

**IN THE FAIR WORK COMMISSION
AT SYDNEY**

MATTER: AM2014/263; 2014/266

**REVIEW OF MODERN AWARDS – STAGE 4
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES (TEACHERS) AWARD 2010
*CHILDREN’S SERVICES AWARD 2010***

IEU SUBMISSIONS RE ACA CLAIM

INTRODUCTION

1. The IEU represents teachers working in privately-owned children’s services and preschools (**ECEC Centers**) who are covered by the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2010 (the Teachers’ Award)*.
2. These are the IEU’s response to the ACA’s claim to vary the Teachers Award to:
 - a. vary cl.B.1.3 to extend the span of hours from 6.00am-6.30pm to 6.00am-7.30pm, and
 - b. introduce an ability to vary a teacher’s days and hours of work at no notice in certain circumstances.
3. ACA has not set out the precise terms of the variation it seeks to the Teachers’ Award. Nor has it taken any steps to justify why teachers’ conditions should be changed in this way, other than to say that the Teachers’ Award should be varied to align with any variations made to the *Children’s Services Award 2010 (the Children’s Services Award)*.
4. The IEU opposes both claims. The first is a naked attempt to further reduce the take-home pay of workers in a notoriously low-paid, female-dominated industry, in circumstances where there is no evidence that this is necessary or justified. The second would require permanent employees to effectively be on-call to cover their colleagues’ sick leave, introducing an extraordinary

level of volatility and unpredictability into their working lives without any additional compensation or other benefit – again without good reason.

CLAIM ONE: EXPANDING THE ORDINARY HOURS

5. Both the Teachers Award and the Children’s Services Award prescribe, at cl.B.1.3 and cl.21.3 respectively, that employees may be rostered to work their ordinary hours between 6.00am and 6.30pm. ACA seeks to extend this to 7.30pm.
6. The point of this claim is, on ACA’s case, to make it cheaper for ECEC Centers to roster workers to finish later at night. It achieves this by degrading the wages and conditions of all workers covered by these awards without any corresponding tradeoff.
7. In other words, it is a significant alteration in conditions (as opposed to a clarification or minor administrative matter).
8. Before the Commission may make this variation, it must be satisfied that this backwards step is necessary to maintain a fair and relevant safety net, and otherwise achieve the modern awards objective. ACA, as the claimant party, must establish this: in the context
9. ACA justifies this on three principal bases:
 - a. **first**, it would make it cheaper to keep ECEC Centers open longer, which would be more convenient for working parents;
 - b. **second**, even if opening hours are not extended, it would allow workers to be rostered later without penalty to deal with parents picking their children up late, which currently results in employees being unexpectedly required to stay late and correspondingly being paid overtime; and
 - c. **third**, it would permit staff meetings to be held after closing time without attracting overtime payments.

10. As an afterthought, it claims that the employees, despite being paid less, will nevertheless benefit from the variation as it will permit more certainty in their rostering patterns. This appears to primarily relate to the second justification (i.e. instead of being given the occasional opportunity to work overtime when parents are late, employees will simply be pre-emptively rostered to finish later to accommodate this risk).
11. In support of this, the ACA relies on a range of broad motherhood statements about the importance of accessible and affordable childcare to working families and the economy, about which nobody disagrees. It has, however, put forward no evidence or submissions:
 - a. demonstrating that these adjustments are necessary – in particular, aside from unsourced opinion evidence it principally relies on spans in service industry awards, rather than evidence as to *actual patterns of work*. It is also worth noting that the current span of hours is not fully utilized by any of its witnesses, and that no operator goes higher than saying it might extend opening hours if the change is made;
 - b. beyond broad assertion, showing that the current regime in fact imposes significant – let alone excessive – costs on operators or parents; and
 - c. explaining why the costs of increasing convenience for parents and profitability of operators should be borne entirely by low-paid early childhood teachers and educators, without any corresponding benefit to them.
12. The Commission would not make a major, and detrimental, change on such shaky ground.
13. The more significant difficulty with the application is that the claim completely fails to deal with the fact that:
 - a. it is currently possible under both awards to roster workers to work their ordinary hours outside the 6.00am-6.30pm span; and

- b. this ability, and the associated costs, would not change if ACA's claim was granted in full.
- 14. Clause B.5 of the Teachers Award deals with shiftwork. Relevantly, per B.5.2:
 - a. a shift commencing at or after 5.00am and before 6.00am is an early morning shift, and attracts a 10% loading; and
 - b. any shift finishing after 6.30pm and at or before midnight is an afternoon shift, and attracts a 15% loading.
- 15. This is replicated at cl.23.4 of the Children's Service Award.
- 16. These clauses stand alone, and are not dependent on the set span of hours. A worker rostered to work one of these shifts must be paid the loading for the entire shift. This reflects the unsociability and other detriments of working these hours. The ACA has not made any claim to change these loadings. This would be a significant alteration from its current case.
- 17. In other words, even if ACA's claim was granted in full, it would not have any of the financial benefits it claims. Given there is no other stated purpose, and the variation is only said to be necessary to achieve the modern awards objective on this basis, it necessarily fails.

CLAIM TWO – NO-NOTICE ROSTER VARIATIONS

- 18. The second ACA claim relates to the notice that a permanent employee must be given before their ordinary hours are changed without their agreement.
- 19. Currently, the Children's Services Award requires seven days notice, unless either:
 - a. the employee agrees; or
 - b. there is an emergency, as defined.

20. This provides a relatively high level of flexibility. Although the ACA in its submissions and evidence repeatedly complain about the apparently onerous requirement to record such agreement in writing, no variation addressing this is sought and it is presumed this is not pressed.
21. As the ACA acknowledges, this was addressed in the 2012 review and the current clause agreed '*as part of a much larger deal*'. It does not explain why it should be permitted to revisit it again now. The fact that it has now put on evidence is not sufficient: some actual change in circumstances should be demonstrated.
22. What ACA now wants, properly understood, is the right to require its workforce – without any compensation – to be subject to having their ordinary hours of work mandatorily changed with no notice. Although this would only be in limited circumstances, on the ACA's case these are matters which regularly and unpredictably arise. The proposed variation would in practice require these workers to be permanently on-call.
23. This would, bizarrely, give these permanent employees less control over their hours of work than casuals, who are compensated in part for the unpredictability of work. Although casuals can be offered work at similarly short or no notice, they are under no obligation to accept. This would not be so for permanent employees if the ACA's claim were granted.
24. The ACA asserts, in justification of this extraordinary claim, that ECEC Centers are particularly vulnerable to staff absences, as they cannot 'run short' due to the requirement to comply with minimum educator- and early childhood teacher-to-children ratios prescribed by state and federal legislation. While this is correct, it is not entirely unique. Most if not all businesses require a minimum level of staff to be operational – consider, for example, a factory production line or an aeroplane operator.
25. The ACA buttresses this with the curious submission that:
 - a. ECEC workers are '*routinely*' absent from work due to illness or other personal issues; and

- b. this is a '*unique*' feature of the ECEC industry.
26. All national system employees are entitled to personal leave and bereavement leave. This is leave which is almost always taken at little to no notice: that is the nature of illness. The risk of an employee being absent at short notice for these reasons is universal; employers must take this into account when determining appropriate staffing levels. In other words, staffing at above-minimum levels is not '*overstaffing*', as described by some ACA witnesses: it is appropriate staffing to manage these risks.
27. What in fact emerges from the ACA evidence is that the alleged difficulties these operators face is not through anything particularly unique to the early childhood industry, but instead as a result of them choosing to staff at levels which preserve minimum compliance with staffing ratios but do not or do not sufficiently take into account normal incidents of employment such as personal leave.
28. Further, ACA's own evidence demonstrates that these self-created problems can be managed in a multiplicity of ways, including:
- a. by agreement with their employees, who are reportedly extremely accommodating;
 - b. through the use of directly-engaged casual staff;
 - c. alternatively, through the use of qualified agency casual staff; and finally
 - d. through operators filling the gaps themselves.
29. Some operators express a preference not to engage casuals, based either on a preference for continuity of care or because of the cost. This is a matter for them; it is not a sufficient basis to further diminish the conditions of low-paid ECEC workers by effectively removing any certainty about their days and hours of work. No change is justified to the Children's Services Award.

30. The lack of merit in this claim is even clearer in respect of the Teachers' Award, which requires significantly longer notice periods including at least four weeks notice for part-time employees (again, waivable by agreement). This reflects the different role played by teachers as opposed to educators, and in particular the need to plan a long-term educational program for each child rather than varying matters on a day to day basis.
31. ACA does not deal at all with these issues; it simply seeks a general variation if its claim in respect of the Children's Service Award is granted.
32. Early childhood teachers and educators:
 - a. perform different work;
 - b. have different skills and qualifications;
 - c. are regulated by different awards;
 - d. accordingly, and appropriately, have different wages and conditions.
33. It is not sufficient for ACA to justify a major change to the conditions of teachers by simply saying it is justified for educators. No case at all has been made out in respect of the particular circumstances of early childhood teachers.
34. Accordingly, even if its claim in respect of the Children's Services Award succeeds – which, for the reasons set out above, it should not – the Teacher's Award cannot and should not be so varied.

CONCLUSION

35. Both of ACA's claims would cause serious detriment to already low-paid employees. Despite the volume of material put on by ACA, no justification emerges: at its highest, the case is one of cost-saving for operators at the expense of their employees.
36. Tellingly, no financial information has been provided in support of the repeated claim that the current minimum award costs are '*unsustainable*'.

37. In these circumstances, the Commission could not safely conclude that the variations sought are necessary to achieve the modern awards objective. The application must be refused.

LUCY SAUNDERS

GREENWAY CHAMBERS

15 APRIL 2019

IN THE FAIR WORK COMMISSION

Matter Number: AM2014/263, AM2014/266, AM2018/18 and AM2018/20

Fair Work Act 2009 - Part 2-3, Div 4 –s.156 - 4 yearly review of modern awards

Group 4A Awards: Children’s Services Award 2010 [MA000120]; Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2010 [MA000077]

STATEMENT OF LISA JAMES IN REPLY

I, Lisa James of [REDACTED], in the state of New South Wales, say as follows:

1. I am employed as an Early Childhood Organiser by the Independent Education Union of Australia (NSW/ACT Branch).
2. My qualifications are as follows:

1994-1997: Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood), Macquarie University. I am qualified to teach children from 0 - 8 years of age.

2005-2007: Master of Early Childhood, Macquarie University. I completed the compulsory Introduction to Educational Research Methods and chose to focus on special needs and professional issues in elective subject assessment tasks. These included Bilingualism, Emotion Regulation, Early Intervention, Communication Development in Children with Autism, The Influence of Visual Arts on a Child with Global Delay, Leadership, The Changing Family Context, The National Competition Policy and The National Child Public Health Strategic Framework for Children 2005-

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2008.

3. My employment experience is as follows:

2007 – Present	Early Childhood Organiser, NSW IEU and then IEUA (NSW/ACT Branch)
2002-2007	Special Needs Teacher, Lorikeet Child Care Centre
2000-2001	Early Childhood Teacher, KU Barra Brui Preschool
1998–1999	Early Childhood Teacher, Emmerick Street Community Preschool
1998	Early Childhood Teacher, The Chase Kindergarten

4. In this Statement I am dealing with the following claims made on behalf of the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA), Australian Business Industrial (ABI) and the New South Wales Business Chamber (NSWBC) (together “**the ACA**”) in respect of the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2010* (“Teachers Award”):

(a) the ordinary hours claim as described at paragraph 2.1 of the ACA Submission;
and

(b) the rostering claim as described at paragraph 3.1 of the ACA Submission.

TEACHERS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTERS

5. The vast majority of teachers in the early childhood sector are found in the long day care and preschool/kindergarten sector of the industry. As a matter of practice teachers are not routinely employed in outside school hours care, family-based child care or other similar services as there is no requirement to employ them under the National Quality Framework. It is my understanding that only centre-based services educating and caring for children of preschool age or younger, such as preschools, kindergartens or long day care services are required to employ teachers.

6. In practical terms, the ACA application by employers will affect teachers employed in long day care services, that provide education and care for children below school age and typically operate for at least 48 weeks per year and usually for ten or more hours per day.
7. I refer to paragraph 8.9 of the Employer Submission where the ACA states that “the role of a “teacher” in a childcare centre more closely aligns with the role of other educators in childcare centres than it does with teachers in schools”. I strongly disagree with this statement.
8. In New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia early childhood teachers and teachers in schools must be registered/accredited with the State Teacher Registration body. This means they must meet the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (the APST), which were developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership as well as complete 100 hours of professional development over a 5 year maintenance of accreditation cycle (7 years if part-time). The APST are annexed and marked as ‘LJ-1’. The requirements of teacher registration and accreditation do not apply to certificate or diploma qualified educators.
9. Early childhood teachers are highly qualified and graduate after four years of university study. Most complete degrees allowing them to teach children 0-8 years or 0-12 year degrees, which both provides specific skills in dealing with pre-school age children and also enables them to teach in primary school as well as early childhood settings.
10. The Effective Provision of Preschool Education (EPPE) project (annexed and marked as ‘LJ-2’) demonstrated that management of centres by university qualified early childhood teachers was directly related to higher Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale scores on literacy, language reasoning, mathematics, science, activities provided, interactions, program structure and relationships with families, and that

“...less well qualified staff demonstrated significantly better practices when they were led by qualified teachers”.

Current operating hours of ECEC centers

11. The Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (“ACECQA”) maintains the National Register of approved children’s education and care services, including long day care services and preschools. The register includes information about services, such as the address, type of service, numbers of approved places for children, operating hours, etc. The Register can be found on the ACECQA website at <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/national-registers>.

12. The Register records the hours of operation of all long day care centers and preschools in Australia. An officer of the Union downloaded the data file of the Register on 8 April 2019 and conducted an analysis of each centers’ hours of operation. I have reviewed this analysis, which shows:

- a) of the 7675 services that identify as Long Day Care in Australia:
 - i. 7348 record a valid closing time for the field *Annual Wednesday End Time*;
 - ii. the average closing time for these 7348 services is 5.57pm;
 - iii. only 188 close after 6.30pm (2.5%). Of these only 44 services close after 19:00 (approx. 0.5% of 7348).
- b) of the 2467 services that are identified as Preschool/Kindergarten Stand Alone [and not classified also as Long Day Care]:
 - i. 1598 show a valid closing time for the field *School Terms Only Session 1 Wednesday End Time*;
 - ii. the average closing time for these 1598 services is 14:48; and
 - iii. only 1 closes after 6.00pm (@6:30pm). None close after 18:30.

13. I am informed, and believe, that this analysis actually overstates the number of services actually operating past 6:30pm. Little Zak's Academy Ultimo (Service Approval No. SE-400006647), is shown as closing at midnight. However enquiries by an officer of the Union indicate that their hours of operation are 7:00am to 6:00pm Monday to Friday.
14. A survey conducted by Early Childhood Australia (ECA) found that only 0.8% of long day care centres opened past 6.30pm - extracts from the ECA website article, *Seven tips on flexible hours you may not know*, is annexed and marked as 'LJ-3'. ECA advised that there are significant challenges in providing flexible / later opening hours.
15. Some of these challenges are cost-related. These are not solely related to overtime payments; in addition to these factors the real cost is the wages of two staff members who need to be rostered notwithstanding the number of children, and the cost of providing an evening meal to children attending later.
16. However, a significant challenge is in fact related to parent demand. In part this may be cost related, if the higher fees are passed on to parents. However, there is no evidence of widespread demand for late opening hours. For example, parental preferences come into play: some parents may prefer a "home-like" environment such as informal care or family day care where their children are staying so late. ECA concluded that:
- "This may mean that demand for extended hours can be a challenge. If there are only a small number of families using the service, or variable demand, extended hours can often be difficult to sustain in the long term."*
17. The difficulties in offering extended hours child care were also canvassed in a study of a trial of extended hours care by the Australian Institute of Family Studies, entitled *Flexible Child Care Key findings from the AIFS Evaluation of the Child Care Flexibility*

Trials, by Jennifer Baxter and Kelly Hand, Australian Government, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2016, annexed and marked as 'LJ-4'. The Summary (at p16) included the following comments:

“Clearly an important question taking this forward is in regard to the likely take-up of those forms of [extended] care. Provision of flexibility “just in case” it is needed is not likely to be financially sustainable, as seen in the trials from those services that experienced low take-up of trialled “flexible” approaches.

Learning from both parent and service provider perspectives in this evaluation, we can see that there are complexities in identifying the demand for care, especially given the diversity of families’ needs and wishes for care solutions. Further there are significant challenges in being able to deliver care that does meet parents’ needs for flexible care.”

18. I agree with the above comments about the challenges of providing extended care, based on my employment at Lorikeet Child Care Centre from 2002 to 2007. Lorikeet Child Care Centre is located at St George Hospital and when I was employed there, the centre was open until up to 11.00pm to cater for hospital shift workers. In my experience, despite there being a lot of shift workers in the area, in practice not many parents used evening care and there were usually only between two and five children in attendance after 6.30 pm.

19. Because centre policies required two employees to be in attendance at all times when children were present, evening care was expensive for the service to operate. There was not sufficient demand to sustain it. Due to the fact there was only one family was enrolled in Evening Care, this program was closed from the beginning of 2015. Lorikeet now closes at 6.15pm due to there being no demand for education and care after 6.00pm. I am also aware that other hospital long day care centres that

previously offered extended hours have also reduced their hours of operation, in large part due to lack of demand.

20. I have come across a number of 24 hours centres in Sydney, such as the World Tower Child Care Centre and First Learning Australia in Lane Cove that cater for shift workers and are able to do so and remain viable despite ordinary hours finishing at 6.30 pm.

Views of IEU members

21. I have consulted with IEU members who are employed as early childcare teachers. They have told me that they would be strongly opposed to working a finishing time of 7.30pm, as this would cause them significant disruption in their family life. 7.30pm is a late finish, and would prevent these workers from having dinner with their family, socialising after work or performing their ordinary activities. There are also concerns about increased fatigue.
22. It is also the case in my experience that even with a finishing time of 7.30pm, regardless of the finishing time, there are always a small group of parents who will run late because of unexpected events or matters outside their control. This is a regular concern raised by members in many different services. A later closing time will inevitably mean an even later actual finishing time for early childhood workers.
23. In any event, in my experience that early childhood teachers are usually employed during 'core hours' – that is, during the middle of the day when the most children are there. This is so they can deliver an educational program during the times of the day when the greatest number of children are in attendance. An example of this can be seen at Annexure MA-1 of Ms Ackerman's Statement: none of the employees rostered on the late shifts finishing at 6.15 or 6.30 pm are teachers (their latest finish being 4:30pm). If teachers are rostered the late shift, this will detract from their ability to properly perform as teachers, rather than educators.

