

Australia

Population: 20 m. **Fertility rate:** 1.7. **GDP per capita:** USD 28 100. **Children under 6 years:** 1.5 million (ABS Population Estimate, June 2003).

Female labour force participation: In October 2005, 68.5% of women aged 15-64 years were in the labour force, 43.3% of whom were in part-time employment (male part-time: 13.3%).

Labour force participation rate of women with a child under 5 years: 16.2% are employed full-time, 35.5% part-time. (Australian Government, December 2005). (Data are not available for women with children under 6.)

Maternity and parental leave: In Australia, there is a statutory entitlement to 52 weeks of parental leave, starting from childbirth, but this leave is unpaid, unless employers agree to pay a salary or support sum. 30.6% of employees in their main job have access to maternity/paternity leave (26% of males and 36% of females) (ABS 6310.0). At the birth of a child, 38.8% of leave taken by women is unpaid leave and 32.2% is leave paid by employers. 5.9% of men take unpaid parental leave and 18.7% take paid parental leave (ABS 6254.0). National data on the duration of these leaves are not available. In addition to the statutory entitlement to parental leave, the Australian Government provides a Maternity Payment – a lump-sum payment of AUD 4 000 from 1 July 2006. The payment is non-means tested and is designed to assist with the costs associated with the birth or adoption of a child, including the loss of income while on unpaid maternity leave. Other financial support to assist with the costs of children is available through the means-tested payments Family Tax Benefit (Part A and Part B). For example, a single income family on low income (below AUD 33 361 per annum) having their first child may receive a maximum of around AUD 10 700 (combined Family Tax Benefit and Maternity Payment) in the child's first year of life.

Compulsory school age: c. 6 years.

Social expenditure: 18%. **Child poverty rate:** 14.7% (OECD average is 11.2 %).

Funding of pre-primary educational services (ISCED Level 0): 0.1% of GDP – 0.7% public and 0.3% private (OECD, *Education at a Glance 2005*), which is 1.7% of the education budget for 2.9% of educational enrolments (OECD, *Education at a Glance 2005*). (This percentage does not include expenditure on child care services or a substantial number of primary school students aged 5 years who are counted in ISCED Level 1 figures.) Australia spends 4.3% of GDP on primary, secondary and post-secondary (non-tertiary) institutions (OECD, *Education at a Glance, 2004*). Enrolments in pre-primary education institutions represent 4.4% of enrolments in all education institutions in Australia (2002). The Level 0 expenditure covers mainly children aged 3-5 years old who attend pre-school (called *kindergarten* in Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania). Australian National Accounts evidence (2002-03) indicated that expenditure on ECEC, including child care and pre-school by both public and private sources was 0.45% GDP.

Funding of services for children under 3: 0.45% of GDP – all private and public expenditure. In the case of long day care, almost all the public expenditure is via subsidies to parents.

Major service types and duration: *Family day care* (FDC) provided in the homes of caregivers, typically less than 10 hours per day. *Long-day child care centres* available for on average 11 hours daily for whole year. *Pre-schools or kindergartens:* normally available for 3-6 hours daily for the academic year. *Out-of-school care* (OSP) for children 6-12 years normally from 7:00-9:00 and 15:00 to 18:00 daily during school terms and 8:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday during school vacations.

Unit cost per child: Data on unit cost per child consistent with OECD definitions are not available for children aged 3-6.

Average costs to parents: for *child care* – parents assume on average 31% of costs for child care; for pre-school/kindergarten, 22% of costs; and for OSP for children 6-12 years: 35% of costs.

Legal entitlement to a free service: 5 or 6 years (depending on jurisdiction).

Rate of access to regulated services (percentages reported here include varied service durations): Children 0-1 year: 6.9%; 1-2 years: 26.3%; 2-3 years: 40%; 3-4 years: 61.5%; 4-5 years: 80.9%; 5-6 years: 27.6%; OSP for children 6-12 years: 14.2%.

