



# Child Care & Early Learning in Summary

## December quarter 2012

This publication provides information on children using approved child care services across Australia.

### Key findings for the December quarter 2012:

- More than one million children (1,033,150) attended approved child care during the quarter, an increase of 4.6 per cent since the December quarter 2011.
- 727,030 families had at least one child in approved child care, an increase of 3.8 per cent since the December quarter 2011.
- 15,256 approved child care services operated in Australia, an increase of 4.4 per cent since the December quarter 2011.
- The total estimated Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate entitlement was \$1,149.0 million, up by 14.0 per cent since the December quarter 2011.



# 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).

During the December quarter 2012, 727,030 families used approved child care services for their 1,033,150 children.

- In terms of affordability, over 90 per cent of these families are estimated to have received Child Care Rebate (CCR), with 50 per cent of their out-of-pocket costs covered by the Australian Government.
- In terms of availability, in the December quarter 2012, there were 15,256 services providing approved child care services across Australia with more than one third (5,223 or 34.2 per cent) of these located in New South Wales.

**Table 1: Child care children, families, services and estimated entitlements by state and territory, December quarter 2012**

State and territory	Number of children using approved child care <sup>1</sup>	Number of families using approved child care <sup>1</sup>	Number of approved child care services	Estimated Child Care Benefit (CCB) entitlement ('000)	Estimated Child Care Rebate (CCR) entitlement ('000)	Estimated number of families receiving CCR <sup>1</sup>
NSW	330,560	240,250	5,223	\$181,435	\$193,106	214,490
Vic.	243,130	167,290	3,485	\$158,508	\$136,264	153,640
Qld	255,210	175,690	3,264	\$160,374	\$121,130	159,010
SA	76,680	52,390	1,202	\$34,771	\$27,222	48,350
WA	78,960	57,190	1,242	\$39,311	\$44,879	52,180
Tas.	21,280	15,050	353	\$10,804	\$7,975	13,580
NT	8,360	5,990	174	\$3,710	\$6,192	5,750
ACT	20,710	14,670	313	\$4,565	\$18,752	14,290
<b>Australia</b>	<b>1,033,150</b>	<b>727,030</b>	<b>15,256</b>	<b>\$593,479</b>	<b>\$555,519</b>	<b>659,920</b>

<sup>1</sup>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 administrative data.

# Child Care Usage

## Children

During the December quarter 2012, 1,033,150 children used approved child care in Australia, up by 4.6 per cent since the December quarter 2011. For children aged 0–12 years using approved child care, this represents 27.5 per cent of the 3,731,080 children aged 0–12 years in Australia.

During December quarter 2012, children attended various services providing approved child care, including long day care (623, 980 children or 60.4 per cent of all children in approved child care), outside school hours care (303,210 children or 29.3 per cent), family day care and in-home care (128, 930 children or 12.5 per cent), and occasional care (7,230 children or 0.7 per cent).

**Table 2: Number of children using child care by service type, December quarter 2011 to December quarter 2012**

Service type	Dec. 11	Mar. 12	June 12	Sept. 12	Dec. 12
Long day care	611,440	598,450	587,100	615,630	623,980
Family day care and In-home care	115,410	117,790	118,700	125,230	128,930
Occasional care	7,300	6,130	6,510	6,950	7,230
Outside school hours care	282,550	299,420	304,120	315,220	303,210
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>987,590</b>	<b>976,230</b>	<b>986,280</b>	<b>1,030,970</b>	<b>1,033,150</b>
<b>Per cent of Australian population<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>27.3%</b>	<b>26.0%</b>	<b>26.3%</b>	<b>27.4%</b>	<b>27.5%</b>

