



Australian Government

Department of Education and Training

Early Childhood and Child Care in Summary

December quarter 2016

This publication provides information on children in approved child care services across Australia for the December quarter 2016.

Key findings for the December quarter 2016 include:

- 1,280,770 children attended approved child care, up 2.6 per cent since the December quarter 2015.
- 871,150 families had at least one child in approved child care, an increase of 2.7 per cent since the December quarter 2015.
- 17,915 approved child care services operated in Australia, an increase of 6.0 per cent since the December quarter 2015.
- The total estimated Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate entitlement was \$1,831.0 million, up 7.7 per cent since the December quarter 2015.

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 2016, 871,150 families used approved child care services for their 1,280,770 children.

- In terms of affordability, 92.9 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 2016, there were 17,915 services providing approved child care services across Australia.

Table 1: Child care children, families, services and estimated entitlements by state and territory, December quarter 2016

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	432,060	296,670	6,300	\$281,787	\$350,869	272,880
Vic.	314,980	209,840	3,939	\$274,468	\$252,926	195,410
Qld	290,360	196,540	3,649	\$192,330	\$191,291	182,540
SA	86,100	58,050	1,347	\$41,541	\$47,585	54,430
WA	98,310	69,410	1,719	\$49,263	\$74,039	64,970
Tas.	22,770	15,800	387	\$11,036	\$11,744	14,650
NT	9,770	6,890	195	\$3,793	\$9,686	6,680
ACT	28,430	19,610	379	\$7,627	\$31,003	19,180
Australia	1,280,770	871,150	17,915	\$861,846	\$969,144	809,240

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 2016, 1,280,770 children used approved child care in Australia, up by 2.6 per cent since the December quarter 2015. For children aged 0–12 years using approved child care, this represents 31.4 per cent of the 4,011,890 children aged 0–12 years in Australia.

During the December quarter 2016, children attended various services providing approved child care, including Long Day Care (706,570 or 55.2 per cent), Outside School Hours Care (401,380 or 31.3 per cent), Family Day Care and In-Home Care (205,920 or 16.1 per cent), and Occasional Care (6,530 or 0.5 per cent).

Table 2: Number of children using child care by service type, December quarter 2015 to December quarter 2016

Service type	Dec. 15	Mar. 16	Jun. 16	Sep. 16	Dec. 16
Long Day Care	685,760	677,380	660,370	694,500	706,570
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	224,910	212,820	210,570	211,700	205,920
Occasional Care	7,100	5,960	6,270	6,530	6,530
Outside School Hours Care	368,650	409,370	413,010	417,650	401,380
Total¹	1,247,820	1,242,470	1,250,270	1,288,480	1,280,770
<i>Per cent of Australian population²</i>	<i>31.3%</i>	<i>31.2%</i>	<i>30.9%</i>	<i>31.9%</i>	<i>31.4%</i>

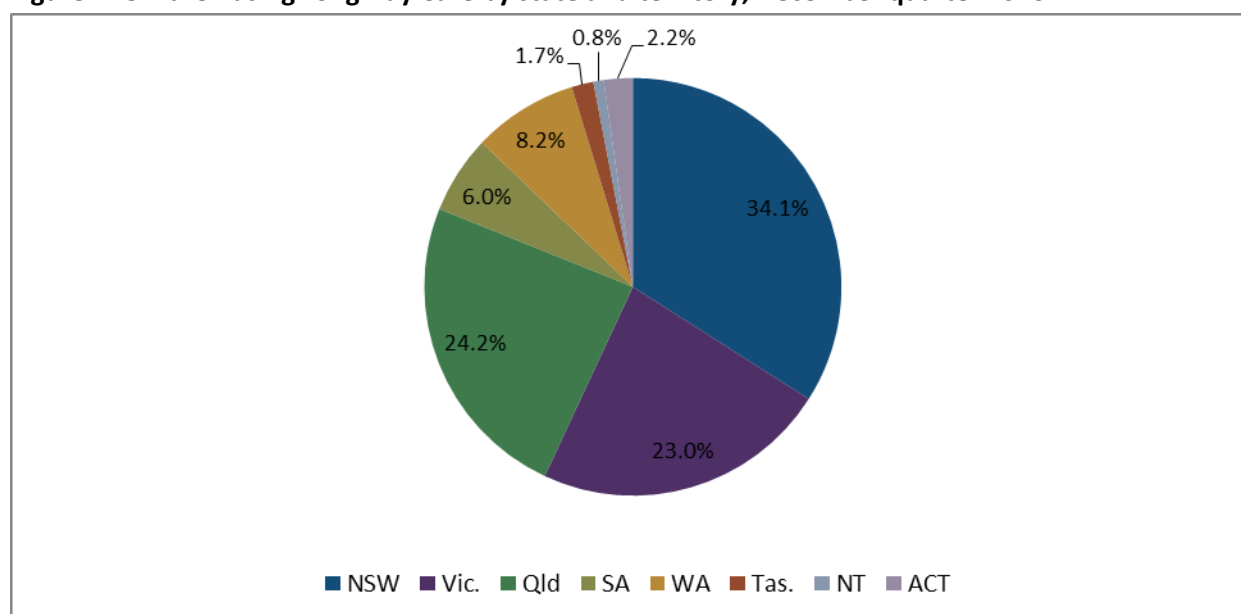
1 As children may use more than one service type in any particular quarter and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the Total.

