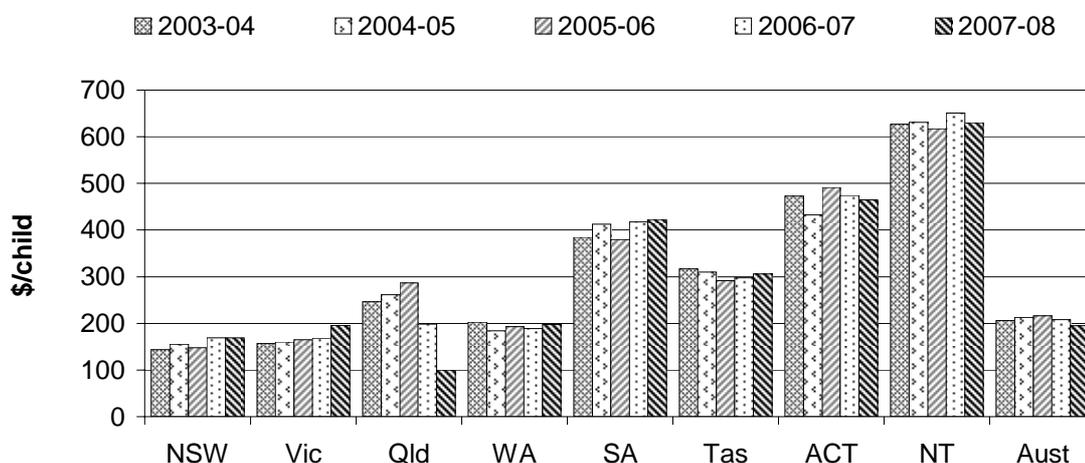
^a Includes administration expenditure, other expenditure on service provision, financial support to families and net capital expenditure on child care services. ^b The Australian total includes a component of expenditure that cannot be disaggregated by State and Territory. ^c Expenditure for 2006-07 and 2007-08 includes payment of Child Care Tax Rebate (CCTR). Prior to 2006-07, CCTR was paid as a rebate through the tax system. ^d Estimated resident population as at 31 December 2007. The Australian total includes children in other territories.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished); ABS (unpublished), derived from *Australian Demographic Statistics*, Cat. no. 3101.0; table 3A.26.

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

Nationally in 2007-08, State and Territory government expenditure on children's services was \$195 per child (figure 3.17). The apparent drop in Queensland expenditure per child between 2005-06 and 2006-07 is due to only six months' data on State preschools being included in 2006-07. The reduction in 2007-08 Queensland expenditure data is due to the cessation of State preschools in December 2006 and the introduction of the Preparatory Year in schools from January 2007.

Figure 3.17 **State and Territory government real expenditure on children's services per child in the community aged 0–12 (2007-08 dollars)^{a, b, c}**

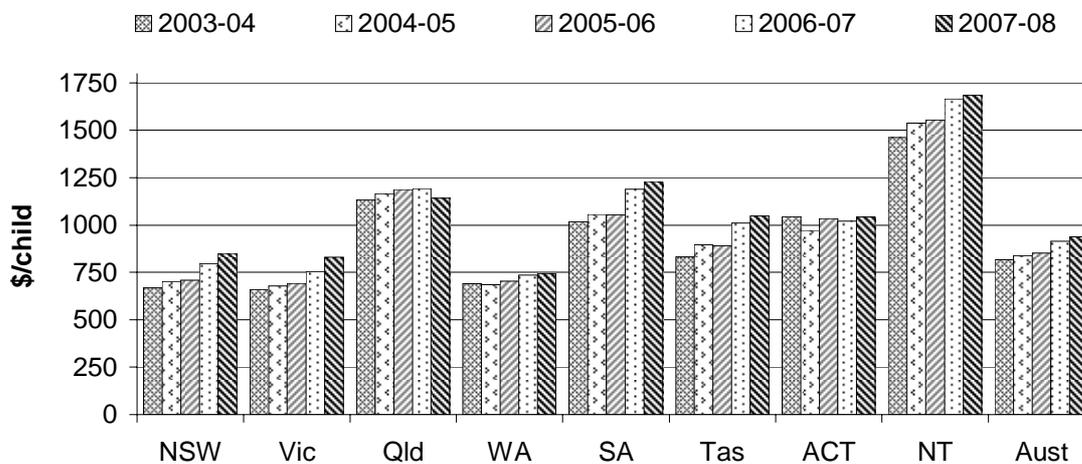


a Includes administration expenditure, other expenditure on service provision, financial support to families, and net capital expenditure on child care and preschool services. **b** The apparent drop in Queensland expenditure per child between 2005-06 and 2006-07 is due to only six months' data on State preschools being included in 2006-07. The reduction in 2007-08 Queensland expenditure data is due to the cessation of State preschools in December 2006 and the introduction of the Preparatory Year in schools from January 2007. Preparatory Year data is included in data on school children in 2007-08. **c** The decrease in SA expenditure per child aged 0–12 years from 2004-05 is due to the exclusion of all Australian Government contributions, which SA currently administers, from the total State/Territory real expenditure on children's services.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); ABS (unpublished), derived from *Australian Demographic Statistics*, Cat. no. 3101.0; table 3A.27.

Figure 3.18 shows the combined expenditure from both the Australian Government and the State and Territory governments per child in the community aged 0–12 years over the period 2003-04 to 2007-08.