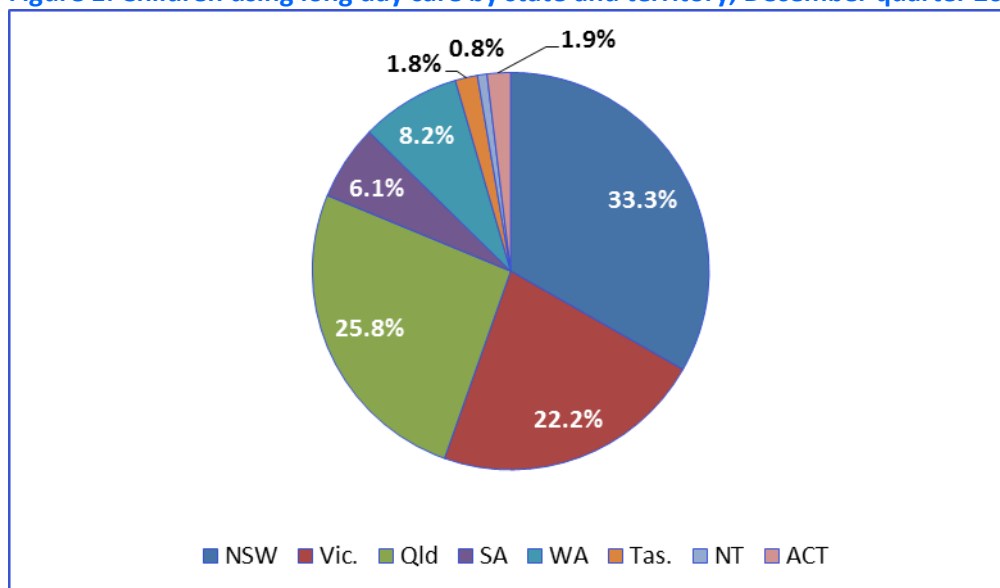
<sup>1</sup> As children may use more than one service type in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total. Totals include a very small number of children for whom other details are unknown.

<sup>2</sup> 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 administrative data, ABS Cat. No. 2001.0 *Census 2011*, and ABS Cat. No. 3101.0 *Australian Demographic Statistics, Dec. 2012*.

In the December quarter 2012, the largest proportion of children attending long day care was in New South Wales (33.3 per cent), followed by Queensland (25.8 per cent) and Victoria (22.2 per cent).

**Figure 1: Children using long day care by state and territory, December quarter 2012**



Source: Department of Education administrative data.

**Table 3: Number of children using child care by service type and state and territory, December quarter 2012**

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
Long day care	207,750	138,490	161,230	38,210	50,890	11,350	4,880	11,940	<b>623,980</b>
Family day care and In-home care	40,580	39,390	25,920	7,830	8,990	5,080	480	1,110	<b>128,930</b>
Occasional care	2,680	2,320	820	120	960	120	0	220	<b>7,230</b>
Outside school hours care	88,410	68,720	74,390	33,390	21,540	5,960	3,180	7,770	<b>303,210</b>
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>330,560</b>	<b>243,130</b>	<b>255,210</b>	<b>76,680</b>	<b>78,960</b>	<b>21,280</b>	<b>8,360</b>	<b>20,710</b>	<b>1,033,150</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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 administrative data.

While most children who used child care, used services located in major cities (773,700 children), one in four (264,230 children or 25.7 per cent) children used child care services located in regional and remote areas.

**Table 4: Number of children using child care by region, December quarter 2012**

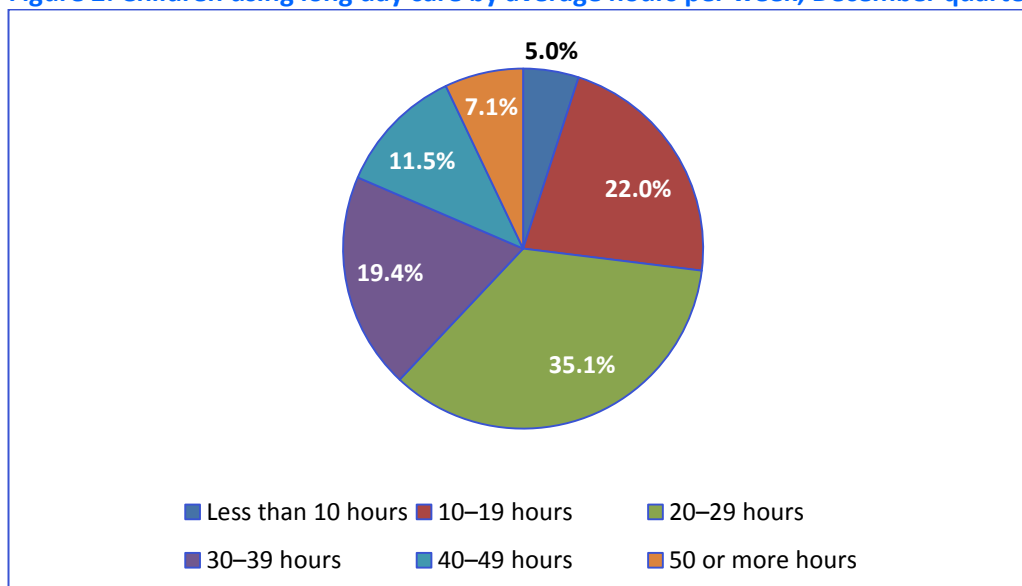
Service type	Major Cities of Australia	Regional and Remote Australia	Total
Long day care	460,410	165,040	<b>623,980</b>
Family day care and In-home care	85,210	44,170	<b>128,930</b>
Occasional care	4,480	2,760	<b>7,230</b>
Outside school hours care	242,570	61,340	<b>303,210</b>
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>773,700</b>	<b>264,230</b>	<b>1,033,150</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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 administrative data.