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, Dec. 2016.

In the December quarter 2016, the largest proportion of children attending Long Day Care was in New South Wales (34.1 per cent), followed by Queensland (24.2 per cent) and Victoria (23.0 per cent).

Figure 1: Children using Long Day Care by state and territory, December quarter 2016



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 2016

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia ¹
Long Day Care	240,680	162,180	170,720	42,720	57,600	12,010	5,690	15,830	706,570
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	76,110	70,260	32,140	8,060	13,020	4,460	490	1,860	205,920
Occasional Care	2,380	2,480	450	110	850	130	0	140	6,530
Outside School Hours Care	125,670	87,690	94,990	38,270	32,080	7,670	3,770	11,440	401,380
Total¹	432,060	314,980	290,360	86,100	98,310	22,770	9,770	28,430	1,280,770

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 (1,005,380 children), around one in five (280,840 or 21.9 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 2016

Service type	Major cities of Australia	Regional ¹ and Remote Australia ²	Total ³
Long Day Care	533,680	174,390	706,570
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	166,690	40,090	205,920
Occasional Care	3,890	2,640	6,530
Outside School Hours Care	328,280	73,850	401,380
Total³	1,005,380	280,840	1,280,770

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 2016, for all types of child care, the average time that a child spent in approved child care was 24.9 hours per week. This compares with children who used Long Day Care who attended for an average of 28.5 hours per week.

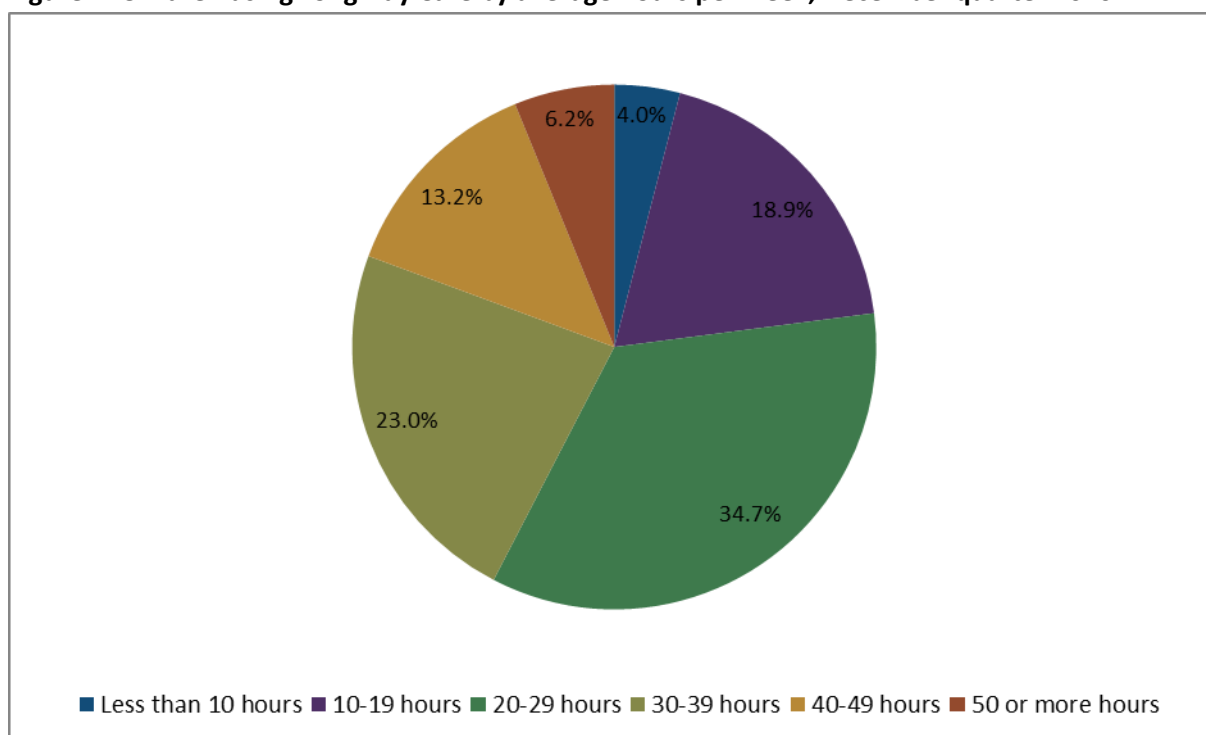
Table 5: Average weekly hours in child care by service type, December quarter 2015 to December quarter 2016

