

Every early childhood educator matters: Evidence for new early childhood workforce strategy in Australia ^[1]

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Excerpt from executive summary

The early childhood education and care (ECEC)¹ workforce is essential to Australia's economic and social prosperity. The day-to-day work of early childhood educators enhances young children's learning and development, and supports the productivity and wellbeing of Australian families. In Australia, close to 200,000 early childhood educators work in preschool, long day care, family day care, and school age care – and every educator has a valuable part to play in delivering quality ECEC services. The COVID-19 pandemic has further emphasised the importance of the ECEC workforce in the lives of Australian children and their families.

In December 2019, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Education Council agreed to develop a new national workforce strategy for ECEC. Many of Australia's state and territory governments are also implementing strategies to respond to the need for workforce reform. These efforts have been given renewed urgency by COVID-19, as it has reportedly caused many educators to consider leaving the sector, placing ongoing workforce supply at risk.

A coherent national approach to ECEC workforce development is necessary, to ensure that every Australian child and family has access to quality early learning. This paper draws on contemporary Australian research, to set out policy proposals for Australian governments to consider in developing and implementing the new national ECEC workforce strategy.

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