During the December quarter 2012, for all types of child care, the average time that a child spent in approved child care was 23.7 hours per week. This compares with children who used long day care who attended for an average of 27.3 hours per week.

**Figure 2: Children using long day care by average hours per week, December quarter 2012**



Source: Department of Education administrative data.

**Table 5: Average weekly hours in child care, December quarter 2011 to December quarter 2012**

Service type	Dec. 11	Mar. 12	June 12	Sept. 12	Dec. 12
Long day care	26.9	27.4	27.2	27.5	27.3
Family day care and In-home care	22.4	23.6	23.6	24.5	25.3
Occasional care	11.6	12.4	12.1	12.2	11.7
Outside school hours care	11.1	12.1	10.7	11.5	10.6
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>23.4</b>	<b>23.8</b>	<b>23.2</b>	<b>23.8</b>	<b>23.7</b>

<sup>1</sup> Totals include a very small number of children for whom other details are unknown.

Source: Department of Education administrative data.

## Families

During the December quarter 2012, there were 727,030 families using some form of approved child care for their children, an increase of 3.8 per cent since the December quarter 2011.

**Table 6: Number of families using child care, December quarter 2011 to December quarter 2012**

Service type	Dec. 11	Mar. 12	June 12	Sept. 12	Dec. 12
Long day care	490,900	479,530	479,830	499,470	504,240
Family day care and In-home care	76,990	77,420	77,940	80,890	82,230
Occasional care	5,930	5,030	5,370	5,710	5,910
Outside school hours care	203,390	213,330	217,720	225,780	217,880
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>700,110</b>	<b>689,790</b>	<b>700,600</b>	<b>726,130</b>	<b>727,030</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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. Totals include a very small number of families for whom other details are unknown.

Source: Department of Education administrative data.

In the December quarter 2012, 240,250 families had children attending approved child care in New South Wales, followed by Queensland (175,690) and Victoria (167,290). Across Australia, more than two-thirds (504,240 or 69.4 per cent) of all families had children in long day care and around one-third of families had children in outside school hours care (217,880 or 30.0 per cent).

**Table 7: Number of families using child care by service type and state and territory, December quarter 2012**

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
Long day care	171,720	112,290	125,210	31,330	41,240	9,250	4,060	9,750	<b>504,240</b>
Family day care and In-home care	28,620	21,550	16,850	4,960	5,730	3,580	380	890	<b>82,230</b>
Occasional care	2,200	1,910	660	100	770	90	0	180	<b>5,910</b>
Outside school hours care	64,440	50,210	52,530	23,100	15,360	4,290	2,330	5,740	<b>217,880</b>
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>240,250</b>	<b>167,290</b>	<b>175,690</b>	<b>52,390</b>	<b>57,190</b>	<b>15,050</b>	<b>5,990</b>	<b>14,670</b>	<b>727,030</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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 administrative data.

## Indigenous children and families

During the December quarter 2012, 28,300 Indigenous children (2.7 per cent of all children) used approved child care in Australia. The number of Indigenous children using approved child care has increased since the December quarter 2011 (up by 3.5 per cent). The strongest growth has been in long day care, up by 4.4 per cent since the December quarter 2011.

