

Trends in long day care services for children in Australia, 1991–99

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Trends in long day care services for children in Australia, 1991–99

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Preface

This paper was prepared by Helen Moyle, Seniz Aydinli, Nigel Gill and Edith Gray. Thanks are extended to the Family and Children's Services Division of the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services for providing the unit record file from the 1995, 1997 and 1999 Census of Child Care Services and for providing helpful comments on this report.

This publication draws on the AIHW Welfare Division Working Paper No. 18 *Trends in Long Day Care Services for Children in Australia 1991-1995*.

Summary

The period covered by the report has been one of rapid growth in the long day care sector, particularly in centre-based long day care. Between 1991 and 1999, the number of places in long day care centres grew by 150% and the number of family day care places by 51%. The growth in the number of children using services was somewhat lower than the growth in services, an increase of 122% of children using centre-based care and 38% of children in family day care. Although the increase in the number of paid workers in centre-based care was commensurate with the growth in children at 125%, the number of family day care co-ordination unit staff increased by only 14% and the number of family day care providers fell by 9% over the period.

Long day care centres and family day care services were originally funded and/or licensed to provide 'long day care' for children under school age. This report shows, however, that by 1999 a substantial proportion of service providers, particularly private-for-profit centres and family day care schemes, offered a variety of services—long day care, preschool programs (or access to these programs), occasional care and school-age care. In 1999, long day care centres were also more likely to provide care for 'young' children (under 2) than in previous years.

Along with the overall growth in long day care services, there has been an extension of the daily hours that long day care centres operate. For example, 61% of private-for-profit centres were open for 11 or more hours per day in 1999, compared with 31% in 1991. Family day care providers also increased the hours per week they provided care—the proportion of providers working 40 hours or more increased by 56% to 66% over the same period. In contrast, the amount of time that children spent in care decreased over the period 1991 to 1999, with an increase in the proportion using care for less than 20 hours a week and a decrease in the proportion in care for 40 hours or more.

An important trend between 1991 and 1999 was the decline in the affordability of long day care services, due to increases in fees charged by service providers—particularly long day care centres—outstripping increases in government fee relief. Vacancy rates in long day care centres increased between 1995 and 1999, which can partly be attributed to the decline in affordability of care.

In each of the census years, over half or more of all children using centre-based long day care were aged 3–4 years compared with just under a third of children in family day care. The proportion of children who were 'young' (under 2) was lowest in private-for-profit centres, although it increased between 1991 and 1999, from 23% to 33%, reflecting the increase in the availability of places for children of this age. The relatively high proportion of children in private-for-profit centres and family day care services who were aged 5 and older—13% and 29% respectively in 1999—reflects the tendency of long day care service providers to offer care for children of school age.

A major aim of Commonwealth Child Care Support is to provide work-related care, that is, to assist families where both parents (or a sole parent) are in the labour force or studying or training for employment. The proportion of children in work-related care increased for every type of service provider between 1991 and 1999. The Commonwealth also provides specific funding to assist parents and children with special needs (such as children with a disability) to access child care services. Over the period 1991 to 1999, the proportion of children in long day care services who had 'additional needs' increased from 14% to 16%.

In all the census years under review, two-thirds or more of all children using long day care services received Childcare Assistance. Policies introduced in 1997 and 1998 to limit the payment of Childcare Assistance – to a maximum of 50 ‘paid hours’ of care for ‘work-related care’ and 20 hours of care for ‘non-work-related care’ – substantially reduced the proportion of children in ‘work-related care’ who were in more than 50 ‘paid hours’ of care in a week and the proportion in ‘non-work-related care’ who were in more than 20 ‘paid hours’ of care in a week.

The profile of workers in long day care services changed in some respects between 1991 and 1999, reflecting the emphasis in the industry on the importance of qualifications and training. The proportion of workers with relevant qualifications increased over the period, particularly in private-for-profit centres. By 1999, around half of all workers in long day care centres, 70% of family day care coordinators and 21% of family day care providers held ‘relevant’ qualifications. Similarly, the proportion of workers who had undertaken in-service training in the 12 months prior to the census also increased from 1991 to 1999. By 1999, two-thirds or more of workers had undertaken in-service training in the previous 12 months.

Since the 1999 data have been collected, there has been a major change in Commonwealth child care policy with the introduction of the Child Care Benefit and the subsequent improvement in affordability. It will be interesting to measure the effects of these changes once the data from the May 2002 census become available.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Child care services provide care and developmental activities for children generally aged 12 years and younger. The provision of child care services has been an important social policy objective of governments and other organisations in Australia for the past 25 years (Brennan 1998). The aims and objectives of government support for child care services are to provide services that are accessible, affordable and of high quality, and that allow parents to participate in the workforce and the community (FaCS 1999a:182). As a condition of government funding and regulation, these services must promote and enhance children's emotional, intellectual, social and physical development.

The major type of government-supported child care for children below school age is long day care. Long day care consists of care and developmental activities primarily for children under school age, provided for at least 8 hours a day on normal working days, for at least 48 weeks of the year. Children may use long day care services either full-time or part-time. Long day care is provided in purpose-built (or modified) child care centres – long day care centres – or in family day care services. Family day care services consist of networks of carers (referred to in this report as 'family day care providers') who provide care and development activities in their own homes for other people's children¹. Each network – or 'family day care scheme' – has a central coordination unit that is responsible for selecting providers, placing children with appropriate providers, monitoring care, providing administrative support, and facilitating in-service training.

The Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) currently supports the provision of formal child care services through Commonwealth Child Care Support (AIHW 2001a). State and Territory Governments also provide support for child care services. The Commonwealth Government supports almost all long day care services in Australia through the provision of fee relief for parents using services. Family day care schemes and some long day care centres in rural, remote and urban fringe areas also receive some operational funding. State and Territory Governments provide some funding for long day care centres but the type of assistance varies by jurisdiction (AIHW 1999:100).

Although the Commonwealth has a major role in supporting the provision of child care services it does not directly provide such services. Long day care centres are provided by private-for-profit bodies, non-profit organisations, local government, non-government organisations and by employers for the benefit of their employees. Local governments and non-profit community organisations are the major providers of family day care services. The State Government is the sole sponsor² of family day care in South Australia (AIHW 1999).

¹ From January 2001, under the In Home Care Initiative, families who do not have access to standard child care services, or whose needs cannot be met by existing services are eligible to have child care provided in their own home (AIHW 2001a).

² The sponsor is the individual, organisation, body or enterprise responsible for the agency or agencies providing the service. Where services are funded, the sponsor signs the funding agreement and is accountable for the funds (AIHW 2000).

Governments use two mechanisms for assuring the quality of child care services – legislative regulations and accreditation (or quality assurance) systems. State and Territory Governments are responsible for licensing and regulating child care services within their jurisdiction. The Commonwealth and some State and Territory Governments also have accreditation systems in place for some of their funded services. Legislative regulations specify the minimum standards, or ‘quantifiable inputs’ (e.g. staff–child ratios and staff qualifications), that must be met for a service to operate. Accreditation systems, on the other hand, focus on measuring the quality of aspects of the services that are delivered, such as staff’s responsiveness to children in their care.

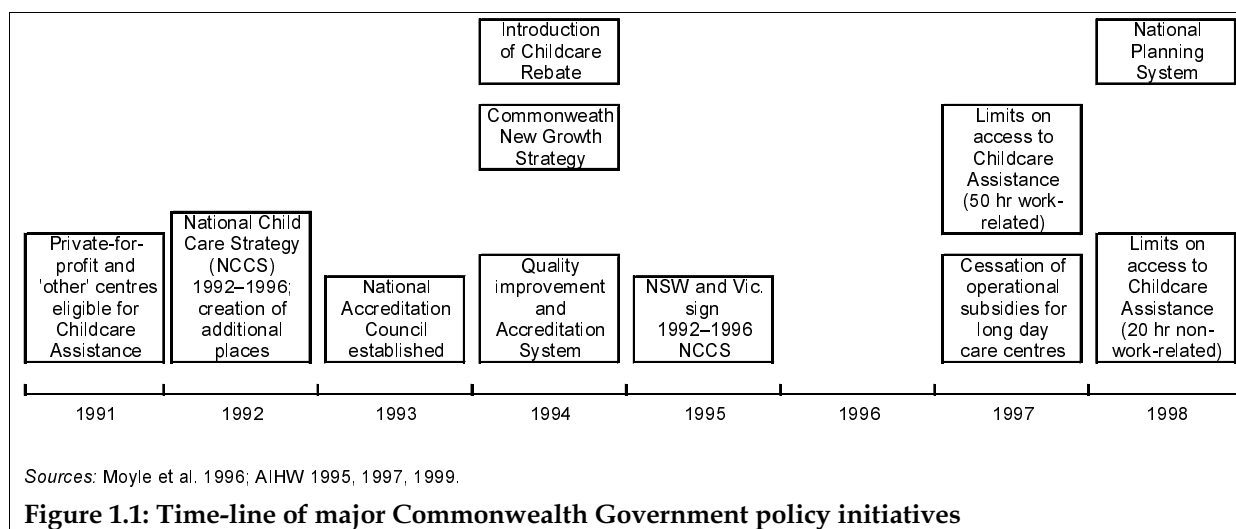
All States and Territories license and regulate centre-based long day care services. Family day care schemes and/or providers are licensed and regulated in New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and (from 2000) the Australian Capital Territory. In all other jurisdictions, minimum standards of staff–child ratios and, in some instances, basic environmental conditions are set for family day care services through statute, ordinance or exemption. Since child care standards vary across the different jurisdictions, in the mid-1990s sets of national standards for long day care centres and family day care services were developed by a committee of State and Territory representatives and endorsed by State and Territory Community Services Ministers. The extent to which these national standards have been implemented varies across jurisdictions.

Since 1994, all long day care centres supported by the Commonwealth Government have been required to participate in the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS). Family day care schemes have been required to participate in a quality assurance system for family day care since July 2001.

The Commonwealth collects data about the child care services that it supports in order to monitor their development and assist planning. Part of FaCS data collection activity is a census of child care services. Reports of each of these censuses have been published, but a comprehensive analysis of this information over time has not been undertaken. This report uses data from the Commonwealth Censuses of Child Care Services to overview trends and highlight changes in the characteristics of long day care service providers, various aspects of service provision, children using these services and the staff providing services. The report examines trends in long day care services from 1991 – when eligibility for Commonwealth fee relief was first extended to users of all types of long day care centres – to 1999, the most recent year for which data are available. The impact of some of the major changes in government child care policies can thus be examined. Comparisons are also made between the States and Territories for 1999.

A time-line of major policy initiatives is provided in Figure 1.1. In relation to service provision, these initiatives comprised the extension of Childcare Assistance to all long day care centres from 1 January 1991; the 1992–98 Commonwealth–State National Child Care Strategy (NCCS) and the 1994 Commonwealth-only New Growth Strategy which provided funding for several thousand long day care places; the establishment of the National Accreditation Council in 1993, the body responsible for administering the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) introduced in the following year; the withdrawal of operational subsidies from community-based long day care centres from 1 July 1997 and the implementation of a National Planning System for new long day care centre places in 1998. Regarding assistance to parents, the Childcare Rebate to assist parents with the costs of work-related care was introduced in 1994 (see Section 2.6) and the policies limiting parents’ access to Childcare Assistance were introduced in 1997 and 1998 (see Section 3.6).

More information about these initiatives can be found in various editions of the AIHW biennial publication *Australia's Welfare* (AIHW 1995, 1997, 1999).



This report begins with a brief discussion of the Censuses of Child Care Services, the main data sources for the report, followed by an examination of the response rates to the censuses over time by long day care service providers. This is followed by a brief examination of changes between 1991 and 1999 in the number of service providers supported by the Commonwealth to provide long day care services, the number of children using services, and the number of paid workers providing services.

Chapter 2 looks at service information, such as the supply of places for young children, the hours of service operation, and the fees charged. Chapter 3 examines the characteristics of children using services, such as their age, the amount of time they spend in care, and whether or not they are in care for work-related reasons. Chapter 4 discusses the staffing of services, with particular attention to the qualifications and training levels.

1.2 The Census of Child Care Services

The data presented in this report come from the Commonwealth Censuses of Child Care Services (hereafter referred to as the Child Care Census) conducted by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services. As a condition of support, the Commonwealth requires child care service providers to participate in the census. In 1991 and 1992 all Commonwealth-supported services were included in the census. The censuses in 1993, 1995 and 1997 included only long day care services, while the 1994 and 1996 censuses covered all other child care services. No census was conducted in 1998. The last complete census of all Commonwealth-supported services was carried out in 1999. Each census has collected information about various aspects of service provision, the children and parents who use the service, and the staff who provide the service.

This report on long day care services draws together data from a number of censuses to provide a picture of changes over time as well as comparisons between service types and between States and Territories for the latest year. The data for this report come from the published census reports for the years 1991 to 1995, and the census unit record file for the years 1995, 1997 and 1999.

In the censuses covered in this report, long day care centres are divided into the following categories:

- *community-based centres*, which are non-profit services incorporating parents on their management committees
- *private-for-profit centres*
- *employer-sponsored and other non-profit centres* (hereafter referred to as 'other' centres) such as centres provided by employers for their employees and centres at TAFE colleges.

The census forms are mailed to each service provider for self-completion during a standard reference week. In 1991 the standard reference week for community-based centres and family day care services was in May, while for private-for-profit centres and 'other' centres it was in August. In 1993, 1995 and 1997, the standard reference week for all service providers was in August, and in 1999 it was in May.

Each census data set contains information about the response rates to the census, i.e. the number of service providers returning the completed forms as a percentage of all Commonwealth-supported services at the time of the census (Table 1.1). Response rates were very high at the beginning of the period, with a 100% response rate for community-based centres and 'other' centres. By 1999 response rates had fallen somewhat, particularly for private-for-profit and community-based centres.

Table 1.1: Number of long day care service providers responding to the Child Care Census and response rates by type of service provider, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999

Type of service provider	1991	1992	1993	1995	1997	1999
	Number					
Community-based centres	958	951	1,028	1,053	1,063	1,016
Private-for-profit centres	835	1,041	1,264	1,874	2,307	2,335
'Other' centres	127	180	186	260	286	282
Family day care schemes	314	316	329	340	321	313
	Response rates					
Community-based centres	100	98	99	96	95	94
Private-for-profit centres	95	96	94	91	89	87
'Other' centres	100	98	98	95	96	98
Family day care schemes	99	98	99	91	99	98

Note: 1991 census for community-based centres and family day care services was conducted in May 1991, for private-for-profit and 'other' centres in August 1991. For all other years except 1999, the census for all long day care services was conducted in August. In 1999, the census was conducted in May.

Sources: DHHCS 1992; DSHS 1994, 1995; DHFS 1997; FaCS 1999b, unpublished data.

Response rates for private-for-profit centres fell from 1992 onwards, and for community-based centres from 1993 onwards. By 1999, the response rate for community-based centres was 94%, while private-for-profit centres had the lowest response rate at 87%. Although response rates for family day care services fell sharply between 1993 and 1995 from 99% to 91%, the trend was reversed in 1997. By 1999, the response rate in family day care and 'other' centres was 98%.

Most of the response rates in the various States and Territories in 1999 were above 90% (Table 1.2), except for private-for-profit centres which had a lower response rate overall. Although response rates were lower for a few types of service providers in some of the smaller jurisdictions, these rates should be interpreted with some caution, as they were the

result of the non-response of one or two service providers out of a small number of providers.

Table 1.2: Number of long day care service providers responding to the Child Care Census and response rates by type of service provider and State/Territory, 1999

Type of service provider	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
	Number								
Community-based centres	382	253	141	74	86	31	30	19	1,016
Private-for-profit centres	984	401	630	211	67	16	19	7	2,335
'Other' centres	110	77	30	15	16	6	20	8	282
Family day care schemes	102	71	84	20	12	11	7	6	313
	Response rates								
Community-based centres	96	93	96	90	93	100	100	86	94
Private-for-profit centres	89	86	88	84	86	89	79	78	87
'Other' centres	98	99	97	94	100	100	95	100	98
Family day care schemes	96	99	99	100	100	100	100	75	98

Source: FaCS unpublished data.

1.3 Expansion of long day care services, 1991 to 1999

One of the main reasons for the growth in demand for child care in Australia has been the increasing participation of mothers in the labour force (AIHW 2001a). During the late 1980s and early 1990s the Commonwealth responded to this growth in demand by implementing a number of strategies to increase the supply of child care places to meet the needs of working parents (AIHW 1995:130). The success of these strategies is reflected in the growth of long day care services – both long day care centres and family day care services.

Because of the great variation in the size of long day care centres and family day care schemes (see Chapter 2), it is more appropriate to examine changes in service capacity by examining trends in the number of Commonwealth-supported 'places' than in the number of service providers. In long day care centres, the number of Commonwealth-supported places is equal to the number of children who can receive Commonwealth support for full-time care in a week. For family day care schemes, a 'place' is equal to 35 hours of care a week (see Section 2.1).

Between 1991 and 1999, the number of places in long day care centres grew by 150%. The growth in family day care places was substantially lower, at 51%. The growth in the number of children using services was somewhat lower than the growth in services, an increase of 121% of children using centre-based care and 38% of children in family day care. Although the increase in the number of paid workers in centre-based care was commensurate with the growth in children, at 126%, the number of family day care coordination unit staff increased by only 14% and the number of family day care providers fell by 9% over the period.

Table 1.3: Estimated numbers of long day care service providers, children using services, and paid workers in agencies, by type of service provider, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999

Type of service provider	1991	1992	1993	1995	1997	1999
Long day care centres						
Places	76,267	93,472	104,152	144,475	182,865	190,326
Children	136,200	159,000	185,700	256,500	294,700	301,500
Paid workers	17,600	21,100	25,000	35,100	40,100	39,700
Family day care schemes						
Places	42,501	45,454	47,855	54,041	62,714	64,037
Children	60,300	69,000	79,600	90,100	85,000	83,100
Paid workers—coordination unit staff	1,400	1,500	1,600	1,800	1,700	1,600
Family day care providers	13,900	14,800	15,200	16,000	14,000	12,700

Note: Data on places are from the FaCS Child Care administrative database at 30 June. Data on children and workers are from the censuses and are adjusted for service provider non-response.

Sources: DHHCS 1992; DSHS 1994, 1995; DHFS 1997; FaCS 1999b, unpublished data.

The information on the number of children and paid workers contained in Table 1.3 is weighted for non-response by the total number of Commonwealth-supported service providers at the time of the census according to the type of service provider, State/Territory and geographic location. In the chapters that follow, however, the unweighted data are used to examine trends in, and distribution of, the characteristics of service providers, various aspects of service provision, children and workers (see AIHW 2000:4). Throughout this report, percentages are calculated excluding missing data.

2 Long day care service provision

This chapter analyses data from the Child Care Censuses to provide a picture of the recent trends in long day care service provision, and characteristics of service provision in 1999. This overview includes trends from 1991 to 1999 in the number of licensed places, the availability of care for young children, the provision of preschool and outside school hours care services, hours of service operation, fees charged and vacancies. A comparison of long day care service provision in 1999 is provided for the various States and Territories. In some instances information is not provided for family day care services – this is because the information was not collected in the census since it was not relevant for these types of services.