Service type	Dec. 15	Mar. 16	Jun. 16	Sep. 16	Dec. 16
Long Day Care	28.1	28.3	28.1	28.7	28.5
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	31.2	31.8	30.9	31.3	30.5
Occasional Care	11.8	12.2	11.8	12.3	12.0
Outside School Hours Care	10.3	12.1	10.7	11.7	10.9
Total	24.9	25.3	24.4	25.3	24.9

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

For children using Long Day Care, 34.7 per cent used 20-29 hours per week in the December quarter 2016.

Figure 2: Children using Long Day Care by average hours per week, December quarter 2016



Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Families

During the December quarter 2016, there were 871,150 families using some form of approved child care for their children, an increase of 2.7 per cent since the December quarter 2015. The number of families using Family Day Care and In-Home Care has decreased by 6.6 per cent since the December quarter 2015.

Table 6: Number of families using child care by service type, December quarter 2015 to December quarter 2016

Service type	Dec. 15	Mar. 16	Jun. 16	Sep. 16	Dec. 16
Long Day Care	556,450	546,880	543,360	565,900	573,280
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	126,080	120,770	119,860	120,680	117,740
Occasional Care	5,940	5,000	5,300	5,440	5,420
Outside School Hours Care	263,650	288,310	293,370	296,970	286,430
Total¹	848,200	843,000	852,160	873,790	871,150

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 December quarter 2016, 296,670 families (34.1 per cent) had children attending approved child care in New South Wales, followed by 209,840 families (24.1 per cent) in Victoria and 196,540 families (22.6 per cent) in Queensland.

Across Australia, nearly two-thirds (573,280 or 65.8 per cent) of all families had children in Long Day Care and around one-third of families had children in Outside School Hours Care (286,430 or 32.9 per cent).

Table 7: Number of families using child care by service type and state and territory, December quarter 2016

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia ¹
Long Day Care	197,790	133,310	133,430	35,070	47,050	9,690	4,730	12,950	573,280
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	45,140	35,350	19,980	4,940	7,930	3,100	340	1,220	117,740
Occasional Care	1,980	2,080	360	90	700	100	0	120	5,420
Outside School Hours Care	90,400	63,700	66,980	26,400	22,630	5,450	2,770	8,250	286,430
Total¹	296,670	209,840	196,540	58,050	69,410	15,800	6,890	19,610	871,150

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 2016, 32,120 Indigenous children (2.5 per cent of all children) used approved child care in Australia. The number of Indigenous children using approved child care has increased by 8.1 per cent since the December quarter 2015.

Table 8: Number of Indigenous children using child care by service type, December quarter 2015 to December quarter 2016