**Table 8: Number of Indigenous children using child care, December quarter 2011 to December quarter 2012**

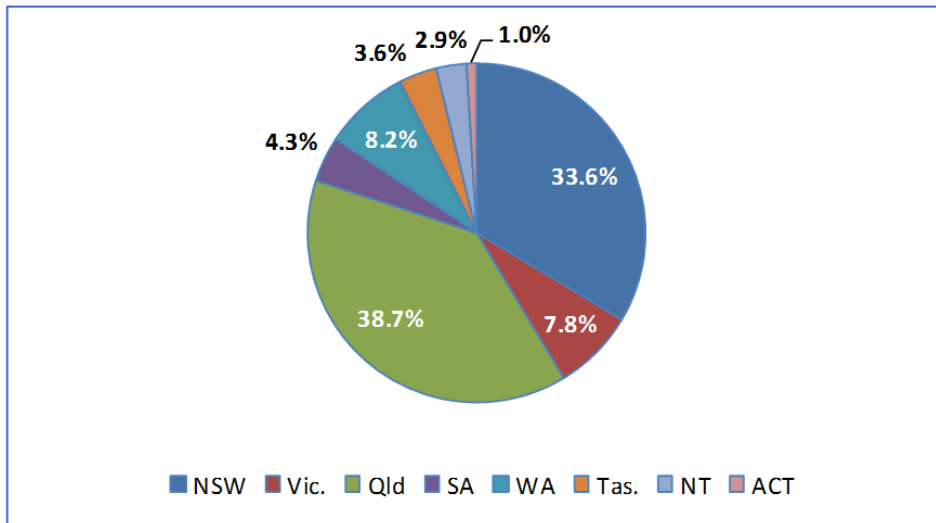
Service type	Dec. 11	Mar. 12	June 12	Sept. 12	Dec. 12
Long day care	18,100	18,170	17,990	18,730	18,910
Family day care and In-home care	3,670	3,610	3,570	3,500	3,580
Occasional care	200	190	200	210	210
Outside school hours care	6,210	6,640	6,590	6,820	6,370
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>27,350</b>	<b>27,410</b>	<b>27,490</b>	<b>28,420</b>	<b>28,300</b>

<sup>1</sup>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. Totals include a very small number of children for whom other details are unknown.

Source: Department of Education administrative data.

The largest proportion of Indigenous children attending long day care was in Queensland (38.7 per cent) and New South Wales (33.6 per cent). Compared with all children, a smaller proportion of Indigenous children aged 0–12 years attended approved child care, in each state and territory (16.4 per cent of Indigenous children aged 0–12 years, 27.5 per cent all children aged 0–12 years, nationally).

**Figure 3: Indigenous children using long day care by state and territory, December quarter 2012**



Source: Department of Education administrative data.

**Table 9: Number of Indigenous children using child care by state and territory, December quarter 2012**

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
Long day care	6,360	1,480	7,320	820	1,550	690	550	180	<b>18,910</b>
Family day care and In-home care	1,740	240	840	160	190	340	50	20	<b>3,580</b>
Occasional care	120	30	30	<10	20	10	0	<10	<b>210</b>
Outside school hours care	1,740	460	2,430	510	420	320	400	90	<b>6,370</b>
<b>Total Indigenous children using approved child care<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>9,680</b>	<b>2,160</b>	<b>10,400</b>	<b>1,450</b>	<b>2,120</b>	<b>1,280</b>	<b>980</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>28,300</b>
<b>Per cent of Indigenous population<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>17.8%</b>	<b>18.5%</b>	<b>20.2%</b>	<b>15.5%</b>	<b>9.9%</b>	<b>21.4%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>19.8%</b>	<b>16.4%</b>

<sup>1</sup>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.

<sup>2</sup>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 administrative data and ABS Cat. No. 2002.0 *Census 2011*.

More than half of all Indigenous children who attended child care did so in regional or remote Australia (15,360 or 54.6 per cent).

**Table 10: Number of Indigenous children using child care by region, December quarter 2012**

Service type	Major Cities of Australia	Regional and Remote Australia	Total
Long day care	8,830	10,125	<b>18,910</b>
Family day care and In-home care	1,210	2,380	<b>3,580</b>
Occasional care	90	120	<b>210</b>
Outside school hours care	3,240	3,140	<b>6,370</b>
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>13,060</b>	<b>15,360</b>	<b>28,300</b>

<sup>1</sup>As children may use more than one service type and use services in more than one region and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

Source: Department of Education administrative data.