2.1 Places

Long day care centres

The number of places that a centre has available for children to be placed in full-time care is a reflection of service size. One measure of the size (or capacity) of a long day care centre is the 'number of licensed places' available, which is equivalent to the maximum number of children a centre is licensed to have in care at any one time.

The number of child care places is regulated by State and Territory legislation and the maximum licensed capacity varies by jurisdiction. For example, in 1999, the maximum number of children allowed to be in care at any one time in centres in Queensland and the Northern Territory was 75, while in the Australian Capital Territory it was 90. In New South Wales the maximum number of places allowable was determined by the age of children, with only 30 children younger than 2 years of age and 60 children between 2 and 6 years of age allowed in a centre at any one time. In Western Australia and Tasmania there was no limit to the number of licensed places.

Centres can be classified as 'small' (fewer than 30 places), 'medium' (30–59 places), or 'large' (60 or more places). The size of a centre may affect the number or variety of activities that are run at the centre. Larger centres, for instance, may be in a better position to offer a wider range of activities and resources than smaller centres. Despite this, some parents prefer to place their children in smaller centres, since they consider them to be more 'home-like' and individualised (Prescott 1978 in Ozanne-Smith & Sebastian 1998:40). It has been suggested, however, that many centres with fewer than 35 places are not in the same position as larger centres to implement cost-saving measures, and may have difficulty keeping fees at affordable levels (SCARC 1998:44).

Data on the number of licensed places are available from 1992 to 1999 for private-for-profit and 'other' centres and from 1995 to 1999 for community-based centres. Over the period, private-for-profit centres had the highest proportion of centres that were 'large', but also the highest proportion of centres that were 'small'.

Between 1992 and 1999, the proportion of centres that were 'large' (with 60 or more children) grew, from 18% to 33% for private-for-profit centres, and 10% to 20% for 'other' centres (Table 2.1). For both types of centre there was a corresponding decrease between 1992 and 1997 in the proportion of centres that were 'small' (less than 30). For private-for-profit

centres, the fall in the proportion of small centres and the rise in the proportion of large centres predominantly occurred between 1993 and 1997, while for 'other' centres these changes occurred between 1995 and 1999.

Table 2.1: Long day care centres by number of licensed places and type of centre, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999 (per cent)

Type of centre	Places	1992	1993	1995	1997	1999
Community-based	< 30	n.a.	n.a.	11	9	9
	30–39	n.a.	n.a.	23	21	20
	40–49	n.a.	n.a.	40	37	34
	50–59	n.a.	n.a.	14	17	20
	60+	n.a.	n.a.	13	16	18
	Total	n.a.	n.a.	100	100	100
Total (n)		n.a.	n.a.	1,053	1,063	1,016
Private-for-profit	< 30	40	38	30	26	25
	30–39	21	20	22	20	19
	40–49	12	12	12	12	12
	50–59	8	8	9	10	10
	60+	18	22	26	32	33
	Total	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		1,041	1,264	1,874	2,307	2,335
'Other'	< 30	30	27	25	22	19
	30–39	25	27	22	21	22
	40–49	21	27	26	24	23
	50–59	14	12	17	16	16
	60+	10	7	10	17	20
	Total	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		180	186	260	286	282

Sources: DSHS 1994, 1995; DHFS 1997; AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

There was a similar increase between 1995 and 1999 in the proportion of community-based centres that were 'large', with the proportion of centres that had 60 or more places increasing from 13% to 18%. However, over this period there was only a slight fall in the proportion of community-based centres that were small.

For all types of long day care centres, the increase in the proportion of large centres and the decrease in the proportion of small centres may have occurred for three reasons. Firstly, centres established since 1992 may have been larger than existing centres; secondly, existing centres may have added to their number of licensed places over the years; and thirdly, smaller centres may have closed due to an inability to remain competitive with larger centres or because they may have combined with other centres.

There were considerable variations between States and Territories in the size of centres in 1999 (Table 2.2). Centres in Queensland were more likely to be 'large', while those in New South Wales were more likely to be 'small'. For example, among private-for-profit centres, most centres in Queensland (71%) had 60 or more licensed places, and only a small minority (5%) had fewer than 30 places. In New South Wales just under half (48%) the centres had fewer than 30 licensed places, and only 7% had 60 or more places. The relatively small size of centres in New South Wales may be a reflection of New South Wales licensing regulations, which require centres with 30–39 licensed places to employ one qualified early childhood teacher, and those with between 40 and 59 places, two teachers.

Table 2.2: Long day care centres by number of licensed places, type of centre and State/Territory, 1999 (per cent)

Type of centre	Places	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based	< 30	9	4	4	18	12	23	20	0	9
	30–39	15	37	8	26	9	13	7	21	20
	40–49	49	17	35	20	20	10	53	53	34
	50–59	15	21	25	23	30	32	10	21	20
	60+	11	21	28	14	29	23	10	5	18
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		382	253	141	74	86	31	30	19	1,016
Private-for-profit	< 30	48	8	5	18	4	38	16	29	25
	30–39	23	14	5	57	10	31	5	29	19
	40–49	11	20	10	7	21	19	0	0	12
	50–59	10	14	9	9	15	6	11	0	10
	60+	7	44	71	9	49	6	68	43	33
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		984	401	630	211	67	16	19	7	2,335
'Other'	< 30	28	9	10	20	25	17	25	0	19
	30–39	22	25	3	47	19	0	20	38	22
	40–49	23	14	30	27	25	67	30	25	23
	50–59	18	22	13	7	13	0	5	13	16
	60+	9	30	43	0	19	17	20	25	20
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		110	77	30	15	16	6	20	8	282

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

Family day care schemes

Since family day care services are not licensed in every jurisdiction, the Child Care Census collected data on the 'funded places' held by each family day care scheme. In family day care the numbers of places approved for funding are known as 'equivalent full-time' places (EFT) where an EFT is usually 35 hours of care per week. An EFT may be divided between a number of children who receive care for a total of 35 hours per week or one child can occupy more than one EFT if the child uses family day care for more than 35 hours per week. Each family day care scheme has a number of EFT places, which are distributed between the family day care providers.

Numbers of equivalent full-time places per family day care scheme were much higher than numbers of licensed places per long day care centre. This is mainly due to the different organisational structure of family day care services. It reflects the scheme's ability to access and manage the services of many individual carers from a centralised location.

In the period 1992 to 1999 only a small proportion of family day care schemes had fewer than 40 EFT places – for example, 3% in 1999 (Table 2.4). Trends from 1992 to 1999 indicate a substantial growth in the size of family day care schemes, with the proportion of schemes with 160 or more places increasing from 27% to 57% over the period. Between 1995 and 1999 the proportion of schemes with 200 or more places increased from 25% to 37%. Data on schemes with 200 or more places is not available for 1992 and 1993, but it is likely that growth in the number of schemes of this size did occur over that period.

Table 2.3: Family day care schemes by number of equivalent full-time (EFT) places, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999 (per cent)

Number of EFTs	1992	1993	1995	1997	1999
< 40	1	2	3	4	3
40–79	23	19	17	13	11
80–119	22	20	15	11	12
120–159	27	26	21	18	18
160–199	27	32	19	20	20
200+	(a)	(a)	25	33	37
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	316	329	340	321	313

(a) Schemes with 200+ places are included in the category '160–199' for 1992 and 1993.

Sources: DSHS 1994, 1995; DHFS 1997; AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

Although by 1999 more than half of schemes Australia-wide had 160 or more places, there were some variations between the different jurisdictions (Table 2.4). The greatest variation in the size of schemes was in Queensland. South Australia tended to have large schemes—83% of family day care schemes in South Australia had 200 or more places. The relatively large size of schemes in South Australia may be due to the fact that the South Australian Government is the sponsor for all family day care in that state. Coordination of family day care therefore occurs at a more centralised level than in other jurisdictions.

The Northern Territory had the highest proportion of small schemes—50% of schemes (3 out of 6) had fewer than 80 places. This is probably due to the lower population density of the Northern Territory compared with other parts of the country.

Table 2.4: Family day care schemes by number of equivalent full-time (EFT) places and State/Territory, 1999 (per cent)

Number of EFTs	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
< 40	1	0	6	0	0	0	0	33	3
40–79	9	11	15	5	8	9	0	17	11
80–119	12	13	14	10	8	9	14	0	12
120–159	19	10	29	10	0	18	14	17	18
160–199	23	13	23	25	0	36	14	0	19
200+	37	54	13	50	83	27	57	33	37
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	102	71	84	20	12	11	7	6	313

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

2.2 Places for young children

Licensing requirements for long day care centres vary according to the age of children in care. In the early 1990s one issue of concern in relation to accessibility of child care services was the under-supply of long day care centre places for very young children, particularly children under 2 years of age. State and Territory licensing regulations require higher staff-child ratios and more space for babies than for younger children, making them more expensive to care for (Auditor-General 1994:47). One of the aims of the Commonwealth's 1994 New Growth Strategy was to increase the supply of long day care centre places for children under 2 years.

It would be useful to examine census data from the period 1991 to 1999 to determine if there has been an increase in the availability of places for young children. However, this is not possible because in most census years the data on places by age group are recorded in overlapping age categories, to some extent reflecting State and Territory licensing regulations. What is possible, however, is to examine changes between 1995 and 1999 in the proportions of centres in the States and Territories that have *any* places for children under 2 years.

Between 1995 and 1999, Australia-wide, there was an increase in the proportion of centres that had places for children under 2 years for all types of service providers (Table 2.5). Over the period, the proportion of centres that had places for 'young' children increased slightly for community-based and 'other' centres – from 91% to 93% and from 79% to 82% respectively. The increase was much greater, however, for private-for-profit centres, with the proportions increasing from 54% to 68%.

Table 2.5: Percentage of centres with places for children under 2 years, by type of long day care centre and State/Territory, 1995 and 1999

Type of centre	Year	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based	1995	83	96	93	96	95	97	96	100	91
	1999	86	97	97	99	100	100	97	100	93
Private-for-profit	1995	22	91	71	67	93	83	100	60	54
	1999	38	98	85	90	96	100	95	71	68
'Other'	1995	81	77	69	82	87	100	71	100	79
	1999	81	79	90	87	94	66	65	100	82

Source: Table A1.1.

There were considerable differences in the provision of places for children under 2 years between types of centres and across jurisdictions. Community-based centres were the most likely to have places for children aged less than 2 years in both 1995 and 1999.

Within each type of centre the allocation of places for children aged less than 2 years varied considerably by State and Territory. New South Wales tended to have a relatively low proportion of centres with places for young children. In 1999, for example, 38% of private-for-profit centres, 81% of 'other' centres and 86% of community-based centres provided care for children under 2. In South Australia, on the other hand, almost all types of centres had places for young children, with 94% of 'other' centres, 96% of private-for-profit centres and all community-based centres having places for children under 2.

The relatively low proportion of private-for-profit long day care centres in New South Wales with places for children under 2 years reflects the history of private-for-profit centres in that jurisdiction. Many of these centres were formerly private preschools (providing services for children aged 2-4 years) which extended their operating hours to qualify for funding as long day care centres (NSW Audit Office 1994:34).

2.3 Preschool and outside school hours care services

Long day care centres and family day care services were originally funded and/or licensed to provide 'long day care' for children under school age, but in recent years these services have changed considerably. Service providers have moved into a more flexible type of service provision in order to meet parents' and children's needs. A service provider funded and/or licensed as a long day care centre or a family day care provider may provide occasional care, a preschool program and/or care for school-age children. Long day care centres and family day care providers may also take children to attend a dedicated sessional preschool. These initiatives are reflected in the data on service provision – they are also reflected in the data on the use of services by children (see Chapter 3).

Since 1995, the census has collected information on whether long day care centres offered an in-house preschool program run by a qualified staff member and on whether centres or family day care providers took children to attend a dedicated sessional preschool service. In 1999, the census also collected information on whether long day care centres offered any places for school-age children in the census week.

In 1995, private-for-profit centres were more likely than community-based and 'other' centres to provide an in-house preschool program run by a staff member with early

childhood teaching qualifications or a 3-year tertiary qualifications in child care (Table 2.6). At this time, an in-house preschool program was provided by 48% of private-for-profit centres compared with 39% of community-based centres and 45% of 'other' centres. Between 1995 and 1999, however, the proportion of long day care centres running an in-house preschool program increased for both community-based and 'other' long day care centres, so that by 1999 around half of all long day care centres offered this type of service.

Table 2.6: Percentage of long day care centres that offer an in-house preschool program and have a staff member with early childhood teaching qualifications or a 3-year diploma or bachelor's degree in child care, by type of centre and State/Territory, 1995, 1997 and 1999

Type of centre	Year	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based	1995	62	23	49	9	21	10	56	14	39
	1997	83	31	51	11	23	6	50	8	50
	1999	78	47	44	7	14	6	50	0	50
Private-for-profit	1995	52	42	55	19	50	25	56	0	48
	1997	55	55	48	18	49	29	18	11	49
	1999	55	66	45	14	45	25	53	0	50
'Other'	1995	56	41	52	12	13	20	76	14	45
	1997	65	40	32	25	6	50	77	20	48
	1999	64	56	50	0	6	50	55	0	51

Source: Table A1.2.

There were considerable variations in the States and Territories in the extent to which long day care centres offered a preschool program, reflecting to some extent differences in the models of preschool provision in the jurisdictions. In 1999, a relatively high proportion of community-based and 'other' centres in New South Wales offered a preschool program run by a qualified teacher. This is partly explained by State licensing regulations, but it may also be partly attributed to market forces. Preschool programs run in long day care centres in New South Wales tend to be financially competitive with those run in sessional preschools because of the relatively high fees charged by most sessional preschools in that jurisdiction (NSW Audit Office 1994). In Victoria, the increase between 1995 and 1999 in the proportion of all types of centres running an in-house preschool program with a qualified teacher illustrates the effects of the funding incentives introduced by the Victorian Government for long day care centres to provide such programs (AIHW 1997:109).

Long day care centres were less likely to provide in-house preschool programs in jurisdictions where all funded sessional preschools do not charge fees and are located and integrated within primary schools. In 1999, only a relatively small proportion of long day care centres in Western Australia and none in the Northern Territory, for instance, provided an in-house preschool program.

The proportion of long day care centre providers Australia-wide taking children out to a dedicated sessional preschool was substantially lower than the proportion running an in-house preschool program in all the years under review (Table 2.7). By 1999, only 22% of private-for-profit centres, 18% of community-based centres and 11% of 'other' centres took children out to a sessional preschool. Between 1995 and 1999, the proportions taking children out to preschool increased slightly for private-for-profit centres and 'other' centres but remained unchanged for community-based centres. In each year, 'other' centres were less likely to take children out to preschool than were community-based and private-for-profit centres.

Jurisdictions in which a relatively high proportion of long day care centres ran a preschool program tended to have a relatively low proportion of centres taking children out to sessional preschools and vice-versa. Only a very small proportion of long day care centres in New South Wales, for instance, took children out to sessional preschools, while in Western Australia and the Northern Territory, the proportions were relatively high.

In 1999, 23% of family day care providers took children in their care to a sessional preschool, around the same proportion as in 1995 and 1997 (Table 2.7). The proportion of family day care providers taking children to preschool varied considerably in the jurisdictions, ranging from 9% in New South Wales to 44% in the Australian Capital Territory in 1999.

Table 2.7: Percentage of long day care centres and family day care providers taking children to a dedicated sessional preschool, by type of service provider and State/Territory, 1995, 1997 and 1999

Type of service provider	Year	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based centres	1995	2	31	14	31	33	23	28	55	18
	1997	1	25	14	27	36	23	27	58	17
	1999	1	23	21	46	43	13	27	53	18
Private-for-profit centres	1995	1	30	23	62	43	25	67	100	19
	1997	1	18	20	53	49	29	59	78	16
	1999	1	19	34	69	61	38	32	100	22
'Other' centres	1995	0	5	17	12	13	20	5	57	7
	1997	2	6	13	13	25	0	23	80	9
	1999	1	8	7	27	31	17	25	100	11
Family day care provider	1995	8	29	27	35	18	12	30	41	22
	1997	9	29	24	23	20	27	32	38	22
	1999	9	30	23	24	42	12	44	39	23

Source: Table A1.3.

In recent years, long day care centre providers have responded to parents' and children's needs by providing care for school-age children, with private-for-profit providers having been the most responsive to the demand for this type of care. Data from the 1999 Census (Table 2.8) show that, Australia-wide, around half (51%) of all private-for-profit long day care centres offered care for school age children in the census week compared with 14% of community-based centres and 13% of 'other' centres. For every type of centre, providers in Western Australia were more likely, and those in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory less likely, to offer outside school hours care in the census week. The tendency for long day care centres to offer care for school-age children probably also relates to the availability of specific outside school hours care services in the local area.

Table 2.8: Percentage of long day care centres which report that they have outside school hours care places by type of centre and State/Territory, 1999

Type of centre	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based	8	8	29	32	17	29	10	16	14
Private-for-profit	32	53	66	90	51	63	21	86	51
'Other'	11	9	10	33	13	67	10	25	13

Source: Table A1.4.

2.4 Hours of opening of long day care centres

As noted in Chapter 1, one of the aims and objectives of government support for child care services is to provide services that are accessible for parents. The census provides information on the number of hours that long day care centres operate, which is an indicator of service accessibility. In order to be eligible for Commonwealth support, long day care centres must operate on normal working days for at least 8 hours a day and 48 weeks in the year. Most centre-based long day care services, however, operate for more than 8 hours per day to meet the varying needs of parents. The questions on opening hours for long day care centres are virtually the same for each census year, so that data are comparable over time.

In the period from 1991 to 1999 the daily hours of operation of long day care centres increased (Table 2.9), with the proportion of services opening for 11 hours or more increasing for all types of service providers. This was most pronounced for private-for-profit services where the proportion of centres operating for 11 or more hours per day increased from 31% to 61% over the period. Although the proportion of all centres opening for less than 10 hours decreased over the period 1991 to 1999, the most marked drop was for community-based centres (from 15% to 6%).

By 1999, the proportion of centres opening for 11 or more hours per day was highest for private-for-profit centres (61% compared with 42% for community-based centres and 26% for 'other' centres). Community-based centres had the smallest proportion (6%) opening for less than 10 hours per day compared with 11% of private-for-profit and 18% of 'other' centres.

Table 2.9: Daily hours of operation of long day care centres, by type of centre, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999 (per cent)

Type of centre	Hours per day	1991	1992	1993	1995	1997	1999
Community-based	8-< 9	1	1	1	1	1	1
	9-< 10	14	9	7	6	4	5
	10-< 11	50	54	55	54	54	53
	11+	35	36	37	39	40	42
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		947	948	1,025	1,053	1,063	1,016
Private-for-profit	8-< 9	11	12	12	8	5	5
	9-< 10	13	13	11	9	7	6
	10-< 11	44	42	41	33	29	28
	11+	31	32	37	50	59	61
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		835	1,041	1,264	1,873	2,307	2,335
'Other'	8-< 9	7	14	9	7	6	7
	9-< 10	28	26	27	20	15	11
	10-< 11	49	42	45	51	52	55
	11+	16	17	18	23	27	26
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		126	180	186	260	286	282

Sources: DHHCS 1992; DSHS 1994, 1995; DHFS 1997; AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

In 1999, for each type of long day care centre, there were considerable variations across the States and Territories in their hours of operation (Table 2.10). Among community-based centres, those in South Australia (57%), Victoria (56%) and Queensland (40%) were the most likely to stay open for 11 or more hours per day. The pattern was similar for private-for-profit centres. In South Australia 96% of private-for-profit centres stayed open for 11 or more hours per day, and in Victoria and Queensland the proportions were 86% and 85% respectively. For 'other' centres, Queensland had the highest proportion of services staying open for 11 hours or more per day (53%).

