



Early Childhood and Child Care in Summary

March quarter 2018

This publication provides information on children in approved child care services across Australia for the March quarter 2018.

Key findings for the March quarter 2018 include:

- 1,287,900 children attended approved child care, up 0.5 per cent compared with the March quarter 2017.
- 897,490 families had at least one child in approved child care, an increase of 2.0 per cent since the March quarter 2017.
- 18,699 approved child care services operated in Australia, an increase of 2.1 per cent since the March quarter 2017.
- The total estimated Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate entitlement was \$1,607.4 million, down 3.0 per cent since the March quarter 2017.

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 March quarter 2018, 887,490 families used approved child care services for their 1,287,900 children.

- In terms of affordability, 93.1 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 March quarter 2018, there were 18,699 services providing approved child care services across Australia.

Table 1: Child care children, families, services and estimated entitlements by state and territory, March quarter 2018

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	429,080	298,980	6,484	\$224,973	\$322,721	275,250
Vic.	318,550	217,560	4,310	\$201,448	\$233,422	202,500
Qld	292,420	199,370	3,744	\$167,379	\$193,723	186,070
SA	84,990	57,870	1,358	\$33,529	\$46,187	54,630
WA	101,450	71,880	1,789	\$42,082	\$70,259	67,620
Tas.	23,070	15,970	394	\$9,884	\$12,164	14,930
NT	10,120	7,120	212	\$3,539	\$9,227	6,890
ACT	30,110	20,680	397	\$6,891	\$28,764	20,150
Australia	1,287,900	887,490	18,699	\$690,211	\$917,212	826,280

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 March quarter 2018, 1,287,900 children used approved child care in Australia, up by 0.5 per cent since the March quarter 2017. When considering children aged 0-12 years, 31.5 per cent of all children in that age bracket attended some form of approved child care in the March quarter 2018.

During the March quarter 2018, children attended various services providing approved child care, including Long Day Care (721,610 or 56.0 per cent), outside school hours care (458,750 or 35.6 per cent), family day Care and In-Home Care (167,780 or 13.0 per cent), and Occasional Care (5,390 or 0.4 per cent).

Table 2: Number of children using child care by service type, March quarter 2017 to March quarter 2018

Service type	Mar. 17	Jun. 17	Sep. 17	Dec. 17	Mar. 18
Long Day Care	699,510	682,060	721,090	734,250	721,610
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	206,520	183,750	182,830	171,540	167,780
Occasional Care	5,660	5,850	6,140	6,180	5,390
Outside School Hours Care	433,480	436,260	445,140	431,420	458,750
Total¹	1,281,260	1,268,140	1,312,650	1,302,940	1,287,900
<i>Per cent of Australian population²</i>	<i>31.4%</i>	<i>31.5%</i>	<i>32.2%</i>	<i>31.9%</i>	<i>31.5%</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.

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data, ABS Cat. No. 3101.0 Australian Demographic Statistics, Mar. 2018.

New South Wales had the largest share of children attending approved child care during the quarter (33.3 per cent), followed by Victoria (24.7 per cent) and Queensland (22.7 per cent).

Table 3: Number of children using child care by service type and state and territory, March quarter 2018

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia ¹
Long Day Care	242,970	172,180	171,700	42,700	58,520	12,120	5,840	16,790	721,610
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	59,420	57,070	27,470	5,270	12,090	4,140	380	1,480	167,780
Occasional Care	1,820	2,050	320	100	890	100	0	120	5,390
Outside School Hours Care	145,370	102,390	106,770	40,960	37,180	8,540	4,350	13,350	458,750
Total¹	429,080	318,550	292,420	84,990	101,450	23,070	10,120	30,110	1,287,900

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.

Most children who used approved child care used services located in major cities (1,009,880 children or 78.4 per cent), whereas around one in five (285,390 or 22.2 per cent) children used services located in regional and remote areas.

Table 4: Number of children using child care by service type and region, March quarter 2018

Service type	Major cities of Australia	Regional ¹ and Remote Australia ²	Total ³
Long Day Care	547,750	176,230	721,610
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	131,910	36,690	167,780
Occasional Care	3,070	2,320	5,390
Outside School Hours Care	375,990	83,770	458,750
Total³	1,009,880	285,390	1,287,900

