

NOT-FOR-PROFIT EDUCATION AND CARE:

high quality, accessible and resilient

Findings of the 2019 Trends in Community Children's Services Survey

November 2020



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Why this report?

Education and care services help children to get the best start in life and help parents by ensuring that children are receiving the vital high quality early childhood education they need.

Australia has a large and patchy system for the provision of education and care to children in the years before school and to children in primary school out of school hours (vacation care and before and after school care). It is well regulated and the qualifications and numbers of staff are mandated under these regulations.

This report is about research conducted over a number of years into the provision of early education and care by not-for-profit, community based entities – local government, parent bodies, and charities. These governance models are far reaching, supporting a wide cross section of Australian communities, including communities who experience vulnerability and disadvantage.

Education and care services are rated against a National Quality Standard (NQS) to determine their quality. Evidence shows that over the years, not-for-profit services have consistently been rated as higher quality than for-profit services. This report elaborates on this evidence, demonstrating that the supporting the workforce through better conditions and equipping educational leaders with the resources and time they need are key ingredients that lead to better quality outcomes.

The research is longitudinal and sheds a light on trends over almost a decade on:

- Educator to child ratios
- Utilisation
- Waiting lists
- Fees, including increases
- Experiences in implementing the NQF
- Existing and emerging vulnerabilities in communities and
- Experiences with regard to recruiting and retaining staff

Prue Warrilow

Convenor, Australian Community Children's Services

Key Terms and acronyms

| | |
|------------|--|
| ACCS | Australian Community Children's Services. ACCS is the national peak body for community based not-for-profit education and care services. It advocates for the right of Australia's children to access quality not-for profit community-owned education and care. Since 1982, ACCS has advocated for these services, building on the strong history of its predecessor, the National Association of Community Based Children's Services (NACBCS). ACCS is a volunteer led organisation. |
| ACECQA | Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority |
| ACCS | Additional Child Care Subsidy |
| CCCF | Community Child Care Fund |
| CCS | Child Care Subsidy |
| CPI | Consumer Price Index |
| NDIS | National Disability Insurance Scheme |
| NQF | National Quality Framework |
| NQS | National Quality Standard |
| OSHC | Outside School Hours Care |
| Quintile | Groupings that result when a population is ranked in an order, such as socio-economic advantage or disadvantage, and that population is divided into 5 equal groups. |
| QUT | Queensland University of Technology |
| Remoteness | This report uses the ASGC (in full) remoteness classification developed by the ABS. |
| RTO | Registered Training Organisation |
| TICCSS | Trends in Community Children's Services Survey |
| VET | Vocational Education and Training |



A word about language

Traditionally education and care services that were provided by councils, parent bodies and charities in Australia have been referred to as community based children's services. Increasingly education and care services are being delivered by corporations and businesses and the term not-for-profit services is being used to distinguish those services where any profit made is reinvested into the enterprise and the primary aim of the provision is not generation of profit. Whereas once the sorts of services that provided education and care to children were called children's services, the most frequently used name for these services is now education and care services. Although the survey that this research reports on is called *Trends in Community Children's Services Survey*, this report uses the terms **education and care services** and **not-for-profit services**. There is also dissension in the education and care sector about the use of the term services, which suggests that a service is being provided to a client and which undermine the partnership that families, educators and educational leaders have, but we have again followed the National Law terminology in referring to these settings as services.

What is the TICCSS survey?

Australia's education and care system is delivered by a range of services. The governance and ownership of these services vary from corporate providers, privately owned chains, small family-owned businesses, and not-for profit providers, also referred to as community based providers. Not-for-profit education and care services are operated as social enterprises which deliver public infrastructure for the long term. Not-for-profit services are auspiced by a range of different providers including local government, religious organisations, educational institutions, parent associations/co-operatives and other non-government organisations. Not-for-profit services operate all types of education and care services including centre based early childhood education and care (long day care centres/ kindergartens/ preschools) occasional care centres, outside school hours care, and home based care such as family day care and in-home care. Not-for-profit services include emerging models of integrated child and family centres, and flexible innovative models for rural communities and for children and families with additional needs.



The TICCSS dataset sheds a light on trends in quality of care, accessibility and affordability, educator and teacher conditions and entitlements, and the overall impact of policy initiatives such as the NQF, the introduction of new child care subsidy mechanisms and the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

There have been significant public policy changes that have impact on education and care services in Australia. The *Trends in Community Children's Services Survey (TICCSS)* is a longitudinal study that began in 2012. Over 5 waves, it has sought to measure the experiences of not-for-profit services in the implementation of one such policy change, the *National Quality Framework for Education and Care Services*. Australian Community Children's Services (ACCS) supported and continues to support the National Quality Agenda, which through the NQF aims to improve the quality of education and care services in Australia. ACCS, as the peak body for not-for-profit, community-owned education and care services, felt that TICCSS survey would help track the unique experiences of not-for-profit community education and care across Australia over a period of significant transformation.

ACCS recognises that research is vital to track the implementation of these reforms, ensuring the experiences of services are recognised, providing identification of the positive outcomes of these changes as well as any challenges that require policy attention. ACCS is acutely aware of the limited sources for information on the experiences of education and care services and, in particular, of not-for-profit services. The TICCSS dataset sheds a light on trends over almost a decade on:

- The provision of quality care in services
- How services support accessibility and affordability for all families
- Teachers' and educators' conditions and entitlements
- The functional aspects of managing early and middle education and care services
- The overall impact of policy initiatives such as the NQF, the introduction of new Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Responses in all TICCSS waves were as varied as the early and middle years education and care sector, representing all states and territories; a range of service sizes, from small to very large; a range of metropolitan, regional and remote areas in Australia; and from small stand-alone services to large providers. The respondents deliver a range of services including long day care, outside of school hours care (OSHC), kindergarten/preschool, family day care, occasional care and mobile services for rural and remote families.

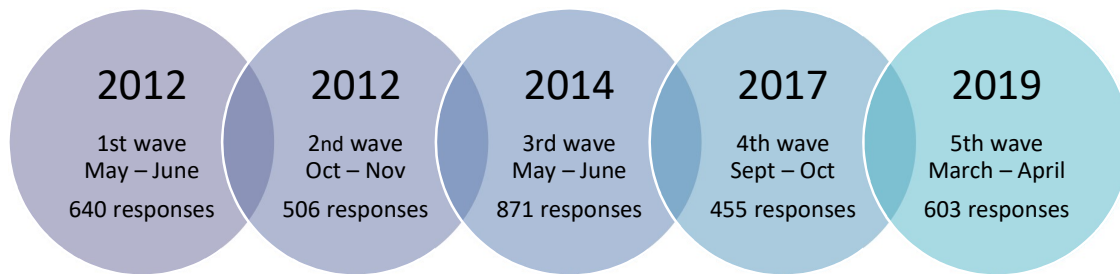
Details of the demographic profile of respondents to the 2019 survey are provided in Appendix B.

TICCSS is designed to be explorative and findings are intended to be indicative, not representative of what is happening in the sector. The findings from TICCSS will provide vital information to track government policy changes in the sector targeted to continuously improve education and care for children. They may also assist in identifying areas where more extensive research could be conducted.

The 2017 and 2019 surveys received ethics approval from the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Human Research Ethics Committee.

Data for each wave of TICCSS has been collected through Survey Monkey. Distribution utilised a snowball technique to gather the sample through ACCS membership and informal networks. Email and social media invitations to participate in the survey are circulated through members and contacts requesting them to forward the survey to their networks.

Table 1. TICCSS survey waves



Concurrent with the 2017 survey were three other industry surveys. This may have impacted on response rates.

TICCSS Wave 6 is scheduled for December 2020 – January 2021 and includes an investigative lens on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the pandemic education and care services have supported child and family wellbeing by providing a safe space. However, they have faced unprecedented impacts on their workforce and their viability. The TICCSS Wave 6 will illuminate the impacts of these issues.

Navigating this report

This report is divided into four sections each presenting evidence around key areas of experience of the National Quality Framework (NQF) and two special spotlight sections.

Quality – this section presents evidence around quality improvement that not-for-profit education and care services have achieved since the implementation of the NQF. Education and care services are assessed and rated by their state and territory regulatory authority against the *National Quality Standard (NQS)*, a nationally consistent standard that measures services' standard of education and care provided to children and families. The NQS measures structural factors, such as educator to child ratios and qualifications of educators, as well as the quality of educational programs, service policies and observed relationships. This report presents evidence about changes in services' reported ratings and compares these to the national averages collated by the independent national authority that assists governments in administering the NQF, the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). This section also highlights evidence from questions asked about educator to child ratios and the qualifications of primary contact staff in the TICCSS survey.

Accessibility – this section provides an overview of how not-for-profit education and care services support families and communities to access their services. Education and care services play an important role in supporting Australian children's safety, health, wellbeing, education and care. Accessible care is enabled through a range of intersecting factors including government subsidies, service supply, affordability and cultural safety. This section highlights evidence around the accessibility of services in regards to fee changes and waiting lists as well as observations from services on how families experiencing vulnerability access their programs and funding in response to policy changes.

Spotlight: Introduction of the Child Care Subsidy – this section examines the experiences of services in receipt of the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) as they adapted to this new Australian Government fee system that was introduced in July 2018. (This was an extensive overhaul of the previous Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate fee subsidy system.) Services were asked about how they may have changed their fee policies and arrangements and also about their impressions of the impact of the government’s fee subsidy changes on families.

Resilient and equipped workforce – the sector’s progress under the National Quality Agenda is contingent upon the Agenda’s demonstrated commitment to the educators and early childhood teachers that staff education and care services. This commitment is demonstrated in data around tenure, pay and conditions and workload requirements. This section of the report shines a light on the role of the educational leader and time allocated to educators in this role to develop programs and provide pedagogical leadership.

Spotlight: Educational leaders – Under the NQF every education and care service must, by law, appoint an educational leader to lead the development and implementation of educational programs in the service. Educational leaders are a special focus of the 2019 TICCSS survey. This spotlight uncovers the support that educational leaders receive from services cross analyses the profile of educational leaders against service quality outcomes to enable us to see the impact of support for this important role on quality outcomes.

Service leadership – Leading education and care services to achieve high quality standards is a challenging role. The TICCSS survey has gathered information on service leaders’ experiences on recruiting suitably qualified staff, key highlights and challenges across the year of implementing the service’s planned quality improvements, regulatory change, government policy changes and undergoing Assessment and Rating against the NQS.



TICCS 2019 Not-for-profit education and care KEY FINDINGS



Not-for-profit = Quality

Not-for-profit education and care services are more likely to achieve Exceeding and Excellent ratings than the national averages in 2014, 2017 and 2019.

41% of not-for-profit services have more educators per child than legally required across all age groups.

Not-for-profit services employ more qualified educators since the introduction of the NQF. In 2019, more educators held diplomas (40%) or four-year early childhood degrees (10%) compared to 2014 (34% and 8%).

Educational Leaders

Educational Leaders in not-for-profit education and care services are well supported and are allocated 3+ hours a week to do this role. Not-for-profit services ensure that these allocated hours are not just allocated but used with 81% reporting that they were always or often used.

Research using TICCS data show links between educational leadership and rates of tenure stability in services and may support achieving a higher NQS rating.



Not-for-profit = Accessibility

Not-for-profit education and care services support children and families experiencing vulnerability. In 2019, 87% of services provided care for children in vulnerable circumstances - an increase since 2012 (81%).

Not-for-profit services only increased their fees minimally in 2019. Two-thirds only increased fees by less than 5% and 1 in 5 services did not increase their fees at all.

Close to one-third of these services changed their pricing structure to help families maximise their entitlement to subsidised care.



Advocating nationally for the right of Australia's children to access quality, not for profit, community children's services



TICCS 2019 Not-for-profit education and care KEY FINDINGS



Not-for-profit = A resilient and equipped workforce

Not-for-profit education and care services experience less staff turnover. Close to two-thirds of educators have been in their not-for-profit service for over 3 years compared to just one-third of staff in services as a whole.

The majority (73%) of not-for-profit education and care services provided pay and conditions for educators above their relevant award. This proportion has been consistent since 2014.

Community operated services provided a range of professional development options for educators, 88% provided PD at the services and 86% paid educators PD costs. 87% of services allocated over 70% of their budget to total staffing costs.



Not-for-profit = Strong leadership

Around one in three services had staff vacancies in 2019, and with recent changes requiring a second early childhood teacher in most states, there is a sharp increase in the demand for Bachelor or post-graduate qualified educators.

81% of not-for-profit education and care services reported utilisation rates above 71% – the rate widely considered the minimum for service viability.

Services topmost concerns have been similar since 2014, with the most prominent being the increased paperwork to meet legal obligations and government regulations.

The Assessment and Rating process was rated positively by services in regards to the accuracy of the final ratings. The aspect that received the most negative response was the process for services to review and provide feedback on their draft report.



Quality

Not-for-profit services provide higher quality education and care

Not-for-profit services provide higher quality education and care

What we know:

- Not-for-profit provision of education and care is high quality provision. 41% of not-for-profit services exceed the NQS, while only 18% of for-profit services do. Only 14% of services operated by not-for-profit providers are Working Towards the NQS compared to a 24% of services operated for profit
- The quality of education and care is vital for children, particularly in their first five years of life; this is the time when human learning and development is at its highest
- Provision of high quality education and care has greater positive impact for children from lower socio-economic backgrounds than other children
- Having more teachers and educators per child and having teachers and educators with higher qualifications are two key factors that most influence quality
- Participation in nurturing early education environments creates a strong protective factor for children experiencing vulnerability, can reduce the gap in children's developmental outcomes and improve social equity¹.

What we found:

- Not-for-profit services participating in the TICCSS survey rate as highly as other not-for-profit services do
- Not-for-profit services maintain or improve on their already high ratings
- Not-for-profit services have higher numbers of teachers and educators than they are legally required to
- Not-for-profit service staff are engaged in further education to improve their qualifications.

¹ Torii, K., Fox, S., & Cloney, D. (2017), Quality is key in early childhood education in Australia, Mitchell Institute Policy Paper No. 01/2017. Mitchell Institute, Melbourne

NQS ratings

Overall ratings

Assessment and rating against the NQS provide a consistent national measure of quality in education and care services. It measures structural factors, such as educator to child ratios and qualifications of educators, the quality of educational programs, service policies and observed relationships.

TICCSS respondent services have rated highly in overall quality consistently since 2014 compared with the national averages for all services as reported by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

Table 2. Overall NQS ratings, TICCSS respondents and all services as reported by ACECQA

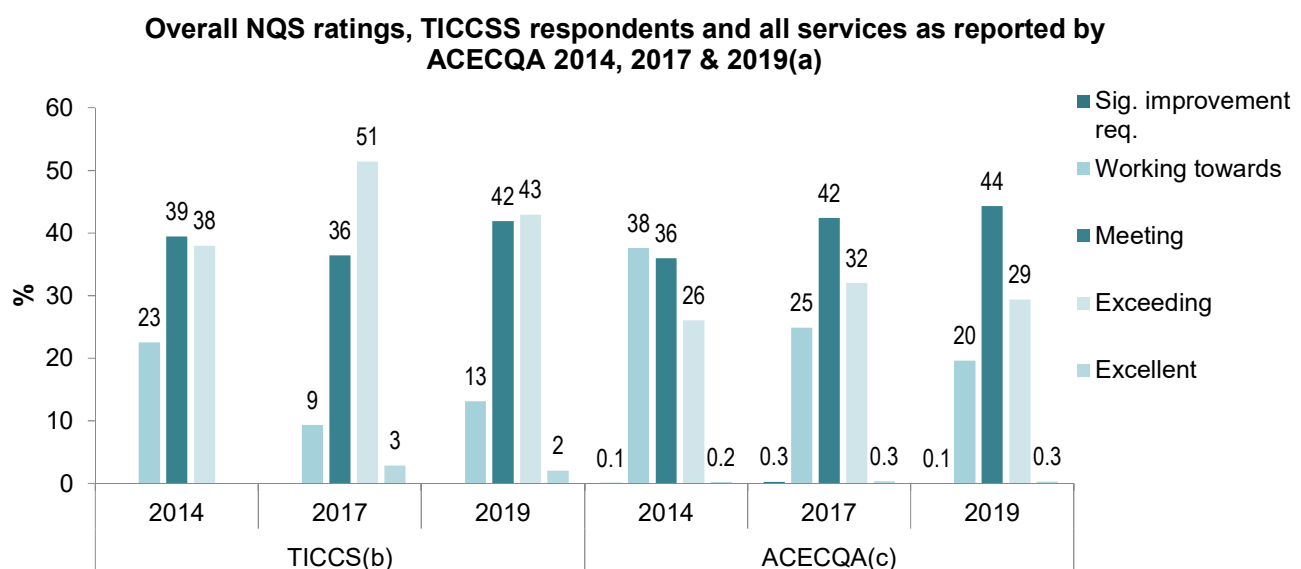


Table notes:

(a) Data for TICCSS refers to reported NQS ratings whereas data from ACECQA are administrative data of actual ratings awarded. Data are indicative only and are not directly comparable. TICCSS participants were not asked in the 2012 surveys about their NQS.

(b) Data from TICCSS are of respondents who reported ratings only, totals exclude those who were not yet rated, unsure/cannot comment and not stated.

(c) ACECQA data is from Quarter 2 in 2014, Quarter 3 in 2017 and Q1 in 2019. Totals exclude services rated as Provisional – Not yet assessed.

- In 2017 and 2019, the proportion of not-for-profit services who completed the TICCSS survey and who reported they received an Excellent rating was higher than the national average. (3% compared with 0.3% in 2017, and 2% compared with 0.3% in 2019)
- In 2014, 2017 and 2019 around a third of respondents to this question in TICCSS reported that their services were rated Exceeding the NQS (38%, 51% and 43%)

respectively). These rates were higher than the overall NQS ratings reported by ACECQA in the same time periods (26%, 32% and 29% respectively)

- In 2014, 2017 and 2019 the proportion of services rated Working Towards the NQS decreased in the five years to 2019, in both TICCSS and ACECQA data.

Recent changes in the rating system have meant it is harder to achieve an Excellent or Exceeding rating. In 2019, 43% of respondents to this question reported a rating of Exceeding the NQS, and 42% rated as Meeting the NQS. This is a slight change to the 2017 survey when 51% of respondents to this question were rated as Exceeding and 36% were rated as Meeting.

NQS rating changes

Maintaining high ratings or reaching a higher rating requires continued quality improvement and whole of service planning and professional learning.

In 2019, TICCSS respondents provided information about their previous ratings. Close to half of respondents had maintained their rating and a third of respondents had improved their rating.

Table 3. TICCSS respondent services, previous and current NQS ratings

| | | Current NQS | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Previous NQS | | Working Towards | Meeting | Exceeding | Excellent | Awaiting assessment | Unsure/ cannot comment |
| | Working Towards | 27% | 48% | 22% | 2% | 2% | 0% |
| | Meeting | 13% | 54% | 27% | 0% | 5% | 1% |
| | Exceeding | 7% | 18% | 63% | 5% | 7% | 0% |

- For those respondents that have had second and subsequent ratings and assessment visits, just under one half (49% of respondents to this question had maintained the same rating. A third (34%) had improved their rating
- Over two-thirds of respondents (70%) to this question who were previously rated as Working Towards NQS had improved their rating in 2019 to either Meeting or Exceeding NQS, and 2% improved to Excellent

- Just over half (54%) of the respondents who were previously rated as Meeting NQS maintained this rating and more than one quarter (27%) improved their rating to Exceeding NQS
- Almost two thirds (63%) of respondents who were previously rated as Exceeding NQS maintained this rating, and 5% improved to Excellent.

Quality improvement

In 2019, TICCSS respondents implemented positive changes across all Quality Areas. Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice continues to be the strongest focus for all respondents with 54% of respondents reporting positive changes in this area.

Quality Area 1 was also the strongest area of focus in 2017 and 2014. ACECQA reports that in the first quarter of 2019 Quality Area 1 had the largest proportion of services rated as Working Towards the NQS (16%) of any quality area².

In 2019, the proportion of respondents to this question reporting positive changes in all Quality Areas has declined from the previous two waves in 2017 and 2014; this is perhaps because the NQS is so deeply embedded in practice that it is now considered business as usual.

When asked about other areas that services were improving, participants talked about how practice principles also featured in their quality improvement.

Practice principles also featured in their quality improvement

"Critical reflection promotes ongoing improvement and positive change across the board."

"We have streamlined and strengthened our program and practice. We have developed a strong centre leadership team with mentoring partnerships to ensure quality improvement is consistent across the centre."

"Educators have been continuing to develop their reflective practice - both individually and as an educator team."

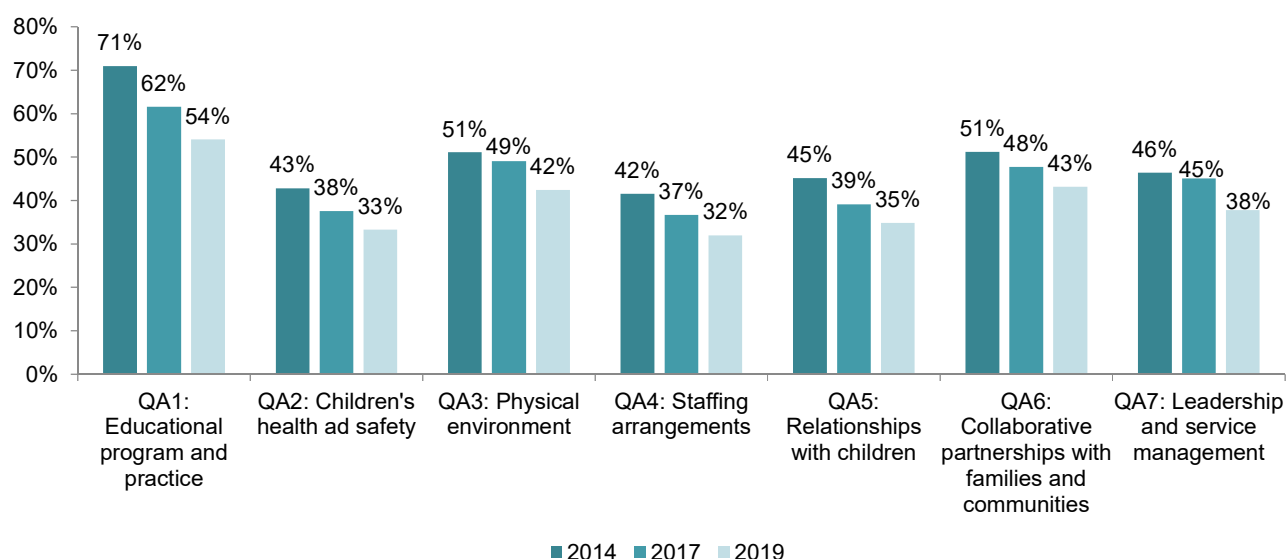
"Completion of Philosophy. This was important as we went through a large consultation process with all stakeholders. Worth the wait as it is a true reflection on the children, families, educators and greater community."

"Ongoing reflective practice is continually evolving all Quality areas."

The following table shows the Quality Areas in which respondents to this question had implemented positive changes over the past 12 months. (This question was not asked in either 2012 survey wave).

² Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (2019), NQF Snapshot Q1 2019, p. 14

Table 3. Quality Areas respondents had implemented positive changes in



Ratios

Educator to child ratios are one of the key structural components of quality in education and care services. Improved ratios linked with higher staff qualifications and smaller group sizes are associated with better child outcomes³. The following table shows the current minimum adult to child ratios for each age group.

| Age group | Ratio |
|---|---|
| Birth to less than 2 years | 1:4 in all jurisdictions |
| 2 years to less than 3 years | 1:5 in all jurisdictions except VIC 1:4 in VIC |
| 3 years to 5 years (not at school) | 1:11 in ACT, NT, QLD, SA and VIC 1:10 in NSW, TAS and WA 2:25 in TAS for children attending a preschool program |
| Primary school age children | 1:15 in all jurisdictions except ACT and WA 1:11 in ACT 1:13 (or 1:10 if kindergarten children are in attendance) in WA |

Source: ACECQA (2020) *Educator to child ratios*, <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/educator-to-child-ratios>

³ Centre for Community Child Health (2013), Policy Brief: Assessing the quality of early childhood education care, p. 2

In 2019, 41% of respondent not-for-profit services operated at a better ratio than legally required in their state and territory. The following two tables show the rates of educator to child ratios, by age grouping, and by jurisdictions with the same legal requirements.

Note that, in some cases, this may have been supported by Inclusion Support Funding which provides funding towards maintaining a higher ratio of educators to children when the group includes children with additional support needs.

Table 4. Educator to child ratios by age group, children aged from birth to 5 years, 2019

**Educator to child ratios by age group, children aged from birth to 5 years, 2019
(a)**

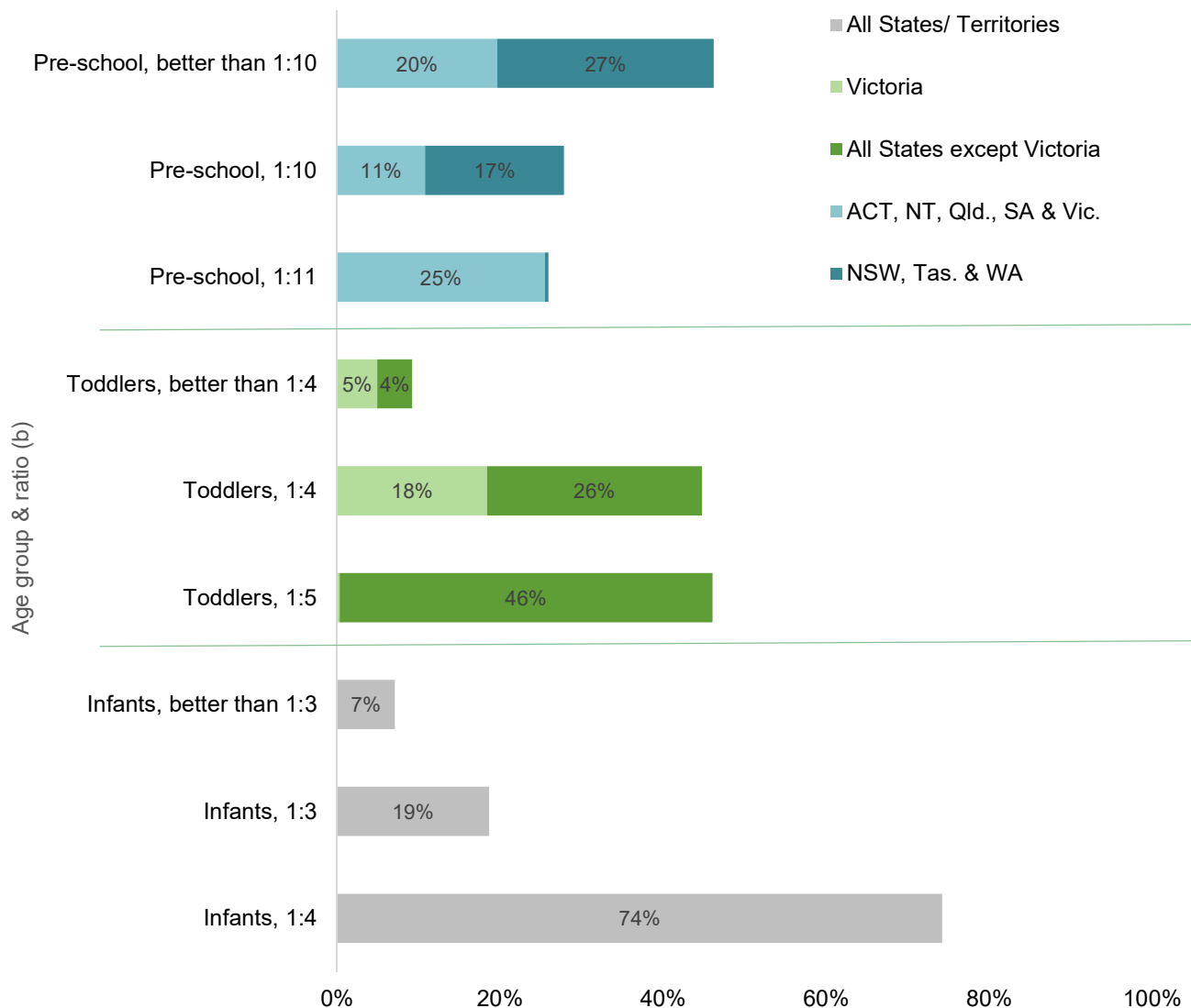


Table notes:

(a) Proportions are calculated from the total of responses for that age group.

(b) "Infants" refers to children aged from birth to 18 months/ 2 years; "Toddlers" refers to children aged from 18 months/ 2 years to 3 years of age; and "Preschool" refers to children aged from 3 to 5 years.

Children aged from birth to 18 months/less than two years

Respondents continue to provide good staffing levels, with all respondents meeting or exceeding the required ratio of educators for infants. Three-quarters (219, 74%) of respondents to this question operated with the prescribed ratios of one educator for every four children. The remaining one-quarter (26%) exceeded the mandatory requirements; 19% had a ratio of 1:3 and 7% had a ratio better than 1:3.

Children aged 18 months/ 2 to 3 years

In 2019, over a third of respondents (36% of services) were operating at a ratio better than they were required to:

- Of the services who were required to provide a ratio of 1 educator to 5 children (232), 60% operated at the required ratio and 40% had ratios better than required
- In Victoria, where services are required to operate at a ratio of 1:4, 78% operated at the required ratio and 21% had ratios that were better than required.

Children aged 3 to 5 years

In 2019, 57% (264) of respondents to this question were operating with ratios better than required. Respondents to this questions (463) were:

- Operating at a ratio of 1:11 in 26% of cases
- Operating at a ratio of 1:10 in 28% of cases
- Operating at ratio better than 1:10 in 46% of cases.

Primary school-aged children

The current prescribed ratio for primary school-age children vary across jurisdictions.

- Over a third of services (37%) had ratios better than required
- Under half (86, 44%), operated at a ratio of 1:15
- Of those respondents who operated with a ratio of 1:13 or 1:11 most were not from Western Australia or the ACT, jurisdictions that operate with these ratios.