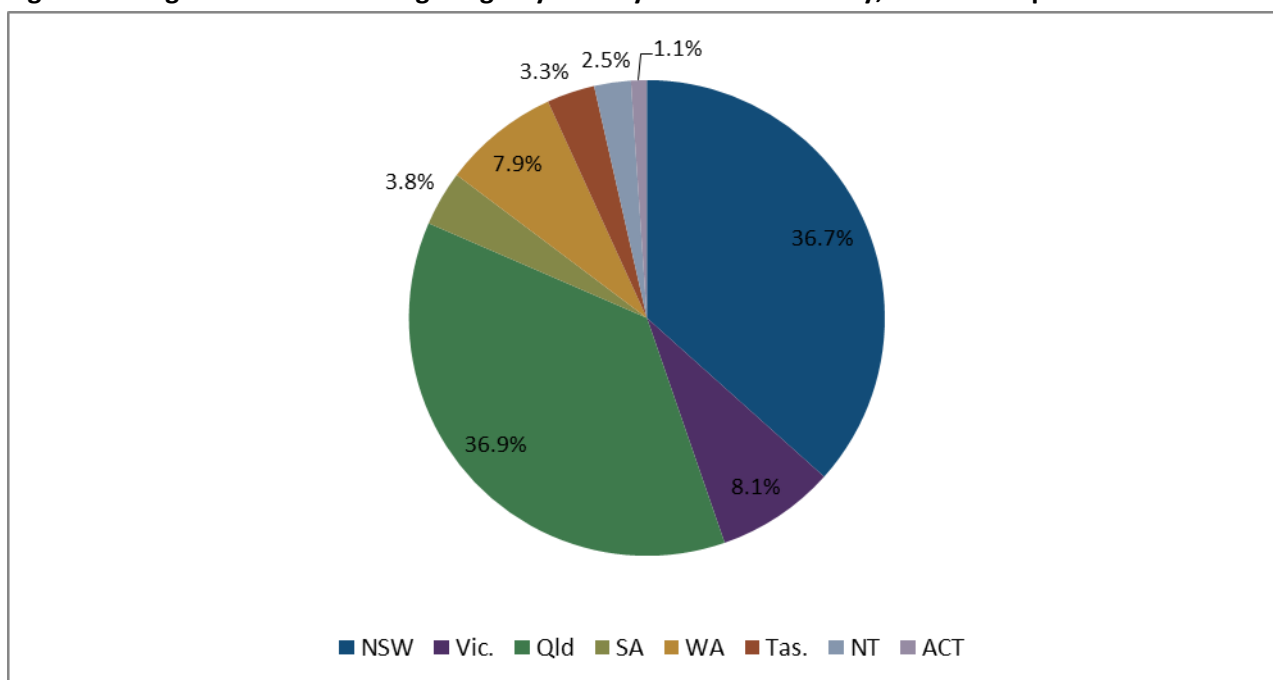
Service type	Dec. 15	Mar. 16	Jun. 16	Sep. 16	Dec. 16
Long Day Care	19,130	19,150	19,050	20,280	20,620
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	4,620	4,640	4,610	4,660	4,580
Occasional Care	190	170	200	240	240
Outside School Hours Care	6,620	7,500	7,570	7,920	7,700
Total¹	29,710	30,180	30,470	32,080	32,120

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 with 36.9 per cent, followed by New South Wales with 36.7 per cent.

Figure 3: Indigenous children using Long Day Care by state and territory, December quarter 2016



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 (14.5 per cent of Indigenous children aged 0–12 years, and 31.4 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 2016

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia ¹
Long Day Care	7,570	1,670	7,610	770	1,640	670	520	220	20,620
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	1,950	540	1,350	140	220	330	30	30	4,580
Occasional Care	140	40	20	<10	20	10	0	10	240
Outside School Hours Care	2,510	660	2,570	550	560	340	380	140	7,700
Total Indigenous children using approved child care¹	11,800	2,840	11,260	1,420	2,330	1,260	910	390	32,120
<i>Per cent of Indigenous population²</i>	17.1%	17.6%	16.8%	11.6%	8.4%	15.7%	4.7%	21.0%	14.5%

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 (15,700 children or 48.9 per cent).

Table 10: Number of Indigenous children using child care by service type and region, December quarter 2016

Service type	Major cities of Australia	Regional ¹ and Remote Australia ²	Total ³
Long Day Care	10,030	10,660	20,620
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	2,500	2,120	4,580
Occasional Care	100	140	240
Outside School Hours Care	4,440	3,280	7,700
Total³	16,640	15,700	32,120

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 2016, 22,040 Indigenous families used approved child care, an increase of 8.0 per cent since the December quarter 2015.