Designation and qualifications of key staff: Long day care centres normally engage a certified *Group Leader* with a post-secondary (2 years) professional diploma for every group of 20-25 children. In addition to a Group Leader other staff may have diplomas, or certificates, or be unqualified. Kindergartens/pre-schools normally engage tertiary qualified *Teachers* with a 4-year undergraduate degree. Qualifications regulations vary across jurisdictions. Nationally, Australian Productivity Commission data (2004) reported 51.3% of staff in approved child care services had formal qualifications.

Overall percentage of qualified staff in services: Family day care: 26%; long day care: 55%; pre-school: 57%. Long day care centres require 1 qualified staff per 20-25 children (depending on the State).

Child-staff ratios (ranges reflect state variations): Family day care: 4-5:1 for children not in school, and 7-8:1 for school-aged children; long day care 0-2 years: 5 or 4:1; 2-3 years: 12 or 10:1; for children 3-5 years: 10-15:1; community pre-school/kindergarten classes for 3-5 years vary from 20 to 26:1 with variable teacher assistant presence; out-of-school provision for children 6-12 years: 11-15:1, but several States do not have regulations.

Maximum group size: A number of jurisdictions do not set maximum group sizes. Regulated family day care: 6; pre-school and kindergarten class sizes up to 30 children; OSP up to 35 children (depending on jurisdiction).

Auspices

Australian early childhood education and care (ECEC) has separate and layered auspices involving both federal and state governments. At federal government level, ECEC auspices are shared by the Department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) and the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). FaCSIA administers national child care policy and strategic direction in all types of ECEC programmes except schools and pre-schools. Child care is viewed partly as an issue of employment, providing a support to working parents with young children. It is also

understood as a developmental opportunity for children. FaCSIA oversees quality issues in long-day, family day and out-of-school hours care services by funding and supporting the National Child care Accreditation Council, which operates the Quality Assurance systems. All long-day, family day care and out-of-school hours care services take part in the quality assurance systems, involving a review of services every 2.5 years. The capacity of these quality assurance systems to achieve good quality services is often challenged by local evidence of poor service quality. However, the state and territory governments set the regulations and issue licenses for long day care services. Family day care services and out-of-school provision (OSP) are not regulated in all States.

DEST is responsible for formulating national policy in school and pre-school education, although school and pre-school provision is primarily in the control of the state and territory governments. DEST exerts influence through national agenda setting and funding. The national funding policy for financing government and non-government schools is based on maximising choice for parents and removing disincentives for schools to raise private income. The process has drawn strong criticism from some quarters for placing public schools, in terms of overall operating resources, at a disadvantage (see for example, Watson, 2004, "The Total Operating Resources of Australian Private Schools in 2004", Discussion Paper No. 4, Lifelong Learning Network). Within this funding regime, pre-school education is the responsibility of state and territory governments. DEST initiatives in the pre-school sector include Supplementary Recurrent Assistance (SRA). SRA provides supplementary per capita funding to education providers. The aim is to accelerate educational outcomes for Indigenous Australians, particularly in remote regions, beyond those which could reasonably be expected from mainstream and own-source funding alone, by focusing provider effort on the 8 Indigenous education priority areas of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). These are:

- Improving Indigenous literacy.
- Improving Indigenous numeracy.
- Increasing the employment of Indigenous Australians in education and training.
- Improving education outcomes for Indigenous students.
- Increasing Indigenous enrolments.
- Increasing the involvement of Indigenous parents/community members in education decision-making.
- Increasing professional development for staff involved in Indigenous education.
- Expanding culturally inclusive curricula.

Critics argue that Australia's complex and multi-layered system of policy development, funding and provision for ECEC may inhibit coordination, an issue also noted by the OECD review team in 2001. In response, various new administrative structures have been introduced to help unify ECEC issues nationally. At the federal level, an Australian Government task force has led co-ordination of early childhood issues, including ECEC, and has sponsored efforts to improve national coherence through the development of the National Agenda for Early Childhood. Many state governments have also established cross-agency working groups to oversee state early childhood initiatives. Education, child care and community services are administered through single departments in some States and separate departments in other States. Three States (New South Wales, Queensland, and Tasmania) have established Commissions for Children and Young People, giving high-level

authority to Commissioners to monitor the administration of policies and services, and to act in the interests of children and young people. Two additional States (Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory) have announced plans to have Children's Commissioners. The State of Victoria has recently established a Commissioner for Child Safety with a narrower remit.