Table 5. Educator to child ratio, primary school-aged children, 2019

Educator to child ratios by age group, school aged children, 2019

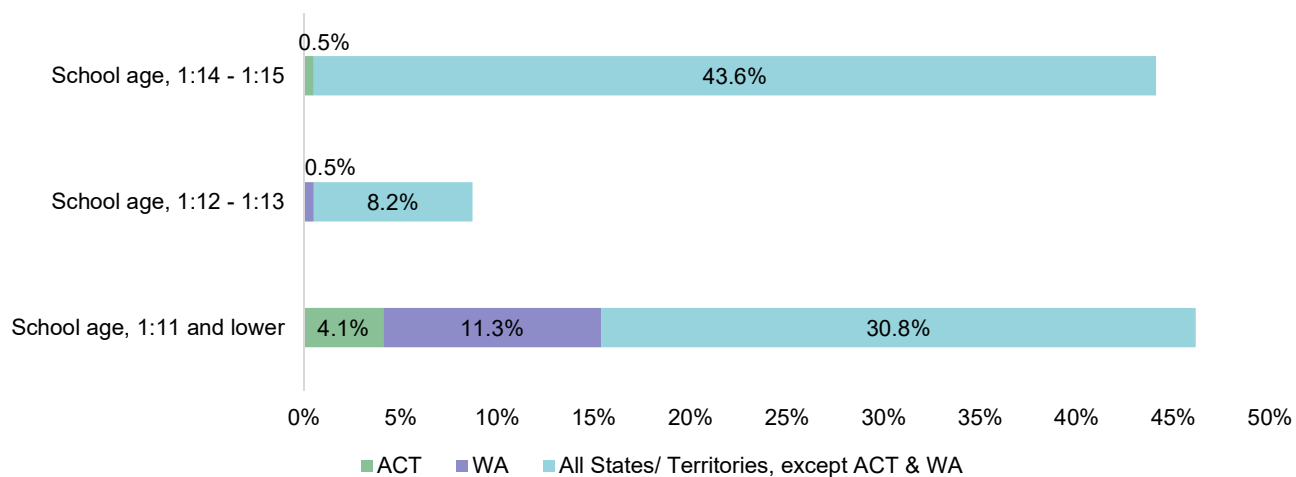


Table notes:

Percentages are calculated from total responses for school aged education and care ratios.



Educator and teacher qualifications

Raising the qualification levels and the total number of teachers and educators working in education and care services was a key element to improving education and care outcomes for children under the NQF. There is a significant evidence base to support this initiative⁴. Mandating minimum qualifications of teachers and educators, along with strategies to enhance access to relevant professional development, was implemented to improve qualification levels across the sector.

All educators working in education and care services for children younger than school-age must have or be working towards a minimum certificate III qualification. Diploma-qualified educators and degree-qualified early childhood teachers are also required and the numbers of these teachers and educators are dependent on the ages and numbers of children attending a service.

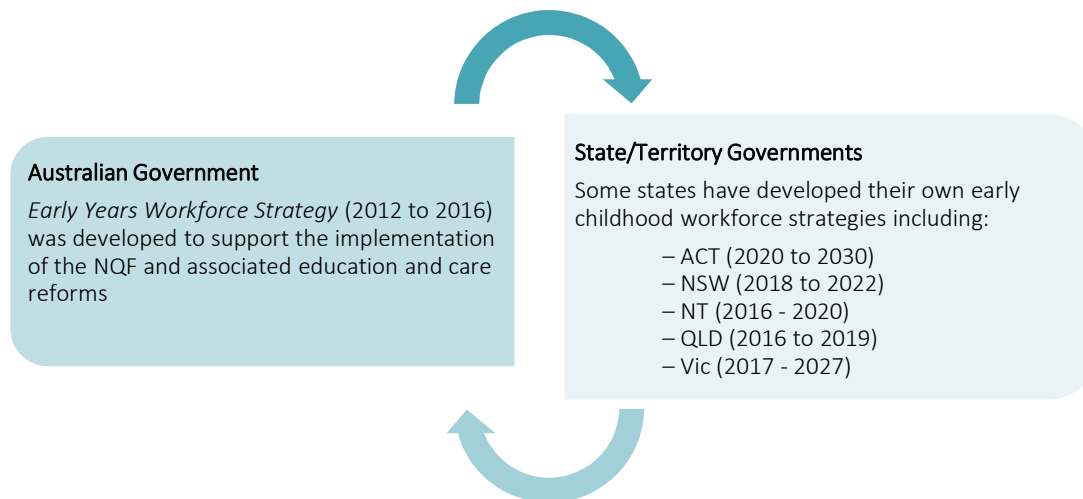
This section of the report analyses the experience of respondents in recruiting and retaining skilled and qualified educators. It provides a profile of teachers and educators employed and the challenges related to the recruitment and retention of these teachers and educators.



⁴ Including O'Connell M, Fox S, Hinz B and Cole H (2016). 'Quality Early Education for All: Fostering, entrepreneurial, resilient and capable leaders', Mitchell Institute policy paper No. 01/2016. Mitchell Institute, Melbourne. Available from: www.mitchellinstitute.org.au, p. 8; 6 Goodfellow, J. (2007) 'Childcare provision: Whose responsibility? Who pays?' Kids Count: Better early childhood education and care in Australia, p. 248; Productivity Commission (2014) Childcare and Early Childhood Learning and Inquiry Report, Volume 2, p.310; Pascoe S, Brennan D (2017) Report of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools through Early Childhood Interventions; OECD (2017), Starting Strong 2017: Key OECD Indicators on Early Childhood Education and Care, OECD Publishing, Paris, p. 101; Torii K, Fox S & Cloney D (2017). Quality is key in Early Childhood Education in Australia. Mitchell Institute Policy Paper No. 01/2017. Mitchell Institute, Melbourne. Available from: www.mitchellinstitute.org.au, p. iii

Early years workforce strategies

The Australian and some state governments have developed workforce strategies that focus on valuing and promoting the role of early childhood teachers and educators, supporting teachers and educators to obtain and/or upskill their qualifications and building the skills and capability of the education and care workforce⁵.



The 2017 [Pascoe and Brennan⁶](#) review calling on Australian governments to agree to a new national education and care workforce strategy, has finally gathered momentum with ACECQA being commissioned by the Education Council to develop a national workforce strategy. Work on this strategy commenced in October 2020.

⁵ ACT early childhood strategy - https://www.education.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1620347/Early-Childhood-Strategy-for-the-ACT.pdf,

NSW workforce strategy - https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/working-in-early-childhood-education/workforce-strategy/NSW_WorkforceStrategy-accessible.pdf;

NT early years strategic plan - https://education.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/275901/DoE_Strategic-Plan.pdf

Qld workforce action plan - <https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/careersAndTraining/Documents/workforce-action-plan-16-19.pdf>

Victorian reform plan - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/educationstate/ec-reform-plan.pdf>

⁶ Pascoe S., Brennan D. (2017) Report of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools through Early Childhood Interventions, p. 13

Current qualifications

Survey respondents were asked to identify qualifications held by staff currently employed and working directly with children. These qualifications ranged from certificate III to postgraduate diplomas or degrees.

In 2019, of the 8,442 teachers and educators employed by respondent services, only 3% (287) of educators (employed by 68 respondents) held no relevant early or middle childhood qualifications, and 11% (938) were working towards relevant early or middle childhood qualifications.

Over time, the qualifications of services have increased. This reflects the intent of the NQF. The following table shows the qualifications of all teachers and educators employed by respondents.

Table 6. Current qualifications of teachers and educators

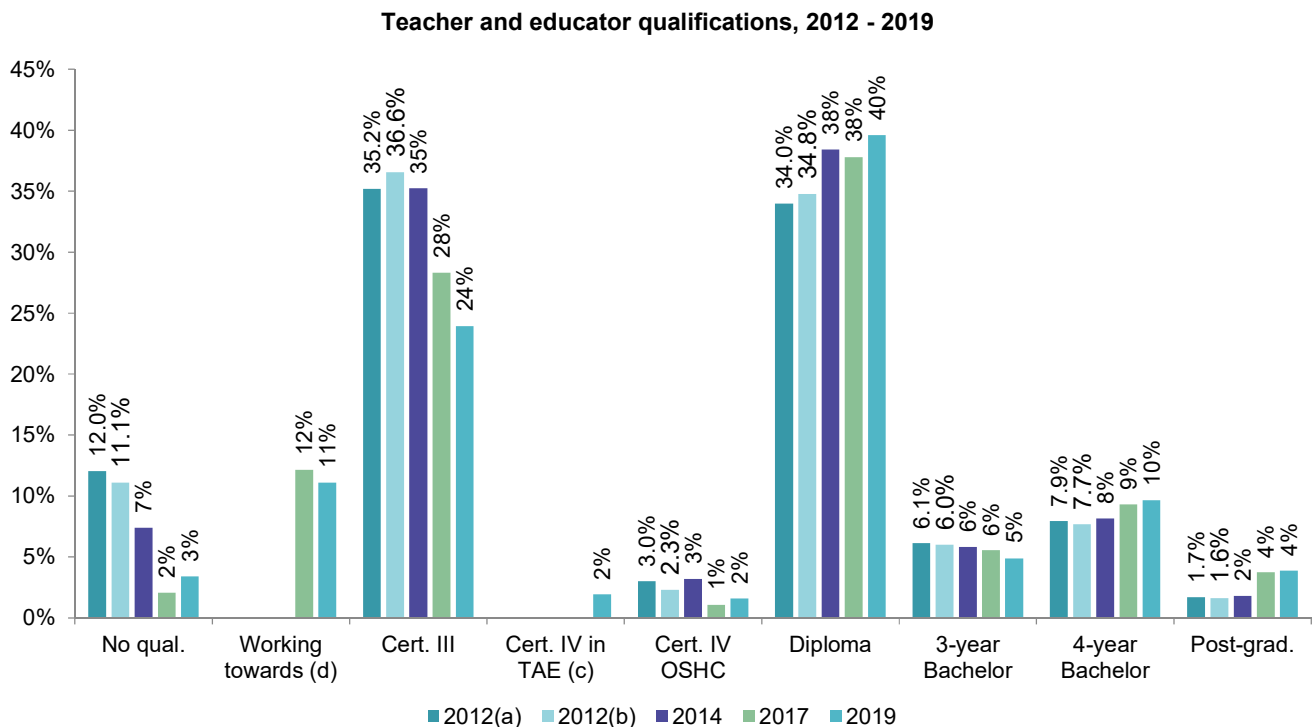


Table notes:

(a) Data are from TICCSS 2012 – wave 1.

(b) Data are from TICCSS 2012 – wave 2.

(c) Question option 'are working towards a qualification' commenced in 2017.

(d) Question option 'have completed a certificate IV (training and assessment)' commenced in 2019.

(e) Data for certificate IV OSHC include educators who have completed any approved certificate IV courses prior to 2019.

In the five years to 2019, there has been a gradual increase in employment of more highly-qualified teachers and educators.

- The proportion of educators with no qualifications decreased from 12% of educators in 2012, to 2% in 2017, and 3% in 2019
- More educators now hold diplomas (40%) or four-year early childhood degrees (10%) compared with those in the 1st wave of 2012 (34% and 8% respectively)
- In the 2019 survey, 97% of staff working with children had relevant early or middle childhood qualifications.

This is a significant improvement on the typical profile of the early childhood workforce before the NQF was introduced; when many educators held no formal training in child development and only a few employees in a service held diploma- or degree- level qualifications. In 2004, according to data from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), just over half (55%) of primary contact staff had relevant qualifications at or above a certificate III and in 2010, just before the implementation of the NQF, this had only grown to 66.2% of primary contact staff⁷.

Degree-qualified early childhood teachers

Degree-qualified teachers provide support for reflective educational practices and lead their services in providing better quality care. The availability of early childhood teachers has been particularly concerning with demand outstripping supply in many areas. For example in Victoria, the State government states that more than 4,000 additional early childhood teachers will be needed to deliver their universal 3 year old kindergarten program⁸.

While this is a small sample, responses from TICCSS show that there is an ongoing demand for degree-qualified early childhood teachers. This corresponds with wider sector commentary about an adequate pipeline for degree-qualified early childhood teacher now and into the future.

The current *National Regulations* require degree-qualified early childhood teachers to be employed for some or all of the time that a service operates.

In 2019, at least 880 early childhood teachers (including teaching positions that were vacant at the time of the survey) were employed in 435 respondent services.

These early childhood teachers worked in:

- Long day care – 543+
- Services that provided preschool/kindergarten – 509+
- After school care – 109+

⁷ Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (2011), Productivity Commission Education Training Workforce Study (The ECD Workforce), p. 19

⁸ Department of Education and Training (Vic. Gov) (2020) Incentives for early childhood teachers to work in regional areas, www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/earlychildhoodupdate/Pages/ecupdate_incentives_regional_Victoria.aspx

- Before school care – 124+
- Vacation care – 106+
- Occasional child care – 47+
- Family day care –16+
- Mobile education and care – 11+

Some respondents may provide more than one service type, so an early childhood teacher may be counted more than once by a respondent.

Since January 2020, a second teacher with approved qualifications is required if the service has 60 to 80 children in attendance; the exception is NSW where a second teacher is required if 40 or more children are in attendance, a third teacher with 60 to 79 children and a fourth teacher with 80+ children.

In 2019, one-fifth (119) of respondents planned to employ one or more additional early childhood teachers.



Upskilling to higher qualifications

The survey shows that the NQF has been highly successful in creating a culture of educators upskilling to higher qualifications, whether to enable their service to meet minimum qualification requirements under the NQF or to build professional skills and capacity of the individual educator and the service in which they work.

Respondents were asked about educators who were working towards higher qualifications. This includes educators who had no qualification and those who were raising their qualification levels. Respondents employed a total of 8,442 teachers and educators.

In 2019 15% (1,232) of teachers and educators employed by respondent services were upskilling to higher qualifications.

The following table shows the qualifications towards which these teachers and educators were upskilling.

Table 7. Educators enroled in further study by qualification, 2012 – 2019

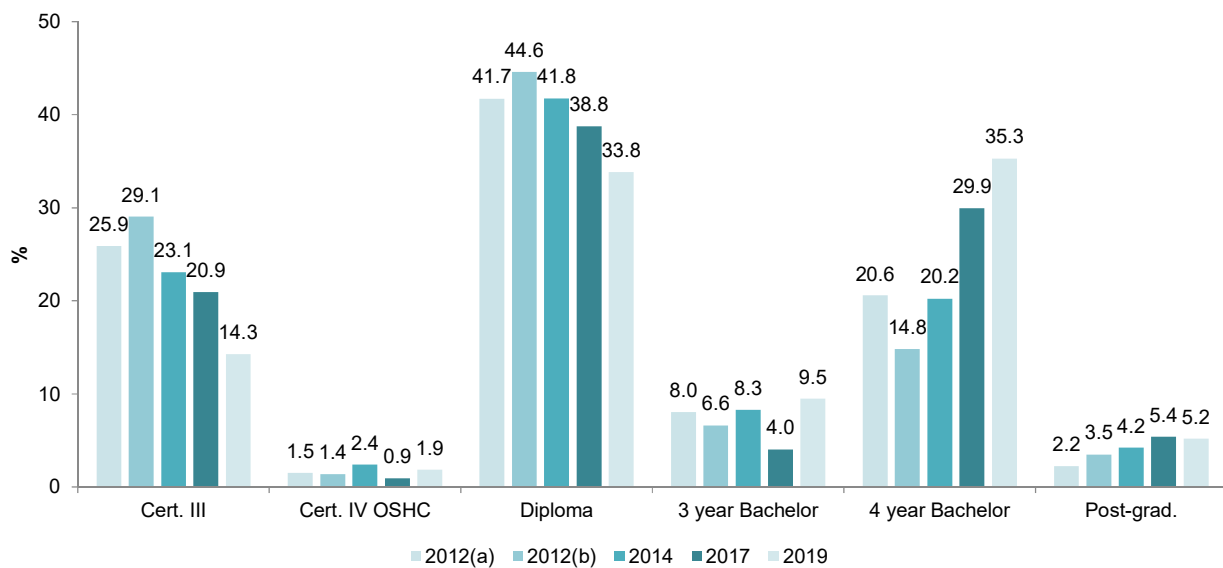


Table notes:

(a) Data are from TICCSS 2012 – wave 1.

(b) Data are from TICCSS 2012 – wave 2.

From 2012 to 2017, a higher proportion of educators were enroled in diploma level qualifications, although this proportion decreased over that time. By 2019, slightly more educators were enrolled in a four-year degree. In the seven years since the introduction of the NQS, there has been a marked increase in the proportion of educators enrolled in a four-year degree qualification course. In the same period, there has been a decrease in those enrolled to complete a certificate III or a diploma qualification.

Summary of quality outcomes

TICCSS respondents have achieved a high rate of key quality indicators which enable them to provide high quality care for children of all ages. In 2014, 2017 and 2019 TICCSS respondents reported high rates of achieving Exceeding NQS (38%, 51% and 43% respectively). These rates were higher than the NQS ratings reported by ACECQA for all services within the same time periods (26%, 32% and 29% respectively). There are signs that the not-for-profit sector is increasingly more competent at meeting the minimum standards as the proportion of not-for-profit services rated Working Towards NQS decreased in the five years to 2019, in both TICCSS and ACECQA data.

Across all services, from those that care for infants to those caring for school-aged children, 41% of TICCSS services were operating at better ratios than those prescribed under the relevant State or Territory regulations. This indicates that many services are understanding and catering well to the needs of children in their care.

In the 2019 survey, 97% of teachers and educators had relevant early or middle childhood qualifications. This is a significant improvement on the typical profile of the education and care workforce before the NQF was introduced; when many educators held no formal training in child development and only a few employees in a service held diploma- or degree-level qualifications.

Qualifications of educators are linked to better quality care and long term development of children. Action towards a National Workforce Strategy will ensure qualification standards such as these are maintained by all services.

Accessibility

Not-for-profit services are more accessible

Not-for-profit services provide early education and care in communities where the markets may fail – such as in communities experiencing disadvantage

What we know:

- The impact of high quality care on children from communities with higher risk of disadvantage, is higher than for children from more advantaged communities. Having access to early education and care helps to minimise disadvantage, not just at school age, but throughout life for children from these communities
- When a system for provision of education and care is not universal, it is children who are experiencing the most disadvantage who are least likely to access care
- We know that there is a smaller proportion of for-profit services in lower socio-economic areas and a higher proportion in higher socio-economic areas
- It is more expensive to provide education and care for children aged less than 2-years because of the need for better educator to child ratios and therefore higher staffing costs.

What we found:

- Almost all not-for-profit services participating in the TICCSS survey provide education and care for children in vulnerable circumstances
- Waiting lists for children in not-for-profit services are dropping and children are staying on them for shorter periods – except for babies under 2
- Demand for care for babies in not-for-profit services remains high. The market has not met the demand for baby places
- Not-for-profit school aged care services have high waiting lists
- Not-for-profit services are interacting with the NDIS on behalf of children with disabilities and are often bridging information gaps for families about the NDIS
- Families in not-for-profit services in the TICCSS survey were understanding about fee rises.

Accessibility

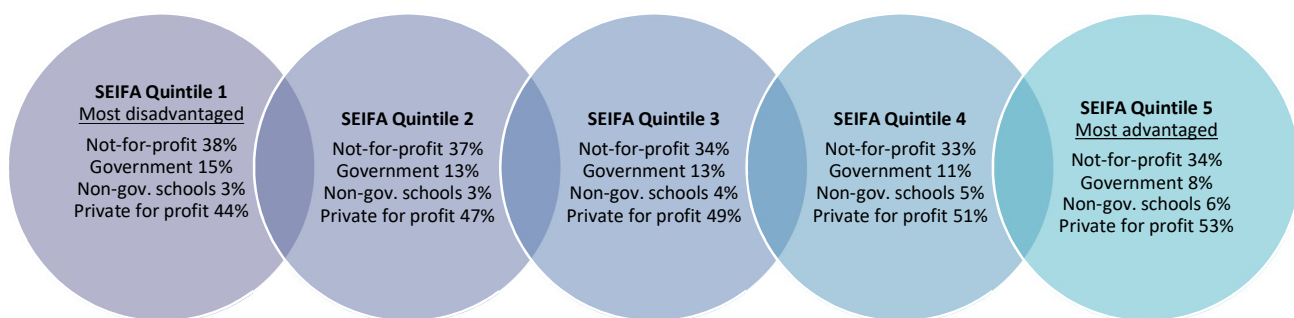
Education and care services play an important role in supporting Australian children's safety, health, wellbeing, education and care. Accessible care is enabled through a range of intersecting factors including government subsidies, service supply, affordability and cultural safety. Services are required under regulations to provide universal support to all children. There are also targeted programs that can assist children and families from a broad range of backgrounds to access and participate in education and care. In Australia, children are eligible for subsidised education and care via the Child Care Subsidy. A separate funding system aims to provide universal access (600 hours per year) for all children in the year before school.

Access to care

Not-for-profit education and care services have traditionally had strong connections to their community with many service providers being aware of those families who may be experiencing vulnerability earlier than child protection services. These services provide a soft, safe entry point for families and children and can provide support and resources for early intervention and risk reduction. Not-for-profit services also disproportionately meet the need for accessible education and care in disadvantaged areas, compared to their for-profit counterparts.

Using the Socio-Economic Index for Areas⁹ (SEIFA), ACECQA reported that as socio-economic disadvantage decreased, the proportion of private for-profit services increased. Conversely, as socio-economic disadvantage increased the proportion of not-for-profit and government-operated services increased¹⁰.

Table 8. Proportion of approved services by provider management type and SEIFA quintile¹¹.



⁹ The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD) is used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to classify services by the level of relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage of their local area. SEIFA was used by ACECQA as a proxy measure to identify services that were more or less likely to educate and care for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

¹⁰ ACECQA (2020), Occasional Paper 7: Quality ratings by socio-economic status of areas, <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-06/OccasionalPaper7.pdf>

¹¹ Ibid., pg. 14.

Vulnerability

Children experiencing vulnerability

The Trends in Community Children's Services survey asked respondents, in all five waves of the survey, to provide their impression of how many children were using the service who were in vulnerable circumstances, and what changes they have seen in these numbers over the last 12 months.

In 2019, 87% of respondents indicated that they had children at their service who were in vulnerable circumstances. This has increased since the first wave in 2012 (81%).

When asked about their impression of changes in these rates (whether there was no change, or there had been an increase or decrease over the previous 12 months), the proportion that respondents who perceived an increase has grown over time from 28% in 2012 (first wave), to 32% in 2014 and 36% in 2017. However, in 2019 this rate has remained steady at 35%.

Services in more disadvantaged areas were more likely than those in more advantaged areas to report that they had children in vulnerable circumstances at their service. This reinforces research that children in areas that experience greater socio-economic disadvantage will be more likely to experience vulnerability. However, as shown in the graph below, even in the most advantaged areas, services are highly likely to have vulnerable children in their care and need to be linked in with community supports and embed inclusive practices in their program.

Table 9. Impressions of vulnerability by SEIFA quintile, 2019

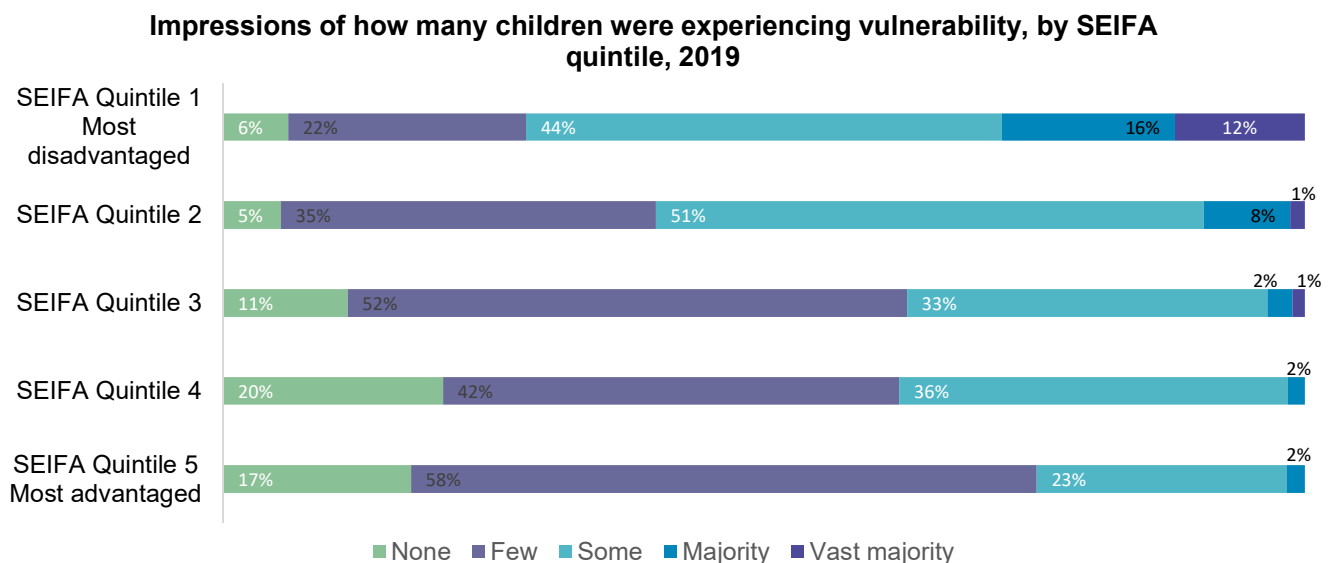


Table notes:

The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD) is used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to classify services by the level of relative socio-economic

advantage and disadvantage of their local area. SEIFA is used here as a proxy measure to identify services in areas where they are more or less likely to educate and care for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Respondents were asked to consider whether the profile of children and families who may be experiencing vulnerability had changed in their service in the past 12 months, why these changes may have occurred and what support could assist those children and families.

Respondents were asked to identify whether there had been a change in the issues experienced by children and families in vulnerable circumstances in the past 12 months. Financial stress, mental health, and domestic and family violence were the issues that most respondents identified. Respondents also commented on the negative impact that drought had had on families, including significantly increased stress levels; noticing more anxiety in young children; the impact of trauma; and more grandparent carers.

Respondents' insights: Issues facing children and families in vulnerable communities

The TICCSS survey asked respondents to consider what children and families experiencing vulnerability may need to support their participation in education and care services. Many respondents considered fee relief, financial support and free child care and education as crucial to supporting participation. Many respondents talked about how these factors were important for child wellbeing and safety, and as a platform for further support.

Financial support for vulnerable families to access education and care

"Foster carers should be able to have the government meet the fees automatically rather than applying for CCS. The ACCS for foster carers is a ridiculous process and is frustrating to the carer and the service as someone needs to pay the bill and the government is the government so regardless of whether child safety or Centrelink pays, why can't the fees just be paid straight away?"

"More support with fees, it is often difficult for families to manage financially and the service can be the most stable and consistent environment in the child's life."

"More CCS hours, less cost - most families in vulnerable circumstances cannot afford childcare and also get insufficient hours of CCS. Previously we were able to support vulnerable families by accessing special child care benefit but over the years it became harder to get approved and now there is even less access to support for them."

"Financial stress- families need to understand how they access support better through Centrelink making it easier and quicker to receive the funding."

"Support at times financially as early learning centres are the consistent safe place where they feel loved and belong, the flexibility for family to act as their guardians if their parents become unwell."

Respondents also wanted access to mental health, parenting and family support services as more children and families presented with these issues.

**Connection
with mental
health,
parenting and
family support
for vulnerable
children and
families**

"Parents with either mental health issues need support through one on one counselling and parenting advice, mentoring. Children with mental health issues or disabilities need to have more support workers in house."

"Services need to be flexible and have a deep understanding of the complexity of mental health and the implications for children involved."

"Financial assistance [for] all of them, additional services for example financial counselling, mental health support -someone to actually bring the child to care as the parent can't get out of bed or leave the house ... somewhere to feel safe and be a constant factor in their life -very hard to use care when living in your car, remotely. Transportation to the services, long distances are a barrier."

"Mental health and or domestic and family violence - these families need engaged and on-going case management to support ... them in accessing services required to keep their children in education and care settings and to provide other supports outside education and care settings - counselling, health services, food pantry etc."

Access to, and availability of, services was also a critical issue for families and children, including those with disabilities. Respondents also talked about a lack of access to transport to access education and care.

**Access,
transportation
and
availability of
places in
services**

"Children in foster type situations that are cared for by other family members or the foster care services that don't have correct documents to receive any rebate due to no immunisation record or wrong birth information."

"Availability of places - and access to them."

"More streamlined process for NDIS and education for the professionals making the assessment, families and educators on the process."

"Support Agencies to help guide these families and providing quicker information to set them up in the system quicker to avoid confusion with gap fees."

"With no public transport within our communities, physically getting to a service to participate is incredibly hard for some families."

Respondents were concerned about those children and families who did not meet the Activity Test for Child Care Subsidy, especially children from families experiencing

vulnerability and disadvantage. It is these children that would benefit the most from increased, rather than decreased, participation in good quality education and care services.

Increased participation in good quality education and care services

"Our biggest challenge has been receiving the ACCS funding as families who are not eligible for CCS are not eligible for ACCS. One single parent family experiencing mental health issues as a result of domestic violence fell behind with immunisation therefore all CCS & ACCS has been withdrawn until the now updated immunisation status has been registered by the GP with the National Immunisation Register. The family are not entitled for a 6 week period a cost of \$1224 which the centre will have to write off which I think is absolutely outrageous. This parent is so challenged with mental health issues her children will fall outside of dates and registers and a punitive approach is really unfair to the family and being picked up by our not-for-profit organisation."

"A service can be a soft landing space for children, the care environment should be easy for families when everything else in their life is difficult. We have created a fund to ensure no child misses out on early childhood education due to disadvantage."

"Families who are under child protection and have an order for the children to attend education and care and need support in having the claim put through. There needs to be a policy in place whereby Child Protection can act on the parent's behalf and have a direct line to Centrelink to have the children linked to CCS. This would eliminate so many issues that vulnerable families are facing and increase the safety for children during this transition time which SHOULD be paramount in at risk situations."

Participants also talked about the expertise required in meeting the needs of vulnerable children and families in their care. This was raised in two ways. Firstly, some respondents talked about the need for greater access and partnerships with health professionals and support agencies for early intervention and prevention for some children. Respondents also talked about the need for teachers and educators to have training to support children and families experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage.

Partnerships with health professionals and support agencies

"Access to basic speech therapy without waiting for months just to get an assessment."

"The service needs to be able to work with support agencies so that everyone is aware of what is going on and so the support is consistent."