Table 11: Number of Indigenous families using child care by service type, December quarter 2015 to December quarter 2016

Service type	Dec. 15	Mar. 16	Jun. 16	Sep. 16	Dec. 16
Long Day Care	14,830	14,850	15,030	15,820	16,010
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	2,790	2,820	2,810	2,820	2,740
Occasional Care	160	140	170	190	190
Outside School Hours Care	4,560	5,040	5,170	5,380	5,260
Total¹	20,410	20,690	21,140	22,050	22,040

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 (8,300 or 37.6 per cent) of Indigenous families had children in approved child care located in New South Wales; another third (7,540 or 34.2 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 2016

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia ¹
Long Day Care	6,040	1,320	5,680	610	1,250	540	420	190	16,010
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	1,210	270	770	80	140	230	30	20	2,740
Occasional Care	110	30	20	<10	20	10	0	<10	190
Outside School Hours Care	1,730	460	1,740	360	360	240	270	110	5,260
Total¹	8,300	1,910	7,540	940	1,600	890	650	280	22,040

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 2016, 17,915 approved child care services operated in Australia, an increase of 6.0 per cent (1,016 services) since the December quarter 2015. There were 9,873 Outside School Hours Care services which accounted for 55.1 per cent of all services and 7,051 Long Day Care services which accounted for 39.4 per cent of all services.

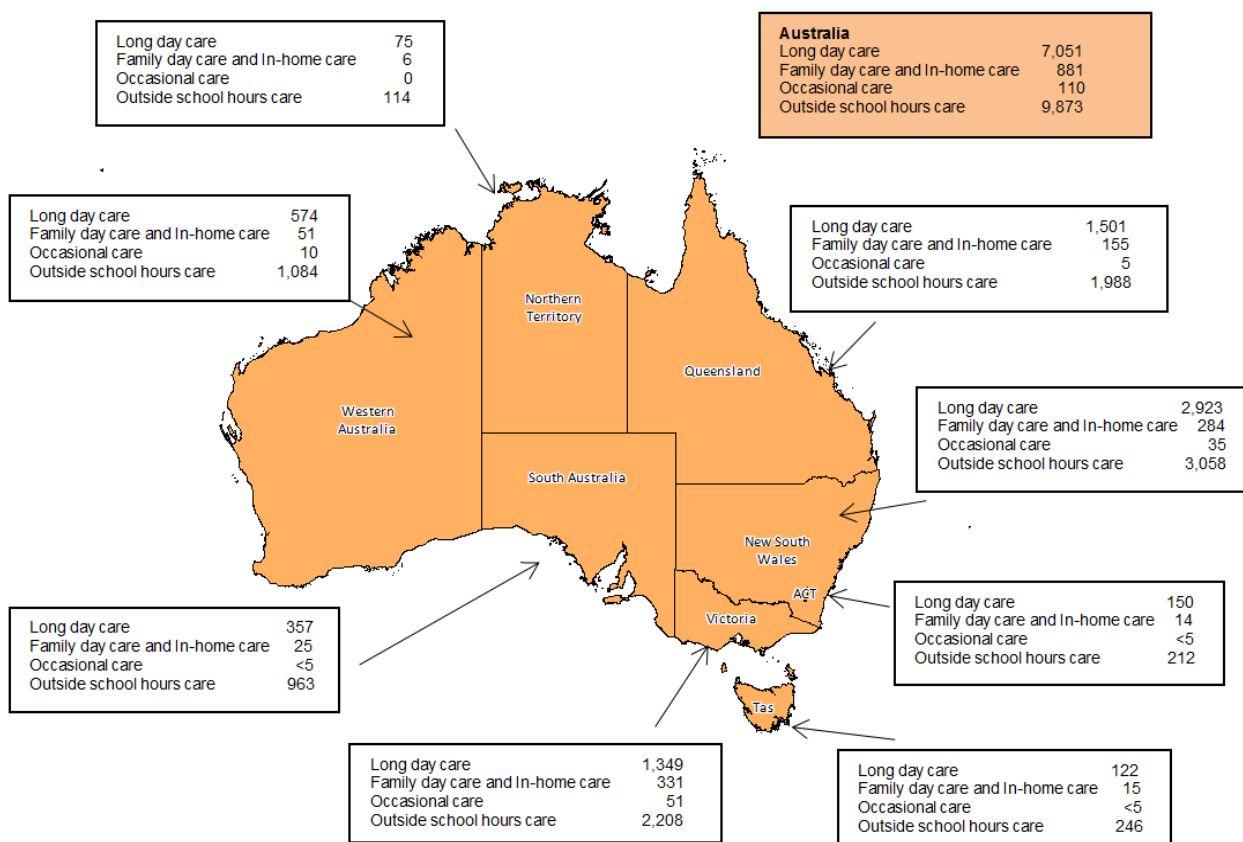
Table 13: Number of child care services by service type, December quarter 2015 to December quarter 2016

Service type	Dec. 15	Mar. 16	Jun. 16	Sep. 16	Dec. 16
Long Day Care	6,804	6,862	6,932	7,027	7,051
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	860	858	887	914	881
Occasional Care	115	111	110	110	110
Outside School Hours Care	9,120	9,825	10,065	10,136	9,873
Total	16,899	17,656	17,994	18,187	17,915

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

In the December quarter 2016, around one third of services were located in New South Wales (35.2 per cent), with 22.0 per cent in Victoria and 20.4 per cent in Queensland.