Table 2.10: Daily hours of operation of long day care centres, by type of centre and State/Territory, 1999 (per cent)

Type of centre	Hours per day	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based	8-< 9	1	0	1	1	0	3	0	0	1
	9- <10	4	2	6	8	1	13	30	5	5
	10-< 11	57	42	52	58	42	77	70	79	53
	11+	38	56	40	32	57	6	0	16	42
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		382	253	141	74	86	31	30	19	1,016
Private-for-profit	8-< 9	11	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	5
	9-<10	13	1	1	1	1	6	11	0	6
	10-< 11	44	13	14	21	3	75	89	57	28
	11+	32	86	85	78	96	19	0	43	61
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		984	401	630	211	67	16	19	7	2,335
'Other'	8-< 9	11	4	10	7	6	0	5	0	7
	9-< 10	8	18	0	13	0	17	25	0	11
	10-< 11	56	53	37	60	63	67	60	88	55
	11+	25	25	53	20	31	17	10	13	26
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		110	77	30	15	16	6	20	8	282

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

In comparison, all types of centres in the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania were less likely to open for 11 or more hours per day. In the Australian Capital Territory there were no community-based or private-for-profit centres staying open for 11 or more hours per day, and 10% of 'other' centres stayed open for these hours. In Tasmania the proportions staying open for 11 or more hours per day were 6%, 19% and 17% for community-based, private-for-profit and 'other' centres respectively.

Although most private-for-profit and community-based centres opened for at least 10 hours a day, 30% of community-based centres in the Australian Capital Territory opened for less than 10 hours a day, as did 24% of private-for-profit centres in New South Wales. Many of the New South Wales private-for-profit centres opening for relatively short hours would have formerly been sessional preschools that extended their hours to become eligible for Childcare Assistance (NSW Audit Office 1994). A relatively high proportion of 'other' centres in several jurisdictions were also likely to be open for less than 10 hours per day. Many of these were probably child care centres on TAFE campuses for students attending classes at the campus during normal working hours (9 am to 5 pm) and TAFE campus employees.

The census also asked a question on whether long day care centres opened during weekends, although these questions are not comparable over the census years. In 1999, less than 1% of centres opened at weekends.

No information was collected on 'hours of opening' for family day care services because of the nature of that service. However, information was collected on whether children in family day care were in 'overnight care' – between the hours of 8 pm and 6 am – during the census week. In 1999, 19% of family day care providers were caring for children during these hours.

2.5 Vacancies in long day care centres

The vacancy rate in long day care centres also provides an indicator of the accessibility of services, since it shows the relationship between the supply of and demand for care.

The census collects information about two types of vacancies in long day care centres – full-time (FT) and part-time (PT). A ‘full-time’ vacancy is defined as a place that is available for a full day throughout the whole week, and a ‘part-time’ vacancy is defined as a place that is available for part of the week. Due to differences in data definitions in the various census years, however, only data for the years 1995, 1997 and 1999 are examined for private-for-profit and ‘other’ centres and 1997 and 1999 for community-based centres.

In the second half of the 1990s, there was an increase in the proportion of all types of long day care centres with vacant places. Over the period 1995 to 1999, the proportion of private-for-profit centres with vacancies increased from 63% to 91% and the proportion of ‘other’ centres from 82% to 92%. There was a similar increase for community-based centres, with the proportion of centres with vacancies increasing from 85% to 93% between 1997 and 1999 (Table 2.11).

The considerable increase in the proportion of private-for-profit centres with vacancies was mainly due to an increase in the proportion of centres with both full-time and part-time vacancies, from 30% of centres in 1995 to 64% in 1999. A similar pattern is evident for community-based and ‘other’ centres. Over the period, there was a corresponding fall in the proportion of centres with only part-time vacancies and the proportion with no vacancies. For instance, from 1995 to 1999 the proportion of ‘other’ centres with only part-time vacancies fell from 43% to 21% and the proportion with no vacancies from 18% to 8%. By 1999 around two-thirds of all types of long day care centres had both full-time and part-time vacancies.

Table 2.11: Long day care centres with vacant places, full-time (FT) and part-time (PT), by type of centre, 1995, 1997 and 1999 (per cent)

Type of centre/Vacant places	1995	1997	1999
Community-based			
Vacancies	n.a.	85	93
FT and PT	n.a.	44	61
FT only	n.a.	7	6
PT only	n.a.	34	25
No vacancies	n.a.	15	7
Total	n.a.	100	100
Total (n)	1,053	1,063	1,016
Private-for-profit			
Vacancies	63	86	91
FT and PT	30	54	64
FT only	8	14	10
PT only	25	18	17
No vacancies	37	14	9
Total	100	100	100
Total (n)	1,873	2,307	2,335
'Other'			
Vacancies	82	87	92
FT and PT	35	48	64
FT only	4	7	7
PT only	43	32	21
No vacancies	18	13	8
Total	100	100	100
Total (n)	260	286	282

Note: Data refer to vacancies in 'licensed' places.

Sources: DHFS 1997; AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

In 1999, the proportion of centres with vacancies varied across the States and Territories. The lowest proportions of centres with vacancies were in New South Wales. New South Wales had vacancy rates of 84% for private-for-profit centres and 87% for community-based and 'other' centres, compared with a national average of 91%, 93% and 92% respectively (Table 2.12). The Northern Territory also had a relatively low proportion of centres with vacancies, but the results are based on a small number of service providers. All long day care centres in Tasmania and almost all long day care centres in Western Australia had vacancies.

Table 2.12: Long day care centres with vacant places, full-time (FT) and part-time (PT), by type of centre and State/Territory, 1999 (per cent)

Type of centre/Vacant places	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based									
Vacancies	87	95	96	99	98	100	93	89	93
FT and PT	49	68	71	66	71	81	50	63	61
FT only	8	4	5	4	9	3	3	5	6
PT only	29	24	21	28	17	16	40	21	25
No vacancies	13	5	4	1	2	0	7	11	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	382	253	141	74	86	31	30	19	1,016
Private-for-profit									
Vacancies	84	96	98	99	94	100	79	86	91
FT and PT	49	71	75	83	76	69	53	57	64
FT only	12	12	9	3	9	0	5	14	10
PT only	23	13	13	12	9	31	21	14	17
No vacancies	16	4	2	1	6	0	21	14	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	984	401	630	211	67	16	19	7	2,335
'Other'									
Vacancies	87	95	97	100	100	100	90	75	92
FT and PT	50	69	73	87	88	83	60	75	64
FT only	7	10	7	0	6	0	5	0	7
PT only	30	16	17	13	6	17	25	0	21
No vacancies	13	5	3	0	0	0	10	25	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	110	77	30	15	16	6	20	8	282

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

Increases in the number of centres with vacant places between 1995 and 1999 are consistent with trends in utilisation rates over the period. In 1995 the average utilisation rate of long day care centres (measured by 'total child hours paid for as a percentage of total capacity') was 90%. This proportion had dropped to 80% by 1997 and 71% by 1999 (FaCS 2000a:12-13).

Increases in vacancy rates and falls in utilisation rates could indicate that there was an improvement in the accessibility of services over this period, i.e. the demand for child care was met and there was an over-supply of places. Since parents' demand for care is affected by the affordability of care, however, it is likely that these trends can partly be attributed to the decline in the affordability of care over the period (see Section 2.6), which indicates a decline in the accessibility of care. Utilisation rates increased following the introduction of the Child Care Benefit which improved the affordability of care (AIHW 2001a:170).

2.6 Fees charged

As noted, another of the aims and objectives of government support for child care is to provide services that are affordable for parents. Information on fees charged by service providers was collected for all types of service providers in each of the census years. Since some centre-based long day care providers charged different fees for children of different ages, for the purpose of comparability between service providers, census data refer to the

'average weekly fees' charged. In examining trends in average fees for long day care centres over time, it is important to note that somewhat different methods were used to obtain these data in the various years (AIHW 1998:17). Data on 'average weekly fees' charged by private-for-profit and 'other' centres are not available for 1991.

Between 1992 and 1999 average weekly fees for long day care increased more than the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Average weekly fees increased by 45% for community-based centres (Table 2.13), 44% for private-for-profit centres, and 36% for 'other' centres, compared with an increase in the CPI of 14%. Family day care fees rose least over the period, increasing by 30%.

Table 2.13: Mean full-time 'average fee' charged per week by type of service provider, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999 (\$)

Type of service provider	1991	1992	1993	1995	1997	1999
Community-based centres	106	118	126	139	163	171
Private-for-profit centres	n.a.	116	124	142	155	167
'Other' centres	n.a.	119	129	138	156	162
Family day care (including administrative levy)	103	107	116	122	130	139
Childcare Assistance ceiling fee	100	103	108.50	112.50	115	117
CPI at 30 June	106.0	107.3	109.3	116.2	120.2	122.3

Sources: DHHCS 1992; DSHS 1994, 1995; DHFS 1997; AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

Australia-wide, community-based centres charged the highest average weekly fee (\$171 per week) in 1999, and family day care services charged the lowest (\$139 per week). There was considerable variation between the jurisdictions in the fees charged, for all types of service provider. Fees in the Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania and New South Wales tended to be higher than the national average, and fees in the Northern Territory and Queensland tended to be lower (Table 2.14).

Table 2.14: Mean full-time 'average weekly fee' charged by type of service provider and State/Territory, 1999 (\$)

Types of service provider	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based centres	178	169	156	164	172	177	182	156	171
Private-for-profit centres	171	166	158	155	168	182	173	150	167
'Other' centres	169	161	152	156	164	173	184	151	162
Family day care (including administrative levy)	149	128	127	151	161	160	163	134	139

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

Although it is evident that fees have increased considerably over the period under review, fees charged by service providers do not necessarily indicate the cost of child care for parents, as the Commonwealth Government provides assistance to make child care services more affordable for families (AIHW 1997:123). In order to examine changes in affordability, increases in fees need to be examined in conjunction with changes in the level of assistance provided by the Commonwealth Government.

The long day care rate of Childcare Assistance (formerly called 'fee relief') which was provided by the Commonwealth Government between 1984 and 2000, was an income-tested payment which reduced fees for low- and middle-income families using Commonwealth-supported long day care services. From July 1994 until July 2000, the Commonwealth also

provided the Childcare Rebate to assist parents with the costs of work-related child care. In July 2000 both Childcare Assistance and the Childcare Rebate were replaced by the Childcare Benefit (AIHW 2001a).

Childcare Assistance was set at a proportion of a 'ceiling fee'. All eligible families paid a portion of the 'ceiling fee' plus the difference between the 'ceiling fee' and the fee charged by the service provider, known as the 'gap fee' (AIHW 1999:117-18). Families with children in work-related care could then claim the Childcare Rebate on the 'gap fee'. The 'ceiling fee' was indexed (increased by the CPI) in most (but not all) years between 1991 and 1999 and was increased by an additional amount above indexation between 1992 and 1993.

In 1992, a relatively large proportion of long day care service providers charged no 'gap fee', i.e., their average weekly fees were at or below the 'ceiling fee' (Table 2.15). Families eligible for Childcare Assistance who used their services thus paid only a portion of the 'ceiling fee'. Between 1992 and 1999, however, reflecting the fact that average weekly fees increased well above inflation, the proportion of service providers with no 'gap fee' fell markedly, particularly for private-for-profit centres and family day care services. More than half of family day care schemes (58%) had no 'gap fee' in 1992, but the proportion had fallen to 5% in 1999. Child care services clearly became more costly for low- and middle-income families receiving Childcare Assistance, since fee increases outstripped increases in government assistance (see also FaCS 1999c:9).

Table 2.15: Percentage of long day care service providers with no 'gap fee', 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999

Type of service provider	1991	1992	1993	1995	1997	1999
Community-based centres	40	18	10	4	1	< 0.5
Private-for-profit centres	n.a.	23	12	4	1	1
'Other' centres	n.a.	23	13	15	9	4
Family day care (including administrative levy)	52	58	43	18	37	5

Sources: DHHCS 1992; DSHS 1994, 1995; DHFS 1997; AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

These data are consistent with other AIHW analyses of child care affordability, which show that long day care became less affordable for families between 1991 and 1998 (AIHW 2001c). This analysis also shows that child care affordability improved greatly with the introduction of the Child Care Benefit in July 2000.

In the AIHW analysis 'child care costs (fees charged less government assistance) as a proportion of disposable income' was used as the indicator of child care affordability (AIHW 2001a: 171). This indicator, however, overstates improvements in affordability at the time Child Care Benefit was introduced. One of the reasons child care costs fell relative to disposable income is that disposable incomes were increased to compensate families for the effects of the introduction of a goods and services tax (GST). Because purchasing power was reduced with the introduction of the GST, the increases in disposable income (and thus in child care affordability) were not generally as great as they appear. Affordability might not have improved at all, however, if the new tax system had applied the GST to child care fees.

3 Children

The census of child care centres collected information on various characteristics of children and families using services. All long day care centres and family day care services provided information on these characteristics. This chapter examines the number of children attending long day care services, the time children spent in care, the age of children using services, family type, whether the children had additional (special) needs, workforce status of parents, child characteristics according to parents' workforce status, and the receipt of Childcare Assistance.

Most of the information was collected for all children using Commonwealth-funded long day care services even if they were absent in the census week, provided that they were booked into and charged for care. However, data on the number of hours that children spent in care were recorded only for children using services in the census week.

3.1 Number of children in long day care

The number of children using services per long day care centre during a week is greater than the number of places (see Section 2.1). This is because many 'places' are used by more than one child in a census week, since most children are not in care full-time (see Section 3.2). The number of children using services per centre reflects the total number of places available and the attendance patterns of children using services at the centre in a week.

In 1999, nationwide, the average number of children using services per long day care centre was 75 for community-based and private-for-profit centres and 64 for 'other' centres (Table 3.1). However, the average varied between jurisdictions. Community-based centres and private-for-profit centres in South Australia, for instance, had a relatively high average number of children using services per centre – 91 and 88 respectively. Tasmania also had relatively high averages for community-based centres (102) and 'other' centres (98). The Northern Territory had the lowest average number of children using services for all types of centres.

Community-based and private-for-profit centres had the same average number of children using services per centre, but the distributions were quite different. Private-for-profit centres were more likely than community-based centres to have either a relatively large number of children using services per centre or a relatively small number. In 1999, 25% of private-for-profit centres had 100 or more children using services in the census week compared with 18% of community-based centres. On the other hand, 11% of private-for-profit centres had fewer than 35 children using services per centre compared with 6% of community-based centres.

Table 3.1: Number of children using long day care centres, by type of centre and State/Territory, 1999 (per cent)

Type of centre/ Number of children per centre	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
<i>Community-based</i>									
< 35	5	4	10	9	1	3	17	0	6
35–54	20	22	14	20	9	10	20	58	19
55–74	28	35	26	18	21	16	40	37	28
75–99	35	25	27	27	36	16	13	5	29
100+	12	13	23	26	33	55	10	0	18
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Average number of children per centre</i>	74	71	77	77	91	102	62	55	75
Total (n)	382	253	141	74	86	31	30	19	1,016
<i>Private-for-profit</i>									
< 35	14	11	6	18	6	6	11	14	11
35–54	29	26	11	23	12	31	16	43	22
55–74	23	21	16	24	18	25	16	0	21
75–99	19	17	26	24	19	19	21	29	21
100+	15	25	42	11	45	19	37	14	25
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Average number of children per centre</i>	66	74	92	63	88	75	80	62	75
Total (n)	984	401	630	211	67	16	19	7	2,335
<i>'Other'</i>									
< 35	17	13	3	7	13	17	30	0	14
35–54	31	25	7	40	38	0	20	75	27
55–74	29	30	40	40	31	0	25	13	30
75–99	15	19	27	7	6	17	15	13	17
100+	7	13	23	7	13	67	10	0	12
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Average number of children per centre</i>	61	65	83	57	59	98	56	56	64
Total (n)	110	77	30	15	16	6	20	8	282

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

In 1999, the average number of children being cared for in the reference week per family day care scheme was 256, although there were wide variations across jurisdictions, with the average ranging from 199 in the Northern Territory to 645 in South Australia (Table 3.2). All the schemes in the Northern Territory cared for fewer than 300 children, while in South Australia more than half the schemes (58%) cared for 400 or more children.

The average number of children being cared for per family day care provider, however, was fairly similar across the States and Territories, and ranged from 5 in the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory to 8 in Tasmania.

Nearly two-thirds of carers nationwide (64%) had between 3 and 8 children in their care in the reference week. Tasmania had the largest numbers of children per provider being cared for during the reference week, with more than half (53%) of providers caring for 9 or more children in the reference week. The Northern Territory had relatively low numbers, with nearly half (46%) of providers caring for fewer than 5 children in the reference week.

Table 3.2: Number of children using family day care services, by State/Territory, 1999 (per cent)

Number of children per family day care scheme/provider	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Family day care —coordination unit									
< 100	17	11	18	15	17	0	14	50	16
100–199	32	21	43	5	0	18	43	17	29
200–299	27	31	29	40	25	27	0	33	29
300–399	12	11	6	20	0	18	14	0	10
400–500	5	14	5	5	8	18	14	0	8
500+	7	11	0	15	50	18	14	0	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Average number of children per scheme									
	230	292	190	306	645	386	343	119	256
Total (n)	102	71	84	20	12	11	7	6	313
Family day care providers									
1–2	8	12	10	6	16	8	10	14	11
3–4	18	23	25	12	22	10	26	32	21
5–6	27	24	27	22	19	12	37	27	24
7–8	21	18	19	22	14	16	19	18	19
9–10	13	10	10	19	11	17	5	6	12
11+	12	12	9	20	18	36	2	4	13
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Average number of children per provider									
	6	6	6	7	6	8	5	5	6
Total (n)	3,505	3,284	2,638	782	1,157	466	134	470	12,436

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

In 1999 there was considerable variation between the States and Territories in the proportions of children being cared for by the different types of service providers (Table 3.3), reflecting the differences in the distribution of the types of service providers. In Queensland, New South Wales, Western Australia and Victoria, children were more likely to attend private-for-profit centres than long day care services provided by other types of service providers. Around two-thirds of children (67%) in long day care in Queensland and just over half (53%) in New South Wales were in private-for-profit centres. In the Northern Territory a greater proportion of children in long day care used community-based centres (40%) and 'other' centres (17%) than in other jurisdictions. The use of family day care was highest in Tasmania (46%), followed by the Australian Capital Territory (35%) and South Australia (34%).

