



Early Childhood and Child Care in Summary

December quarter 2014

This publication provides information on children in approved child care services across Australia for the December quarter 2014.

Key findings for the December quarter 2014 include:

- 1,184,750 children attended approved child care, up 5.7 per cent compared with the December quarter 2013.
- 811,310 families had at least one child in approved child care, an increase of 4.4 per cent since the December quarter 2013.
- 16,184 approved child care services operated in Australia, an increase of 0.9 per cent since the December quarter 2013.
- The total estimated Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate entitlement was \$1,542.5 million, up 12.7 per cent since the December quarter 2013.

Introduction

This report presents information on the numbers of children and families using approved child care, the costs of care and the numbers and types of child care services in Australia. It includes data from the Child Care Management System (CCMS), MyChild website, Department of Human Services and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

During the December quarter 2014, 811,310 families used approved child care services for their 1,184,750 children.

- In terms of affordability, 89.0 per cent of these families are estimated to have received Child Care Rebate (CCR), with up to 50 per cent of their out-of-pocket costs covered by the Australian Government.
- In terms of availability, in the December quarter 2014, there were 16,184 services providing approved child care services across Australia.

Table 1: Child care children, families, services and estimated entitlements by state and territory, December quarter 2014

State and territory	Number of children using approved child care ¹	Number of families using approved child care ¹	Number of approved child care services	Estimated Child Care Benefit (CCB) entitlement ¹ ('000)	Estimated Child Care Rebate (CCR) entitlement ¹ ('000)	Estimated number of families receiving CCR ¹
NSW	388,870	271,540	5,483	\$260,828	\$260,554	240,170
Vic.	294,770	195,320	3,574	\$248,847	\$194,665	175,340
Qld	275,850	188,020	3,447	\$179,200	\$148,195	166,150
SA	84,290	56,960	1,290	\$43,658	\$37,634	50,740
WA	91,180	64,680	1,493	\$47,583	\$58,607	57,270
Tas.	22,350	15,540	375	\$10,452	\$9,567	13,850
NT	9,120	6,490	176	\$3,568	\$7,673	6,030
ACT	25,410	17,660	346	\$8,140	\$23,295	16,720
Australia	1,184,750	811,310	16,184	\$802,277	\$740,190	721,910

¹ As families and children may use services in more than one state or territory and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Child Care Usage

Children

During the December quarter 2014, 1,184,750 children used approved child care in Australia, up by 5.7 per cent since the December quarter 2013. For children aged 0–12 years using approved child care, this represents 30.2 per cent of the 3,856,350 children aged 0–12 years in Australia.

During the December quarter 2014, children attended various services providing approved child care, including Long Day Care (664,890 or 56.1 per cent), Outside School Hours Care (339,260 or 28.6 per cent), Family Day Care and In-Home Care (208,380 or 17.6 per cent), and Occasional Care (7,630 or 0.6 per cent).

Table 2: Number of children using child care by service type, December quarter 2013 to December quarter 2014

Service type	Dec. 13	Mar. 14	Jun. 14	Sep. 14	Dec. 14
Long Day Care	646,750	641,740	631,400	658,400	664,890
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	165,440	179,200	192,510	203,790	208,380
Occasional Care	8,130	6,920	7,430	7,750	7,630
Outside School Hours Care	335,110	354,020	367,940	369,630	339,260
Total¹	1,120,880	1,127,730	1,161,150	1,201,110	1,184,750
<i>Per cent of Australian population²</i>	<i>29.0%</i>	<i>29.2%</i>	<i>29.6%</i>	<i>30.6%</i>	<i>30.2%</i>

1 As children may use more than one service type in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

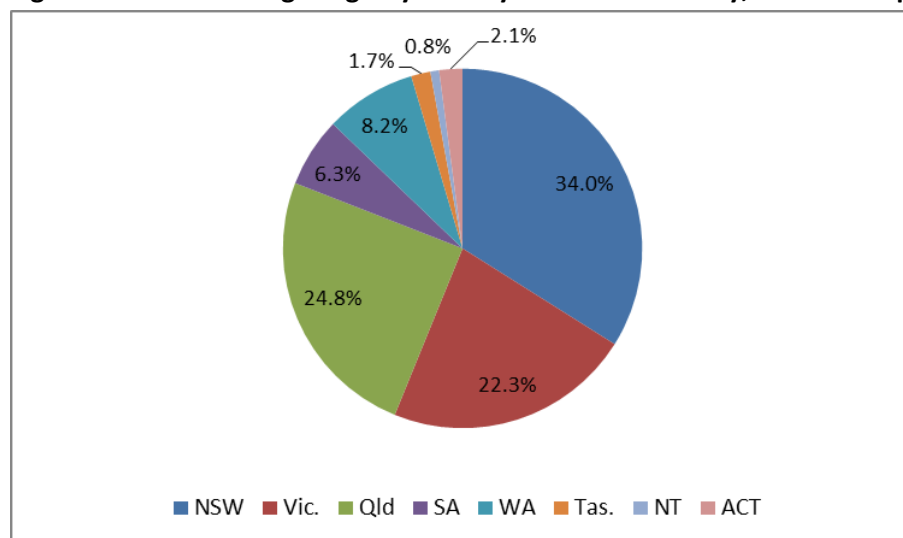
2 Number of children aged 0–12 years using approved child care as a proportion of all Australian children aged 0–12 years.