ACA witnesses

24. I have read the witness statements provided by ACA in support of its claim. I address the main points below. Where I do not address a matter raised by a particular witness, this should not be taken as an indication that I agree with it.

Viknarash

25. I refer to paragraphs 40 to 46 of the Statement of Karthiga Viknarash where she states that parents may be charged \$20 for the first five minutes they are late and then an additional \$1 per minute thereafter. I agree, based on my experience, that the threat of late fees is an effective means to discourage parents from being late.

Mahoney

26. I refer to paragraph 40(a) of the Statement where Kerry Mahony states that “The Federal Government is encouraging is to be more flexible in our hours for families but we are hampered by overtime penalties”. It is not clear precisely what encouragement he is referring to, nor what form of flexibility. The *Child Care Subsidy (What Constitutes a Session of Care) Determination 2018* provides that a session of care may be of any length as determined by the provider, up to a maximum of 12 hours. The concept of flexible care is that session times may be *shorter* so that parents are not paying for hours of care they are not utilising - for example nine hours of care rather than twelve hours of care. Annexed and marked as ‘LJ-5’ is an extract from the website of Goodstart Early Learning explaining the flexible care offered by them, of nine hours, ten hours or all day, in over 600 child care centres. I am also aware that other services are considering flexible options. I do not agree that overtime penalties hamper these arrangements.

27. Where a service charges a daily fee or session fee, the hourly fee is determined by dividing the fee for the session by the number of hours for which the centre

operates. The subsidy rate cap of \$11.77 per hour applies for each hour of care – see extracts from *the website New Child Care Package Frequently Asked Questions*, Australian Government, Department of Education and Training, annexed and marked as 'LJ-6'. From my experience most services continue to charge a standard daily fee which entitles a child to care for all hours in a day for which the service is open. If however a higher fee was charged for an evening session, the same subsidy rate cap of \$11.77 per hour would still apply.

Hands

28. At paragraph 44, Ms Hands asserts that having the capacity to close at 7:30pm would benefit staff as “they would know their finishing time with a greater degree of certainty” and therefore be more able to plan their non-working lives. As stated above, I do not agree with thos comment because:

- a) based on my experience, parents may run late regardless of the closing time;
and
- b) This statement ignores the extreme inconvenience of these late shifts.

Wharton

29. In paragraph 31 Ms Wharton asserts that the ACA’s claim with respect to extending the ordinary hours of work to 7:30pm will “provide a safeguard for late pick ups and other unforeseen circumstances (such as difficult children)” and will allow the centre to run staff meetings after children have gone home. Based on my experience in the industry, in my opinion the span of ordinary hours in the modern award cannot impact on or safeguard against late pickups or children exhibiting challenging behaviours. This is because staff are typically rostered for eight hour shifts and overtime would still be payable if staff were required to work additional time beyond the eight hours. Similar issues arise in relation to staff meetings that are scheduled after staff have completed eight hour shifts.

30. Most centers, if not all, centers roster teachers to work at times when the most children are present: that is, when there are children available to teach. It would be an inefficient and costly use of higher-paid teachers to roster them to stay late just in case parents were late picking up their children: more often than not, this would simply leave the teacher in an empty center.

Chemello

31. Ms Chemello indicates at paragraph 45, that it has been reported to her that a number of childcare operators in Western Australia where a parent is more than 15 minutes late, have a policy of transporting children to a police station and leaving them there, so as to avoid overtime payments. As a former early childhood teacher and with my understanding of the emotional needs of preschoolers, I find this stated practice very concerning and disproportionate to the situation the operator finds themselves in. This is in no way a normal practice in the industry.

32. Ms Chemello states in paragraph 46 that extending the span of ordinary hours to 7:30pm would facilitate the holding of staff meetings. This could only occur after the centre had closed for children as staff required to supervise children could not attend the staff meeting. As mentioned above, in my view overtime provisions would still apply either because the majority of staff would still be required to work more than eight hours per day if they were rostered to work until immediately before the staff meeting or alternatively would be required to return to work if they had finished work earlier. It is usual practice that only a small number of staff are rostered when a long day care centre closes, so staff who have finished work earlier would need to return to work to attend the staff meeting.

White

33. I refer to paragraph 39 of the Statement where Ms White suggests that if there was a longer span of hours in the Award, her centre at Marsden Park could stay open later

to cater for children of parents who were shopping or working in nearby businesses. Any attendance of such children would be on an occasional basis and I do not believe that a centre could plan to stay open later in the hope that sufficient children (of shopping parents) would attend to justify the additional wages cost of rostered staff. In my experience there is limited demand for child care past 6.30pm. The difficulties of providing services to meet demand on a casual basis are discussed in *Flexible Child Care Key findings from the AIFS Evaluation of the Child Care Flexibility Trials*, referred to above. I also note that parents sometime prefer home-based care for their children in the evenings so even if long day care centres were open past 6.30pm, such parents may still not enrol their children in long day care, as suggested in paragraph 40 by Ms White (see *Seven tips on flexible hours you may not know*, in relation to parental preference for home- based care, cited above).

34. I refer to paragraph 50 where Ms White states that one of the reasons for the changes to the child care subsidy [in July 2018] was to encourage “flexible work practices by having centres offer care on a sessional basis” and that the Awards hamper this approach. I do not agree that the changes to the child care subsidy were intended to encourage late-night operation, as set out above.

McPhail

35. At paragraph 30, Ms McPhail states that aspects of the modern awards “have the ability to detrimentally impact quality and safety of a centre to a significant degree.” If quality and safety were significantly impacted as claimed by Ms McPhail, then most Centres covered by the Modern Awards would not be meeting or exceeding these Standards. However, according to the ACECQA website in 2018 79% of services were meeting or exceeding the National Quality Standard (<http://snapshots.acecqa.gov.au/Snapshot/overallratings.html>).

Tullberg

36. In paragraph 85 of her statement, Ms Tullberg states that the proposed change to ordinary hours would give staff consistent/set finish times. In my experience this assertion is incorrect. A minority of parents will occasionally pick up late, regardless of the closing time due to unavoidable delays or general personal disorganisation - staff in the sector would much prefer finishing late on occasion than working back until 7.30pm every time they are rostered a closing shift.

Smith

37. In paragraph 44, Ms Smith states that she does not consider working until 7.30pm to be unsociable or inconvenient. In fact Ms Smith asserts it would provide more consistency. In my experience this is not the case. Teachers I have consulted have informed me that they would consider that a regular "late shift" that goes until 7.30pm is both unsociable and inconvenient and would much rather occasionally finish 15 minutes late.

ROSTERING CLAIM

38. The ACA's proposal to change the rostering provision of the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2010* would significantly change the working conditions of teachers in early childhood centers.

39. There is in my view no reason that the rostering provisions in the Teachers Award need to align with those in the Children's Service Award nor is it necessary to change the notice provisions in the Teachers Award in circumstances where an employer wishes to change the days of work of a part time teacher. Teachers perform different work to educators, and have different planning requirements according to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. It is not always appropriate for a teacher to be generally on-call to replace an educator who becomes sick at short

notice. This would make it more difficult for teachers to properly develop and implement their educational programs. This reflects the different role played by teachers as opposed to educators, and in particular the need to plan a long-term educational program for each child rather than varying matters on a day to day basis. The importance of having an educational program delivered by a qualified teacher on educational outcomes for children is recognised through Universal Partnership Agreements. To vary the days and number of hours worked by a teacher with less than 4 weeks' notice would disadvantage children, whose educational program would be regularly disrupted and lack consistency. Constantly changing attendance patterns of teachers would make assessing children's progress against learning outcomes more challenging, particularly as many children attend early childhood services on a part-time basis and children arrive and leave the centre at different times of day. A teacher observes each child, assesses their individual strengths and needs, sets long and short-term learning goals to extend existing knowledge and further develop positive learning dispositions, implements activities to support and extend the child's understanding and then evaluates the child's progress against learning goals. This sequential planning cycle would be seriously disrupted if teachers' hours and days of attendance were varied on a regular basis.

40. At Lorikeet Child Care Centre employees regularly swapped shifts recorded on the roster (although it was displayed 1-2 weeks ahead of time) due to absences or last-minute requests for leave/ to change hours for appointments etc. We had one floater and three regular casuals. Most employers address roster issues using existing staff (including a floater if they have one) through the swapping of shifts, then try casuals on their own casual list and only then use an agency. However, these options are all available.

41. In my experience, responsible centers will not staff at the absolute minimum level required to preserve ratios. Employees get sick from time to time – particularly in the

early childhood sector, where they are exposed to disease by children. The answer to staff shortages is not making permanent employees casual, but centers staffing at appropriate levels.

42. Reducing the notice requirements for changing an employee's roster will not facilitate or encourage greater flexibility in an employee's lifestyle. In my experience, where an employee has less time to plan for and less control over their rosters, flexibility in their normal working life is significantly impeded.

43. All of ACA's witnesses seem to agree that employees, including teachers, are very accommodating about short-notice roster changes. This accords with my experience in the industry. In my view it would be unfair to employees to permit their employer to force them to change shifts at no notice, unless they were provided with additional pay to compensate for this.

ACA witnesses

44. I have read the witness statements provided by ACA in support of its claim. I address the main points below. Where I do not address a matter raised by a particular witness, this should not be taken as an indication that I agree with it.

Hands

45. At paragraph 72, Ms Hands refers to the "biggest difficulty" that arises in terms of rostering, that being multiple short-term absences (without notice) caused by community outbreaks such as gastroenteritis and influenza. Ms Hands confirms that when this occurs and the swapping of shifts between part-time staff is not an option, then they utilise relief staff, including casuals to maintain required staffing levels. She also acknowledges that agency staff are another option. My experience correlates with Ms Hands - employers in the industry regularly utilise relief staff, including

casuals and agency staff to maintain adequate staffing to deal with this situation in the context of the current modern award arrangements.

McPhail

46. At paragraph 72, Kristen McPhail states that they refuse to use casual employees provided by employment agencies, as irregular casuals are not in touch with centre processes and child specific knowledge. In my experience, I have not come across an employer in the sector who did not use casual employees as required.

Member Feedback

47. In the course of preparing this Statement I sent an email to IEU members seeking feedback as to the Employer's proposed changes to the Modern Award. Annexed and marked as 'LJ-7 is a copy of the email and feedback from members.



Lisa James

Date: 15 April 2019



Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

February 2011

Work on the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (the Standards) commenced under the auspices of the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA – now the Education Council) in 2009. Significant work was undertaken by the Australian Standards Sub-group of the Australian Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs Senior Officials Committee (AEEYSOC) during 2009-10. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) assumed responsibility for validating and finalising the Standards in July 2010.

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers were endorsed by MCEECDYA in December 2010. AITSL appreciates Ministers' commitment to quality teaching and to the National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality, and looks forward to continuing work with them on these important national reforms.

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Education Council, PO Box 202, Carlton South, VIC 3053, Australia.

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership was formed to provide national leadership for the Commonwealth, state and territory governments in promoting excellence in the profession of teaching and school leadership with funding provided by the Australian Government.

Preamble

The crucial role of the teacher

Teachers share a significant responsibility in preparing young people to lead successful and productive lives. The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (the Standards) reflect and build on national and international evidence that a teacher's effectiveness has a powerful impact on students,¹ with broad consensus that teacher quality is the single most important in-school factor influencing student achievement.² Effective teachers can be a source of inspiration and, equally importantly, provide a dependable and consistent influence on young people as they make choices about further education, work and life.

As stated in the National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality³ and the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians,⁴ improving teacher quality is considered an essential reform as part of Australia's efforts to improve student attainment and ensure it has a world class system of education. 'The greatest resource in Australian schools is our teachers. They account for the vast majority of expenditure in school education and have the greatest impact on student learning, far outweighing the impact of any other education program or policy'.⁵

Internationally⁶ and locally, education systems are developing professional standards for teachers to attract, develop, recognise and retain quality teachers. 'High performing school systems,

though strikingly different in construct and context, [maintain] a strong focus on improving instruction because of its direct impact upon student achievement'.⁷

Professional standards for teachers

Developing professional standards for teachers that can guide professional learning, practice and engagement facilitates the improvement of teacher quality and contributes positively to the public standing of the profession. The key elements of quality teaching are described in the Standards. They articulate what teachers are expected to know and be able to do at four career stages: Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead.

The Standards and their descriptors represent an analysis of effective, contemporary practice by teachers throughout Australia. Their development included a synthesis of the descriptions of teachers' knowledge, practice and professional engagement used by teacher accreditation and registration authorities, employers and professional associations. Each descriptor has been informed by teachers' understanding of what is required at different stages of their careers. An extensive validation process involving almost 6,000 teachers ensured that each descriptor was shaped by the profession.

"The greatest resource in Australian schools is our teachers. They account for the vast majority of expenditure in school education and have the greatest impact on student learning, far outweighing the impact of any other education program or policy."

The Standards support the Melbourne Declaration,⁸ which describes aspirations for all young Australians for the next decade. This commits Australian Education Ministers to the specific educational goals that Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence and that all young Australians will become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens.⁹ 'All Australian governments, universities, school sectors and individual schools have a responsibility to work together to support high-quality teaching and school leadership, including by enhancing pre-service¹⁰ teacher education'.¹¹

Purpose of the Standards

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers are a public statement of what constitutes teacher quality. They define the work of teachers and make explicit the elements of high-quality, effective teaching in 21st century schools that will improve educational outcomes for students. The Standards do this by providing a framework which makes clear the knowledge, practice and professional engagement required across teachers' careers. They present a common understanding and language for discourse between teachers, teacher educators, teacher organisations, professional associations and the public.

Teacher standards also inform the development of professional learning goals, provide a framework by which teachers can judge the success of their learning and assist self-reflection and self-assessment.¹² Teachers can use the Standards to recognise their current and developing capabilities, professional aspirations and achievements.

Standards contribute to the professionalisation of teaching and raise the status of the profession. They could also be used as the basis for a professional accountability model,¹³ helping to ensure that teachers can demonstrate appropriate levels of professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement.

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers are organised into four career stages and guide the preparation, support and development of teachers. The stages reflect the continuum of a teacher's developing professional expertise from undergraduate preparation through to being an exemplary classroom practitioner and a leader in the profession.

The Graduate Standards will underpin the accreditation of initial teacher education programs. Graduates from accredited programs qualify for registration¹⁴ in each state and territory.

The Proficient Standards will be used to underpin processes for full registration as a teacher and to support the requirements of nationally consistent teacher registration.

The Standards at the career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead will inform voluntary certification.¹⁵

Organisation of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers comprise seven Standards which outline what teachers should know and be able to do. The Standards are interconnected, interdependent and overlapping.

The Standards are grouped into three domains of teaching; Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Engagement. In practice, teaching draws on aspects of all three domains.

Within each Standard focus areas provide further illustration of teaching knowledge, practice and professional engagement. These are then separated into Descriptors at four professional career stages: Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead.

Domains of teaching	Standards	Focus areas and descriptors
Professional Knowledge	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Know students and how they learn2. Know the content and how to teach it	Refer to the Standard at each career stage
Professional Practice	<ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning4. Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments5. Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning	
Professional Engagement	<ol style="list-style-type: none">6. Engage in professional learning7. Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community	

Organisation of the Standards

Domains of teaching

Professional Knowledge

Teachers draw on a body of professional knowledge and research to respond to the needs of their students within their educational contexts.

Teachers know their students well, including their diverse linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds. They know how the experiences that students bring to their classroom affect their continued learning. They know how to structure their lessons to meet the physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of their students.

Teachers know the content of their subjects and curriculum. They know and understand the fundamental concepts, structure and enquiry processes relevant to programs they teach. Teachers understand what constitutes effective, developmentally appropriate strategies in their learning and teaching programs and use this knowledge to make the content meaningful to students.

Through their teaching practice, teachers develop students' literacy and numeracy within their subject areas. They are also able to use Information and Communication Technology to contextualise and expand their students' modes and breadth of learning.

Professional Practice

Teachers are able to make learning engaging and valued. They are able to create and maintain safe, inclusive and challenging learning environments and implement fair and equitable behaviour management plans. They use sophisticated communication techniques.

Teachers have a repertoire of effective teaching strategies and use them to implement well-designed teaching programs and lessons. They regularly evaluate all aspects of their teaching practice to ensure they are meeting the learning needs of their students. They interpret and use student assessment data to diagnose barriers to learning and to challenge students to improve their performance.

They operate effectively at all stages of the teaching and learning cycle, including planning for learning and assessment, developing learning programs, teaching, assessing, providing feedback on student learning and reporting to parents/carers.

Professional Engagement

Teachers model effective learning. They identify their own learning needs and analyse, evaluate and expand their professional learning both collegially and individually.

Teachers demonstrate respect and professionalism in all their interactions with students, colleagues, parents/carers and the community. They are sensitive to the needs of parents/carers and can communicate effectively with them about their children's learning.

Teachers value opportunities to engage with their school communities within and beyond the classroom to enrich the educational context for students. They understand the links between school, home and community in the social and intellectual development of their students.

The Australian Professional Standards For Teachers

The seven Standards identify what is expected of teachers within three domains of teaching. Teachers' demonstration of the Standards will occur within their specific teaching context at their stage of expertise and reflect the learning requirements of the students they teach.

Domains of teaching	Standards
Standard 1:	1. Know students and how they learn
Standard 2:	2. Know the content and how to teach it
Standard 3:	3. Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning
Standard 4:	4. Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments
Standard 5:	5. Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning
Standard 6:	6. Engage in professional learning
Standard 7:	7. Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community

Focus areas and descriptors

The focus areas and descriptors identify the components of quality teaching at each career stage. They constitute agreed characteristics of the complex process of teaching. An effective teacher is able to integrate and apply knowledge, practice and professional engagement as outlined in the descriptors to create teaching environments in which learning is valued.

Professional capability at four career stages

The four career stages in the Standards provide benchmarks to recognise the professional growth of teachers throughout their careers. The descriptors across the four career stages represent increasing levels of knowledge, practice and professional engagement for teachers. Progression through the stages describes a growing understanding, applied with increasing sophistication across a broader and more complex range of situations.

