



Early Childhood and Child Care in Summary

December quarter 2017

This publication provides information on children in approved child care services across Australia for the December quarter 2017.

Key findings for the December quarter 2017 include:

- 1,302,940 children attended approved child care, up 1.7 per cent compared with the December quarter 2016.
- 897,880 families had at least one child in approved child care, an increase of 3.1 per cent since the December quarter 2016.
- 18,524 approved child care services operated in Australia, an increase of 3.4 per cent since the December quarter 2016.
- The total estimated Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate entitlement was \$1,827.2 million, down 0.2 per cent since the December quarter 2016.

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 2017, 897,880 families used approved child care services for their 1,302,940 children.

- In terms of affordability, 93.2 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 2017, there were 18,524 services providing approved child care services across Australia.

Table 1: Child care children, families, services and estimated entitlements by state and territory, December quarter 2017

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	434,080	302,850	6,418	\$252,563	\$377,314	280,120
Vic.	321,930	219,530	4,262	\$226,206	\$272,992	204,870
Qld	296,730	201,910	3,730	\$188,466	\$212,444	187,960
SA	86,410	58,730	1,345	\$38,019	\$51,141	55,330
WA	102,600	72,730	1,776	\$48,204	\$80,886	68,310
Tas.	23,050	16,060	393	\$10,686	\$12,923	14,970
NT	10,090	7,150	207	\$3,851	\$10,419	6,920
ACT	29,830	20,580	393	\$7,269	\$33,807	20,180
Australia	1,302,940	897,880	18,524	\$775,265	\$1,051,927	837,100

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 2017, 1,302,940 children used approved child care in Australia, up by 1.7 per cent since the December quarter 2016. When considering children aged 0-12 years, 31.9 per cent of all children in that age bracket attended some form of approved child care in the December quarter 2017.

During the December quarter 2017, children attended various services providing approved child care, including Long Day Care (734,250 or 56.4 per cent), outside school hours care (431,420 or 33.1 per cent), family day Care and In-Home Care (171,540 or 13.2 per cent), and Occasional Care (6,180 or 0.5 per cent).

Table 2: Number of children using child care by service type, December quarter 2016 to December quarter 2017

Service type	Dec. 16	Mar. 17	Jun. 17	Sep. 17	Dec. 17
Long Day Care	706,570	699,510	682,060	721,090	734,250
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	205,920	206,520	183,750	182,830	171,540
Occasional Care	6,530	5,660	5,850	6,140	6,180
Outside School Hours Care	401,380	433,480	436,260	445,140	431,420
Total¹	1,280,770	1,281,260	1,268,140	1,312,650	1,302,940
<i>Per cent of Australian population²</i>	<i>31.4%</i>	<i>31.4%</i>	<i>31.5%</i>	<i>32.2%</i>	<i>31.9%</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. 2017.

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 (22.8 per cent).

Table 3: Number of children using child care by service type and state and territory, December quarter 2017

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia ¹
Long Day Care	247,890	173,030	175,400	43,510	60,130	12,520	5,920	16,790	734,250
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	61,250	58,550	27,830	5,830	12,110	4,080	420	1,570	171,540
Occasional Care	2,140	2,380	400	100	910	110	0	140	6,180
Outside School Hours Care	134,960	96,450	101,060	39,930	35,260	7,840	4,000	12,220	431,420
Total¹	434,080	321,930	296,730	86,410	102,600	23,050	10,090	29,830	1,302,940

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 (1,019,430 children or 78.2 per cent), whereas around one in five (288,890 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, December quarter 2017

Service type	Major cities of Australia	Regional ¹ and Remote Australia ²	Total ³
Long Day Care	555,430	180,450	734,250
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	134,700	37,380	171,540
Occasional Care	3,620	2,560	6,180
Outside School Hours Care	353,460	78,830	431,420
Total³	1,019,430	288,890	1,302,940