Figure 3.18 Total government real expenditure on children’s services per child in the community aged 0–12 (2007-08 dollars)^{a, b}



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

^b See notes to figures 3.16 and 3.17 for further detail on the Australian Government’s and State and Territory governments’ expenditure data.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); ABS (unpublished), derived from *Australian Demographic Statistics*, Cat. no. 3101.0; tables 3A.26 and 3A.27.

Inputs per output unit — Australian government expenditure per child attending approved children’s services (dollars per child)

‘Australian Government expenditure per child attending approved children’s services’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to maximise the availability and quality of services through the efficient use of taxpayer resources (box 3.19).

Box 3.19 Australian Government expenditure per child attending approved children's services

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

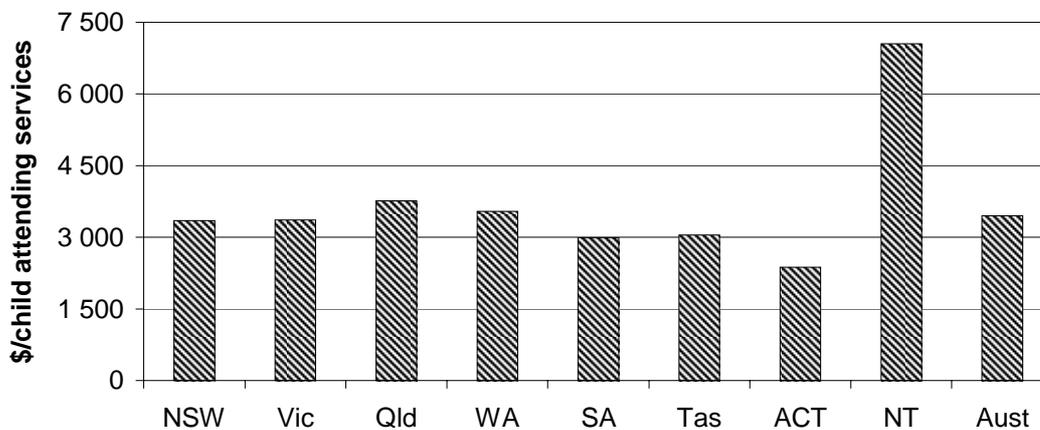
Provided the level and quality of, and access to, services remains unchanged, lower expenditure per child can indicate greater efficiency of government expenditure.

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

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Figure 3.19 shows expenditure by the Australian Government on each child aged 0–12 years attending Australian Government approved child care services. Nationally in 2008, Australian Government expenditure per child attending approved child care services was \$3451.

Figure 3.19 Australian Government expenditure per child aged 0–12 attending Australian Government approved child care services, 2008^{a, b, c, d}



^a Includes expenditure for some children aged greater than 12 years, including Indigenous children and children with special needs who may be older than 12 years. ^b Data for 2008 are drawn from DEEWR administrative data collected through the CCB payments system, and are not comparable to data reported for previous years. See box 3.1 and table 3A.28 for more information. ^c Children attending approved services in 2008 are counted once, even if attending more than one type of service during the reference week. ^d Attendance counted as the number of children attending approved care in all services except Vacation Care during the week 18-24 February 2008. Vacation care attendance was measured during week 21-27 January 2008.

Source: DEEWR (unpublished); table 3A.28.

Outcomes

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

Family needs

‘Family needs’ in children’s services is an indicator of governments’ objective for children’s services to provide support for families in caring for their children, to allow the needs of the family to be met (box 3.20).

Box 3.20 Family needs

'Family needs' is defined as the proportion of all children in formal care, whose parents were seeking additional formal care for work related reasons.

This measure addresses the need for families to participate in the labour force without child care being a barrier to this participation.

Development is underway to investigate other measures associated with 'family needs'.

Data for this indicator were not available for the 2009 Report and are anticipated to be available for the 2010 Report.

Demand for (additional) child care

'Demand for (additional) child care' is an indicator of governments' objective to ensure children's services meet the requirements of all Australian families. Expressed need for additional child care indicates the extent to which children's services are not meeting demand by families (box 3.21).

Box 3.21 Demand for (additional) child care

'Demand for (additional) child care' is defined as the proportion of children aged under 12 years for whom additional services were required in the four weeks before the survey interview.

A lower proportion of children for whom additional services were required indicates demand by families is being met to a greater extent. This indicator has some limitations as a measure of unmet demand. The focus on the four-week period before the survey interview excludes families who may desire additional childcare on a more permanent, or ongoing, basis.

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Data for this indicator were obtained from the ABS 2005 *Child Care Survey* and are reported in attachment tables 3A.29–3A.31. Box 3.22 includes further information about the 2005 survey. Data from the ABS 2008 *Childhood Education and Care Survey* are anticipated to be available for inclusion in the 2010 Report.

Box 3.22 ABS Child Care Survey

The ABS Child Care Survey is conducted every three years throughout Australia, as a supplement to the Labour Force Survey. The latest survey was conducted in June 2005 (ABS 2006).

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

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

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

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

The ABS has redeveloped the Child Care Survey to include a new topic on Early Years Learning. This topic was integrated into the 2008 Childhood Education and Care Survey which was conducted in June 2008. It is anticipated that data will be available for the 2010 Report.

Out-of-pocket costs

'Out-of-pocket costs' is an indicator of governments' objective that all Australian families have equitable access to children's services regardless of their financial circumstances (box 3.23).

Box 3.23 Out-of-pocket costs

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

Lower out-of-pocket costs for child care as a proportion of weekly disposable income (after child care subsidies) represents more affordable child care. Similar percentages across income groups suggest a more equitable outcome.