1 Includes Inner and Outer Regional

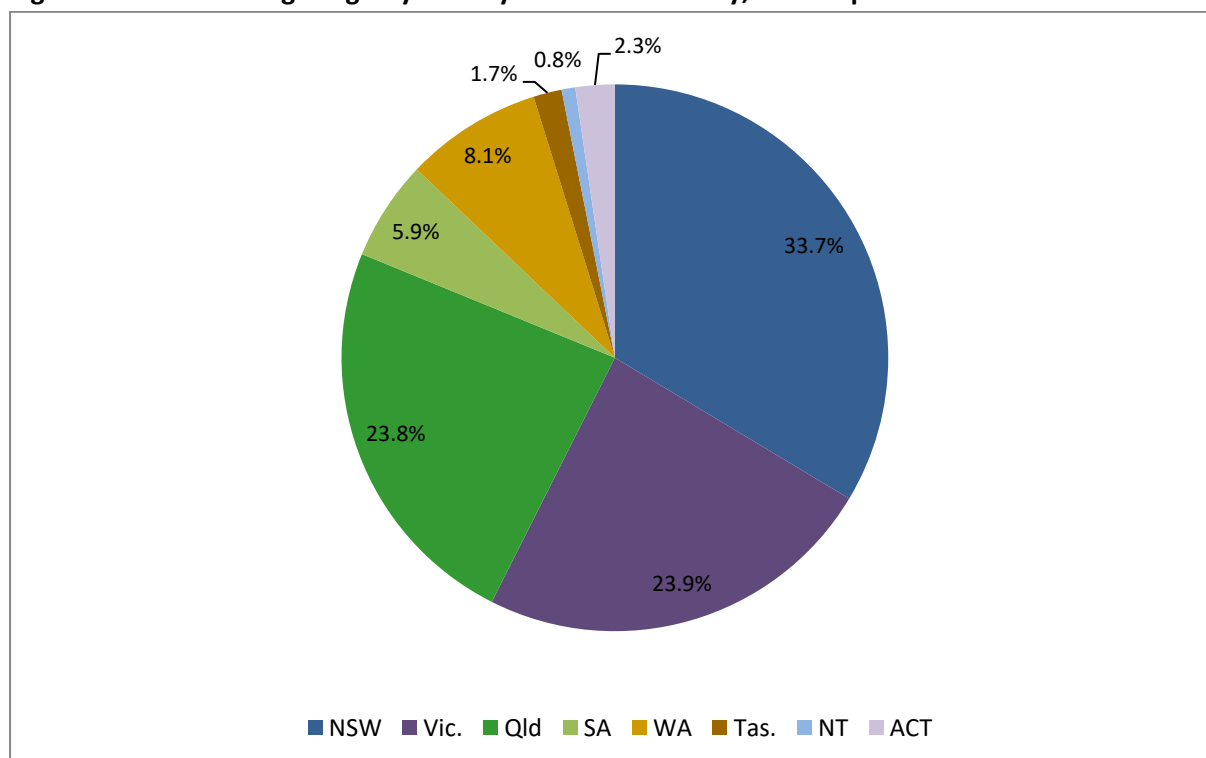
2 Includes Remote and Very Remote

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.

New South Wales (33.7 per cent) had the largest share of children using Long Day Care during the quarter, followed by Victoria (23.9 per cent) and Queensland (23.8 per cent).

Figure 1: Children using Long Day Care by state and territory, March quarter 2018



Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

During the March quarter 2018, for all types of child care, the average time that a child spent in approved child care was 24.5 hours per week. This compares with children who used Long Day Care who attended for an average of 28.8 hours per week.

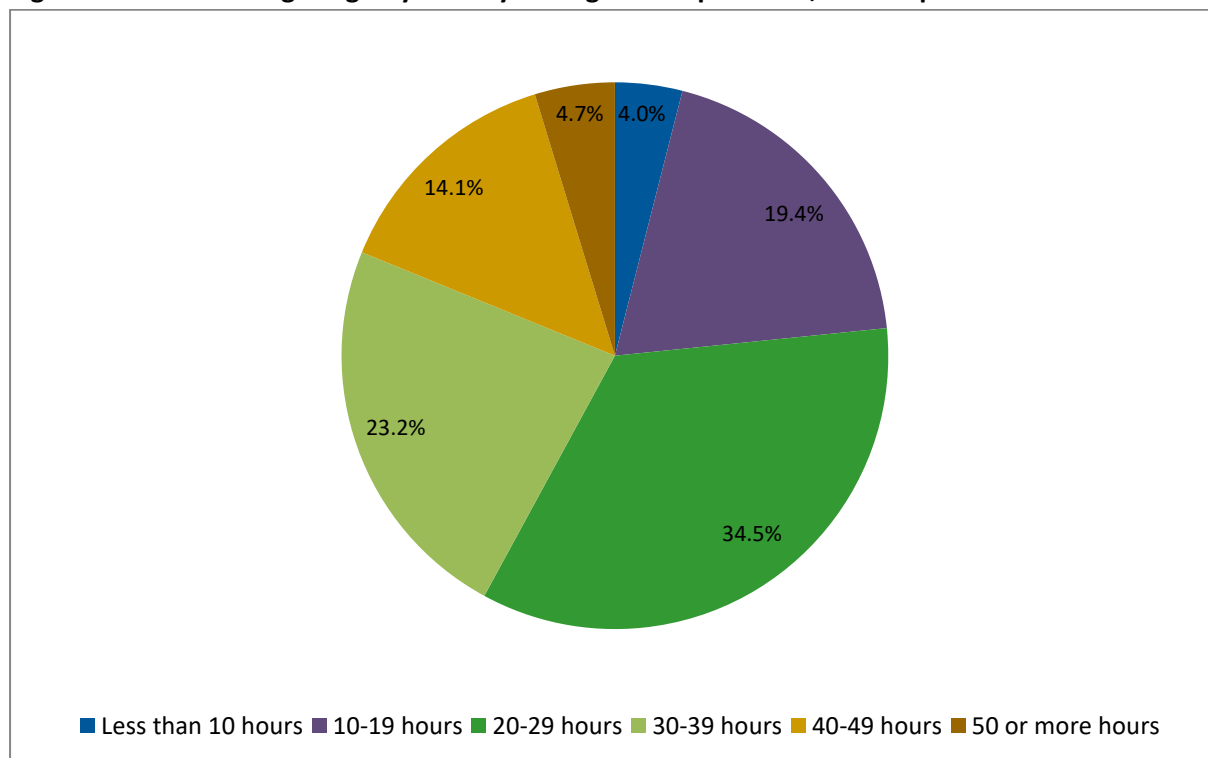
Table 5: Average weekly hours in child care by service type, March quarter 2017 to March quarter 2018