NOTE: Due to the timing of the Dec. quarter 2014, there was one week less of October school holidays than usual in some states recorded in this period. Accordingly, the number of children that attended vacation care (and therefore Outside School Hours Care) was lower than recent quarters.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data, ABS Cat. No. 3101.0 Australian Demographic Statistics, Jun. 2014.

In the December quarter 2014, the largest proportion of children attending Long Day Care was in New South Wales (34.0 per cent), followed by Queensland (24.8 per cent) and Victoria (22.3 per cent).

Figure 1: Children using Long Day Care by state and territory, December quarter 2014



Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Table 3: Number of children using child care by service type and state and territory, December quarter 2014

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia ¹
Long Day Care	225,930	147,970	164,780	41,580	54,660	11,610	5,230	13,940	664,890
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	72,610	75,270	34,080	10,640	12,940	4,920	560	2,480	208,380
Occasional Care	2,560	2,800	740	120	1,060	150	0	200	7,630
Outside School Hours Care	98,360	75,460	83,650	35,130	26,820	7,190	3,470	9,300	339,260
Total¹	388,870	294,770	275,850	84,290	91,180	22,350	9,120	25,410	1,184,750

1 As children may use more than one service type in more than one state or territory in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

While most children who used approved child care, used services located in major cities (923,670 children), around one in four (265,760 or 22.4 per cent) children used services located in regional and remote areas.

Table 4: Number of children using child care by service type and region, December quarter 2014

Service type	Major cities of Australia	Regional ¹ and Remote Australia ²	Total ³
Long Day Care	498,800	167,440	664,890
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	167,340	41,710	208,380
Occasional Care	4,500	3,130	7,630
Outside School Hours Care	277,150	62,510	339,260
Total³	923,670	265,760	1,184,750

1 Includes Inner and Outer Regional

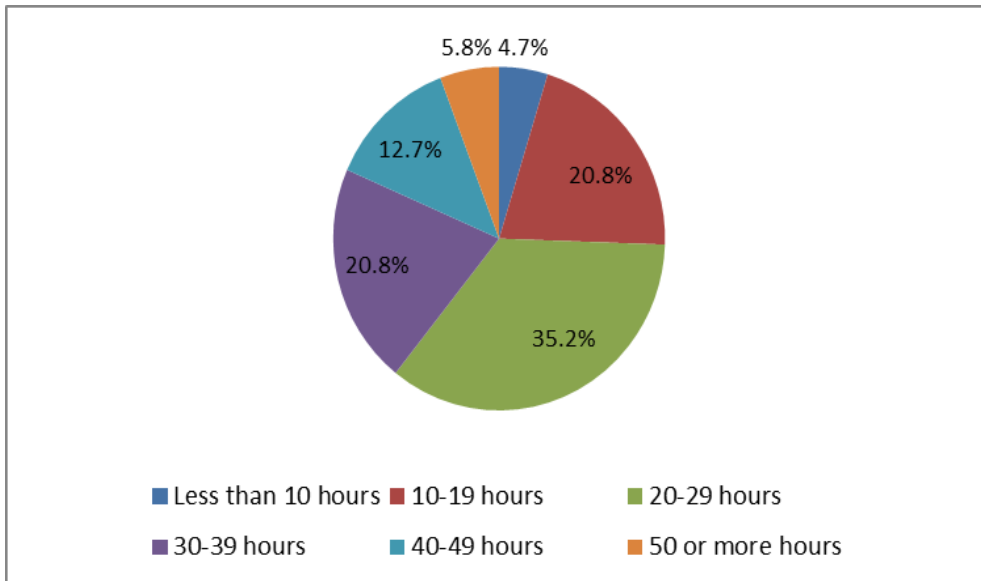
2 Includes Remote and Very Remote

3 As children may use more than one service type in more than one region in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

During the December quarter 2014, for all types of child care, the average time that a child spent in approved child care was 25.0 hours per week. This compares with children who used Long Day Care who attended for an average of 27.7 hours per week.