1 Includes Inner and Outer Regional

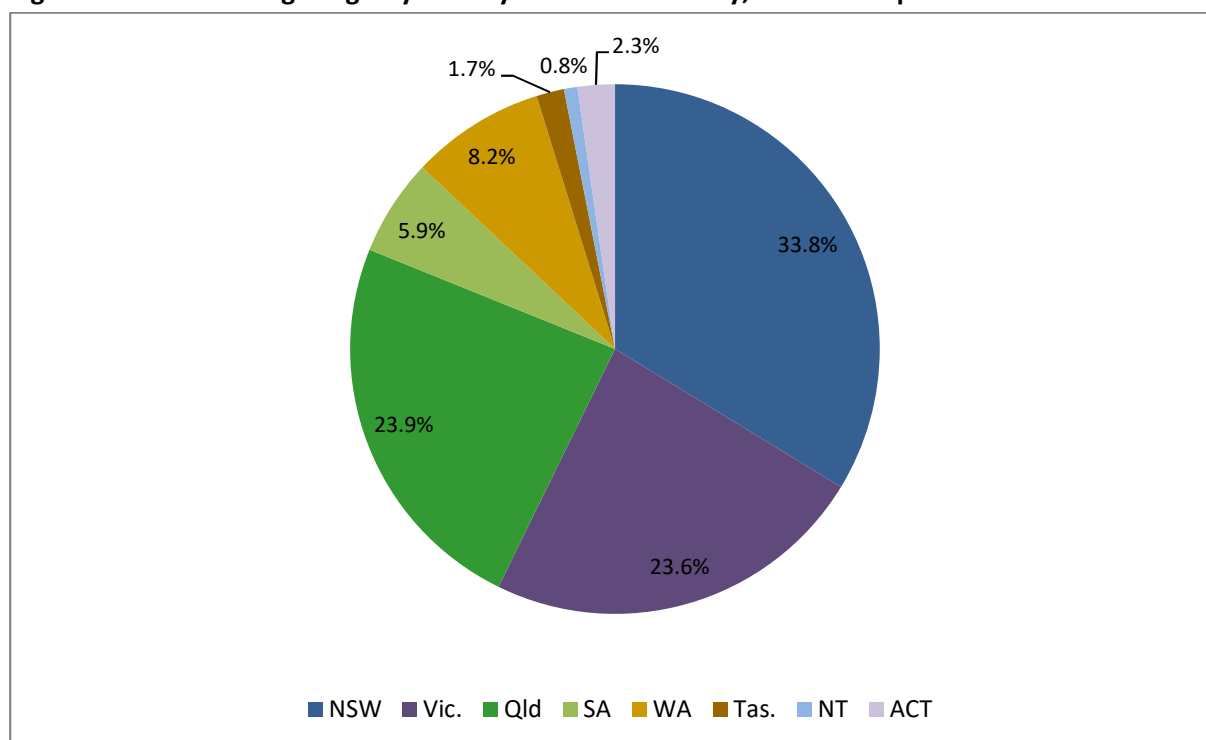
2 Includes Remote and Very Remote

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 (33.8 per cent) had the largest share of children using Long Day Care during the quarter, followed by Queensland (23.9 per cent) and Victoria (23.6 per cent).

Figure 1: Children using Long Day Care by state and territory, December quarter 2017



Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

During the December quarter 2017, for all types of child care, the average time that a child spent in approved child care was 24.6 hours per week. This compares with children who used Long Day Care who attended for an average of 28.8 hours per week.

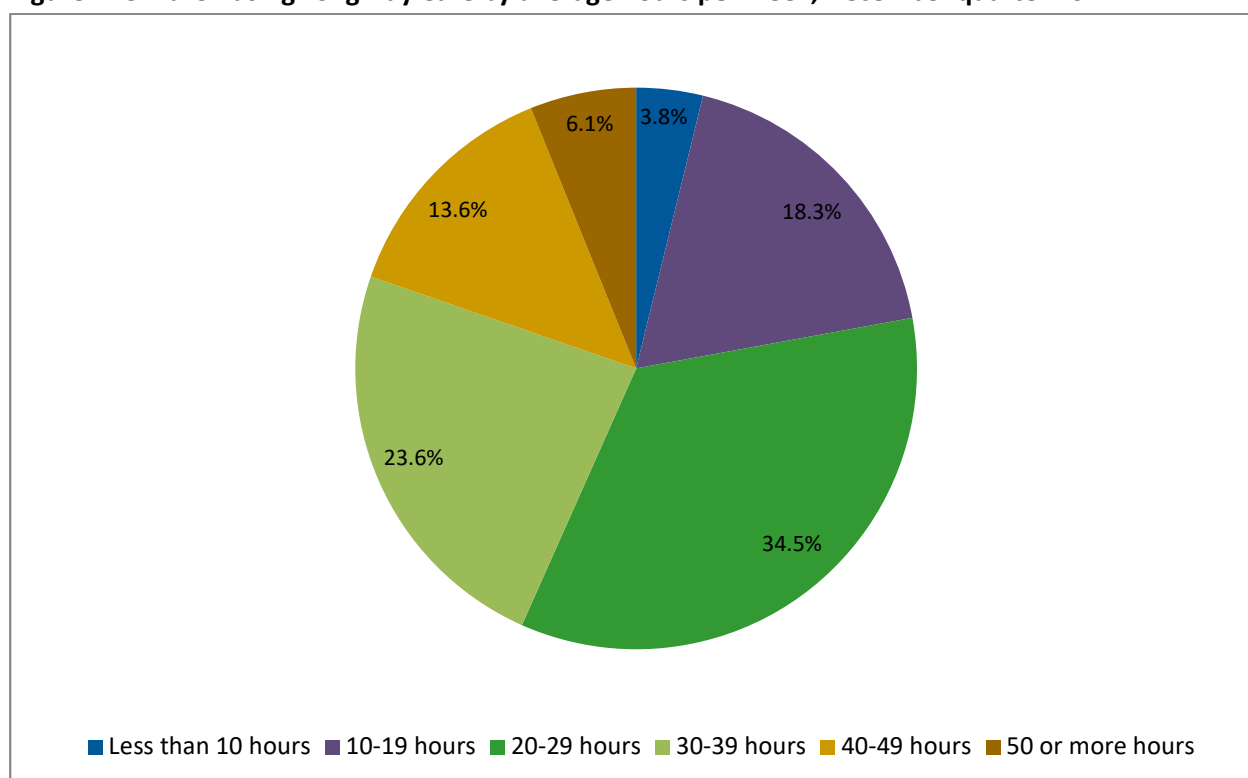
Table 5: Average weekly hours in child care by service type, December quarter 2016 to December quarter 2017