Service type	Mar. 17	Jun. 17	Sep. 17	Dec. 17	Mar. 17
Long Day Care	28.6	28.4	28.9	28.8	28.8
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	30.9	29.5	29.0	28.5	28.8
Occasional Care	12.4	12.1	12.5	12.2	12.4
Outside School Hours Care	12.0	10.8	11.8	11.2	12.0
Total	25.0	24.1	24.8	24.7	24.5

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

During the March quarter 2018, 34.5 per cent of children in Long Day Care used an average of 20-29 hours per week.

Figure 2: Children using Long Day Care by average hours per week, March quarter 2018



Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Families

During the March quarter 2018, there were 887,490 families using some form of approved child care for their children, an increase of 2.0 per cent since the March quarter 2017. The number of families using Family Day Care and In-Home Care has decreased by 11.3 per cent since the March quarter 2017.

Table 6: Number of families using child care by service type, March quarter 2017 to March quarter 2018

Service type	Mar. 17	Jun. 17	Sep. 17	Dec. 17	Mar. 18
Long Day Care	564,880	560,260	586,830	594,970	582,540
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	117,650	112,310	112,520	106,640	104,310
Occasional Care	4,770	4,940	5,120	5,140	4,480
Outside School Hours Care	305,380	310,090	317,270	308,620	324,590
Total¹	869,750	874,020	901,640	897,880	887,490

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.

In the March quarter 2018, 298,980 families (33.7 per cent) had children attending approved child care in New South Wales, followed by 217,560 families (24.5 per cent) in Victoria and 199,370 families (22.5 per cent) in Queensland.

Across Australia, nearly two-thirds (582,540 or 65.6 per cent) of families using approved child care chose Long Day Care and around one-third (324,590 or 36.6 per cent) chose outside school hours care.

Table 7: Number of families using child care by service type and state and territory, March quarter 2018

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia ¹
Long Day Care	198,900	140,130	133,930	34,830	47,540	9,800	4,860	13,620	582,540
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	38,600	31,660	17,950	3,610	7,910	2,870	290	1,040	104,310
Occasional Care	1,510	1,720	260	80	720	80	0	100	4,480
Outside School Hours Care	103,580	73,570	74,630	28,360	26,000	5,960	3,120	9,490	324,590
Total¹	298,980	217,560	199,370	57,870	71,880	15,970	7,120	20,680	887,490

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 March quarter 2018, 34,080 Indigenous children used approved child care in Australia. The number of Indigenous children using approved child care has increased by 4.3 per cent since the March quarter 2017.

Table 8: Number of Indigenous children using child care by service type, March quarter 2017 to March quarter 2018