"Children require an onsite counsellor to talk to. Staff in an OSHC setting are not training to discuss these things with children but have the trust there to listen. Makes it hard to help

these children without further training or a paid professional for children to speak to.”

“Trained staff who have understanding of mental health and wellbeing and trauma in children and families is important.”

Throughout the rich array of responses, the key obstacles appeared to be the complexity of Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy, restricted eligibility and lack of access to services or training that strengthen teachers’ and educators’ own expertise to support children with sometimes very complex vulnerabilities. Some strengths also emerged – including the determination of teachers, educators and directors to guide families through complex systems and enable greater access and availability. Services noted ways they have overcome hurdles through practical strategies such as funds that were set aside by services for families experiencing vulnerability or through the guidance of well-trained staff. However, these generous strategies are not possible for many struggling services. Other strategies identified by respondents to enable more families experiencing vulnerability to access care for their children included streamlining the process of fee payment for children in out-of-home care and allowing children in receipt of the Additional Child Care Subsidy, or who are known to be vulnerable, to be eligible for more hours of subsidised education and care. Of course, it must be recognised that these strategies are not within the control of services themselves.

Recognising opportunities to improve access for children experiencing the most disadvantage or vulnerability, and improving the subsidy system is a challenge that requires action by the Federal Government.

Other key challenges that emerged through the participants’ responses included transportation access in regional and remote areas, these challenges may be addressed with the support of local governments. Realising these opportunities for all Australian children and overcoming challenges will require concerted national action.

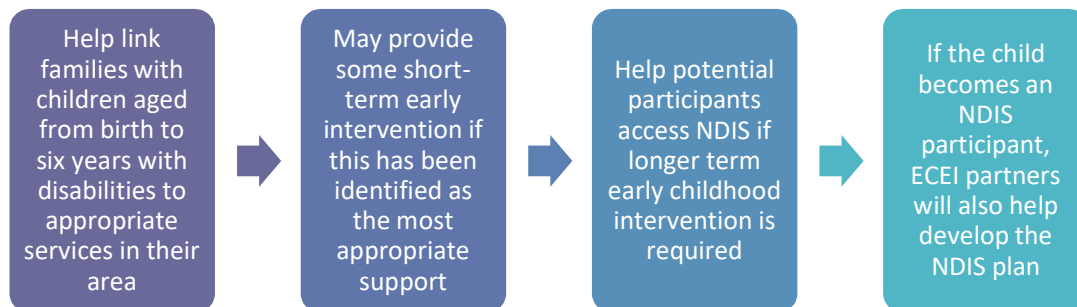
The impact of the introduction of the NDIS

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) commenced in a number of states and territories in July 2013, with the wider rollout commencing from 2016. Western Australia’s NDIS rollout occurred in 2019.

Families/carers of children aged from birth to six years who have a developmental delay or disability, receive support under the NDIS through Early Childhood Early Intervention. The ECEI approach supports families to help children develop the skills they need to take part in daily activities and achieve the best possible outcomes throughout their life.

The NDIS has engaged Early Childhood Partners around Australia to deliver the Early Childhood Early Intervention approach.

What ECEI partners can do:



Not-for-profit education and care centres can be involved in the NDIS early intervention process.

In 2019 respondents were asked about the impact the introduction of the NDIS may have had on their service and their support for children and families.

Many respondents had had limited, or no experience with the NDIS as they either did not have children with disabilities attending their services or families have gone through the process themselves and this did not involve any input from the service.

“Very little, except we can encourage parents to get involved in early intervention services, knowing they have the funds to do so.”

Some respondents who had experience with the NDIS were very positive about the impacts it had – particularly noting heightened awareness about early childhood intervention, greater outreach into the community, and inclusive practices.

Awareness of early childhood intervention and inclusive practices

“Increased the awareness of the importance of early years for children.”

“Great - working more with local community members for better outcomes for children.”

“Positive to support children with inclusivity.”

“We have had such a positive experience with the NDIS, it has benefitted our families hugely. We are also trialling a telehealth program with speech therapists and OT's, this has been the best program for children, families and educators, it should be rolled out across all early learning services.”

One respondent particularly noted concerns regarding transition to school for children with disabilities and that this is not always a smooth process.

Transition to school

"There is no-one to assist with the transition from an education and care centre to formal schooling - no-one who knows aspects of both environments, who can address the specific needs of the child and act as a 'introductory agent' for the families to the schools."

Some respondents also noted once a child's NDIS package has been approved, families are better able to access a range of services and resources to support their child with a disability.

Access to services and resources

"...we now have a paediatrician in our service once a week for a half day, but already she has a wait list of 4 months."

"...once a family is approved we are seeing positive changes in families being able to access intervention services and linking in with us as a professional team."

Some respondents were now able to support children with disabilities more effectively.

More effective support

"We are able to provide support for some children that we may not have been able to before."

"Increased funding has given us the opportunity to bridge the gap and employ an additional early childhood teacher to work with our children with additional needs. This has far improved outcomes for the children and support for the families."

In 2019, TICCSS respondents raised some challenges with interacting with the NDIS, ranging from families having difficulties accessing the NDIS, and finding services once they had access as well as differences in the way NDIS service providers work with children with disabilities.

There were additional challenges too with some respondents confused about the interplay between NDIS and child care subsidies, the role of the Early Childhood Early Intervention partners in supporting families, and the fit between NDIS and the Inclusion Support Program.

Respondents also talked about difficulties and confusion experienced by families trying to understand and engage with the NDIS application process.

NDIS application process

"Frustration from families with the process."

"NDIS is difficult for families to access due to the complexities of the application process. NDIS does not cover mental health issues even if diagnosed so a large number of children miss out on funding assistance to access professional support."

"Many of our families and educators have found changes to NDIS confusing, with access and information from service providers conflicting, inconsistent and confusing."

"Impact on support services that we had regularly partnered with to meet families' needs and difficulty for families to understand how to get the best program for their child. Families

are often only just coming to terms with diagnosis and what they need for their child."

Some families were frequently waiting a long time for approval of NDIS plans. Once a child has been diagnosed with a disability, early childhood intervention provides critical support for the child to develop the skills they needed to participate in daily activities to achieve the best possible life course outcomes. Any delays in NDIS approval processes impact on this. One respondent noted a family had been waiting 12 months for the NDIS plan to be approved.

NDIS approval processes

"Families have been frustrated in long wait times to put together their child's NDIS plan once they have been approved for funding. This means that children spend a long time in limbo without access to appropriate allied health support. We have one family who has been waiting for approximately 12 months so far."

"Families waiting for long periods of time in many different stages of the process. Families start the NDIS application independently and then being told they have to use an ECEI organisation and then this makes it take even longer."

"It's more difficult for families to access services as children need diagnosis of condition to get NDIS, and providers are slow to arrange assessments and offer services."

Some respondents were very concerned about the challenges families experienced trying to access services, particularly in rural and remote communities where there are more limited service options.

Rural and remote communities

"Working in rural communities makes implementation of supports for children difficult due to limited providers and distances (costs) to an individual's NDIS package."

"We have 1 family accessing and the biggest issue is the time it takes for things to come through and there have been challenges for them to access services close to home."

Some respondents noted increased paperwork and administrative burdens, in part related to the Inclusion Support Program. It is not clear whether this increased burden also related to the NDIS.

Some respondents found it challenging to integrate individual therapies and interventions with service philosophies that were based on inclusive practices. This is an interesting conundrum as all service philosophies would be based on the best possible outcomes for children and having access to appropriate early childhood intervention is an important element of supporting best outcomes for children with disabilities. Other respondents commented that on-site therapies provided an opportunity for teachers and educators to develop skills in these areas. Some respondents noted that they did not have appropriate withdrawal space for therapies to be delivered in their service.

Working with support services

"We have parents who have elected to have their therapy sessions at the service, through NDIS, and we feel this is a very poor idea. Kindergarten must be inclusive with emphasis on strengths and similarities not on singling children out to practise what they are poor at while their friends are playing. We have had to word an agreement that emphasises the child's right to anti-bias and inclusivity."

"We have had two children attend our service who receive NDIS funding. This has resulted in speech pathologists and occupational therapists attending the service to deliver services. We do not have a withdrawal space so have been inclusive of the professional services within our program. We figure we can learn some additional skills from the service provider. Some providers are not so inclusive and respectful of our educators and service."

Summary of the responses about the impact of the NDIS program on education and care services

The strengths noted by respondents in relation to the NDIS program include the greater promotion of early intervention and access to this. Respondents noted that their increased interaction with therapists, through their engagement in the services, allows for their own staff to learn new skills and develop knowledge of children's needs. They also noted that, through greater access to early support, children have improved outcomes and families feel more supported.

The weaknesses that were noted by respondents were particularly around the length of time it took for approvals to happen and confusion about the flow of the NDIS processes. This provides an opportunity for the disability support sector and NDIS providers to utilise, train and support early education and care services to provide accurate guidance for families. Some opportunities raised by respondents included being able to refer families on to a service they know they can afford. A particular challenge that was raised by one respondent was the inability of NDIS to easily cover mental health issues. The challenge for the National Disability Insurance Agency is to provide clear information which enables the education and care sector, especially not-for-profit services on whom the greater burden of supporting children with disability falls, to provide accurate advice to families when they need to.

Waiting lists

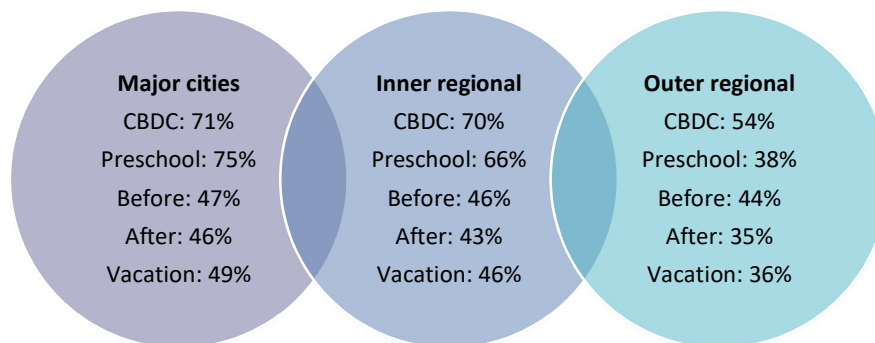
Number of children on waiting lists

In 2019, 63% (374) of respondents had children on their waiting lists, down from 70% in 2017 and 67% in 2014. 70% of centre based day care and 71% of preschool/kindergarten services that answered this question had waiting lists. This contrasts with OSHC service respondents. Just under half of before

school care (47%), after school care (46%), and vacation care (47%) had waiting lists in place.

Geographic location also impacted on waiting list. Fewer respondents in outer regional areas had waiting lists as the following chart shows. It is interesting to note that of those preschool/kindergarten that responded to this question, three quarters of preschools located in major city areas had waiting lists compared with two-thirds of services located in inner regional areas. In other service types the proportion of services with waiting lists remained about the same across major cities and inner regional areas.

Table 10. Waiting lists by remoteness



Note: Family day care, remote and very remote respondents have not been included due to the low number of responses.

Over a third (38%) of children on waiting lists were under 2 years old, 24% were aged between 2 and 3, 32% were aged between 3 to 5 years and 5% were primary school age.

Table 11. Proportion of children by age on waiting lists

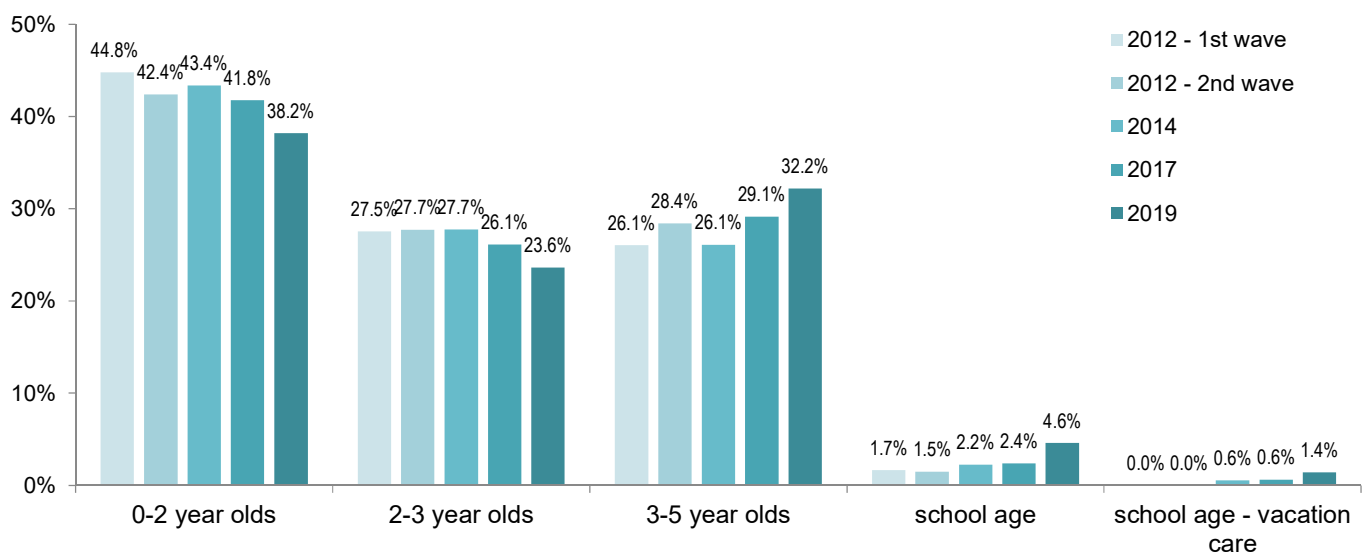
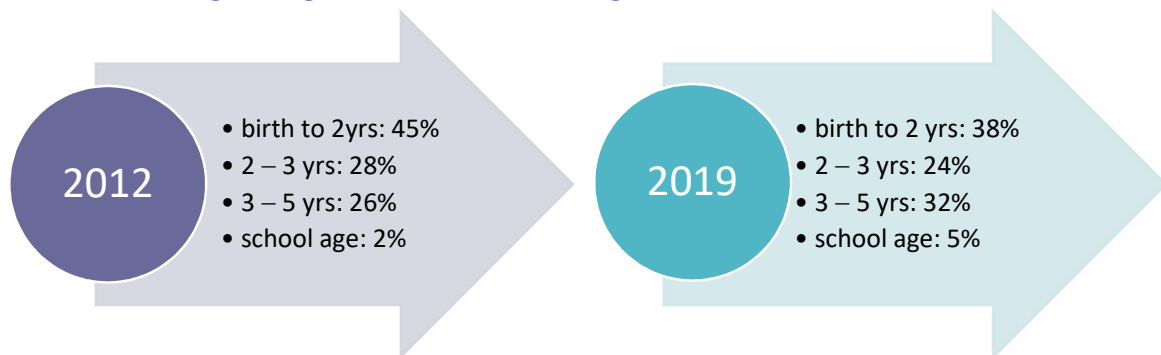


Table note: 2012 surveys did not separate school-aged children into before and/or after school care and vacation care

Over time, the proportion of babies and toddlers on waiting lists has declined while the proportion of preschool/kindergarten and school age children has increased.

Table 12. Changes in ages of children on waiting lists



It is interesting to speculate why these age-related changes to waiting lists have occurred. Overall, the proportion of children using centre based care has increased from 27.5% in June 2012 to 36.3% in March 2019¹². Over the same period the total number of centre based day care services has increased from 6,156 in June 2012, to 7,932 in March 2019¹³. Anecdotal information suggests that some families are finding it easier to access places for children aged from birth to two years when returning to work from parental leave; it may be that the market has responded to this demand with new long day care centres providing more places for babies and toddlers than previously.

The increase in waiting list demand for pre-schoolers may reflect state-based policies that are encouraging greater attendance of 3 year olds and universal access for 100% of children in the year before they go to school, along with enhanced affordability strategies in some states and territories. (Preschool programs can be delivered in preschools/kindergartens and centre based day care services.) In the period 2012 to 2018, the proportion of children aged 4 or 5 years who were enrolled in a preschool program (across all education and care settings) in the year before they went to school increased from 71% in 2012, to 100% in 2018¹⁴. The jurisdictional strategies implemented under the *National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education* have heightened families' awareness of the importance of good quality early learning as a critical influence in a child's educational and life course outcomes.

The small increase in demand for OSHC may reflect increased demand for after school care. Lack of available after school care places is reflected in regular media reports¹⁵. One third of

¹² Department of Education (2013), Child Care & Early Learning in Summary, December Quarter 2012, p.3. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2019), Australian Demographic Statistics, Catalogue number 3101.0, Table 8: estimated resident population by age and sex - at 30 June 2018

¹³ Department of Education (2013), Child Care & Early Learning in Summary, December Quarter 2012, p.4. Department of Education, Child Care in Australia, March Quarter 2019, Table 3.1 Number of services by State and Territory March quarter 2019

¹⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012 and 2018), Australian Demographic Statistics, Catalogue number 3101.0, Table 8: estimated resident population by age and sex - at 30 June 2018 and 30 June 2012. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012 and 2018), Preschool Education, Catalogue number 4240.0, Table 2 (2018) and Table 3 (2012): Children enrolled

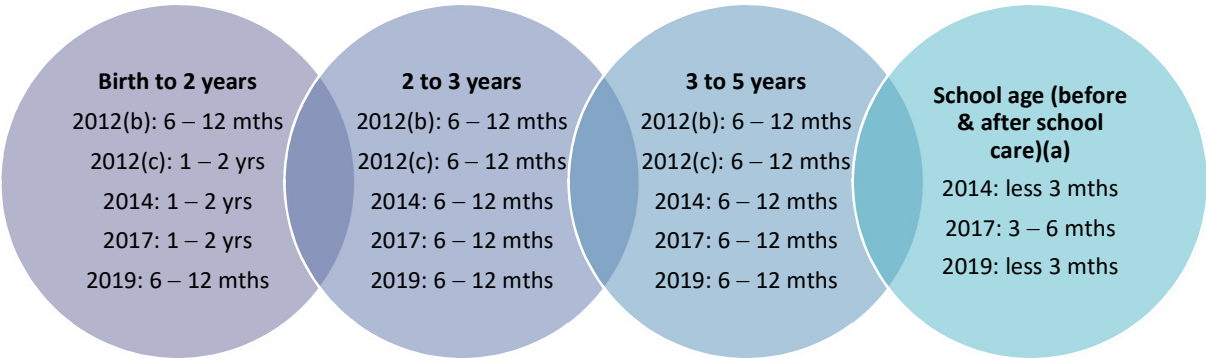
¹⁵ <https://www.innerwest.nsw.gov.au/about/news/hot-topics/out-of-school-hours-care-shortage>;
<https://www.smh.com.au/education/huge-sense-of-urgency-clock-ticks-on-after-school-care-promise-20190906-p52ot3.html>;
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-01-21/back-to-school-but-no-after-care-brisbane-places-shortage/9345932>;

after school care respondents in 2019 were operating at 91 to 100% capacity compared with only one fifth in 2017.

Length of time on waiting lists

Before the introduction of the NQF, there was speculation as to whether accessibility of services would be impacted. Our data indicate that the NQF has not created a crisis in accessibility of education and care services. While there are some fluctuations in numbers of children on waiting lists, the length of time on waiting lists by age has not varied considerably across all waves of TICCSS. Peak waiting times for children aged from birth to less than two years have reduced from 38% of children waiting one to two years in 2017, to 34% of children waiting six to 12 months in 2019. Anecdotally some families are finding it easier to find places for babies and toddlers than previously with some services having vacancies across all age groups.

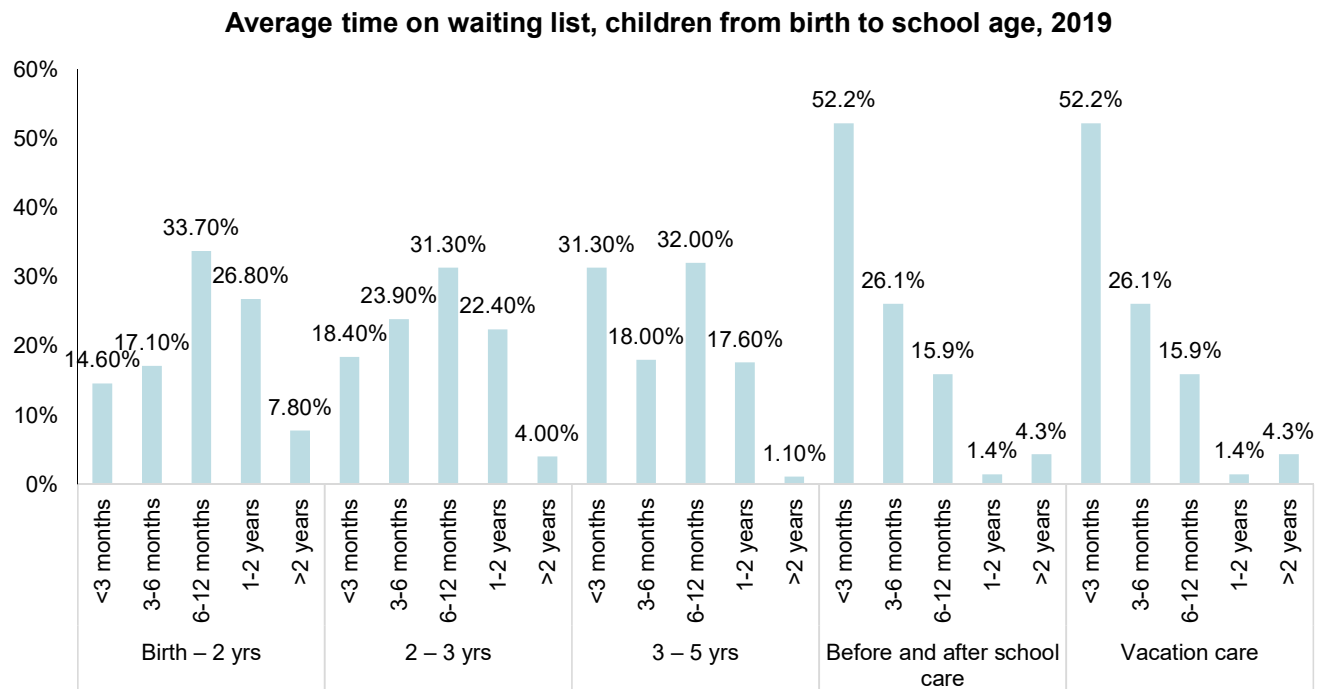
Table 13. Peak waiting times by age group, 2012 – 2019



- Table Notes:
- a) Data for school aged children on waiting lists were not comparable for 2012 waves, as school aged care services were not collected separately in 2012. Data for Vacation care services are not shown here due to low numbers
 - b) Data are from 2012 wave 1
 - c) Data are from 2012 wave 2.

In 2019, almost half of children from all age groups were on a waiting list for less than 6 months, however this varied considerably between different age groups. Children aged from birth to less than 2 years were almost twice as likely as children aged two to three years old to be on a waiting list for more than 2 years (7.8% compared with 4% respectively). Most school aged children were only on waiting lists for less than one school term (less than 3 months).

Table 14. Average time on waiting list, children from birth to school age, 2019



Specific requirements for waiting lists

2019 was the first time that respondents were asked about any specific requirements placed on families to go on waiting lists. 41% of respondents who had a waiting list required families tour the service and 29% charged an application fee to go on the waiting list.

Fifty-eight respondents (15.3% of those with waiting lists) provided comments about other requirements. Other respondents commented they followed priority of access requirements or required families to live in a particular area or be associated with a particular school or college.

Affordable education and care

TICCSS commenced at a time of significant change in the education and care sector. Some of these changes such as the introduction of Modern Awards, which worked towards equalising wages and conditions, and the NQF which mandated higher adult to child ratios in some states and territories, directly impacted on operating costs of education and care services. Some of these costs may have been passed on to families through increased fees. Other wider market factors can also necessitate fee increases, such as increases in tenancy costs, or meeting increased prices of materials and resources. Disincentives towards fee increases are often brought about by oversupply in local market conditions, or fee-ceilings which develop in areas where many households experience low income or job insecurity.

For education and care fees to be characterised as ‘affordable’ they must be low enough to allow families to meet other living costs. Increases that are higher than wage growth can drive down affordability. However, this can be softened by subsidies to providers and/or families. State subsidies for kindergarten and preschool programs and Federal child care subsidies for early childhood and outside school hours care programs help families to lower their out-of-pocket costs. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Social Protection and Wellbeing Index, in 2018 to 2019, Australia raised its ranking amongst other OECD countries from 20th to 11th for childcare cost for parents using childcare¹⁶. However, for children aged from birth to 2/3 years, affordability for education and care is restricted by eligibility requirements for Child Care Subsidy which include income and activity tests. Families who were ineligible for Child Care Subsidy are often unable to afford full fees. Another factor that makes education and care services unaffordable is the fact that the difference between any extra income that is earned by either parent being more active in the workforce is offset by the additional income tax paid and loss in subsidies. This leads to disincentives for parents (particularly women) to increase their work hours or days and this, in turn, leads to a loss of hours or days for the child in education and care programs¹⁷.

Children and families in all communities benefit from affordable education and care. The findings highlighted in this chapter, demonstrate the importance of affordability. A strong universally accessible sector not only provides some support to everyone but also provides a platform for identifying who may need targeted support irrespective of their socio-economic characteristics or where they live.

Fee increases

Did fees go up?

It is standard business practice for education and care services to increase their fees on an annual basis to reflect increased operating costs that most often relate to wages and conditions, various insurances and accommodation costs. Many not-for-profit education and care have modest fee increases in line with proportional increases to the cost of living (consumer price index – CPI). In March 2019, close to the time of the 2019 TICCSS survey, the national CPI increased by 1.3%¹⁸.

In the two waves conducted in 2012 around half of services reported they had increased fees in the previous 6 months (43% in wave 1, and 48% in wave 2). This is difficult to compare with 2014 – 2019 where respondents were asked about fee increases in the previous 12 months. In 2014, three-quarters of services increased their fees; this dropped to 67% in 2017 and increased to 81% in 2019.

¹⁶ OECD (2020) Net childcare costs for parents using childcare, <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=NCC>

¹⁷ Wardell-Johnson, G and Kitchen, A (2019), The case for further investment in the child care subsidy, KPMG, Australia.

¹⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2019), Consumer Price Index, Australia, Table 1 CPI: GROUPS, Index Numbers and Percentage Changes

Table 15. Services who have increased fees, 2014 – 2019

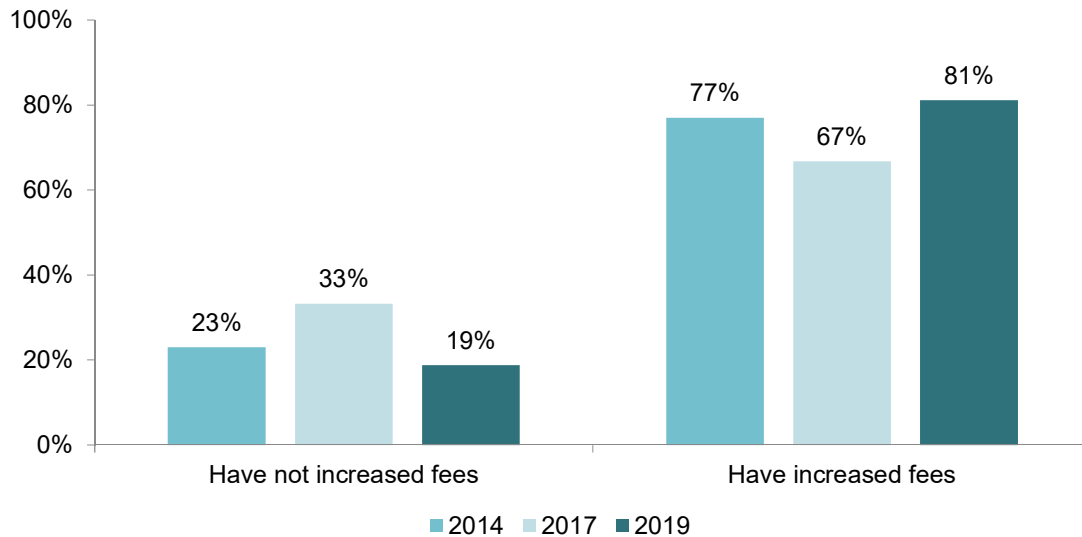


Table note:
Proportions were calculated from the total respondents for this question.

In 2019, two-thirds (66%) of respondents increased their fees by less than 5% and 19% did not increase their fees at all. However, the rate of increase changed according to socio-economic areas of advantage and disadvantage (SEIFA).

Services in the most disadvantaged areas were more likely than those located in more advantaged SEIFA quintiles to have made a small increase to their fees (71% in SEIFA quintile 5, compared with 57% in SEIFA quintile 1). However, services located in the two most advantaged SEIFA quintiles (SEIFA quintiles 1 and 2), were more likely to maintain their fee levels in the 12 months prior, but also more likely to increase their fees by over 10%. The decision to maintain similar fees may be based on the desire to keep costs low for families, however, it can also be driven by local market considerations such as over-supply. For other services, exacerbating factors such as tenancy or resource costs may factor in their decision to increase fees by over 10%.