Figure 4: Number of approved services by service type and state and territory, December quarter 2016



Affordability

Costs of care before Australian Government fee assistance

The average hourly child care fee for all service types in the December quarter 2016 was \$8.75, an increase of 5.0 per cent since the December quarter 2015. Fees varied across service types from a high of \$10.05 per hour for Occasional Care services to a low of \$7.00 per hour for Outside School Hours Care services.

Table 14: Average hourly fee by service type, December quarter 2015 to December quarter 2016

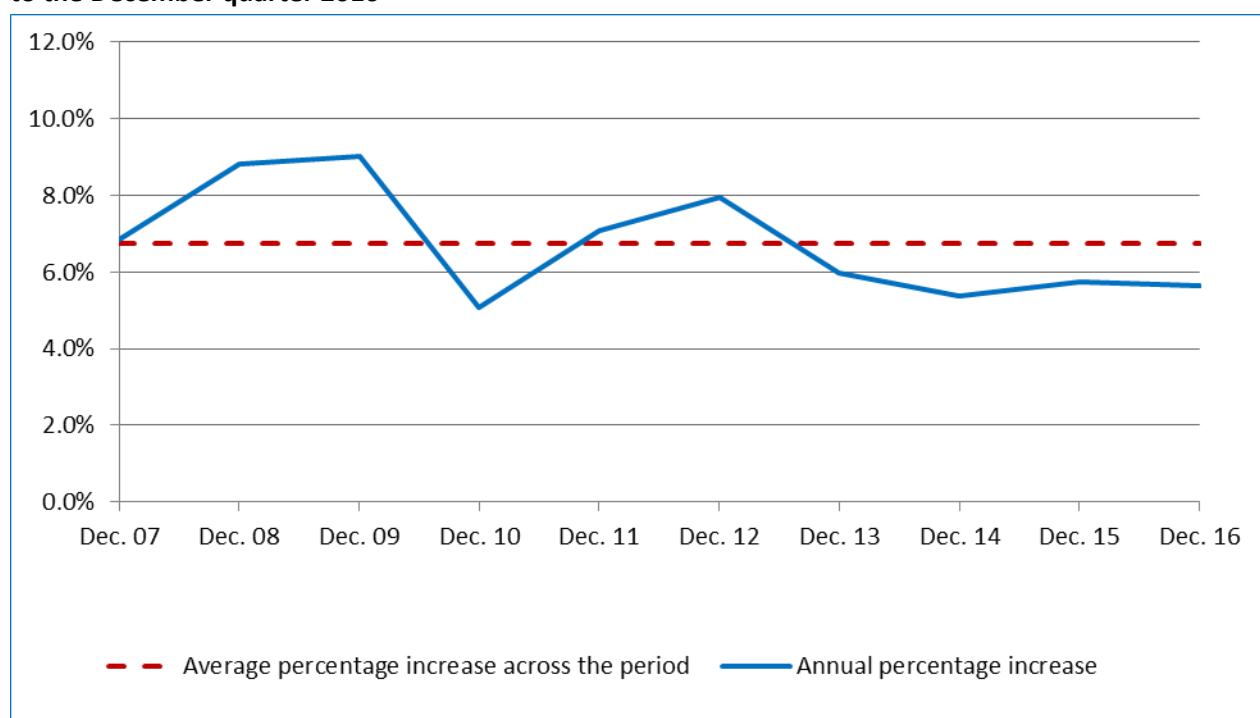
Service type	Dec. 15	Mar. 16	Jun. 16	Sep. 16	Dec. 16
Long Day Care	\$8.50	\$8.80	\$8.90	\$9.00	\$8.95
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	\$8.55	\$8.65	\$8.80	\$8.90	\$8.95
Occasional Care	\$9.65	\$9.80	\$9.90	\$10.05	\$10.05
Outside School Hours Care	\$6.80	\$6.70	\$7.05	\$6.95	\$7.00
Total¹	\$8.35	\$8.50	\$8.65	\$8.75	\$8.75

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 5.7 per cent from the December quarter 2015 to the December quarter 2016. This increase compares with the average annual percentage increase of 6.8 per cent for the period from the December quarter 2007 to the December quarter 2016.