Table 3.3: Children using long day care services, by type of service provider and State/Territory, 1999 (per cent)

Type of service provider	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
<i>Long day care centres</i>	81	72	82	76	66	54	65	73	77
Community-based	23	24	12	22	35	34	27	40	22
Private-for-profit	53	40	67	51	26	13	22	16	50
'Other'	5	7	3	3	4	6	16	17	5
<i>Family day care</i>	19	28	18	24	34	46	35	27	23
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	123,736	73,152	87,528	25,997	22,464	9,210	6,915	2,651	351,653

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

3.2 Time spent in care

The number of hours that children spent in care was similar for all types of service providers. In all the census years, more than half of all children were in care for less than 20 hours in the census week and less than a fifth were in care for 40 or more hours a week (Table 3.4). The main trend over the 1991 to 1999 period was an increase in the proportion of children using care for less than 20 hours per week and a decrease in the proportion in care for 40 hours or more. For instance, the proportion of children in community-based centres in care for less than 20 hours per week increased from 53% to 62% over the period, and the proportion in care for 40 hours or more fell from 19% to 12%. The increase in the proportion of children in care for less than 20 hours per week was considerably lower for other types of service providers. In all census years only a small minority of children were in care for 50 hours or more – by 1999 the proportion was less than 5% for all types of service providers.

Table 3.4: Hours children spent in long day care services during the census week, by type of service provider, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999 (per cent)

Type of service provider	Hours per week	1991	1992	1993	1995	1997	1999
Community-based centres	< 10	26	22	24	23	26	30
	10–19	27	27	28	28	30	32
	20–29	16	18	18	20	19	18
	30–39	12	13	13	14	11	9
	40–49	17	14	13	12	10	9
	50+	2	6	4	4	3	3
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		63,126	66,155	71,922	73,575	79,139	76,450
Private-for-profit centres	< 10	27	22	25	24	25	28
	10–19	31	32	33	33	33	34
	20–29	15	18	17	18	19	18
	30–39	9	10	10	11	10	9
	40–49	10	10	9	10	9	8
	50+	8	9	5	5	5	4
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		56,667	71,780	90,716	136,757	172,562	175,599
'Other' centres	< 10	29	31	35	28	26	28
	10–19	23	26	27	28	29	30
	20–29	16	17	16	18	19	19
	30–39	11	10	10	13	11	11
	40–49	13	10	10	10	11	9
	50+	7	6	2	3	3	3
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		7,326	10,420	11,246	15,861	18,193	18,186
Family day care services	< 10	31	31	31	32	34	34
	10–19	29	28	28	28	28	29
	20–29	15	16	16	16	17	17
	30–39	10	10	10	10	10	9
	40–49	12	11	11	10	9	8
	50+	4	4	4	4	3	3
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		58,235	66,835	73,928	82,199	83,471	81,418

Sources: DHHCS 1992; DSHS 1994, 1995; DHFS 1997; AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

In 1999, the number of hours that children spent in long day care varied by State and Territory (Table 3.5). A higher proportion of children in Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania spent less than 10 hours in long day care centres than those in other jurisdictions. For instance, among children in community-based centres, although 30% Australia-wide attended centres for less than 10 hours per week, 45% of children in Tasmania, 37% in Western Australia, and 42% in South Australia were in this category.

Table 3.5: Hours children spent in long day care during the census week, by type of service provider and State/Territory, 1999 (per cent)

Type of service provider	Hours per week	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based centres	< 10	26	29	27	37	42	45	24	18	30
	10–19	36	28	32	28	29	30	24	19	32
	20–29	19	19	18	16	15	14	19	20	18
	30–39	9	11	10	8	7	6	12	13	9
	40–49	8	10	10	8	5	4	19	24	9
	50+	2	4	3	3	1	1	3	6	3
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		28,138	17,858	10,825	5,667	7,866	3,175	1,867	1,054	76,450
Private-for-profit centres	< 10	28	27	25	35	31	49	13	20	28
	10–19	40	26	33	28	27	27	19	19	34
	20–29	18	16	20	15	18	12	18	16	18
	30–39	7	11	10	8	11	5	16	11	9
	40–49	5	13	8	8	8	4	25	22	8
	50+	3	7	4	5	4	4	9	13	4
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		65,371	29,562	58,240	13,352	5,914	1,202	1,525	433	175,599
'Other' centres	< 10	24	29	25	41	47	58	17	18	28
	10–19	35	26	34	30	28	25	21	14	30
	20–29	21	19	19	14	15	10	18	16	19
	30–39	11	13	10	8	6	5	21	9	11
	40–49	7	10	10	6	3	2	20	18	9
	50+	3	3	3	1	1	<1	3	24	3
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		6,717	5,020	2,480	860	949	586	1,124	450	18,186
Family day care	< 10	31	41	28	38	35	46	27	19	34
	10–19	28	28	28	31	31	30	28	25	29
	20–29	19	15	18	14	22	14	17	15	17
	30–39	10	8	11	8	7	6	12	16	9
	40–49	8	6	11	7	3	3	14	22	8
	50+	3	2	4	1	2	0	3	4	3
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		23,510	20,712	15,983	6,118	7,735	4,247	2,399	714	81,418

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

In comparison, children in the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory used long day care for longer periods of time than those in other jurisdictions. For instance, among children in private-for-profit centres, 34% in the Australian Capital Territory and 35% in the Northern Territory were in care for 40 or more hours in the census week, compared with 12% of children Australia-wide.

3.3 Age of children

Long day care services are funded primarily to care for children under school age, including babies and very young children. However, in all census years there were substantial variations in the age distribution of children using services delivered by the different types of service providers. In comparing age distributions between the various years, however, it is worth noting that one reason the age distribution in 1999 is slightly younger than in 1997 is because the 1999 Census was conducted in May and the 1997 Census in August (see Section 1.2).

In each of the census years, over half or more of all children using centre-based long day care were aged 3–4 years, compared with just under a third of children in family day care services (Table 3.6). The proportion of children who were ‘young’ (aged 2 years and under) was lowest in private-for-profit centres, although it increased between 1991 and 1999, from 23% to 33%. The increase in the proportion of children who were ‘young’ reflects the increase in the availability of places for children of this age (see Section 2.2).

Although long day care services are specifically targeted at children under school age, a small proportion of children in long day care centres (particularly private-for-profit centres), and a relatively large proportion of children using family day care services were 5 years of age or older. Many of these children would be attending primary school. In 1999, 13% of children in private-for-profit centres and 29% in family day care were 5 years of age or older. The tendency for private-for-profit centres to have a higher proportion of children using services for school-age care compared with other types of centres may reflect the fact that they are more likely to have outside school hours care places (see Section 2.3).

Table 3.6: Age of children using long day care services, by type of service provider, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999 (per cent)

Type of service provider	Age	1991	1992	1993	1995	1997	1999
Community-based centres	0–1	18	16	17	17	18	20
	2	24	22	22	22	23	25
	3–4	55	55	54	54	52	51
	5	3	6	6	6	7	3
	6+	1	1	<0.5	<0.5	1	1
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		65,708	68,562	75,172	76,857	79,139	76,450
Private-for-profit centres	0–1	8	8	8	10	12	13
	2	15	15	16	18	19	20
	3–4	63	64	63	58	54	54
	5	8	9	9	9	10	6
	6+	4	4	4	4	5	7
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		58,857	74,072	94,177	142,513	172,562	175,599
'Other' centres	0–1	22	21	21	19	19	20
	2	23	23	23	21	22	23
	3–4	49	50	49	50	51	51
	5	5	5	5	7	7	3
	6+	1	1	1	2	1	2
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		7,711	10,980	11,822	16,655	18,193	18,186
Family day care	0–1	23	23	22	21	20	21
	2	18	19	19	19	18	18
	3–4	30	30	30	31	31	31
	5	7	8	8	8	8	7
	6+	20	21	21	22	22	22
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		60,202	68,447	76,356	84,212	83,471	81,418

Sources: DHHCS 1992; DSHS 1994, 1995; DHFS 1997; AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

There was some variation between the States and Territories in the age distribution of children using different types of long day care centres in 1999 (Table 3.7), to some extent reflecting differences in the availability of places for children of different ages (see Sections 2.2 and 2.3). For instance, in New South Wales, the proportion of children in private-for-profit centres who were 2 years of age or younger was somewhat lower than the national average (26% compared with 33%), while in the Australian Capital Territory the proportion was higher (49%). The proportion of children in community-based and private-for-profit centres aged 3–4 years was relatively high in New South Wales, reflecting the tendency of children in that State to attend preschool programs in long day care centres.

There were also substantial differences between the States and Territories in the age distribution of children using family day care services. In New South Wales, children using these services tended to be relatively young, while those in South Australia tended to be older. Half the children in family day care (50%) in New South Wales were 2 years or younger and 18% were 5 years or older. In contrast, in South Australia, just over a quarter (27%) were 2 years or younger and 45% were 5 years or older.

Table 3.7: Age of children using long day care services, by type of service provider and State/Territory, 1999 (per cent)

Type of service provider	Age	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based centres	0–1	16	22	20	25	24	22	24	23	20
	2	24	26	24	28	25	25	24	25	25
	3–4	57	48	49	42	49	48	48	50	51
	5	2	3	6	3	1	4	3	1	3
	6+	< 0.5	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		28,138	17,858	10,825	5,667	7,866	3,175	1,867	1,054	76,450
Private-for-profit centres	0–1	8	20	14	18	20	18	25	14	13
	2	18	24	20	23	23	22	24	19	20
	3–4	65	47	49	40	48	49	46	55	54
	5	4	4	8	7	3	4	3	8	6
	6+	5	6	8	12	6	7	2	4	7
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		65,371	29,562	58,240	13,352	5,914	1,202	1,525	433	175,599
'Other' centres	0–1	20	20	19	25	25	20	20	26	20
	2	22	22	22	28	27	17	21	29	23
	3–4	54	52	51	43	45	40	53	44	51
	5	2	4	5	2	1	8	5	1	3
	6+	1	2	3	2	2	16	1	0	2
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		6,717	5,020	2,480	860	949	586	1,124	450	18,186
Family day care	0–1	27	18	22	19	14	17	18	22	21
	2	23	17	17	21	13	18	14	20	18
	3–4	33	32	27	35	28	35	29	35	31
	5	5	8	8	7	8	9	8	6	7
	6+	13	25	26	18	37	21	31	16	22
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		23,510	20,712	15,983	6,118	7,735	4,247	2,399	714	81,418

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

3.4 Work-related care

Under priority of access guidelines that applied for most of the 1990s, all Commonwealth-funded long day care services were required to give parents who needed child care for 'work-related reasons' first priority in accessing child care places (AIHW 1995:137). In the period under review (1991 to 1999), service providers were required to give first preference to:

- children in two-parent families where both parents were in the labour force (employed or unemployed) or studying/training for employment
- children in one-parent families where a single parent was in the labour force or studying/training for employment.

These children are defined in the census as being in 'work-related care'.

Since 1999, priority of access guidelines have changed to give highest priority to children at risk of serious abuse or neglect, followed by children of a single parent who satisfies, or children of parents who both satisfy, the work/training/study test (FaCS 2000b:5) – primarily children needing ‘work-related care’.

Between 1991 and 1999 the proportion of children who were in work-related care increased for every type of service provider (Table 3.8). The increase was greatest for private-for-profit centres, where the proportion in work-related care rose from 61% in 1991 to 82% in 1999. The proportion of children in work-related care in community-based centres and ‘other’ centres also increased – from 74% to 83% for community-based centres and 82% to 88% for ‘other’ centres. In 1991, the proportion of children in family day care who were in work-related care (87%) was considerably higher than in other long day care centres. This proportion increased from 87% to 91% from 1993 to 1995 and then fell to 89% from 1997 to 1999. Throughout the period, the proportion of children who were in work-related care was highest for family day care services and lowest for private-for-profit centres.

Table 3.8: Percentage of children using long day care services who are in care for work-related reasons, by type of service provider, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999

Type of service provider	1991	1992	1993	1995	1997	1999
Community-based centres	74	75	76	82	86	83
Private-for-profit centres	61	60	61	69	79	82
‘Other’ centres	82	77	77	82	87	88
Family day care	87	87	87	91	91	89

Sources: DHHCS 1992; DSHS 1994, 1995; DHFS 1997; AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

In 1999, the proportion of children in all types of long day care services who were in care for work-related reasons was highest in the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory (Table 3.9). Almost all children in family day care in the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory (97% in both jurisdictions) were in work-related care. The proportion of children using family day services for work-related reasons in South Australia, however, was 71%, which was considerably lower than the national average (89%). Among children using private-for-profit centres, the proportion in New South Wales who were in care for work-related care reasons was considerably lower than in other jurisdictions. This probably reflects their use as an alternative to ‘sessional preschools’ (see Section 2.3).

Table 3.9: Percentage of children using long day care services who are in care for work-related reasons, by type of service provider and State/Territory, 1999

Type of service provider	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based centres	83	85	82	82	83	79	92	91	83
Private-for-profit centres	77	87	84	89	85	81	93	93	82
‘Other’ centres	89	90	82	83	76	88	91	95	88
Family day care	92	89	94	84	71	84	97	97	89

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

Over the period 1991 to 1999 the proportion of children from one-parent families who were using centre-based long day care for work-related care reasons increased, as did the proportion from two-parent families (Table 3.10). In private-for-profit centres the proportion of children from one-parent families who were in work-related care increased from 65% to 85%, while the proportion from two-parent families increased from 60% to 82%. There were

also substantial increases in the proportions of children in work-related care in community-based and 'other' centres, for both one- and two-parent families. In contrast, in family day care, and the proportion of children from two-parent families in work-related care increased slightly (from 89% to 91%) the proportion from one-parent families fell slightly (from 85% to 82%). In each census year, the proportion of children from two-parent families who were in work-related care was higher than the proportion from one-parent families in community-based centres and family day care services.

Table 3.10: Percentage of children using long day care services who are in care for work-related reasons, by family type and type of service provider, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999

Family type/Type of service provider	1991	1992	1993	1995	1997	1999
Community-based centres						
One-parent family	72	73	74	80	82	78
Two-parent family	75	75	77	82	87	85
Private-for-profit centres						
One-parent family	65	66	69	76	82	85
Two-parent family	60	58	59	67	79	82
'Other' centres						
One-parent family	80	78	82	88	88	87
Two-parent family	82	77	75	81	87	88
Family day care						
One-parent family	85	85	83	89	87	82
Two-parent family	89	88	88	92	93	91

Sources: DHHCS 1992; DSHS 1994, 1995; DHFS 1997; AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

As shown in Table 3.8, in 1999 most children using long day care services were in care for work-related reasons, i.e. they were from families with both parents (or a sole parent) in the labour force or studying/training for work. Children in 'non-work-related care' may be in child care to enable parents to participate in community or personal activities or for family support reasons. Parents of all children in long day care services may use child care services to satisfy children's needs for companionship and play opportunities and for their social, physical, emotional and intellectual development. Child care services have been found to be particularly beneficial for children from low-income families (Centre for Community Child Health 2000:16).

In 1999 there were some differences between the age distribution of children in work- and in non-work-related care (Table 3.11). Children in work-related care were more likely to be 'young' and more likely to be 'school age'.

In long day care centres, for instance, the proportion of children in work-related care who were under 2 years was higher than the proportion in non-work-related care. For example, in community-based centres 21% of children in work-related care were under 2 compared with 14% of children in non-work-related care. In family day care services, on the other hand, the proportion of children in non-work-related care who were under 2 was the same as the proportion in work-related care (21%).

The proportion of children in work-related care who were 'school age' (5 years or older) was higher than the proportion in non-work-related care, particularly in private-for-profit centres and family day care services. In family day care services, for instance, 31% of children in work-related care were aged 5 or older, compared with 20% of children in non-work-related care.

Table 3.11: Children using long day care services by age and work-related care status and type of service provider, 1999 (per cent)

Age/Type of service provider	Work-related care	Non-work-related care
Community-based centres		
0-1	21	14
2	24	28
3	28	34
4	23	22
5+	4	3
Total	100	100
Total (n)	63,762	12,688
Private-for-profit centres		
0-1	14	9
2	20	22
3	27	34
4	25	29
5+	14	6
Total	100	100
Total (n)	144,389	31,210
'Other' centres		
0-1	21	12
2	22	24
3	27	35
4	23	25
5+	6	4
Total	100	100
Total (n)	15,939	2,247
Family day care		
0-1	21	21
2	18	24
3	17	22
4	14	14
5+	31	20
Total	100	100
Total (n)	72,214	9,204

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

Not surprisingly children who were in long day care for non-work related reasons spent considerably fewer hours in care than those in work-related care, albeit with some variation by type of service provider (Table 3.12). Around half of the children who were in non-work-related care spent less than 10 hours in care a week and only a relatively small proportion spent more than 20 or more hours a week in care. For instance, in community-based centres, 57% of children in non-work-related care spent less than 10 hours a week in care and 9% spent 20 or more hours. In contrast, 27% of children in work-related care spent less than 10 hours a week in care and 43% spent 20 or more hours.

Table 3.12: Children using long day care services by hours in care, work-related care status and type of service provider, 1999 (per cent)

Hours/Type of service provider	Work-related care	Non-work-related care
Community-based centres		
0-9	27	57
10-19	30	34
20-29	19	6
30-39	11	2
40-49	10	1
50+	3	0
Total	100	100
Total (n)	12,688	63,762
Private-for-profit centres		
0-9	26	47
10-19	31	40
20-29	19	9
30-39	10	2
40-49	9	1
50+	5	1
Total	100	100
Total (n)	31,210	144,389
'Other' centres		
0-9	28	51
10-19	28	37
20-29	20	7
30-39	12	3
40-49	10	1
50+	3	0
Total	100	100
Total (n)	2,247	15,939
Family day care services		
0-9	35	47
10-19	27	33
20-29	17	14
30-39	10	3
40-49	8	2
50+	3	1
Total	100	100
Total (n)	9,204	72,214

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

One of the reasons children in non-work-related care spent fewer hours in care a week than those in work-related care is because parents with children in non-work-related care can access fee relief only for up to 20 hours of 'paid care' a week (see Section 3.6).

3.5 Children and parents with special needs

Parents and children with special needs include single parents and their children, children and/or parents with a disability, children of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent, children from culturally diverse backgrounds and children at risk of abuse or neglect. It is important to note that any one child may be from more than one special-needs group, for instance, the child may come from a one-parent Indigenous family. The Commonwealth Government provides funding for special programs to help those parents and children with special needs to access services.

Under the Jobs, Education and Training Scheme (JET), for instance, parents dependent on Centrelink payments and allowances (including single parents) who want to enter or return to the workforce are helped to find child care.

The Supplementary Services Program (SUPS) (which operated throughout the 1990s) provides funding to integrate children with additional needs – such as children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and children with a disability – into Commonwealth supported services.

In 1997 a complementary program, the Special Needs Subsidy Scheme (SNSS), was introduced to help families with children who have ongoing high support needs to access child care. Parents and children with special needs are also given priority of access to Commonwealth-supported child care services. This includes children at risk of abuse and neglect, single parents and their children, Indigenous families, families with a parent and/or child with a disability, and children in families with a culturally diverse background (AIHW 1995, 2001a).