Service type	Dec. 16	Mar. 17	Jun. 17	Sep. 17	Dec. 17
Long Day Care	28.5	28.6	28.4	28.9	28.8
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	30.5	30.9	29.5	28.9	28.5
Occasional Care	12.0	12.4	12.1	12.5	12.2
Outside School Hours Care	10.9	12.0	10.8	11.8	11.2
Total	24.9	25.0	24.1	24.8	24.6

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

During the December quarter 2017, 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, December quarter 2017



Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Families

During the December quarter 2017, there were 897,880 families using some form of approved child care for their children, an increase of 3.1 per cent since the December quarter 2016. The number of families using Family Day Care and In-Home Care has decreased by 9.4 per cent since the December quarter 2016.

Table 6: Number of families using child care by service type, December quarter 2016 to December quarter 2017

Service type	Dec. 16	Mar. 17	Jun. 17	Sep. 17	Dec. 17
Long Day Care	573,280	564,880	560,260	586,830	594,970
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	117,740	117,650	112,310	112,520	106,640
Occasional Care	5,420	4,770	4,940	5,120	5,140
Outside School Hours Care	286,430	305,380	310,090	317,270	308,620
Total¹	871,150	869,750	874,020	901,640	897,880

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 2017, 302,850 families (33.7 per cent) had children attending approved child care in New South Wales, followed by 219,530 families (24.4 per cent) in Victoria and 201,910 families (22.5 per cent) in Queensland.

Across Australia, nearly two-thirds (594,970 or 66.3 per cent) of families using approved child care chose Long Day Care and around one-third (308,620 or 34.4 per cent) chose outside school hours care.

Table 7: Number of families using child care by service type and state and territory, December quarter 2017

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia ¹
Long Day Care	203,620	141,700	137,010	35,690	48,990	10,130	4,950	13,690	594,970
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	39,910	32,500	18,210	3,950	7,900	2,850	320	1,090	106,640
Occasional Care	1,760	2,000	320	80	770	90	0	120	5,140
Outside School Hours Care	97,460	70,160	71,550	27,610	24,810	5,560	2,900	8,800	308,620
Total¹	302,850	219,530	201,910	58,730	72,730	16,060	7,150	20,580	897,880

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 2017, 34,500 Indigenous children used approved child care in Australia. The number of Indigenous children using approved child care has increased by 7.4 per cent since the December quarter 2016.

Table 8: Number of Indigenous children using child care by service type, December quarter 2016 to December quarter 2017