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

Data reported for this indicator are comparable.

Updated data for this Report were not available.

Data for 'out-of-pocket costs' were previously sourced from the AGCCCS, which was discontinued following the 2006 AGCCCS. Anticipated replacement data (for 2008) for this indicator were not available. Data for 2006 can be found in the 2008 Report and attachment tables.

Children's needs

'Children's needs' is an indicator of governments' objective to provide children's services that meet the care, education and development needs of children, in a safe and nurturing environment (box 3.24).

Box 3.24 Children's needs

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

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

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

Development is underway to investigate a broad set of measures for 'children's needs' using data from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (box 3.25) and/or the Australian Early Development Index (box 3.26).

Box 3.25 Longitudinal Study of Australian Children

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

The LSAC was initiated and is funded by FaHCSIA, with the AIFS having responsibility for the design and management of the study.

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

For more information on the LSAC, refer to <http://www.aifs.gov.au/growingup>.

LSAC and outcomes for children

The LSAC Outcome Index, attached to each infant and child in the Study, is a composite measure that indicates how children are developing across Physical, Social/Emotional and Learning domains of competence.

The Outcome Index provides a means of summarising the development of children across multiple domains, and wherever possible incorporates both positive and negative outcomes (see AIFS 2005b for more details).

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

Box 3.26 Australian Early Development Index (AEDI)

The Australian Early Development Index: Building Better Communities for Children project will enable communities to understand how their children are developing at the time they reach school age. The AEDI is based on the Canadian Early Development Instrument and is a measure of young children's development from a teacher-completed checklist. The AEDI measures five developmental domains:

- language and cognitive skills
- emotional maturity
- physical health and wellbeing
- social competence
- communication skills and general knowledge.

The purpose of the AEDI project is to measure the health and development of populations of children, to help communities assess how well they are doing in supporting young children and their families. Previously, there has been no method to monitor early child development at a community level, or to understand how local circumstances might be changed to improve children's life chances. Over the three years of the project, up to 60 communities will implement the AEDI.

Supporting children in the years before school greatly increases their chances of a successful transition to school and better learning outcomes whilst at school. The AEDI provides community members and families with the opportunity to understand the health and development of local children, and facilitates increased collaboration between schools, early childhood services, and local agencies supporting children and families.

By using the AEDI to map children's development, it is possible to begin to identify and understand the influence of socioeconomic and community factors on children's development. The AEDI can also be used to monitor changes over time.

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

Source: <http://www.rch.org.au/australianedi/index.cfm>

3.4 Future directions in performance reporting

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

Improving reporting of existing indicators

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

Future indicator development

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

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

Reform of Specific Purpose Payments

In December 2007, COAG agreed to reform Specific Purpose Payments (SPPs). SPPs are financial agreements between the Australian Government and State and Territory governments involving a contribution by the Australian Government to the funding of services which are considered a joint Australian and State and Territory government responsibility.

At its 29 November 2008 meeting, COAG agreed to six new National Agreements (none specific to children's services, although COAG agreed that funding for early childhood education would be delivered through a National Agreement after 2012-13) (COAG 2008a). Five of the new Agreements are associated with a National SPP. Under the reforms, the National Agreements contain the objectives, outcomes, outputs and performance indicators for the relevant service areas. The performance of governments in achieving these mutually agreed outcomes will be assessed by the COAG Reform Council (CRC). The Steering Committee has been requested by COAG to provide the SPP performance information to the CRC (COAG 2008b).

The National Agreements/SPPs will be supplemented by a range of National Partnerships (NPs): project, facilitation and reward agreements. Funding for NPs

may be conditional on states and territories meeting agreed milestones and performance benchmarks. There were two NPs agreed that are directly relevant to children's services (COAG 2008b).

The Steering Committee and the Children's Services Working Group will ensure that reporting in this chapter reflects the COAG priorities identified in the relevant NPs.

Improving the completeness and comparability of data

Potential new sources of data

Several new sources of data may be able to be used in future Reports:

- A National Minimum Data Set (NMDS) for children's services has been developed, which provides a framework for collecting a set of nationally comparable data for child care and preschool services. The NMDS was developed by the AIHW, under the guidance of the Children's Services Data Working Group (CSDWG). The CSDWG is a working group established by the National Community Services Information Management Group, a subgroup of the CDSMAC. The AIHW has published the final report on the development of the NMDS. CDSMAC has funded a feasibility study into implementation of this set of data elements and this project is currently underway.
- The ABS 2008 Childhood Education and Care Survey will integrate the current ABS Child Care Survey with a new topic on Early Years Learning (EYL). The EYL will seek to provide large-scale data on children's learning activities and environments in their early years. The ABS conducted the survey in June 2008 and data are expected to be available in mid 2009, for inclusion in the 2010 Report.
- The Longitudinal Study of Australian children (LSAC) is a longitudinal study that aims to examine the impact of Australia's unique social, economic and cultural environment on children growing up in Australia today (see box 3.24 for more information).
- The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) measures young children's development from a teacher-completed checklist (see box 3.25 for more information).
- Progressively from January 2008, all Australian Government approved child care services will be required to report all child care usage and vacancy information through the Child Care Management System (CCMS).

