

I work at an Early Years Management group in Victoria. We employ over 70 Early Childhood Teachers in permanent roles and another 12 as casual relievers.

With the introduction of funded 3 year old Kindergarten in 2022, we will require at least another 15 ECT's to teach these extra groups.

Workforce is a huge issue, and as well as there not being enough qualified educators for the need that we will have, there is also an issue with the quality of graduates.

We have recently supported students in their final placement and supervising ECT's are telling me how concerned they are that some of these students are unprepared for teaching next year. ECT's are also frustrated with the lack of high expectations for students at some universities and there seems to be very few requirements for the student to complete while on the placement.

As an employer and the person responsible for recruitment at my organisation it is clear to me how ill prepared many students are when they graduate. They have a very basic knowledge of many things and struggle to put the theory that they have learnt into practice. There is little focus on the admin and paperwork part of the job, which unfortunately due to the over regulation of early childhood, is a much bigger part of the job of an ECT than it should be.

It is also apparent that many students are unfortunately disadvantaged by where they undertake placements. Many students unfortunately complete placements at poor quality centres, where they learn little and are unable to see a high quality program in action. Some graduates have never undertaken a placement in sessional Kindergarten at all while completing BECS. This leaves them totally unprepared for working in a sessional Kindergarten where there is no Centre Director to do the paperwork and admin.

My final comment is that Masters graduates are often the least prepared for work. Doing a Bachelor in Podiatry has no relation to then doing a graduate diploma in Early Childhood. I find that graduates with a Bachelor degree in something unrelated to teaching really struggle with the theory and readiness to teach.

Please don't waste this opportunity to make important changes to ITE.