Graduate teachers

Graduate teachers have completed a qualification that meets the requirements of a nationally accredited program of initial teacher education. The award of this qualification means that they have met the Graduate Standards.

On successful completion of their initial teacher education, graduate teachers possess the requisite knowledge and skills to plan for and manage learning programs for students. They demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the implications for learning of students' physical, cultural, social, linguistic and intellectual characteristics. They understand principles of inclusion and strategies for differentiating teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.

Graduate teachers have an understanding of their subject/s, curriculum content and teaching strategies. They are able to design lessons that meet the requirements of curriculum, assessment and reporting. They demonstrate the capacity to interpret student assessment data to evaluate student learning and modify teaching practice. They know how to select and apply timely and appropriate types of feedback to improve students' learning.

Graduate teachers demonstrate knowledge of practical strategies to create rapport with students and manage student behaviour. They know how to support students' wellbeing and safety, working within school and system curriculum and legislative requirements.

They understand the importance of working ethically, collaborating with colleagues, external professional and community representatives, and contributing to the life of the school. Teachers understand strategies for working effectively, sensitively and confidentially with parents/carers and recognise their role in their children's education.

Proficient teachers

Proficient teachers meet the requirements for full registration through demonstrating achievement of the seven Standards at this level.

These teachers create effective teaching and learning experiences for their students. They know the unique backgrounds of their students and adjust their teaching to meet their individual needs and diverse cultural, social and linguistic characteristics. They develop safe, positive and productive learning environments where all students are encouraged to participate.

They design and implement engaging teaching programs that meet curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements. They use feedback and assessment to analyse and support their students' knowledge and understanding. Proficient teachers use a range of sources, including student results, to evaluate their teaching and to adjust their programs to better meet student needs.

Proficient teachers are active participants in their profession and with advice from colleagues identify, plan and evaluate their own professional learning needs.

Proficient teachers are team members. They work collaboratively with colleagues; they seek out and are responsive to advice about educational issues affecting their teaching practice. They communicate effectively with their students, colleagues, parents/carers and community members. They behave professionally and ethically in all forums.

Highly Accomplished teachers

Highly Accomplished teachers are recognised as highly effective, skilled classroom practitioners and routinely work independently and collaboratively to improve their own practice and the practice of colleagues. They are knowledgeable and active members of the school.

Highly Accomplished teachers contribute to their colleagues' learning. They may also take on roles that guide, advise or lead others. They regularly initiate and engage in discussions about effective teaching to improve the educational outcomes for their students.

They maximise learning opportunities for their students by understanding their backgrounds and individual characteristics and the impact of those factors on their learning. They provide colleagues, including pre-service teachers, with support and strategies to create positive and productive learning environments.

Highly Accomplished teachers have in-depth knowledge of subjects and curriculum content within their sphere of responsibility. They model sound teaching practices in their teaching areas. They work with colleagues to plan, evaluate and modify teaching programs to improve student learning. They keep abreast of the latest developments in their specialist content area or across a range of content areas for generalist teachers.

Highly Accomplished teachers are skilled in analysing student assessment data and use it to improve teaching and learning.

They are active in establishing an environment which maximises professional learning and practice opportunities for colleagues. They monitor their own professional learning needs and align them to the learning needs of students.

They behave ethically at all times. Their interpersonal and presentation skills are highly developed. They communicate effectively and respectfully with students, colleagues, parents/carers and community members.

Lead teachers

Lead teachers are recognised and respected by colleagues, parents/carers and the community as exemplary teachers. They have demonstrated consistent and innovative teaching practice over time. Inside and outside the school they initiate and lead activities that focus on improving educational opportunities for all students. They establish inclusive learning environments that meet the needs of students from different linguistic, cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. They seek to improve their own practice and to share their experience with colleagues.

They are skilled in mentoring teachers and pre-service teachers, using activities that develop knowledge, practice and professional engagement in others. They promote creative, innovative thinking among colleagues. They apply skills and in-depth knowledge and understanding to deliver effective lessons and learning opportunities and share this information with colleagues and pre-service teachers. They describe the relationship between highly effective teaching and learning in ways that inspire colleagues to improve their own professional practice.

They lead processes to improve student performance by evaluating and revising programs, analysing student assessment data and taking account of feedback from parents/carers. This is combined with a synthesis of current research on effective teaching and learning.

They represent the school and the teaching profession in the community. They are professional, ethical and respected individuals inside and outside the school.

Conclusion

The development of the Australian Professional Standards for the teaching profession is an integral part of ensuring quality learning and teaching in Australian schools. With their development and implementation, Australian education systems are well placed to be among the best in the world.

These Standards build upon the significant work undertaken previously in Australia. They are a fundamental component of the reforms agreed to in the National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality and will help to realise the goals and commitments set out in the Melbourne Declaration.

Professional Knowledge

Standard 1 – Know students and how they learn				
Focus area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
1.1 Physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students and how these may affect learning.	Use teaching strategies based on knowledge of students' physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics to improve student learning.	Select from a flexible and effective repertoire of teaching strategies to suit the physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students.	Lead colleagues to select and develop teaching strategies to improve student learning using knowledge of the physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students.
1.2 Understand how students learn	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of research into how students learn and the implications for teaching.	Structure teaching programs using research and collegial advice about how students learn.	Expand understanding of how students learn using research and workplace knowledge.	Lead processes to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching programs using research and workplace knowledge about how students learn.
1.3 Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds	Demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.	Design and implement teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.	Support colleagues to develop effective teaching strategies that address the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.	Evaluate and revise school learning and teaching programs, using expert and community knowledge and experience, to meet the needs of students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Professional Knowledge

Standard 1 – Know students and how they learn

Focus area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
1.4 Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of the impact of culture, cultural identity and linguistic background on the education of students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.	Design and implement effective teaching strategies that are responsive to the local community and cultural setting, linguistic background and histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.	Provide advice and support colleagues in the implementation of effective teaching strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students using knowledge of and support from community representatives.	Develop teaching programs that support equitable and ongoing participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by engaging in collaborative relationships with community representatives and parents/carers.
1.5 Differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of strategies for differentiating teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.	Develop teaching activities that incorporate differentiated strategies to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.	Evaluate learning and teaching programs, using student assessment data, that are differentiated for the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.	Lead colleagues to evaluate the effectiveness of learning and teaching programs differentiated for the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.
1.6 Strategies to support full participation of students with disability	Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of legislative requirements and teaching strategies that support participation and learning of students with disability.	Design and implement teaching activities that support the participation and learning of students with disability and address relevant policy and legislative requirements.	Work with colleagues to access specialist knowledge, and relevant policy and legislation, to develop teaching programs that support the participation and learning of students with disability.	Initiate and lead the review of school policies to support the engagement and full participation of students with disability and ensure compliance with legislative and/or system policies.

Professional Knowledge

Standard 2 – Know the content and how to teach it				
Focus area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
2.1 Content and teaching strategies of the teaching area	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concepts, substance and structure of the content and teaching strategies of the teaching area.	Apply knowledge of the content and teaching strategies of the teaching area to develop engaging teaching activities.	Support colleagues using current and comprehensive knowledge of content and teaching strategies to develop and implement engaging learning and teaching programs.	Lead initiatives within the school to evaluate and improve knowledge of content and teaching strategies and demonstrate exemplary teaching of subjects using effective, research-based learning and teaching programs.
2.2 Content selection and organisation	Organise content into an effective learning and teaching sequence.	Organise content into coherent, well-sequenced learning and teaching programs.	Exhibit innovative practice in the selection and organisation of content and delivery of learning and teaching programs.	Lead initiatives that utilise comprehensive content knowledge to improve the selection and sequencing of content into coherently organised learning and teaching programs.
2.3 Curriculum, assessment and reporting	Use curriculum, assessment and reporting knowledge to design learning sequences and lesson plans.	Design and implement learning and teaching programs using knowledge of curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements.	Support colleagues to plan and implement learning and teaching programs using contemporary knowledge and understanding of curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements.	Lead colleagues to develop learning and teaching programs using comprehensive knowledge of curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements.

Professional Knowledge

Standard 2 – Know the content and how to teach it				
Focus area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
2.4 Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians	Demonstrate broad knowledge of, understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.	Provide opportunities for students to develop understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.	Support colleagues with providing opportunities for students to develop understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.	Lead initiatives to assist colleagues with opportunities for students to develop understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.
2.5 Literacy and numeracy strategies	Know and understand literacy and numeracy teaching strategies and their application in teaching areas.	Apply knowledge and understanding of effective teaching strategies to support students' literacy and numeracy achievement.	Support colleagues to implement effective teaching strategies to improve students' literacy and numeracy achievement.	Monitor and evaluate the implementation of teaching strategies within the school to improve students' achievement in literacy and numeracy using research-based knowledge and student data.
2.6 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	Implement teaching strategies for using ICT to expand curriculum learning opportunities for students.	Use effective teaching strategies to integrate ICT into learning and teaching programs to make selected content relevant and meaningful.	Model high-level teaching knowledge and skills and work with colleagues to use current ICT to improve their teaching practice and make content relevant and meaningful.	Lead and support colleagues within the school to select and use ICT with effective teaching strategies to expand learning opportunities and content knowledge for all students.

Professional Practice

Standard 3 – Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning

Focus area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
3.1 Establish challenging learning goals	Set learning goals that provide achievable challenges for students of varying abilities and characteristics.	Set explicit, challenging and achievable learning goals for all students.	Develop a culture of high expectations for all students by modelling and setting challenging learning goals.	Demonstrate exemplary practice and high expectations and lead colleagues to encourage students to pursue challenging goals in all aspects of their education.
3.2 Plan, structure and sequence learning programs	Plan lesson sequences using knowledge of student learning, content and effective teaching strategies.	Plan and implement well-structured learning and teaching programs or lesson sequences that engage students and promote learning.	Work with colleagues to plan, evaluate and modify learning and teaching programs to create productive learning environments that engage all students.	Exhibit exemplary practice and lead colleagues to plan, implement and review the effectiveness of their learning and teaching programs to develop students' knowledge, understanding and skills.
3.3 Use teaching strategies	Include a range of teaching strategies.	Select and use relevant teaching strategies to develop knowledge, skills, problem solving and critical and creative thinking.	Support colleagues to select and apply effective teaching strategies to develop knowledge, skills, problem solving and critical and creative thinking.	Work with colleagues to review, modify and expand their repertoire of teaching strategies to enable students to use knowledge, skills, problem solving and critical and creative thinking.
3.4 Select and use resources	Demonstrate knowledge of a range of resources, including ICT, that engage students in their learning.	Select and/or create and use a range of resources, including ICT, to engage students in their learning.	Assist colleagues to create, select and use a wide range of resources, including ICT, to engage students in their learning.	Model exemplary skills and lead colleagues in selecting, creating and evaluating resources, including ICT, for application by teachers within or beyond the school.

Professional Practice

Standard 3 – Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning

Focus area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
3.5 Use effective classroom communication	Demonstrate a range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support student engagement.	Use effective verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support student understanding, participation, engagement and achievement.	Assist colleagues to select a wide range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support students' understanding, engagement and achievement.	Demonstrate and lead by example inclusive verbal and non-verbal communication using collaborative strategies and contextual knowledge to support students' understanding, engagement and achievement.
3.6 Evaluate and improve teaching programs	Demonstrate broad knowledge of strategies that can be used to evaluate teaching programs to improve student learning.	Evaluate personal teaching and learning programs using evidence, including feedback from students and student assessment data, to inform planning.	Work with colleagues to review current teaching and learning programs using student feedback, student assessment data, knowledge of curriculum and workplace practices.	Conduct regular reviews of teaching and learning programs using multiple sources of evidence including: student assessment data, curriculum documents, teaching practices and feedback from parents/carers, students and colleagues.
3.7 Engage parents/carers in the educative process	Describe a broad range of strategies for involving parents/carers in the educative process.	Plan for appropriate and contextually relevant opportunities for parents/carers to be involved in their children's learning.	Work with colleagues to provide appropriate and contextually relevant opportunities for parents/carers to be involved in their children's learning.	Initiate contextually relevant processes to establish programs that involve parents/carers in the education of their children and broader school priorities and activities.

Professional Practice

Standard 4 – Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments

Focus area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
4.1 Support student participation	Identify strategies to support inclusive student participation and engagement in classroom activities.	Establish and implement inclusive and positive interactions to engage and support all students in classroom activities.	Model effective practice and support colleagues to implement inclusive strategies that engage and support all students.	Demonstrate and lead by example the development of productive and inclusive learning environments across the school by reviewing inclusive strategies and exploring new approaches to engage and support all students.
4.2 Manage classroom activities	Demonstrate the capacity to organise classroom activities and provide clear directions.	Establish and maintain orderly and workable routines to create an environment where student time is spent on learning tasks.	Model and share with colleagues a flexible repertoire of strategies for classroom management to ensure all students are engaged in purposeful activities.	Initiate strategies and lead colleagues to implement effective classroom management and promote student responsibility for learning.
4.3 Manage challenging behaviour	Demonstrate knowledge of practical approaches to manage challenging behaviour.	Manage challenging behaviour by establishing and negotiating clear expectations with students and address discipline issues promptly, fairly and respectfully.	Develop and share with colleagues a flexible repertoire of behaviour management strategies using expert knowledge and workplace experience.	Lead and implement behaviour management initiatives to assist colleagues to broaden their range of strategies.

Professional Practice

Standard 4 – Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments

Focus area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
4.4 Maintain student safety	Describe strategies that support students' well-being and safety working within school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements.	Ensure students' well-being and safety within school by implementing school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements.	Initiate and take responsibility for implementing current school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements to ensure student well-being and safety.	Evaluate the effectiveness of student well-being policies and safe working practices using current school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements and assist colleagues to update their practices.
4.5 Use ICT safely, responsibly and ethically	Demonstrate an understanding of the relevant issues and the strategies available to support the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.	Incorporate strategies to promote the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.	Model, and support colleagues to develop, strategies to promote the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.	Review or implement new policies and strategies to ensure the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.

Professional Practice

Standard 5 – Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning

Focus area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
5.1 Assess student learning	Demonstrate understanding of assessment strategies, including informal and formal, diagnostic, formative and summative approaches to assess student learning.	Develop, select and use informal and formal, diagnostic, formative and summative assessment strategies to assess student learning.	Develop and apply a comprehensive range of assessment strategies to diagnose learning needs, comply with curriculum requirements and support colleagues to evaluate the effectiveness of their approaches to assessment.	Evaluate school assessment policies and strategies to support colleagues with: using assessment data to diagnose learning needs, complying with curriculum, system and/or school assessment requirements and using a range of assessment strategies.
5.2 Provide feedback to students on their learning	Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of providing timely and appropriate feedback to students about their learning.	Provide timely, effective and appropriate feedback to students about their achievement relative to their learning goals.	Select from an effective range of strategies to provide targeted feedback based on informed and timely judgements of each student's current needs in order to progress learning.	Model exemplary practice and initiate programs to support colleagues in applying a range of timely, effective and appropriate feedback strategies.
5.3 Make consistent and comparable judgements	Demonstrate understanding of assessment moderation and its application to support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning.	Understand and participate in assessment moderation activities to support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning.	Organise assessment moderation activities that support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning.	Lead and evaluate moderation activities that ensure consistent and comparable judgements of student learning to meet curriculum and school or system requirements.

Professional Practice

Standard 5 – Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning

Focus area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
5.4 Interpret student data	Demonstrate the capacity to interpret student assessment data to evaluate student learning and modify teaching practice.	Use student assessment data to analyse and evaluate student understanding of subject/content, identifying interventions and modifying teaching practice.	Work with colleagues to use data from internal and external student assessments for evaluating learning and teaching, identifying interventions and modifying teaching practice.	Co-ordinate student performance and program evaluation using internal and external student assessment data to improve teaching practice.
5.5 Report on student achievement	Demonstrate understanding of a range of strategies for reporting to students and parents/carers and the purpose of keeping accurate and reliable records of student achievement.	Report clearly, accurately and respectfully to students and parents/carers about student achievement, making use of accurate and reliable records.	Work with colleagues to construct accurate, informative and timely reports to students and parents/carers about student learning and achievement.	Evaluate and revise reporting and accountability mechanisms in the school to meet the needs of students, parents/carers and colleagues.

Professional Engagement

Standard 6 – Engage in professional learning				
Focus area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
6.1 Identify and plan professional learning needs	Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers in identifying professional learning needs.	Use the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and advice from colleagues to identify and plan professional learning needs.	Analyse the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers to plan personal professional development goals, support colleagues to identify and achieve personal development goals and pre-service teachers to improve classroom practice.	Use comprehensive knowledge of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers to plan and lead the development of professional learning policies and programs that address the professional learning needs of colleagues and pre-service teachers.
6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice	Understand the relevant and appropriate sources of professional learning for teachers.	Participate in learning to update knowledge and practice, targeted to professional needs and school and/or system priorities.	Plan for professional learning by accessing and critiquing relevant research, engage in high quality targeted opportunities to improve practice and offer quality placements for pre-service teachers where applicable.	Initiate collaborative relationships to expand professional learning opportunities, engage in research, and provide quality opportunities and placements for pre-service teachers.
6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice	Seek and apply constructive feedback from supervisors and teachers to improve teaching practices.	Contribute to collegial discussions and apply constructive feedback from colleagues to improve professional knowledge and practice.	Initiate and engage in professional discussions with colleagues in a range of forums to evaluate practice directed at improving professional knowledge and practice, and the educational outcomes of students.	Implement professional dialogue within the school or professional learning network(s) that is informed by feedback, analysis of current research and practice to improve the educational outcomes of students.
6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning	Demonstrate an understanding of the rationale for continued professional learning and the implications for improved student learning.	Undertake professional learning programs designed to address identified student learning needs.	Engage with colleagues to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher professional learning activities to address student learning needs.	Advocate, participate in and lead strategies to support high-quality professional learning opportunities for colleagues that focus on improved student learning.