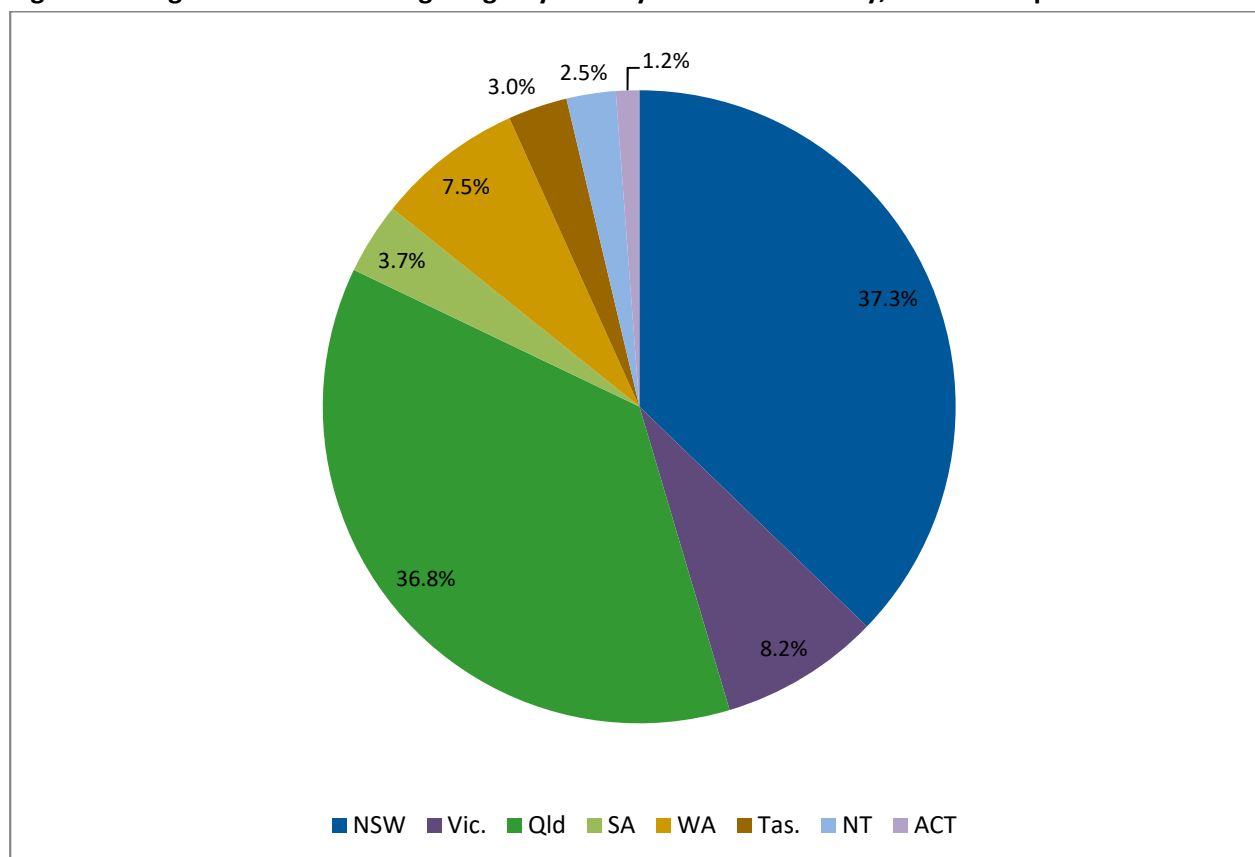
Service type	Dec. 16	Mar. 17	Jun. 17	Sep. 17	Dec. 17
Long Day Care	20,620	20,790	20,610	22,150	22,430
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	4,580	4,640	4,160	4,180	4,010
Occasional Care	240	210	210	220	220
Outside School Hours Care	7,700	8,430	8,480	8,970	8,860
Total¹	32,120	32,670	32,500	34,440	34,500

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 37.3 per cent, followed by Queensland with 36.8 per cent.

Figure 3: Indigenous children using Long Day Care by state and territory, December quarter 2017



Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

At the national level, 15.4 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, December quarter 2017

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia ¹
Long Day Care	8,360	1,840	8,250	820	1,680	680	570	270	22,430
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	1,810	440	1,040	130	230	310	30	30	4,010
Occasional Care	120	30	30	<10	30	10	0	<10	220
Outside School Hours Care	2,830	830	3,020	600	690	340	400	170	8,860
Total Indigenous children using approved child care¹	12,760	3,080	12,020	1,500	2,520	1,250	970	450	34,500
<i>Per cent of Indigenous population²</i>	<i>18.3%</i>	<i>18.9%</i>	<i>17.7%</i>	<i>12.2%</i>	<i>9.0%</i>	<i>15.2%</i>	<i>5.0%</i>	<i>23.8%</i>	<i>15.4%</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 (16,860 children or 48.9 per cent).

Table 10: Number of Indigenous children using child care by service type and region, December quarter 2017

Service type	Major cities of Australia	Regional ¹ and Remote Australia ²	Total ³
Long Day Care	10,990	11,510	22,430
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	2,040	1,970	4,010
Occasional Care	100	120	220
Outside School Hours Care	5,140	3,740	8,860
Total³	17,820	16,860	34,500

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 2017, 23,790 Indigenous families used approved child care, an increase of 7.9 per cent since the December quarter 2016.