During the December quarter 2012, 19,640 Indigenous families used approved child care, up by 840 families or 4.5 per cent since the December quarter 2011.

**Table 11: Number of Indigenous families using child care, December quarter 2011 to December quarter 2012**

Service type	Dec. 11	Mar. 12	June 12	Sept. 12	Dec. 12
Long day care	13,870	13,970	14,100	14,510	14,570
Family day care and In-home care	2,450	2,410	2,420	2,360	2,390
Occasional care	150	140	150	160	160
Outside school hours care	4,110	4,370	4,410	4,590	4,360
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>18,800</b>	<b>18,920</b>	<b>19,220</b>	<b>19,680</b>	<b>19,640</b>

<sup>1</sup>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. Totals include a very small number of families for whom other details are unknown.

Source: Department of Education administrative data.

Around one third (6,970 or 35.5 per cent) of Indigenous families had children in approved child care located in Queensland; another third (6,960 or 35.5 per cent) had children in approved child care located in New South Wales.

**Table 12: Number of Indigenous families using child care by state and territory, December quarter 2012**

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia
Long day care	5,100	1,130	5,400	640	1,180	540	460	150	<b>14,570</b>
Family day care and In-home care	1,180	150	540	90	120	250	40	10	<b>2,390</b>
Occasional care	90	30	20	<10	20	10	0	<10	<b>160</b>
Outside school hours care	1,230	340	1,600	340	290	210	280	70	<b>4,360</b>
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>6,960</b>	<b>1,510</b>	<b>6,970</b>	<b>970</b>	<b>1,470</b>	<b>890</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>19,640</b>

<sup>1</sup>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 administrative data.

## Availability

### Services

During the December quarter 2012, 15,256 approved child care services operated in Australia, an increase of 4.4 per cent (642 services) since the December quarter 2011.

In the December quarter 2012, there were 8,405 outside school hours care services which accounted for 55.1 per cent of all services and 6,271 long day care services which accounted for 41.1 per cent of all services.

**Table 13: Number of child care services by service type, December quarter 2011 to December quarter 2012**

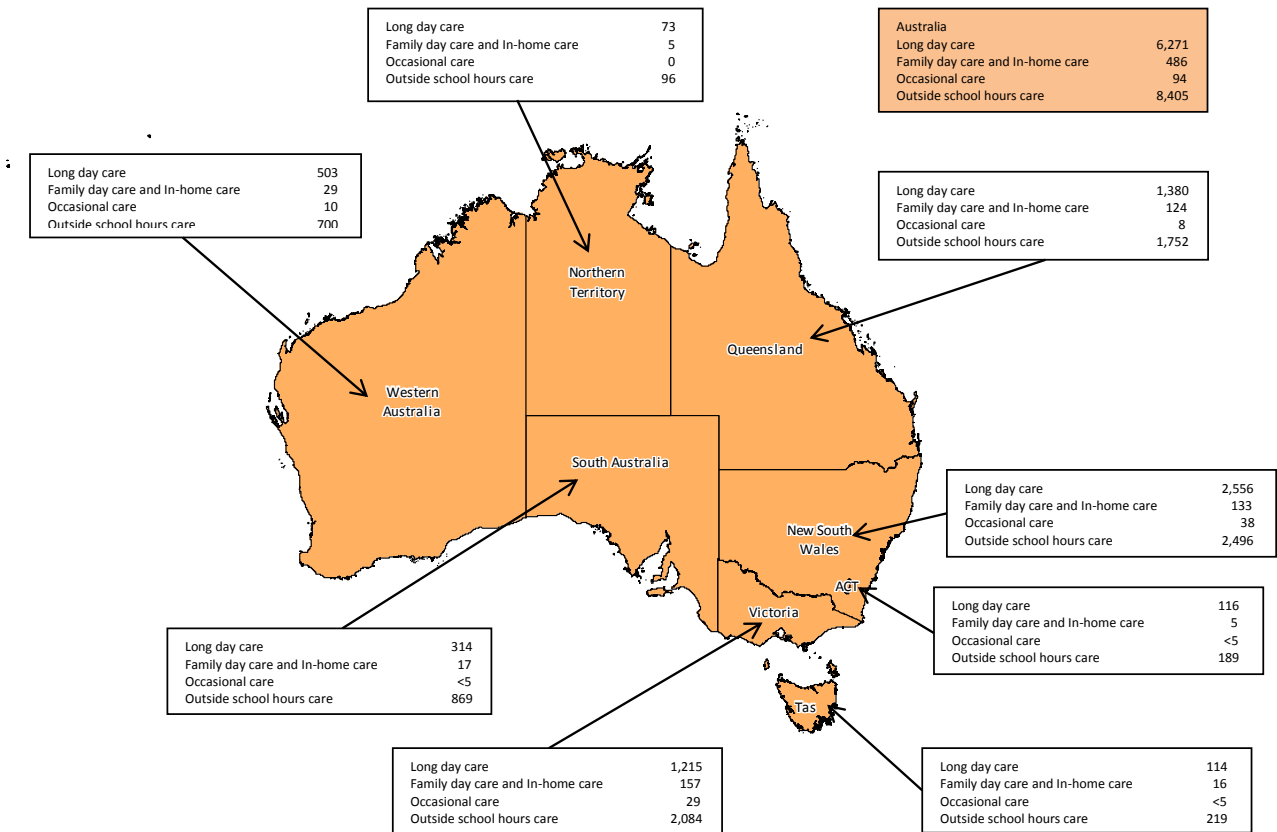
Service type	Dec. 11	Mar. 12	June 12	Sept. 12	Dec. 12
Long day care	6,123	6,133	6,156	6,192	6,271
Family day care and In-home care	424	434	441	460	486
Occasional care	82	80	80	82	94
Outside school hours care	7,985	8,203	8,342	8,413	8,405
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>14,614</b>	<b>14,851</b>	<b>15,020</b>	<b>15,147</b>	<b>15,256</b>