Figure 2: Children using Long Day Care by average hours per week, December quarter 2014



Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Table 5: Average weekly hours in child care by service type, December quarter 2013 to December quarter 2014

Service type	Dec. 13	Mar. 14	Jun. 14	Sep. 14	Dec. 14
Long Day Care	27.5	27.8	27.6	28.0	27.7
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	29.3	31.3	31.1	31.6	32.2
Occasional Care	11.2	11.8	11.4	11.8	11.5
Outside School Hours Care	10.7	12.1	10.8	11.7	10.1
Total	24.3	25.0	24.5	25.3	25.0

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Families

During the December quarter 2014, there were 811,310 families using some form of approved child care for their children, an increase of 4.4 per cent since the December quarter 2013. The number of families using Family Day Care and In-Home Care has increased by 19.3 per cent since the December quarter 2013.

Table 6: Number of families using child care by service type, December quarter 2013 to December quarter 2014

Service type	Dec. 13	Mar. 14	Jun. 14	Sep. 14	Dec. 14
Long Day Care	524,070	517,770	518,170	535,930	539,630
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	98,770	104,130	110,690	116,190	117,790
Occasional Care	6,690	5,840	6,240	6,390	6,310
Outside School Hours Care	239,780	250,370	261,440	263,200	243,200
Total¹	776,790	776,330	797,860	819,970	811,310

¹ As families may use more than one service type in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

NOTE: Due to the timing of the Dec. quarter 2014, there was one week less of October school holidays than usual in some states recorded in this period. Accordingly, the number of families that used vacation care (and therefore Outside School Hours Care) was lower than recent quarters.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

In the December quarter 2014, 271,540 families (33.5 per cent) had children attending approved child care in New South Wales, followed by 195,320 families (24.1 per cent) in Victoria and 188,020 families (23.2 per cent) in Queensland.

Across Australia, nearly two-thirds (539,630 or 66.5 per cent) of all families had children in Long Day Care and around one-third of families had children in Outside School Hours Care (243,200 or 30.0 per cent).

Table 7: Number of families using child care by service type and state and territory, December quarter 2014

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia ¹
Long Day Care	186,270	121,270	128,900	34,140	44,480	9,370	4,370	11,460	539,630
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	43,020	37,690	21,030	6,150	7,600	3,420	390	1,530	117,790
Occasional Care	2,130	2,300	620	100	880	120	0	160	6,310
Outside School Hours Care	71,500	55,000	58,990	24,310	18,990	5,160	2,530	6,820	243,200
Total¹	271,540	195,320	188,020	56,960	64,680	15,540	6,490	17,660	811,310

¹ As families may use more than one service type in more than one state or territory in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Indigenous children and families

During the December quarter 2014, 26,420 Indigenous children (2.2 per cent of all children) used approved child care in Australia. The number of Indigenous children using approved child care has decreased by 5.3 per cent since the December quarter 2013.

Table 8: Number of Indigenous children using child care by service type, December quarter 2013 to December quarter 2014

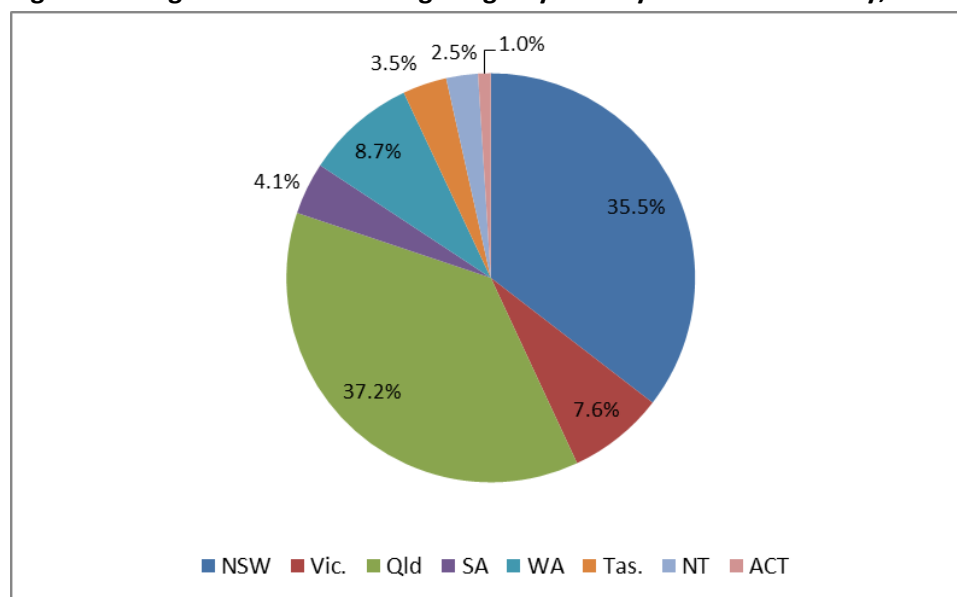
Service type	Dec. 13	Mar. 14	Jun. 14	Sep. 14	Dec. 14
Long Day Care	17,990	17,570	17,030	17,240	16,950
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	3,730	3,810	3,880	4,030	4,030
Occasional Care	200	180	180	180	190
Outside School Hours Care	6,770	7,130	7,380	7,340	6,020
Total¹	27,910	27,490	27,580	27,910	26,420

¹ As children may use more than one service type in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

The largest proportion of Indigenous children attending Long Day Care was in Queensland (37.2 per cent) and New South Wales (35.5 per cent).