Professional Engagement

Standard 7 – Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community				
Focus area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
7.1 Meet professional ethics and responsibilities	Understand and apply the key principles described in codes of ethics and conduct for the teaching profession.	Meet codes of ethics and conduct established by regulatory authorities, systems and schools.	Maintain high ethical standards and support colleagues to interpret codes of ethics and exercise sound judgement in all school and community contexts.	Model exemplary ethical behaviour and exercise informed judgements in all professional dealings with students, colleagues and the community.
7.2 Comply with legislative, administrative and organisational requirements	Understand the relevant legislative, administrative and organisational policies and processes required for teachers according to school stage.	Understand the implications of and comply with relevant legislative, administrative, organisational and professional requirements, policies and processes.	Support colleagues to review and interpret legislative, administrative, and organisational requirements, policies and processes.	Initiate, develop and implement relevant policies and processes to support colleagues' compliance with and understanding of existing and new legislative, administrative, organisational and professional responsibilities.
7.3 Engage with the parents/carers	Understand strategies for working effectively, sensitively and confidentially with parents/carers.	Establish and maintain respectful collaborative relationships with parents/carers regarding their children's learning and well-being.	Demonstrate responsiveness in all communications with parents/carers about their children's learning and well-being.	Identify, initiate and build on opportunities that engage parents/carers in both the progress of their children's learning and in the educational priorities of the school.
7.4 Engage with professional teaching networks and broader communities	Understand the role of external professionals and community representatives in broadening teachers' professional knowledge and practice.	Participate in professional and community networks and forums to broaden knowledge and improve practice.	Contribute to professional networks and associations and build productive links with the wider community to improve teaching and learning.	Take a leadership role in professional and community networks and support the involvement of colleagues in external learning opportunities.

Glossary

A

Accreditation

Endorsement that a program meets approved standards.

Advocate

Promote a view or position or provide support to others.

Assessment – formal

Evaluating student performance through a structured (often written) assessment.

Assessment – formative

Evaluating student learning to provide feedback to students and devise/change teaching and learning programs.

Assessment – informal

Evaluating student performance through techniques such as observation and anecdotal records.

Assessment – summative

Evaluating student achievement of learning goals at a point in time.

B

Broad

Ensuring variety, not narrow or limited; i.e. comprehensive in content, knowledge, experience, ability, or application.

C

Career stage

Benchmarks which recognise the professional growth of teachers throughout their careers, represented by increasing levels of knowledge, practice and professional engagement.

Certification

Credential attained by teachers who have met specified requirements.

Collaboration

Working with one or more colleagues to achieve a common goal.

Colleague

Other professionals and paraprofessionals (inside and outside the school) including but not limited to, teachers, principals, specialist teachers, pre-service teachers, industry partners, education assistants, teachers' aides.

Context

The set of circumstances or facts that surround a particular event, situation or environment.

Curriculum content

What teachers are expected to teach and students are expected to learn. Curriculum content includes knowledge, skills and understanding that students are expected to learn and is usually described for a particular learning area at a particular year level.

D

Demonstrate

To show or make evident knowledge and/or understanding.

E

Effective teaching strategies

Strategies which research and workplace knowledge suggests contribute to successful learning outcomes for students.

Evidence

Data that is considered reliable and valid which can be used to support a particular idea, conclusion or decision.

Exemplary

A high standard of practice, serving as a model or example for students, colleagues and the community.

I

ICT

Information and Communication Technology; the generation and application of knowledge and processes to develop devices, methods and systems.

L

Learning and teaching program

An organised and sequenced program of teaching activities and strategies; assessment strategies and resources.

Learning goals

The specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-targeted (SMART) objectives set with, by and for students.

M

Mentor

A more experienced person who supports and assists another person to grow and learn in their role.

N

Non-verbal communication

The use of unspoken cues generated by both the teacher and their environment that have potential message value to students. This could include but is not limited to eye contact, gestures, proximity and visual aids.

P

Pre-service teachers

Students in initial teacher education programs provided by higher education institutions.

R

Range

The set of available strategies or tools that can be used in different situations.

Registration

Regulatory processes for entry and continued employment in the teaching profession.

S

Stages of learning

Levels of learning aligned to the age or development of students.

Subject

Specific, recognised body of learning that is described in a curriculum document or is the focus of undergraduate studies.

T

Teaching area

The curriculum and learning area/s in which the teacher provides instruction.

W

Workplace knowledge

Knowledge of learning and teaching developed by practitioners within the context of their work environment.

Notes

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4. Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, *Melbourne declaration on educational goals for young Australians*, Melbourne, 2008, viewed 31 January 2011, http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf
5. B Jensen, *What teachers want: Better teacher management*, Melbourne, Grattan Institute, 2010, p. 5.
6. OECD, 'Teacher evaluation: a conceptual framework and examples of country practice', paper presented at the OECD-Mexico workshop, *Towards a teacher evaluation framework in Mexico: international practices, criteria and mechanisms*, Mexico City, 1-2 December 2009.
7. M Barber & M Mourshed, *How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top*, London, McKinsey & Company, 2007, p. 13.
8. Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, *Melbourne declaration on educational goals for young Australians*, Melbourne, 2008, viewed 24 November 2010, http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf
9. Although Australian education systems perform strongly against other OECD countries, low equity is still a significant issue. In response to this, the Melbourne Declaration commits to specific actions such as improving educational outcomes for Indigenous youth and students with disability.
10. The terminology 'initial teacher education' has replaced the term pre-service teacher education.
11. Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, *Melbourne declaration on educational goals for young Australians*, Melbourne, 2008, viewed 31 January 2011, p. 11. http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf
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13. *ibid.*
14. In New South Wales (NSW) "accreditation" is the equivalent of "registration".
15. "Accreditation" in NSW.

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THE EFFECTIVE PROVISION OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION (EPPE) PROJECT: FINDINGS FROM THE PRE-SCHOOL PERIOD

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What is EPPE?

The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) project is the first major European longitudinal study of a national sample of young children's development (intellectual and social/behavioural) between the ages of 3 and 7 years. To investigate the effects of pre-school¹ education for 3 and 4 year olds, the EPPE team collected a wide range of information on over 3,000 children, their parents, their home environments and the pre-school settings they attended. Settings (141) were drawn from a range of providers (local authority day nursery, integrated² centres, playgroups, private day nurseries, maintained nursery schools and maintained nursery classes). A sample of 'home' children (who had no or minimal pre-school experience) was recruited to the study at entry to school for comparison with the pre-school group. In addition to investigating the effects of pre-school provision on young children's development, EPPE explores the characteristics of effective practice (and the pedagogy which underpin them) through twelve intensive case studies of settings with positive child outcomes. EPPE has demonstrated the positive effects of high quality provision on children's intellectual and social/behavioural developmental. This brief on the main findings of the research related to the pre-school period (for children aged 3 or 4 years of age to entry into primary school).

Key findings

Impact of attending a pre-school centre

- Pre-school experience, compared to none, enhances children's development.
- The duration of attendance is important with an earlier start being related to better intellectual development and improved independence, concentration and sociability.
- Full time attendance led to no better gains for children than part-time provision.
- Disadvantaged children in particular can benefit significantly from good quality pre-school experiences, especially if they attend centres that cater for a mixture of children from different social backgrounds.

¹ Pre-school centres in this document means those centres that included 3 and 4 year olds.

² 'Integrated' settings fully combines education and care and is referred to as 'combined' centres in EPPE Technical Papers.

The quality and practices in pre-school centres

- The quality of pre-school centres is directly related to better intellectual/cognitive and social/behavioural development in children.
- Good quality can be found across all types of early years settings. However quality was higher overall in integrated settings, nursery schools and nursery classes.
- Settings which have staff with higher qualifications, especially with good proportion of trained teachers on the staff, show higher quality and their children make more progress.
- Where settings view educational and social development as complementary and equal in importance, children make better all round progress.
- Effective pedagogy includes interaction traditionally associated with the term "teaching", the provision of instructive learning environments and 'sustained shared thinking' to extend children's learning.

Type of pre-school

- There are significant differences between individual pre-school settings in their impact on children. Some settings are more effective than others in promoting positive child outcomes.
- Children tend to make better intellectual progress in fully integrated centres and nursery schools.

The importance of home learning.

- The quality of the learning environment of the home (where parents are actively engaged in activities with children) promoted intellectual and social development in all children. Although parent's social class and levels of education were related to child outcomes the quality of the home learning environment was more important. The home learning environment is only moderately associated with social class. What parents do is more important than who they are.

The Aims of EPPE

EPPE set out to investigate:

What is the impact of pre-school on young children's intellectual and social/behavioural development? Can the pre-school experience reduce social inequalities?

Are some pre-schools more effective than others in promoting children's development?

What are the characteristics of an effective pre-school setting?

What is the impact of the home and childcare history (before aged 3) on children's intellectual and behavioural development?

EPPE studied a range of different types of pre-school settings and 3,000 children from differing social backgrounds. An important element in the study has been to ensure that fair comparisons can be made between individual settings and types of provision. To do this, full account needs to be taken of differences in the characteristics of the children attending different settings and types of provision. Similarly, the study has taken into account the contribution to children's progress and development of background factors such as birth weight, gender, parental qualifications/occupations, home language and the home learning environment. The pre-school effects reported in this paper are therefore net of child and family factors. Only by using such 'value added' methods can appropriate comparisons be made across settings.

The impact of pre-school provision

EPPE researchers assessed children individually at three/four years old when they joined the study. Assessments were undertaken to create a profile of each child's intellectual and social/behavioural development (their attainment) using standardised assessments and reports from the pre-school worker who knew the child best. Children were assessed again at entry to primary school (usually reception) and analyses were carried out to compare children's progress, taking into account the range of background factors referred to above. Many EPPE findings point to the importance of attending pre-school centres for 3 and 4 year olds.

From analyses of children's development during pre-school compared with 'home' children, EPPE found that pre-school attendance improves all children's cognitive development and aspects of social behaviour, such as independence, concentration, cooperation, conformity and relationships with other children (peer sociability). Moreover, individual settings vary in their effectiveness with some settings fostering better child outcomes than others.

Children with no (or limited) pre-school experience (the 'home group') had poorer cognitive attainment, sociability and concentration when they start school. These differences show even when we take account of differences between the pre-school and home groups in child, family and home environment characteristics.

A number of factors associated with attendance at pre-school were also explored. EPPE shows that how long a child attended pre-school (duration measured in months from entry to the study to the start of primary school) was related to positive intellectual gains. An early start at pre-school (under 3 years) was also linked with better intellectual attainment and children having better relationships with other children (peer sociability) at age 3 years. These benefits continue when children start primary school. However, there was no evidence that full day attendance led to better development than half-day attendance.

In addition to studying the overall impact on all children's development the research explored whether pre-school had an impact on the progress of different kinds of children. For instance, was pre-school particularly beneficial to children who are more disadvantaged? EPPE shows that one in three children were 'at risk' of developing learning difficulties at the start of pre-school. However, this proportion fell to one in five by the time they started primary school³. This suggests that pre-school can be an effective intervention for the reduction of special educational needs (SEN), especially for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children.

Disadvantaged children are more likely to have adverse social profiles at age 3 and school entry. The increased risk of anti-social/worried behaviour can be reduced by high quality pre-school when they were aged 3 and 4.

Different groups of children have different needs. Results imply that specialised support in pre-schools, especially for language and pre-reading skills, can benefit children from disadvantaged backgrounds and those for whom English is an additional language.

It is also interesting to note that there is evidence of significant gender differences in young children's intellectual and social behavioural development. At entry to pre-school, girls generally show better social development than boys, especially in co-operation/conformity and independence and concentration. Girls also show higher attainment on all cognitive outcomes. These differences persist to the start of primary school.

EPPE has shown that pre-school has an important impact on children's development. Whilst not eliminating disadvantage, it can help to ameliorate the effects of social disadvantage and can provide children with a better start to school. Investing in good quality pre-

school provision is therefore likely to be an effective means of achieving targets concerning social exclusion and breaking cycles of disadvantage.

Are some pre-schools more effective than others in promoting children's development?

Even after taking account of a child's background and prior intellectual skills, the type of pre-school a child attends has an important effect on their developmental progress.

It was found that integrated centres (these are centres that fully combine education with care) and nursery schools tend to promote better intellectual outcomes for children. Similarly, integrated centres and nursery classes tend to promote better social development even after taking account of children's backgrounds and prior social behaviour.

Disadvantaged children do better in settings with a mixture of children from different social backgrounds rather than in settings containing largely disadvantaged groups. This has implications for the siting of centres in areas of social disadvantage.

What are the characteristics of an effective pre-school?

Statistical analysis of the progress of children during the pre-school period enabled the researchers to identify settings which promoted children's developmental outcomes beyond what could be expected given the child's overall profile and social background. These were the most 'effective' centres; settings where children made more progress than could be expected given their intellectual and social/behavioural assessments at entry to pre-school.

A focus on effective centres illustrated some key characteristics that seemed to promote developmental gains in children. These clustered around the *quality* of the centres and the *practices* within the centres. Although there was significant variation between the types of centres in the study, there was no tendency for centres that were more effective in promoting children's intellectual development to be less effective at promoting social/behavioural development (or vice versa). In other words the most effective centres promoted both.

Pre-school 'Quality'

An important question for the EPPE research was whether higher quality pre-school provision makes a difference to the intellectual and social behavioural development of young children, and if so, what is essential in ensuring quality?

³ See the Early Transition and Special Education Needs (EYTSN) Report for more detail on SEN in the early years. Published by Institute of Education

Information from observations to assess the quality of each setting, using standardised rating scales⁴ showed a significant links between higher quality and better child outcomes. Children in pre-school centres of high quality show reduced anti-social/worried behaviour by the time they get to school.

EPPE findings on quality are consistent with other large-scale longitudinal research including the NICHD (National Institute of Child Health and Development) and CQO (Childcare Quality and Outcomes) studies in the US.

Good quality pre-school education can be found in all kinds of settings irrespective of type of provider. However, the EPPE data indicates that integrated centres and nursery school provision have the highest scores on pre-school quality, while playgroups, private day nurseries and local authority centres have lower scores.

The quality of the interactions between children and staff were particularly important; where staff showed warmth and were responsive to the individual needs of children, children showed better social behavioural outcomes. Several features of the quality rating scale were also related to increased intellectual progress and attainment at entry to school.

What improves 'quality'?

There was a significant relationship between the quality of a centre and improved outcomes for children. There was also a positive relationship between the qualification levels of the staff and ratings of centre quality. The higher the qualification of staff, particularly the manager of the centre, the more progress children made. Having qualified trained teachers working with children in pre-school settings (for a substantial proportion of time, and most importantly as the pedagogical leader) had the greatest impact on quality, and was linked specifically with better outcomes in pre-reading and social development.

Pre-school 'Practices'

The rating scales used to assess quality showed an impact on children's development. For instance, centres which put particular emphasis (as described in the rating scale) on the development of literacy, maths and catering for children's individual needs promoted better outcomes for children in the subsequent development of reading and mathematics. Similarly, high scores on some aspects of the rating scale which focus on promoting

positive 'social interactions' were linked with better sociability in children.

In addition to the rating scale measurements of quality, EPPE conducted individual intensive case studies in 12 centres identified in the upper range of effectiveness based on the amount of progress their children made while attending them. The purpose of the case studies was to explore the practices in these centres that might help explain their greater effectiveness. This has important implications for all those working directly with young children as it describes practices linked to children making better progress.

The case studies identified five areas that are particularly important when working with children aged 3 to 5 years. These were the quality of adult-child verbal interactions; staff knowledge and understanding of the curriculum; knowledge of how young children learn; adult's skill in supporting children in resolving conflicts and helping parents to support children's learning in the home.

The quality of adult-child verbal interactions

'Sustained shared thinking' is where two or more individuals 'work together' in an intellectual way to solve a problem, clarify a concept, evaluate an activity, extend a narrative etc. Both parties must contribute to the thinking and it must develop and extend the understanding. It was found that the most effective settings encourage 'sustained shared thinking' which was most likely to occur when children were interacting 1:1 with an adult or with a single peer partner. It would appear that periods of 'sustained shared thinking' are a necessary pre-requisite for the most effective early years practice.

Interestingly, information from interviews with parents suggests that in some of the very middle class case study settings (notably the private day nurseries), parents who were pro-active towards their children's learning engaged in 'sustained shared thinking' with their children at home. In more disadvantaged settings staff had to be pro-active in supporting parents to develop the home learning environment.

Knowledge and understanding of the curriculum

Pre-school workers' knowledge of the particular curriculum area that is being addressed is vital. A good grasp of the appropriate curriculum content linked to strategies for promoting learning in that content area is a vital component of pedagogy and it is shown to be just as important in the early years as at any later stage of education. The research found that, even in these effective settings, there were examples of inadequate knowledge and understanding of curriculum areas,

⁴ The Early Childhood Environment rating scales: Revised (ECERS-R) and Extension(ECERS-E)

especially in the teaching of the sound patterns of word e.g. rhymes. The study shows that early years staff may need support in developing their knowledge of curriculum content and ways of introducing it to children especially in the domains of the Early Learning Goals.

Knowledge on how young children learn

There has been a long debate about the extent to which pre-school education should be formal or informal, often summarised by the extent to which the curriculum is or is not 'play' based. EPPE concludes that in the most effective centres, 'play' environments were used to provide the basis of instructive learning. The most effective pedagogy is both 'teaching' and providing freely chosen yet potentially instructive play activities.

In effective settings, the balance of who initiated the activities, staff or child, was about equal. Children were encouraged to initiate activities as often as the staff. Similarly in effective settings the extent to which staff extended child-initiated interactions was important. Almost half of the child-initiated episodes which contained intellectual challenge, included interventions from a staff member to extend the child's thinking. The evidence also suggests that adult 'modelling' is often combined with sustained periods of shared thinking, and that open-ended questioning is also associated with better cognitive achievement. However, open-ended questions made up only around 5% of the questioning used in even the 'effective' settings. Greater use of such open ended questions by staff is likely to benefit better intellectual and social development for pre-school children.

In all of the case study settings, the research found that the children spent most of their time in small groups. Freely chosen play activities often provided the best opportunities for adults to extend children's thinking. It may be that extending child-initiated play, coupled with the provision of teacher-initiated group work, improves opportunities for learning.

Qualified staff in the most effective settings provided children with more experience of curriculum-related activities (especially language and mathematics) and they encouraged children to engage in activities with higher intellectual challenges. While the research found that the most highly qualified staff also provided the most direct teaching, they were also the most effective in their interactions with the children, using the most sustained shared thinking. Further, the research found that less qualified staff were significantly better as pedagogues when they worked with qualified teachers.