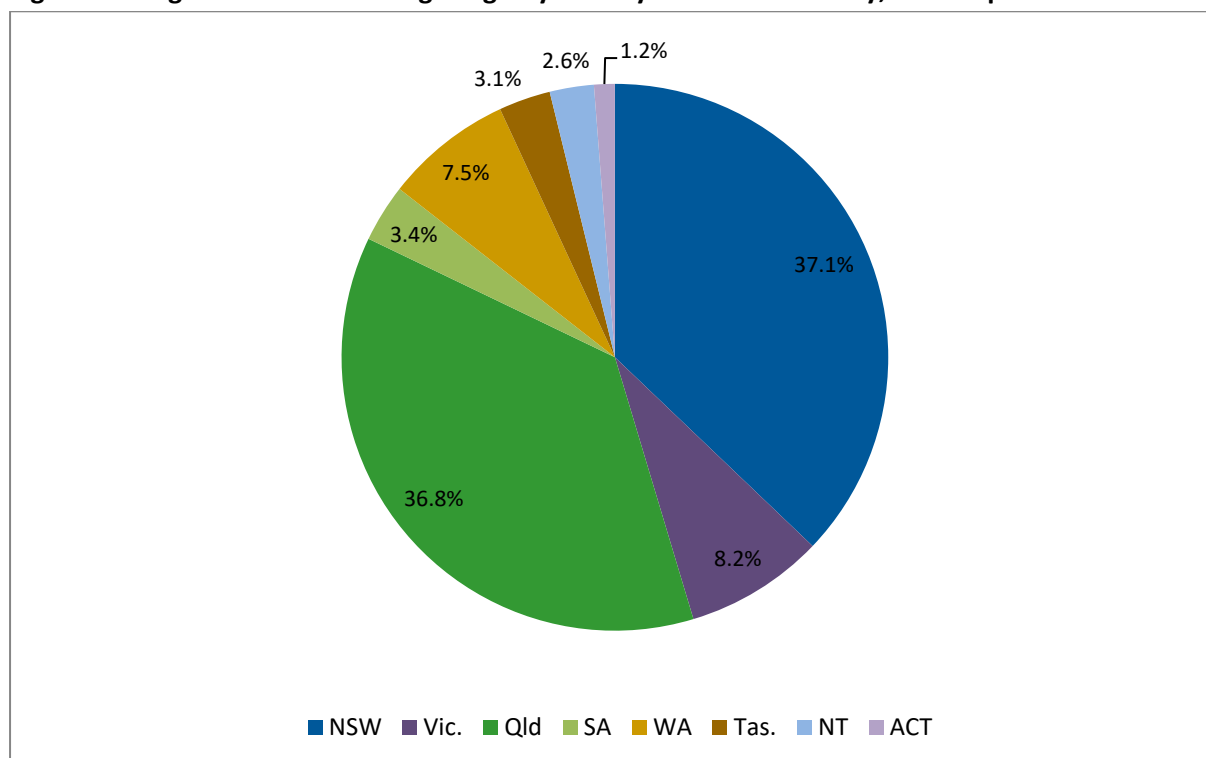
Service type	Mar. 17	Jun. 17	Sep. 17	Dec. 17	Mar. 18
Long Day Care	20,790	20,610	22,150	22,430	22,010
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	4,640	4,160	4,180	4,010	3,960
Occasional Care	210	210	220	220	210
Outside School Hours Care	8,430	8,480	8,970	8,860	9,370
Total¹	32,670	32,500	34,440	34,500	34,080

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.

New South Wales had the largest share of Indigenous children attending Long Day Care with 37.1 per cent, followed by Queensland with 36.8 per cent.

Figure 3: Indigenous children using Long Day Care by state and territory, March quarter 2018



Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

At the national level, 15.2 per cent of Indigenous children aged 0–12 years attended approved child care. Compared with all children aged 0–12 years, a smaller proportion of Indigenous children aged 0–12 years attended approved child care, both nationally and in each state and territory.

Table 9: Number of Indigenous children using child care by service type and state and territory, March quarter 2018

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia ¹
Long Day Care	8,180	1,810	8,100	750	1,660	670	580	270	22,010
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	1,780	430	1,040	110	210	310	30	30	3,960
Occasional Care	110	30	20	<10	20	10	0	<10	210
Outside School Hours Care	3,000	870	3,210	600	700	390	430	180	9,370
Total Indigenous children using approved child care¹	12,560	3,020	11,930	1,400	2,460	1,290	1,000	460	34,080
<i>Per cent of Indigenous population²</i>	<i>18.0%</i>	<i>18.5%</i>	<i>17.6%</i>	<i>11.4%</i>	<i>8.9%</i>	<i>15.6%</i>	<i>5.1%</i>	<i>24.1%</i>	<i>15.2%</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 (16,680 children or 48.9 per cent).

Table 10: Number of Indigenous children using child care by service type and region, March quarter 2018

Service type	Major cities of Australia	Regional ¹ and Remote Australia ²	Total ³
Long Day Care	10,820	11,320	22,010
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	2,020	1,970	3,960
Occasional Care	90	120	210
Outside School Hours Care	5,450	3,950	9,370
Total³	17,670	16,680	34,080

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 March quarter 2018, 23,530 Indigenous families used approved child care, an increase of 5.7 per cent since the March quarter 2017.

Table 11: Number of Indigenous families using child care by service type, March quarter 2017 to March quarter 2018

Service type	Mar. 17	Jun. 17	Sep. 17	Dec. 17	Mar. 18
Long Day Care	16,050	16,220	17,230	17,350	17,040
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	2,780	2,650	2,660	2,560	2,570
Occasional Care	170	180	180	180	170
Outside School Hours Care	5,690	5,800	6,120	6,080	6,370
Total¹	22,260	22,610	23,780	23,790	23,530

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.