3.5 Jurisdictions' comments

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

Australian Government comments

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Late in 2007 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to substantial reform in the areas of education, skills and early childhood development, and deliver significant improvements in human capital outcomes for all Australians. The early childhood education and child care reform agenda is being advanced through COAG processes set up to enable the delivery of the reforms through cooperative federalism, and by all levels of government. This agenda focuses on providing Australian families with high quality, accessible and affordable integrated early childhood education and child care. It also has a strong emphasis on ensuring all children are fully prepared for learning and life through the integration of child care with early childhood education and improving the quality of early childhood services. The Office of Early Childhood Education and Child Care was established by the Government in early 2008 to deliver the Government's key commitments to the agenda, as well as guiding major national policy reform.

In the 2008-09 Budget, the Australian Government has committed to fund a range of initiatives under the agenda, these include:

- \$114.5 million over four years to establish 38 additional Early Learning and Care Centres as part of the Government's commitment to establish up to 260 additional Early Learning and Care Centres.
- \$533.5 million over five years from 2007-08 towards ensuring that, by 2013, every child will have access to 15 hours of affordable, quality early childhood education programs per week, for 40 weeks a year, in the year before formal schooling, delivered by university-trained early childhood teachers in a range of settings including child care, to meet the needs of working families. Additional funding of \$450 million per annum will be available once fully implemented.
- increasing the Child Care Tax Rebate (CCTR) to 50 per cent, up to \$7500 per child per year from 1 July 2008. CCTR payments can also now be received either quarterly or annually.
- \$22.2 million over four years towards a new National Quality Framework for early childhood education and care, including the development of national quality standards, new regulatory arrangements and a quality rating system
- \$2.5 million over 2008-09 to develop a national Early Years Learning Framework. This framework will underpin the delivery of nationally consistent and quality early childhood education across sectors and jurisdictions.
- investing \$126.6 million over four years to develop a National Early Years Workforce Strategy, this includes removing TAFE Fees for Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas, paying half the HECS-HELP debt of early childhood teachers teaching in disadvantaged areas, and funding more early childhood education university places.

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New South Wales Government comments



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

In 2008, the NSW Government commenced a fundamental review of the NSW regulatory framework for children's services. The Review provides an opportunity to build on the strengths of the NSW integrated approach to the delivery of early childhood services; to shift the regulatory focus on to what benefits children the most by setting standards in line with the latest research evidence; to reduce unnecessary regulation; and to streamline administrative requirements to make them more cost effective for both the sector and Government to administer.

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

Preschools are an integral part of children's services in NSW. The NSW Government's \$85 million *Preschool Investment and Reform Plan* is now within its third and final stage, which focuses on growing and expanding the sector. From 2008-09 onwards, the NSW Government will invest \$29.8 million per annum to expand the number of subsidised preschool places for another 10 500 children. Total expenditure under the Government's Children's Services Program for 2008-09, including funding under the Preschool Investment and Reform Plan, will be \$144 million.

Another NSW initiative that commenced in 2008 is the staged expansion of regulation to school-based children's services. Incorporating services operating from school sites within the children's services regulatory framework will provide equity for service operators and ensure a consistent quality of early childhood education and care is provided to NSW families. Licensing of school-based children's services will be implemented over the next three years on a geographical basis.

2007-2008 also saw the introduction of registration for out of school hours care (OSHC) services in NSW. Registration is the first stage of a proposed two stage regulatory development process to introduce a regulatory framework for the OSHC sector. Over 2550 services have been registered since registration commenced in February 2007.



Victorian Government comments



The Victorian Government believes that every Victorian child deserves the best possible start in life. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development released in September 2008 outlines reforms to improve outcomes for children and young people and articulates shared goals for all Victoria's children.

The focus is on integrating early childhood services and linking them much more closely with schools. An Early Years Learning and Development Framework for children is being developed and transition plans for children starting primary school are being piloted.

A flagship project is the Children's Capital Program that includes \$38.56 million over four years in grants to build and improve integrated early childhood facilities in the state. A total of \$17.2 million has already been invested and includes 11 new integrated children's centres and grants to local governments for municipal wide infrastructure redevelopment planning. Many of these children's centres are located on or near school sites. The existing State and local government partnerships in establishing these services is now articulating with the Australian Government's Early Learning and Care Centres.

The Victorian Government investment in a year of high quality kindergarten in the year before school, across a range of settings including long day care continues. Funding to early childhood education and care has increased by 158 per cent since 1999. This has included increasing the kindergarten fee subsidy so that 16 500 children with concession cards can access 10 hours of quality early childhood education at no cost. A similar initiative has been extended to three year old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Early childhood education and care workforce initiatives aim to attract and retain staff and to improve quality. Scholarships are encouraging people into early childhood careers, with an emphasis on attracting teachers to long day care services, and building the workforce in rural and disadvantaged areas.

Victoria is the first jurisdiction in Australia to introduce legislative protections for children with severe, life threatening allergies. The new legislation requires children's services to provide a safe and supportive environment where children diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis can fully participate. Free comprehensive anaphylaxis management training has been provided to more than 11 500 children's services staff.

Victoria is currently reviewing the children's services legislation. At a time when young children are spending longer hours in children's services, a strong regulatory system will ensure children's development and welfare is promoted. The *Children's Legislation Amendment Act 2008* will extend regulation to Family Day Care and Outside School Hours Care services ensuring that minimum standards are maintained across all formal child care types. It is anticipated that the new regulations will come into effect in May 2009.



Queensland Government comments

“ Queensland children will have the best preparation for school and life under significant reforms announced in September 2008, under *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland*, a state-wide plan for the future. Recognising children's early years are critical to their development, the Queensland Government is taking action to ensure all Queensland children have access to a high quality early childhood education, in the year prior to full time schooling.