Figure 3: Indigenous children using Long Day Care by state and territory, December quarter 2014



Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Compared with all children, a smaller proportion of Indigenous children aged 0–12 years attended approved child care, in each state and territory (12.2 per cent of Indigenous children aged 0–12 years, and 30.2 per cent all children aged 0–12 years, nationally).

Table 9: Number of Indigenous children using child care by service type and state and territory, December quarter 2014

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia ¹
Long Day Care	6,020	1,290	6,300	700	1,480	590	430	170	16,950
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	1,650	610	1,090	180	190	310	30	20	4,030
Occasional Care	110	30	20	<10	20	10	0	<10	190
Outside School Hours Care	1,590	500	2,150	500	510	310	350	110	6,020
Total Indigenous children using approved child care¹	9,110	2,390	9,340	1,320	2,120	1,150	800	300	26,420
<i>Per cent of Indigenous population²</i>	<i>13.5%</i>	<i>15.2%</i>	<i>14.4%</i>	<i>11.1%</i>	<i>7.8%</i>	<i>14.8%</i>	<i>4.1%</i>	<i>16.8%</i>	<i>12.2%</i>

1 As children may use more than one service type and use services in more than one state or territory in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

2 Number of Indigenous children aged 0–12 years using approved child care as a proportion of all Indigenous children aged 0–12 years.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data and ABS Cat. No. 3238.0 Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians 2001 to 2026 (30 April 2014)

Almost half of all Indigenous children who attended child care did so in regional or remote Australia (13,140 children or 49.7 per cent).

Table 10: Number of Indigenous children using child care by service type and region, December quarter 2014

Service type	Major cities of Australia	Regional ¹ and Remote Australia ²	Total ³
Long Day Care	8,150	8,830	16,950
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	2,190	1,850	4,030
Occasional Care	80	120	190
Outside School Hours Care	3,310	2,710	6,020
Total³	13,410	13,140	26,420

1 Includes Inner and Outer Regional

2 Includes Remote and Very Remote

3 As children may use more than one service type in more than one region in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

During the December quarter 2014, 18,190 Indigenous families used approved child care, a reduction of 650 families or 3.4 per cent since the December quarter 2013.

Table 11: Number of Indigenous families using child care by service type, December quarter 2013 to December quarter 2014

Service type	Dec. 13	Mar. 14	Jun. 14	Sep. 14	Dec. 14
Long Day Care	13,690	13,190	12,960	12,980	13,180
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	2,360	2,330	2,340	2,380	2,440
Occasional Care	150	130	140	140	150
Outside School Hours Care	4,540	4,730	4,900	4,890	4,120
Total¹	18,840	18,260	18,260	18,280	18,190

¹ As families may use more than one service type in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Around one third (6,510 or 35.8 per cent) of Indigenous families had children in approved child care located in New South Wales; another third (6,350 or 34.9 per cent) had children in approved child care located in Queensland.

Table 12: Number of Indigenous families using child care by service type and state and territory, December quarter 2014

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia ¹
Long Day Care	4,840	1,010	4,740	560	1,110	460	360	140	13,180
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	1,050	300	650	90	110	220	30	20	2,440
Occasional Care	80	20	20	<10	20	10	0	<10	150
Outside School Hours Care	1,110	370	1,450	320	330	210	250	80	4,120
Total¹	6,510	1,570	6,350	880	1,430	760	570	210	18,190

¹ As families may use more than one service type and use services in more than one state or territory in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Availability

Services

During the December quarter 2014, 16,184 approved child care services operated in Australia, an increase of 0.9 per cent (146 services) since the December quarter 2013. There were 8,605 Outside School Hours Care services which accounted for 53.2 per cent of all services and 6,623 Long Day Care services which accounted for 40.9 per cent of all services.