One-parent families

Between 1991 and 1995 the proportion of children in long day care services who were from one-parent families fell slightly from 23% to 21% and then remained unchanged to 1999 (Table 3.13). The proportion fell for all types of service providers except private-for-profit centres, where it increased from 16% to 20% between 1991 and 1999. The increase in the proportion of children using private-for-profit centres who were from one-parent families may reflect the improvements in the accessibility of their services between 1991 and 1999, with the proportion opening for 11 or more hours per day almost doubling over the period (see Section 2.4).

Table 3.13: Percentage of children in long day care services from one-parent families by type of service provider, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999

Type of service provider	1991	1992	1993	1995	1997	1999
Community-based centres	23	20	19	18	18	18
Private-for-profit centres	16	18	18	19	21	20
'Other' centres	20	19	19	17	18	16
Family day care	30	30	29	28	27	27
All long day care services	23	22	22	21	21	21

Sources: DHHCS 1992; DSHS 1994, 1995; DHFS 1997; AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

Throughout the period from 1991 to 1999 the proportion of children in long day care services who were from one-parent families was highest in family day care services. In 1999, for instance, 27% of children in family day care were from one-parent families compared

with 20% of those in private-for-profit centres, 18% in community-based centres and 16% in 'other' centres. One of the reasons single parents are more likely to use family day care is that it is more affordable than centre-based care. On average, single parents have lower incomes than couples and family day care fees are lower than fees for centre-based care (see Section 2.6).

Family day care services are also more flexible than long day care centres, in terms of providing care during 'non-standard' hours – that is, at nights and on weekends. This would be of particular assistance to single parents who do not have a co-resident parent available to help them with child care. In 1999, 7% of children in family day care Australia-wide were in 'overnight care' during the census week; of these nearly two-thirds came from one-parent families. The proportion of children in long day care services who were from one-parent families was higher than the proportion of children in the Australian population who were from one-parent families – 16% of children aged 0–4 years in 1997 (AIHW 1999:114). This reflects the greater need of sole parents for child care.

In 1999 the proportion of children in all long day care services from one-parent families ranged from 18% in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory to 26% in South Australia (Table 3.13). In the Australian Capital Territory, the proportion in long day care centres was lower than the national average, while the proportion in family day care was higher.

Table 3.14: Percentage of children in long day care services from one-parent families, by type of service provider and State/Territory, 1999

Type of service provider	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based centres	19	16	19	16	18	17	13	17	18
Private-for-profit centres	17	19	24	25	20	21	11	18	20
'Other' centres	16	15	15	26	21	21	13	16	16
Family day care	21	26	27	30	40	25	30	32	27
All long day care services	18	20	23	24	26	22	18	21	21

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

Children with special needs

The census collects data on 'children with additional needs' which the census defines as children and/or parents with a disability, children at risk of abuse or neglect, children of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, and children with a culturally diverse background. The definition of 'culturally diverse background' has varied slightly over the years, but in 1997 and 1999 it referred to 'children with a culturally diverse background including those with a parent born overseas in a country where the first language is not English'.

Over the period 1991 to 1999, the proportion of children in long day care services who had 'additional needs' increased slightly from 14% to 16% (Table 3.14). The proportion was highest in community-based and 'other' centres and lowest in family day care services. Between 1991 and 1999 the proportion of children in community-based centres who had additional needs fell slightly, from 21% to 19%, and in 'other' centres it fluctuated between 17% and 20%. In contrast, the proportion of children using family day care services who had special needs increased slightly from 10% to 12%, and the proportion in private-for-profit centres increased from 10% to 15%. These increases were mainly due to increases in the proportion of children who were from a culturally diverse background.

Table 3.15: Percentage of children using long day care services with special (additional) needs by type of service provider, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999

Type of service provider/Additional needs	1991	1992	1993	1995	1997	1999
Community-based centres						
Child with a disability	3	4	3	3	2	2
Parent with a disability	1	1	1	1	1	1
Child at risk of abuse or neglect	2	1	1	1	1	1
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1	1	1	1	2	2
Culturally diverse background	15	15	15	14	15	15
Any additional need	21	21	20	20	20	19
Total (n)	65,588	68,562	75,172	76,857	79,139	76,450
Private-for-profit centres						
Child with a disability	1	2	2	2	2	2
Parent with a disability	< 0.5	< 0.5	1	< 0.5	1	1
Child at risk of abuse or neglect	1	< 0.5	< 0.5	< 0.5	< 0.5	< 0.5
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	< 0.5	1	1	1	1	1
Culturally diverse background	7	11	10	9	11	11
Any additional need	10	14	13	13	14	15
Total (n)	58,857	74,0722	94,177	142,513	172,562	175,599
Other centres						
Child with a disability	2	2	2	2	2	2
Parent with a disability	< 0.5	< 0.5	< 0.5	1	1	1
Child at risk of abuse or neglect	1	1	< 0.5	1	< 0.5	< 0.5
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1	1	1	1	1	1
Culturally diverse background	15	17	14	15	17	17
Any additional need	19	20	17	20	20	20
Total (n)	7,711	10,980	11,822	16,655	18,193	18,186
Family day care						
Child with a disability	2	2	2	2	3	3
Parent with a disability	1	1	< 0.5	< 0.5	< 0.5	< 0.5
Child at risk of abuse or neglect	1	1	1	1	< 0.5	1
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1	1	1	1	1	1
Culturally diverse background	6	7	6	6	7	8
Any additional need	10	10	10	10	12	12
Total (n)	60,202	68,447	76,356	84,212	83,471	81,418
All long day care services						
Child with a disability	2	2	2	2	2	2
Parent with a disability	1	1	1	1	1	1
Child at risk of abuse or neglect	1	1	1	< 0.5	< 0.5	< 0.5
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1	1	1	1	1	1
Culturally diverse background	10	11	10	10	11	11
Any additional need	14	15	14	14	15	16
Total (n)	192,358	222,061	257,527	320,237	353,365	351,653

Note: Some children may be included in more than one additional needs category.

Sources: DHHCS 1992; DSHS 1994, 1995; DHFS 1997; AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

In every census year under review, children with a culturally diverse background comprised the largest group of children with additional needs using long day care services. In 1999, for instance, children from a culturally diverse background comprised 11% of children using all long day care services compared with 2% or less of children from any of the other 'additional needs' groups (Table 3.15).

The proportion of children using long day care services who had a disability and the proportion who were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin were somewhat lower than the proportions of these groups of children in the Australian population (AIHW 2001a). Among children using long day care services in 1999, 2% had a disability, compared with 4% of children aged 0–4 years of age Australia-wide in 1998 (ABS 1998). Similarly, 1% of children in long day care in 1999 were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, but this was lower than the proportion of children under 5 in the Australian population who were Indigenous—4% in 1999 (AIHW 2001a). One reason for the relatively low representation of Indigenous children in long day care services is that in every jurisdiction except the Australian Capital Territory, the Commonwealth funds special services for Indigenous children, i.e. multifunctional Aboriginal children's services (MACS). These services operate as long day care centres with other services provided to meet the needs of the particular Indigenous community (Moyle et al. 1996:35). Another reason for the low representation is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families are less likely than other families to use formal child care services since they tend to prefer to use informal care provided by families and friends (ABS 1995).

No population data are available to classify Australian children according to the definition of 'culturally diverse background' used in the Child Care Census. There are also no population data on parents with a disability or children at risk of abuse or neglect.

The proportion of children with additional needs varied considerably between the States and Territories (Table 3.16), to some extent reflecting differences between State and Territory populations. For instance, for each type of service provider, the Northern Territory, the jurisdiction with the highest proportion of children under 5 who were Indigenous (39% in 1999), had the highest proportion of children in long day care who were Indigenous—9% of children in community-based centres and 3% in family day care services were Indigenous.

Some other differences between jurisdictions may relate to differences in State and Territory policies and programs. In South Australia, for instance, where the State Government sponsors family day care services, 9% of all children in family day care have a disability compared with 3% of children using these services Australia-wide.

Table 3.16: Percentage of children using long day care services with special (additional) needs by type of service provider and State/Territory, 1999

Type of service provider/ Additional needs	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based centres									
Child with a disability	3	2	2	1	3	2	2	1	2
Parent with a disability	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0.5	1
Child at risk of abuse or neglect	1	1	1	1	< 0.5	1	1	< 0.5	1
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	2	1	3	2	1	< 0.5	1	9	2
Culturally diverse background	20	17	9	12	6	3	16	12	15
Any special need	25	20	14	17	11	6	20	22	19
Total (n)	28,138	17,858	10,825	5,667	7,866	3,175	1,867	1,054	76,450
Private-for-profit centres									
Child with a disability	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	2
Parent with a disability	1	1	1	1	1	< 0.5	1	< 0.5	1
Child at risk of abuse or neglect	< 0.5	< 0.5	< 0.5	< 0.5	< 0.5	< 0.5	< 0.5	0	< 0.5
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1	< 0.5	2	2	1	< 0.5	1	4	1
Culturally diverse background	16	13	7	8	6	3	11	9	11
Any special need	20	15	12	11	9	6	14	14	15
Total (n)	65,371	29,562	58,240	13,352	5,914	1,202	1,525	433	175,599
Other centres									
Child with a disability	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	2
Parent with a disability	1	< 0.5	1	1	1	1	< 0.5	0	1
Child at risk of abuse or neglect	< 0.5	< 0.5	0	< 0.5	0	0	0	0	< 0.5
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	4	1
Culturally diverse background	23	15	11	8	11	4	13	10	17
Any special need	27	18	15	13	15	6	16	16	20
Total (n)	6,717	5,020	2,480	860	949	586	1,124	450	18,186
Family day care									
Child with a disability	2	4	3	2	9	3	2	1	3
Parent with a disability	< 0.5	< 0.5	< 0.5	< 0.5	0	1	< 0.5	0	< 0.5
Child at risk of abuse or neglect	1	1	< 0.5	< 0.5	< 0.5	1	< 0.5	1	1
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1	< 0.5	1	2	2	< 0.5	1	3	1
Culturally diverse background	9	9	4	9	8	2	9	6	8
Any special need	12	14	9	13	18	5	13	11	12
Total (n)	23,510	20,712	15,983	6,118	7,735	4,247	2,399	714	81,418
All long day care services									
Child with a disability	2	2	2	2	5	2	2	1	2
Parent with a disability	1	1	1	1	0.5	1	1	< 0.5	1
Child at risk of abuse or neglect	1	0.5	< 0.5	0.5	< 0.5	0.5	< 0.5	< 0.5	0.5
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1	< 0.5	2	2	1	< 0.5	1	6	1
Culturally diverse background	16	13	7	9	7	2	12	9	11
Any special need	20	16	12	13	13	5	16	17	16
Total (n)	123,736	73,152	87,528	25,997	22,464	9,210	6,915	2,651	351,653

Note: Some children may be included in more than one special needs category.

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

3.6 Childcare Assistance

All the censuses from 1991 to 1999 collected data on whether or not a child received Childcare Assistance (see Section 2.5). However, separate data for private-for-profit centres and 'other' centres are not available for 1991.

In all census years under review, two-thirds or more of children using long day care services received Childcare Assistance. The proportion of children in community-based and private-for-profit centres receiving assistance increased up to 1993, remained relatively stable between 1993 and 1997, then fell to 1999 (Table 3.17). For 'other' centres, the proportion increased slightly between 1992 and 1993 and then fell to 1999. In contrast, the proportion of children in family day care receiving Childcare Assistance increased markedly between 1991 and 1997 and then fell slightly to 1999.

Throughout the period the proportion of children in 'other' centres who were receiving Childcare Assistance was substantially lower than the proportions in other types of centres and family day care. In 1999, 62% of children in 'other' centres received Childcare Assistance, compared with 70% of children in community-based centres, 77% of children in private-for-profit centres and 81% of children in family day care.

Table 3.17: Percentage of children using long day care services receiving Childcare Assistance, by type of service provider, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999

Type of service provider	1991	1992	1993	1995	1997	1999
Community-based centres	69	74	75	74	74	70
Private-for-profit centres	n.a.	75	81	81	81	77
'Other' centres	n.a.	66	68	66	66	62
Family day care	69	77	80	81	82	81

Sources: DHHCS 1992; DSHS 1994, 1995; DHFS 1997; AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

There were marked variations in 1999 between the States and Territories in the extent to which children in long day care received Childcare Assistance (Table 3.17). For all types of service providers, the proportion of children receiving Childcare Assistance was relatively high in Queensland and South Australia and relatively low in the Australian Capital Territory. For instance, among private-for-profit centres, 86% of children using these services in Queensland received Childcare Assistance compared with 36% in the Australian Capital Territory. The proportion of children in family day care services in South Australia who were receiving Childcare Assistance was very high – 98% compared with 81% Australia-wide.

Table 3.18: Percentage of children using long day care services receiving Childcare Assistance, by type of service provider and State/Territory, 1999

Type of service provider	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based centres	70	68	75	65	77	79	49	55	70
Private-for-profit centres	71	74	86	80	80	77	36	73	77
'Other' centres	58	63	71	71	67	78	39	55	62
Family day care	73	83	82	82	98	89	66	67	81

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

In 1999 the income threshold for maximum Childcare Assistance was \$528 per week. This was the level at which the maximum level of the (then) More than Minimum Family

Payment for low-income families cut out. Since Childcare Assistance is an income-tested payment, the proportion of children receiving the payment reflects the income levels of the families using the services. Thus, among families and children using private-for-profit long day care centres, the proportion of families with a family income of \$528 a week or less was lowest in the Australian Capital Territory (16%), the jurisdiction with the lowest proportion of children receiving Childcare Assistance (36%) (Tables 3.18, 3.19). Similarly, the proportion of families using private-for-profit centres with a family income of \$528 a week or less was highest in Queensland (56%), the jurisdiction with the highest proportion of children receiving Childcare Assistance (86%).

Table 3.19: Percentage of families with adjusted incomes of \$528 per week or less (receiving maximum Childcare Assistance), by type of service provider and State/Territory, 1999

Type of service provider	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based centres	41	37	42	36	40	41	21	30	39
Private-for-profit centres	41	41	56	48	42	44	16	33	46
'Other' centres	35	37	37	45	39	39	18	22	35
Family day care	38	45	44	48	65	49	32	33	45

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

The proportion of children whose parents received Childcare Assistance also reflects, to some extent, the proportions of children in non-work-related care. This is because most children in work-related care have both parents (or a single parent) employed and these families would, on average, have higher incomes than other families of the same family type. In 1999, for every type of service provider the proportion of children in non-work-related care who received Childcare Assistance was greater than the proportion in work-related care (Table 3.20). Of children in community-based centres, for instance, 83% of children in non-work-related care were in receipt of Childcare Assistance compared with 68% of children in work-related care. Further, children in non-work-related care were more likely to receive the maximum Childcare Assistance than children in work-related care.

Table 3.20: Percentage of children using long day care services receiving Childcare Assistance (CA) by work-related care status and type of service provider, 1999

Type of service provider	Work-related		Non-work related	
	Receiving maximum CA	Receiving CA	Receiving maximum CA	Receiving CA
Community-based centres	35	68	61	83
Private-for-profit centres	44	76	56	81
'Other' centres	33	60	50	73
Family day care	40	79	77	92

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

Childcare Assistance is paid on the basis of the hours that a child is booked into care, i.e. 'paid hours' of care (AIHW 1999). Between 1995 and 1999, there were two important changes regarding access to Childcare Assistance:

- From 1 April 1997, any one child could not receive Childcare Assistance for more than 50 'paid hours' per week, except where families needed more care to meet working commitments (DHFS 1996a:184).

- From 28 April 1998, Childcare Assistance for non-work-related care was limited to 20 'paid hours' per week per child, except for families and children in specific circumstances, including families in crisis, children at risk of abuse and neglect, and children with a disability and their siblings (AIHW 1997).

Data from the 1995 and 1999 censuses show that these policies had a large impact on the number of 'paid hours' of care used by children in work-related and non-work-related care receiving Childcare Assistance (Table 3.21).

In 1995 among children in long day care centres who received Childcare Assistance, there was a relatively high proportion of children in work-related care for more than 50 'paid hours' of care a week. This proportion was highest in private-for-profit centres – 24%. The proportion of children receiving Childcare Assistance who were in work-related care and who were using more than 50 'paid hours' a week was considerably lower in family day care (3%).

In 1995, among children in long day care centres who received Childcare Assistance and were in non-work-related care more than a third were in care for more than 20 'paid hours' a week. This proportion was considerably lower in family day care (15%).

The tendency of children in long day care centres receiving Childcare Assistance to be in care for a higher number of 'paid hours' a week than those in family day care may partly reflect the different charging practices of long day care centres and family day care services. Parents with children in long day care centres are generally required to book into a centre for a given period – for instance, half a day or a full day – and pay for that period, even though the children may not attend for the entire period. Given this, the 'paid hours' of care are generally higher than the 'actual hours' the children spend in care. In family day care, however, parents are often charged by the hour, so that the 'paid hours' of care are more likely to be similar to the 'actual hours'.

The introduction of the '50-hour limit' in April 1997 for children in work-related care had a marked effect on the paid hours of care of children in work-related care. In community-based centres the proportion of children receiving Childcare Assistance who were in work-related care for more than 50 paid hours fell from 19% in 1995 to 7% in 1999. Similar drops were recorded for children in private for profit (from 24% to 6%) and 'other' centres (from 10% to 5%). The corresponding fall for children in family day care was from 3% in 1995 to 2% in 1999.

The introduction of the '20-hour' limit in April 1998 had a similar effect on the paid hours of care per week of children receiving Childcare Assistance who were in non-work-related care. In community-based centres the proportion of these children who were in care for more than 20 paid hours fell from 40% to 23%. Similar drops were recorded for children in private for profit (from 52% to 25%) and 'other' centres (from 34% to 22%). The corresponding fall for family day care was from 15% in 1995 to 13% in 1999.

Table 3.21: Children using long day care services receiving Childcare Assistance (CA) by work-related care status, type of service provider and 'paid hours' of care, 1995 and 1999 (per cent)

Type of service provider/ Work-related care	Paid hours of care			Total
	20 or less	21–50	51+	
1995				
Community-based centres				
Work-related	30	51	19	100
Non-work-related	60	34	6	100
Private-for-profit centres				
Work-related	31	45	24	100
Non-work-related	49	44	8	100
'Other' centres				
Work-related	43	47	10	100
Non-work-related	66	31	3	100
Family day care				
Work-related	59	38	3	100
Non-work-related	85	14	1	100
1999				
Community-based centres				
Work-related	41	52	7	100
Non-work-related	78	22	1	100
Private-for-profit centres				
Work-related	39	55	6	100
Non-work-related	76	24	1	100
'Other' centres				
Work-related	46	50	5	100
Non-work related	78	22	0	100
Family day care				
Work-related	63	35	2	100
Non-work-related	87	12	1	100

Sources: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1995, 1999).

It is clear that these policy initiatives had a substantial effect on the number of 'paid hours' of care used by families with children in work-related and non-work-related care receiving Childcare Assistance. These trends suggests that the demand for child care services is 'highly elastic' (demand is highly responsive to price) – with parents' use of services falling as price rises because of changes in eligibility for Childcare Assistance.