Table 11: Number of Indigenous families using child care by service type, December quarter 2016 to December quarter 2017

Service type	Dec. 16	Mar. 17	Jun. 17	Sep. 17	Dec. 17
Long Day Care	16,010	16,050	16,220	17,230	17,350
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	2,740	2,780	2,650	2,660	2,560
Occasional Care	190	170	180	180	180
Outside School Hours Care	5,260	5,690	5,800	6,120	6,080
Total¹	22,040	22,260	22,610	23,780	23,790

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 (9,040 or 38.0 per cent) of Indigenous families had children in approved child care located in New South Wales and another third (8,070 or 33.9 per cent) had children in approved child care located in Queensland.

Table 12: Number of Indigenous families using child care by service type and state and territory, December quarter 2017

Service type	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Australia ¹
Long Day Care	6,640	1,450	6,130	640	1,290	550	460	220	17,350
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	1,200	230	640	70	160	220	20	20	2,560
Occasional Care	100	20	20	<10	20	10	0	<10	180
Outside School Hours Care	1,990	590	2,030	400	440	230	280	130	6,080
Total¹	9,040	2,090	8,070	1,020	1,730	890	680	320	23,790

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 2017, 18,524 approved child care services operated in Australia, an increase of 3.4 per cent (244 services) since the December quarter 2016. There were 10,341 Outside School Hours services which accounted for 55.8 per cent of all services and 7,349 Long Day Care services which accounted for 39.7 per cent of all services.

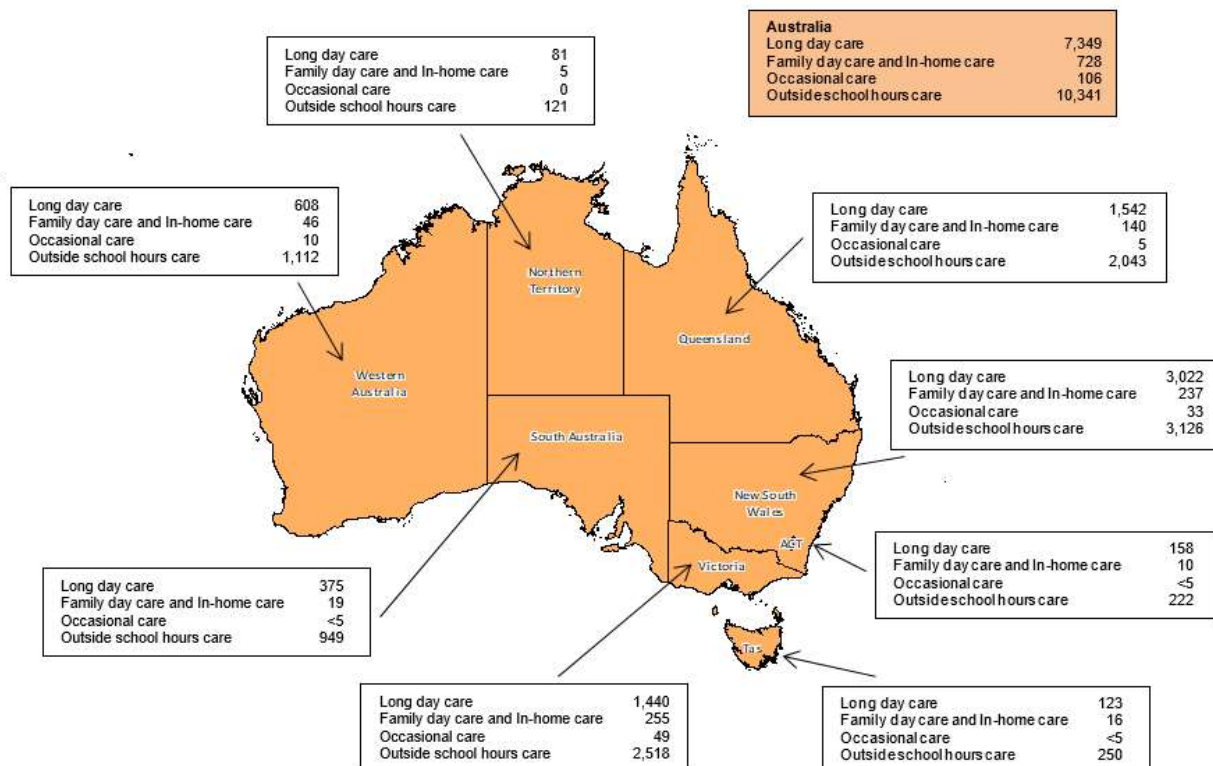
Table 13: Number of child care services by service type, December quarter 2016 to December quarter 2017

Service type	Dec. 16	Mar. 17	Jun. 17	Sep. 17	Dec. 17
Long Day Care	7,051	7,145	7,184	7,256	7,349
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	881	858	818	773	728
Occasional Care	110	106	106	106	106
Outside School Hours Care	9,873	10,209	10,353	10,385	10,341
Total	17,915	18,318	18,461	18,520	18,524

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

In the December quarter 2017, around one third of services (34.6 per cent) were located in New South Wales, with 23.0 per cent in Victoria and 20.1 per cent in Queensland.