Context

Labour force rates: Australian government data from 2001 indicated that the percentage of women with at least one child below six years who participated full-time in the labour force was 14.5% and part-time, 32.8%. The percentage of women with a child below 3 years who participated full-time was 11.6% and part-time, 30.8%. There was a 28% participation by lone mothers, of which 7% were in full-time employment. These percentages suggest that many children of working parents are cared for by relatives or informal carers during at least part of the day (see *Access and provision* below).

Parental leave: Parental leave in Australia is predominately unpaid. Employees, after twelve months of continuous employment with the same employer, are entitled to 52 weeks of unpaid leave, which can be shared between a mother and father at any ratio, but periods of leave cannot overlap. This is supported by a lump-sum Maternity Payment and means-tested family assistance payments. These "family payments" are provided to perform the function that maternity and parental leave do in other countries. In addition, around 30% of the workforce has access to employer funded paid maternity leave. Data on uptake and the percentage of remunerated salary are unavailable. However, the Australian Bureau of Statistics *Pregnancy and Work Survey*, as well as a study drawn from the Longitudinal Study of Australia's Children, will soon provide this information.

Access and provision

Operating hours and the annual duration of services vary according to service type. Services that open for a full day for the whole working year include regulated family day care, and centre-based ECEC. The services that open for sessional (short) hours for the academic year include, pre-school and accredited out-of-school care (during school terms). Public kindergarten classes operate for the length of the school day (normally 9:00-15:00) and year (40 weeks). School holiday programmes, run by private and community providers, offer care for the full day during breaks between school terms in all States and Territories.

Rates of provision

0-3 years: Based on 2002 ABS Population data, 46.8% of children aged 0-3 years are cared full-time by parents. 24.6% of 0-3 years spend at least part of their day in publicly licensed services while an estimated 36% are placed, for at least part of their day, in informal child care. Of infants (0-1 year) 6.9% are enrolled in licensed and regulated services; for 1-2 year-olds the proportion grows to 26.3%; for 2-3 year-olds: 40%.

3-4 years: Data on participation at 3-4 years vary substantially in the different States. In 2004, the Australian Productivity Commission reported 37.3% of children 0-5 years accessed child care services (2002-03). Almost two-thirds (61.5%) of the 3-4 year-olds in services are in licensed child care settings. Children in this age band may take part in more than one service type in a routine week. For example, some children attend sessional pre-school or kindergarten classes for some hours/days in the week and child care centres for other hours/days.

4-6 years: Wide variation exists across Australia in the age at which children access pre-school services. These services are generally attached to schools, use varied nomenclature (e.g. pre-school, kindergarten, reception), and operate for 5-6 hours daily, during each school term. For convenience, they are termed “pre-school” in this profile. The programmes that accept children one year prior to primary are free publicly funded provision in almost all of Australia. These programmes are also known by various terms in different parts of Australia, but are referred to here as “kindergarten” classes. The Australian Productivity Commission (2004), advising caution because of differing age criterion for access in different States, indicated that in 2002-03 some 83.5% of children attended funded pre-school in the year before they commenced school. For the same period, only 17% of children accessed pre-school programmes two years before they commenced school, this varying by jurisdiction.

Children with diverse needs

Children with disabilities: Of the population of children 0-4 years 3.77% have a reported disability. Data on the inclusion of this age group into ECEC services are not available. However, Australian Productivity Commission data (2004) report 2.3% of children 0-12 years with a disability access approved child care services.

Children from low-income families: The child poverty level in Australia is 14.7% after redistribution (OECD average is 11.2%). Data grouping 0-14 year-olds indicate in 2002 that 31.4% of children accessing child care services were from low-income families. Poverty is particularly marked in the Indigenous communities (in 2001, 2.4% of population).

Ethnic and bilingual children: 40% of the Indigenous population is under 15 years and life expectancy is nearly twenty years less than for the wider population. Representation of children from Indigenous background among children accessing child care services in 2002 varied across Australia, but was lower than overall Indigenous representation in the community. For example, 9.8% of the children who attended child care services in the Northern Territory (NT) were Indigenous whereas representation of Indigenous children in the NT population is 41.4%. ABS data (2001-02) indicate that in parallel, Indigenous children are over-represented in the child protection system. Incidence of Indigenous children being placed under care and protection orders is approximately six times higher than for non-Indigenous Australian children. Across jurisdictions, the proportion of Indigenous children attending pre-schools was broadly similar to their representation in the community.