4 Workers

All child care censuses have collected some information about the workers in Commonwealth-supported long day care services. The term 'workers' as used here includes paid and unpaid workers in long day care centres and family day care coordination units, and family day care providers. This chapter looks at various characteristics of these workers including age ('junior' or 'senior'), cultural background (Indigenous or 'culturally diverse'), employment characteristics (employment status, hours worked and type of work performed), qualifications and whether or not they had undertaken in-service training in the past 12 months.

4.1 Workers per service provider

Data on the average number of workers per long day care centre for 1999 are shown in Table 4.1. Although the average number of workers per centre was slightly higher for community-based centres (13) than private-for-profit and 'other' centres (10 and 11 respectively), the distributions were somewhat different. For instance, the proportion of private-for-profit centres with fewer than 10 workers was more than twice that for community-based long day care centres (59% compared with 23%). There were also some variations in the average number of workers per centre across the States and Territories, particularly for private-for-profit centres. The average numbers of workers per private-for-profit centre ranged from 7 in New South Wales to 14 in the Australian Capital Territory – 78% of centres in New South Wales had fewer than 10 workers per centre compared with 26% in the Australian Capital Territory.

There are probably three main reasons for the variations in the number of workers per long day care centre – differences in the size of centres; differences in the proportions of workers who are part-time and full-time; and differences in the State and Territory licensing regulations regarding staff-child ratios.

Table 4.1: Number of staff per long day care centre, by type of centre and State/Territory, 1999 (per cent)

Type of centre/ Number of staff per centre	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based									
< 5	1	0	1	4	0	3	0	0	1
5–9	19	23	23	30	29	23	20	21	22
10–14	50	47	29	46	34	26	50	68	44
15–19	23	23	30	15	29	26	23	11	24
20+	7	6	17	5	8	23	7	0	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Average number of staff per centre</i>	13	13	14	12	13	15	13	12	13
Total (n)	382	253	141	74	86	31	30	19	1,016
Private-for-profit									
< 5	21	3	3	11	3	13	5	14	12
5–9	57	49	33	45	28	50	21	57	47
10–14	16	16	41	36	42	25	21	29	26
15–19	5	23	18	7	24	6	37	0	12
20+	1	9	5	1	3	6	16	0	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Average number of staff per centre</i>	7	12	11	9	12	10	14	8	10
Total (n)	984	301	630	211	67	16	19	7	2,235
'Other'									
< 5	4	3	3	13	13	17	0	0	4
5–9	37	30	7	40	44	17	45	31	33
10–14	34	49	30	40	25	17	15	15	35
15–19	18	14	43	7	13	33	20	15	20
20+	7	4	17	0	6	17	20	0	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Average number of staff per centre</i>	11	11	15	10	10	10	15	13	11
Total (n)	110	77	30	15	16	6	20	8	282

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

In 1999, Australia-wide, most family day care coordination units had fewer than 10 workers (93%) with an average of 5 workers per scheme. The average number of family day care coordination unit staff per scheme varied considerably across the States and Territories, ranging from 3 in the Northern Territory to 11 in South Australia. Five of the six schemes in the Northern Territory (83%) had fewer than 5 workers in their coordination units, while half of the schemes in South Australia had 10 or more (Table 4.2).

Across Australia, there was an average of 44 family day care providers per scheme, although this ranged from 26 in the Northern Territory to 117 in South Australia. Three-quarters of the schemes in South Australia had 60 or more providers compared with 1 of the 6 schemes in the Northern Territory. These findings are consistent with the data on the relative size of schemes in these two jurisdictions – as measured by the number of places (see Chapter 2).

Table 4.2: Number of staff per family day care scheme by type of worker and State/Territory, 1999 (per cent)

Type of worker	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Coordination unit staff									
< 5	36	51	63	40	17	9	29	83	46
5–9	58	46	36	50	33	82	29	17	47
10+	6	3	1	10	50	9	43	0	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Average number of unit staff per scheme</i>	6	4	4	6	11	6	9	3	5
Total (n)	102	71	84	20	12	11	7	6	313
Family day care providers									
< 20	25	14	25	10	17	9	14	50	21
20–39	32	23	40	35	0	27	29	17	31
40–59	30	25	29	35	8	55	14	17	28
60+	12	38	6	20	75	9	43	17	20
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Average number of providers per scheme</i>	37	52	34	43	117	48	73	26	44
Total (n)	102	71	84	20	12	11	7	6	313

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

4.2 Workers by age

Although specific information on the age of workers is not collected in the census, a question is included for long day care centres as to whether a worker is 'junior' or 'senior'. 'Junior' staff are defined as those aged under 18, and 'senior' staff are those 18 years or older. These two categories are recognised in the licensing regulations in some States and Territories, with the regulations explicitly stating a required ratio of junior to senior staff. In the other jurisdictions, legislative regulations regarding the ratio of qualified to unqualified staff effectively limit the numbers of 'juniors' that can be employed, since it is likely that only a small proportion of junior staff would hold qualifications.

The Child Care Censuses did not collect information on this characteristic (age by senior/junior categories) for workers in family day care. This is presumably because it is assumed that all family day care providers are at least 18 years of age, as specified in the family day care national standards (CSWM 1995:38).

In each of the census years, most staff in long day care centres were 'senior'. Between 1991 and 1999, the proportion of workers in private-for-profit centres who were 'senior' increased markedly, from 85% to 93% (Table 4.3). By 1999, junior staff accounted for only 7% of workers in private-for-profit centres and 3% in community-based and 'other' centres.

Table 4.3: Workers in long day care centres, by age category and type of centre, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999 (per cent)

Type of centre	Age category	1991	1992	1993	1995	1997	1999
Community-based	Senior	95	94	93	95	94	97
	Junior	5	6	7	5	6	3
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		12,344	12,591	13,983	14,541	13,892	13,182
Private-for-profit	Senior	85	87	88	91	91	93
	Junior	15	13	12	9	9	7
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		6,053	7,967	10,575	17,736	22,242	22,314
'Other'	Senior	96	94	94	94	95	97
	Junior	4	6	6	6	5	3
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		1,371	1,787	2,027	3,090	3,386	3,339

Note: Age is classified as 'senior' for staff age 18 years and over, and 'junior' for staff under 18 years.

Sources: DHHCS 1992; DSHS 1994, 1995; DHFS 1997; AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

There was some variation across jurisdictions in the proportions of workers classified as 'senior/junior' (Table 4.4). The proportion of workers in long day care centres in Western Australia who were 'junior' was considerably higher than in other jurisdictions, while in the Northern Territory almost all workers were 'senior'. In private-for-profit centres, for instance, 17% of staff in Western Australia were 'junior' compared with 2% in the Northern Territory.

Table 4.4: Workers in long day care centres, by age category, type of centre and State/Territory, 1999 (per cent)

Type of centre	Age category	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based	Senior	98	98	95	94	99	95	98	99	97
	Junior	2	2	5	6	1	5	2	1	3
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		4,930	3,210	1,972	874	1,120	459	398	219	13,182
Private-for-profit	Senior	97	93	93	83	96	93	96	98	93
	Junior	3	7	7	17	4	7	4	2	7
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		7,306	4,631	7,180	1,934	783	160	261	59	22,314
'Other'	Senior	99	98	96	89	95	98	97	100	97
	Junior	1	2	4	11	5	2	3	0	3
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)		1,251	882	461	146	165	91	254	89	3,339

Note: Age is classified as 'senior' for staff age 18 years and over, and 'junior' for staff under 18 years.

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

4.3 Cultural background

Another personal characteristic of child care workers that is collected in the census is the 'cultural background' of the worker, i.e. whether the worker is an Indigenous Australian (of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background) or has a culturally diverse (non-English-speaking) background. 'Culturally diverse background' is defined in the census as 'born overseas in a country where the first language is not English'.

Over the period 1991 to 1999 the proportion of long day care workers who were Indigenous was very small – 2% or less. In 1999, 1% of workers in long day care centres and family day care coordination units were Indigenous Australians, compared with less than 0.5% of family day care providers (Table 4.5). This was similar to the proportion of children attending long day care services who were Indigenous (1%) (see Chapter 3). These are broad averages across all service providers, however, and do not necessarily mean that Indigenous workers were providing services used by Indigenous children. Additionally, there are problems in comparing these data for workers and children due to issues of identification of Indigenous status (AIHW 2000).

The proportion of long day care workers with a culturally diverse background was considerably higher than the proportion of workers who were Indigenous and varied between different types of service providers (Table 4.5). In 1999, for instance, 15% of staff in community-based centres and 14% of staff in 'other' centres had a culturally diverse background compared with 9% of those in private-for-profit centres. In family day care services, 6% of coordination unit staff had a culturally diverse background compared with 19% of family day care providers. The proportions of workers with a culturally diverse background fluctuated over the period 1991 to 1999 for most types of service providers.

The proportion of children using family day care who were identified as having a culturally diverse background was less than half that of family day care providers in all census years (see Table 3.15). There are, however, problems in comparing these data on workers and children for a number of reasons. Firstly, children from a culturally diverse background may not use services provided by workers with such a background. Secondly, even where they do use these services, the cultural background of the children may be different from that of the workers. Thirdly, the identification of cultural background for workers may be different from that for children (AIHW 2000).

Table 4.5: Long day care workers by cultural background and type of service provider, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999 (per cent)

Type of service provider/ Cultural background	1991	1992	1993	1995	1997	1999
Community-based centres						
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1	2	1	1	2	1
Culturally diverse background	14	15	16	16	14	15
Neither	85	83	83	83	85	83
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	12,394	12,591	13,983	14,541	13,892	13,182
Private-for-profit centres						
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1	1	1	1	1	1
Culturally diverse background	7	9	9	10	9	9
Neither	92	90	90	89	90	89
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	6,012	7,976	10,575	17,736	22,242	22,314
'Other' centres						
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1	1	2	2	1	1
Culturally diverse background	14	14	13	15	13	14
Neither	85	85	85	83	85	85
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	1,370	1,787	2,027	3,090	3,386	3,339
Family day care coordination unit staff						
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	2	1	2	1	1	1
Culturally diverse background	7	8	9	8	7	6
Neither	92	91	89	91	92	93
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	1,410	1,532	1,607	1,689	1,691	1,611
Family day care providers						
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	< 0.5	< 0.5	< 0.5	< 0.5	< 0.5	< 0.5
Culturally diverse background	17	19	19	19	19	19
Neither	83	80	81	80	80	80
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	13,679	14,435	15,087	14,938	13,786	12,437

Sources: DHHCS 1992; DSHS 1994, 1995; DHFS 1997; AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

In 1999, there was considerable variation between States and Territories in the cultural background of long day care workers (Table 4.6). These differences, to some extent, reflect the differences in the population of the jurisdictions. The proportion of all workers that were identified as Indigenous, for instance, was highest in the Northern Territory, the jurisdiction with the higher proportion of Indigenous people in the population. There was also a relatively high proportion of workers with a culturally diverse background in long day care services in the Northern Territory and in New South Wales.

Table 4.6: Long day care workers by cultural background and type of service provider by State/Territory, 1999 (per cent)

Type of service provider/ Cultural background	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based centres									
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1	0	2	1	0	1	1	3	1
Culturally diverse background	19	18	9	12	8	2	15	35	15
Neither	79	82	89	86	92	97	84	63	83
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	4,930	3,210	1,972	874	1,120	459	398	219	13,182
Private-for-profit centres									
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	2	1	2	2	< 0.5	1	1	2	1
Culturally diverse background	14	11	5	7	6	4	11	12	9
Neither	85	88	94	91	94	96	88	86	89
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	7,306	4,631	7,180	1,934	783	160	261	59	22,314
'Other' centres									
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1	1	1	0	1	1	< 0.5	4	1
Culturally diverse background	18	12	4	9	11	4	19	28	14
Neither	81	86	95	91	88	95	81	67	85
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	1,251	882	461	146	165	91	254	89	3,339
Family day care coordination unit staff									
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1	2	< 0.5	4	4	2	2	6	1
Culturally diverse background	9	6	1	8	3	3	10	6	6
Neither	90	93	98	88	93	95	89	88	93
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	565	317	339	112	135	65	61	17	1,611
Family day care providers									
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	< 0.5	< 0.5	1	< 0.5	< 0.5	< 0.5	1	2	< 0.5
Culturally diverse background	26	22	10	21	12	4	34	25	19
Neither	74	78	89	79	87	96	66	72	80
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	3,505	3,284	2,639	782	1,157	466	470	134	12,437

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

4.4 Employment characteristics

Information about the working conditions of long day care workers can be obtained from a number of data items in the censuses: employment status ('paid full-time', 'paid part-time', 'paid casual', or 'unpaid'), type of work performed (direct contact with children, administrative, or other), and hours worked.

Employment status

In each of the census years from 1992, all services providers were asked to report the 'employment status' of their workers according to whether they were 'paid full-time', 'paid part-time', 'paid casual' or 'unpaid'. This information was not collected for family day care providers, given that most (but not all) of the workers are self-employed rather than the employees of the schemes (DHFS 1997:Section 14).

Over the period 1992 to 1999, most workers in long day care centres and family day care coordination units were paid workers; only a small minority were 'unpaid' – this category includes parents working as volunteers and students on work experience (Table 4.7). The proportion of workers in long day care centres who were 'paid part-time' or 'paid full-time' fell slightly between 1992 and 1999, with a corresponding increase in the proportion who were 'paid casual'. In contrast, the proportion of workers in family day care coordination units who were 'paid part-time' or 'paid full-time' increased between 1992 and 1999, from 86% to 92%, and there was a corresponding decrease in the proportion who were 'paid casual' (11% to 6%). The proportion of workers who were 'paid casual' was highest in private-for-profit centres and lowest in family day care coordination units. Family day care coordination units also had the lowest proportion of unpaid staff.

Table 4.7: Workers in long day care centres and family day care coordination units, by type of service provider and employment status, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999 (per cent)

Type of service provider/Employment status	1992	1993	1995	1997	1999
Community-based centres					
Paid part-time/paid full-time	72	71	71	71	68
Paid casual	20	20	22	23	24
Unpaid	9	9	7	6	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	12,591	13,983	14,541	13,892	13,182
Private-for-profit centres					
Paid part-time/paid full-time	64	63	67	65	62
Paid casual	26	27	25	27	29
Unpaid	9	9	8	7	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	7,967	10,575	17,736	22,242	22,314
'Other' centres					
Paid part-time/paid full-time	72	67	67	70	69
Paid casual	21	23	25	23	24
Unpaid	7	10	8	7	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	1,787	2,027	3,090	3,386	3,339
Family day care coordination unit staff					
Paid part-time/paid full-time	86	89	90	90	92
Paid casual	11	7	7	7	6
Unpaid	3	4	3	3	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	1,532	1,607	1,689	1,691	1,611

Sources: DHHCS 1992; DSHS 1994, 1995; DHFS 1997; AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

The distribution of long day care centre workers according to employment status varied between States and Territories in 1999 (Table 4.8). For instance, in New South Wales and Victoria, relatively high proportions of workers in all types of long day care centres were 'paid part-time' or 'paid full-time', and relatively low proportions were employed on a 'paid casual' basis. This was not the case in South Australia and Queensland. For example, 74% of workers in private-for-profit centres in New South Wales were 'paid part-time' or 'paid full-time' and 19% were 'paid casual', while in South Australia the corresponding proportions were 43% and 50%.

There were also variations across States and Territories in the proportions of long day care centre workers who were 'unpaid'. In Western Australia and Queensland, the proportion of workers who were unpaid tended to be relatively high, while in the Northern Territory it was very low. For example, in Western Australia 15% of workers in private-for-profit centres and 20% in 'other' centres were 'unpaid' compared with 3% in private-for-profit centres and 1% in 'other' centres in the Northern Territory.

More than 90% of family day care coordination unit staff were 'paid full-time' or 'paid part-time' in 1999, except in Tasmania (89%), Queensland (88%) and the Northern Territory (82%) (Table 4.8). In South Australia, where the State Government is the sponsor of all family day care schemes, 99% of workers were 'paid full-time' or 'paid part-time' and none were unpaid. Family day care coordination units in the Northern Territory had a relatively high proportion of 'paid casual' and 'unpaid' workers (12% and 6% respectively).

Table 4.8: Employment status of workers in long day care services and family day care units, by type of service provider and State/Territory, 1999 (per cent)

Type of service provider/ Employment status	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based centres									
Paid part-time/paid full-time	72	70	58	77	53	67	75	72	68
Paid casual	20	23	32	16	41	28	20	26	24
Unpaid	8	7	10	7	6	5	5	2	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	4,930	3,210	1,972	874	1,120	459	398	219	13,182
Private-for-profit centres									
Paid part-time/paid full-time	74	72	45	66	43	55	68	61	62
Paid casual	19	22	46	19	50	37	28	36	29
Unpaid	7	6	9	15	7	8	4	3	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	7,306	4,631	7,180	1,934	783	160	261	59	22,314
'Other' centres									
Paid part-time/paid full-time	72	76	55	66	40	55	72	78	69
Paid casual	21	19	33	14	51	37	22	21	24
Unpaid	7	5	12	20	9	8	6	1	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	1,251	882	461	146	165	91	254	89	3,339
Family day care coordination unit staff									
Paid part-time/paid full-time	91	97	88	92	99	89	92	82	92
Paid casual	6	3	10	4	1	6	8	12	6
Unpaid	3	1	1	4	0	5	0	6	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	565	317	339	112	135	65	61	17	1,611

Sources: DHHCS 1992; DSHS 1994, 1995; DHFS 1997; AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

Type of work

The type of work performed by workers in long day care centres – classified as 'direct contact with children', 'administrative tasks', or 'other tasks' (such as cleaning and cooking) – has also been measured in the censuses since 1992. This information was not collected for workers in family day care, because those in coordination units would, by definition, mainly be undertaking administrative and supervisory work, and the providers would mainly be working with children.

Throughout the period 1992 to 1999, most long day care centre workers (around 80%) worked directly with children, with relatively small proportions involved in administrative tasks or other tasks (Table 4.9). There were only small changes between 1992 and 1999 in the proportion of workers falling into these three categories in community-based centres, and the proportions in private-for-profit and 'other' centres were virtually unchanged.

Table 4.9: Workers in long day care centres, by type of centre and major type of work, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999 (per cent)

Type of centre/Major type of work	1992	1993	1995	1997	1999
Community-based centres					
Direct contact with children	79	79	79	79	81
Administrative tasks	10	10	10	11	10
Other tasks	11	11	11	10	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	12,591	13,983	14,541	13,892	13,182
Private-for-profit centres					
Direct contact with children	81	81	82	81	81
Administrative tasks	10	10	10	10	10
Other tasks	9	9	9	9	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	7,967	10,575	17,736	22,242	22,314
'Other'					
Direct contact with children	85	85	83	82	83
Administrative tasks	8	9	10	11	10
Other tasks	7	6	7	7	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	1,787	2,027	3,090	3,386	3,339

Sources: DHHCS 1992; DSHS 1994, 1995; DHFS 1997; AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

In 1999 there were some differences between the State and Territories in the major type of work performed by child care workers (Table 4.10). Long day care centres in the Australian Capital Territory tended to have higher than average proportions of staff mainly working with children and lower than average proportions involved in 'other tasks', while the opposite was the case in centres in New South Wales.