By 2014, the Queensland Government will have established an extra 240 kindergarten services across Queensland. In so doing, the State will invest up to \$300 million to build new or extended kindergartens that will cater for approximately 12 000 children not currently attending any early childhood education and care centres. Where possible, new services will be co-located with schools. The Queensland Government is also working with the Australian Government to ensure child care centres are supported to employ qualified early childhood teachers and provide a recognised early education program.

The Queensland Government also established a new Office for Early Childhood Education and Care, which reports to the Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts. Operational from January 2009, the Office brings together responsibility for early education and child care services in one agency to deliver on the early years reform agenda.

In 2008, the Queensland Government invested an additional \$24.4 million in early learning programs in 35 remote Indigenous communities. Under the *Bound for Success* program, the total investment over the next two years (2008–2010) is \$40.7 million. These services provide a strong foundation on which to build from as Queensland rolls out its strategy for achieving universal access to a Kindergarten program.

Queensland is committed to supporting families most in need and has continued implementing a range of initiatives to enable parents access to integrated services including early childhood education and care, child health and family support programs. Two Early Years Centres are operating, with another two planned.

In addition, during 2007-08 the Queensland Government commenced a review of the *Child Care Act 2002*. As a first step, in 2008 amendments were made to the *Child Care Regulation 2003* to: improve safeguards for children in child care; reduce the regulatory burden on services; improve the requirements for enrolment, completion and monitoring of child care staff study; and to broaden the areas of study for school age care staff. This phase of the review of the Act also concentrated on informing the development of nationally-streamlined legislation in line with the Council of the Australian Governments' early childhood development reforms.

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Western Australian Government comments

“ The Department for Communities was established in July 2007. It is the lead agency for the development and implementation of the across State Government early childhood agenda (which encompasses the Council of Australian Government reform agenda). Initiatives include the establishment of 25 early learning and care centres on school, TAFE and community sites; the development of quality standards and an early years learning framework across care and education settings; increased access to kindergarten for four year old children; the development of five Indigenous children and family centres; and collaboration on the National early childhood workforce strategy. The State's Best Start program will be expanded to improve school readiness for Indigenous children. The review of the State Occasional Child Care program is complete; and will re-focus the delivery to Indigenous, rural and remote communities.

The Review of the State Child Care legislation and regulations is complete and involved a wide consultation. The implementation of the 28 recommendations, the drafting of the regulations and the amendments to the *Child Care Services Act 2007* will streamline and strengthen the regulatory framework. The Child Care Licensing and Standards Unit has commenced a program of annual monitoring visits and increased the number of unannounced visits. A new model of child care for rural and remote areas is being developed. Reciprocal agency child protection protocols for dealing with the abuse of a child in a child care centre are being finalised.

Pre-compulsory education (kindergarten and pre-primary) lays the foundation for compulsory education. The Department of Education and Training provides a 11 hours per week kindergarten program for children aged four years of age by 30 June in any given year. In 2008 there were 495 public school kindergartens and 26 Aboriginal kindergartens providing culturally appropriate learning programs. There are also 36 community kindergartens which are managed by a voluntary parent committee.

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

The Early Childhood (K-3) Syllabus 2007 is an advisory resource which provides clarity for teachers on what should be taught in the early phase of development of learning, teaching and assessment programs. The Syllabus supports teachers to make professional judgements about individual student learning.”

South Australian Government comments

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In July 2008 the Government of South Australia created the Early Childhood Development ministerial portfolio. This portfolio reflects an increasing commitment by the government and places significant importance on the education, care, health and wellbeing of young children.

An internationally recognised authority in early childhood development, Dr Fraser Mustard, has recognised South Australia as a world leader in early childhood development. Dr Mustard, lived and worked in South Australia as an Adelaide Thinker in Residence during 2006-07.

His recently released report *Investing in the Early Years: Closing the Gap Between What We Know and What We Do (2008)* confirms South Australia's position as an international leader in early childhood development and makes recommendations to further strengthen this position.

The Early Childhood Development portfolio directly responds to Dr Mustard's recommendation for a whole of government approach to early childhood development and builds on and strengthens our already established Inter-Ministerial Committee: Early Childhood Development.

Under the auspices of the responsible Ministers, the Inter-Ministerial Committee brings together the key government areas of Education and Children's Services; Mental Health and Substance Abuse; Families and Communities; Premier and Cabinet; Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation; Health; Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology; Treasury and Finance; Attorney-General; and the Guardian for Children and Young People.

The South Australian Government's investment in the early years continues with seven of the 20 planned Children's Centres for Early Childhood Development and Parenting already open. The remaining centres are due to open in 2010. Our Children's Centres are widely acknowledged as an excellent example of integrated universal provision of education, care, health and family support services.

South Australia is continuing the reform of education and early childhood development legislation. The aim is to progressively enact modern legislation that underpins and supports the stronger integration of birth to year 12 services to achieve better outcomes for children and families.

The Government of South Australia also has a strong focus on addressing the inequalities faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children through targeted literacy support in early years and access to preschool from the age of three years. An extra 13 full time equivalent teacher positions have been employed in preschools to support Aboriginal children. In 2007-08, 77 per cent of three year old Aboriginal children were enrolled in preschool, an increase of 12 per cent from 2006-07.