Table 13: Number of child care services by service type, December quarter 2013 to December quarter 2014

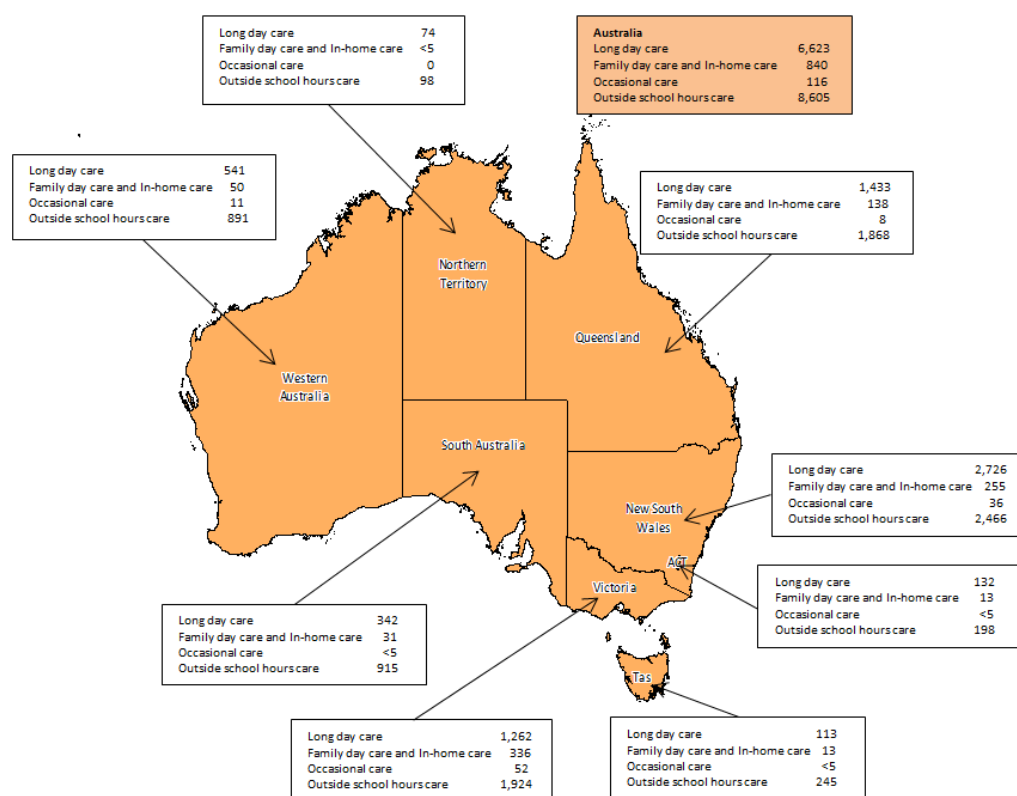
Service type	Dec. 13	Mar. 14	Jun. 14	Sep. 14	Dec. 14
Long Day Care	6,471	6,450	6,606	6,601	6,623
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	675	714	783	829	840
Occasional Care	119	119	117	115	116
Outside School Hours Care	8,773	8,924	9,177	9,172	8,605
Total	16,038	16,207	16,683	16,717	16,184

NOTE: Due to the timing of the Dec. quarter 2014, there was one week less of October school holidays than usual in some states recorded in this period. Accordingly, the number of vacation care services (and therefore Outside School Hours Care services) was lower than recent quarters.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

In the December quarter 2014, around one third of services were located in New South Wales (33.9 per cent), with 22.1 per cent in Victoria and 21.3 per cent in Queensland.

Figure 4: Number of approved services by service type and state and territory, December quarter 2014



Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Affordability

Costs of care before Australian Government fee assistance

The average hourly child care fee for all service types in the December quarter 2014 was \$7.85, an increase of 4.5 per cent since the December quarter 2013. Fees varied across service types from a high of \$9.40 per hour for Occasional Care services to a low of \$6.55 per hour for Outside School Hours Care services.

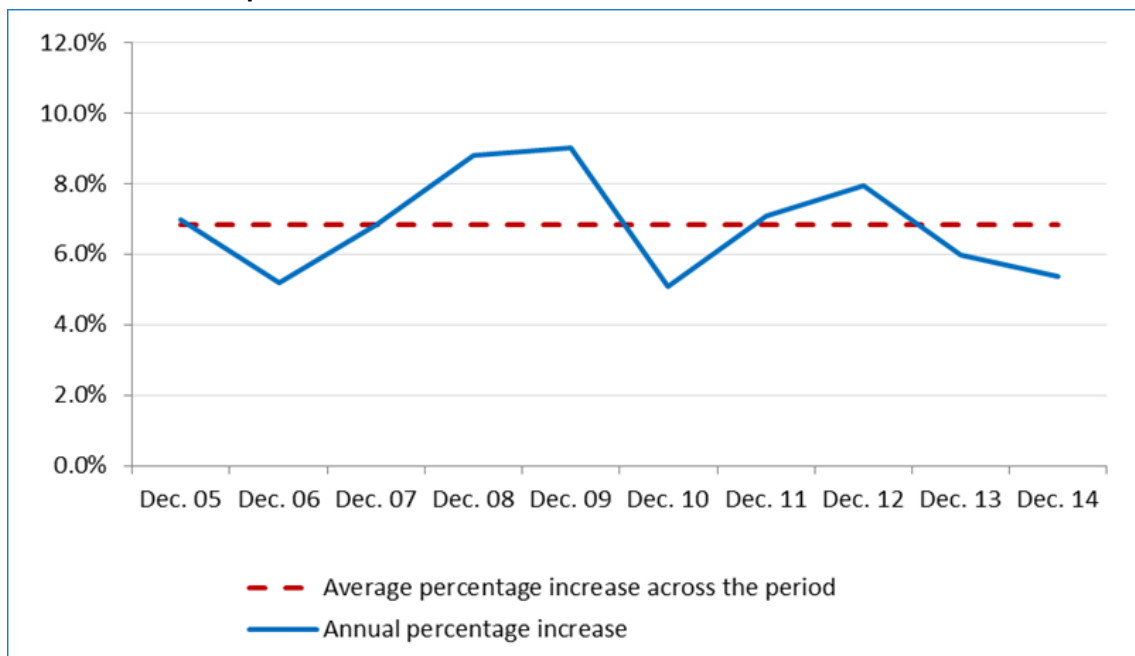
Table 14: Average hourly fee by service type, December quarter 2013 to December quarter 2014