Figure 4: Number of approved services by service type and state and territory, December quarter 2017



Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Affordability

Costs of care before Australian Government fee assistance

The average hourly child care fee for all service types in the December quarter 2017 was \$9.00, an increase of 3.0 per cent since the December quarter 2016. Fees varied across service types from \$7.20 per hour for Outside School Hours Care services to \$10.50 per hour for Occasional Care services.

Table 14: Average hourly fee by service type, December quarter 2016 to December quarter 2017

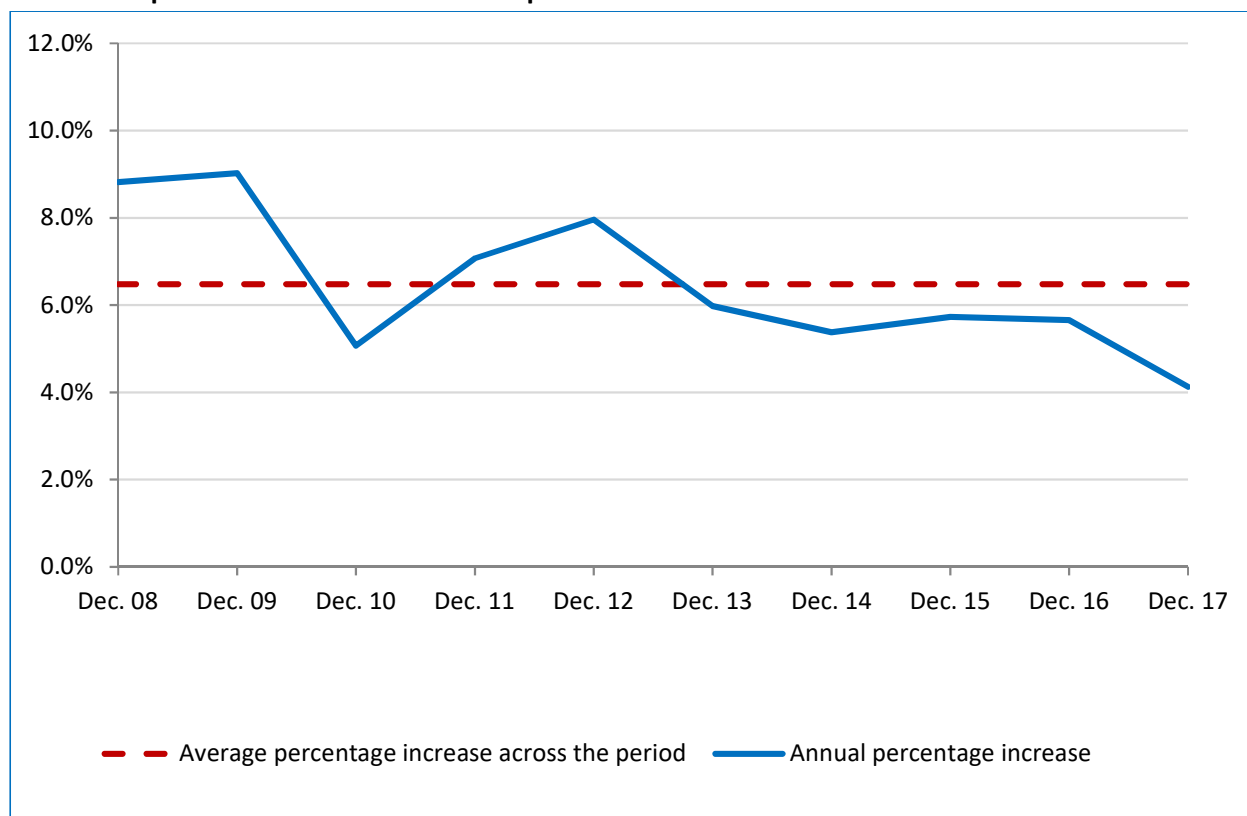
Service type	Dec. 16	Mar. 17	Jun. 17	Sep. 17	Dec. 17
Long Day Care	\$8.95	\$9.15	\$9.20	\$9.35	\$9.35
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	\$8.95	\$8.95	\$8.80	\$8.80	\$8.85
Occasional Care	\$10.05	\$10.25	\$10.25	\$10.45	\$10.50
Outside School Hours Care	\$7.00	\$7.05	\$7.20	\$7.05	\$7.20
Total¹	\$8.75	\$8.85	\$8.90	\$9.00	\$9.00

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 4.1 per cent from the December quarter 2016 to the December quarter 2017. This increase compares with the average annual percentage increase of 6.5 per cent for the period from the December quarter 2008 to the December quarter 2017.