How adults support children in resolve conflicts

The most effective settings adopted discipline/behaviour policies in which staff supported children in being assertive, while simultaneously rationalising and talking through their conflicts. In settings that were less effective in this respect, observations showed that there was often no follow up on children's misbehaviour and, on many occasions, children were 'distracted' or simply told to stop.

Supporting children's learning at home.

The most effective settings shared child-related information between parents and staff, and parents were often involved in decision making about their child's learning programme. There were more intellectual gains for children in centres that encouraged high levels of parental involvement. More particularly, children did better where the centre shared its educational aims with parents. This enabled parents to support children at home with strategies that complemented those being undertaken in the pre-school. In more disadvantaged areas, staff in effective settings had to be proactive in influencing and supporting the home learning with the kind of activities described later in this briefing.

What improves 'practice'?

The case studies reveal the practices that appear to contribute to better outcomes for children. The following factors should be considered when trying to improve the pre-school experiences of very young children.

The settings that view cognitive and social development as complementary achieve the best all round outcomes.

Pre-school workers need good curriculum knowledge as well as knowledge and understanding of child development. In addition, increasing formative feedback to children during activities will aid a child's understanding.

The most effective settings provide both adult-initiated group work and freely chosen yet potentially instructive play activities. Children's cognitive outcomes appear to be directly related to the quantity and quality of the teacher/adult planned and initiated focused group work for supporting children's learning.

Behaviour policies in which staff support children in being assertive, at the same time as rationalising and talking through their conflicts lead to better socialisation for children.

Improving practices in sharing educational aims with parents would benefit children.

Trained teachers were most effective in their interactions with children, engaging more often in sustained shared thinking. Less well-qualified staff demonstrated significantly better practices when they were led by qualified teachers. The research findings support the general approach taken in Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (CGFS).

What is the impact of the home and childcare history on children's development?

In addition to the child assessments and pre-school centre information, interviews were conducted with parents when their child entered the study (with follow-up questionnaires when the children were in school). These were used to collect detailed information about childcare histories, characteristics of children, their families and home environments. This wealth of information has enabled the research study to investigate some of the influences affecting young children that have a significant relationship with their intellectual and social/behavioural development. These factors clustered around demographic influences, patterns of childcare before entering the study and the home learning environment.

Demographic influences

Research has consistently indicated that there are strong associations between certain factors (such as low socio-economic status [SES], low income, mother's educational levels) and children's poor intellectual attainment at school. However, relatively few large-scale research studies have been able to explore the range of background factors considered in the EPPE study.

The parent, family and home characteristics of children are inter-related and causal attributions cannot be made. For instance the higher incidence of lower attainment amongst children with young mothers is also likely to reflect other factors, including lower qualification levels and reduced employment levels for this group. Bearing this in mind, the findings indicate that there is a strong relationship between a child's intellectual skills and their family background characteristics at entry to pre-school. However, this reduces (though is still strong) by the time children enter primary school. This indicates that pre-school whilst not eliminating differences in social backgrounds, can help to promote better development and can thus help to combat social exclusion.

These findings are consistent with findings from the NICHD study, where family characteristics have a greater impact on outcomes for children than pre-school factors. However, the effect of attending pre-school

(versus not) on developmental progress is greater than the effect of measure of social disadvantage (qualification level of family, SES etc.). In addition, for children attending pre-school, the effect of attending a specific centre is about half that of all social background factors (bearing in mind individual settings vary in their impact).

Patterns of childcare before entering the study

Our parental interviews discussed with parents the 'history' of their children before they entered the study. Data were collected on the number of hours and type of childcare before aged three but not on the quality of the childcare before aged three. This revealed that non-parental child care before three years of age had several effects:

High levels of 'group care' before the age of three (and particularly before the age of two) were associated with higher levels of anti-social behaviour at age 3. This effect was largely restricted to children attending Local Authority and Private Day nurseries where substantial numbers of children attended from infancy onwards. When children who show anti-social behaviour at age 3, attend a high quality setting between the ages of 3 and 5 years, their level of anti-social behaviour decreased. Children with high levels of group care before the age of three, by contrast, showed better cognitive attainment.

Where there was substantial individual care from a relative (usually grandmothers) there was less anti-social behaviour in children. Although moderate levels of childminder care were not associated with increased anti-social behaviour, extremely high levels were.

The home learning environment.

What parents and carers do makes a real difference to young children's development. The EPPE project developed an index to measure the quality of the home learning environment (HLE). This measures a range of activities that parents undertake with pre-school children that are related to improvements in children's learning and have a positive affect on their development. For example, reading to child, teaching songs and nursery rhymes, painting and drawing, playing with letters and numbers, visiting the library, teaching alphabet, teaching numbers, taking children on visits and creating regular opportunities for them to play with their friends at home were all associated with higher intellectual and social/behavioural scores.

The HLE can be viewed as a 'protective' factor in reducing incidence of SEN. It is interesting to note that the HLE was only moderately associated with mother's educational level. In other words what parents do with

their children is more important than who parents are. Young mothers, with few qualifications can improve their children's progress, and give them a better start at school by engaging in those activities at home that foster children's learning. This has important implications for programmes such as Sure Start (local programmes) that target areas of high social exclusion.

Methodology

EPPE used the following sources of information: standardised child assessments taken over time, child profiles completed by pre-school staff, parental interviews, interviews with pre-school centre staff, quality rating scales and case study observations and interviews. The case studies included detailed documentation of naturalistic observations of staff pedagogy, and systematic structured target child observations of children's learning. Information was also gathered and analysed using interviews with parents, staff and managers and through intensive and wide ranging documentary analysis and a literature review of pedagogy in the early years.

These sources of data have been used in statistical analyses including multilevel modelling to explore the 'value added' by pre-school after taking account of a range of child, parent and home background factors to produce rigorous and persuasive data for policy makers and provided practical guidance on quality for practitioners.

Summary

This study has demonstrated the positive effects of high quality pre-school provision on children's intellectual and social behavioural development up to entry to primary school. The EPPE research indicates that pre-school can play an important part in combating social exclusion and promoting inclusion by offering disadvantaged children, in particular, a better start to primary school. The findings indicate pre-school has a positive impact on children's progress over and above important family influences. The quality of the pre-school experience as well as the quantity (more terms but not necessarily more hours per day) are both influential. The results show that individual pre-school centres vary in their effectiveness in promoting intellectual progress over the pre-school period, and indicate that better outcomes are associated with some forms of provision. Likewise, the research points to the separate and significant influence of the home learning environment. These aspects (quality and quantity of pre-school and home learning environment) can be seen as more susceptible to change through policy and practitioner initiatives than other child or family

characteristics, such as SES. Further analyses will explore the progress of the children who attended a pre-school centre as well as the home group over Key Stage 1. Such analyses will help to establish whether the positive impact of pre-school on young children's development remains significant as children progress through their first years at primary school.

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SEVEN TIPS ON FLEXIBLE HOURS YOU MAY NOT KNOW

HOME ▶ OUR WORK ▶ FLEXIBILITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES ▶ EXTENDED HOURS ECEC ▶ SEVEN TIPS ON FLEXIBLE HOURS YOU MAY NOT KNOW

TEXT SIZE [A](#) [A](#) [A](#)

Seven tips on flexible hours you may not know

When opening hours and the needs of families align, this can support parents' workforce participation and support children's best interests.

Only 0.8% of long day care centres open after 6:30pm according to ECA's [Long Day Care Flexibility Survey Report](#). Yet, most approved early childhood services actually have considerable discretion to open earlier or close later.

According to the [Child Care Service Handbook](#) the maximum length of long day care sessions is 12 hours. However services can be approved to operate for more than 12 hours by offering multiple sessions. Services can also be approved to offer 24 hour care.

Extended hours doesn't just mean 24 hour care. It could mean offering later sessions, opening earlier to allow parents to commute long distances, or offering emergency care for children at risk. Each model depends on the service type and the needs of the community, and each has different risks that need to be managed.

So what are the risks?

Costs are a significant challenge in offering extended hours. Some policies covering centre based services require two staff to be rostered at all times, for safety reasons, even if the number of children only requires one educator. Evening meals may also need to be prepared, also requiring staff. Beyond 6:30pm, penalty rates under the [Children's Services Award](#) may also apply increasing staff costs. These costs may need to be reflected in increased fees, potentially reducing demand for these services.

For evening care, parents' may also preference 'home environments', either in informal care arrangements, family day care or in-home care. This may mean that demand for extended hours can be a challenge. If there are only a small number of families using the service, or variable demand, extended hours can often be difficult to sustain in the long term.

What is in children's interests?

Children's interests must be paramount, when considering extended hours ECEC.

Research shows that high child care use (more than 30 hours per week) negatively affects children's behavioural outcomes (Datta Gupta and Simonsen, 2010, p.1) (NICHD, 2006, p.17). Children in care for a very long day also show increased prevalence of the stress hormone cortisol (Dettling, Gunnar, and Donzella, 1999).

However, quality may act as a 'protective factor' mitigating the 'risk burden' which may accrue through flexible early childhood practices (Biddle and Seth-Purdie, 2014, p.61)

Most early childhood services can monitor children's time in care so that it is not excessive. Some services place caps on daily hours to ensure children are not in care for longer than certain periods, even if the centre is open late at night.

Centre based services should think about whether the centre based environment is suitable for evening or overnight care arrangements; can a home like environment be offered, with appropriate areas for rest and quiet evening play?; Will children's sleep be disrupted by a late pickup or other children?

Stable relationships between children and their educators as well as their peers is also important for children's development (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000) (Clasien De Schipper, J. W.C. Tavecchio, L. H. Van IJzendoorn) . Services can take this into account and maximise the continuity of staff and group arrangements. Extended hours services may also offer children greater stability, as parents might otherwise resort to using multiple care arrangements.



What about the interests of early childhood staff?

Another challenge for early childhood services in extending hours is staff. Some staff may be reluctant to work during the evening, especially if they have family responsibilities. However, other staff who have commitments during the day, such as study, may recognise the benefits of working later, or earlier. Shifts can be staggered so that educators have different starting times.

It is important to monitor staff to ensure that they maintain appropriate work life balance and are supported. For example family day care educators who are caring for two groups of children, during the night and the day are particularly susceptible to burnout.

Seven tips on flexible hours

1. Consider how the the proposed extension of opening times will impact children. 30 minutes may not be significant, but what if the extension goes well beyond standard hours?
2. Think about strategies that could protect children's interests: e.g. restricting session length, reducing hours at the corresponding end of the day, minimising sleep disruption, and providing a 'home environment' and appropriate programming during evenings.
3. **Why not ask parents about your operating hours?** Make sure you ask if they would actually use the flexible service or whether they would commit to a short trial. Advertise the extended hours with groups of parents most likely to benefit, such as shift workers.
4. Understand the costs of delivering extended hours services, like penalty rates and the preparation of evening meals. Then ask if these costs are prohibitive, and whether flexibility would contribute to your philosophy and/or business plan.
5. Consider placing families wanting extended hours on a waiting list until there is a viable number of children to commence operating.
6. Check with the Commonwealth Department of Education about approval requirements to extend hours under Family Assistance Law. Also check whether planning regulations apply. Many local governments place controls on opening hours.
7. Keep an eye on the work life balance of staff working extended hours, e.g. appropriate breaks and rostered time off.

Chris Steel

Project Manager—Early Childhood Flexibility Patterns and Practices Project

Tell us what you think at flexibility@earlychildhood.org.au or join the conversation on [Facebook](#).

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Flexible child care

Key findings from the AIFS Evaluation of the Child Care Flexibility Trials

Jennifer Baxter and Kelly Hand

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1

Introduction

Given the importance of child care in enabling parents to engage in paid work, there has been a recent policy focus in Australia on meeting the needs of parents who work non-standard or variable work hours and who may have difficulties finding care that supports such work hours. Interest in the extent to which child care is flexible enough to meet the needs of parents who work non-standard or variable hours led to the development of the Child Care Flexibility Trials, a project conducted by the Australian Government in 2013 and 2014.¹ One of the objectives of these trials was to gain greater understanding about parents' and service providers' perspectives on flexible child care. The other main objective was to test a number of approaches to the delivery of flexible child care, with a focus on families whose needs did not fit with standard models of child care delivery. A key aspect of this was to explore the level of demand for greater flexibility and whether this demand could be met in the long term in a sustainable and replicable way.

The Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) was commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the trials. The evaluation measured the extent to which the goals and expected outcomes of the trials were achieved, and was based on interviews with and surveys of parents, service providers and other key stakeholders. This paper provides a summary of the key findings from this evaluation.

There were a number of components to the trials, each designed to test different ways of delivering flexible child care. Different approaches were trialled within selected sites across Australia, and involved the government working with service providers and also key stakeholders, including representatives of the police, nurses and paramedics in selected jurisdictions of Australia. The focus of specific trials included:

- flexible care provided through family day care (FDC);
- extended hours of operation in long day care (LDC) settings;
- weekend care in a centre-based setting;
- school holiday care for older children and for children with special needs.

In addition, coordinated by the National Outside School Hours Services Association (NOSHSA), more than 60 action research projects were developed within outside-school-hours care (OSHC) services, with the overall aim of this approach being to improve the skills and knowledge of educators, and to identify opportunities to create more flexible and responsive service provision for local communities.

More information about the components of the trials is presented in Box 1 (on page 2). Key evaluation findings regarding each project's implementation and outcomes are also presented in this box.

The take-up of some projects in the trials was quite low (see box text), but discussions with service providers and parents, and related survey data, helped to provide some explanations for this, and to provide more general information about the challenges and opportunities relating to the demand for and supply of flexible child care.

¹ The Child Care Flexibility Trials were announced by the Australian Government's Department of Education and Training (then named the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations) in March 2013. The trials concluded in 2014.

Box 1: Child Care Flexibility Trial components

Flexible care through family day care

- This trial involved the provision of FDC, with parents being able to arrange new or changed bookings through a single point of call, with care to be available 24/7, and changeable at short notice. Within each of six sites, it was intended to pair families with a team of two or three FDC educators who would provide flexible child care by offering weekend, weekday evening and overnight care.
- In total, 31 families enrolled and received care as part of the trial. The model that was trialled *did* meet the needs of many families requiring flexible care. In fact, some of the “flexible” features of care being trialled were already being offered by individual educators. FDC was especially valued because it could (often) provide the flexibility required to match parents’ varying work hours, be booked for shorter sessions or paid per hour, and involve care outside of standard hours.
- However, access to this model of care was dependent on there being a match with specific educators willing to provide flexible care to families who needed it, at the times they needed it, and in the geographical area they needed. Matching of families to educators within specific locations was problematic. This matching was even difficult for families needing standard hours of care, with educators already at capacity, or unable or unwilling to provide the high degree of flexibility that some parents sought, given the possible effects on their own wellbeing and that of their family.

Extended hours in long day care

- Two services provided extended hours in their long day care services.
- *Service 1* aimed to provide participating families with access to extended hours of operation at the start and/or at the end of the weekday at six centres across Australia. Participating centres offered extended early morning sessions (commencing at 5 am at the earliest) and/or extended evening sessions (until 8 pm at the latest). A separate fee was payable for the extended session of care, and parents were required to book this session in advance.
 - While some centres reported that families showed significant interest in the extended sessions, only one centre had sufficient permanent enrolments to continue an extended session beyond the trial period. At the end of 2013, three of the centres had no enrolments in the extended hours service, and as a result the trials at these centres were discontinued early. In total, 18 families were reported to have enrolled in the extended hours sessions over the trial period.
 - The extended hours were especially helpful to some families, and so in this respect the trial met the needs of these families. However, the low take-up may in part have reflected that the model of delivery (requiring parents to book sessions of care ahead of time and to pay extra for those sessions) did not meet other parents’ needs for flexible care. It may also have been due to a lack of demand at those particular services.
- *Service 2* piloted a range of changes to 12 children’s services, including early childhood education and care and OSHC services. Changes included extending care through the New Year period, extending operating hours at eight services, trialling the idea of opening for weekend sessions (this was not pursued, after a survey of parents revealed lack of demand), reducing the length of notice required for cancellation, and the provision of a number of other new activities within specific services.
 - There was a strong uptake of the extended hours offered at these services as part of the trials, with numbers building slowly. Accessing extended hours did not require a separate booking or an additional fee. This may have meant that parents were able to make use of the extended hours in a flexible way.
 - The other changes were implemented successfully (such as changing the New Year opening period, and changing cancellation processes), although some changes (e.g., the provision of take-home meals) did not have sufficient demand and were not expected to continue beyond the trial period.

Weekend centre-based care

- This project aimed to meet a perceived community need for weekend and evening child care. The initial scope of the trial was to provide care on weekends (Saturdays and Sundays) at one school-aged care service. The scope was later expanded to include evening care from 6 pm to 10 pm.
- While this service was extremely highly regarded by parents using it for standard hours care, the take-up of care on weekends and evenings was far lower than had been expected. During the life of the trial, a total of 31 families expressed an interest in the evening and weekend extended sessions. Of these, six were new families and 25 existing families. The design and delivery of this program certainly appears to have qualities that would be valued by parents seeking care at these hours for school-aged children, so this suggests that the low use of weekend (and evening) care might be because parents have other options available to them. The extended weekday hours and weekend care offered through this project ceased operating at the end of the trial due to insufficient demand.

School holiday care for older children and children with special needs

- Two services provided school holiday care for older children and those with special needs.
- At *Service 1*, the aim was to establish a trial vacation care program tailored towards 11–14 year olds. Much attention was given to the development of an age-appropriate program, finding a suitable location and the staffing mix. Community and parent engagement aimed to increase awareness of the program.
 - The program ran in four school holiday periods, with a total of 38 children participating, averaging eight children per day. This was lower than needed to be viable, and so the program was downscaled to allow a version of it to continue.
 - The data collected in the evaluation (which was limited due to the low take-up) suggested that the program did offer a significant improvement for school holiday care of older children, compared to programs generally designed for a younger age group, and so had the potential to be very helpful as a means of addressing the school holiday care needs of parents of older children.
- At *Service 2*, the proposal was to deliver vacation care program for children aged 5–12 years old with autism spectrum disorder. The program itself was carefully considered and designed to be as flexible as possible for parents, while taking account of the special needs of the children attending.
 - In the holiday period when it was offered, average daily attendance varied between 6 and 11 children per day. The take-up for this program, however, was lower than needed in order for it to remain financially viable.
 - From the data collected through the evaluation (which was limited due to the low take-up), it appears that parents appreciated the idea of this service, but a major barrier to its use concerned the lack of availability of transport. Cost was also a factor for some.