<sup>1</sup>Totals include a very small number of services for which other details are unknown.  
Source: Department of Education administrative data.



A mix of approved child care services are located in all states and territories. In the December quarter 2012, more than one third of services were located in New South Wales (34.2 per cent), with 22.8 per cent in Victoria and 21.4 per cent in Queensland.

**Figure 4: Number of approved services by service type and state and territory, December quarter 2012**



Source: Department of Education administrative data.

# Affordability

## Costs of care

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

The average hourly child care fee for all service types in the December quarter 2012 was \$7.10, an increase of 8.1 per cent since the December quarter 2011. Fees varied across service types from a high of \$8.60 per hour for occasional care services to a low of \$5.85 per hour for outside school hours care services.

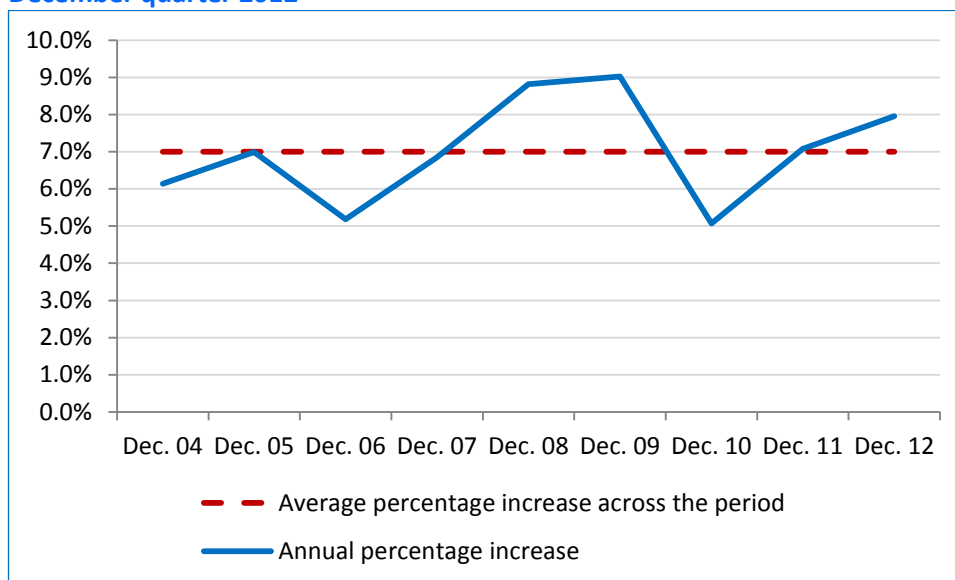
**Table 14: Average hourly fee by service type, December quarter 2011 to December quarter 2012**