Figure 5: Average and annual percentage change to Long Day Care hourly fees, December quarter 2008 to the December quarter 2017



Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

During the December quarter 2017, 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 \$1,827.2 million. The majority (\$1,332.6 million or 72.9 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 2017

Service type	Child Care Benefit ('000)	Child Care Rebate ('000)	Total ('000)
Long Day Care	\$487,847	\$844,801	\$1,332,648
Family Day Care and In-Home Care	\$233,014	\$96,860	\$329,874
Occasional Care	\$1,413	\$2,338	\$3,751
Outside School Hours Care	\$52,992	\$107,928	\$160,920
Total	\$775,265	\$1,051,927	\$1,827,193

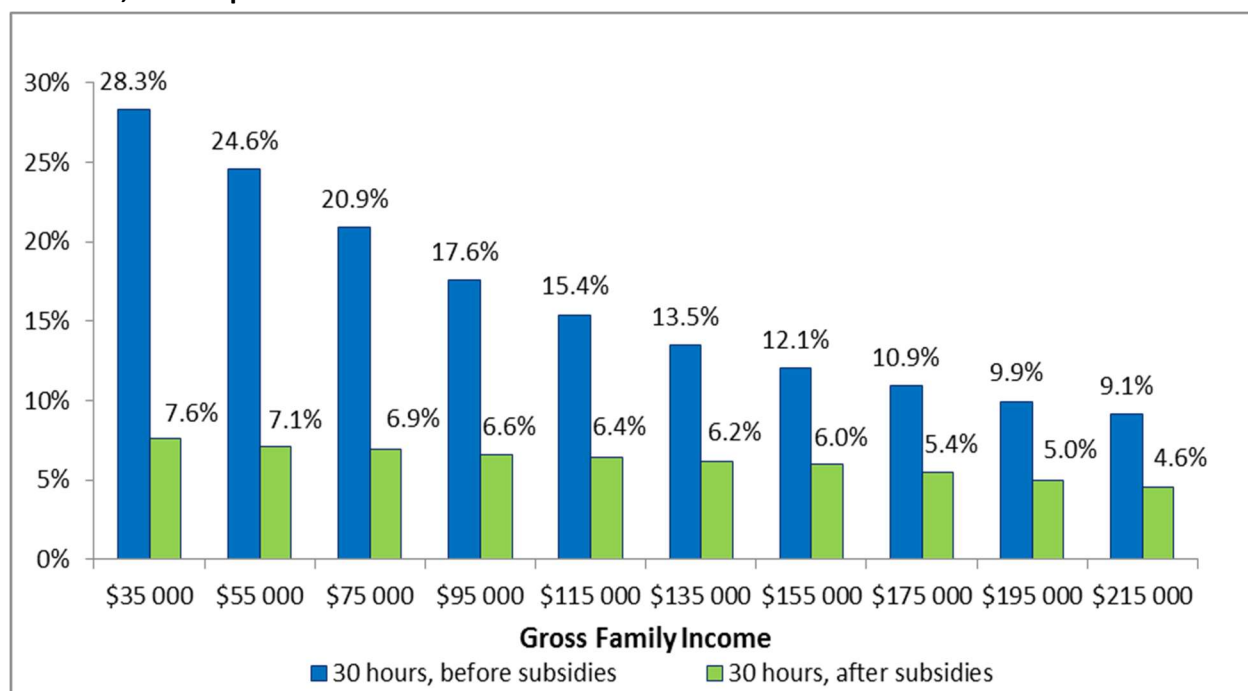
Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data – based on estimated entitlements.

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 28.3 per cent of weekly disposable income for families earning a gross income of \$35,000 per year to 9.1 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 7.6 per cent for families earning a gross income of \$35,000 per year to 4.6 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 2017



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 \$7,500).

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Long description of Figure 6 Out-of-pocket costs as a proportion of weekly disposable family income for one child in Long Day Care before and after Australian Government subsidies, March quarter 2017

Subsidy	\$35,000	\$55,000	\$75,000	\$95,000	\$115,000	\$135,000	\$155,000	\$175,000	\$195,000	\$215,000
Before Government Subsidies	28.3%	24.6%	20.9%	17.6%	15.4%	13.5%	12.1%	10.9%	9.9%	9.1%
After Government Subsidies	7.6%	7.1%	6.9%	6.6%	6.4%	6.2%	6.0%	5.4%	5.0%	4.6%

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Additional Assistance

JET Child Care Fee Assistance

In the December quarter 2017, 6,790 families were assisted with Jobs, Education and Training Child Care Fee Assistance (JETCCFA). This represented 0.8 per cent of the total number of families who used approved child care services.