Outside-school-hours care projects

- This component involved the planned delivery of 60 action research projects based in OSHC services across Australia. The purpose was to use existing infrastructure and invest in improving the skills and knowledge of educators, and to identify opportunities to create more flexible and responsive service provision for the local community. As such, through a “best practice” approach, the trial sought to enhance service delivery, improve accessibility and build capacity within the sector to develop flexible services that are more responsive to the needs of their local community. This trial included funding to engage community coordinators in “high need” communities, to bring together groups of service providers running programs for school-aged children, and to broker activity care packages tailored to the interests of local children.
- There was significant diversity in the types of projects being undertaken by services participating in the action research projects. It was noted by participants that by taking a “community development” approach to these projects, they were more likely to find local answers to local issues.

In total, 42 interviews with service providers, educators and stakeholders were undertaken to capture views about the implementation and outcomes of the trial projects and more general views about flexible child care.

The views of parents were important for the evaluation of the trials. A sample of parents came from the stakeholder groups (police, nurses and paramedics) and their families ($N = 69$). Other parents were drawn from services that had some involvement in the trials, although not all these parents had taken part in the “flexible” aspect of the care being trialled ($N = 50$). Parents from these two groups participated through qualitative interviews. We also conducted an online survey about flexible child care, with participants ($N = 260$) being a subset of parents at the services of school-aged care projects.

Key findings from the evaluation are set out in this paper in two main sections. First, in section 2, we present a discussion of the key learnings from the trials, capturing information about the delivery of trial projects, and more general findings regarding the delivery of flexible child care. Then, in section 3, we provide a discussion of what parents told us, through this evaluation, about what they sought to better meet their flexible child care needs. A final section concludes.

2

Overall learnings about flexible care

The evaluation, through information provided by parents, service providers and other stakeholders, allowed us to consider broad issues regarding the supply and demand for flexible child care. The main learnings are that:

- parents' child care needs and preferences are diverse, so parents need a range of easily accessed child care options;
- identification of demand for flexible care is not straightforward;
- “flexibility” is just one of the characteristics of care that parents look for;
- delivery of a flexible child care solution is dependent on service provider commitment and educator availability; and
- when introducing a new child care option, timing and continuity matters.

Some learnings relate specifically to the outcomes of the trial projects, others to the broader questions of supply and demand for flexible child care. They are considered in more detailed in the remainder of this section.

Parents' child care needs and preferences are diverse, so parents need a range of easily accessed child care options

Parents who participated in the evaluation research had diverse child care needs and views about how they wished those needs to be met. There was also evidence that those views changed as children grew and as they experienced different forms of care.

Some families appeared to have a greater unmet need than others for child care (during non-standard hours, especially). Those needing more or different child care options included families with less flexibility themselves in terms of family support or local area solutions for child care (e.g., single-parent families, families in regional areas, or those with children with special needs).

There was a view among parents working non-standard and variable hours that it was difficult to find effective child care solutions. However, no one clear solution emerged from the data. Generally, there were preferences for more occasional care, for more in-home care and for nannies to be more affordable, as described in section 3.

Through the family day care trial, it was observed that some parents expressing interest were actually seeking carers who would come to their home. This FDC coordinator told us:

I guess probably there is a small element of client base that actually would rather, when it's out-of-hours care, have a carer come into their home because it's very difficult for some of them. I'm just thinking about a recent case [where] they don't want to take a baby out in the middle of the night. Or if they're coming home from work at 7 o'clock in the morning they want to be able to come home and, you know, begin the routine, rather than trying to collect children, transport children, take them home and get them

ready. So I think in these instances they're probably looking for a more in-home care as opposed to out-of-home. (FDC coordinator)

Some wished for their child care (or OSHC) to be open during hours that better aligned with their own work hours. Commonly this was related to opening or closing hours not quite matching work hours. As stated by this mother:

Mostly [the challenge] was just when I started work at six o'clock. The day care didn't open till 6.30. So, I sort of had to rely on other people to take my son to day care. (Mother, single parent, school-aged and under-school-aged children)

The inflexibility of hours offered though long day care was a particular issue for workers with unpredictable or variable hours. For example, this mother said:

That's the thing. It's 6 am to 6 pm, and in the majority of your standard day care centres if you're late, the late fee is something like \$15 a minute. For, say a shift worker ... we might get a late callout at 5.30, taking you half an hour late, that's an absolute fortune. (Mother, partnered, under-school-aged child only)

This contrasts with the flexible care some families had through family day care. For example, in one family using family day care:

Well, we normally drop the boys off there at about a quarter to eight in the morning and are picking them up somewhere around about 4.30 ... If we have to start earlier or finish later that's not a problem for her. So there's a little bit of flexibility with the hours there, which is good. (Father, partnered, school-aged and under-school-aged children)

Identification of demand for flexible care is not straightforward

Given the diversity described above, it should not be assumed that formal child care is sought by all parents, even among those whose work involves non-standard or irregular hours. In this evaluation, there were many families who arranged their work schedules such that they had no or very little need for formal child care. These mothers, both partnered with under-school-aged children, told us:

We probably only want to stick to two days [in child care]. Look, I don't want her in all the time, if that's alright. We want to be her primary caregivers, so I don't want her in day care any more than two days a week really. We change our life around that. (Mother, partnered, with under-school-aged children)

I've used work to our benefits—what I might perceive as a benefit for me—so that it's either my husband or myself who's caring for our children at any time. (Mother, partnered, with under-school-aged children)

Some of these families used informal care, including grandparents and friends, while others relied only on themselves. While such arrangements were not always problem-free, they were seen by many to be the best solution for them. As such, the availability of high-quality, flexible formal child care solutions as offered through the trials was not seen by all families to be an improvement. Understanding the demand for care is critical for services that seek to offer flexible care in a viable and sustainable way. This was voiced by different service providers, including this long day care coordinator:

Then you have to go back and look at it on the financial side. Well, we couldn't afford to be open from 6.30 to 8 with nobody here every night. Because financially it wasn't feasible, and I had to try and explain that to the parents, that from 6.30 to 8 was completely different. It ran by bookings and things like that. We just never got anybody at all. (LDC coordinator)

“Flexibility” is just one of the characteristics of care that parents look for

As a result, take-up of new, extended or more flexible options can be affected by the ease of access to and costs of those options, as well as other central characteristics of a service, such as location.

Some high-quality and well-developed child care programs were tested through the trials, and yet low take-up by parents meant that the trialled components of the programs were not financially viable in the long term. The key learnings from this were that take-up of child care will be affected by the fundamental characteristics of that care, not just its flexibility. This related to the location of the care (e.g., having FDC educators located close to home or work), the availability of transport (e.g., for children with special needs), and the cost of care.

The ease of access to flexible care can also facilitate or deter access to that care, with the most flexible options being offered as part of usual operating arrangements, and the least flexible requiring booking arrangements in advance. For shift-working families, having to have fixed bookings for child care, whether through FDC, LDC or OSHC, was particularly problematic. Some were fortunate in having access to arrangements that were more flexible, as was the case with this family:

We’ve got a good understanding with our day care. We can just ring up and go, “Righto, can we book them in today?”. So that’s sort of as we need it. So sometimes it could be three or four days a week that we need it, and other days it could be only one or two days a week that we need it. (Father, single parent, under-school-aged child only)

Also, the wellbeing of the children was a key feature in parents’ decision-making about work and care, and as such parents talked about the potential for care to provide opportunities for their children to develop relationships, or to develop socially or cognitively.

Delivery of a flexible child care solution is dependent on service provider commitment and educator availability

Across both long day care and family day care, service providers had difficulties in finding financially viable ways to accommodate parents who had rotating and variable rosters that did not also compromise the wellbeing of the individual educators and their families. This was especially the case for the provision of the most flexible care, for families with variable care needs. For example, a service coordinator told us:

And then you’ve got burnout where some educators are doing [flexible hours] and not taking a break for themselves. Their coordinators had been working with them to try and encourage them to do that, but they didn’t want to let families down.

In the long day care setting, extended opening hours were managed by adjusting staff rosters. Some saw such adjustments as positive; for example, it facilitated rostered days off, or meant staff started earlier and had more time to set up and plan for the day before the arrival of most children. However, problems were sometimes observed. For example, a coordinator with long day care noted:

I’ve found that a few of the opening staff, who have been getting up earlier and things, they haven’t minded it other than I’ve found that they’ve been a bit sicker. So they’re getting a little bit more rundown because being up, you know, earlier every morning, about 4.30/5 o’clock, to come into the centre, and then their families still expect them to be on at night at home.

When introducing a new child care option, timing and continuity matters

In the trials, this emerged as a significant issue for service providers and parents. The trials commenced in the middle of a school year, at which time many parents had already established their care and work arrangements for the year and were reluctant to change them. This reluctance was further exacerbated by the uncertainty about whether the flexible care arrangements being offered would continue beyond the trial period. As reported by one of the family day care coordinators:

We did get feedback from families on the ad that: “Oh, so what happens at the end, once the trial finishes. Where do I go then?” You know, they thought that it had kind of stopped and finished—that was the end of it. But obviously we were able to explain that, but potentially people might have looked at that and thought: “That’s not secure for me, I need to look elsewhere”.

The timing of the trials also mattered to service providers, with some feeling they had insufficient time in the development phase of the trials to establish their program. It was also expressed that building demand for new services takes time, especially allowing for the development of partnership with parents. This was seen as something that could not be fully developed given the trial nature of the project. For example, as stated by one of the project stakeholders:

The correct timing for the rollout and completion of a project should not be underestimated. Any major decisions for families regarding changes to child care require adequate time for households to accommodate new schedules and arrangements for care.

3 What parents want in order to meet their flexible care needs

This section highlights common themes that emerged from the qualitative and survey data in regard to how parents want their child care flexibility needs to be met. While parents contributing to the evaluation were not a representative sample of all Australian parents, they provided insights that especially highlighted issues faced by families in which one or two parents work non-standard hours.

Greater availability of child care options

A constraint felt by a number of families in the evaluation was related to their inability to access the formal child care they needed. Parents talked about placing children's names on waiting lists for LDC and FDC, and about constraints in the availability of OSHC. It is not surprising, then, that some parents voiced their wish for more child care to be available:

I think the big issue is that we need more places and more child care centres. (Mother, partnered, under-school-aged child only)

I think they need more places. Every year at the school they struggle to get all of the new prep kids that need to get into the before- and after-school care in. And they don't know what to do in the end if they can't get their kids in. They have to find some other alternative arrangements. And all the schools are the same. Some schools only have before-school care and no after-school care or vice versa, and some schools start later at 7.30, which is not very suitable to all parents either. So, I don't know, I think more and more parents are working out of necessity or whatever, and the government wants more and more people to work to keep the country running, so I think they need to expand their before- and after-school and day care places so that as many kids as possible can get in. (Mother, partnered, school-aged child only)

Of course, within the context of this evaluation and the nature of the parents participating in the interviews, many wanted this care to be better suited to shift-working families, as discussed further below.

Access to more formal care was sought by many parents, including those who had no informal care options available to them, and those who had less flexibility in their work arrangements. Further, regardless of work arrangements, formal care was increasingly sought by parents as their children grew through the preschool years, when child care was seen to provide important opportunities for development and socialisation.

A general comment is that some parents sought more information about the formal care arrangements available to them. The invitations to participate in the FDC trials seem to have alerted some parents to the option of FDC for the first time, especially for those returning to work after a period of leave. This highlights the usefulness of distributing information on different child care options to parents when they are likely to be making decisions about child care.

In terms of specific types of care, some parents valued and preferred one type of care over the other. For example, shift-working families who had a "flexible" FDC educator very much valued this care, whether or not that was arranged through the trials. However, others who had hoped to access more flexible arrangements through FDC had found that not all FDC educators

were able to provide care for their variable or non-standard hours. Some parents reported experiencing problems with being matched to FDC educators who could provide care for the hours needed, given the necessity of care being available within a localised area and possibly for more than one child care place. Outside of the trials, parents talked about being unable to use FDC because of long waiting lists. Also, parents mentioned that they had not gone ahead with FDC because, like centre-based care, they were required to book in set days of care. (See also the discussion below regarding access to flexible care.)

Many parents valued the quality of centre-based care, and so often used this in conjunction with some informal care to meet their child care needs. The lack of flexibility in most child care centres was an issue, as was the cost. Nevertheless, parents generally valued the quality of this care and the stability it offered them and their children.

Some respondents thought that workplace child care could be a good option for them. This was imagined as providing the qualities of centre-based formal care, but with the flexibility to be used like occasional care, 24 hours per day. As stated by one nurse, in addition to the flexibility that workplace child care would give, it would save on travel costs and time:

The only way that it could possibly improve would be if there was care available on the hospital grounds, or attached to the hospital grounds ... It would cut out a lot of travel expenses and time if care was available at the hospital. (Mother, single parent, school-aged child only)

That parents sought different forms of formal care is relevant also in that it is important that a range of child care options be available to parents so they can choose that which suits them and their children. This in itself provides more flexibility to parents, as discussed by the following respondent, who noted that care with different qualities should be available to families:

Maybe the government could consider a few options like flexible child care, where it's open at different times, 24 hours pretty much. And then maybe have another system set up like many that's affordable for families to actually use, that can come to the house at night for older kids like my son, who'll go to school next year. And then that won't have an impact on their life. (Mother, partnered, under-school-aged children only)

In fact, while parents often expressed their wish for more formal care, many parents preferred that their children were only cared for by themselves or by extended family members. Some had altered their work arrangements to ensure child care arrangements could work with these informal or family-based options.

Extended hours of care

Many of the parent respondents noted having difficulties with the hours that child care is available. Such comments were most often made with respect to child care centres, including OSHC. However, these comments also applied to FDC, given that FDC educators are not all available to provide care outside of standard hours.

We heard often of the difficulties respondents faced when opening hours did not quite match work hours, and this was especially so in the mornings, when parents of multiple children also had problems with LDC hours being incompatible with before-school care opening hours. Some parents were conflicted about the use of early morning child care, given concerns over waking children early in the morning, and so preferred alternate arrangements (such as in-home carers) for the mornings. Others, however, needed this formal care and struggled with their existing arrangements, by juggling between themselves, calling upon the help of others, or adjusting their start time at work.

At the end of the day, parents likewise struggled if their formal care closed at a time that was earlier than they needed. Some, for example, talked about closing hours of 6 pm, which parents often reported as being difficult to work with. Being able to collect their children from care by closing time was sometimes associated with significant stress (and for some, subsequent financial penalty). This was especially so for those with less flexibility in their work hours at the end of the day, or those whose jobs were subject to unexpected overtime, such as was the case for some emergency services and health care workers.

There were marked differences across families in the degree to which these hours were seen to be problematic, depending on the work schedules and flexibility of each parent, along with the commute times from work to the child care centre.

Two services (each covering more than one site) trialled extended opening hours in long day care settings. These extended opening hours proved helpful for those who made use of those additional hours. At one service, parents were required to book in advance and to pay extra for the early starts or late finishes, and take up of this trialled option was quite low. At the other, extended hours were open to all parents, and the numbers of parents using these extended hours was reported to be growing. The low take up in the first may reflect a reluctance by parents to pay extra for the additional time, or to book into those additional hours rather than having them simply offered as part of standard hours. However, it may also reflect a lower demand for extended hours of care in some areas.

With regard to more extended hours of care, parents in this evaluation offered views about using overnight care. Some used it already, through having children cared for overnight by grandparents or FDC educators. Some thought the idea of overnight care was perfectly reasonable, and they would use it, were it available to them. Others were more reticent about overnight care, citing their preference to have their children at home and with their family overnight.

Generally, when parents were asked about the sort of care they would like to see, many said that 24/7 care would be ideal. However, if offered through a centre, the reality of how this would work, and how much it would be used was not so clear. Many parents may still prefer to juggle the care between themselves to allow this care to be provided at home by themselves or family. As this police officer stated:

Well, in an ideal world child care would run 24 hours wouldn't it? Then again, most parents aren't going to be stoked about the idea of taking their kid in there in the middle of night to drop them off for eight hours, so I don't know where the answer is. (Father, partnered, under-school-aged child only)

There was some demand for children to stay with an FDC educator overnight. When parents had this available to them, it seems to have been a good solution and the parents reported that this worked well for both parents and children. In-home carers were also seen as being a good solution for some families requiring 24-hour or overnight care (see the discussion on in-home carers, below).

Weekend care

A specific form of non-standard hours care that parents referred to was weekend care. A number of families said that they had difficulties with (or had to avoid) work on weekends, given that there are no formal care arrangements available.

Many shift-working parents contributing to the evaluation worked weekends. These interviews revealed that some families with children in FDC used that care on weekends, but mostly, parents used informal care or shared the care between themselves at this time. Single parents did not always have the option of sharing the care of children with another parent, and for them, weekend work tended to mean calling upon the help of other family and friends. Within the online survey of parents of school-aged children, among parents working weekends, very few reported using any child care on weekends at all. Generally, when care was needed on weekends, grandparents and friends were called upon to help.

The low numbers of families using child care on weekends may reflect a lack of availability of formal care options on those days. However, it is not clear to what extent families would shift from informal to formal care on weekends, were it available, as parents also expressed that they valued children being in some informal care, in giving them time in a less formal or family environment.

One of the trialled projects specifically focused on weekend child care, but had little take-up of this form of care (see Box 1 for information). This parent reflected on why she thought the take-up had not been there, given the large parent base, and the considerable effort by the service

to spread this information to local businesses. She considered the low take-up to be related to parents already having arrangements in place, and also that parents in couple families often have someone available to look after the children:

But, I think, why would you pay, you know, quite a decent amount of money when you've already got someone organised. I think that's the problem. And I guess on weekends you've got the issue—I'm a single parent but most people aren't single, do you know? So one parent will be working and one will be at home. So, I mean, the requirement is probably less than you expect, but it's still there. (Mother, single parent, school-aged child only)

Some of the demand for weekend care was expressed by parents in the evaluation as being “just in case” it was needed:

I think maybe a Saturday, you know, it possibly could come in handy ... if I needed to help my husband out at business or something, but it wouldn't be a regular thing ... An ad hoc thing, a one-off here and there. (Mother, partnered, under-school-aged children only)

For shift-working parents who shared the care between themselves, there were also times on weekends, as with weekday time, that these parents sought some occasional child care to help them out with overlapping schedules.

