

State of Education in NSW

Early childhood education and care

This fact sheet focuses on key items of context and reported outcomes for the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector, reported in the inaugural edition of the biennial State of Education in NSW.

Background

Providers

Service providers offering a preschool program NSW 2013

Preschools in government schools include:

- 100 preschools operated by the Department of Education and Communities
- 37 government-funded preschools operated by local councils.

Long day care	2,136	(71%)
Community managed preschools	751	(25%)
Preschools in government schools	100	(3%)
Independent schools	18	(<1%)
Catholic schools	5	(<1%)

Source: NSW Department of Education and Communities, ECEC Preschool Census 2013; Schools Mid Year Census 2013; and NSW 2013 Supplementary Data Report under the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education (forthcoming)

Enrolments

Total enrolments in early childhood education and care 2013

Long day care	57,486
Community preschools	33,890
Government preschools	4,765

Source: NSW Department of Education and Communities, NSW 2013 Supplementary Data Report under the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education (forthcoming)

Workforce

Total workforce in early childhood education and care 2013

Primary contact staff (FTE)	31,366
Administrative staff (FTE)	2,149
Other staff (FTE)	832
Family day carers (FTE)	4,660
Unpaid staff	325

Source: SCRGSP 2014, Report on Government Services 2014, vol. B Childcare, education and training, Productivity Commission, Canberra, Table 3A.35

Funding

Government expenditure on childcare and preschool services NSW 2012-13

Commonwealth	\$1.754 billion	(87.4%)
NSW	\$252.8 million	(12.6%)
Total	\$2.007 billion	

Source: SCRGSP 2014, Report on Government Services 2014, vol. B Childcare, education and training, Productivity Commission, Canberra, Table 3A.4 and 3A.5

Snapshot of performance

What is going well	Needs improvement
<h3>Universal access to early childhood education</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase in children enrolled in a preschool program in year before full-time schooling. ■ Increase in number of hours for children enrolled in government and community preschool programs in the year before school – an average of 14.11 hours or 2.34 days per week in 2013. ■ 55% of year-before-school cohort in these services enrolled for 15 hours per week – increase from 49% in 2011. ■ ECEC services operated and/or funded by NSW Government generally charge low fees, dropping between 2008 and 2013 for all children from \$31.73 to \$24.61 (2013 dollars). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Median weekly fee for 50 hours of centre-based LDC was \$392 in NSW, second highest nationally and increasing by 13% from 2011. ■ Out-of-pocket expenses for families relatively high compared to other parts of Australia – but between 2011 and 2013 increases were less than in most jurisdictions, closing the gap.
<h3>Increasing equity</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In 2012, smaller proportion of children (19.9%) vulnerable on one or more AEDI domains than in 2009 (21.3%) and less than national average (22%). ■ In 2012, smaller proportion of children (9.5%) vulnerable on two or more AEDI domains than 2009 (10.3%) and less than national average (10.8%). ■ Costs for children from low SES areas have fallen by 42% 2009-13, from \$18.38 to \$10.60 (2013 dollars). ■ A 46.8% increase in participation of children from low-income families, 2011-13. ■ A 15.1% increase in participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, 2011-13. ■ Average daily fees paid by Aboriginal families reduced (in 2013 dollars) from \$11.50 in 2009 to \$5.73 in 2013 (a decrease of 45%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ While enrolments have increased and overall target has been met, participation by children from disadvantaged backgrounds remains lower than average in some areas. ■ Early development indices (AEDI) show challenges for equity groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 14.6% of lowest quintile SES children vulnerable on two or more AEDI domains – 13.2% of remote children and 21.9% of very remote children vulnerable on two or more domains, with less improvement since 2009 than for other children – 37% of Aboriginal children vulnerable on one or more domain and 21% vulnerable on two or more domains (cf. 8.5% of non-Aboriginal children).
<h3>Quality of services</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 37% of services have been assessed against the National Quality Standards. ■ By March 2014, two services had applied for and achieved an 'excellent' rating. ■ Good performance in the quality areas of 'staffing', 'relationships with children', 'collaborative partnerships with families and communities' and 'leadership and service management'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ As potentially 'weaker' services were assessed first, NSW is below the national average in proportion of assessed services meeting or exceeding the National Quality Standard. ■ In line with national trends, assessed services could improve in the quality areas of 'educational program and practice', 'children's health and safety' and 'physical environment'.

For more information

The report is available on the CESE website at www.cese.nsw.gov.au

Further information about the report may be obtained through CESE at cese@det.nsw.edu.au or by telephone on T 02 9561 1211.