More than one third (8,880 or 37.7 per cent) of Indigenous families had children in approved child care located in New South Wales and another third (8,060 or 34.3 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, March quarter 2018

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia ¹
Long Day Care	6,490	1,430	6,060	590	1,250	540	470	220	17,040
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	1,200	230	650	70	150	220	20	30	2,570
Occasional Care	90	30	10	<10	20	10	0	<10	170
Outside School Hours Care	2,080	600	2,140	410	450	260	300	130	6,370
Total¹	8,880	2,060	8,060	960	1,680	900	690	330	23,530

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 March quarter 2018, 18,699 approved child care services operated in Australia, an increase of 2.1 per cent (381 services) since the March quarter 2017. There were 10,430 Outside School Hours services which accounted for 55.8 per cent of all services and 7,463 Long Day Care services which accounted for 39.9 per cent of all services.

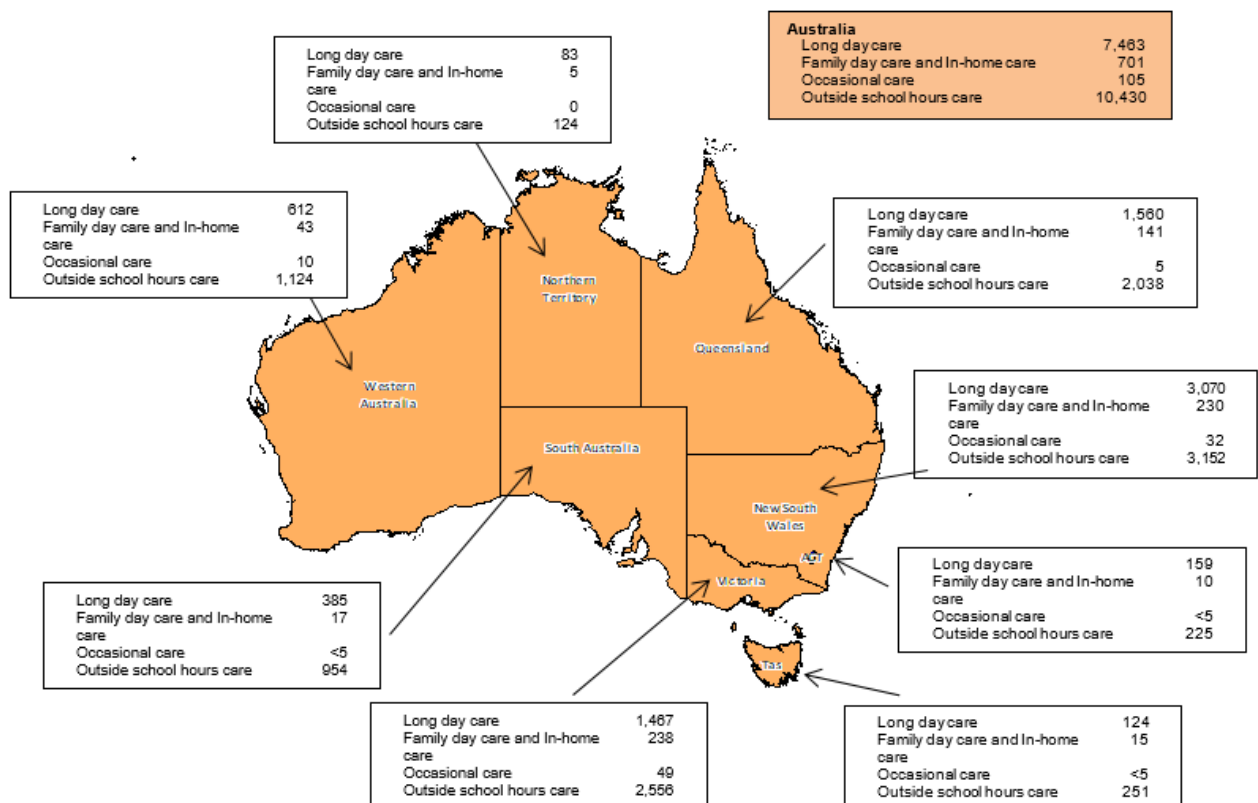
Table 13: Number of child care services by service type, March quarter 2017 to March quarter 2018

Service type	Mar. 17	Jun. 17	Sep. 17	Dec. 17	Mar. 18
Long Day Care	7,145	7,184	7,256	7,349	7,463
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	858	818	773	728	701
Occasional Care	106	106	106	106	105
Outside School Hours Care	10,209	10,353	10,385	10,341	10,430
Total	18,318	18,461	18,520	18,524	18,699

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

In the March quarter 2018, around one third of services (34.7 per cent) were located in New South Wales, with 23.0 per cent in Victoria and 20.0 per cent in Queensland.

Figure 4: Number of approved services by service type and state and territory, March quarter 2018



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 March quarter 2018 was \$9.10, an increase of 2.7 per cent since the March quarter 2017. Fees varied across service types from \$7.20 per hour for Outside School Hours Care services to \$10.60 per hour for Occasional Care services.