Table 4.10: Workers in long day care centres, by type of centre and major type of work, State/Territory 1999 (per cent)

Type of centre/Major type of work	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based centres									
Direct contact with children	79	82	81	79	81	81	84	80	81
Administrative tasks	10	9	10	11	12	10	10	10	10
Other tasks	11	9	9	9	7	9	6	10	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	4,930	3,210	1,972	874	1,120	459	398	219	13,182
Private-for-profit centres									
Direct contact with children	80	80	85	78	81	79	85	83	81
Administrative tasks	9	10	10	10	9	14	8	8	10
Other tasks	11	10	5	11	10	8	7	8	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	7,306	4,631	7,180	1,934	783	160	261	59	22,314
'Other' centres									
Direct contact with children	82	85	81	86	82	85	85	85	83
Administrative tasks	10	10	10	9	12	11	9	10	10
Other tasks	8	5	8	5	6	4	6	4	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	1,251	882	461	146	165	91	254	89	3,339

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

Hours worked

All censuses from 1991 to 1999 collected information on the number of hours worked by long day care workers during the census week.

Between 1991 and 1999 the proportion of workers in community-based and private-for-profit centres working 40 or more hours a week dropped – from 22% to 18% for community-based centres and 28% to 20% for private-for-profit centres (Table 4.11). Workers in private-for-profit centres worked longer hours than workers in other centres throughout the period. In 1999 for instance, 60% of workers in private-for-profit centres worked 30 or more hours compared with 50% of workers in community-based centres, and 52% in 'other' centres.

In contrast to the declining hours worked by centre-based workers, the proportion of family day care providers working 40 or more hours a week increased markedly over the same period – from 56% to 66%. This was due to the increase in the proportion of providers working 50 or more hours a week – from 25% in 1991 to 36% in 1999. The relatively high proportion of family day care providers who worked 40 or more hours in the census week (66%) can be explained by the nature of their work. These providers work in their own homes and provide care from the time the first child arrives until the last child leaves.

Table 4.11: Workers in long day care services, by hours worked in census week and type of service, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999 (per cent)

Type of service provider/ Hours worked	1991	1992	1993	1995	1997	1999
Community-based centres						
< 20	28	27	27	26	27	30
20–29	17	18	17	18	19	19
30–39	33	33	32	34	32	32
40+	22	22	23	23	21	18
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	12,448	12,591	13,983	14,541	13,892	13,182
Private-for-profit centres						
< 20	26	24	24	22	24	25
20–29	12	13	12	13	14	15
30–39	33	36	35	34	41	40
40+	28	27	28	31	21	20
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	6,053	7,967	10,575	17,736	22,242	22,314
'Other' centres						
< 20	24	27	30	30	29	29
20–29	19	16	18	16	18	18
30–39	35	38	32	33	30	30
40+	21	20	20	21	23	22
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	1,371	1,787	2,027	3,090	3,386	3,339
Family day care coordination unit staff						
< 20	29	28	26	24	25	23
20–29	23	24	23	24	25	26
30–39	42	44	47	48	44	44
40+	5	4	4	4	6	6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	1,410	1,532	1,607	1,689	1,691	1,611
Family day care providers						
< 20	16	13	13	10	9	8
20–29	13	12	12	10	10	10
30–39	15	16	16	16	17	16
40–49	31	31	31	31	31	30
50+	25	27	28	33	33	36
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	13,679	14,435	15,087	14,907	13,786	12,437

Sources: DHHCS 1992; DSHS 1994, 1995; DHFS 1997; AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

In 1999, there was some variation across the States and Territories in the hours worked by long day care workers in the census week.

Table 4.12: Workers in long day care services, by hours worked in census week, type of service provider and State/Territory, 1999 (per cent)

Type of service provider/ Hours worked	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based centres									
< 20	33	27	30	26	32	38	26	22	30
20–29	19	18	20	16	23	22	25	18	19
30–39	23	34	41	56	34	32	42	35	32
40+	25	20	10	2	11	8	6	25	18
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	4,930	3,210	1,972	874	1,120	459	398	219	13,182
Private-for-profit centres									
< 20	28	23	24	26	26	41	15	10	25
20–29	15	14	15	15	21	12	10	24	15
30–39	23	42	52	50	43	38	38	53	40
40+	34	21	9	10	11	9	36	14	20
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	7,306	4,631	7,180	1,934	783	160	261	59	22,314
'Other' centres									
< 20	29	26	32	29	50	35	28	13	29
20–29	17	17	19	21	16	29	24	15	18
30–39	22	36	27	43	27	34	39	63	30
40+	32	21	22	6	7	2	8	9	22
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	1,251	882	461	146	165	91	254	89	3,339
Family day care coordination unit staff									
< 20	27	21	23	16	16	35	18	24	23
20–29	27	25	27	24	22	31	31	12	26
30–39	38	42	48	57	58	29	51	65	44
40+	8	12	2	3	4	5	0	0	6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	565	317	339	112	135	65	61	17	1,611
Family day care providers									
< 20	5	11	5	4	14	11	9	4	8
20–29	9	12	7	9	14	10	10	6	10
30–39	18	19	13	16	16	21	11	4	16
40–49	35	26	31	37	17	36	37	36	30
50+	33	32	45	36	39	22	34	50	36
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	3,505	3,284	2,639	782	1,157	466	470	134	12,437

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

Workers in all types of long day care centres in New South Wales were more likely to work 40 or more hours in the census week (Table 4.12). For example 34% of workers in private-for-profit centres in New South Wales worked 40 or more hours in the census week compared with 20% nationally. Workers in long day care centres in the Northern Territory were more likely to work 30 or more hours in the census week, and those in Tasmania were more likely to work less than 30 hours.

There was also some variation in the hours worked by family day care unit coordination staff. Nationally, 50% of workers worked 30 or more hours during the census week, but this ranged from 34% in Tasmania to 65% in the Northern Territory. Family day care providers worked longer hours than all other types of staff. Nationally 66% of family day care providers worked 40 or more hours in the census week, and this ranged from 56% in South Australia to 86% in the Northern Territory.

4.5 Qualifications

The quality of care has been shown to be strongly related to whether or not staff working in child care services have had appropriate training in the area (Fleer 2000:39). The National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) stated in its 1993 handbook that well-trained staff provide care which enhances the development of children. Child care staff providing the 'best level of care will know what are appropriate experiences for and appropriate expectations of children of different ages, and will be sensitive to the individual and cultural dimensions of development' (NCAC 2001:4). Such staff will also know how to 'provide an environment in which there is a balance of stimulating planned and spontaneous experiences, appropriate to each child's individual interest and needs' (NCAC 2001:4).

State and Territory licensing regulations and the national standards for long day care centres specify the 'recognised qualifications' for the various staff-child ratios and positions. According to the national standards for long day care centres (endorsed in 1995), a 'recognised qualification is a 2-year accredited post-secondary qualification in child care' and a '3-year-accredited tertiary course in early child care or education'. It is important to note that the national standards are 'minimum standards' and that licensing regulations in the States and Territories differ somewhat in the 'required' qualifications for the various staffing positions and staff-child ratios (Press & Hayes 2000: 43, 73-74). Currently, some State and Territory regulations, for instance, specify that a centre director must have a 3-year tertiary qualification in early childhood, while others require only a 2-year tertiary qualification.

The national standards for family day care specify that the minimum qualification for a family day care scheme coordinator is 'a diploma of 2 years full-time study in early childhood studies or behavioural sciences conducted by a registered training organisation' (FaCS 2000c: Appendix F, Section 8.2). For family day care providers, the national standards do not focus on formal qualifications but rather on basic competencies, experience, knowledge and skills. Where licensing regulations for family day care services exist, they are generally consistent with the national standards.

Relevant qualifications

Information on 'relevant qualifications' held by child care workers was collected in each of the censuses. 'Relevant qualifications' are defined in the census as qualifications in early childhood and primary teaching, child care, nursing and 'other relevant' areas. For staff in long day care centres and family day care schemes, 'other relevant' qualifications included 'other teaching', accountancy, psychology, social work and business management, while for family day care providers they included 'certificate of home-based care', nanny's course, 'other teaching', social work and business management. From 1993 onwards, information was also obtained from the censuses on whether staff had more than 3 years experience in the child care industry as well as whether they were currently undertaking qualifications.

Table 4.13: Qualifications of workers in long day care centres, by type of centre, Australia, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999 (per cent)

Type of centre/Qualification status	1991	1992	1993	1995	1997	1999
Community-based centres						
Qualified	48	51	48	50	51	54
No qualifications:	52	49	52	50	49	46
Undertaking qualification	n.a.	n.a.	11	11	10	11
Worked in industry for more than 3 yr	n.a.	n.a.	19	19	21	21
Neither	n.a.	n.a.	21	20	18	14
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	12,448	12,591	14,499	14,541	13,892	13,182
Private-for-profit centres						
Qualified	42	50	46	48	49	53
No qualifications:	58	50	54	52	51	47
Undertaking qualification	n.a.	n.a.	14	15	16	16
Worked in industry for more than 3 yr	n.a.	n.a.	12	10	12	14
Neither	n.a.	n.a.	28	27	24	17
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	6,053	7,967	10,575	17,736	22,242	22,314
'Other' centres						
Qualified	51	55	52	53	54	57
No qualifications:	49	45	48	47	46	43
Undertaking qualification	n.a.	n.a.	11	11	11	12
Worked in industry for more than 3 yr	n.a.	n.a.	14	14	16	17
Neither	n.a.	n.a.	23	22	19	14
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	1,371	1,787	2,027	3,090	3,386	3,339

Sources: DHHCS 1992; DSHS 1994, 1995; DHFS 1997; AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

Between 1991 and 1999, the proportion of workers with 'relevant' qualifications generally increased in all types of long day care centres, albeit fluctuating over the period (Table 4.13). The increase was greatest among workers in private-for-profit centres – from 42% to 53%. In 1991, workers in community-based centres were more likely to have relevant qualifications than workers in private-for-profit centres, but by 1999 the proportions were around the same.

Between 1993 and 1999 there was a substantial fall in the proportion of workers in all types of long day care centres who had no relevant qualifications, were not undertaking qualifications and had not worked in the industry for more than 3 years (Table 4.13). For example, in private-for-profit centres, the proportion fell from 28% to 17%. Over the same period, the proportion of workers with no qualifications and not undertaking qualifications, but with more than 3 years experience rose slightly, as did the proportion of workers who had no qualifications but were undertaking qualifications (except in community-based centres where this proportion changed little). Throughout the period, the proportion of workers who did not have relevant qualifications but were studying for these qualifications was highest in private-for-profit centres. The proportion who had worked in the industry for more than 3 years, but did not have relevant qualifications and were not studying for them, was highest in community-based centres.

The proportion of family day care workers with relevant qualifications also increased from 1991 to 1999, with similar fluctuations over the period (Table 4.14). Throughout the period,

the proportion of family day care providers with relevant qualifications was considerably lower than the proportion of staff in family day care schemes and in long day care centres. For instance, in 1999, 21% of family day care providers had relevant qualifications compared with 70% of workers in family day care schemes and 54% in community-based centres (Table 4.13). Between 1993 and 1999, the proportion of workers without relevant qualifications, who were not studying for them and did not have more than 3 years experience in the industry fell for both providers and staff in schemes, from 41% to 28% and from 13% to 7% respectively (Table 4.14). During the same period, the proportion of family day care providers with more than 3 years experience, but who did not have qualifications and were not studying for these qualifications, increased from 38% to 44%.

Table 4.14: Qualifications of family day care scheme workers by type of worker, Australia 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999 (per cent)

Type of worker/Qualification status	1991	1992	1993	1995	1997	1999
Coordination unit staff						
Qualified	66	68	66	66	66	70
No qualifications:	34	32	34	34	34	30
Undertaking qualification	n.a.	n.a.	4	4	6	5
No qualification but worked in industry for 3 yr	n.a.	n.a.	17	18	17	18
Neither	n.a.	n.a.	13	11	11	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	1,410	1,532	1,797	1,689	1,691	1,611
Family day care providers						
Qualified	15	18	16	20	20	21
No qualifications:	85	82	84	80	80	79
Undertaking qualification	n.a.	n.a.	5	6	6	6
No qualification but worked in industry for 3 yr	n.a.	n.a.	38	39	41	44
Neither	n.a.	n.a.	41	35	33	28
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	13,679	14,435	15,237	14,934	13,786	12,437

Sources: DHHCS 1992; DSHS 1994, 1995; DHFS 1997; AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

Differences in the proportions of staff in family day care schemes and of family day care providers with relevant qualifications reflect to some extent differences in the type of work that they do (see Section 1.1) and the requirements set out in the national standards.

In 1999, there were considerable variations between the States and Territories in the qualification status of long day care centre workers (Table 4.15). The proportions of workers in all types of centres in Western Australia and the Northern Territory with relevant qualifications was relatively low, while in Victoria it was relatively high. In community-based centres, for instance, the proportion of workers with relevant qualifications ranged from 45% in the Northern Territory to 65% in Victoria. Among workers in community-based and private-for-profit centres, those in Queensland were more likely than those in other jurisdictions to have no relevant qualifications, but be undertaking qualifications. For instance, 24% of workers in private-for-profit centres in Queensland had no relevant qualifications but were undertaking qualifications compared with a national average of 16%.

Table 4.15: Qualification status of workers in long day care centres by type of centre and State/Territory, 1999 (per cent)

Type of centre/Qualification status	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based centres									
Qualified	50	65	56	49	47	45	57	45	54
No qualifications:	50	35	44	51	53	55	43	55	46
Undertaking qualification	10	7	18	12	12	14	10	16	11
No qualification but worked in industry for 3 yr	25	17	13	20	25	26	20	21	21
Neither	15	11	13	19	16	15	13	17	14
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	4,930	3,210	1,972	874	1,120	459	398	219	13,182
Private-for-profit centres									
Qualified	52	56	54	42	50	56	54	34	53
No qualifications:	48	44	46	58	50	44	46	66	47
Undertaking qualification	12	11	24	19	15	13	18	19	16
No qualification but worked in industry for 3 yr	19	14	9	14	17	17	18	20	14
Neither	18	20	13	25	18	14	20	27	17
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	7,306	4,631	7,180	1,934	783	160	261	59	22,314
'Other' centres									
Qualified	54	64	58	43	56	51	57	49	57
No qualifications:	46	36	42	57	44	49	43	51	43
Undertaking qualification	11	8	17	30	14	7	11	17	12
No qualification but worked in industry for 3 yrs	22	16	7	14	15	23	17	12	17
Neither	13	12	17	13	16	20	15	21	14
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	1,251	882	461	146	165	91	254	89	3,339

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

There were wide variations across the States and Territories in the proportions of family day care workers with relevant qualifications in 1999. These proportions ranged from 47% of workers in family day care schemes in the Northern Territory to 78% in New South Wales and 8% of family day care providers in South Australia to 28% in the Northern Territory (Table 4.16). Although the proportion of family day care providers in South Australia with relevant qualifications was small, well over half of providers in that State (61%) had no qualifications, but had more than 3 years experience in the industry.

Table 4.16: Qualification status of family day care workers, by type of worker and State/Territory, 1999 (per cent)

Type of worker/Qualification status	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Coordination unit staff									
Qualified	78	72	69	71	50	60	49	47	70
No qualifications:	22	28	31	29	50	40	51	53	30
Undertaking qualification	4	3	8	4	4	12	5	0	5
No qualification but worked in industry for 3 yr	15	19	15	15	35	14	41	18	18
Neither	4	6	7	10	11	14	5	35	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	565	317	339	112	135	65	61	17	1,611
Family day care providers									
Qualified	21	26	16	29	8	20	26	28	21
No qualifications:	79	74	84	71	92	80	74	72	79
Undertaking qualification	6	3	10	7	1	10	21	5	6
No qualification but worked in industry for 3 yr	45	42	44	36	61	43	39	37	44
Neither	27	30	30	29	30	26	14	29	28
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total (n)	3,505	3,284	2,639	782	1,157	466	470	134	12,437

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

Type of relevant qualifications

A 2-year Child Care Certificate/ Associate Diploma followed by a 1-year Child Care Certificate/ Associate Diploma, and early childhood teaching qualifications were the most common forms of qualification for all long day care centre workers between 1991 and 1999 (Table 4.17). During this period, the proportion of workers with a 2-year Child Care Certificate increased in community-based and private-for-profit centres from 20% to 25% and 13% to 21% respectively. In contrast, the proportion of staff in 'other' centres with this type of qualification fell from 25% to 19% between 1991 and 1992, but had risen to 25% again by 1999.

The proportion of workers with an early childhood teaching qualification rose markedly from 5% to 11% for those in 'other' centres between 1991 and 1999, and also increased for those in community-based and private-for-profit centres (from 7% to 9% and 6% to 8% respectively).

As noted earlier in this section, the national standards specify that a '2-year accredited post-secondary qualification in child care' and a '3-year-accredited tertiary course in early child care or education' are 'recognised' qualifications for long day care centre workers. Analysis of the census data indicates that the proportion of workers that have either an early childhood teaching degree and/or a 2-year child care diploma and/or a 3-year diploma or bachelor has increased for all centres.

Table 4.17: Relevant qualifications held by long day care centre workers, by type of centre and type of qualification, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999 (per cent)

Type of Centre/Type of qualification	1991	1992	1993	1995	1997	1999
Community-based centres						
Teaching—Early childhood	7	8	8	9	9	9
Teaching—Primary	2	2	2	2	2	2
Nursing	7	10	9	7	6	4
Child care—1 year	6	8	6	8	8	9
Child care—2 year	20	19	19	21	22	25
Child care—3 year	2	3	3	4	4	5
Other relevant	5	5	5	5	5	6
<i>Total workers with qualifications</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>54</i>
<i>Total workers without qualifications</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>46</i>
Total (n)	12,448	12,591	13,983	14,541	13,892	13,182
Private-for-profit						
Teaching—Early childhood	6	7	9	9	8	8
Teaching—Primary	4	4	5	5	4	3
Nursing	5	6	6	5	4	4
Child care—1 year	7	9	7	9	9	11
Child care—2 year	13	5	15	15	18	21
Child care—3 year	2	3	4	4	5	6
Other relevant	8	8	7	6	6	6
<i>Total workers with qualifications</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>53</i>
<i>Total workers without qualifications</i>	<i>56</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>47</i>
Total (n)	6,053	7,967	10,575	17,742	22,242	22,314
'Other' centres						
Teaching—Early childhood	5	9	9	11	11	11
Teaching—Primary	3	2	4	3	3	3
Nursing	5	13	10	6	5	4
Child care—1 year	7	9	8	8	9	10
Child care—2 year	25	19	19	20	22	25
Child care—3 year	2	3	4	4	5	5
Other relevant	4	5	5	7	6	8
<i>Total workers with qualifications</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>57</i>
<i>Total workers without qualifications</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>43</i>
Total (n)	1,371	1,787	2,027	3,090	3,386	3,339

Notes

1. Percentages in the table represent the proportion of all workers holding a specific qualification. Columns do not add to the totals, as workers may hold more than one qualification.
2. 'Other relevant' includes qualifications in accountancy, psychology, social work, and business management.