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Tasmanian Government comments

“ Tasmania is continuing to consolidate its whole of government approach to the early years. The focus is on strategies and programs that promote and support the importance of the early years for children’s successful learning and development, acknowledging the importance of relationships between parents, communities and school/child care services.

Launching into Learning is a \$12.6 million commitment over four years (2007–2010) to the provision of learning opportunities prior to kindergarten. Its philosophy is to intentionally support parents as their child’s first, ongoing and often most influential teachers. It also recognises, values and enhances the initiatives that have previously been developed in some school communities. 98 schools are now involved, including all schools with an Educational Needs Index over 70.

The Let’s Read program is a national early literacy initiative that promotes and supports parents to read aloud with young children from birth to five years of age. The financial commitment in Tasmania is \$675 000 over three years (2007–2009). A liaison officer is working with local communities covering all 29 local government areas to implement the program as those communities are ready, including the management of training, delivery of information packs and books, follow up and community events.

Programs funded through the *Skills to Care* initiative (\$140 000 over 4 years) have been successful in their first year and are now operating in other areas of the State. These programs are aimed at reducing the turnover of staff in the child care sector by providing additional support to new graduates and those new to leadership positions.

In late 2007, the Minister’s Child Care Advisory Council identified recruitment and retention of suitable staff as its main priority and developed a successful budget bid to support the Recognition process. \$750 000 will be available over three years, commencing in 2009. The project will result in a significant increase in the number of qualified carers, the target group being carers who do not have an appropriate qualification yet have relevant skills and knowledge. The first stage will include establishing and training a pool of assessors (coaches) within the sector to provide support in the workplace for those undertaking the recognition process. In conjunction with the expert practitioners, specific recognition assessment tools will be developed, and validated by the sector’s peak bodies. This program will build on and complement the Child Care Scholarships program, the *Skills to Care* initiative, and the *Skills for Growth* (the TAFE Tasmania Recognition Centre) initiative.

In addition to continuing with the State government’s initiatives, 2008-2009 will also focus on implementing the Australian Government’s initiatives, including the Universal Access to Early Childhood Education programs, the national Early Years Learning Framework, National Child Care Quality Standards, the roll out of the AEDI and the establishment of the first round of new Early Learning and Child Care Centres.”

Australian Capital Territory Government comments

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The ACT Government seeks to ensure the children of Canberra are encouraged and supported to reach their full potential. These goals are articulated through the ACT Children's Plan, a whole of government policy framework for children up to 12 years of age for the period 2004–2014. This plan guides decisions about policies, programs and services for children.

The Office for Children, Youth and Family Support (OCYFS) within the ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services works in partnership with the community to provide early intervention services, family and community support, and care and protection services to children and young people. OCYFS provides or funds specific services to meet the needs of the people of Canberra including: child and family centres; youth justice services; family support; monitoring and licensing of children's services; and care and protection services.

The Children's Policy and Regulation Unit within OCYFS has responsibility for the monitoring and licensing of children's services. *The Children and Young People Act 2008* was passed in August 2008. The Child Care Chapter of the Act will commence in February 2009 .

The ACT Children's Services Forum brings together ACT children's services stakeholders to inform issues impacting on the ACT licensed children's services sector. In 2008 an *ACT Children's Services Forum Workforce Subcommittee* was established to consider issues related to the child care workforce and to develop strategies to address those issues.

In 2008 the ACT Government launched *'Early Childhood Schools – A Framework for their development as learning and development centres for children (birth to eight) and their families'* in 2008. This document provides a foundation for the development of four new early childhood schools to be opened in 2009.

In 2008 all ACT public preschools amalgamated with their local primary school to support the continuity of learning. All ACT public schools catering for primary aged students offer up to two years of non-compulsory education.

The ACT Government has demonstrated its commitment to providing universal access to preschool. In 2009 the ACT will commence implementation of access to 15 hours of free preschool education to children who turn 4 on or before 30 April. This will be implemented in the new early childhood schools from 2009 and be incrementally established within all government preschool programs and child care services from 2010.

The Koori Preschool Program was expanded to provide nine hours of preschool education to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (in addition to local preschool). This has been received favourably by the community with numbers increasing at all five sites.

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Northern Territory Government comments

“ The Northern Territory recently established the Early Childhood Services Division within the Department of Education and Training that brought together the children’s services from the Department Health and Community Services and the early years of school from Teaching, Learning and Standards. Key focus areas for the Division include improving the wellbeing and learning outcomes of all children, promoting the capacity of families and communities to care for children, enhancing service integration and supporting early year’s educators.

Comparability of data across jurisdictions continues to be difficult. The data still consistently shows lower participation levels of Indigenous children in child care services, but the data does not include participation in other children’s service types that exist in the Northern Territory, such as innovative child care services, JET crèches, mobile services and playgroups. These service types are the preferred service models for many Indigenous communities. The Northern Territory Government’s collaboration with the Australian Government will see an increase in the number of children’s services, particularly in remote areas.

The Northern Territory Government continues to implement *Closing the Gap of Indigenous Disadvantage: A Generational Plan of Action*. Priority areas include:

- development of new regulations for children’s services
- the delivery of programs to support the development and learning of children age 0–5 years
- establishing six additional mobile preschools in small remote communities with 21 teachers and assistants.

The Northern Territory Government continues to provide access to universal preschool education for four year old children. At five years of age, children attend all-day universally available transition education. Trials of earlier age of entry to preschool and transition education are continuing and will inform future policy development.”