Quality

Licensing and regulatory regimes: Different licensing and regulatory requirements apply in each State. State licensing with guaranteed annual health checks applies to family day care, crèche and centre-based care, and out-of-school care. These services are monitored also for quality through the national Quality Assurance system (normally every 2.5 years). Kindergarten/pre-school regulatory requirements (for 3-4 year-olds) vary even more widely than those in child care services. Some follow the monitoring and accounting processes used in public kindergarten services (generally for 5-year-olds) including registration and reviews, set curriculum standards, staff professional development and supervision. Others follow some of the requirements set for child care services, in particular licensing and annual health checks but do not take part in Quality Assurance.

Funding: Australian National Accounts evidence (2002-2003), published through the Australian Bureau of Statistics, indicate that expenditure on ECEC (including pre-school services) by both public and private sources is 0.45% of GDP. Sixty-six per cent of the expenditure is public funding for child care with 34% private spending (including parental). Parental contributions as a percentage of overall costs are reported to be 31% in child care and 22% in pre-school. Outside the school-based pre-school system, fees for ECEC services are set by the market. Fee support is available to over 98% of parents using child care services (both formal/approved and informal/registered) through Child Care Benefit (CCB). Low-income families receive a higher rate of CCB. In addition to CCB, the Australian government has announced the introduction of a 30% child care tax rebate for out-of-pocket expenses incurred by families using approved child care from 1 July 2004.

The Australian Productivity Commission (2004) indicated that in 2002-03, average expenditure by federal and state governments on children's services (including child care and pre-school), was AUD 650 (approx. USD 500/€380) per child (aged 0-12), varying in different States and Territories. Average state and territory government expenditure for the same range and type of services was less than USD 200/child (approx USD 140/€116), varying significantly by jurisdiction. For early education services, state governments normally fund the cost of one full-time year of school prior to Year One of primary. While all States have available a sessional pre-school year, this sessional pre-school year is free in some States while in others costs are only partially subsidised and parents pay fees.

Staffing: ECEC staffing varies according to the regulatory requirements of each State and Territory. In general, non-school services employ a mix of trained (often two-year vocational) and untrained staff. In family day care settings only 26% of carers have relevant formal qualification. In long day care services this figure is 55% and in pre-schools the derived estimate (excluding Tasmania) is 57%. In long day care centres, minimising staff costs to limit fee increases has worked against the employment of qualified staff whenever such staff are not a regulatory requirement. In some States, staff can be employed while in training for the minimum-level qualification. The estimated proportion of primary contact staff with qualifications in the system as a whole is 52.6%, a low percentage by OECD standards. School-linked pre-schools overseen by state education departments must employ fully trained teachers.

Training requirements: The minimum qualification required for teacher/child care group leader in care settings is a tertiary professional diploma. For trained assistants a post-secondary diploma is required. Qualification requirements for family day care staff (in addition to a First Aid Certificate) were only recently introduced. In school-linked pre-schools, the required qualification is an education degree (normally four years) but not necessarily with an early childhood specialisation in all States. Staff in child care settings who complete qualifications above minimum requirements frequently leave child care settings for employment in education-based ECEC services.

Work conditions: The percentage of part-time staff in ECEC settings is 27.5% for teachers/child care group leaders and 31% for trained assistants. Statutory working hours are 38 hours per week. There is neither a statutory requirement to fund a minimum level of staff development nor recommendations regarding annual hours of in-service training. The status of ECEC staff in non-school services is low. Compared with teachers in pre-schools and kindergarten classes, child care staff have longer contact hours (38 vs. approx 26 per week), greater responsibility, fewer holidays, less planning time and lower wages. Turnover rates

are high and difficulties in recruiting care staff are reported extensively, especially in rural and remote areas. Men are hardly represented in care services or pre-school.