Table 16. Fee increase over the last 12 months, by SEIFA quintiles 2019

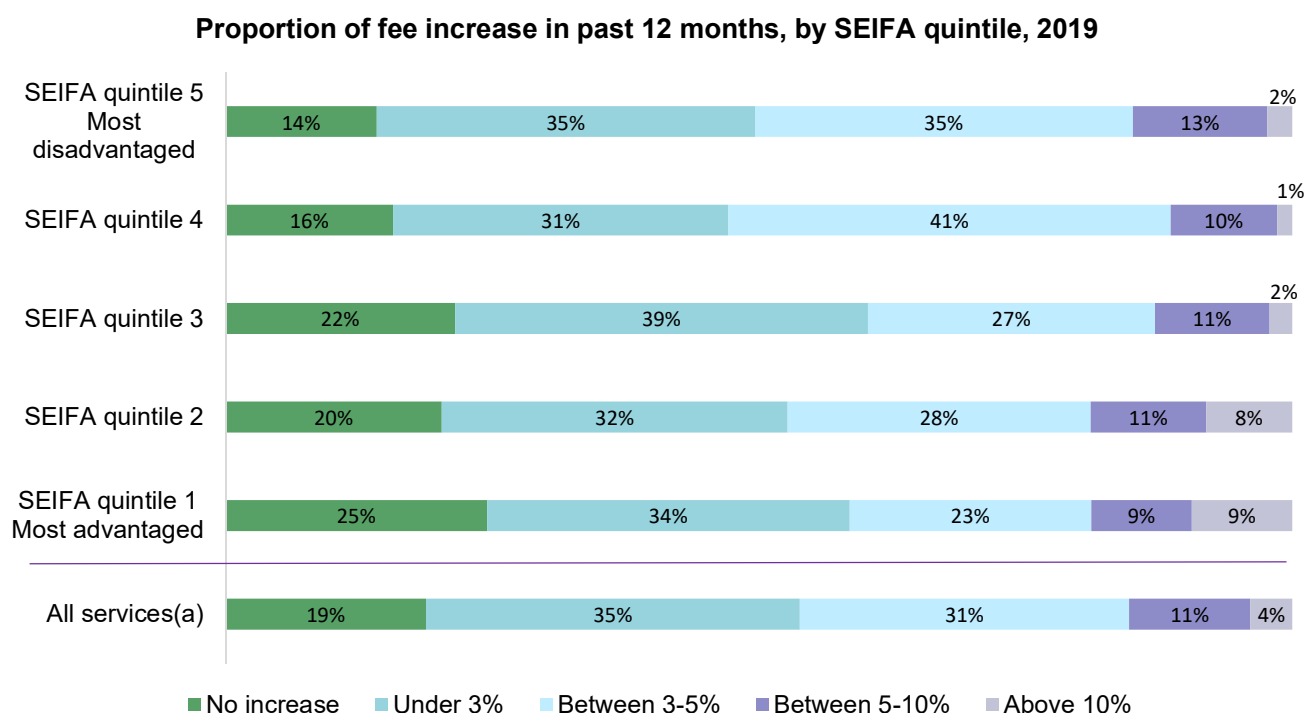


Table notes:

(a) The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD) is used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to classify services by the level of relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage of their local area. SEIFA was used by ACECQA as a proxy measure to identify services that were more or less likely to educate and care for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Why did fees go up?

The normal cost of living/CPI increases continues to be the main reason for fee increases followed by increases in staff wages.

In 2019, one in eight services who responded to this question, reported that the introduction of the Child Care Subsidy was a main reason for an increase in their fees.

The financial impact of significant regulatory changes to early and middle childhood services seems to have slowed. Costs relating to meeting regulatory standards or other quality improvements were higher in the two 2012 waves with the introduction of the NQS and in 2014 when ratio changes were introduced with regard to toddlers and children aged three to five years. In 2019, the impact of increases in staffing was on par with the rate reported in 2017; this could reflect some respondents already meeting the 2020 requirements for early childhood teachers.

While the impact of staff wages peaked at the time of the second wave in 2012 (in response to new minimum qualifications), in the first wave of 2012, and in 2014, 2017 and 2019 around 4 in 9 services attribute staff wages as a main reason for fee increases.

Table 17. Main reason/s for fee increase, 2012 – 2019

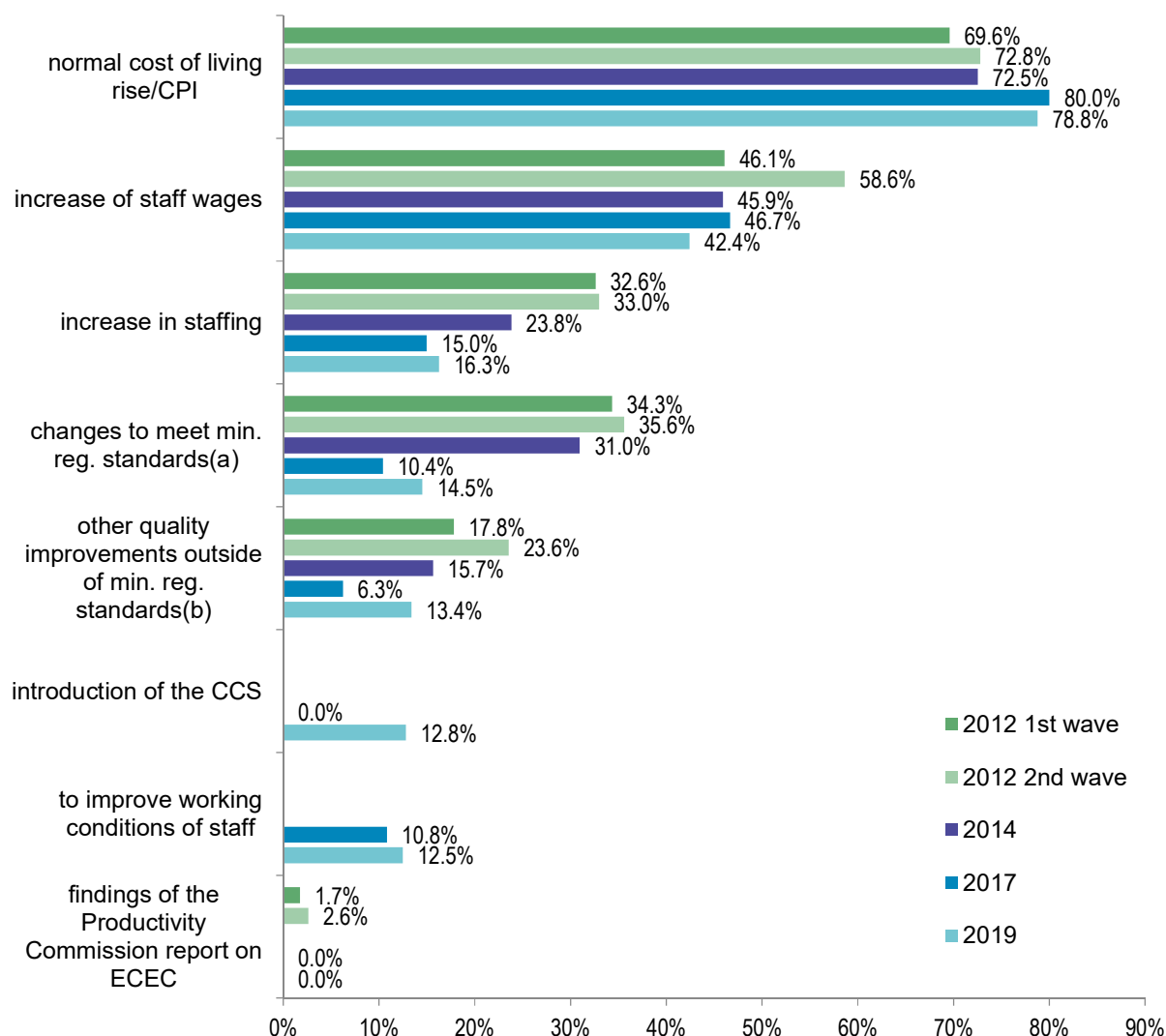


Table notes:

(a) "Changes to meet minimum regulatory standards."

(b) "Other quality improvements outside minimum regulatory standards."

Impressions of the impacts of fee increases on families

Respondents were asked to consider how fee increases may have impacted on the families using their services, including specific feedback from families reducing days or hours, or leaving the service altogether.

In 2019, half (52%) of the respondents reported that no families had expressed frustration due to fee increases. Close to a third (31%) said that one or a few families had expressed their understanding of the need for fee increases.

Only a very small proportion of services reported that some or many families left the service due to fee increases (4%); however, one-fifth (20%) of respondents to this question reported that some or many families reduced their days or hours due to fee increases.

Table 18. Impact of fee increases on families

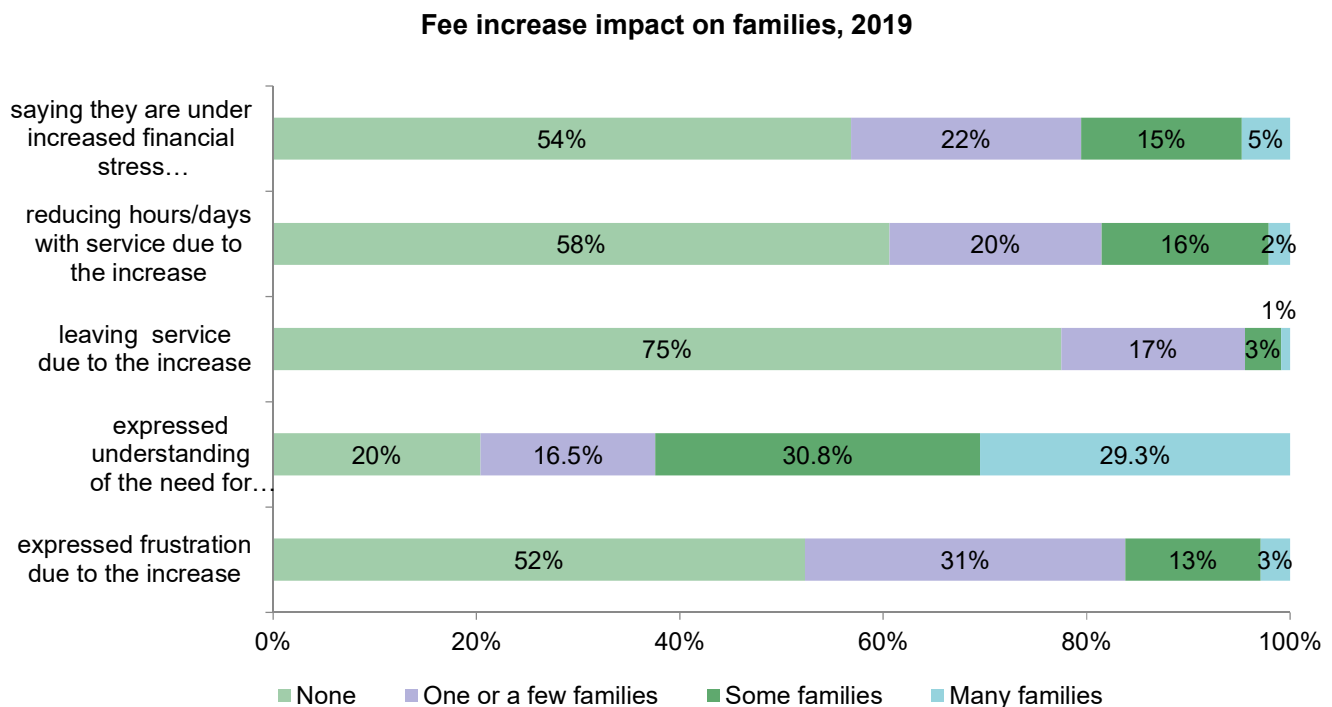


Table note:
Proportions are calculated from the number of respondents to this set of questions.

It would seem that many families are managing the fee increases and opting not to leave education and care services. It is not known whether the increased fees have also increased financial stress for these families. However, some respondents reported that families had talked in general about their financial stress. Respondents also reported that the introduction of the Child Care Subsidy occurred around the same time as fee increases thus alleviating or exacerbating the impact of the increases. However, only 3% of services reported introducing a new hourly rate as a response to CCS changes.

Impacts on families due to fee increases

"Families do talk in general about the costliness of child care."

"Our fees increased in the new financial year but fees for families decreased due to CCS being introduced."

"Some families did not actually know/understand what this was actually going to mean for them and needed it to be explained."

“Some families have complained that they don't get as much subsidy on the new CCS.”

“The CCS and available hours affected some families and special request and letters from the service were required to resolve this issue. Many of our families are in financial stress.”

“This is hard to answer as a fee increase was in line with the new CCS system.”

Summary of accessibility measures in TICCSS

Accessibility across Australia and for vulnerable families

Not-for-profit services are accessible across all areas of socio-economic advantage and disadvantage and areas of remoteness. High numbers of not-for-profit services support children and families in vulnerable circumstances. In 2019, 87% of services provided care for children in vulnerable circumstances - an increase since 2012 (81%).

Impact of the NDIS rollout

Services in our study have learned much by working alongside NDIS providers and supporting families through NDIS applications and therapies. The strengths noted by respondents in relation to the NDIS program include the greater promotion of disability services and access to these. Respondents noted that their increased interaction with therapists, through their engagement in the services, allows their own staff to learn new skills and develop their knowledge of their children's needs. They also noted that, through greater access to early support, children have improved outcomes and families feel more supported.

The negatives of the impact of NSIS showed in some of the responses, particularly around the length of time it took for approvals to happen and confusion about the flow of the NDIS processes. This provides an opportunity for the disability support sector and NDIS providers to utilise, train and support education and care services to provide accurate guidance for families. Some opportunities raised by respondents included being able to refer families on to a service they know they can afford. A particular challenge that was raised by one respondent was the inability of NDIS to cover mental health issues – however, some support is provided for disability arising from mental ill-health which is covered under NDIS. The challenge for NDIS Australia is to provide clear information which enables the education and care sector to provide accurate advice to families when they need to.

The impact of waiting lists

Waiting lists for babies remain a concern, although, over time, places in not-for-profit services have become more quickly available to children than they were in 2014 or 2017 and waiting times are now similar rates to what they were in the first wave of 2012.

Waiting lists for babies and school-aged children halved between 2017 and 2019. In 2019, almost half of children from all age groups were on a waiting list for less than 6 months, however, this varied considerably between different age groups. Children aged less than 2 years were almost twice as likely as those aged 2 to 3 years to be on a waiting list for more

than 2 years. Most school aged children were only on waiting lists for less than one school term.

Impact of fee increases

The impact of fee increases on families appears to have lessened since 2014. There were lower numbers of families leaving services due to fee increases in more recent years. There were also lower numbers of families who reduced their days or hours due to fee increases in more recent years.

While fewer families were expressing frustration due to fee increases, the rate of families who expressed understanding for the need for fee increases was similar across the three surveys. Around half of services reported that no families expressed frustration about fee increases in 2017 and 2019 compared with 38% in 2014. Around four-fifths of services reported that they experienced families who expressed understanding of the need for fee increases.



Child Care Subsidy

Spotlight on the introduction of CCS

The introduction of Child Care Subsidy and the Activity Test which determines the amount of subsidised care families can receive has had an impact on not-for-profit services and the families that use them. Although a large proportion have managed to keep their fees under the Child Care Subsidy capped rate, ensuring a level of affordability, two-thirds had families that reduced their days, and one-third had families that reduced their hours. Some children were withdrawn altogether, including some children from high income families. Sadly, 16% of not-for-profit services have fewer children from families experiencing vulnerability enrolled than they did before the introduction of the Child Care Subsidy.

Spotlight on the introduction of CCS

The Child Care Subsidy was introduced on 1 July 2018. This new Australian Government fee subsidy replaced the previous Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate. The Child Care Subsidy eligibility threshold in relation to the total annual family income and workforce participation is more generous than for the previous Benefit and Rebate. However, one significant change under the Child Care Subsidy is that families who do not meet the minimum work activity test are now eligible for only half the hours of subsidised child care – now 24 hours per fortnight rather than the previous 24 hours per week under Child Care Benefit. Furthermore, some higher income families who were previously eligible for Child Care Rebate now receive no subsidy at all – resulting, in some cases, in the withdrawal of children from childcare entirely.

Families who find it difficult to meet the new work activity test and have reduced access to subsidised child care are more likely to be experiencing disadvantage or vulnerability; it is children from these same families who would benefit most from participation in good quality early learning environments.

Respondents were asked to consider how the introduction of CCS had impacted their services in relation to pricing structures and changes to family enrolments.

Table 19. Changes to pricing structure since introduction of Child Care Subsidy

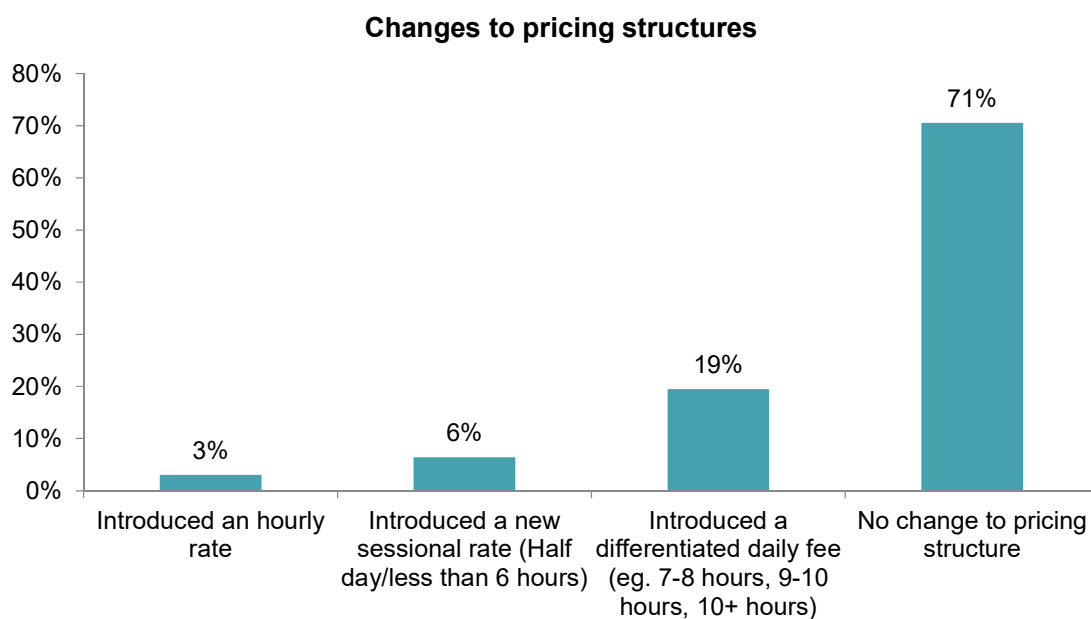


Table notes:

Proportions are calculated of respondents to this question and exclude Preschool/ Kindergarten only services as these are ineligible for CCS.

In 2019, three-quarters of respondents (71%) to this question had made no changes to their pricing structures since the introduction of Child Care Subsidy. 19% of respondents had introduced a differentiated daily fee.

Changes to the usage of education and care in response to the introduction of the Child Care Subsidy

42% (164) of respondents to this question had experienced changes to enrolments since the introduction of the Child Care Subsidy. These changes related to the number of enrolments of families attending the service.

Table 20. Impact of changes to enrolments since the introduction of CCS

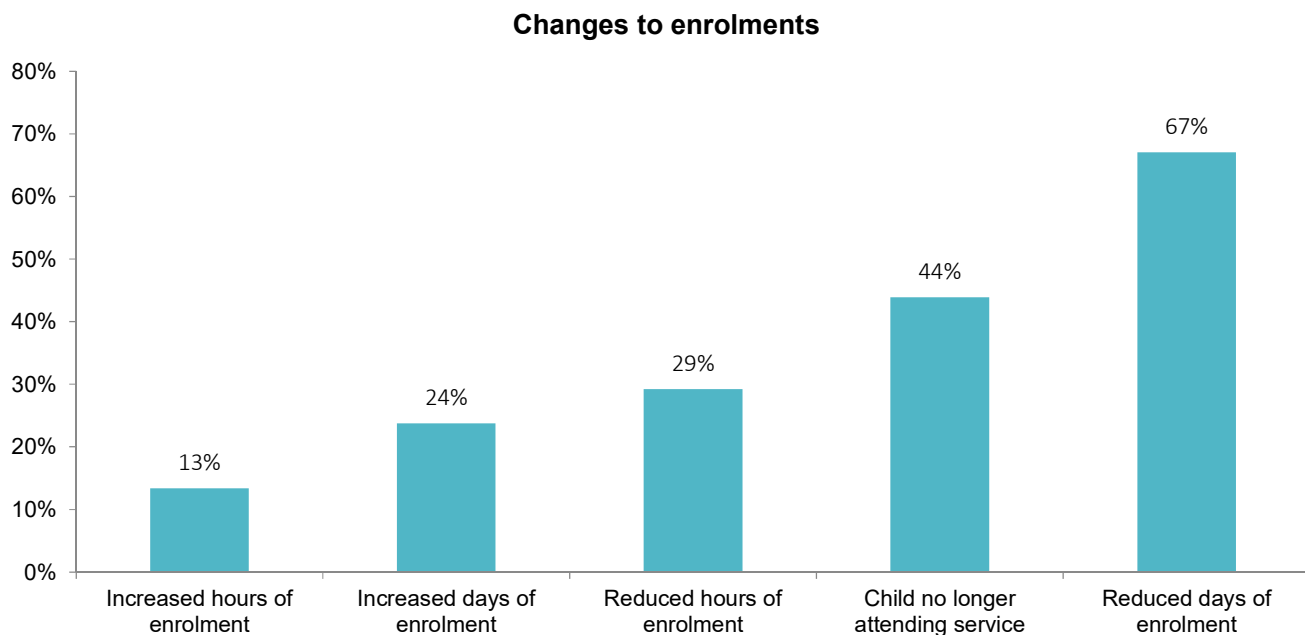


Table note:

Proportions are calculated from the 42% of respondents who reported that they *had* experienced changes in enrolments due to the introduction of CCS (164). This number includes 10 Preschool/Kindergarten only services.

There was a higher proportion of respondents to this question who experienced negative enrolment impacts since the introduction of CCS. Close to one-third (29%) had experienced reduced hours of enrolments, and over two-thirds (67%) experienced reduced days of enrolment (including 3 preschool/kindergarten only services). Fewer services had experienced increases in hours of enrolments (13%) and increased days of enrolment (24%).

These findings are consistent with preliminary evaluation of the Child Care Package by the Australian Institute of Family Studies which found that overall, 71% of families reported that they had not made changes to their child care arrangements in response to the introduction of the new Child Care Package. A second question, asking about Child Care Subsidy-related changes to the amount of formal care, found that 70% of families were using the same amount of care from pre-July 2018 to November 2018, 19% were using less formal child care and 11% were using more¹⁹.

¹⁹ AIFS (2019) Child Care Package Evaluation: Early monitoring report – Report on baseline, early monitoring and emerging issues, <https://aifs.gov.au/publications/child-care-package-evaluation-early-monitoring-report>

Change in the demographic profile of families after Child Care Subsidy

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE CHILD CARE SUBSIDY MAY HAVE DISPROPORTIONALLY IMPACTED FAMILIES EXPERIENCING VULNERABILITY WITH ONE IN SIX SERVICES REPORTING THEY HAD EXPERIENCED A DECREASE IN FAMILIES USING THEIR SERVICE WHO WERE EXPERIENCING VULNERABILITY.

In 2019, respondents were asked if the introduction of the Child Care Subsidy made an impact on the profile of families utilising their services. Changes that were reported include:

- **16% decrease in families experiencing vulnerability**
- **10% increase in families experiencing vulnerability**
- **9% decrease in the number of families on high incomes**
- **5% increase in the number of families on high incomes**

Summary of the impact of Child Care Subsidy on accessibility

Child Care Subsidy appears to have an impact on the education and care sector in several ways. Many services, whose families are eligible to receive Child Care Subsidy, reported that their fees were lower than the funding cap. This ensures that families receive maximum support with their out-of-pocket costs. Close to one-third of CCS funded services changed their pricing structure with the introduction of CCS, with the most common change being an introduction of differentiated daily rates. These allow families to pay for a lower daily rate if they are able to and make the most of the subsidised hours for which they are eligible.

There are signs, however, that families have experienced some reductions in their accessibility of education and care. Over two-thirds of services in receipt of Child Care Subsidy for families reported that their families had reduced days, one-third reported families reducing hours and 4% reported having some children no longer attending at all. Further, 1 in 10 services reported a decrease in the number of high income families, and 16% reported a decrease in the number of families experiencing vulnerability.

Workforce

Not-for-profit services have a strong focus on supporting the education and care workforce. This leads to higher quality education and care and happier teachers and educators.

Not-for-profit services support their education and care workforce.

What we know:

- Children form strong attachments to their teachers and educators and these relationships are vital for children to learn
- Low wages in early education and care contribute to regular staff turnover – only a third of all educators have worked in their service for 3 years
- We have a severe shortage of early childhood teachers – and this will worsen as the number of students studying early childhood education is dramatically fewer than the numbers that Regulations will require services to engage
- The two factors that impact most on service quality is the number of teachers and educators and their qualifications. Higher qualified staff and more staff in a service mean higher quality education and care for children.

What we found:

- Not-for-profit services participating in the TICCSS survey spend a very high proportion (almost 80%) of their income on staff
- Not-for-profit services pay higher wages and conditions
 - Two-thirds pay above award wages
 - Most give more planning time than required under the award
 - Most pay for professional development and provide it in normal working hours
- Not-for-profit services participating in TICCSS that provide more planning time have more stable workforces
- Not-for-profit services have more staff who stay longer in the job. Two-thirds of TICCSS services had very high tenure – most of their staff had been with them for over 3 years.

Resilient and equipped workforce

The quality of Australia's education and care services is underpinned by teachers and educators having the skills they need to develop and deliver high quality educational programs. A skilled workforce has been growing since the introduction of the National Quality Framework however teacher and educator wellbeing is key to ensuring they stay and are passionate about their work. This section examines tenure, opportunities for promotion and growth, pay and conditions, allocation of services' budgets to professional development and overall expenditure on staff pay.

Tenure

Close to two-thirds of educators in not-for-profit education and care services have been in their service for over 3 years. This is a stark comparison to national averages, where only one-third of staff had been with their service for over 3 years.

Retention of educators is a vital component of the provision of continuity of care for young children. Turnover of staff can reduce the quality of care as it leads to skill-loss, loss of revenue (due to the costs of recruitment), and breaks in the continuity of care-givers in children's environments. Children's learning is founded on attachment, so when this is interrupted, so too is their development.

The turnover rate in the education and care sector has been reported to be as high as 30%, with educators staying with any one service for three and a half years on average²⁰. TICCSS data, however, shows strong stability in the staffing of not-for-profit education and care.

The comparison between the 2016 TICCSS, the 2016 *National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census* and the 2019 TICCSS demonstrate the stark differences between the profiles of tenure stability in TICCSS respondents' not-for-profit services compared with the overall sector.



²⁰ McDonald, Thorpe and Irvine (2018), Low pay but still we stay: retention in early childhood education and care

Table 21. Comparison between tenure of contact staff, National ECEC Workforce Census, 2016 compared with TICCSS, 2019

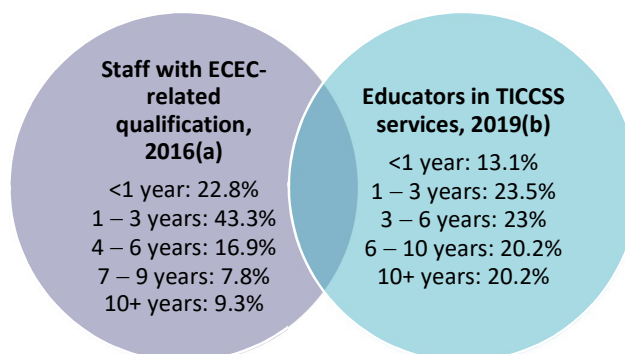


Table notes:

(a) Data is from National ECEC Workforce Census, 2016²¹.

(b) Data is from TICCSS, 2019.

The average teacher or educator employed in TICCSS services has between 3 – 6 years of employment with their service. The number of teachers and educators who have worked six or more years in the service has increased slightly over the past three survey waves while the number of respondents' teachers and educators who have worked from one to three years in the service has decreased slightly over the same period.

Table 22. Educator length of tenure, 2014, 2017 and 2019

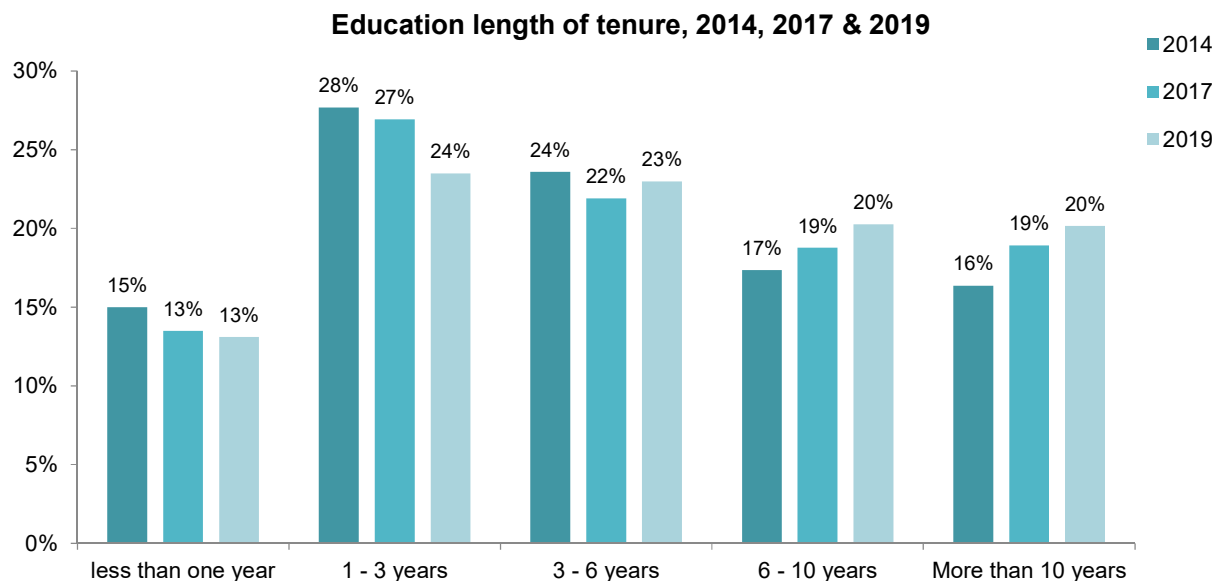


Table note:

This question was not asked in 2012 1st or 2012 2nd waves.

²¹ ANU Social Research Centre, Australian DET (2017) 2016 Early Childhood Education and Care National Workforce Census, https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/2016_ecec_nwc_national_report_sep_2017_0.pdf

2019 respondents to this question seemed to have a fairly stable workforce reporting almost two thirds (63%) of their staff having 3 or more years of employment in the service. This compares with 57% in 2014 and 60% in 2017.

Tenure is also explored in the section on *Pay and conditions* and *qualification of educational leaders* later in this chapter.

Significantly, services with *Very high* tenure stability were:

- More likely to be providing above awards and conditions
- More likely to have educational leaders who had higher qualifications such as a bachelor or postgraduate degrees
- More likely to ensure their educational leaders *always* took their allocated time out of classrooms or away from other responsibilities for educational leader duties.

Pay and conditions

The majority of respondents over all waves provide pay and conditions above the minimum requirements of the relevant education and care awards.