Figure 5: Average and annual percentage change to Long Day Care hourly fees, December quarter 2007 to the December quarter 2016



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 2016, the total estimated expenditure on Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate was \$1,831.0 million. The majority (\$1,233.8 million or 67.4 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, December quarter 2016

Service type	Child Care Benefit ('000)	Child Care Rebate ('000)	Total ('000)
Long Day Care	\$475,473	\$758,327	\$1,233,800
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	\$333,757	\$115,037	\$448,793
Occasional Care	\$1,498	\$2,321	\$3,819
Outside School Hours Care	\$51,118	\$93,460	\$144,578
Total	\$861,846	\$969,144	\$1,830,990

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

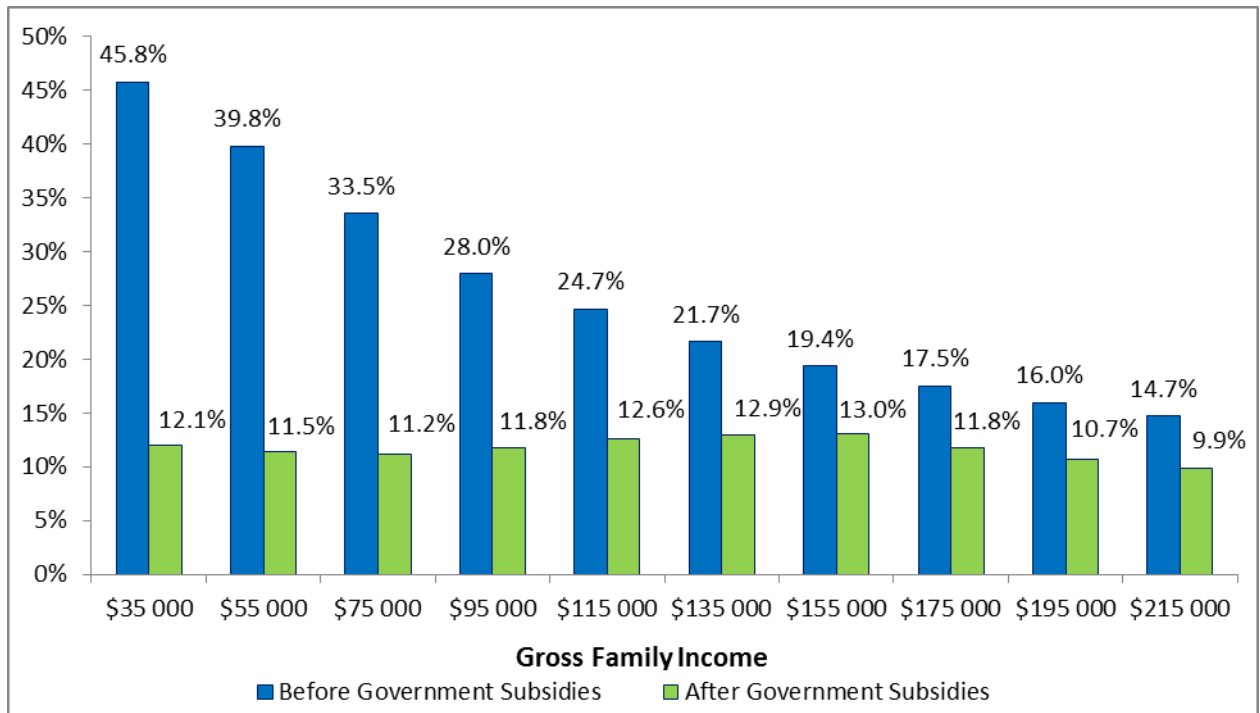
Costs of care after Australian Government fee assistance

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 45.8 per cent of weekly disposable income for families earning a gross income of \$35,000 per year, to 14.7 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 12.1 per cent for families earning a gross income of \$35,000 per year, to a high of 13.0 per cent for families earning a gross income of \$155,000 per year and 9.9 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 2016



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 50 hours of care per week. This takes into account the CCR cap (of \$7,500).

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Additional Assistance

JET Child Care Fee Assistance

In the December quarter 2016 there were 7,880 families assisted with Jobs, Education and Training Child Care Fee Assistance (JETCCFA). This represented 0.9 per cent of the total number of families who used approved child care services.