Nannies or in-home carers

Very few parents in this evaluation had any experience of using a nanny or an in-home carer, but several talked about having looked into this option, or having thought about it.

Families who seemed to be considering this service were those who had been unable to find an acceptable care solution, and were at the time relying on informal carers or juggling the care of children around their work responsibilities. Those with especially difficult work situations (such as when both parents in couple families were working variable or non-standard hours) were likely to have thought about a nanny or in-home carer. For example, this was the ideal arrangement for one family:

I suppose it's not really achievable to have someone go to every person's house, but for me that's the only solution that I can see to be able to keep the kids in their normal lifestyle ... I mean, my husband and I signed up to be shift workers, not them. (Mother, partnered, school-aged and under-school-aged children)

Single parents, families with a number of children, and those living in areas with limited formal care options also saw this as being a solution for them. One police officer, a mother with a police officer husband and three under-school-age children who did not at the time have any formal care arrangements (because previous arrangements were not working), said:

I'd just like there to be a service—and I guess there is, the nannying service—where you can ring and book a nanny, but that type of service is so expensive. A type of family, in-home service where it's a reasonable price and people will come 24 hours a day to be with the kids ... An in-home service for emergency service workers would be better, because the children have more stability and they have everything they need if the parent cannot get there on time. (Mother, partnered, under-school-aged children only)

Her difficulties in finding appropriate formal child care were largely related to her inability to find an FDC place that could accommodate her three children.

The perceived cost of having a nanny or in-home carer was the barrier that prohibited most parents from pursuing this form of care. Some went so far as to comment that the cost was especially prohibitive given that they would not be able to access the child care rebate for this expense.

Some had looked into (or had past experience of) the “in-home care” program, but were not receiving care through this program at the time of their interview, having been advised that there were no appropriate carers available.

While some parents expressed worries about having a stranger in the home, others were comfortable with this as an option, assuming such carers were appropriately vetted.

More flexible care, including occasional care

Parents contributing to the evaluation generally wanted access to more “flexible” care. At times this meant care during non-standard hours (discussed above), but at other times this meant having access to care with some flexibility in bookings. This was a significant issue for families of parents who worked rotating or irregular rosters, who found the need to make permanent and regular bookings with child care did not fit well with the nature of their work schedules. Some found the only way they could manage was to have set bookings in child care that covered all their possible needs, given that was the only option available to them, but this meant they paid for more child care than they used (or wanted to use).

Families who had access to flexible care, largely through the FDC they had accessed through the trials, found this helped them enormously in managing their work and family commitments. This was especially so compared to families who juggled a number of different care providers in order to meet their care needs.

Parents without the ability to access “flexible” bookings of care often expressed a wish for access to care that could accommodate changes to bookings without significant financial penalty. This included having access to care with some capacity to add days of care, if needed. For example:

Having the flexibility to add casual days when I need it for work. I have three children, and it is difficult to get a spot for them all. And it is difficult to send them to a friend's house, as there are too many children to fit into the friend's car to get all the children to school. So care is my best option. (Mother, partnered, school-aged children only)

A little more flexibility would be great, when you might require an extra morning or afternoon due to work requirements, on short-term basis. Also, occasional Saturday care would assist with Saturday work roster. (Mother, partnered, school-aged child only)

Flexi days to work around rosters. I want my child home when I'm home, but can't get casual days, so have to pay for care even when it's not required. (Mother, partnered, under-school-aged child only)

Parents often could not access additional care, especially if they relied upon care through an LDC centre or through OSHC, due to those services being unable to take on more children. One father in the evaluation, a police officer, wanted this flexibility, but understood that meeting such a demand for child care might be challenging for providers. When asked what he wants in child care, he said:

More flexibility in terms of holding your spot, but then also having the ability to either add a couple of days or drop a couple of days. I don't know how that would work as a business model, but that'll definitely be more convenient. (Father, partnered, under-school-aged children only)

Some parents avoided using formal care altogether, relying on only themselves to care for their children, getting help from informal carers, or limiting their paid work involvement, because they could not access formal care to match their variable roster. For example:

We don't use any child care at the moment because we can't. Because the only way that I would be able to use child care is if I had somewhere with flexible occasional days ... I don't want to book in for a permanent booking at day care every Monday and not use it every Monday but still have to pay for it. (Mother, partnered, school-aged and under-school-aged children)

Further, a commonly expressed wish by families was for more access to child care that could be booked on a casual basis for short sessions of use. This was often discussed in the shift-working families, who sometimes faced just short periods in the day when the overlap of their shifts meant neither parent was able to care for their children. Some parents used informal carers to fill this gap, while others had to use and pay for whole days of care (or sessions, for OSHC), regardless of how much time their children were in that care. Some parents talked about the

benefits of FDC in this regard, in being able to pay for the number of hours required, rather than having to pay for a full day. For example, one police officer talked about what he would like to have access to:

Maybe drop them off at 6 am and then they get picked up at 8.30 in the morning. It's just somewhere where they can hang out basically while we're doing a transition. Mum's going to work and I'm coming home, and whatever. (Father, partnered, under-school-aged children only)

Many families talked about this change-over of shifts as being a really difficult and stressful time for them. For some, this was made worse if one parents' finish time was somewhat unreliable (as could happen with some emergency service and health workers).

Affordable flexible care

Some parents felt the cost of formal child care needed addressing. Parents often talked about how little they gained financially from working once their child care costs were taken into account. When we asked parents what the government should know about child care for shift-working families, it was commonly expressed that the cost was too high.

There were some specific issues related to costs that parents raised. One concerned the effects of accruing too many absences, and thus being ineligible for Child Care Benefit for all their child care costs. This came about for families who had set bookings for child care to ensure they had care in place to cover different possibilities with shift rosters, but who then did not use all those set days in care. Another issue raised was parents' dissatisfaction with having to pay for child care for public holidays, when that care was not actually available. This was a problem for shift workers who might actually be working those public holidays.

Related to this are parents' views about paying for care when it was not used, for example because of children's sickness or because of a change in a shift roster. Several parents understood, however, that these circumstances could not be simply addressed by expecting to pay nothing on these days. For example, this police officer said:

Because, you know, it's not cheap. So it's one thing that I would love to see. And I also understand that the educators need a reliable income, but it'd be great to see at least something like a reduced amount that we have to pay when the kids actually aren't there. (Father, partnered, school-aged and under-school-aged children)

Parents did also express appreciation of government assistance that is currently available, and those with high levels of assistance tended to consider their child care costs to be quite affordable. Clearly, the perception of affordability is a relative one for parents, with some parents saying that while child care costs are high, they are manageable for their family, given their income. Some families we spoke with had, however, reduced their involvement in paid work or delayed return to paid work, in order to minimise the costs associated with formal child care.

School holiday care

Many parents discussed school holiday care. Parents sought access to more school holiday care, to more affordable school holiday care, and to more variety in the programs offered.

In the online survey, parents were asked what arrangements they used for children in school holidays. Almost all of these families used formal OSHC services during the week, but some of these services did not offer school holiday programs. Also, some parents who were interviewed reported experiencing considerable difficulties in school holidays, sometimes with the logistics and sometimes with costs. For example, this nurse, a mother with three children, said:

Holidays, that's really, really hard. Trying to get time off, like everyone wants their time off because they've got children to look after in the holidays. So something more for children during the holidays. Again, it's very expensive to put three children into care all day. Yes, occasionally [we have used vacation care] when I've not been able to get children off to friends or family or hubby or I couldn't get time off. I've had to use it. Yes, but it's way too expensive ... But yes, it's a one-off thing. I can't afford to do it everyday

so it's, you know, it's a desperation I guess, when you've got no one else to look after them. The other comment that I would make would be during school holidays, vacation care for my children is extremely expensive. During the school holidays I pay \$65 each for [child 1] and [child 2] to go to vacation care. So that's \$130 a day, plus [child 3]'s \$115. That's, you know, \$245 a day, when I'm only going to work to earn \$125. (Mother, partnered, school-aged and under-school-aged children)

Availability of places at a particular OSHC service was the most common of the issues raised by parents, as illustrated by the following example:

We currently put our kids in a school holiday program at a different school to the one our children attend. While they enjoy the program, they are not familiar with any of the other children at that school. It would be great for [service] to offer a vacation program. Also would suit us better in terms of location and travel time to go to the local school. (Mother, partnered, school-aged and under-school-aged children)

However, parents also often noted that they get through somehow, even if there are difficulties. In the online survey, respondents were asked to score their satisfaction with their school holiday arrangements on a scale from 1, “extremely dissatisfied”, to 4 “mixed feelings”, to 7 “extremely satisfied”. Overall, 58% of families were very satisfied (scoring 6 or 7) with their school holiday arrangements, and 36% had mixed feelings (scoring 3 to 5), leaving 6% who were dissatisfied (scoring 1 or 2).

Additional services or improved quality within child care

Putting aside issues of availability of care, most parents who had access to child care considered their options to be high quality. As a result, there were not many comments from parents concerning the ways in which their service could be improved. Issues of availability of care were relevant, however, in that some parents felt constrained in their child care choices, and as a result felt their only option was to use a child care service that in some way did not meet the standard of care they wished to use. This did not apply to many parents taking part in this evaluation, and usually parents were unhappy just with a particular aspect of the service, but were happy with other aspects, such as the flexibility offered.

Thinking specifically about flexibility, beyond hours and costs of care, there were some suggestions by parents who said that it would be helpful if the services provided meals, and for school-aged children, some structure for ensuring the children did their homework. However, others were concerned that such additional services would mean higher costs.

One of the trialled projects involved the introduction of some extra services that provided opportunities for parents to meet each other, and to spend more time with staff. The availability of a coffee van and a pizza van at different services were seen to be positive in providing opportunities to build these connections.

Special awareness of emergency service workers

Some evaluation participants who worked in emergency services strongly expressed a wish that the government consider the importance of the work that they were doing, and provide adequate child care services to enable them to fulfil their employment requirements, free of worry over how their child care needs would be met.

Better flexibility in the workplace

Despite parents talking of complex “juggling” of work and child care, there were some parents in who sought no changes to their current arrangements for child care. Instead, they wanted more flexibility in the workplace. We heard this especially from parents with less say over their shifts, inflexible work hours, or particular constraints at home, such as being a single parent, or having a partner who also works shifts.

4 Summary and concluding comments

In summary, this evaluation highlighted that parents sought various dimensions of “flexibility” in child care. For some, this meant greater availability of existing care arrangements, while others wanted access to options they did not currently see as being available to them, including more occasional or in-home care, or care at different hours. Some parents expressed a wish for the types or features of care that were explored in the trials (such as weekend care).

Clearly an important question taking this forward is in regard to the likely take-up of those forms of care. Provision of flexibility “just in case” it is needed is not likely to be financially sustainable, as seen in the trials from those services that experienced low take-up of trialled “flexible” approaches.

Learning from both parent and service provider perspectives in this evaluation, we can see that there are complexities in identifying the demand for care, especially given the diversity of families’ needs and wishes for care solutions. Further, there are significant challenges in being able to deliver care that does meet parents’ needs for flexible care.

Despite these challenges, many families participating in the evaluation had found a solution that worked for them. For some, this involved informal or family-based solutions. For others, the care offered through LDC, OSHC or FDC met their needs for flexible care. Clearly, some of these services were more flexible than others in the options they offered to families.

While this evaluation has provided valuable insights about the supply of and demand for flexible child care, we do not have perspectives on this from a representative sample of Australian parents, and this would be needed in order to better understand the needs for different flexible care solutions across the Australian population.



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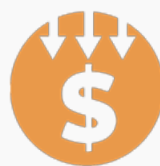


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	All Day	10 hour session	9 hour session
Session Window <small>*Indicative times only. Session start and end times may vary between centres. Check with your Centre Director for your centre's session times.</small>	Full day centre opening hours	7:30am - 5:30pm*	8:00am - 5:00pm*
Grace period <small>(either side of session)</small>	Not applicable	30 mins each side	15 mins each side
Early drop off or late pickup admin charge <small>(outside of grace period)</small>	Not applicable	\$5 per 30 minutes each side	\$5 per 30 minutes each side

Terms and conditions:

Sessions are subject to availability. Session windows may vary for each centre (and are subject to change). We may offer other sessions at a centre subject to our eligibility criteria. An additional admin charge applies if you drop off/collect your child outside the grace period (but within centre operating hours) and after a centre has closed. We recommend speaking with your Centre Director who will be able to provide further details. Additional terms and conditions apply and may be subject to change.

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We understand your schedule can sometimes get complicated by unplanned delays, so we're offering a grace period either side of your daily session times. If you opt for the all-day session, this runs for the duration of your centre's opening hours so no grace period applies.





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[Sole parent \(#Sole-parent\)](#)

[Hourly rate cap \(#Hourly-rate-cap\)](#)

How do hourly rate caps work?

If your service charges a daily fee, the hourly rate is determined by dividing the daily fee by the hours the service operates. Your service tells us their standard session fees and how long the session is, and we use the hourly rate cap to help us calculate how much to pay.

Is the rate cap the same for standard and non-standards hours?

Yes. The hourly rate cap applies to all hours of child care.

Why is Family Day Care hourly rate allowance different to Long Day Care?

The hourly rate cap varies across service types to reflect differences in fees charged and operating costs.

Do the hourly rate caps get indexed?

Yes, the hourly rate caps may be subject to adjustment through indexation in subsequent years.

Are the maximum hours of subsidy per child or per family?

The maximum hours of subsidy are per child.

[Immunisation \(#Immunisation\)](#)

[In Home Care \(#In-Home-Care\)](#)

[International \(#International\)](#)

[Invoicing \(#Invoicing\)](#)

[Parental/maternity leave \(#Parental-maternity-leave\)](#)

[Payment method \(#Payment-method\)](#)

[Withholding \(#Withholding\)](#)

[Preschool exemption \(#Preschool-exemption\)](#)

[Service types \(#Service-types\)](#)

[Session of Care \(#Session-of-Care\)](#)

What is the definition of a 'Session of care'?

The [Child Care Subsidy \(What Constitutes a Session of Care\) Determination 2018](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2018L00827) (<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2018L00827>) provides the definition of a session of care under Family Assistance Law – that is, a session that can attract Child Care Subsidy.

In short, a session of care is the period of time for which a provider charges a fee for providing child care, that the parent is genuinely liable to pay (whether or not the parent is entitled to Child Care Subsidy for the session).

The maximum session length is 12 hours. However, it is important to note that, while providers can offer sessions of any length up to this maximum, 12 hours should not in any way be seen as a 'standard' session length. Providers should determine session lengths that are appropriate to the needs and circumstances of families and their business.

What are the requirements for sessions of before and after school care?

Specific requirements that previously applied to sessions of before and after school care have not been included in the new Determination. However, it is important to note that section 8 of the [Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2017L01464) (<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2017L01464>) establishes that there is no Child Care Subsidy eligibility for a session of care where the child attends school during any part of the session.

For example, if a child finishes school at 3.15 pm, their parent would not be eligible for Child Care Subsidy for a session that starts at 3.00 pm. Start times for before school sessions and end times for after school sessions should reflect realistic periods of care based on families' needs.

[Session reports \(#Session-reports\)](#)

[Compliance Notifications \(#Compliance-Notifications\)](#)

[Statements of entitlement \(#Statements-of-entitlement\)](#)

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Dear IEU Members

The Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA), representing mainly for-profit employers have filed a claim with the Fair Work Commission seeking to change the Modern Award for teachers in the following ways:

1. They would like to extend Ordinary Hours of work to 7.30pm (Ordinary Hours are currently 6.00am until 6.30pm). The effect of this change is that teachers could be rostered to work with children and/or attend staff meetings etc until 7.30pm on a regular basis and would not be entitled to be paid overtime for working between 6.30pm and 7.30pm.
2. They are seeking to remove the current requirement to provide 4 weeks' notice to vary a part-time teacher's days of work in all cases. They are seeking that where another employee is away because of an unplanned absence and ratios require their replacement, there would be **no notice period** if an employer wanted to require a part-time teacher who is employed on say Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday to change to working Wednesday, Thursdays and Fridays instead. This could potentially change every week.

The IEU is urgently seeking the feedback of teachers about the impact the proposed changes above would have on your family life, commitments, other part-time employment (for example if you are employed in 2 different services as a part-time teacher) etc. The information you provide will be conveyed to the Fair Work Commission.

Please send feedback by close of business on Thurs 11 April to lisa@ieu.asn.au

Thank you very much for your assistance,

Lisa James

IEU Organiser

This is terrible. Our work conditions would be going backwards. I have after child care arrangements for my children in place for the part time days I work. It would be impossible for me to change week to week.

And being required to attend an evening staff meeting during family time is bad enough. To not even be paid penalty rates is terrible.

SG

Hi Lisa - this would be personally and professionally disastrous for teachers working in the industry. Astoundingly short sighted and disrespectful!

It would also ensure that those teachers currently working under difficult conditions in the ECEC sector will leave - they will move further into the infant and primary school sector, or possibly change careers completely! This will have a detrimental effect on children in the sector, who will have reduced access to fully qualified ECT's, a detrimental effect on quality of education for those children and families, and the sector will experience even more problems attracting and keeping fully qualified, experienced and excellent teachers in their centres.

This reeks of profit-over-quality, and the sector continues to make huge profits on the backs of overworked and undervalued teachers in their system.

This move would ensure that myself and any other teacher who has a family, and other work commitments would leave the sector - the conditions would be untenable. It will also ensure a greater distance between parity of conditions and wages in the school and ECEC sector.

You can not argue that you respect and value quality education and care for all children, and propose these changes to working conditions for teachers - the professionals who ensure you can keep your doors open!

JC

To whom it may concern,

I am about to move to a part time role after 10 years full time. I am moving to 3 days a week and studying a research degree at university.

The proposed change to the award regarding part time days and the amount of notice given, would mean that I cannot have certainty in the days that I work each week. This is problematic for me as I have meetings and appointments associated with my university commitments that I need to plan and attend.

This proposed change to the award may make it challenging to meet the requirements of my degree. This is my personal situation, however the principle is sound across a range of situations. A lack of stability or certainty can be stressful and I think that it could lead to distracted and stressed teachers.

Kind regards,

AD

Hello Lisa

I travel from Central Coast to Sydney everyday - What time i am meant to go home? This time upsets /impacts on family time, Dinner time. Which is already a challenge with 6pm finish.

Casualising the work 'does not make teachers look professional'.