In 2019, almost three-quarters of respondents to this question (73%, 360) provided pay and conditions above the relevant education and care awards. This is similar to the rate in 2017 (75%), and 2014 (71%).

In 2019 respondents to this question provided:

- Above award wages – 67%
- Above award programming time – 45%
- Above award leave entitlements – 21%
- Study leave days – 34%

Some respondents also provided the following above award conditions.

- Access to paid professional development and for some this included paid time out of hours
- Salary packaging
- Reduced child care fees
- Paid maternity leave
- Extra days off/additional holidays.

Pay and conditions were associated with longevity of tenure. For the purposes of investigating the associations between tenure and conditions, services were categorised by the proportion of their staff who had been with their services for 3 years or more. Services were categorised as “Very High” if 75 – 100% of their staff had been with them for more than 3 years; “High” tenure if that was true for 50 – 74% of their staff, “Low” if that was true for 25 – 49% of their staff; and “Very Low” if that was true for 0 – 24% of their staff.

The categorisation ranking was higher for services which paid educators above their relevant award. Three quarters (72%) of services who paid above award wages had Very high tenure.

Table 23. Tenure stability of staff, by pay and conditions, 2019

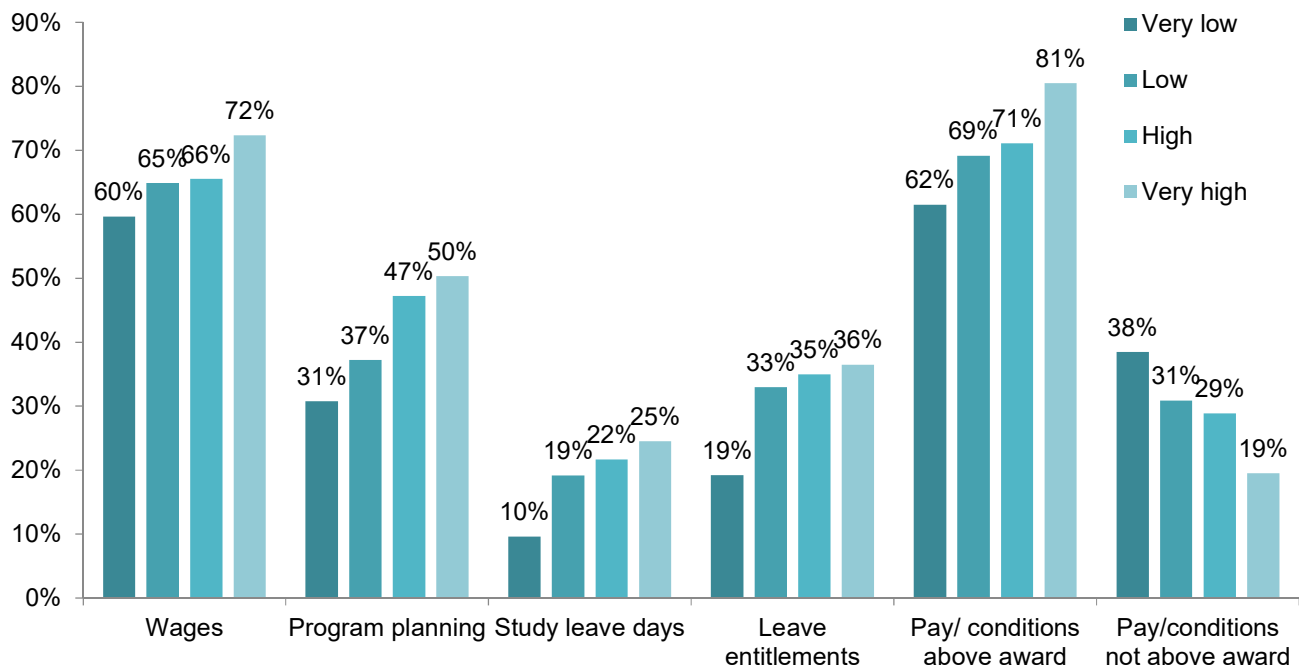


Table note:

Tenure stability is calculated by the proportion of staff who have been with the service for 3 years or more. *Very Low* refers to less than 25% of staff having been with the service for 3 years or more, *Low* refers to 25 – 49%, *High* refers to 50 – 74% and *Very High* refers to over 75%.

Pay and conditions were strongly linked with tenure stability. For instance, 81% of services that had Very High tenure stability paid staff and provided conditions that were above the award, whereas this dropped to 62% of services with Very Low tenure stability.

The largest correlation was between services with Very High tenure stability where half (50%) provided additional program planning entitlements. This contrasts with services with Very Low tenure stability where less than one-third (31%) provided additional program planning. Interestingly services with Low, High or Very High tenure stability all had similar rates of providing additional leave entitlements (33%, 35% and 36%), this decreased to 19% in services with Very Low tenure stability.

Professional development

THE MAJORITY OF NOT-FOR-PROFIT SERVICES PROVIDE EDUCATORS WITH ACCESS TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WITH 88% SUPPORTING EDUCATORS TO ATTEND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DURING WORK HOURS AND 86% PAYING FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COSTS.

Respondents were asked about different professional development options they may provide for their teachers and educators.

In 2019, attendance at professional development during work hours (83% in 2017, 88% in 2019) and paying fees for professional development (87% in 2017, 86% in 2019) ranked as the top two options in 2019 (and 2017) for respondents to this question.

Table 24. Professional development options provided, 2017 and 2019

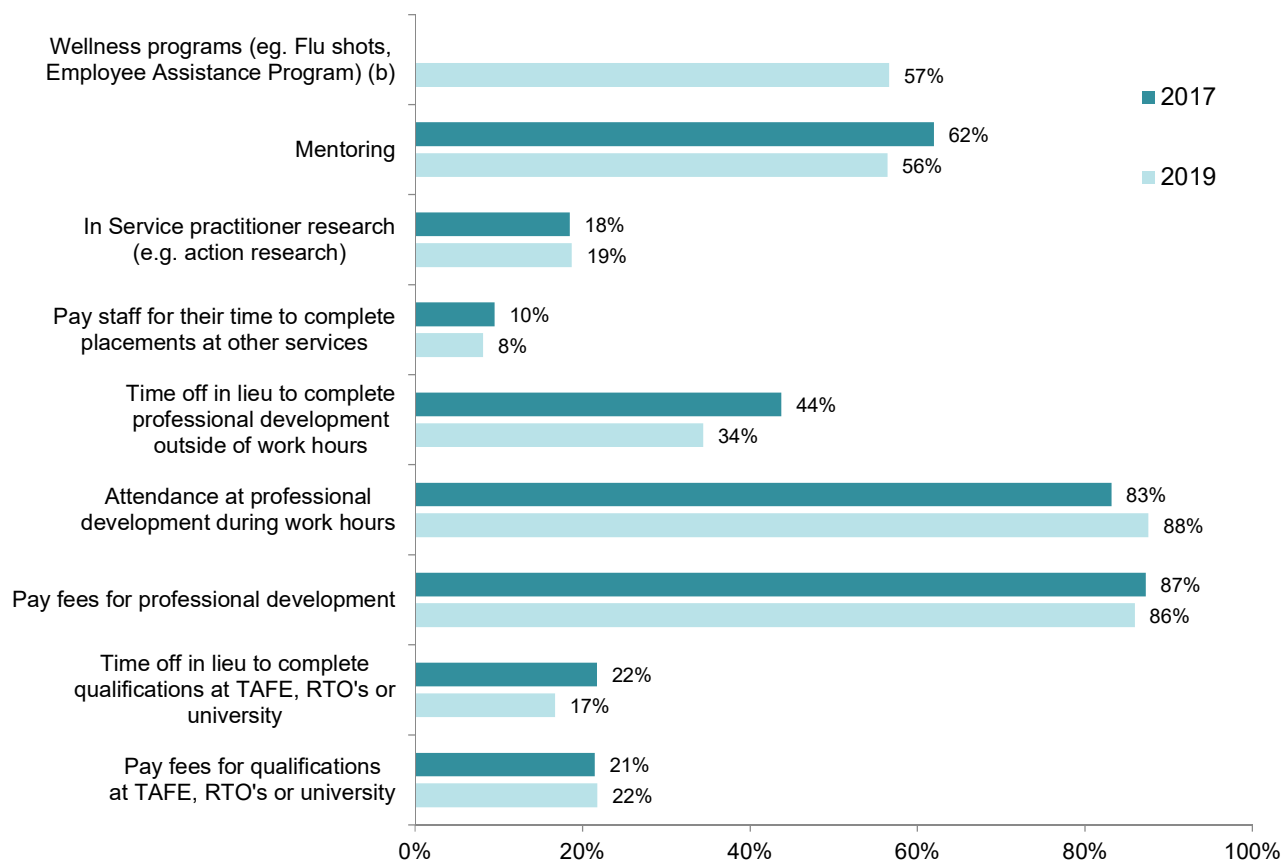


Table note:

Wellness is a new category in the 2019 survey. Different professional development questions were asked in both 2012 waves and are not compatible to the current waves. This question was not asked at all in 2014.

In 2019 respondents noted other professional development provisions, including:

- Annual paid professional development allocations per staff member as well as additional, self-funded days if required
- Payment for mandatory courses only such as first aid or anaphylaxis training
- A preference for online training as this was perceived to be of lower costs and easier to access
- Closing the service for a few days per annum to provide professional development for the entire educator team.

Related respondent comments included the following:

“Pay for CPR and First Aid course, fire training and child protection training.”

“Service encourages staff to search for online PD.”

“We close for two professional development days. We try to incorporate a weekend away fully paid so that educators can bond and feel valued.”

Expenditure on professional development

Respondents were asked to calculate professional development expenditure as a proportion of total annual revenue. The majority (34%, 131) of respondents reported that they spent over 1% of their total annual revenue on professional development, while forty-three respondents (11%) spent 1%, thirty-three respondents (9%) spent less than 1%. Forty-five respondents (12%) were unsure how much they spent.

Annual expenditure on staff

GENERALLY, THE LARGER THE PROPORTION OF ANNUAL REVENUE SPENT ON STAFFING COSTS, THE BETTER QUALIFIED AND GREATER NUMBER OF STAFF EMPLOYED AT THE SERVICE. THIS IN TURN LEADS TO HIGHER QUALITY CARE.

THE MAJORITY (87%) OF NOT-FOR-PROFIT SERVICES REPORTED SPENDING OVER 70% OF THEIR REVENUE ON STAFFING COSTS. THE AVERAGE WAS 78.9% – COMPARATIVELY MORE THAN THE AVERAGE FOR LARGE FOR-PROFIT PROVIDERS WHICH RANGE FROM 55 – 65%.

The proportion of annual revenue related to staffing expenditure is a very broad-brush indicator of quality; in general, the larger proportional spending indicates better qualified and greater numbers of staff employed at a service. Anecdotal evidence suggests that staffing costs in not-for-profit education and care services range from 75% of total revenue upwards; small private operators that may own one or a few services would generally be in the range of 70% to 85% and large for-profit providers range from 55% to 65%. These lines can become blurred as more and more not-for-profit providers are being charged market rents which can dramatically increase fixed operating costs and decrease the ratio of staffing expenditure to annual revenue.

Respondents were asked to calculate the annual staffing expenditure as a ratio of total annual revenue. The highest proportion was 95% with two respondents to this question. The following table shows these results.

Table 25. Annual staff expenditure as a proportion of total revenue

| Annual staffing expenditure as a proportion of total annual revenue | Frequency | % |
|---|-----------|-------|
| 90% to 95% | 18 | 10% |
| 80% to 89% | 88 | 48.9% |
| 70% to 79% | 50 | 27.8% |
| 60% to 69% | 24 | 13.3% |

Table notes:

Forty-eight (18%) respondents to this question identified proportions lower than 60% ranging down to 1% or gave a written answer so it is most likely that some of these responses were inaccurate. Forty (15%) respondents to this question were not sure what the proportion of annual staffing expenditure was in relation to their total annual revenue.

87%, (156 of 180 from the table above) of respondents with staff/revenue ratios of 60% or greater, were in the range of staff expenditure as a proportion of total annual revenue expected for not-for-profit and private providers; that is 70% plus. The majority (58.9%) spent above 80% of their revenue on wages.

Analysis of TICCSS data, using the rates of revenue spent on annual staff expenditure and tenure-stability measures, support previous research findings which suggest that expenditure on staff is linked with better pay and conditions outcomes for educators. Greater stability of staff will, in turn, lead to better care and development of children.



In 2019, services who spent over 80% of service revenue on staff expenditure were more likely to have *Very High* tenure (40%, compared with 34% for all services within scope). While those who spent under 80% were more likely to have *Very Low/ Low* tenure compared with the rate for all services (38% compared with 29%).

Table 26. Proportion of revenue on staff expenditure, by tenure-stability, 2019

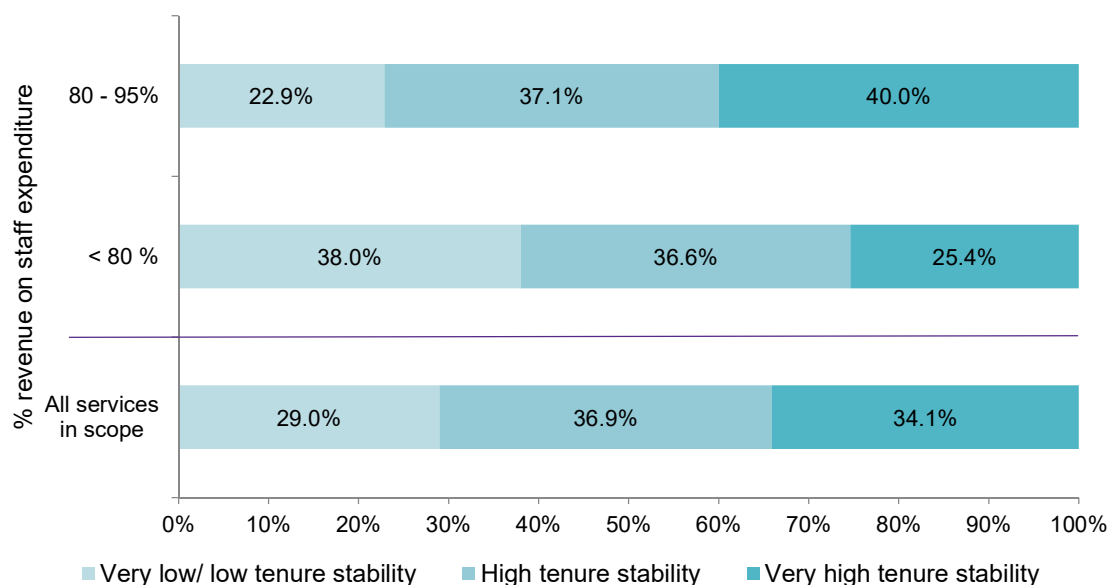


Table note:

(a) Proportions are calculated from data reported within the expected scope of expenditure (176). The rates for the 507 services who responded to questions about tenure; 30% were *Very low/ low*, 33% were *High*; and 36% were *Very high*.
 (b) Tenure stability ratings are calculated from the proportion of staff who had been with their service for 3 years or more. *Very low/ low* refers to services with rates less than 50%; *High* refers to those with 50 – 74%; and *Very high* refers to those with 75 – 100%.

Summary of stability, remuneration and budget allocation to supporting a resilient and equipped workforce

Not-for-profit services are providing a high quality setting to support teachers and educators welfare and wellbeing. Working conditions can alleviate or exacerbate burnout. For instance, having limited time allocated for planning and programming, or to collaborate with colleagues, was one factor which was raised by Jessie Javonovic²² (2013) as an impediment to wellbeing. This appears to be an area where services can do more, as less than half (45%) of services who completed TICCSS reported that they provided above award level programming time for educators. Our analysis supports the link between providing more planning time and tenure stability. Services with High and Very High tenure stability (47%, and 50% respectively)

²² Jovanovic, J. (2013). Retaining Early Childcare Educators. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 20(5), 528–544. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0432.2012.00602.x>

were more likely than those with Very Low or Low tenure stability to provide above award planning time (31%, and 37% respectively).

Providing a good wage for teachers and educators supports their costs of living and their ability to stay in their chosen field. With other low-skilled work providing wages that are comparative or higher, supporting teachers and educators with good pay will help them stay. In 2019, two-thirds (67%) provided wages that were higher than the award rate. Further, including the provision of other entitlements, the majority of not-for-profit services have consistently provided pay and entitlements for educators above their relevant industry award (71% 2014; 75% 2017; and 2019 73%).

Another factor contributing to teachers and educators wellbeing is the amount of support they have to engage in professional development²³ which helps to build capacity for critical reflection and professional growth. The majority of not-for-profit services provide access to professional development, with 88% supporting educators to attend professional development during work hours and 86% paying for their professional development costs.

Positive organisational cultures support teachers and educators to feel valued and appreciated. One measure of this is the proportion of services' budget that is allocated to staff costs. Generally, the larger the proportion of annual revenue is spent on staffing costs, the better qualified and greater number of staff employed at the service. This in turn leads to higher quality care. 87% of not-for-profit services reported spending over 70% of their revenue on staffing costs. The average rate of staff expenditure was 78.9%, which is comparatively more than the average for large for-profit providers which range from 55 – 65%.

Staff turn-over rates and tenure give us an indication of teacher and educator satisfaction with their professional recognition, their place of employment and the match of pay and conditions to the needs in their life. Close to two-thirds of teachers and educators in not-for-profit services have been in their service for over 3 years. This compares starkly with the national averages, where only a third of staff in all Australian services had been with their service for over 3 years.

²³ Cumming, Tamara. 2015. Early childhood educators' experiences in their work environments: Shaping (im)possible ways of being an educator? *Complicity* 12, (1): 52-66.

Educational Leaders

Spotlight on educational leaders

Educational leaders in not-for-profit services are more supported – they are highly qualified (over half have a degree), highly experienced (almost three quarters have been in education and care over 9 years), get time to do their role (almost 40% get over 3 hours a week and 20% get over 9 hours). Three-quarters of the educational leaders in not-for-profit services actually get to take this time! (Not surprisingly, taking this time is associated with high ratings).

Spotlight on educational leaders

Under the National Regulations each education and care service must designate, in writing, a suitably qualified and experienced educator, co-ordinator or another individual as educational leader at the service to lead the development and implementation of educational programs in the service (Regulation 118). Educational leaders support staff in services to aspire to high quality care and pedagogy. Manjula Waniganayake, Sandra Cheeseman and Marianne Fenech define **intentional leaders** as “*educators who demonstrate courage in implementing leadership responsibilities in ethical ways. They act purposefully, learning and finding ways to collaborate with other to achieve collective goals*”. The intentional educational leader may be what was initially envisioned in the National Quality Framework. There is an increasingly diverse array of international research that supports the view that effective leaders in education and care settings are associated with higher quality centre practice, positive impacts on the quality of the centre as a workplace and can support long term achievements in children’s development²⁴.

In 2019 respondents were asked about their educational leaders for the first time – their qualifications, years of experience, and the time allocated weekly to fulfil this responsibility.

In 2019 the majority of educational leaders in respondent services had a Bachelor Degree in Early Childhood (54%), or a Diploma in Education and Care (38%). 70% had over 9 years’ experience.

Only a small proportion had a Certificate III in Education and Care or a Certificate IV in OSHC (both 1%) and 6% had a Master of Educational Leadership/Early Childhood.

Table 27. Qualification of educational leader, 2019

| Qualification | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Certificate III in Education and care | 4 | 1.0% |
| Certificate IV in OSHC | 4 | 1.0% |
| Diploma in Education and care/OSHC | 156 | 38.0% |
| Bachelor/Degree in Early Childhood | 223 | 54.3% |
| Master of Educational Leadership/Early Childhood | 24 | 5.8% |
| Total | 411 | 100% |

²⁴ Waniganayake, M, Cheeseman, S, & Fenech, M 2017, Leadership: Contexts and Complexities in Early Childhood Education, Oxford University Press, Melbourne. Available from: ProQuest Ebook Central. [13 September 2020].

Most respondents employed educational leaders with nine or more years of experience (70%, 290), followed by five to eight years of experience (15%, 63). The following table shows educational leaders' years of education and care experience.

Table 28. Years of education and care experience of the educational leader, 2019

| Years of experience | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------|-----------|---------|
| Less than 2 years | 13 | 3.1% |
| 2–5 years | 51 | 12.2% |
| 5–8 years | 63 | 15.1% |
| 9+ years | 290 | 69.5% |
| Total | 417 | 100% |

The role of an educational leader can be challenging. Allocated time to concentrate on educational leadership duties, separate from the responsibilities of caring for children or running a centre, is paramount to ensuring educational leaders do not experience work load stress. Most services in TICCSS had allocated between 1 and 8 hours each week (63.5% of services). Only 1 in 6 (18%) allocated less than one hour a week. Some services provided comments that educational leadership planning was expected to be done alongside other work.

Table 29. Service time allocation to educational leadership role, 2019

| Time allocated | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Less than 1 hour | 69 | 17.6% |
| 1 to less than 3 hours | 129 | 32.9% |
| 3 to 8 hours | 120 | 30.6% |
| 9 to 16 hours | 31 | 7.9% |
| More than 16 hours | 43 | 11.0% |
| Total | 392 | 100% |

Table note:

Time allocated away from direct caring or administrative duties. Proportion calculated from total responded.

Less than 1 hour includes those who allocated nil time.

While time may be allocated to this responsibility it is not always taken due to the changing needs of children attending a service. Respondents were asked how frequently their educational leader was able to take their allocated time. The vast majority of services reported that educational leaders *always* (62.9%) or *often* (182%) used their allocated time towards their educational leadership duties. A further 13.3% reported that they *sometimes* used it and 6% reported that they *never* or *rarely* used it.

Table 30. How often is the weekly time allocated to the educational leader used

| Use of allocated time | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------------|-----------|---------|
| Always | 246 | 62.9% |
| Often | 71 | 18.2% |
| Sometimes | 52 | 13.3% |
| Rarely | 10 | 2.6% |
| Never | 12 | 3.1% |
| Total | 391 | 100% |

There is some evidence which supports a link between using allocated educational leadership planning time and achieving a quality program. While 63% of services reported that educational leaders *Always* used their allocated time this increased to 68% when looking at services who rated Exceeding/Excellent in their most recent Rating and Assessment. This was a higher rate compared with those who received a Working Towards NQS or Meeting NQS rating (56% and 59% respectively). It must be noted, however, that this question was asked after an NQS rating had been received which may have led to different behaviours in regards to the actual use of allocated times.

Additionally, the degree to which educational leaders used their allocated time was also associated with positive staff tenure stability. Tenure stability is measured by looking at the proportion of staff who had been with the service for 3 years or more. While 63% of services *Always* used their allocated time, this increased to 67% for services who had *Very High* tenure stability (over 75% of staff had been with the service for 3 years or more). However, when examining the usage of allocated time by other categories there appeared to be only very small differences.

The impact of educational leadership on other outcomes

By looking at the distribution of respondents with selected variables in different groups we can begin to see connections between these and different outcomes. Two outcome measures in TICCSS relate to service quality and collegial or positive workplaces; namely overall NQS rating and the tenure stability measure. Overall NQS ratings refer to the most recent Assessment and Rating outcome. Tenure stability is a proxy for how satisfied staff are with working in their service. Analysis of other variables collected concerning educational leaders in TICCSS only showed very small differences when compared with outcome measures. However, the qualification level of educational leader seems to have a difference in outcomes measuring quality and service stability.

The usual distribution of diploma or certificate level educational leaders compared with those that have a bachelor or postgraduate qualification is 40% and 60% respectively.

APPOINTING A HIGHLY QUALIFIED EDUCATOR TO BE AN EDUCATIONAL LEADER MAY LEAD TO BETTER OUTCOMES IN STAFF STABILITY. IT MAY ALSO HELP THE SERVICE TO ACHIEVE HIGHER RATINGS AGAINST THE NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, BETTER CHILD DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES.

Services who had an educational leader with a bachelor degree or postgraduate qualification were more likely to have Exceeding/Excellent NQS Assessment & Rating with 65% of services who rated Exceeding/Excellent and less likely to receive Meeting. However, there was no difference for services who had received a rating of Working Towards the NQS.

There appears to be some other possible differences between groups with different tenure stability. Services who had High/ Very High tenure stability, also had slightly more bachelor/ postgraduate qualified educational leaders. Services with Very Low/ Low tenure stability had equal proportions of educational leaders with either diploma/ certificate level qualifications or bachelor/ postgraduate qualifications.

Table 31. Qualifications of educational leaders, by tenure stability and NQS rating, 2019

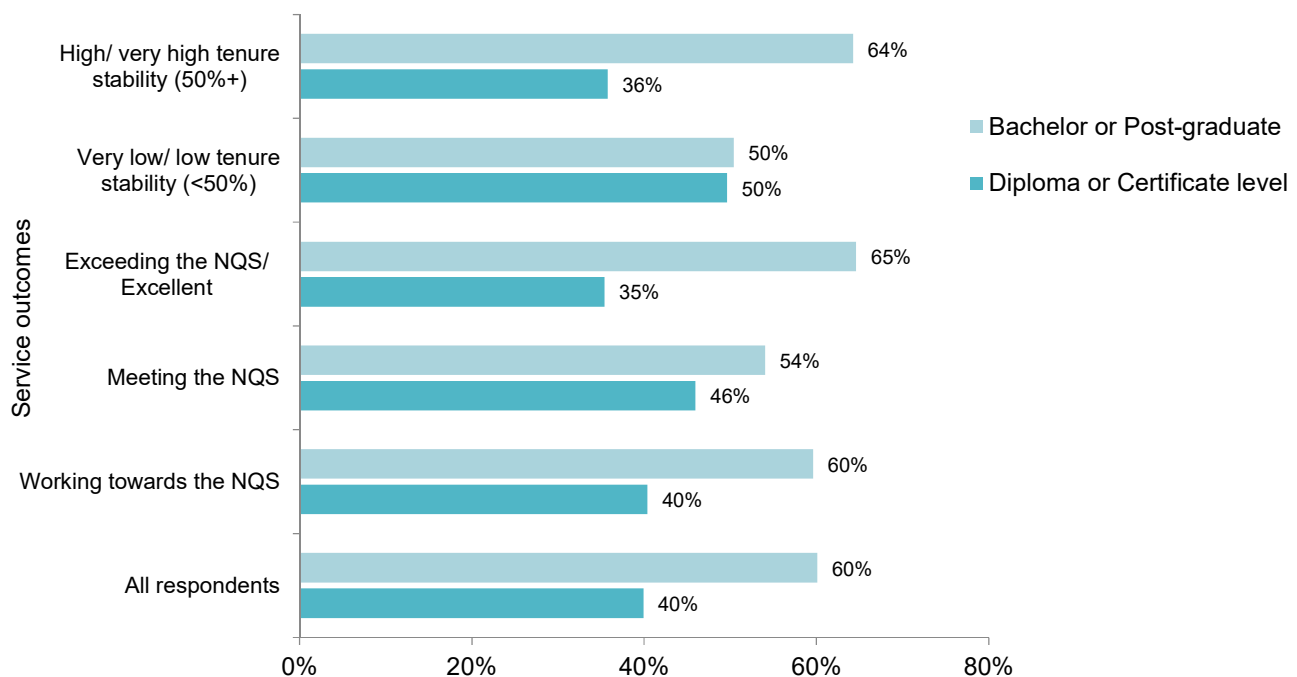


Table note:

Proportions are calculated from total responded. Tenure stability is calculated by the proportion of staff who have been with the service for 3 years or more. *Very low* refers to less than 25% of staff having been with the service for 3 years or more, *Low* refers to 25 – 49%, *High* refers to 50 – 74% and *Very high* refers to over 75%.

Summary of impact of educational leadership on ensuring a resilient and equipped workforce

Educational leadership in not-for-profit services are well supported and equipped with around half of all educational leaders allocated over 3 hours a week away from children to undertake the role. Most services also ensure that these allocated hours are utilised with 81% reporting that they were *Always* or *Often* used and only 3% reporting they were never used. Most educational leaders have a bachelor degree in early childhood (54%) and the next largest group are those with a diploma level qualification (38%). This information is important for providers of diploma level certification as the preparation for this duty requires both regulatory and theoretical support. Data from services show that there are some positive links between higher qualified educational leadership and achieving NQS rating of Exceeding or Excellent. However, educational leaders with all levels of qualification have been shown to lead their services to great ratings. There are stronger associations between qualifications of educational leaders and greater whole of staff stability (tenure).



Leadership

Not-for-profit services have stronger leadership

Not-for-profit services have stronger leadership.

What we know:

- Education and care services need high utilisation rates to be viable
- Many services are struggling with occupancy, especially long day care services as supply is outstripping demand in many areas
- Recruitment of teachers and educators is getting harder because of staff shortages and because lower quality preservice training courses impacting on the quality of candidates
- The NQF was designed to improve the quality of education and care services.

What we found:

- Not-for-profit services participating in the TICCSS survey have high utilisation rates – two thirds are above 81%
- Demand for not-for-profit services is relatively stable throughout the years
- Fewer not-for-profit services are full or near full as more mostly for-profit services open
- Like all services, not-for-profit services are finding it harder to fill staff vacancies. A third had staff positions vacant and three quarters found it difficult to engage early childhood teachers
- Not-for-profit services are positive about the NQF believing it makes staff more reflective and more connected with the community
- Not-for-profit services also find the NQF has increased their paperwork and requires more time than they have available
- Not-for-profit services reported that assessment and rating gives accurate results but some noted the process was difficult.

Service leadership

Not-for-profit services who participated in the TICCSS longitudinal study operate under an array of different leadership structures, ranging from services operated by local or state/territory governments, services that operate under a committee of management or those operated by charity organisations or philanthropic persons or groups. One thing they all share in common is that the complexities of operating a service are numerous.

The day to day work of some service managers includes recruitment, monitoring utilisation rates and implementing policy changes to name a few. These roles are often impacted by larger economic and workforce implications including issues around an aging workforce, recruiting suitably qualified educators and the impacts of economic or local-market conditions on utilisation rates. Other issues that relate to leadership include managing the turn-over of staff which has been talked about earlier in this report as an indicator of educator workplace satisfaction.

Average utilisation

Average service utilisation and the number of approved child places impact on service viability. Various industry commentators suggest that 70 – 80% utilisation rates are required for a financially sustainable long day care centre²⁵.

