

Child care and early childhood education in Australia^[1]

Fact Sheet

Author: Baxter, Jennifer

Source: Australian Institute of Family Studies

Format: Fact sheet

Publication Date: 20 May 2015

AVAILABILITY

Fact Sheet available online^[2]

Description:

Child care and early childhood education hold a key place in the wellbeing of families and their local communities. They provide key opportunities for children's development and social engagement, and for enabling families to engage fully in the labour market, each of which is important in contributing to stronger families. This 2015 Families Week Facts Sheet presents information about the types of child care used by children in Australia, highlighting how arrangements change as children grow, and how they vary for families of different characteristics.

Different forms of child care are covered here. These include formal child care, which is provided predominantly through long day care and outside-school-hours care, and informal child care, in which families rely on grandparents or other relatives, friends, neighbours or nannies to care for their children.

Of relevance also is early childhood education, which many children attend in the year before full-time school (and sometimes earlier than this). This has been referred to as preschool here. The main objective of preschool is not child care, but to provide an early education for children, to help prepare them for school. It is included here as it may provide an alternative to child care for some families.¹ Throughout this Facts Sheet, the term "early childhood education or care" (ECEC) is used to encompass children's participation in both child care and early childhood education.

Key Facts

- There are very distinct patterns in the types of child care used and in early childhood education participation across ages of children.
- The predominant reasons for children attending ECEC are to enable parents to engage in paid employment, and to provide developmental or social opportunities for children.
- The time children spent in care varies according to the types of formal ECEC used, the reasons for care and ages of children.
- Children's participation in formal ECEC and informal care varies with parents' employment arrangements, varies for single parent versus two parent families and other family characteristics.
- Many children attend more than one form of care. Combining informal care with formal child care was most common for children aged 1 to 3 years.
- Grandparent-provided child care was the most common type of informal care.

Related link: Stay at home parents creching the daycare party^[3]

Region: Australia and New Zealand^[4]

Tags: affordability^[5]

funding^[6]

accessibility^[7]

federal programs^[8]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/15/05/child-care-and-early-childhood-education-australia>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/15/05/child-care-and-early-childhood-education-australia>^[2]

<https://aifs.gov.au/publications/child-care-and-early-childhood-education-australia>^[3] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/15/05/stay-home-parents-creching-daycare-party>^[4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/region/australia-and-new-zealand>^[5]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/affordability>^[6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/funding>^[7]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/accessibility>^[8] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/federal-programs>