Service type	Dec. 11	Mar. 12	June 12	Sept. 12	Dec. 12
Long day care	\$6.65	\$6.90	\$7.00	\$7.20	\$7.20
Family day care and In-home care	\$6.95	\$7.05	\$7.30	\$7.65	\$7.60
Occasional care	\$8.25	\$8.25	\$8.35	\$8.60	\$8.60
Outside school hours care	\$5.45	\$5.50	\$5.70	\$5.75	\$5.85
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>\$6.60</b>	<b>\$6.75</b>	<b>\$6.90</b>	<b>\$7.10</b>	<b>\$7.10</b>

<sup>1</sup> Hourly fees for each service type are calculated by dividing the sum of all fee amounts by the sum of all hours for each service type.  
Source: Department of Education administrative data.

The average hourly fee for long day care increased by 8.0 per cent from the December quarter 2011 to the December quarter 2012. This increase compares with the average annual percentage increase of 7.0 per cent for the period from the December quarter 2004 to the December quarter 2012.

**Figure 5: Average and annual percentage change to long day care hourly fees, December quarter 2004 to December quarter 2012**



Source: Department of Education 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 2012, the total estimated expenditure on Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate was \$1,149.0 million. Around three quarters (\$870.1 million or 75.7 per cent) of this was paid on behalf of families using long day care services.

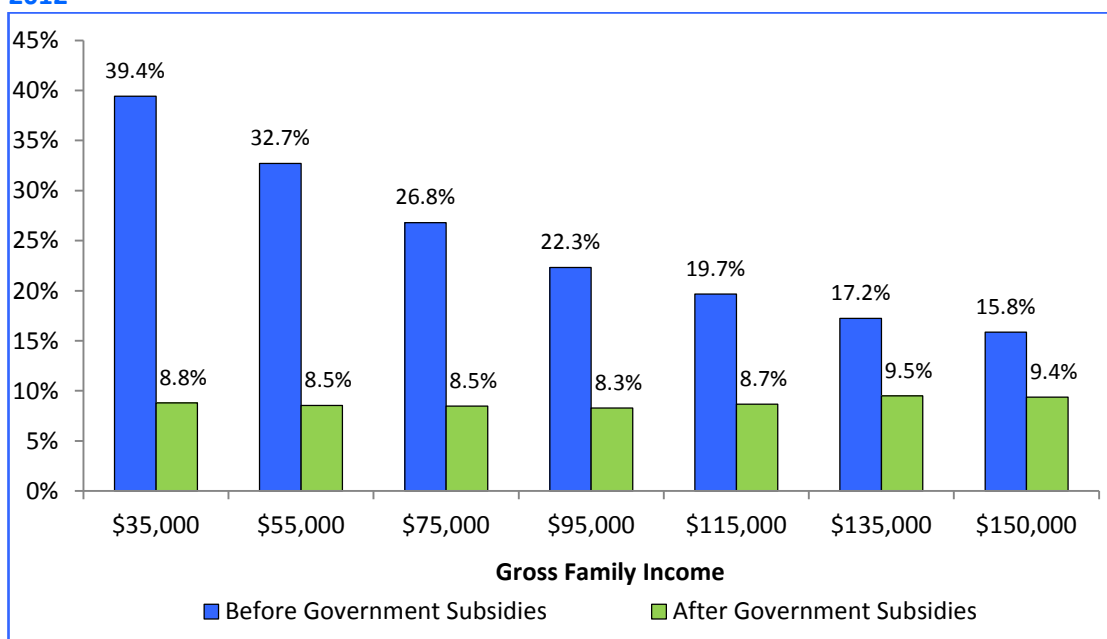
**Table 15: Total estimated Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate entitlements by service type, December quarter 2012**

Service type	Child Care Benefit ('000)	Child Care Rebate ('000)	Total ('000)
Long day care	\$415,201	\$454,933	<b>\$870,134</b>
Family day care and In-home care	\$136,311	\$47,825	<b>\$184,136</b>
Occasional care	\$1,519	\$1,867	<b>\$3,386</b>
Outside school hours care	\$40,448	\$50,894	<b>\$91,342</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$593,479</b>	<b>\$555,519</b>	<b>\$1,148,998</b>

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

Before Australian Government child care subsidies were taken into account, out-of-pocket costs for families varied from 39.4 per cent of weekly disposable income for families earning a gross income of \$35,000 per year, to 15.8 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 9.0 per cent of disposable income across all income ranges.