Child-staff ratios: Ratios vary, depending on state regulations and type of service. In long day care, ratios are: 5:1 or 4:1 for children 0-2 years; 12:1 or 10:1 for children 2-3 years, and range between 10:1 and 15:1 for children 3-5 years. In family day care, ratios are 5:1 or 4:1 for children not yet in school and 8:1 or 7:1 for school children. In pre-school and kindergarten classes delivered by communities and education departments, child-staff ratios vary according to local jurisdiction with group sizes ranging from 20-26. Teachers have varied amounts of support from teacher-assistants. For out-of-school care provision some States do not have regulations. Those with regulations vary in ratio from 15:1 to 11:1. The maximum group size allowable varies widely according to service type and the State in which it functions. In centre-based ECEC services, maximum group size is 35. In regulated family day care services, maximum size is 6. Pre-school and kindergarten class sizes vary from 15-30. The staff in ECEC services are not necessarily qualified. In general, long day care centres (depending on the State) are required to have one qualified staff member for every group of children, which, for children aged 3-5, could be 20-25 children.

Curriculum and pedagogy: Regulation and processes surrounding curriculum and pedagogy divide according to type of setting. Child care settings participating in Quality Assurance (all long day care, family day care, out-of-school care services) are required to provide a “developmentally appropriate” programme. There is no prescribed curriculum. Some States have a curriculum framework that is mandatory for pre-school aged children in centre-based child care services although normally, pre-school programmes located in child care centres are not required to follow a prescribed curriculum. In pre-school and kindergarten settings, the States and Territories have separate curriculum frameworks and guidelines. The most common provision is a detailed curriculum guideline for 3- to 5- or 4- to 6-year-olds. The framework in South Australia is designed to cover programmes for children 0-18 years. Most guidelines address socio-emotional, physical, cultural, cognitive and linguistic areas of development and include attention to early literacy and numeracy development. Play-based pedagogy is the most common recommended approach. Some recent curriculum guidelines articulate outcomes and are designed to link with the outcomes-based school education curriculum of early primary.

Monitoring, evaluation and research: Reference has already been made to licensing and regulation regimes, and to the Quality Assurance accreditation process. In addition, the role of parents is viewed as central to quality monitoring of all ECEC services, although critics suggest that parents may not always have the required knowledge or time, or choose to engage in this way with services.

National monitoring and reporting is targeted on the overall development, health and well-being of Australian children. The Australian Productivity Commission, through regular reviews of government services, provides coordinated information about child care and pre-school services in each State/Territory, and for the nation, based on existing data sets. A national minimum data set on Children’s Services (0-12), focused on usage, provider and service-type statistics is under development and will help further identify ECEC provision when adopted. A focus of current national effort has been the creation of an Australian-relevant evidence base about child outcomes and effective prevention and early intervention approaches during early childhood. The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) was initiated in 2004. One wave of data has been collected and made

available to researchers. In addition, the federal government is developing and testing an Australian Early Development Index for its usefulness as a community-level measure of children's development. Considerable national effort is going into evaluation of early childhood interventions at both state and federal levels. There is an active body of professional researchers in Australia with expertise in early childhood who are increasingly contributing to ECEC policy and service delivery.

Parent and community involvement: The current phase of the federal government's Stronger Families and Communities Strategy (SFCS) has a major focus on improving early childhood outcomes through engaging stronger community involvement and improving service delivery in disadvantaged communities. The National Agenda encompasses the importance of supporting parents in their child-rearing role, attention to maternal and child health, and building child-friendly communities. Under the SFCS, for example, there is a project establishing the information needs and preferences of parents to guide the way information about child development and parenting is targeted to parents. A new National Parenting Information Website is being developed in response to consultations from this project. Quality Assurance also fosters family involvement through encouraging family members to participate in the planning, programming and operation of child care services. Further evidence is being gathered on the needs and service experiences of parents in their child's early years. State and territory governments also support parent and community involvement through a variety of initiatives.