Table 16: JET Child Care Fee Assistance usage, December quarter 2016 to December quarter 2017

	Dec. 16	Mar. 17	Jun. 17	Sep. 17	Dec. 17
Number of children assisted	11,530	10,610	10,560	10,760	9,820
Number of families using JETCCFA	7,880	7,350	7,360	7,430	6,790
Average hours per week per child	26.4	26.6	26.4	26.8	26.9
Estimated JETCCFA entitlement (\$'000)	\$7,729	\$6,436	\$8,373	\$8,688	\$7,402

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Special Child Care Benefit

In the December quarter 2017, 11,250 families were assisted with Special Child Care Benefit. This represented 1.3 per cent of the total number of families who used approved child care services.

Table 17: Special Child Care Benefit usage, December quarter 2016 to December quarter 2017

	Dec. 16	Mar. 17	Jun. 17	Sep. 17	Dec. 17
Number of children assisted	15,630	14,730	15,390	17,030	16,680
Number of families using SCCB	10,270	9,780	10,480	11,490	11,250
Average hours per week per child	34.2	34.4	34.0	34.7	34.8
Estimated SCCB entitlement (\$'000)	\$45,269	\$42,407	\$45,850	\$58,287	\$50,487

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Grandparent Child Care Benefit

In the December quarter 2017, 4,480 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 2016 to December quarter 2017

	Dec. 16	Mar. 17	Jun. 17	Sep. 17	Dec. 17
Number of children assisted	8,560	8,800	8,010	8,080	7,890
Number of families using GCCB	4,540	4,590	4,400	4,490	4,480
Average hours per week per child	36.8	37.8	36.2	36.3	35.8
Estimated GCCB entitlement (\$'000)	\$55,409	\$55,220	\$33,256	\$30,894	\$29,238

Source: Department of Education and Training administrative data.

Vacancies

Table 19 details the national trend in child care vacancies from the December quarter 2015 to the December quarter 2017 by service type.

Table 19: Child care vacancies by service type, December quarter 2015 to December quarter 2017

Service type	Dec. 15	Mar. 16	Jun. 16	Sep-16	Dec-16	Mar-17	Jun-17	Sep-17	Dec-17
Long Day Care									
Total number of services	6,804	6,862	6,932	7,027	7,051	7,145	7,184	7,256	7,349
Per cent services reporting	91%	92%	92%	92%	91%	90%	92%	89%	91%
Proportion with vacancies	88%	91%	91%	89%	89%	93%	92%	92%	91%
Average vacancies	77,440	110,510	106,650	91,980	87,610	122,570	113,560	103,000	98,850
Family Day Care									
Total number of services	792	794	823	849	819	794	757	712	668
Per cent services reporting	32%	30%	44%	42%	40%	37%	36%	36%	37%
Proportion with vacancies	90%	89%	87%	90%	91%	92%	94%	94%	92%
Average vacancies	7,520	7,180	9,270	11,640	9,990	8,940	9,030	8,370	7,190
Occasional Care									
Total number of services	115	111	110	110	110	106	106	106	106
Per cent services reporting	64%	59%	68%	71%	68%	72%	70%	64%	71%
Proportion with vacancies	54%	60%	56%	56%	56%	53%	55%	54%	57%
Average vacancies	420	510	460	470	430	600	470	410	520
Before and After School Hours Care									
Total number of services	6,981	7,177	7,331	7,324	7,306	7,502	7,583	7,554	7,530
Per cent services reporting	60%	58%	60%	80%	80%	79%	79%	76%	82%
Proportion with vacancies	92%	91%	92%	93%	94%	94%	94%	94%	95%
Average vacancies	119,040	105,750	117,550	187,600	194,800	188,400	197,390	195,210	215,810
Vacation Care									
Total number of services	2,139	2,648	2,734	2,812	2,907	2,707	2,770	2,831	2,811
Per cent services reporting	57%	55%	55%	60%	60%	58%	58%	57%	58%
Proportion with vacancies	64%	75%	70%	75%	68%	77%	67%	73%	69%
Average vacancies	34,100	33,410	30,510	42,920	43,930	39,360	31,670	40,330	37,350

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 December quarter 2017, vacancies for Long Day Care, Before and After School Hours Care, Occasional Care and Family Day Care are reported from 27 November to 3 December 2017. Vacancies for Vacation Care are reported from 2 October to 8 October 2017 for all States and Territories other than Qld. The Vacation Care reference week for Qld is 11 December to 17 December 2017 due to differences in 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 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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