Sources: DHHCS 1992; DSHS 1994, 1995; DHFS 1997; AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

The distribution of types of relevant qualifications held by long day care centre workers varied considerably across the States and Territories in 1999 (Table 4.18). For instance, relatively high proportions of workers in all types of long day care centres in Tasmania held a 2-year Child Care Certificate/ Associate Diploma, and relatively high proportions in New South Wales had an early childhood teaching qualification.

Table 4.18: Relevant qualifications held by long day care centre workers, by type of centre, type of qualification and State/Territory 1999 (per cent)

Type of centre/ Type of qualification	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based centres									
Teaching—Early childhood	14	5	7	2	8	5	9	3	9
Teaching—Primary	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	2
Nursing	3	8	3	4	3	4	8	3	4
Child care—1 year	2	18	15	10	3	3	13	12	9
Child care—2 year	22	27	26	25	25	28	24	24	25
Child care—3 year	5	6	6	5	4	0	5	3	5
Other relevant	7	5	3	5	7	3	8	5	6
<i>Total workers with qualification</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>56</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>54</i>
<i>Total workers without qualification</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>46</i>
Total (n)	4,930	3,210	1,972	874	1120	459	398	219	13,182
Private-for-profit centres									
Teaching—Early childhood	11	7	7	4	9	9	6	8	8
Teaching—Primary	3	4	3	1	4	6	3	2	3
Nursing	2	8	2	4	5	8	5	0	4
Child care—1 year	7	15	15	6	2	7	11	7	11
Child care—2 year	20	17	24	21	21	25	25	12	21
Child care—3 year	6	6	6	4	7	3	3	3	6
Other relevant	9	6	5	5	8	6	7	2	6
<i>Total workers with qualification</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>56</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>56</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>53</i>
<i>Total workers without qualification</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>47</i>
Total (n)	7,306	4,631	7,180	1,934	783	160	261	59	22,314
'Other' centres									
Teaching—Early childhood	14	11	9	1	7	7	11	7	11
Teaching—Primary	2	4	3	1	7	2	3	1	3
Nursing	3	7	2	7	6	2	5	4	4
Child care—1 year	4	15	17	11	4	1	10	13	10
Child care—2 year	26	22	25	21	28	34	24	21	25
Child care—3 year	5	6	4	3	2	2	5	6	5
Other relevant	9	9	2	4	8	10	8	2	8
<i>Total workers with qualification</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>56</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>57</i>
<i>Total workers without qualification</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>43</i>
Total (n)	1,251	882	461	146	165	91	254	89	3,339

Notes

1. Percentages in the table represent the proportion of all workers holding a specific qualification. Columns do not add to the totals, as workers may hold more than one qualification.
2. 'Other relevant' includes qualifications in accountancy, psychology, social work, and business management.

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

In community-based centres, 28% of workers in Tasmania had a 2-year tertiary qualification in child care compared with 25% Australia-wide, and in New South Wales 14% of workers had an early childhood teaching qualification compared with 9% Australia-wide. Some of the differences between jurisdictions in the types of relevant qualifications held by workers are probably due to differences in State and Territory licensing requirements. In New South Wales, for instance, the regulations stipulate that a centre with more than 30 places must have at least one qualified early childhood teacher on duty (Moyle et al. 1996:36). (See also Section 2.1.)

Over the period 1991 to 1999, the most common forms of qualifications held by family day care coordination unit staff were the 2-year Child Care Certificate/ Associate Diploma and 'other relevant' qualifications (Table 4.19). Between 1991 and 1999, the proportion of all coordination unit staff holding a 2-year tertiary child care qualification increased markedly from 16% to 26%. The proportion holding a 3-year accredited tertiary qualification in child care also increased during the period – from 2% to 7%.

The relatively high proportion of coordination unit staff holding 'other relevant' qualifications, which (as noted) include 'other teaching', accountancy, psychology, social work and business management, is indicative of the administrative and managerial duties typical of a family day care coordinator.

For family day care providers over this period the most common form of relevant qualification was 'other relevant' qualifications which (as noted) include 'certificate of home-based care', nanny's course, 'other teaching', social work and business management. There were increases between 1991 and 1999 in the proportion of providers with 'other relevant' qualifications (from 4% to 10%), with a 1-year Child Care Certificate (from 2% to 5%), and with a 2-year Child Care Certificate/ Associate Diploma (from 1% to 3%).

Table 4.19: Relevant qualifications held by family day care workers, by type of worker and type of qualification, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999 (per cent)

Type of worker /Type of qualification	1991	1992	1993	1995	1997	1999
Coordination unit staff						
Teaching—Early childhood	9	10	10	12	11	10
Teaching—Primary	9	9	9	9	8	8
Nursing	8	8	10	9	9	9
Child care1—year	3	4	3	3	3	4
Child care—2 year	16	16	17	20	22	26
Child care—3 year	2	3	4	3	5	7
Other relevant	21	25	24	21	20	22
<i>Total workers with qualifications</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>70</i>
<i>Total workers without qualifications</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>30</i>
Total (n)	1,410	1,532	1,607	1,689	1,691	1,611
Family day care providers						
Teaching—Early childhood	1	1	1	1	1	1
Teaching—Primary	2	2	2	2	2	1
Nursing	4	4	4	3	3	2
Child care—1 year	2	2	2	3	4	5
Child care—2 year	1	1	1	1	2	3
Child care—3 year	0	0	0	<0.5	<0.5	<0.5
Other relevant	4	7	7	10	10	10
<i>Total workers with qualifications</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Total workers without qualifications</i>	<i>85</i>	<i>82</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>79</i>
Total (n)	13,679	14,435	15,087	14,938	13,786	12,437

Notes

1. Percentages in the table represent the proportion of all workers holding a specific qualification. Columns do not add to the totals, as workers may hold more than one qualification.
2. For coordination unit staff, 'other relevant' qualifications are accountancy, psychology, social work, and business management. For providers, 'other relevant' qualifications are certificate in home-based care, nanny's course, other teaching, social work, and business management.

Sources: DHHCS 1992; DSHS 1994, 1995; DHFS 1997; AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

In 1999, the types of relevant qualifications held by family day care coordination unit staff and family day care providers also varied across jurisdictions (Table 4.20). The proportion of family day care coordination unit staff holding a 2-year Child Care Certificate/ Associate Diploma ranged from 13% in South Australia to 34% in New South Wales, and the proportion with 'other relevant' qualifications ranged from 6% in the Northern Territory to 29% in South Australia.

The proportion of family day care providers with 'other relevant' qualifications, however, was highest in the Northern Territory (18%) and Victoria (17%), and lowest in Queensland and South Australia (3% each). The proportion with a 1-year Child Care Certificate was highest in the Australian Capital Territory (16%) and lowest in the Northern Territory and South Australia (1% each).

Table 4.20: Relevant qualifications held by family day care workers by type of worker, type of qualification, and State/Territory, 1999 (per cent)

Type of worker/ Type of qualification	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Coordination unit staff									
Teaching—Early childhood	14	7	11	5	4	15	2	12	10
Teaching—Primary	9	7	9	9	5	3	3	0	8
Nursing	7	14	9	8	4	5	11	0	9
Child care—1 year	3	5	6	10	1	2	5	6	4
Child care—2 year	34	24	22	25	13	14	21	18	26
Child care—3 year	5	8	9	15	5	2	11	12	7
Other relevant	21	25	25	12	29	28	10	6	22
<i>Total workers with qualifications</i>	78	72	69	71	50	60	49	47	70
<i>Total workers without qualifications</i>	22	28	31	29	50	40	51	53	30
Total (n)	565	317	339	112	135	65	61	17	1,611
Family day care providers									
Teaching—Early childhood	1	1	1	1	1	< 0.5	< 0.5	1	1
Teaching—Primary	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1
Nursing	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	3	2
Child care—1 year	4	6	5	12	1	7	16	1	5
Child care—2 year	4	2	4	4	< 0.5	5	3	4	3
Child care—3 year	< 0.5	< 0.5	1	1	< 0.5	0	0	0	< 0.5
Other relevant	11	17	3	9	3	6	6	18	10
<i>Total workers with qualifications</i>	21	26	16	29	8	20	26	28	21
<i>Total workers without qualifications</i>	79	74	84	71	92	80	74	72	79
Total (n)	3,505	3,284	2,639	782	1,157	466	470	134	12,437

Notes

1. Percentages in the table represent the proportion of all workers holding a specific qualification. Columns do not add to the totals, as workers may hold more than one qualification.
2. For coordination unit staff, 'other relevant' qualifications are accountancy, psychology, social work, and business management. For providers, 'other relevant' qualifications are certificate in home-based care, nanny's course, other teaching, social work, and business management.

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

4.6 In-service training

In-service training is also provided to improve child care workers' skills and competencies. In some jurisdictions, in-service training is required under the State and Territory regulations. For example, a proportion of child care workers in each centre (and most family day care providers) are required to have a current First Aid Certificate, and this normally implies taking a course every 2 years. All censuses have collected information on the in-service training undertaken by workers in the 12 months prior to the census. The types of 'relevant training', as defined in the censuses, are 'child care-related', 'management /financial', and 'other' (which includes first aid, 'communication skills', and 'conflict resolution').

Between 1991 and 1999 the proportions of long day care workers undertaking in-service training in the 12 months prior to the census increased for all types of service providers. The largest increase was for workers in private-for-profit centres, where the proportion undertaking in-service training increased from 45% in 1991 to 70% in 1999 (Table 4.21). The increase in the proportion of long day care centre workers undertaking in-service training may be related to the introduction of the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) for all Commonwealth-supported long day care centres (see Section 1.1), in which all centres were required to register to participate by 30 June 1995. To reach an acceptable standard of quality according to the QIAS, long day care centres are required to provide regular learning and training opportunities for staff. Principle 10.4 of the QIAS 2001 states that a provider of high-quality child care services is one where 'Management provides and facilitates regular professional development opportunities for staff' (NCAC 2001:7).

Table 4.21: Percentage of long day care workers undertaking in-service training in the last 12 months, by type of service provider 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999

Type of service provider	1991	1992	1993	1995	1997	1999
Centre-based						
Community-based	56	63	63	69	67	67
Private-for-profit	45	58	58	69	70	70
'Other'	54	64	62	68	70	69
Family day care services						
Coordination unit staff	79	83	84	87	86	88
Family day care providers	68	76	74	77	77	77

Sources: DHHCS 1992; DSHS 1994; 1995; DHFS 1997; AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1995, 1999).

By 1999, two-thirds or more of the workers in all types of long day care centres and family day care services had undertaken in-service training in the previous 12 months (Table 4.21). Over the entire period family day care workers were more likely than staff in long day care centres to have undertaken training in the previous 12 months.

In 1999, the relatively high proportion of family day care providers undertaking in-service training was not uniform in all jurisdictions, with relatively low proportions of family day care providers in South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory (51% and 48% respectively) having undertaken in-service training (Table 4.22). In contrast, almost all (97%) of family day care providers in Tasmania had undertaken in-service training in the year prior to the 1999 Census.

Table 4.22: Percentage of long day care workers undertaking in-service training in the last 12 months, by type of service provider, State/Territory, 1999

Type of service provider	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Centre-based									
Community-based	62	69	72	67	69	66	67	70	67
Private-for-profit	71	65	77	61	68	74	74	68	70
'Other'	67	71	73	58	68	77	67	85	69
Family day care services									
Coordination unit staff	89	91	90	83	74	89	85	82	88
Family day care providers	78	79	87	69	51	97	48	67	77

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1997, 1999).

Because of changes over time in the categories of types of in-service training used in the census question, it is difficult to examine changes in the distribution of the types of in-service training courses undertaken by child care workers.

For all long day care centre workers in 1999, the most common type of in-service training was 'other child care-related' (that is, child care training other than for special needs children) (Table 4.23 and Table 4.24). The proportions undertaking this type of training ranged from 45% of workers in private-for-profit centres to 64% of family day care workers.

The proportion of workers who had undertaken 'other relevant' courses was also relatively high for all types of service providers. Family day care coordination unit staff accounted for the highest proportion of workers who had undertaken 'other relevant' courses (48%), and workers in community-based centres had the lowest proportion (36%).

Family day care coordination unit staff and care providers were more likely to have undertaken management/financial courses than workers in long day care centres. These types of courses were undertaken by 45% of coordination unit staff and 39% of family day care providers compared with less than 10% of workers in long day care centres. This is indicative of the main type of work undertaken by family day care coordination unit staff, and the fact that most family day care providers are self-employed and therefore responsible for some elements of the administration and financial management of their 'business'.

As outlined in Section 3.5, 16% of children in all long day care services had 'additional needs' (see Table 3.15). This included children with a disability, children at risk of abuse or neglect, children of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander families, and children from families with a non-English-speaking background. It is clear that efforts are being made in the industry to provide an appropriate service for these children. In 1999, the proportion of workers who had undertaken in-service courses designed to help them with children who had 'additional needs' ranged from 11% of family day care providers to 28% of family day care coordination unit staff.

There were sometimes considerable variations between the States and Territories in the proportions of workers undertaking the different types of in-service training. For example, the proportion of family day care providers who had undertaken 'other child care related' training ranged from 37% in South Australia to 70% in New South Wales. In the Northern Territory, only a small proportion of workers in community-based and private-for-profit centres (7% and 2% respectively). No workers in 'other centres' or family day care schemes had undertaken this type of training. This may indicate problems with access to this type of training.

Table 4.23: In-service training courses undertaken in last 12 months by long day care centre workers, by type of centre, type of course and State/Territory, 1999 (per cent)

Type of service provider/ Type of course	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based centres									
Training for additional needs children	14	15	10	13	16	5	18	7	14
Other child care related	46	49	39	44	44	41	56	52	46
Management/financial	10	7	7	9	9	13	6	11	9
'Other' relevant	23	40	57	35	43	39	29	37	36
<i>Total workers with in-service training</i>	62	69	72	67	69	66	67	70	67
<i>Total workers without in-service training</i>	38	31	28	33	31	34	33	30	33
Total (n)	4,930	3,210	1,972	874	1,120	459	398	219	13,182
Private-for-profit centres									
Training for additional needs children	15	11	14	10	22	16	12	2	14
Other child care related	52	40	42	38	44	41	59	41	45
Management/financial	7	5	6	5	5	13	4	3	6
'Other' relevant	35	38	59	33	35	43	35	46	43
<i>Total workers with in-service training</i>	71	65	77	61	68	74	74	68	70
<i>Total workers without in-service training</i>	29	35	23	39	32	26	26	32	30
Total (n)	7,306	4,631	7,180	1,934	783	160	261	59	22,314
'Other' centres									
Training for additional needs children	17	15	13	8	8	23	19	0	15
Other child care related	52	50	43	32	43	59	52	67	50
Management/financial	9	8	9	6	7	12	8	13	9
'Other' relevant	28	37	55	29	39	64	41	51	37
<i>Total workers with in-service training</i>	67	71	73	58	68	77	67	85	69
<i>Total workers without in-service training</i>	33	29	27	42	32	23	33	15	31
Total (n)	1,251	882	461	146	165	91	254	89	3,339

Notes

- 'Other' relevant courses include courses that are not directly child care related but are relevant to the operation of the service, i.e. First Aid Certificate.
- Percentages do not necessarily add to subtotals, since workers may have taken more than one in-service course in the past 12 months.

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

Table 4.24: In-service training courses undertaken in last 12 months by family day care centre workers, by type of service provided, type of course and State/Territory, 1999 (per cent)

Type of worker/Type of course	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Family day care coordination unit staff									
Training for additional needs children	28	31	30	18	33	25	25	0	28
Other child care related	63	61	70	55	9	62	16	54	56
Management/financial	35	59	50	34	59	54	34	29	45
'Other' relevant	36	56	64	23	41	70	41	30	48
<i>Total workers with in-service training</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>91</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>85</i>	<i>82</i>	<i>88</i>
<i>Total workers without in-service training</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>12</i>
Total (n)	565	317	339	112	135	65	61	17	1,611
Family day care providers									
Training for additional needs children	10	17	14	3	4	3	3	0	11
Other child care related	70	67	65	63	37	63	41	65	64
Management/financial	40	41	48	40	14	38	20	41	39
'Other' relevant	35	59	50	34	59	38	20	41	39
<i>Total workers with in-service training</i>	<i>78</i>	<i>79</i>	<i>87</i>	<i>69</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>77</i>
<i>Total workers without in-service training</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>23</i>
Total (n)	3,505	3,284	2,639	782	1,157	466	470	134	12,437

Notes

1. 'Other' relevant courses include courses that are not directly child care related but are relevant to the operation of the service i.e. First Aid Certificate.
2. Percentages do not add to sub-totals, since workers may have taken more than one in-service course in the past 12 months.

Source: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1999).

Appendix

Table A1.1: Number of long day care centres with places for children aged under 2 years, by type of centre and State/Territory, 1995 and 1999

Type of centre	Year	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based	1995	384	276	140	90	85	31	25	22	1,053
	1999	382	253	141	74	86	31	30	19	1,016
Private-for-profit	1995	778	302	544	169	46	12	18	5	1,874
	1999	984	401	630	211	67	16	19	7	2,335
'Other'	1995	85	81	29	17	15	5	21	7	260
	1999	110	77	30	15	16	6	20	8	282

Sources: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1995, 1999).

Table A1.2: Number of long day care centres that offer an in-house preschool program and have a staff member with early childhood teaching qualifications or a 3-year diploma or bachelor's degree in child care, by type of centre and State/Territory, 1995, 1997 and 1999

Type of centre	Year	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based	1995	384	276	140	90	85	31	25	22	1,053
	1997	384	276	146	81	91	31	30	24	1,063
	1999	382	253	141	74	86	31	30	19	1,016
Private-for-profit	1995	778	301	543	168	46	12	18	5	1,873
	1997	917	429	639	217	65	14	17	9	2,307
	1999	984	401	630	211	67	16	19	7	2,335
'Other'	1995	85	81	29	17	15	5	21	7	260
	1997	104	86	31	16	16	6	22	5	286
	1999	110	77	30	15	16	6	20	8	282

Sources: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1995, 1997, 1999).

Table A1.3: Number of long day care centres and family day care providers taking children to a dedicated sessional preschool, by type of service provider and State/Territory, 1995, 1997 and 1999

Type of service provider	Year	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Community-based centres	1995	384	276	140	90	85	31	25	22	1,053
	1997	384	276	146	81	91	31	30	24	1,063
	1999	382	253	141	74	86	31	30	19	1,016
Private-for-profit centres	1995	778	302	544	169	46	12	18	5	1,874
	1997	917	429	639	217	65	14	17	9	2,307
	1999	984	401	630	211	67	16	19	7	2,335
'Other' centres	1995	85	81	29	17	15	5	21	7	260
	1997	104	86	31	16	16	6	22	5	286
	1999	110	77	30	15	16	6	20	8	282
Family day care providers	1995	4,152	4,322	2,785	759	1,519	499	705	193	14,934
	1997	3,776	3,787	2,823	792	1,431	446	551	180	13,786
	1999	3,505	3,284	2,639	782	1,157	466	470	134	12,437

Sources: AIHW analysis of FaCS Census of Child Care Services Unit Record File (1995, 1997, 1999).

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