Table 16: JET Child Care Fee Assistance usage, December quarter 2015 to December quarter 2016

	Dec. 15	Mar. 16	Jun. 16	Sep. 16	Dec. 16
Number of children assisted	12,930	12,060	12,380	12,470	11,530
Number of families using JETCCFA	8,900	8,400	8,640	8,600	7,880
Average hours per week per child	26.2	26.4	26.4	26.6	26.4
Estimated JETCCFA entitlement (\$'000)	\$7,977	\$6,866	\$8,945	\$9,313	\$7,729

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Special Child Care Benefit

In the December quarter 2016, 10,270 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, December quarter 2015 to December quarter 2016

	Dec. 15	Mar. 16	Jun. 16	Sep. 16	Dec. 16
Number of children assisted	14,540	14,030	14,790	16,520	15,630
Number of families using SCCB	9,370	9,040	9,900	10,870	10,270
Average hours per week per child	34.0	34.4	33.8	34.2	34.2
Estimated SCCB entitlement (\$'000)	\$42,232	\$40,619	\$43,575	\$55,771	\$45,269

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Grandparent Child Care Benefit

In the December quarter 2016, 4,540 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, December quarter 2015 to December quarter 2016

	Dec. 15	Mar. 16	Jun. 16	Sep. 16	Dec. 16
Number of children assisted	6,850	7,320	7,500	8,220	8,560
Number of families using GCCB	3,940	4,110	4,170	4,470	4,540
Average hours per week per child	35.6	37.1	36.2	37.7	36.8
Estimated GCCB entitlement (\$'000)	\$35,171	\$39,401	\$43,748	\$53,492	\$55,409

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Vacancies

Table 16 details the national trend in child care vacancies from the December quarter 2014 to the December quarter 2016 by service type.

Table 19: Child care vacancies by service type, December quarter 2014 to December quarter 2016¹

Service type	Dec-14	Mar-15	Jun-15	Sep. 15	Dec. 15	Mar. 16	Jun. 16	Sep-16	Dec-16
Long Day Care									
Total number of services	6,623	6,656	6,723	6,755	6,804	6,862	6,932	7,027	7,051
Per cent services reporting	90%	91%	91%	91%	91%	92%	92%	92%	91%
Proportion with vacancies	87%	91%	90%	89%	88%	91%	91%	89%	89%
Average vacancies	70,160	98,510	94,000	86,700	77,440	110,510	106,650	91,980	87,610
Family Day Care									
Total number of services	772	771	778	786	792	794	823	849	819
Per cent services reporting	36%	34%	34%	32%	32%	30%	44%	42%	40%
Proportion with vacancies	85%	91%	89%	87%	90%	89%	87%	90%	91%
Average vacancies	8,400	8,120	8,510	8,410	7,520	7,180	9,270	11,640	9,990
Occasional Care									
Total number of services	116	116	116	115	115	111	110	110	110
Per cent services reporting	68%	65%	59%	63%	64%	59%	68%	71%	68%
Proportion with vacancies	47%	55%	51%	55%	54%	60%	56%	56%	56%
Average vacancies	310	450	460	390	420	510	460	470	430
Before and After School Hours Care									
Total number of services	6,628	6,841	6,911	7,348	6,981	7,177	7,331	7,324	7,306
Per cent services reporting	62%	55%	58%	51%	60%	58%	60%	80%	80%
Proportion with vacancies	91%	90%	91%	90%	92%	91%	92%	93%	94%
Average vacancies	109,790	92,350	102,770	100,080	119,040	105,750	117,550	187,600	194,800
Vacation Care									
Total number of services	1,977	2,515	2,609	2,732	2,139	2,648	2,734	2,812	2,907
Per cent services reporting	75%	58%	55%	55%	57%	55%	55%	60%	60%
Proportion with vacancies	71%	73%	72%	73%	64%	75%	70%	75%	68%
Average vacancies	32,280	32,020	30,510	34,000	34,100	33,410	30,510	42,920	43,930

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.

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 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 2016, vacancies for Long Day Care, Before and After School Hours Care, Occasional Care and Family Day Care are reported for the week 28 November to 4 December 2016. Vacancies for Vacation Care are reported for the week 3 October to 9 October 2016 for New South Wales, South Australia, Northern Territory, Western Australia, Tasmania and Australian Capital Territory, 12 December to 18 December 2016 for Queensland and 26 December to 1 January 2017 for Victoria.

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.

ISBN

978-1-76051-131-9



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