3.6 Definitions of key terms

Administration expenditure	Administration expenditure includes all expenditure by the responsible departments associated with the provision of licensing, advice, policy development, grants administration and training services. Responsible departments include those departments that administer policy for, fund, and license/accredit child care and preschool services in each jurisdiction.
Australian Government approved child care service	A service approved by the Australian Government to receive Child Care Benefit (CCB) on behalf of families.
Centre-based long day care	Services aimed primarily at 0–5 year olds that are provided in a centre, usually by a mix of qualified and other staff. Educational, care and recreational programs are provided based on the developmental needs, interests and experience of each child. In some jurisdictions, primary school children may also receive care before and after school, and during school vacations. Centres typically operate for at least eight hours per day on normal working days, for a minimum of 48 weeks per year.
Child care services	The meeting of a child's care, education and developmental needs by a person other than the child's parent or guardian. The main models of service are centre-based long day care, family day care, outside school hours care (before/after school hours and 'pupil free days' care), vacation care, occasional care and other care.
Children	All resident male and female Australians aged 12 years or younger at 30 June of each year (unless otherwise stated).
Children from low income families	Families who are receiving the maximum rate of Child Care Benefit.
Children from non-English speaking backgrounds	Children living in situations where the main language spoken at home is not English.
Children's services	All government funded and/or provided child care and preschool services (unless otherwise stated).
Counting rules	Prescribed standards, definitions and mathematical methods for determining descriptors and performance indicators for monitoring government services.
Disability related care	Care of children who have a developmental delay or disability (including an intellectual, sensory or physical impairment), or who have parent(s) with a disability.
External cause (of injury)	The environmental event, circumstance or condition that causes an injury.
Family day care	Services provided in the carer's home. The care is largely aimed at 0–5 year olds, but primary school children may also receive care before and after school, and during school vacations. Central coordination units in all states and territories organise and support a network of carers, often with the help of local governments.
Financial support to families	Financial support to families includes any form of fee relief paid by governments to the users of children's services (for example, Child Care Benefit).
Formal child care	Organised care provided by a person other than the child's parent or guardian, usually outside of the child's home — for example, centre based long day care, family day care, outside school hours care, vacation care and occasional care (excluding babysitting).

Formal qualifications	Early childhood-related teaching degree (three or four years), a child care certificate or associate diploma (two years) and/or other relevant qualifications (for example, a diploma or degree in child care [three years], primary teaching, other teaching, nursing [including mothercraft nursing], psychology and social work).
Full time equivalent staff numbers	A measure of the total level of staff resources used. A full time staff member is employed full time and engaged solely in activities that fall within the scope of children's services covered in the chapter. The full time equivalent of part time staff is calculated on the basis of the proportion of time spent on activities within the scope of the data collection compared with that spent by a full time staff member solely occupied by the same activities.
Government funded or/and provided	All government financed services — that is, services that receive government contributions towards providing a specified service (including private services eligible for Child Care Benefit) and/or services for which the government has primary responsibility for delivery.
Hospital separation	An episode of care for a person admitted to a hospital. It can be a total hospital stay (from admission to discharge, transfer or death) or portions of hospital stays beginning or ending in a change of type of care (for example from acute to rehabilitation) that cease during a reference period.
Indigenous children	Children of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin who self identify or are identified by a parent or guardian to be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait islander origin.
Informal child care	Child care arrangements provided privately (for example, by friends, relatives, nannies) for which no government assistance (other than the minimum rate of Child Care Benefit for Registered Care) is provided. Such care is unregulated in most states and territories.
In-home care	Care provided by an approved carer in the child's home. Families eligible for in-home care include those where the parent(s) or child has an illness/disability, those in regional or remote areas, those where the parents are working shift work or non-standard hours, those with multiple births (more than two) and/or more than two children under school age, and those with a breastfeeding mother working from home.
In-service training	Formal training only (that is, structured training sessions that may be conducted in-house or externally), including training in work or own time but not training towards qualifications included in obtaining formal qualifications. It includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • management or financial training • training for additional needs children (such as children with a disability, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children and children from a culturally diverse background • other child care-related training • other relevant courses (such as a first aid certificate).
Licensed services	Those services that comply with the relevant State or Territory licensing regulations. These regulations cover matters such as the number of children whom the service can care for, safety requirements and the required qualifications of carers.

Net capital expenditure	Expenditure on the acquisition or enhancement of fixed assets, less trade-in values and/or receipts from the sale of replaced or otherwise disposed of items. Capital expenditure does not include expenditure on fixed assets which fall below threshold capitalisation levels, depreciation or costs associated with maintaining, renting or leasing equipment.
Non-standard hours of care	Defined by service model as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • centre-based long day care — providers of service for more than 10 hours per day on Monday to Friday and/or service on weekends • preschool — providers of service for more than six hours per day, for stand alone preschools only • family day care — providers of service for more than 50 hours per week and/or service overnight and/or on weekends • outside school hours care: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – before/after school care (providers of service for more than two hours before school and three hours after school) • vacation care (providers of service for more than 10 hours per day) • occasional care — providers of service for more than eight hours per day • other — providers of service for more than 10 hours per day.
Occasional care	Services usually provided at a centre on an hourly or sessional basis for short periods or at irregular intervals for parents who need time to attend appointments, take care of personal matters, undertake casual and part time employment, study or have temporary respite from full time parenting. These services provide developmental activities for children and are aimed primarily at 0–5 year olds. Centres providing these services usually employ a mix of qualified and other staff.
Other expenditure on service provision	Expenditure on service provision includes all recurrent expenditure on government funded and/or provided child care and preschool services except administration and financial support to families. It includes one-off, non-capital payments to peak agencies that support child care and preschool service providers.
Other services	Government funded services to support children with additional needs or in particular situations (including children from an Indigenous or non-English speaking background, children with a disability or of parents with a disability, and children living in regional and remote areas).
Other territories	A separate category for data collections, which includes Jervis Bay Territory, the Territory of Christmas Island and the Territory of Cocos (Keeling) Islands.
Outside school hours care	Services provided for children enrolled in schools (4–12 year olds) outside school hours during term and vacations. Care may be provided on student free days and when school finishes early.
Preschool services	Services usually provided by a qualified teacher on a sessional basis in dedicated preschools. Preschool programs or curricula may also be provided in long day care centres and other settings. These services are primarily aimed at children in the year before they commence full time schooling (that is, when children are 4 years old in all jurisdictions), although younger children may also attend in most jurisdictions.
Primary contact staff	Staff whose primary function is to provide child care and/or preschool services to children.