In 2019, 67% of respondents reported average utilisation greater than 81%, and 83% of respondents reported average utilisation greater than 71%.

Without more knowledge about the local market and each individual service respondent, this would suggest that the majority of respondents to this question at the time of the survey are likely to be financially sustainable. The benefits of full utilisation vary by economies of scale, particularly the number of approved child care places a service can provide. Provider models may also impact on viability with for-profit services indicating that 80% occupancy is required to break even²⁶.

The majority of TICCSS participants, being not-for-profit, may have other resource sharing and efficiencies in place as 29% of smaller services (less than 25 places) reported lower utilisation compared with 9% of services with 80 or more places. However, smaller services may also have increased pressure to overcome barriers, such as access to additional ACCS support for families experiencing vulnerability in order to secure their own viability. One respondent noted the barriers they were experiencing and the concerns they had over their viability:

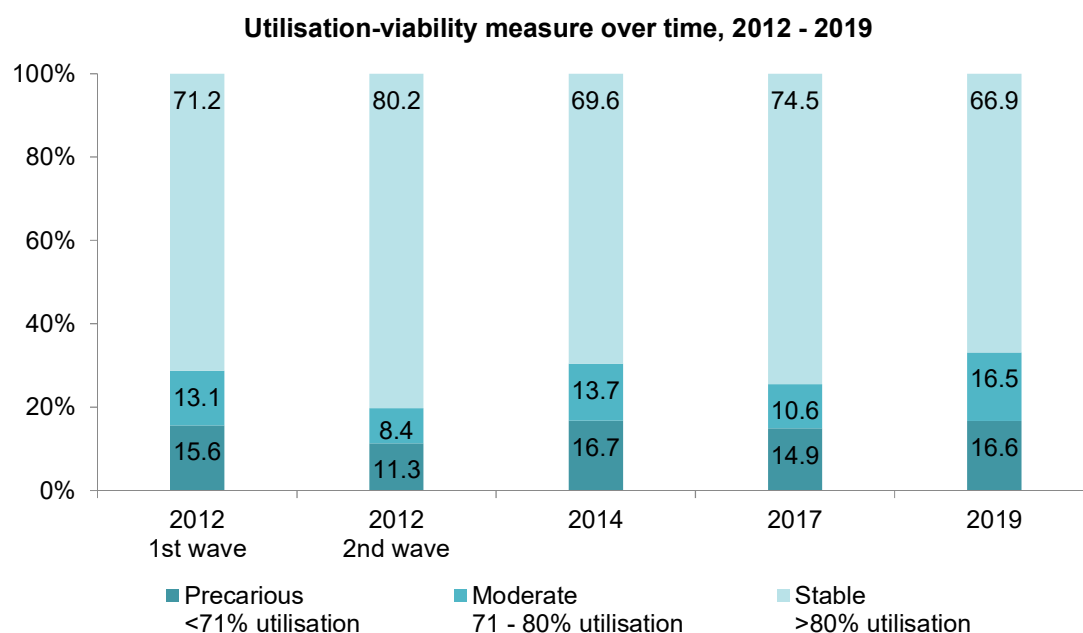
²⁵ IBISWorld; Urban Economics (2018), Occupancy and Performance Appraisal: Early Childhood Education and Care Sector, p. iii

²⁶ Productivity Commission (2015), Childcare and Early Childhood Learning, Appendix H The costs and viability of childcare operations, p. 972

“Families need to know they can access our service easily in an emergency. Our families are 4th generation unemployed and cannot afford to pay full fees. The introduction of the new CCS system does not help these families. It is too confusing and difficult for families to access the MyGov website, then contact Centrelink and also register with our CCS software. ... It affects our utilisation, our income and our flexibility for our families. We are a small service averaging 8-12 children after school with 1 staff most days and do not offer vacation care during the holidays, so this has a huge impact on our viability”.

Data for utilisation-related viability are presented below, using the industry standard baselines for viability. Stable viability represents services reporting average utilisation rates of over 80%, moderate viability are those reporting 71 – 80% utilisation and precarious refers to services reporting less than 71% utilisation. Over time, not-for-profit operated services have maintained similar rates of moderate and/or stable utilisation.

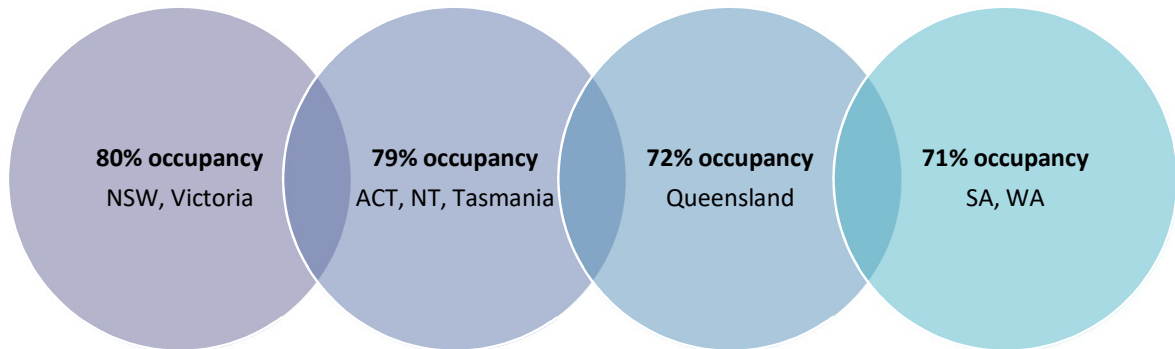
Table 32. Utilisation-viability measure, 2012 – 2019



Urban Economics and Deloitte Access Economics have reported other research on occupancy conducted during this time.

A 2018 report by [Urban Economics](#) detailing a national long day care occupancy survey across all management types reported lower than optimal utilisation rates over 2017 and 2018. The following chart shows these long day care occupancy rates.

Table 33. Urban Economics survey long day care occupancy rates



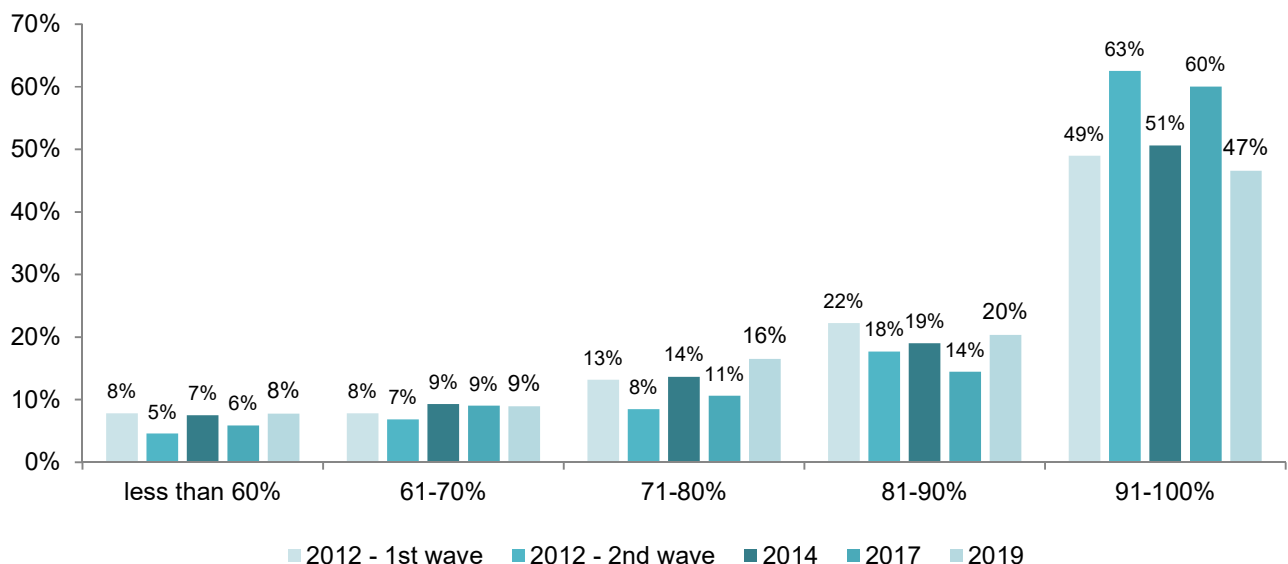
Source: Urban Economics (2018), Occupancy and Performance Appraisal: Early Childhood Education and Care Sector, p. 21

A NSW 2017 report by [Deloitte Access Economics](#) found that in NSW

- 60% of before school care services had vacancies and only 23% had utilisation of more than 50%
- 25% of after school care services had vacancies and 37% had utilisation of more than 80%
- 24% of vacation care services had spare capacity, and 34% had utilisation of more than 80%²⁷.

In 2019, just under half (47%, 277) of respondents were operating at full or close to full capacity, down from 60% 2017.

Table 34. Average weekly utilisation



²⁷ Deloitte Access Economics (2017), Out of School Hours Care: A review of supply and demand in NSW, p.2

Remoteness impacted on utilisation; usually, the more remote a service the lower the average weekly utilisation. However, in 2019 there were proportionally more remote or very remote services operating above 91% capacity than in 2017.

Table 35. Average weekly utilisation by remoteness of respondent

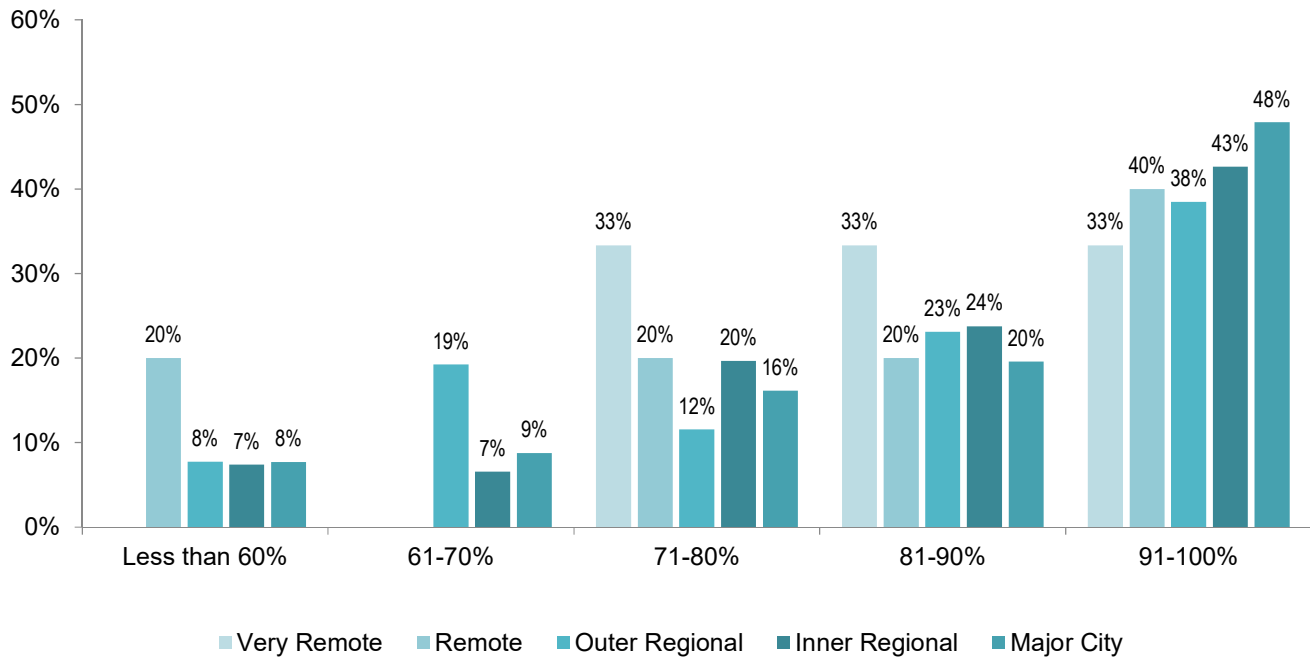


Table note:
'Remoteness' is formulated using the ABS - ASGC areas by postcodes.

Recruitment of educators

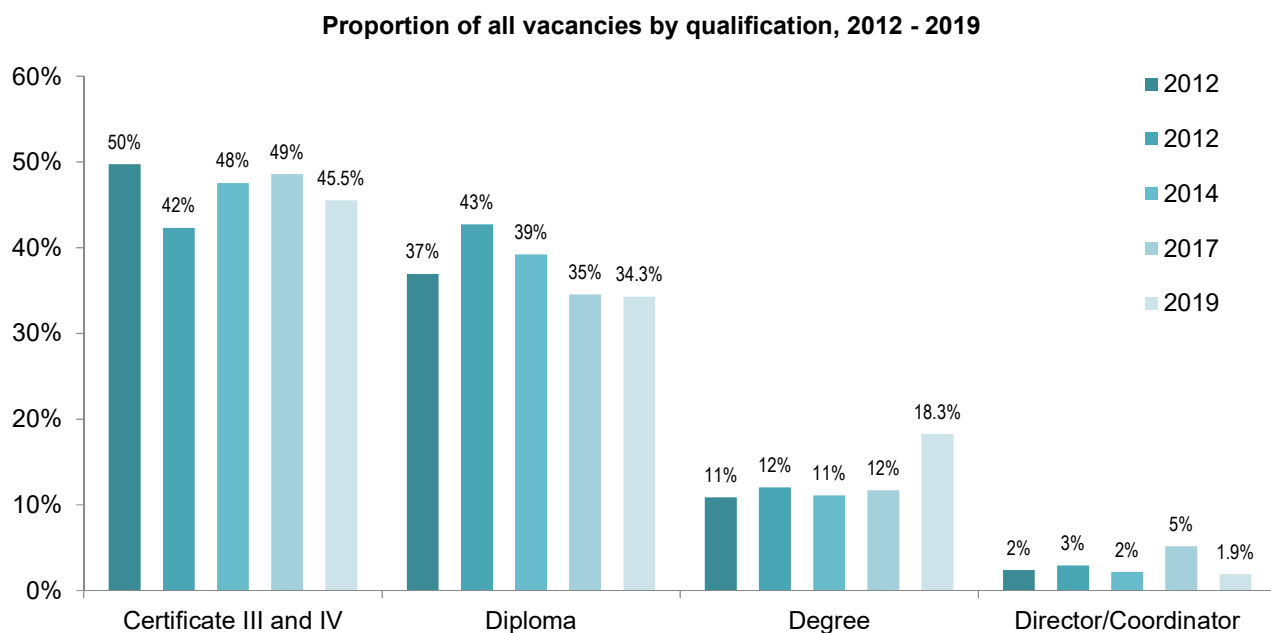
AROUND ONE IN THREE SERVICES HAD VACANCIES IN 2019, AND WITH RECENT CHANGES IN THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A SECOND ECT IN MOST JURISDICTIONS, THERE WAS A SHARP INCREASE IN THE DEMAND FOR BACHELOR OR POSTGRADUATE-QUALIFIED EDUCATORS.

Current vacancies

Close to a third of services (31%, 160) had educator positions to be filled. This is higher than in previous survey waves; with 28% in 2012 – wave 1, 27% in 2012 – wave 2, 22% in 2014 and 28% in 2017.

Across all waves, most vacancies have been for certificate III, certificate IV and diploma-qualified educators. The profile of vacancies by qualification has been similar across survey waves, except for a spike in vacancies for degree-qualified vacancies, which rose to 18% in 2019. This may reflect the requirement for a second ECT in most jurisdictions. There has been a decline in diploma qualification vacancies from 2012 to 2019/2017.

Table 36. Service employment vacancies



Most recent recruitment

Just over two-thirds of respondents (69.7%, 357) to the question about most recent recruitment had recruited for a teacher or educator in the six months prior to the survey.

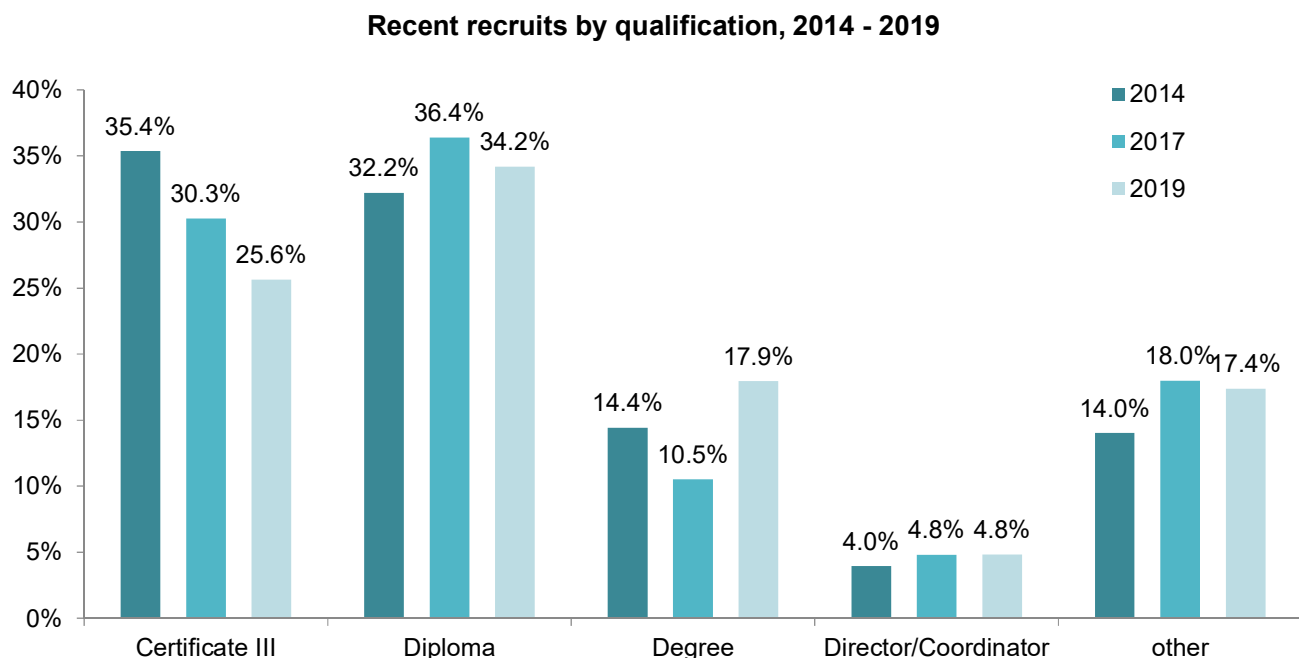
In 2019, more respondents were recruiting for early childhood teachers than in all previous waves; 34.2% of respondents to this question compared with 10.6% to 16% in previous waves.

This is not surprising given the 2020 requirement for additional early childhood teachers in all states and territories except NSW.

In 2019, there was a decrease in respondents recruiting diploma-qualified staff with 17.9% in 2019 compared with 32.2% to 36.3% in previous waves. It is interesting to speculate whether this reflects improved retention rates reported by respondents in 2019 or up-skilling of certificate IIIs to diploma qualifications.

Standard of applicants

Table 37. Proportion of most recent recruit by qualification, 2014 – 2019

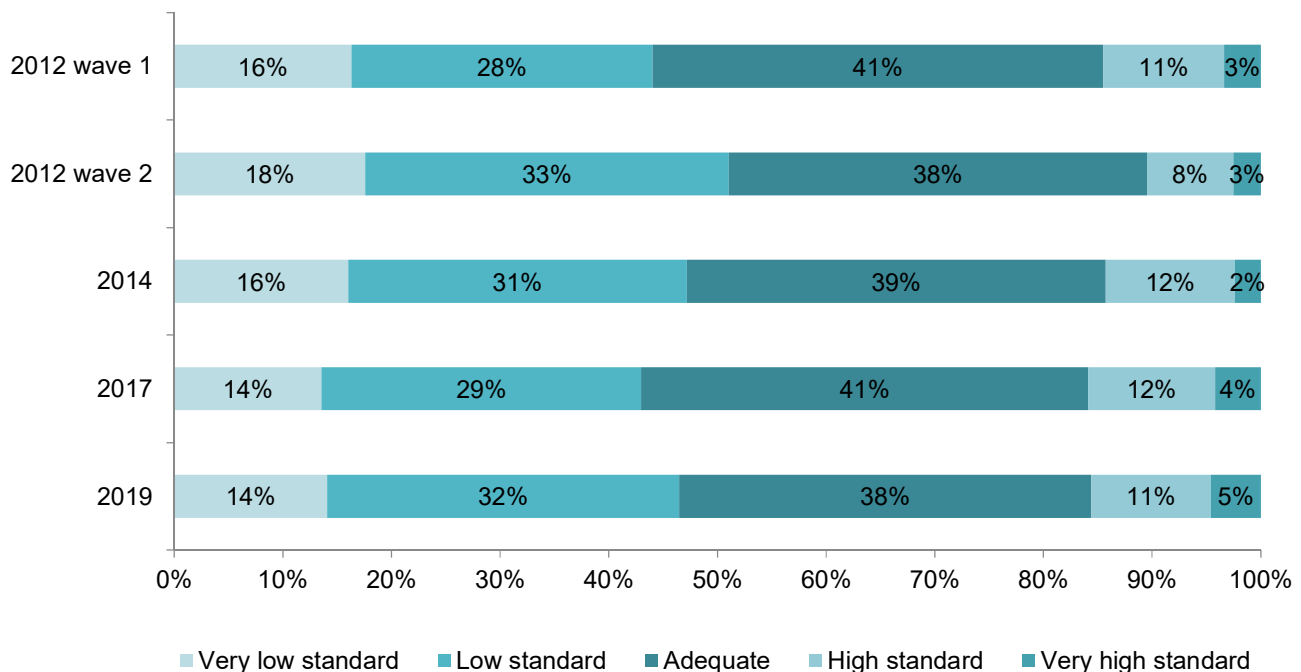


Respondents were asked to consider the standard of applicants for their most recent recruit. Rates of impressions about the standards for the field of applicant have remained similar across all waves of the study.

In 2019, only 16% of respondents felt that the field of applicants was of a high or very high standard.

There has been no improvement in the perceived quality of applicants for education and care positions despite a recent review of training products and unduly short courses being conducted by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training²⁸. Across all survey waves a notable proportion of respondents who recently recruited, considered the field of applicants to be of low or very low standard.

Table 38. Standard of the field of applicants to most recently recruited position, 2012 - 2019

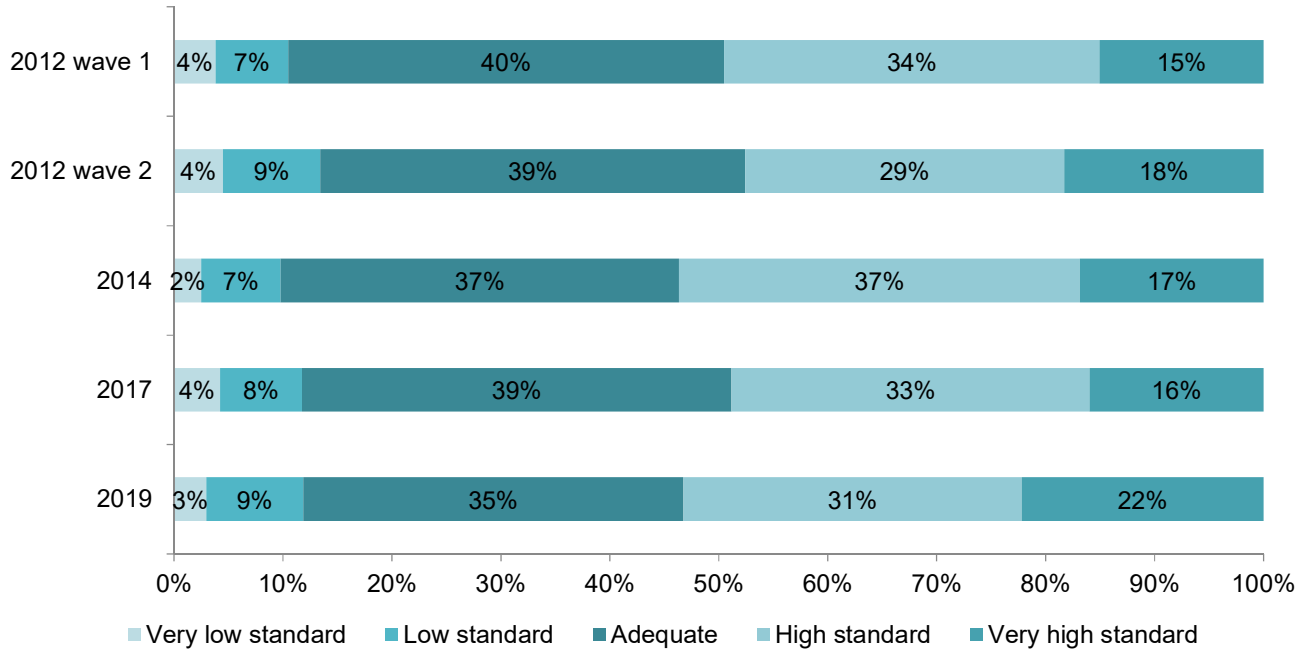


Successful applicants suitability for the role

In 2019, just over half of the respondents to this question (53.3%) considered the successful educator in their most recent recruitment process to be of a high or very high standard with regard to suitability for the role. Only 11.9% considered the successful educator to be of very low or low standard in relation to suitability. This is to be expected as it is unlikely that respondents would employ someone poorly suited for the role. There is some variation when considering the successful educator's suitability for the role by qualification. Proportionally more certificate IIIs were considered to be of adequate suitability only, and diploma and degree-qualified staff were considered adequate or a high standard of suitability.

²⁸ Australian Skills Quality Authority (2017) A review of issues relating to unduly short training, 2017; <https://www.asqa.gov.au/resources/strategic-review-reports/review-issues-relating-unduly-short-training-2017>

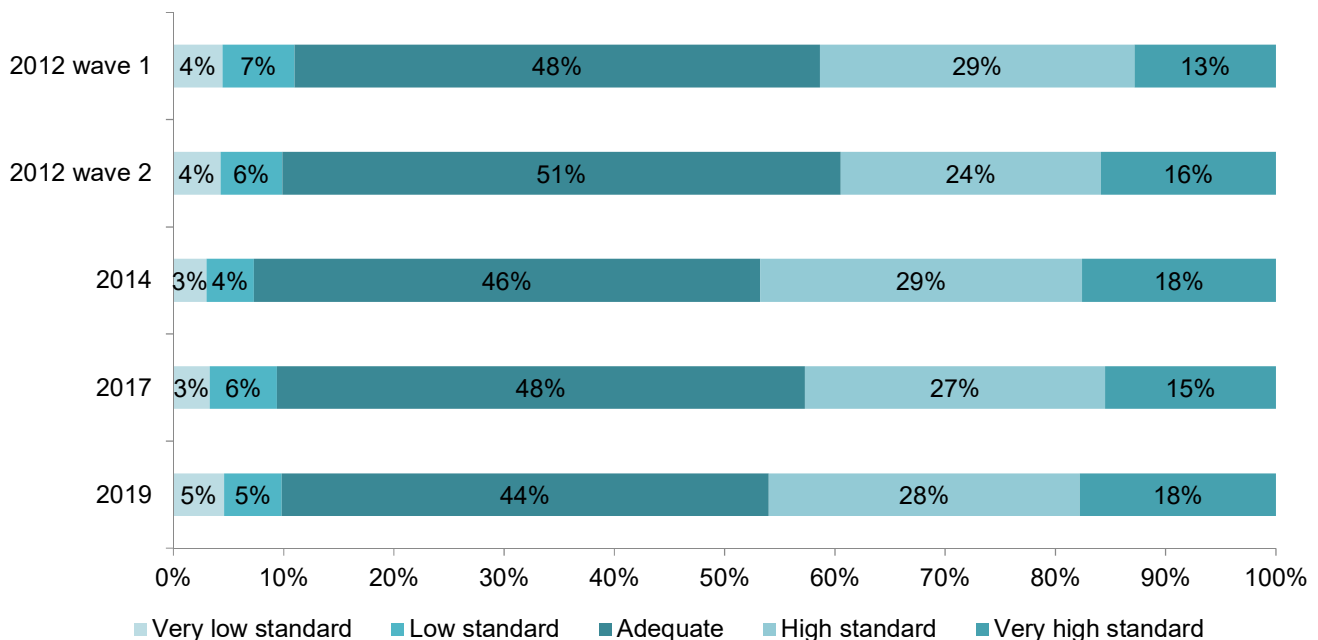
Table 39. Standard of the successful educator's suitability for the role



Appropriate qualifications for the role

The following table shows that there has been very little variation with regard to the standard of the successful educator's qualifications for the role over all survey waves.

Table 40. Standard of the successful educators' qualifications for the role

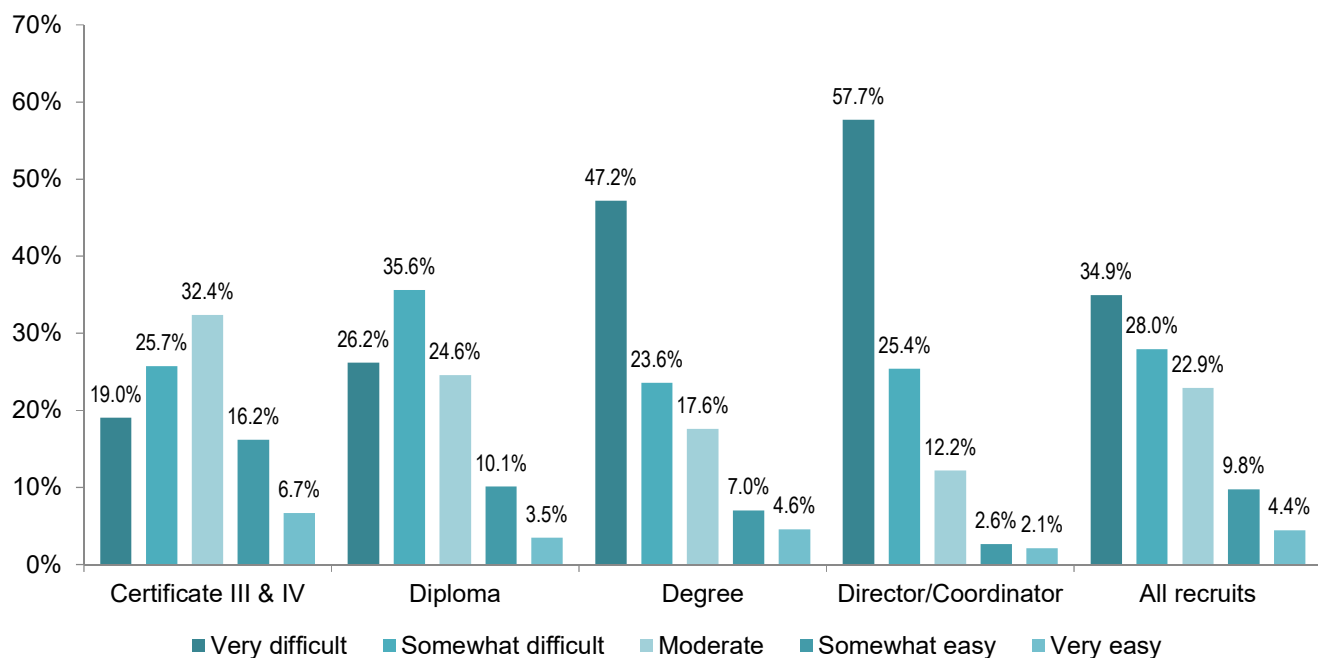


Difficulty recruiting

Despite the greater satisfaction with the suitability of applicants for diploma and degree-qualified educators, respondents continue to report greater difficulty recruiting for higher qualifications and more senior positions.