**Figure 6: Out-of-pocket costs for one child in long day care<sup>1</sup> before and after Australian Government subsidies, 2012**



<sup>1</sup> 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 administrative data.

# Vacancies

Table 16 details the national trend in child care vacancies from the June quarter 2011 to the December quarter 2012 by service type.

It appears that vacancies in long day care services peak in the March quarter of each year (approximately 66,000 in March quarter 2010 and March quarter 2011 and approximately 69,000 in March quarter 2012) and that the number of vacancies then declines throughout the year.

**Table 16: Child care vacancies by service type, June quarter 2011 to December quarter 2012**

Service type	June 11	Sept. 11	Dec. 11	Mar. 12	June 12	Sept. 12	Dec. 12
<b>Long day care</b>							
Total number of services	6,086	6,071	6,123	6,133	6,156	6,192	6,271
Per cent of services reporting	76%	78%	79%	77%	77%	84%	82%
Proportion with vacancies	88%	86%	86%	90%	87%	85%	86%
Average number of vacancies	61,620	53,950	51,930	68,750	60,540	61,660	58,190
Service type	June 11	Sept. 11	Dec. 11	Mar. 12	June 12	Sept. 12	Dec. 12
<b>Before and after school hours care</b>							
Total number of services	5,604	5,697	5,732	5,956	6,020	6,036	6,057
Per cent of services reporting	64%	62%	65%	63%	65%	66%	64%
Proportion with vacancies	87%	88%	87%	86%	85%	86%	87%
Average number of vacancies	66,100	67,240	73,970	72,360	73,910	80,660	82,860
Service type	June 11	Sept. 11	Dec. 11	Mar. 12	June 12	Sept. 12	Dec. 12
<b>Family day care</b>							
Total number of services	333	352	360	370	376	392	415
Per cent of services reporting	72%	70%	68%	66%	63%	65%	59%
Proportion with vacancies	89%	89%	86%	84%	84%	83%	80%
Average number of vacancies	6,200	6,020	5,450	6,490	5,980	6,040	6,230
Service type	June 11	Sept. 11	Dec. 11	Mar. 12	June 12	Sept. 12	Dec. 12
<b>Occasional care</b>							
Total number of services	85	82	82	80	80	82	94
Per cent of services reporting <sup>1</sup>	66%	70%	62%	65%	59%	62%	56%
Proportion with vacancies	55%	54%	59%	63%	60%	57%	53%
Average number of vacancies	320	310	280	300	240	220	220
Service type	June 11	Sept. 11	Dec. 11	Mar. 12	June 12	Sept. 12	Dec. 12
<b>Vacation care</b>							
Total number of services	2,114	2,253	2,253	2,248	2,323	2,377	2,348
Per cent of services reporting	59%	54%	57%	53%	58%	64%	58%
Proportion with vacancies	61%	70%	67%	69%	67%	69%	69%
Average number of vacancies	14,670	20,630	20,080	19,740	21,410	27,370	21,480

<sup>1</sup> A number of occasional care services were affected by a software reporting problem resulting in under reporting for the March quarter 2011. The values included in the table are for the services that were able to successfully provide data to the Department of Education.

Source: Department of Education 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 time frame 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:

- From the September quarter 2011 the majority of data is extracted from the Child Care Data and Reporting System (CCDARS). CCDARS is a Department of Education based data storage system for data collected from approved child care services via the Child Care Management System.
- Supplementary data is sourced from the Department of Human Services.

**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 Child Care Benefit approved services are required to regularly report their anticipated vacancies according to a standard definition, to the Department of Education. 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 2012, vacancies for long day care, before and after school hours care, occasional care and family day care are reported for the week 22 to 28 October 2012, while for vacation care it varies across the states and territories due to the different timing of 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 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 cap.

**Family day care:** A family day care scheme is a network of experienced caregivers who provide care and development activities for other peoples young children in the caregiver's own home. Schemes are administered and supported by central coordination units.

**In-home care:** A form of approved child care in which experienced caregivers provide care for children in their own home.

**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. Private operators, local councils,

community organisations, employers or non-profit organisations may run these services. The total number of services refers to the number of services that were active during the December quarter 2012, 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. 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.

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