Table 14: Average hourly fee by service type, March quarter 2017 to March quarter 2018

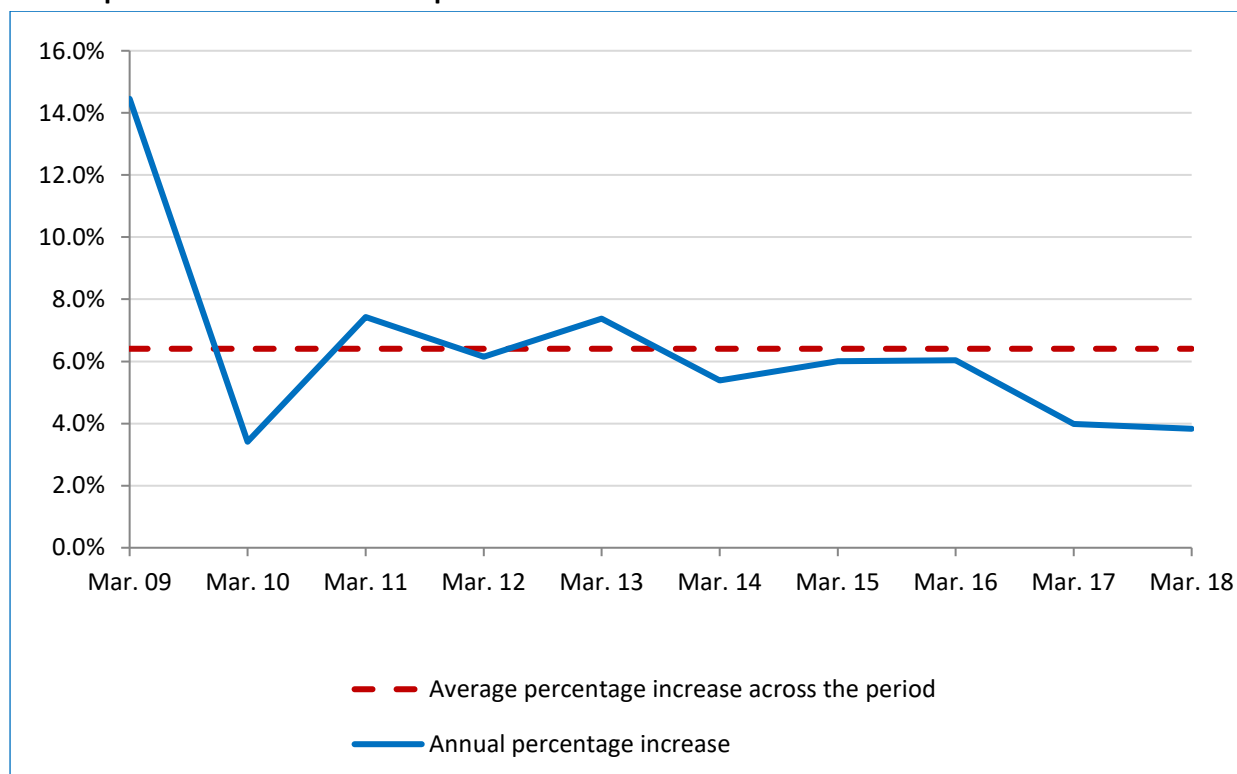
Service type	Mar. 17	Jun. 17	Sep. 17	Dec. 17	Mar. 18
Long Day Care	\$9.15	\$9.20	\$9.35	\$9.35	\$9.50
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	\$8.95	\$8.80	\$8.80	\$8.85	\$8.85
Occasional Care	\$10.25	\$10.25	\$10.45	\$10.50	\$10.60
Outside School Hours Care	\$7.05	\$7.20	\$7.05	\$7.20	\$7.20
Total¹	\$8.85	\$8.90	\$9.00	\$9.00	\$9.10

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 3.8 per cent from the March quarter 2017 to the March quarter 2018. This increase compares with the average annual percentage increase of 6.4 per cent for the period from the March quarter 2009 to the March quarter 2018.

Figure 5: Average and annual percentage change to Long Day Care hourly fees, March quarter 2009 to the March quarter 2018



Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

During the March quarter 2018, the Australian Government subsidised 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. The total estimated expenditure on Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate during the quarter was \$1,607.4 million. The majority (\$1,136.8 million or 70.7 per cent) of this was paid in relation to families using Long Day Care services.