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

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

3.7 Attachment tables

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

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Single jurisdiction data – NSW	
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Table 3A.37	Characteristics of child care and preschool services not included by the Australian Government, New South Wales
Table 3A.38	Children aged 0–12 years using State Government funded and/or provided child care and preschool services, by age, New South Wales
Table 3A.39	Staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, New South Wales

Table 3A.40	Paid staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, by qualification and experience, New South Wales
Table 3A.41	Licensed and/or registered service providers, by management type, New South Wales
Table 3A.42	Substantiated breaches arising from complaints about State Government registered or licensed service providers, New South Wales

Single jurisdiction data – Vic

Table 3A.43	State Government real expenditure on child care and preschool services, Victoria (2007-08 dollars) (\$'000)
Table 3A.44	Characteristics of child care and preschool services not included by the Australian Government, Victoria
Table 3A.45	Children aged 0–12 years using State Government funded and/or provided child care and preschool services, by age, Victoria
Table 3A.46	Staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, Victoria
Table 3A.47	Paid staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, by qualification and experience, Victoria
Table 3A.48	Licensed and/or registered service providers, by management type, Victoria
Table 3A.49	Substantiated breaches arising from complaints about State Government registered or licensed service providers, Victoria

Single jurisdiction data – Qld

Table 3A.50	State Government real expenditure on child care and preschool services, Queensland (2007-08 dollars) (\$'000)
Table 3A.51	Characteristics of child care and preschool services not included by the Australian Government, Queensland
Table 3A.52	Children aged 0–12 years using State Government funded and/or provided child care and preschool services, by age, Queensland
Table 3A.53	Staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, Queensland
Table 3A.54	Paid staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, by qualification and experience, Queensland
Table 3A.55	Licensed and/or registered service providers, by management type, Queensland
Table 3A.56	Substantiated breaches arising from complaints about State Government registered or licensed service providers, Queensland

Single jurisdiction data – WA

Table 3A.57	State Government real expenditure on child care and preschool services, Western Australia (2007-08 dollars) (\$'000)
Table 3A.58	Characteristics of child care and preschool services not included by the Australian Government, Western Australia
Table 3A.59	Children aged 0–12 years using State Government funded and/or provided child care and preschool services, by age, Western Australia

Table 3A.60	Staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, Western Australia
Table 3A.61	Paid staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, by qualification and experience, Western Australia
Table 3A.62	Licensed and/or registered service providers, by management type, Western Australia
Table 3A.63	Substantiated breaches arising from complaints about State Government registered or licensed service providers, Western Australia

Single jurisdiction data – SA

Table 3A.64	State Government real expenditure on child care and preschool services, South Australia (2007-08 dollars) (\$'000)
Table 3A.65	Characteristics of child care and preschool services not included by the Australian Government, South Australia
Table 3A.66	Children aged 0–12 years using State Government funded and/or provided child care and preschool services, by age, South Australia
Table 3A.67	Staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, South Australia
Table 3A.68	Paid staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, by qualification and experience, South Australia
Table 3A.69	Licensed and/or registered service providers, by management type, South Australia
Table 3A.70	Substantiated breaches arising from complaints about State Government registered or licensed service providers, South Australia

Single jurisdiction data – Tas

Table 3A.71	State Government real expenditure on child care and preschool services, Tasmania (2007-08 dollars) (\$'000)
Table 3A.72	Characteristics of child care and preschool services not included by the Australian Government, Tasmania
Table 3A.73	Children aged 0–12 years using State Government funded and/or provided child care and preschool services, by age, Tasmania
Table 3A.74	Staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, Tasmania
Table 3A.75	Paid staff employed by State Government funded and/or managed child care and preschool service providers, by qualification and experience, Tasmania
Table 3A.76	Licensed and/or registered service providers, by management type, Tasmania
Table 3A.77	Substantiated breaches arising from complaints about State Government registered or licensed service providers, Tasmania

Single jurisdiction data – ACT

Table 3A.78	State Government real expenditure on child care and preschool services, Australian Capital Territory (2007-08 dollars) (\$'000)
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Table 3A.79	Characteristics of child care and preschool services not included by the Australian Government, Australian Capital Territory
Table 3A.80	Children aged 0–12 years using State Government funded and/or provided child care and preschool services, by age, Australian Capital Territory
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Table 3A.91	Substantiated breaches arising from complaints about State Government registered or licensed service providers, Northern Territory

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