In 2019, more than half of the respondents (58%) found it very difficult to recruit a director/coordinator and just under half (47%) found it very difficult to recruit a teacher. In contrast, only 19% of respondents found it very difficult to recruit certificate III or IV educators.

Table 41. Difficulty recruiting at different qualification levels - 2019



Across all survey waves, there is some variation in the difficulty of recruiting by type of qualification. Most notably in 2019, it seems it was more challenging than in previous waves to recruit certificate III and IV educators, although still easier than recruiting for more qualified positions. In 2012 – wave 1, 19% of respondents found it *Very easy* to recruit certificate III and IV educators, however in 2019 this fell to 6.7%.

Over time, degree-qualified teachers and directors/coordinators continue to be difficult to recruit; although it is interesting to note that in 2019 only 47% of respondents to this question had difficulty recruiting degree-qualified staff compared with both waves of 2012 (62% and 66% respectively), when the first round of qualification changes impacted particularly around the employment of degree-qualified teachers.

Respondents were asked to consider the top three factors that may make it difficult for them to recruit. The following table shows the top factors in 2019 and in previous survey waves that respondents identified as impacting their ability to fill positions.

Table 42. Factors that impact on ability to recruit

| | 2012 – 1 st wave | 2012 – 2 nd wave | 2014 | 2017 | 2019 |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------|------|------|
| Applicants have completed qualifications with private Registered Training Organisations and are not suitably skilled | – | – | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Low number of applicants | – | – | – | 2 | 2 |
| Applicants lack of understanding of the National Quality Standards | – | – | – | – | 3 |
| Low wages | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| Applicants are not [suitably skilled 1st & 2nd waves] qualified | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| Working hours | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

Table note:

Blanks indicate that this option was not available in a particular survey wave.

Over the three most recent survey waves, respondents to this question identified that the top issue continues to be:

- ‘Applicants, having completed qualifications with private Registered Training Organisations (RTO), are not suitably skilled’
- ‘Low number of applicants’ was ranked second over the past two surveys (when this option was asked)
- A new option in 2019 was ‘Applicants’ lack of understanding of the NQS” and this rated third most difficult in 2019.

Since 2012, ‘Low wages’ continues to rank as a top issue that makes it difficult to recruit.

In 2019, respondents to this question also noted the following factors that made it difficult to recruit.

- Educators having no or limited experience
- Poor written and oral communication skills including limited English for those from non-English speaking backgrounds and, for English speakers, inability to “articulate practice, knowledge and understanding”
- Some displayed a lack of understanding of the National Regulations

- Difficulties recruiting for OSHC with short shifts, split shifts and casual work
- Some educators having very long commutes as increased housing costs have made local living too expensive.

Related respondent comments included the following:

“Lack of experience in the role that they are applying for.”

“Limited spoken and written English skills.”

“Inability to follow the application processes for example cover letter, addressing the selection criteria.”

“Understand the NQS but not the National Regulations.”

“Very difficult to get good quality/qualified staff prepared to only work 3 hrs an afternoon. OOSH is not seen as a career path so often only have uni-students apply as it fits in with their timetable which is susceptible to change. This all despite the fact we offer above award and good conditions.”

“Educators can't generally afford to live in the area, especially once they have a family so this makes recruiting difficult. At the moment we are relying on international student on student visas to fill casual positions.”

In 2015, the Australian Skills and Quality Authority (ASQA) conducted a review into training for early childhood education and care in Australia²⁹. This was in response to recommendations from the Productivity Commission research report *Early Childhood Workforce (2011)* in regards to the quality of vocational training. ASQA found that there was evidence of non-compliance with assessment requirements, training courses being delivered in too short a time, and learning and assessment not occurring in structured workplace environments. Recommendations from the review address the need for:

- Training packages to include minimum benchmarks around the amount of training required for units of competency and VET qualifications
- ASQA to obtain intelligence from early childhood and care providers about the quality of training and assessment
- The quality of assessment to improve
- Greater clarity in training packages in relation to assessment evidence
- Adequate provision of training and assessment in an actual or simulated workplace
- Trainers and assessors to gain and maintain vocational competence.

²⁹ Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) (2015) Training for early childhood education and care in Australia, https://www.asqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/Strategic_Review_2015_Early_Childhood_Education_Report.pdf

SkillsIQ has been commissioned to conduct an overhaul of the Vocational, Education and Training (VET) Children's Education and Care Training Package. This consists of qualifications for Early Childhood Education, School Age Care and Education Support.

ACCS has representation on the Children's Education and Care Industry Reference Committee and Technical Advisory Committee, and is anticipating the submission of the Case for Endorsement for AISC approval will be scheduled for December 2020³⁰.

Experiences implementing the National Quality Framework

The NQF has been one of the most significant changes in the education and care sector in the last decade, requiring improved child staff ratios, minimum qualifications, continuous improvement, and enhanced quality rating systems. It is a significant partnership between Australian and state/territory governments and for the first time embraces all major education and care service types. For these reasons, it is important to understand and track the impact of the NQF on education and care services.

In this section of the report, we asked respondents to identify the positive impacts and issues with the NQF on their services along with changes in quality ratings, educational leadership and waivers. We also asked respondents about their perceptions of their most recent assessment and rating process.

Highlights

SERVICES NOTED THAT EDUCATORS' REFLECTIVE PRACTICES AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS WERE THEIR KEY HIGHLIGHTS IN 2019, TWO AREAS WHICH UNDERPIN IMPROVED QUALITY AIMS OF THE NQF AND THE EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK AND FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL AGED CARE.

In 2019, respondents felt that the NQF highlights were that:

- **Educators regularly engage in reflective practices**
- **Their service is working more closely with the wider community**
- **Developing and implementing the QIP has led to improvements at their service**
- **Their service is more focused on meeting individual children's needs.**

Over the past three survey waves 'educators regularly engage in reflective practices' has consistently been one of the top three highlights for respondents to this question. Reflective practice is the cornerstone of improved teaching in education and care services and is one of

³⁰ SkillsIQ (2020) Children's Education and Care Training Package Development, <https://www.skillsiq.com.au/CurrentProjectsandCaseStudies/ChildrensEducationandCareTPD>

the key principles of *Belonging, Being & Becoming, The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*.

“Reflective practice is a form of ongoing learning that involves engaging with questions of philosophy, ethics and practice. Its intention is to gather information and gain insights that support, inform and enrich decision-making about children’s learning ... early childhood educators examine what happens in their settings and reflect on what they might change.”³¹

‘Developing and implementing the Quality Improvement Plan has led to improvements at our service’ and ‘service is more focused on meeting individual children’s needs’ rated equally as the third most frequent highlights in 2019 (29.5%). These two outcomes often go hand in hand.

There was a sharp decrease in the item ‘Educators are more interested and engaged in programming and planning’ from 38.2% in 2014 down to 24.2% in 2019. This may reflect that educators are now more accustomed to the fact that programming and planning are a fundamental component of their role.



³¹ The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, p. 14

Table 43. Top three highlights experienced in the last 12 months, 2014, 2017 and 2019

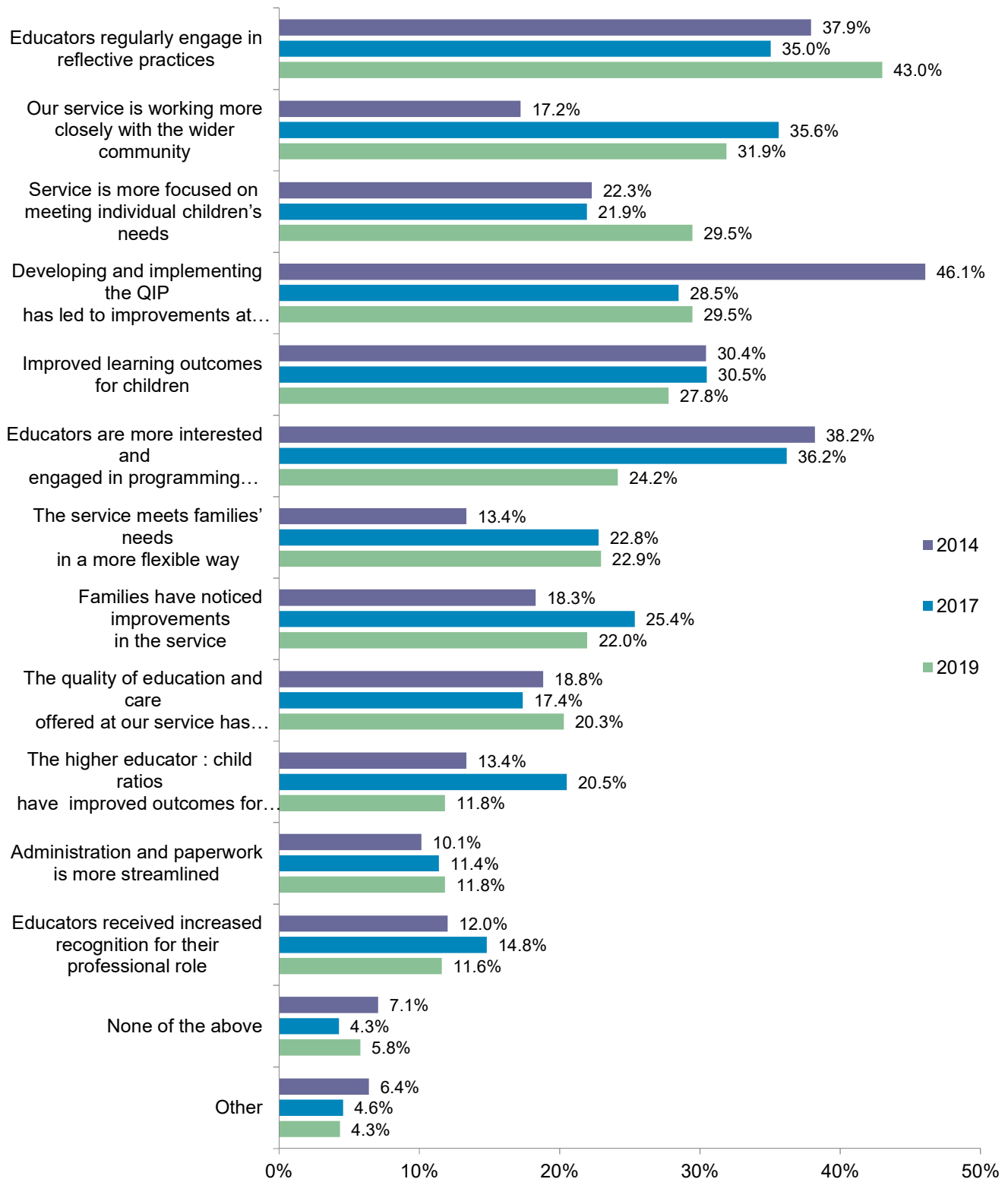


Table note:
Proportions are calculated from the total number of responses for this question.

Issues and concerns

In 2019, respondents reported their top concerns with the NQF.

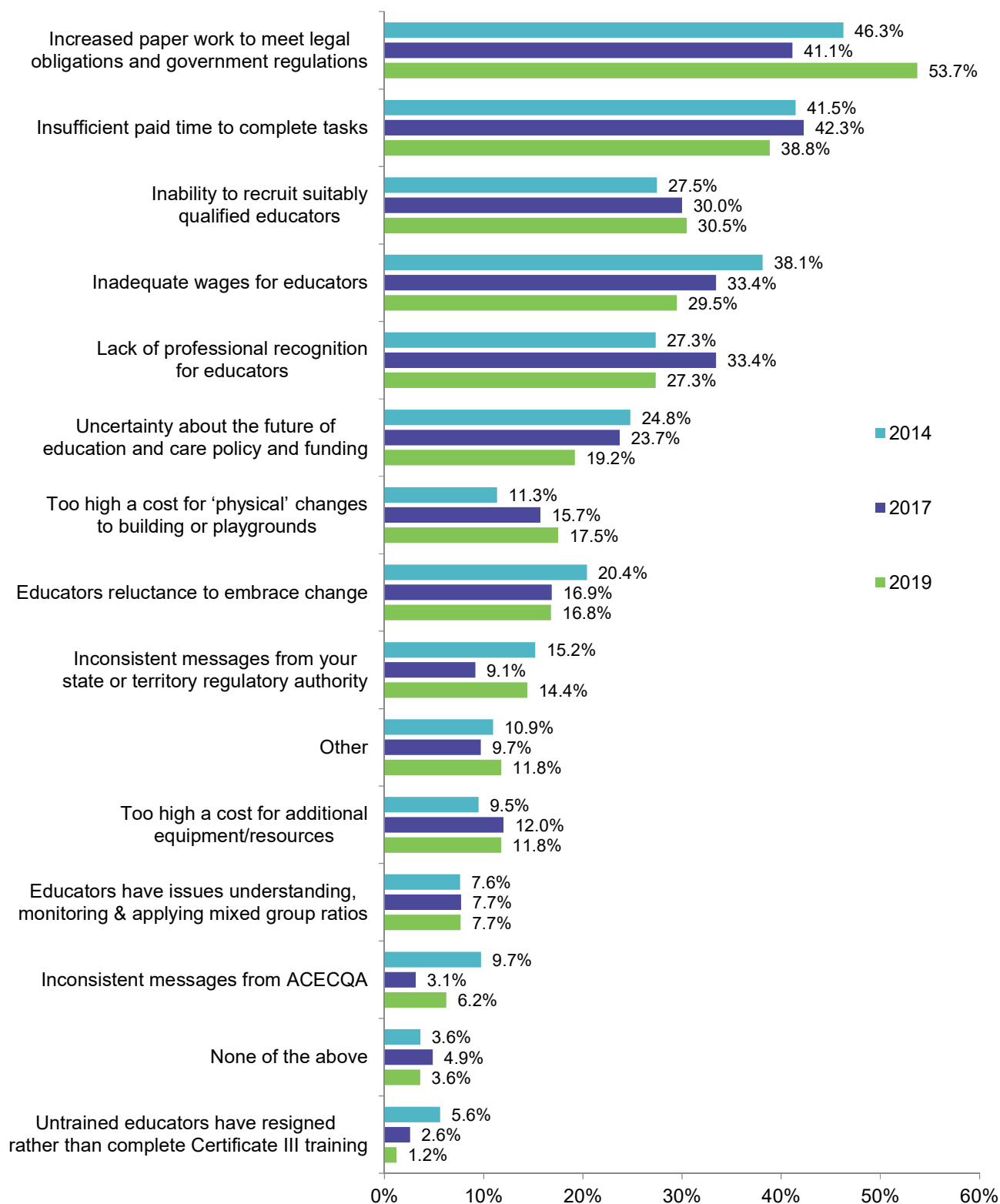
- **53.7% said it had increased paperwork to meet legal obligations and government regulations**
- **38.3% said they had insufficient paid time to complete tasks**
- **30.5% said the fact they were unable to recruit suitably qualified educators**
- **29.5% said the inadequate wages for educators**
- **27.3% said the lack of professional recognition for educators.**

These are the same top five issues as 2017 and 2014 although the order differs in each survey wave.

Across all survey waves, the proportion of respondents experiencing the issues identified in this question has generally declined over time. One notable exception is that 'increased paperwork to meet legal obligations and government regulations' was experienced by more respondents (53.7%) in 2019 than in 2017 (41.1%). This increase could be related to the introduction of Child Care Subsidy still impacting on respondents at the time of the survey, as reporting obligations under the NQF have not changed.



Table 44. Main three issues with the NQF in the last 12 months, 2014, 2017 and 2019



The impact of recent NQF changes

For the most part, respondents to this question viewed the recent NQF changes as positives. Respondents commented that the changes had heightened awareness about critical reflection in their services, increased family and community engagement, and actively supported a culture of continual improvement.

Impact of changes to the National Quality Framework

"I think the NQF is a great way to encourage ongoing improvement within our service as well as increasing staff professional discussion and critical reflection."

"This has been a great asset to our industry – out of school hours care."

"Focussed our attention more on community engagement."

"Heightened awareness and increased professional conversations of all educators and families. This has a significant impact and educators wanting to read and understand pedagogy more and sharing this knowledge with families and each other."

"Supported us to commit to a culture of continual improvement."

"On feedback from educators they have found that the reviewed NQF is easier to understand (and read) as it 'guides' their focus towards what each standard and element requires."

"The recent changes have made all educators more reflective and team oriented. Leadership focus and focus on theory and ethics have cemented why we do things the way we do, and made educators look to the 'big picture.'"

"We have more meaningful learning experiences for the children and we have become more involved in our community."

"We work hard to understand and embrace the NQS. We use it as a bench mark and truly have a commitment to high quality care and education for children. The NQS is a useful tool to ensure we are focussed and to guide us on the journey of achieving strong outcomes for children."

Respondents commented that the changes had had minimal or no impact on their services most often because many of the practices were already in place. Impacts were noticed in updating policies and Quality Improvement Plans.

Some respondents noted a more streamlined process and specifically commented on decreased paperwork and administrative tasks required.

Reduced administrative burden

"More user friendly and simplified."

"It's more succinct, less overlap."

“Removal of individual child observations for school aged care has reduced the amount of paperwork.”

Others however, viewed these changes as stressful, creating a negative impact on service.

“Stressful - the amount of documentation is reducing engagement with children preventing strong relationships with children and families being maintained.”

“Previous to our A&R visit, we would have said 'not a lot'. However, after our A&R visit I would say the new system is negative and not supportive of quality improvement and it now purely focused on COMPLIANCE!!!!”

The negative impacts related mostly to increased paperwork and administration related to the changes.

Increased administrative burden

“Each time the NQF is reviewed it increases paperwork, we have made a decision to stick to Meeting to ensure the wellbeing of children and educators. We have less and less time to look at NQF, a 1200 page document is too extensive for us to be fully conversant with.”

“We have had a re-think about the ratings and have come to the conclusion that we want to focus on the children and family and for management we want to focus on staff well-being. The exceeding rating is all about paperwork and we are not prepared to put our children and families second to paperwork, this needs a re-think. The NQF is too long too much information and not a usable document...”

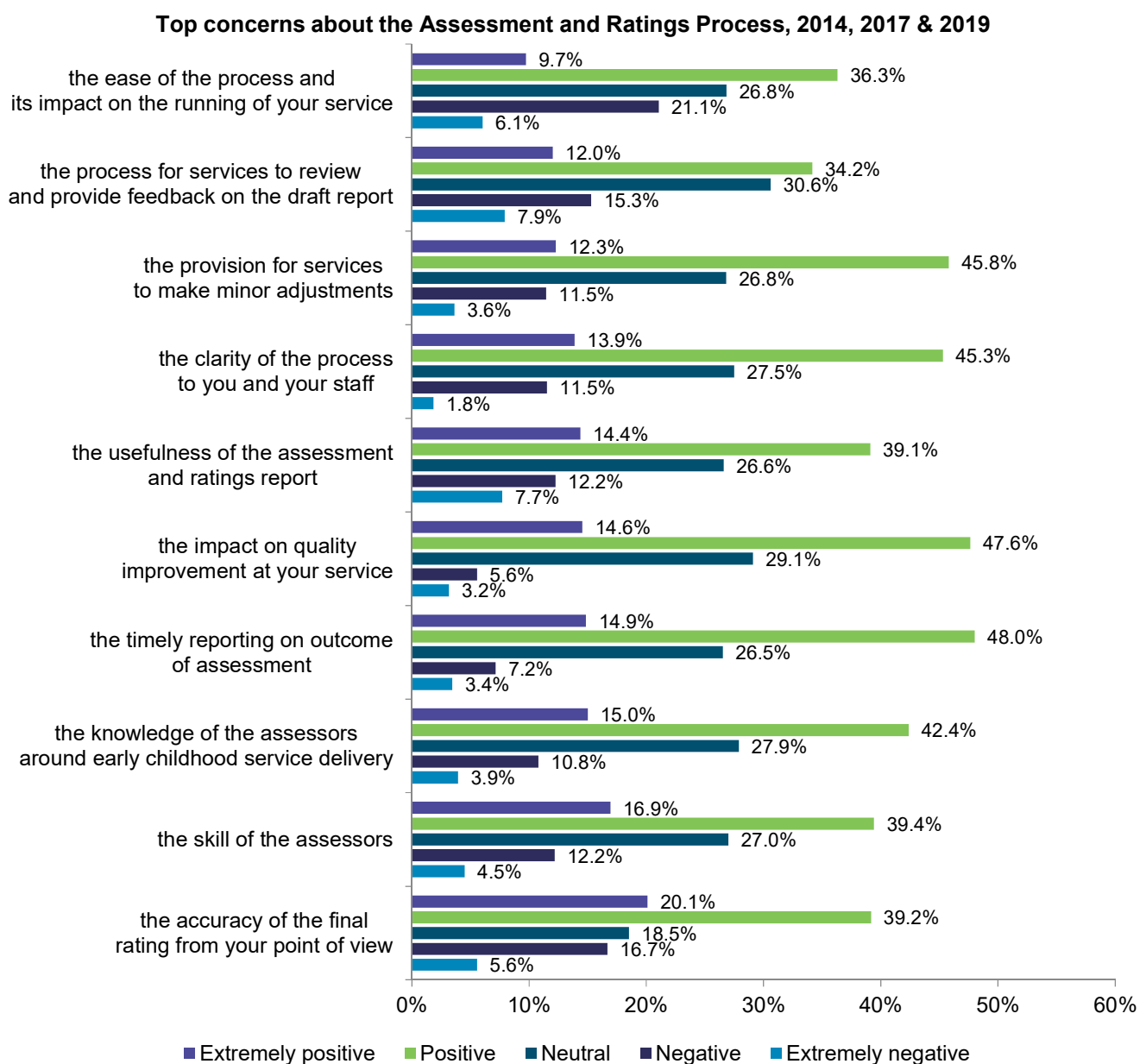
Perceptions of assessment and rating process

Services are assessed under NQS through Assessment and Rating visits. TICCSS respondents were asked to consider their experience with the most recent assessment and rating process from extremely negative to extremely positive.

In 2019, the largest proportion of respondents viewed each aspect of their most recent assessment and rating process as positive.

The following table shows the respondents' perceptions of the most recent assessment and rating process.

Table 45. Perceptions of the most recent assessment and ratings process



The highest:

- Extremely positive response was for ‘The accuracy of the final ratings from your point of view ‘– 20.1%
- Positive response was for ‘The timely reporting on the outcome of assessment ‘– 48%
- Neutral response was for ‘The process for services to review and provide feedback on the draft report ‘– 30.6%
- Negative responses for ‘The ease of the process and its impact on the running of your service ‘– 21.1%
- Extremely negative responses for ‘The process for services to review and provide feedback on the draft report ‘– 7.9%.

Some respondents also provided additional comments regarding their perceptions of the most recent assessment and rating visit. While there were some positive comments, these were significantly outweighed by expressed concerns.

Respondents that provided positive comments noted that the NQS was now embedded in day to day practice, the NQS provided clarity and transparency for teachers and educators in their day to day work, and that continuous improvement had helped improve outcomes for children.

Embedded in day-to-day practice

“We have found this process to be CRUCIAL to providing ongoing improvements and quality care for our kids and families. Paperwork is hard to keep up with, but we are striving to have successful documentation pathways embedded.”

“We were assessed by someone from outside our area which I think is a good thing. Our assessor was extremely flexible and open and subjective which was positive.”

“The assessment and Rating Process has been extremely positive helping us to reflect on our practice, implement quality improvement plans and gain feedback about our progress and achievements.”

“We had a senior assessor who seemed extremely competent, efficient and willing to listen.”

In 2019, respondents' concerns about their most recent assessment and rating process related to inconsistencies with the assessor and/or the process and the consequent negative impact on teachers and educators; the assessment and rating process not taking a strengths-based approach but focussing on compliance and criticism; and the timing and duration of the assessment and rating visits which they felt were not adequate for assessors to fully understand the different aspects of service's quality provision.

Respondents wanted assessors to work with them and their services to improve the quality of education and care that is provided; they wanted the assessors to be partners in quality improvement rather than just observers of compliance.

"The NQS Assessment process should be more about supporting Early Childhood services in their journey to improve quality - rather than publicly [labelling] (or shaming) services into improvement, adding tighter constraints and increasing pressure to the load of Early Childhood services..."

Inconsistencies in assessors and /or process

"There are too many personal opinions placed in the [assessment] from the assessors, they [aren't] out to help or improve a service they are about bringing a service down, we are meant to be a team, working together to improve the education and safety for early childhood children..."

"My experience is that the new 3 themed process appears to be adding further stress and work for services trying to ensure they have gathered enough information/documentation in all areas to prove high quality practice & it shouldn't be this way - services are extremely busy & ticking additional boxes to meet additional assessment requirements is adding significantly to services work load across the year – particularly for ManagersI fully support the need for Early Childhood services to be accountable for their quality & process....However, I just have to say here that I feel the process needs to be simplified/modified rather than extended further (Early Childhood is already heavily regulated)."

Negative impact on staff

"Some of the comments made by the assessors in the report were incorrect and they would not make the corrections. She could not offer us any [advice] on the day of assessment but was quick to find faults. The final result absolutely demoralised educators at the Pre-School, to the point where counselling was made available."

“Changing the assessment process has led to a decrease in our rating while our service has improved - why make it so hard for services to maintain their rating or improve it. [There] seems to be a bias towards long day care services in the new assessment process where there is time for reflection within the day. It was a very disappointing and exhausting process for the staff and of no real benefit to the morale of the educators.”

Concerns about the negative nature of A & R process, rather than being a strengths based approach

“I am very supportive of the NQS and the implementation of Quality Improvement Plans ... allows us to critically reflect on all aspects of our service delivery and gives us focus. I question the need for 'Assessment and Rating' I would rather see a more positive model where assessors would visit regularly and offer advice for improvement, mentoring practices from other centres who have excellent procedures and practices to share Our report did not offer advice for improvement or offer us any inspiration to extend our QIP. We will continue to strive for excellence because that is what all children deserve, not for the rating.”

“We would much prefer it to be from a supporting perspective rather than assessment based. This way you can assist struggling early childhood facilities in a more meaningful way. Mentoring programs, advisory role etc.”

Concerns about the behaviours of assessors

“Our assessors (2x) spent less than 5 hours at our service on day 1 and only 3 on day 2. They [didn't] see families' arrivals or departures. Didn't discuss anything with ANY educators. They focussed totally on the NATURAL outdoor play environment and picked holes in the natural formations of timber used in play equipment (knot holes in timber, small warps in timber, bolt heads, screw head visible, paint peeling (we are not repainting as part of our return to a natural environment) and so on. NONE of the items listed were of a structural or safety issue to children. There was no room for negotiations or discussions and there was little focus on the children, the program, family and community input and connections, sustainability, and routines to name a few. The other items picked up in the check were 'band aids' that were past their use by date (3 or 4 at the bottom of the first aid box).”

“It was one of the most frustrating and disappointing experiences I have encountered in early childhood teaching. The lead up and visit itself were fine and we were excited to show

the assessor our preschool. The ensuing report has left us all devastated and so disappointed in a failing A&R system. The report had factual inaccuracies, bits were clearly copied and pasted and didn't reflect our actual service. The assessor falsified her visit times saying she had been in the service earlier than she actually had been. The suggestions for improvements were bland and not relevant to our preschool in most senses."

"Our assessor was extremely unprofessional and did not understand basic early years plans (we had to explain what a reconciliation action plan was and why we had one, even though we have minimal Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander families). The report and lacking in detail and give little to use to improve service."

"Despite receiving an Exceeding rating we did not have a good experience. Our Assessor was disinterested, constantly on her phone, and because of the very short days she did, we needed to provide a lot of evidence after the fact because she didn't have time...to talk"

Concerns about the timing and duration of A & R visits

"One day is not enough, you are unable to show all. The assessor was not fully aware of the things in a Preschool. They didn't even look at folders for proof."