Table 15: Total estimated Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate entitlements by service type, March quarter 2018

Service type	Child Care Benefit ('000)	Child Care Rebate ('000)	Total ('000)
Long Day Care	\$421,992	\$714,784	\$1,136,776
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	\$210,298	\$87,107	\$297,405
Occasional Care	\$1,016	\$1,720	\$2,735
Outside School Hours Care	\$56,904	\$113,602	\$170,507
Total	\$690,211	\$917,212	\$1,607,423

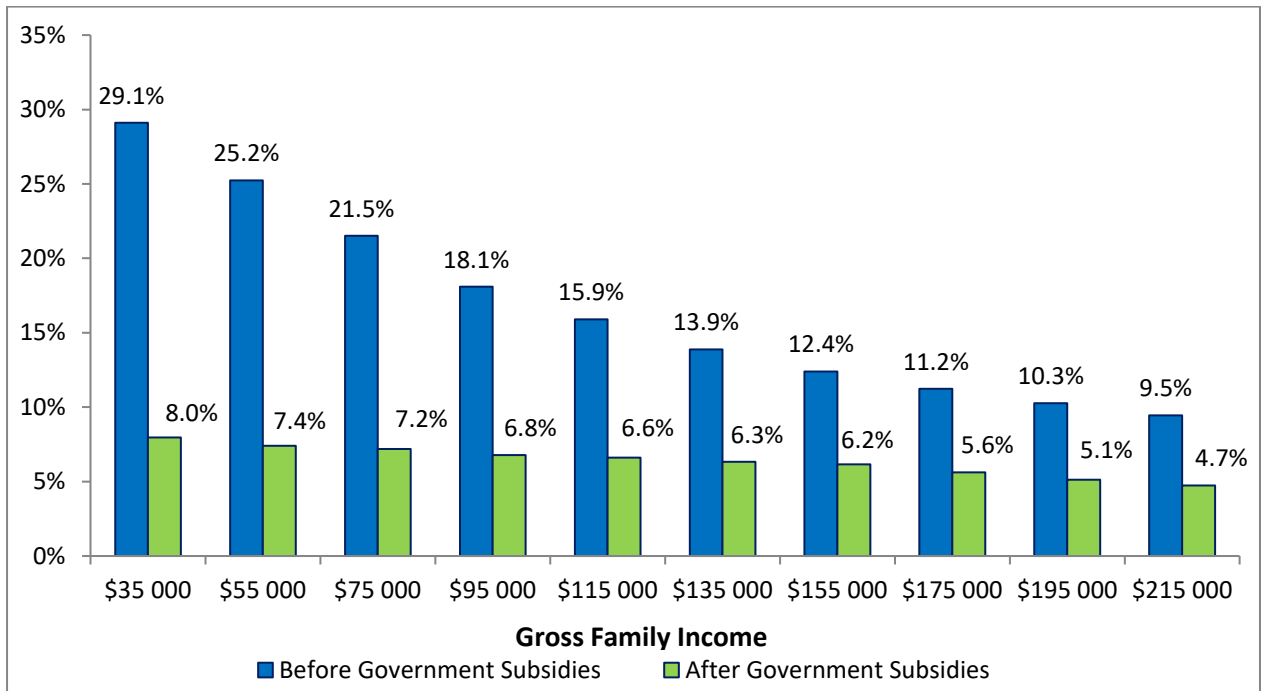
Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data – based on estimated entitlements.

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 29.1 per cent of weekly disposable income for families earning a gross income of \$35,000 per year to 9.5 per cent for families earning a gross income of \$215,000 per year. After Australian Government child care subsidies, out-of-pocket costs were significantly reduced, varying from 8.0 per cent for families earning a gross income of \$35,000 per year to 4.7 per cent for families earning a gross income of \$215,000 per year.

Figure 6: Out-of-pocket costs¹ for one child in Long Day Care before and after Australian Government subsidies, March quarter 2018



¹ Out-of-pocket costs (before and after Australian Government subsidies) are shown for families with one child aged less than 5 years old using Long Day care for 30 hours of care per week. This takes into account the CCR cap (of \$7,613).

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Additional Assistance

JET Child Care Fee Assistance

In the March quarter 2018, 6,410 families were assisted with Jobs, Education and Training Child Care Fee Assistance (JETCCFA). This represented 0.7 per cent of the total number of families who used approved child care services.

Table 16: JET Child Care Fee Assistance usage, March quarter 2017 to March quarter 2018

	Mar. 17	Jun. 17	Sep. 17	Dec. 17	Mar. 18
Number of children assisted	10,610	10,560	10,760	9,820	9,170
Number of families using JETCCFA	7,350	7,360	7,430	6,790	6,410
Average hours per week per child	26.6	26.4	26.8	26.9	27.1
Estimated JETCCFA entitlement (\$'000)	\$6,436	\$8,373	\$8,688	\$7,402	\$6,131

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Special Child Care Benefit

In the March quarter 2018, 10,690 families were assisted with Special Child Care Benefit. This represented 1.2 per cent of the total number of families who used approved child care services.

Table 17: Special Child Care Benefit usage, March quarter 2017 to March quarter 2018

	Mar. 17	Jun. 17	Sep. 17	Dec. 17	Mar. 18
Number of children assisted	14,730	15,390	17,030	16,680	15,770
Number of families using SCCB	9,780	10,480	11,490	11,250	10,690
Average hours per week per child	34.4	34.0	34.7	34.8	35.1
Estimated SCCB entitlement (\$'000)	\$42,407	\$45,850	\$58,287	\$50,487	\$45,549

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Grandparent Child Care Benefit

In the March quarter 2018, 4,340 families were assisted with Grandparent Child Care Benefit. This represented 0.5 per cent of the total number of families who used approved child care services.