Service type	Dec. 13	Mar. 14	Jun. 14	Sep. 14	Dec. 14
Long Day Care	\$7.60	\$7.80	\$7.95	\$8.05	\$8.05
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	\$7.90	\$7.95	\$7.95	\$7.90	\$7.90
Occasional Care	\$9.05	\$9.15	\$9.25	\$9.35	\$9.40
Outside School Hours Care	\$6.15	\$6.15	\$6.35	\$6.30	\$6.55
Total¹	\$7.55	\$7.65	\$7.75	\$7.85	\$7.85

¹ Hourly fee for each service type is calculated by dividing the sum of all fee amounts by the sum of all hours for each service type.
 Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

The average hourly fee for Long Day Care increased by 5.4 per cent from the December quarter 2013 to the December quarter 2014. This increase compares with the average annual percentage increase of 6.8 per cent for the period from the December quarter 2005 to the December quarter 2014.

Figure 5: Average and annual percentage change to Long Day Care hourly fees, December quarter 2005 to December quarter 2014



Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

The Australian Government subsidises the cost of child care for eligible families through the Child Care Benefit and the Child Care Rebate to help parents with the cost of approved child care. During the December quarter 2014, the total estimated expenditure on Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate was \$1,542.5 million. The majority (\$1,005.7 million or 65.2 per cent) of this was paid on behalf of families using Long Day Care services.

Table 15: Total estimated Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate entitlements by service type, December quarter 2014

Service type	Child Care Benefit ('000)	Child Care Rebate ('000)	Total ('000)
Long Day Care	\$433,338	\$572,339	\$1,005,677
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	\$326,318	\$101,124	\$427,442
Occasional Care	\$1,604	\$2,206	\$3,810
Outside School Hours Care	\$41,017	\$64,520	\$105,537
Total	\$802,277	\$740,190	\$1,542,466

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data – based on estimated entitlements.

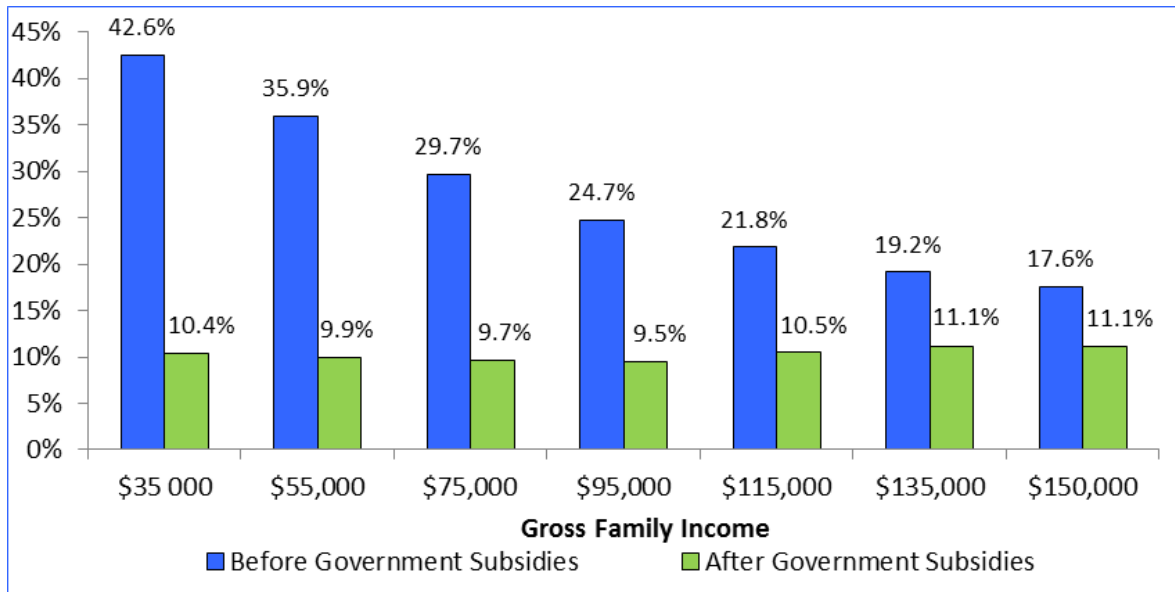
Costs of care after Australian Government fee assistance

The child care out-of-pocket costs for families are determined by a combination of the fees services charge, the type of child care used, the amount of care used by families for their children and the amount of Australian Government subsidies that families are entitled to.