I think this is a strategy by the Employers Alliance discourages teachers from staying in this line of work. Hence providing

opportunity to empower employers and the governments to say there is shortage of teachers and to bring cheaper overseas/

foreign workers. The obvious reason would be to undercut/underpay salaries to these workers, ultimately its about

empowering employers making child care an just a profit driven machine.

Currently working in the professional I hear and see how poor English speaking teaching is being done. Children are currently exposed

to poor pronunciations and grammar of the English language.

Where is all this leading too? More corrupt society and govenrmnents!

RN

Re: Fair Work Commission- Teachers Modern Award.

Absolutely no way should they (for profit employers) be allowed to change these work conditions under the modern award for teachers.

How this impacts me.....

1) Suitable hours are hard to find!

I work part time for one of these « for profit employer organisations » and I was in dire straits when I needed to accept this job that allows me to work 6 hour days plus take half an hour lunch break. It is such a hard gig to find, so I was very happy to find a job that would be accomodating for work life balance and family reasons. However I've never worked for a « private profit employer » before.

The hours in my current job are needed in order to care for my remaining elderly parent. It was so hard to work in a shared job or to work a full 8 hour shift, even shifts that alternated were difficult.

2) Commitments

I needed the 6 hours to accomodate both my work life and a care schedule for my parent to take them to Doctor and specialist appointments. To co ordinate plans, allow

time to transfer and include daily routines and also ensure the safety during their care day. When I did this while working an 8 hour shift my health was affected and work performance was affected. My parent had falls and I had to leave work which took away all my sick leave entitlements. In this situation I found it hard to fit in my own Doctors appointments.

Also when working an 8 hour shift I had to wait for the earliest shift to come back around to me to plan appointments in which was impacting my parents health, this was on a fortnight basis. I could imagine how the stress of working until 7:30pm would definitely take its toll on me.

3) Conditions of others F/Time employees where I work.

The girls that I work with do 8 hour shifts but take away their lunch break, it's really only 7 1/2 hour shifts. They don't get RDOs, they work overtime which most of them rely on to pay mortgages and bills, they also still pay fees for their own children to stay in care while they work, could you imagine keeping your child with you at work for such extensive hours when the mother has no immediate family or father/partner to take the child home earlier.

4) Christmas Holiday

Recently our Christmas holiday was taken away from us as our employer wants us to work throughout this time. What has happened to quality family time during the Christmas period? where many celebrate this tradition be it religious or not. I am personally affected as if I choose not to work over Christmas but to care for my elderly parent, I go without pay. I cannot leave an elderly person without care, or without a meal on such an important day. Throughout the year all my annual leave and sick leave entitlements are already used up, so I'm just barely allowed to have 1 day to myself as a sick day, I don't get a break from care work, and now they want teachers to work until 7:30pm. We are not robots used for a convenience. Society needs to look at why they need child care care for that long and weigh up the values of family life.

The conditions that « for profit employers » seek to change are horrendous. I would have to leave the child care industry altogether in my case.

1) working from 6pm until 7:30pm every day is totally wrong or even working an 8 hour shift within that time frame is wrong.

Women in childcare are already working in substandard pay and conditions because we sacrifice our salary and our times worth for a job to accomodate our needs for family care, health needs and a multitude of other reasons. Women are forced into poor socio economic positions due to marital status, low housing accomodation, low wages and overworked conditions. So many young women Ive seen struggle to pay rent and live on their own and so they work more and more overtime to compensate for this, this leads to poor health and depression etc. All their income is gone just by health care, rent, petrol & food. As mentioned above even f/time workers rely on overtime to pay mortgages and bills and they go without monthly RDOs or holiday pay.

Yet these « for profit employers » really just want us to work extended hours as their cleaners, their babysitters, their personal assistants and their counsellors. I feel it

should stop, I've recently seen the ugly side of this kind of employer neglect, it's abusing the system and they should not be allowed to use people for their own gain.

2) Removing the 4 week notice period in order to change the part time teachers days of work unplanned is insidious!

Being a permanent part time staff member I could not go back to having my days change constantly should someone be absent. The potential weekly changes would be difficult. I am not there to be used for relief cover. Teachers train and study for 4 years to deliver quality education, not to be used as a relief cover in absences, where there is no continuity of a class and this has an effect on students behaviours etc.

People have commitments as I have mentioned mine above. You will have made it worse again for themselves. Teachers will fall ill more, they cannot plan for classes with such short notice to changes, they will be replaced so easily for cheaper paid staff and this will lower the industries standards, plus the quality of education that goes into their practices.

I am happy to forward this onto the Fair Work Commission.

Regards

DC

Dear Lisa sorry, ive not got back to you earlier. Ive just finished tutoring which i do on other days i dont work at my current early childhood centre (2 days per week).Monday Tuesdays.

I might as well get a better paid casual job at woolies if im going to have to chop and change with out notice. I work as a part time ect teacher because i have other things on other days.

With already existing downgraded conditons in the modern award, like many ect this would just make us leave the industry. There is little care in our industry for ect and their experience i already dont get work because they can get a temporary replacement less qualified. or my hours when i do casual are cut . but to reduce conditions with a part time contract well like many we will just leave then the industry will be even worse off with very few ECTs

we will go to the schools or other industries where policy support for its university trained workers values them better.

as for the 7.30 yeh how about we ask the people prosoing this if they would like it. Early childhood teachers deserve a life and we deserve to be paid more not less for the work and responisbility and learning we provide.

Thank you IEU for standing up for ECTs and some where where we can get some understanding and value as sadly business and ACA doesnt.

Thank you Lisa sorry this is late

J

Hi Lisa

As a member of the IEU and long term part time employee, I would like to actively support the union in objecting to the changes proposed - extension of work hours and removal of notice period to vary hours.

Regarding variation of work hours -

Part time employees are exactly that - part time employees, not casual staff, and as such, should be able to expect the same regularity of employment that full time employees have. Personal commitments, whether they be children in child care, taking care of elderly family members, personal business commitments just to name a few, are usually organised around regular hours of work, and the ability for employers to provide reduced or no notice to alter, would leave many teachers unable to fulfil these important commitments. Child care bookings (regardless of whether they are child care or before & after school services) are usually not able to offer such flexibility and on top of that are very sort after and are unlikely to be able to be changed in a week to week basis, leaving children potentially with out care and teachers unable to work. Specialist appointments for children and/or elderly family members need to be made months in advance, with most part time employees choosing to make these on their non-work days. The care/health of family members could easily be compromised if employers were free to make changes to days of work freely, regularly or without adequate notice. Continuity of care (and thus quality of care for children) is likely to deteriorate if employee's days of work are fluid, particularly with the many children and families who enrol into child care centres on a part time basis. To see educators certain days this week, other days next week and different days again in a few weeks or months could never be considered as quality care for children.

I feel it is reasonable for employers to offer part time educators the option of increasing hours of employment to cover other employee's short term periods of leave/absence - however it is something that should be optional and at the discretion of the employee, not something that can be expected.

If employers would like the flexibility of fluid and variable hours, maybe they should consider the option of casual employees 😊

Regarding the extension of ordinary hours of work - child care centres usually already extend beyond the majority of places of employment's hours of work, allowing families travelling time to and from workplace to centre. 7:30pm is definitely in the 'family time' zone, and to be expected to have this as part of educator's ordinary hours of work, reduces their own quality family time. They would be unable to utilise the majority of child care services for their own children, as most close earlier than this, particularly before and after school services. Add travelling time home from work after this would greatly decrease any family balance in educator's lives and enable many not to be able to work. It would also contribute to teacher stress, this in turn negatively affect levels of quality care for children and increase educator burn-out.

It would decrease the attractiveness of early childhood careers in child care centres, making the school hours services more attractive employment environments, decreasing the quality of educators in early child care centres. Making regular hours of work extend to 7:30pm also enables children to potentially be in care this late each evening, also negatively affecting their health, lifestyle and well-being.

Hopefully some of these ideas and thoughts are helpful as you oppose these proposals.

JL

Hello Lisa, even though at this stage I am not working under the award, I have in the past. I absolutely disagree with any change to ordinary work hours for teachers. If children are enrolled in care it is a full day paid price so ratio should not be effected. Changing hours and days at whim of ratio only benefits the bottom line of wages for the centre.

More staff should be employed or at least paid overtime if ratio requires.

Set employment days are essential and have been fought for! The uncertainty of days and hours effects employees wages, and importantly family life. It seems all interests of care are aimed at benefits for parents, employer and government perspectives, for profits.

L

Hello,

Thank you for asking for the feedback. In my opinion, these proposed changes sound very biased and favouring the businesses! Are these ACA people even early childhood trained????

For extending hours- 7.30pm does not sound appealing at all. This means that if I did closing, I will only get to sit down for dinner at 8.30pm at the earliest if I have to travel home and then cook dinner (mind you that I only live around the corner, what more of someone who lives a distance away?). Not to mention it will affect my family time and sleep time! By extending hours, it also means that families spend less time together- young children under 5 years old should already be in bed by 7.30pm, not just being picked up from day care! When did they think that these children will be fed, bathed and put to bed? What about single-parent families who do not have a partner to rely on? It is a horrible situation to even imagine- where will their school-going age child go to between the hours of 6ish (after school care) to 7.30pm? It sounds like these people do not understand children or different dynamics of families at all! How disappointing! Overtime pay- we do not get any overtime pay should we stay on for a staff meeting, just time in lieu. Honestly, no one wants to be at work past 6.30pm. Everyone is tired after a long day (we have 10 hour shifts), and children are exhausted too. Extending time just means a whole world of unhappy children = overworked teachers and ultimately would be burnt out.

Removing 4 weeks notice is extremely unfair to part time staff. They are part timers for a reason- perhaps they need to care for their children or parents / grandparents or even perhaps have an illness. If days are being changed as and when, it will make the lives of part timers hard. Why would a person want to be a part timer if there is no stability at all? Part timers are so helpful to a centre because we know we can depend on them, the

children and families know them and there is a consistency in the centre. Without part timers, we have to rely on casuals who are 1. more expensive, 2. may not have the same quality care as a part timer (because part timers already have a bond with families and children from being there on a more permanent basis), 3. are usually more challenging to work with because they need assistance to understand routines and where things are etc.

I used to be a part time staff as I was working in another industry (weddings)- if I had been in a situation where I had to change work days, or not get a call in at all- this would mean that there would be some weeks that I will not get any income since the wedding industry usually operates between Thursday- Sunday. If I was called in for a shift on Thursday and Friday at the centre, I wouldn't be able to work at the other job. Adding on to that, if they cancel my shift because of meeting ratios, this would mean that I could potentially go without work for a week. Already the early childhood industry is known for its notoriously low pay, this would add insult to the part time staff and create a status of perpetual anxiety of wondering how they will pay the rent and feed themselves. I would say that if this change were to take place, I would certainly leave the early childhood industry and try to get work somewhere else or dare I say it, think about getting new start allowances, burdening the country because of this unnecessary and unethical change!

I hope this helps, and I wish you luck.

NC

Hi lisa.

I am appalled that such changes would even be considered. As ECTs we already have conditions and remuneration well below our colleagues in primary. This to me just undermines our professionalism further and literally implies we r babysitters as no quLity teaching would occur at 7.30pm. Good quality teachers will not work in such centres and so the standards in early childhood education will plummet further as u will get what they pay for. When are they going to value what we do and respect that we are professionals and should be treated as such. The sector will not hold good teachers because they are not affirmed for their roles. Working until 7.30 sends the message that the parents whose chn we mind have a life and important jobs as they cant pick up their chn on time well what about staff in ecec who need to pick up thrir chn get thrir chn to activities etc. I also wonder with the extra hrs these fot profit ones want to be open will they actually remunerate stsff better and provide better quality and quantity of resourcez. As casual i see some absolutely appalling centres that chsrge full fees but resources minimal meals skimpy etc. I totally disagree with working these hrs as we already badly treated this just makes more determined to leave sector as y study to be a babysitter.

Kind regards

T

Hi,

Just some feedback on the email we received. The extension of hours wouldn't bother me but the changing of the notice period would impact me greatly. I have small children with set day care patterns and before and after school care. So unless my work place could accommodate all of my children to change days with me and also provide me with before and after school care I would be unable to change days which could put my job in jeopardy. My workplace wouldn't be able to do this as they don't offer before and after school care and I think it would be very unlikely they could change my children's days easily either as I have 3 children in long day care and 1 at an entirely different service. This would make my life very difficult.

Thanks

BD

Hi Lisa

I am horrified to think that our children are in care until 7.30pm at night, let alone our teachers having to teach until the late evening. I realise these extended hours services exist to cater for jobs, but making these hours part of our award says that we accept this as the new normal. People choose to go into teaching to make a difference in the lives of children, not to be babysitters. These hours are not family friendly on both sides of the fence and will certainly lead to more teacher burn out, less work/life balance for teachers and greater stress for children, as the cheaper it becomes for providers the more who will extend their hours and the more children who will not be having any family time until 8pm at night at best. Shame on the sector for even considering this.

Kind regards

MH

Dear Lisa,

The two issues mentioned above are both unreasonable and unfair. As workers we deserve fair rights not no rights. Working conditions in early childhood services for teachers and all staff need to be improved and up graded not extended or added too what they already do.

Early childhood teachers are already under an enormous amount of stress pressure and exhaustion due to regulatory requirements especially undergoing assessment and rating as well as all the required documentation.

If the ACA are really committed to retaining good qualified staff they will not push for this change. If we as a profession keep going down this track of adding and piling on top of what we already do we will have no one to employ.

It's already extremely difficult to get good qualified staff, especially in a casual capacity. Maybe the ACA need to think about whether they want their centres to be open or not because that's what it will eventually come down too, who will do the job under these conditions?

This issue is about the bigger picture and not just about profits, look after our profession and value our teachers not grind them into the ground.

Just a few quick thoughts I had, hope it helps.

Regards

FO

Dear IEU,

The proposed changes to the teachers award represent an appalling erosion of conditions that will place increased stress upon teachers and the sector.

Already the conditions of teachers working in LDC or preschool are by no way comparable with their primary school teacher counterparts. These changes would only widen the gap.

Working routinely past 6.30 pm will significantly impact on teachers and their families. 6.30 pm and beyond is a very busy time in households. On occasions when staff are asked to stay back extra remuneration has been paid, which to a small extent compensates for this intrusion on family life.

If it approved that the hours of ordinary work are extended to 7.30pm then we will see employers have regular expectations that teachers work until this time. There will be a change to the hours that services keep with many more services staying open until 7.30pm as it isn't costing owners or employers more in staffing costs. Children will then spend longer hours in childcare and over time this changes family patterns and impacts negatively on outcomes for children. Teacher moral will suffer and stress will rise.

Removing the current requirement of giving 4 weeks notice of intent to vary a part-time teachers work days to no-notice-period is ridiculous and another significant erosion to the conditions of teachers. In my example; I have two part-time teaching roles at different preschools and it would be impossible for me to be flexible at short notice. It is a basic human right to have a predictable work experience that allows teachers to plan their work commitments, family commitments and personal commitments. Loosing this security will only create job dissatisfaction and unrest. When looking at changes, you need to consider the worst possible misuse of the award and that would be employers who change teachers days every week instead of employing enough staff and relief. There is a significant likelihood of misuse.

Regards,
AC (Early childhood teacher of 20 plus years)

Hello Lisa,

I consider this application being filed by ACA as another reflection of the disregard for the professionalism and recognition of teachers working in early childhood.

It further devalues our university qualifications and reinforces the already considerably lower award wage we are already on (in relation to primary school teachers) and doesn't even enable us to claim overtime for later hours (which of course can be necessary in relation to working in long day programs).

Already our sector is continually losing teachers to the primary sector due to inequitable conditions (particularly pay) and these types of applications further reduce our working conditions as well so we can theoretically be paid less for more extended hours with no overtime allowances which ALL impacts on our family income and quality time, not to mention potentially increasing stress levels and burnout.

Finally the request in relation to notice for part-time teachers is unbelievably disrespectful and unrealistic for any employee but again particularly for teachers when it is our endeavor in relation to quality early childhood programs to retain teachers expertise in this essential area of education (0-5 years)!!!!

Thank you to the IEU for your continued representation of our EC sector,
CG

Dear Lisa,

Thank you for this opportunity to give my feedback regarding your IEU email pertaining to Childcare Alliance potential changes to work hours and notice periods.

I believe that the ECEC sector is, and has always been, highly stressful.

Hence, the extremely high staff turnover.

We have as a profession only recently begun to realise the potential for Wellbeing and Wellness of teachers and educators as a high priority for retaining quality staff long-term.

The proposed changes would greatly reduce the recent mindful reflection and thinking of teachers looking after themselves in order to look after all stakeholders.

I greatly disagree with the proposed changes.

Thankyou.

With kind regards,

KA

I have 3 kids and it's bad enough that every other week I work 9 30 to 5 30 pm if they owned until 7 30 pm in the evening then I would definitely leave the ERly Years industry and I am an ECT and there is already a shortage of ECTs in Australia why make the problem even worse when we don't receive same salary and benefits school teachers get
I currently work for a not for profit centre

Hi Lisa

1. changing "regular working hours" to 7.30pm would be cause significant difficulties for employees with families. in a predominantly female industry, many working women are mothers and this would cause distress to them and their families. As for myself I dont have too much travelling time, but for employers who might need to add 30 minutes to an hour or more travelling time before they reach home, this would severely impact on their ability to care for their families. consequently I dont belive finishing at 7.30pm could be called "regular working hours" by any stretch of the imagination.

2. no notice period to change days is unfair. most people chose their days of work if they are working part time, and organised other things on their non-working days. what if the employee has a long standing medical appointment, a university schedule, or other paid work? At the moment I believe the employer has to give two weeks notice of change of schedule to unpaid workers, and I consider this also to be unfair. the only reason employers want to do this is to increase profits, how is this fair when it so negatively affects people's lives?

that is my opinion, thank you

D

Hi Lisa

I work in a child care centre one day a week, on a permanent basis, because I work in other places on other days, not all in child care. So I would not want a child care centre to ask me to come on another day other than my set one, because I would not be available.

Kind Regards

V

Yes that's right Lisa. I have part time work at other centres. Also let's say you work a set day eg Monday. If it's a long weekend they can ask you to work on another day instead of Easter Monday or the Monday or a June or October long weekend or move your day if your work day falls on Anzac Day, or Christmas or Boxing Day.

Thanks

V