Table 18: Grandparent Child Care Benefit usage, March quarter 2017 to March quarter 2018

	Mar. 17	Jun. 17	Sep. 17	Dec. 17	Mar. 18
Number of children assisted	8,800	8,010	8,080	7,890	7,570
Number of families using GCCB	4,590	4,400	4,490	4,480	4,340
Average hours per week per child	37.8	36.2	36.3	35.8	35.5
Estimated GCCB entitlement (\$'000)	\$55,220	\$33,256	\$30,894	\$29,238	\$25,018

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Vacancies

Table 19 details the national trend in child care vacancies from the March quarter 2016 to the March quarter 2018 by service type.

Table 19: Child care vacancies by service type, March quarter 2016 to March quarter 2018

Service type	Mar. 16	Jun. 16	Sep-16	Dec-16	Mar-17	Jun-17	Sep-17	Dec-17	Mar-18
Long Day Care									
Total number of services	6,862	6,932	7,027	7,051	7,145	7,184	7,256	7,349	7,463
Per cent services reporting	92%	92%	92%	91%	90%	92%	89%	91%	91%
Proportion with vacancies	91%	91%	89%	89%	93%	92%	92%	91%	94%
Average vacancies	110,510	106,650	91,980	87,610	122,570	113,560	103,000	98,850	145,907
Family Day Care									
Total number of services	794	823	849	819	794	757	712	668	642
Per cent services reporting	30%	44%	42%	40%	37%	36%	36%	37%	36%
Proportion with vacancies	89%	87%	90%	91%	92%	94%	94%	92%	94%
Average vacancies	7,180	9,270	11,640	9,990	8,940	9,030	8,370	7,190	6,497
Occasional Care									
Total number of services	111	110	110	110	106	106	106	106	105
Per cent services reporting	59%	68%	71%	68%	72%	70%	64%	71%	66%
Proportion with vacancies	60%	56%	56%	56%	53%	55%	54%	57%	57%
Average vacancies	510	460	470	430	600	470	410	520	597
Before and After School Hours Care									
Total number of services	7,177	7,331	7,324	7,306	7,502	7,583	7,554	7,530	7,673
Per cent services reporting	58%	60%	80%	80%	79%	79%	76%	82%	79%
Proportion with vacancies	91%	92%	93%	94%	94%	94%	94%	95%	94%
Average vacancies	105,750	117,550	187,600	194,800	188,400	197,390	195,210	215,810	209,088
Vacation Care									
Total number of services	2,648	2,734	2,812	2,907	2,707	2,770	2,831	2,811	2,757
Per cent services reporting	55%	55%	60%	60%	58%	58%	57%	58%	64%
Proportion with vacancies	75%	70%	75%	68%	77%	67%	73%	69%	70%
Average vacancies	33,410	30,510	42,920	43,930	39,360	31,670	40,330	37,350	38,620

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Technical Notes

General counting rules

All analysis broken down by state in this report corresponds to the *state of the service* rather than the state where the child/family lives.

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.

CCB and CCR estimation

The Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Rebate (CCR) estimation method used in this report:

- Under-estimates CCB as only CCB payments made during the quarter are reported and not the CCB amounts customers were actually entitled to but did not receive (for example because of families over-estimating income or receiving annual or lump sum CCB payments to avoid debts).
- Over-estimates CCR due to under-estimation of CCB.
- Doesn't take into account reconciliation which will adjust the customers' CCB and CCR actual entitlements based on their actual rather than estimated incomes. There is a considerable time lag for the reconciliation process to be complete, this can take a number of years.

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 19) 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 March quarter 2018, vacancies for Long Day Care, Before and After School Hours Care, Occasional Care and Family Day Care are reported from 19 February to 25 February 2018. Vacancies for Vacation Care are reported from 22 January to 28 January 2018 for all States and Territories.

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.

Grandparent Child Care Benefit (GCCB): Grandparents with the primary care of grandchildren and who receive an income support payment may be eligible for the Grandparent Child Care Benefit (GCCB). The GCCB covers the full cost of approved child care for up to 50 hours for each child per week. In certain circumstances Grandparents may be able to get GCCB for more than 50 hours per week.

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.

Jobs, Education and Training Child Care Fee Assistance (JETCCFA): This is a form of government assistance that provides extra help with the cost of approved child care for eligible parents undertaking activities such as job search, work, study, or rehabilitation as part of an Employment Pathway Plan with the Department of Human Services or an employment service provider, to help them to enter or re-enter the workforce.

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 2015, that is, they had at least one record of child care attendance in the quarter.

Special Child Care Benefit (SCCB): Additional child care assistance provided for children considered to be at risk of serious abuse or neglect, or exceptional cases where a family's income does not truly reflect their capacity to pay the usual charged fee. Special Child Care Benefit is reported as 'child at risk' and 'financial hardship'.

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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