Before Australian Government child care subsidies were taken into account, out-of-pocket costs for families varied from 42.6 per cent of weekly disposable income for families earning a gross income of \$35,000 per year, to 17.6 per cent for families earning a gross income of \$150,000 per year.

After Australian Government child care subsidies, out-of-pocket costs were significantly reduced to around 10.0 per cent of disposable income across all income ranges.

Figure 6: Out-of-pocket costs¹ for one child in Long Day Care before and after Australian Government subsidies, March quarter 2014



1 Out-of-pocket costs (before and after Australian Government subsidies) are shown for families with one child using Long Day Care for 50 hours of care per week.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Vacancies

Table 16 details the national trend in child care vacancies from the December quarter 2012 to the December quarter 2014 by service type.

It appears that vacancies in Long Day Care services peak in the March quarter of each year (nearly 81,000 in March quarter 2013 and over 92,000 in March quarter 2014) and that the number of vacancies then declines throughout the year.

Table 16: Child care vacancies by service type, December quarter 2012 to December quarter 2014¹

Service type	Dec-12	Mar-13	Jun-13	Sep-13	Dec-13	Mar-14	Jun-14*	Sep-14	Dec-14
Long Day Care									
Total number of services	6,271	6,268	6,310	6,360	6,471	6,443	6,606	6,601	6,623
Per cent services reporting	82%	83%	84%	91%	90%	93%	90%	91%	90%
Proportion with vacancies	86%	89%	89%	86%	86%	90%	88%	87%	87%
Average vacancies	58,190	80,630	78,250	68,490	66,410	92,340	83,740	75,230	70,160
Family Day Care									
Total number of services	415	447	499	560	605	642	714	761	772
Per cent services reporting	59%	54%	50%	47%	46%	40%	38%	36%	36%
Proportion with vacancies	80%	81%	83%	80%	85%	85%	87%	87%	85%
Average vacancies	6,230	6,980	6,890	7,130	7,500	8,610	8,690	8,070	8,400
Occasional Care									
Total number of services	94	118	119	119	119	119	117	115	116
Per cent services reporting	56%	51%	55%	63%	66%	61%	59%	60%	68%
Proportion with vacancies	53%	55%	61%	52%	53%	55%	54%	51%	47%
Average vacancies	220	320	380	310	300	330	320	280	310
Before and After School Hours Care									
Total number of services	6,057	6,219	6,292	6,314	6,306	6,514	6,633	6,589	6,628
Per cent services reporting	64%	63%	62%	66%	66%	65%	63%	63%	62%
Proportion with vacancies	87%	87%	87%	88%	89%	89%	90%	91%	91%
Average vacancies	82,860	84,550	88,010	96,160	100,41	101,88	103,57	107,900	109,79
Vacation Care									
Total number of services	2,348	2,332	2,426	2,482	2,467	2,403	2544	2,583	1,977
Per cent services reporting	58%	57%	57%	60%	56%	60%	58%	59%	75%
Proportion with vacancies	69%	71%	69%	72%	71%	73%	69%	73%	71%
Average vacancies	21,480	23,860	22,650	29,480	26,200	29,130	28,280	33,370	32,280

¹ Data relating to the small number of reporting services with all places not meeting the relevant vacancies definition have not been included in this report.

See table 13 note about vacation care services.

* June quarter 2014 vacancy data has been updated to reflect a reference week that better represents long term vacancy patterns.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Technical Notes

General counting rules

Use of child care services is counted for each individual child using approved child care services. An instance of child care usage is defined as at least one child care attendance per child care service for the quarter irrespective of duration or frequency. For example, a single hour at an Occasional Care centre or 40 hours per week throughout the quarter at a Long Day Care centre, are both counted as an instance of child care usage.

Children and families are recorded for each of the service types that they use during the quarter. Children and families using more than one service type during the quarter or financial year are counted only once within each applicable service type category and only once within the 'Total' category for the relevant time period. Note that as children and families may use more than one service type in any particular timeframe the sum of the component parts may not equal the 'Total' category.

Changes in service type numbers need to be understood in the context of counting rules. Prior to the implementation of the Child Care Management System (CCMS) all services with an 'active' status were included regardless of attendance. This resulted in a small number of services being included in the data that did not actually have any children in attendance. Under CCMS a service is counted as 'active' only if it had at least one child attending at some time during the quarter, thus aligning the counting rules for children, families and services.