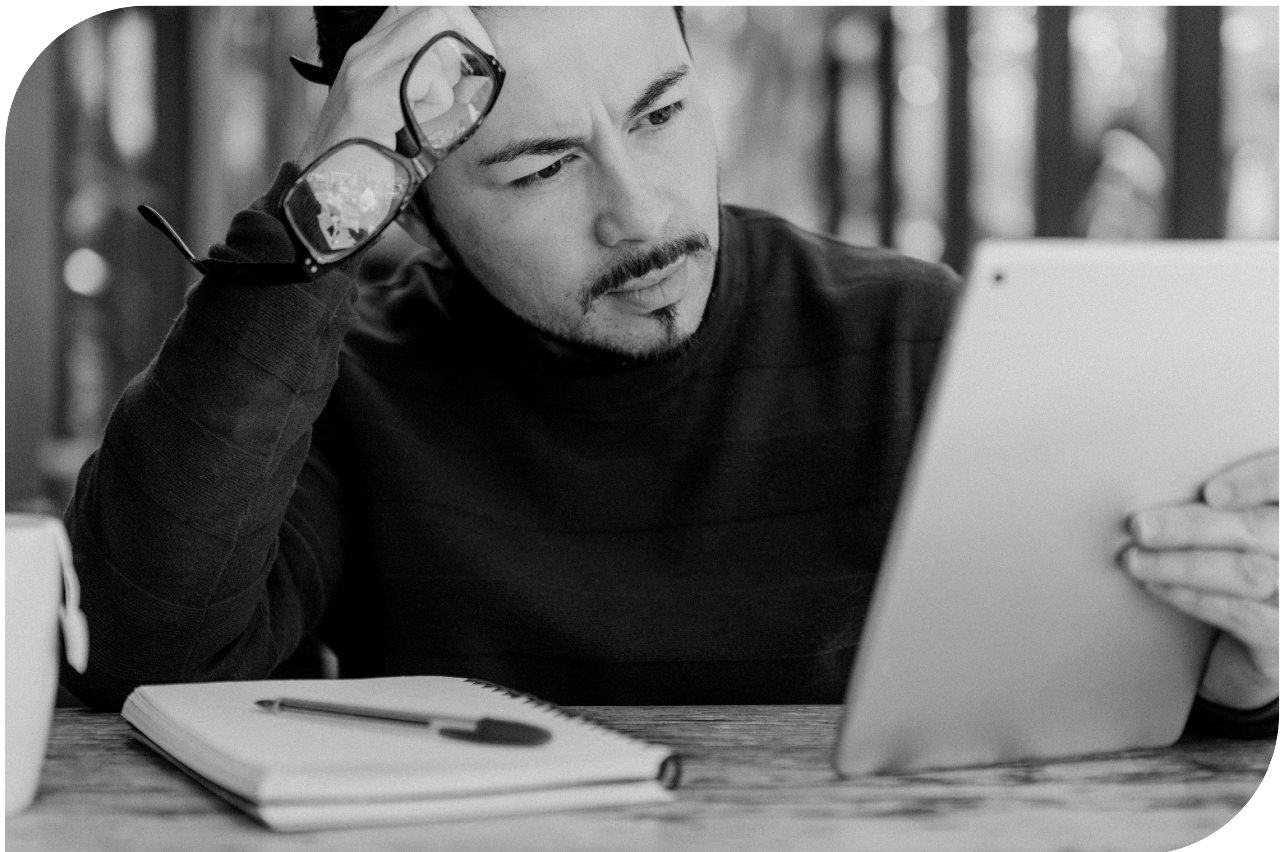
"I think that visits should be spontaneous so that assessments are a true reflection of the services normal working day and not a staged event."

"We had an incredibly long and drawn out A&R process and made several complaints about the time taken to deliver the report and the factual inaccuracies."

"We had a very challenging experience...our reviewer who came late and left early then wrote that she had not observed many items. We had supplied a welcome pack, handbooks, policies etc. in printed form that were not referred to in the report and were marked down as a result. It was quite a process to then request a review proving what had not been observed on the day. We were happy with the end result but it was very disheartening for the staff who work consistently hard to create a quality environment and then not be asked questions on the day."

Although some services reported positive responses to the Assessment and Rating visits, it remains one of the most stressful experiences of service leadership throughout the five waves of TICCSS.

Respondents spoke positively about the improvements that can be made across all services in response to being regularly reviewed. However, they also articulated the weaknesses in a system where assessors may have inconsistent experience and knowledge. There are opportunities for the assessment and rating process to incorporate a strengths-based approach and build assessors relationships and knowledge of diverse pedagogical approaches, however, there are challenges in making adjustments to an already extremely regulated and complicated system.



Summary of Service leadership

Recruitment trends and their impact on service leadership

Recent changes in regulations requiring an additional early childhood teacher for services could be a contributor to the increase in recruitment for bachelor degree or postgraduate degree-qualified educators. One-in-six of the most recent recruitments were for this position. Services also reported that this was the most difficult position to fill, with close to half (47%) reporting that they found the process *Very difficult* and a further 25% reporting they found it *Difficult*. Despite a recent review into unduly short training,³² respondents have consistently rated their top issue with recent recruits being that 'Applicants have completed qualifications with private Registered Training Organisations and are not suitably skilled.' However, proportionally more certificate IIIs were considered to be of adequate suitability only, and diploma and degree-qualified staff were considered adequate or a high standard of suitability.

Utilisation management

In 2019, 67% of respondents to this question reported average utilisation greater than 81%, and 83% of respondents to this question reported average utilisation greater than 71%. Without more knowledge about the local market and each individual service respondent, this would suggest that the majority of respondents to this question at the time of the survey are likely to be financially sustainable.

Perceptions of implementing the National Quality Framework

Services noted that educators' reflective practices and community connections were their key highlights in 2019, two areas which underpin improved quality aims of the NQS and early years frameworks. Services' topmost concerns have been similar since 2014, with the most prominent being the increased paperwork to meet legal obligations and government regulations.

Impacts of the recent changes in the National Quality Framework

For the most part, respondents to this question viewed the recent NQF changes as positives. Respondents commented that the changes had heightened awareness about critical reflection in their services, increased family and community engagement, and actively supported a culture of continual improvement. Some responses noted a more streamlined process which cuts out the paperwork however, this was not a view shared by all – with some reporting that paperwork had increased and that the new NQF document was onerous.

Experiences of Assessment and Ratings

Although some services highlighted the benefits of Assessment and Rating, it remains highly concerning for many services. The most positive response was towards the accuracy of the final ratings. The aspect that received the most negative response was the process for services to review and provide feedback on the draft report.

³² ASQA (2017) A review of issues relating to unduly short training, 2017; <https://www.asqa.gov.au/resources/strategic-review-reports/review-issues-relating-unduly-short-training-2017>

Appendix A: NQF and other context

About the National Quality Framework

In 2009, the Council of Australian Governments released a national Early Childhood Development Strategy - *Investing in the Early Years* with an ambitious objective that “by 2020 all children have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves, and for the nation”³³. Underpinning this objective were key outcomes focusing on young children’s developmental pathways; participation by parents in their children’s early learning; and the provision of services that support workforce participation of families³⁴.

Young children’s developmental pathways included children being engaged in and benefiting from educational opportunities that establish skills for lifelong learning, and enhancing social inclusion and reducing disadvantage especially considering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Educational opportunities were to be delivered, in part, through high quality education and care services that were integrated, responsive, interdisciplinary, child aware, inclusive and accessible, and providing universal and targeted services as needed.

National Quality Framework

The high quality education and care outcomes of the Early Childhood Development Strategy were actioned through the *National Partnership on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care* endorsed by all State/Territory and Australia Governments. The National Quality Agenda, outlined in the NQF, commenced on 1 January 2012 which had the purpose “to improve educational and developmental outcomes for children attending services provided under the National Law”³⁵. The National Quality regulatory framework includes:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* as the overarching legislation
- The *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* as the Underpinning regulatory framework
- The *National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care* (NQS) that sets national benchmarks for the quality of education and care children receive at services
- Two national curriculum frameworks that articulate pedagogy and intentional teaching as key underpinnings of the NQS - *Belonging, Being & Becoming; The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* for children aged from birth to five years and *My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia* for primary school age children attending out of school aged care

³³ *Investing in the Early Years-A National Early Childhood Development Strategy*, (2009), p. 13

³⁴ *ib id.*, p. 13

³⁵ National Partnership on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care -2015–16 to 2017–18, p. 2

services. Additionally, some states/territories retained existing curriculum frameworks, and

- An assessment and quality rating process.

The NQS is monitored by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), an independent national authority whose role includes promoting a nationally consistent application of the relevant law and regulation. The following table provides a summary of the ECE reforms.

Table 46. Key changes under the National Quality Framework

| | |
|-------------|--|
| 2012 | NQF commences 1:4 educator to child ratio for children aged from birth to less than two years |
| 2013 | Every child to have access to 15 hours/week of preschool delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher in the year before school |
| 2014 | All long day care and preschool services to employ a qualified early childhood teacher 50% of educators to have, or to be working towards, a diploma level or higher qualification All other educators to have, or to be working towards a certificate III qualification (or equivalent) |
| 2016 | 1:11 educator to child ratio for children aged 3-5 years 1:6 educator to child ratio for children aged 2 to 3 years |
| 2017 | 1:15 educator to child ratio for primary school-aged children Mandated family day care coordinator to educator ratios – 1:15 for the first 12 months of a new provider and 1:25 thereafter |
| 2018 | Implementation of revised NQS reducing the number of standards from 18 to 15 and number of elements from 58 to 40 Services can only receive an Exceeding NQS rating in a Quality Area when all standards in that Quality Area are rated at exceeding Services can only apply for an Excellent rating if all Quality Areas are rated at exceeding Changes to the definition of Significant Improvement Required from 'unacceptable risk' to 'significant risk' |
| 2020 | All long day care and preschool services with 60 or more children to employ a second early childhood teacher, or another suitably qualified leader |

Source: ACECQA

Recent sector changes

The current TICCSS survey includes some new questions that reflect recent and imminent changes impacting on the education and care sector. These are listed below.

NQF review

The National Quality Framework commenced in 2012. Regular review processes were mandated to ensure that the NQF continues to meet the objectives detailed in the National Law. There has been one review in 2014 with changes implemented from this review in 2018. In 2019 a second review commenced considering how the NQF should reflect recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the National Review of Teacher Registration and the Review of the Australian Qualifications Framework. The outcomes from this review were presented to the Education Council in a Draft Regulatory Impact Statement in 2020.

The 2019 review considered the following areas:

- Approvals
- Operations
- Public awareness of quality
- Compliance and enforcement.

ACECQA review

Coinciding with the NQF review was a review of ACECQA functions conducted by KPMG and presented to the Education Council in September 2019 for consideration. This review considered whether ACECQA was fit for purpose in the current education and care environment and was working in line with the objectives and principles of the National Law.

Child Care Subsidy

The Child Care Subsidy commenced on 2 July 2018 providing one payment to families, replacing the Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate. The amount of Child Care Subsidy a family is eligible for is dependent on total annual family income, amount of work related activity per fortnight and type of education and care service used. The CCS is capped to an hourly rate by service type. These caps for the 2019/2020 financial year were:

- \$11.98 per hour for centre based day care
- \$11.10 per hour for family day care
- \$10.48 outside school hours care.

CCS eligibility is based on a three-step work activity test which provides for up to 100 hours of CCS per fortnight. The activity test includes paid and self-employed work, paid and unpaid parental leave, unpaid work in a family business, looking for work, volunteering or studying. A single parent or the person who works the least hours per fortnight in a couple family needs to be engaged in at least eight hours per fortnight of approved activities to receive CCS. There are exemptions to the activity test for parents who legitimately cannot meet the requirements.

Under CCS families earning less than \$68,163 in 2019/20 that do not meet the activity test are only eligible to receive 24 hours/fortnight of subsidised care.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

The NDIS has now commenced in every state and territory in Australia. Children aged up to seven years access the NDIS through ECEI partners. The ECEI partners assist families to access supports, can provide short-term early intervention, and help request NDIS access if longer term intervention supports are required for the child.

In practice, this may mean that a child who is the recipient of an NDIS package may have some of their programs/therapies provided or delivered in education and care settings by a variety of health professionals. How and when these programs/therapies are incorporated into an education and care program is at the discretion of a director/coordinator of the service.

Appendix B: Demographics of respondents to 2019 survey

Respondent demographics

This section of the report documents respondents' service demographics. Where relevant, data from previous surveys have been included.

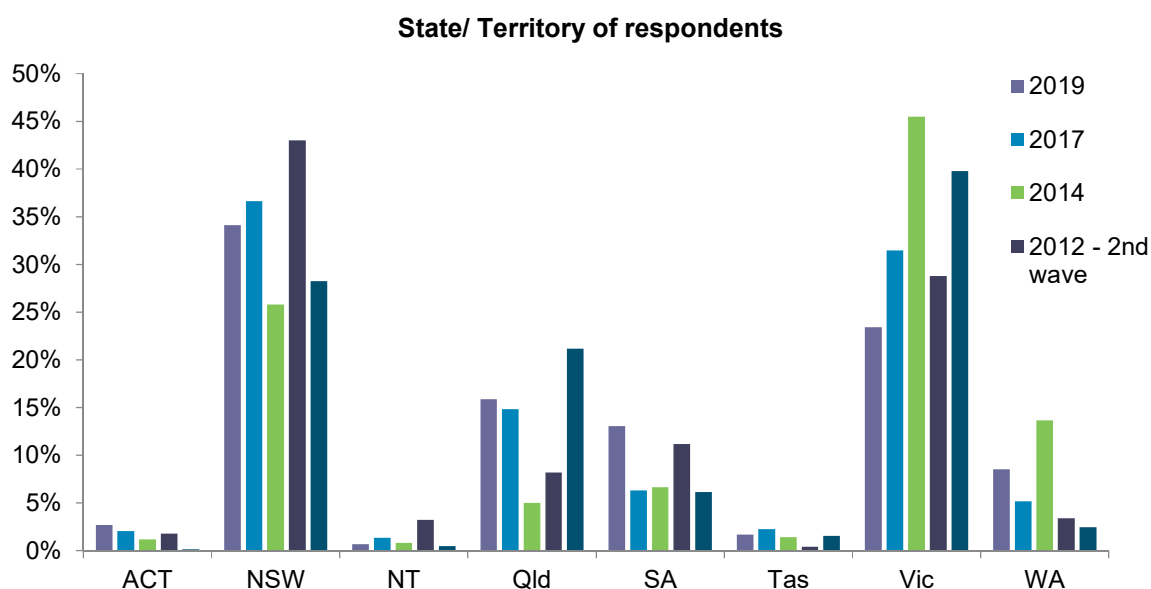
603 people responded to the 2019 survey. The survey was made available through Survey Monkey and was promoted through a variety of online communications.

Unless otherwise stated all data in tables/charts is from TICCSS.

Location of respondents

In 2019 TICCSS survey respondents came from every state and territory in Australia with the largest group of respondents from NSW (204, 34%) and Victoria (140, 23%). This reflects 2019 Q1 sector profile provided from ACECQA; aside from South Australia which is over-represented, comprising 7.5% of all services nationally and 13% of survey respondents³⁶. The following table shows which jurisdiction respondents came from for the current and previous waves of TICCSS. Survey respondents in each survey wave may not have participated in the previous waves. This research is not intended to track changes in individual services but provides an indicative snapshot at the time of the survey.

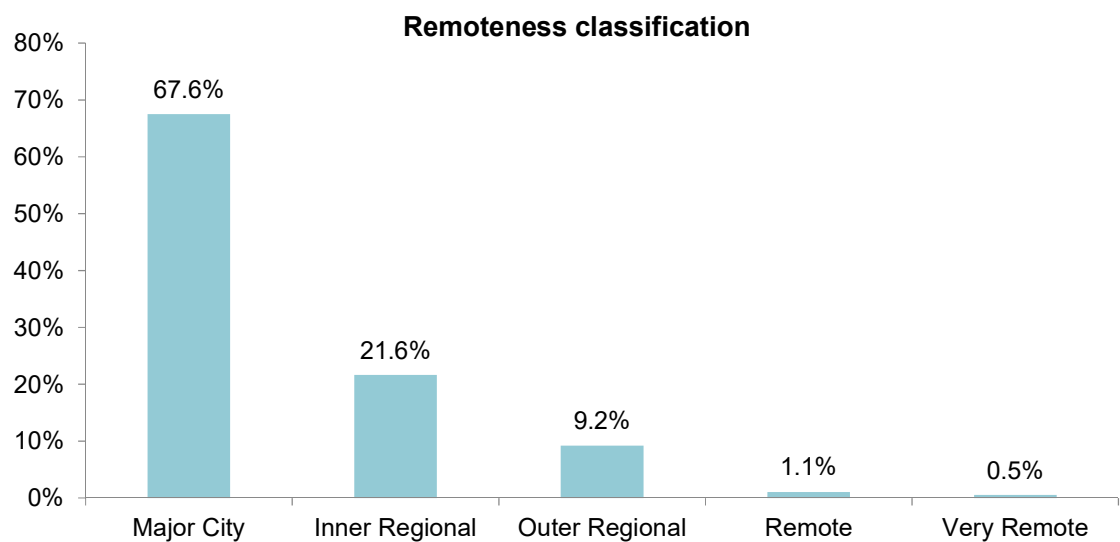
Table 47. State/ Territory of respondents



³⁶ ACECQA Courtly National Quality Standard Data (Q3 2013 - Q2 2019), released 8 August 2019

Survey respondents were located in the city, regional, rural and remote areas throughout Australia. Almost 90% (89.2%, 503) of respondents to this question were located in major cities or inner regional areas, followed by outer regional, remote and very remote locations. The following table shows the geographic location of respondents.

Table 48. Geographic location of respondents



The respondents' service governance model

TICCSS continues to achieve its primary focus on documenting the experiences of not-for-profit services.

Just over half (288, 53%) of the respondents' services were managed by a standalone committee, association or cooperative and just over a third (1196, 36%) by a larger not-for-profit organisation; the same proportion as the 2017 survey. As for previous waves of the TICCSS research, a small number of private for-profit services responded. The following table shows the children's service governance model of respondents across the four waves.

Education and care governance model

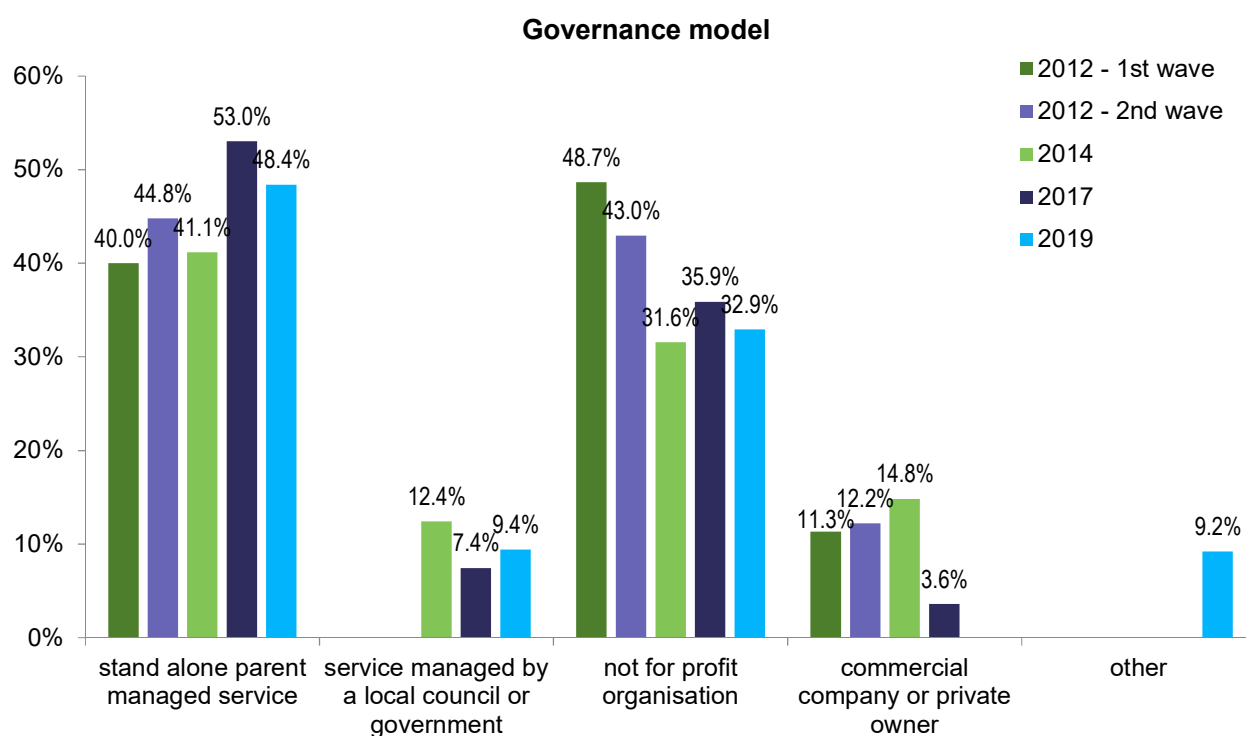


Table notes: The 2012 waves did not separate out local government and other not-for-profit organisations. In 2019 the commercial company or private owner options was deleted and other was added.

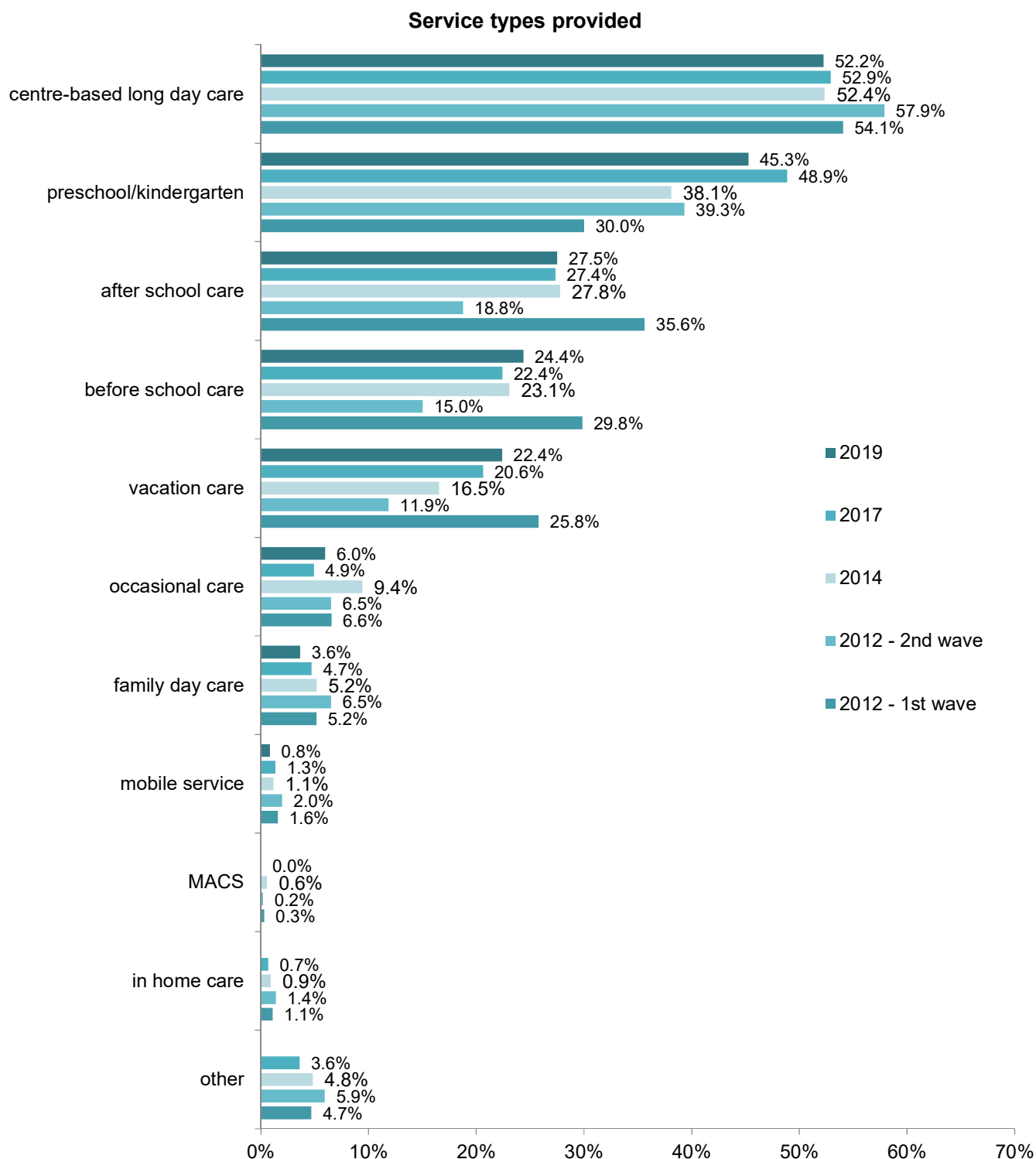
Of the 55 (10%) 2019 respondents who described themselves as 'other' 20 were school based services, nine private providers and five services were managed by universities/TAFEs.

Service type

Respondents represented the full range of education and care services in Australia, including all those covered by the *National Law and Regulation*, and out of scope services such as occasional care and mobile services. In each survey wave centre-based long day care has comprised the largest group of service types provided by respondents. In 2019 just over half (315, 52%) of the respondents provided centre-based day care, followed by preschool/kindergarten (273, 45%) and around one quarter provided after school care (166,

28%), before school care (147, 24%) and vacation care (135, 22%). The following table shows the range of education and care types provided by respondents.

Table 49. Service types provided

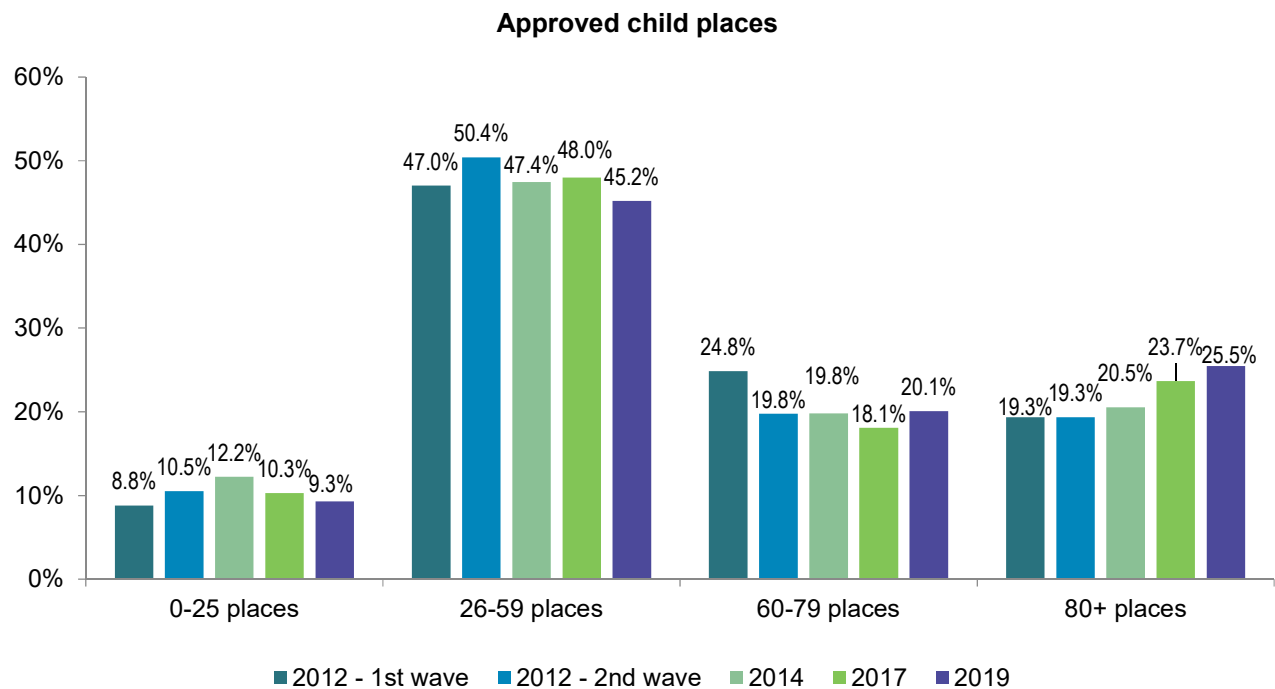


Children

Number of approved child places

Just under half (268, 45%) of respondents were approved to provide 26 to 59 child places, followed by 80+ child places (151, 26%). This has been a consistent trend across all survey waves. The following table shows the proportion of approved child places by service size.

Table 50. Proportion of approved child places offered



Almost half those respondents that provided long day care (150, 48%) or preschool/kindergarten (132, 49%) had services ranging in size from 26 to 59 places. More OSHC services were approved for 80+ places. These 80+ child services were:

- Before school care – 47% (68)
- After school care – 44% (72)
- Vacation care – 41% (54)

Number of child places offered per day

Respondents provided services to a significant number of children aged from birth to 12 years.

The 603 respondents provided 40,068 places for children aged from birth to 12 years of age, with 12% (4,928) of total places provided for children aged from birth to less than 2 years, 13% (5,400) for children aged two to less than three years, 41% (16,348) for children aged from three to five years and 33% (13,392) for school age children. The following table shows the proportion of places offered each day.

Table 51. Number of child places offered per day

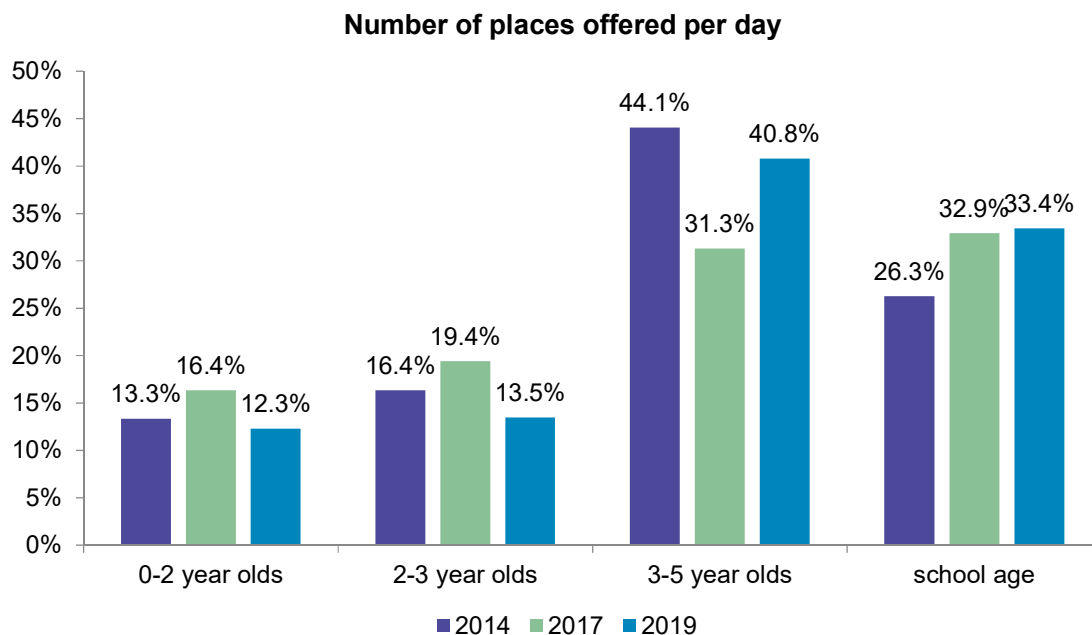


Table note: this question was not asked in 2012 1st and 2nd waves

Of the 26,678 places for children aged from birth to five years not at school, 19% (4,928) were for children aged from birth to two years, 20% (5,400) for children aged two to three years, and 61% (16,348) for children aged three to five years.



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