Data sources

Data included in this report comes from the following sources:

- The majority of data is extracted from the Child Care Data and Reporting System (CCDARS). CCDARS is a Department of Education and Training based data storage system for data collected from approved child care services via the Child Care Management System.
- Supplementary data is sourced from the MyChild website and the Department of Human Services.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data is included in this report for comparison purposes.

Revisions: Due to changes in the administrative system, data may be revised to ensure the most accurate, up-to-date figures are published.

Vacancy information

All approved services are required to regularly report their anticipated vacancies according to a standard definition, to the Department of Education and Training. For most services, a vacancy is defined as a permanent full day vacancy that the service is willing to fill.

The information contained in this report (Table 16) relates to specific reference weeks. As is standard practice, a reference week is used to represent the quarter and reduce errors due to potential inconsistencies in reporting. For the December quarter 2014, vacancies for Long Day Care, Before and After School Hours Care, Occasional Care and Family Day Care are reported for the week 17 November to 23 November 2014. Vacancies for Vacation Care are reported for the week 29 September to 5 October 2014.

As the June quarter 2014 vacancy data has been revised, the reference week used to calculate the vacancies for Long Day Care, Family Day Care, Occasional Care and Before and After School Hours Care are reported for the week 26 May to 1 June 2014. Vacancies for Vacation Care are reported for the week 14 April to 20 April 2014 for New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory, 7 April to 13 April 2014 for Victoria, Queensland and the Northern Territory, 28 April to 4 May 2014 for Tasmania. Vacation Care results are calculated using a 4 day reference week for New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory due to a public holiday coinciding with school holidays.

Definitions

Approved care: Care provided by Long Day Care, Family Day Care and In-Home Care, Outside School Hours Care and Occasional Care services approved by the Australian Government to receive Child Care Benefit on behalf of families.

Average number of vacancies: As services report vacancies for each day of the week, the number of vacancies for each service is averaged out across the weekdays, that is, it is the sum of vacancies on each weekday divided by five. The total number of vacancies in an area is the sum of the average vacancies per service.

Child Care Benefit (CCB): A payment made by the Australian Government to families to assist with the cost of child care.

Child Care Management System (CCMS): This is the electronic system used for the administration of CCB. Under CCMS, approved child care services submit attendance information to the Department of Education and Training over the internet. Data in this report are primarily sourced from the CCMS.

Child Care Rebate (CCR): A payment made by the Australian Government to assist eligible working families with the out-of-pocket cost of child care. CCR is calculated based on the gap between the fees charged by the child care service and the CCB paid in respect of fee relief. Families who satisfy the work/training/study test requirements may be entitled to receive CCR for 50 per cent of all out-of-pocket costs up to an annual limit.

Family Day Care: Family Day Care educators provide flexible care and developmental activities in their own homes for other people's children on behalf of an approved Family Day Care service.

In-Home Care: In-Home Care educators provide flexible care and developmental activities in the child's own home on behalf of an approved In-Home Care service.

Long Day Care: This is a centre-based form of child care service. Long Day Care services provide quality all day or part-time care for children of working families and the general community.

Occasional Care: This is a care type mainly for non-school aged children. These services cater mainly for the needs of families who require short-term care for their children.

Outside School Hours Care: Services provide care for school aged children before and/or after school during the school term. Some services also provide care on 'pupil free' days. Vacation Care is also included in this category. Vacation Care services provide care for school children during the school holidays. Vacancies are reported separately for Before and/or After School Hours Care and Vacation Care.

Reference week: For Long Day Care, Family Day Care, Before and/or After School Hours Care and Occasional Care services, the reference week for vacancy information is selected as one of the last available weeks that is not affected by school or other holiday periods and a week that provided a consistent (with other weeks in the quarter) level of services that had reported across the quarter. The reference week includes weekdays only as most services do not operate on weekends. The reference week for Vacation Care is based on each state and territory's school holiday periods.

Region: Regions of Australia are classified according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS), July 2011. This classification divides each state and territory into several regions on the basis of their relative access to services.

Reporting services: The services that reported their vacancy information for the reference week. This includes a small number of services that reported vacancy information and indicated they were not operational for the week.

Service: Child care services are approved by the Australian Government to receive CCB on behalf of families. Most Long Day Care, Family Day Care, Before and After School Hours Care, Vacation Care services and some In-Home Care and Occasional Care services are approved child care services. The total number of services refers to the number of services that were active during the December quarter 2014, that is, they had at least one record of child care attendance in the quarter.

Vacancy: Anticipated availability that child care services are willing to fill for each week they are operational. This is an ongoing full day vacancy for Long Day Care and Family Day Care, full day vacancy for Vacation Care and Occasional Care services and an ongoing full session vacancy for Before and/or After School Hours Care.

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