OECD policy issues

Among the issues for policy attention identified in 2001 by the OECD review team for Australia were:

- *Understandings of childhood and early education:* ECEC in Australia reveals a range of beliefs and policy directions depending on government philosophy, the government department or administrative body in charge, type of setting and community perception. It was felt that a clearer vision (including a strategy framework) of Australian ECEC policy should be elaborated, drawing from the views and interests of children, families, communities, professionals and researchers across the States and Territories.
- *System coherence and co-ordination:* Currently, real limitations on system coherence are imposed in Australia by the complexities of government in a federation of states, and the multi-layering of administration and regulation. Other difficulties arise from the vastness of the territory and the dispersion of populations.
- *Quality issues:* It was felt that the low pay, low status and training levels of ECEC staff undermine quality, and may counterbalance the investments governments are making in the sector, despite state regulation and national monitoring of quality through a Quality Assurance system. In addition, attention was drawn to the poorer work conditions experienced by staff in the early childhood child care sector, compared to other education sectors.
- *Training and status of ECEC staff:* The OECD team suggests that firmer regulations about the numbers of *trained* staff to be employed by long day centres and family day care would help to improve the quality of their services, and that comprehensive in-service training at a range of levels for staff in this sector is a necessity.

- *Children with special educational needs*: Poverty and early education issues arise most acutely with regard to Indigenous children. The determined targeting of resources by recent governments towards Indigenous educational, economic, and health programmes is acknowledged. The key to the success of the new Indigenous programmes will be their respectful approach to issues of self-determination, cultural ownership, and for some, language. In addition to Indigenous children, children with special needs such as children with a disability, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are target groups for support by Australian Government programmes. Inclusion of these children is critical to a positive and equitable child care environment.

Developments

Over recent years, ECEC has been viewed as a competitive market service in Australia. Government funding of ECEC provision includes both public and non-government sector services (Australian Government funding is through subsidies to parents not to service providers). More recently, corporate, profit-based child care providers have listed on the stock exchange and currently occupy a significant place in the Australian child care sector. With few exceptions, direct operational subsidies to community, non-profit services were removed under a “level playing field” strategy in 1996 and 1998, although Indigenous and other special services, including family day care, retain subsidies.

In the education sector there is a major emphasis on learning outcomes, with national attention to literacy and numeracy skills, seen as vital for labour market participation. The commitment of the States to furthering an outcomes-based approach is evident through state funding of state authorities to engage in the development of curricula and quality standards.

Growing recognition of the importance of ECEC is evident in *The National Agenda for Early Childhood* (DFCS, 2004). The consultations with all levels of government and the non-government sector surrounding the development of the National Agenda revealed strong support for early learning and care as one of four action areas to improve outcomes for Australian children. Achieving greater national consistency in early childhood education and care systems has been recognised in the National Agenda document as a key objective. The National Agenda highlights the need for development of a skilled and knowledgeable workforce as a key consideration for ensuring an effective and sustainable early childhood system. The National Agenda has been endorsed by the Australian Government and is with States and Territories for their endorsement. Once endorsed, collaborative cross-government projects will be developed under the auspices of the National Agenda.

Austria

Population: 8.17 m. **Fertility rate:** 1.39. **GDP per capita:** USD 28 900. **Children under 6 years:** 487 000.

Female labour force participation: 63.5% of women (15-64) participate, 29.6% of whom are in part-time employment (male part-time is 3.7%) (OECD in *Figures*, 2004).

Labour force participation rate of women with a child under 6 years: 30% (Statistics Austria 2002/03).

Maternity and parental leave: 16 weeks of maternity leave paid at 100% of earnings. 3 years with funded benefit.

Average duration of parental leave: Not available.

Compulsory school age: 6 years.

Social expenditure: 26% GDP Child poverty rate: 10.2% GDP (UNICEF, 2005) after taxes and transfers (OECD average is 11.2%).

Funding of pre-primary educational services: 0.55% of GDP, 9% of education budget with 14% of education enrolments.

Funding of services for children under 3: Not available but very low. Less than 10% of children in licensed services.

Unit cost per child is USD 6 169 (OECD, *Education at a Glance*, 2005).

Average costs to parents: 20% maximum of service costs.

Legal entitlement to a free service: 5 years, but places in kindergarten are generally available from 3 years.

Major service types and duration: *Tagesmütter* or family day care; some few *Krippen* (crèches – in Vienna mainly) provide centre-based care for children 0-3, available for approx. 10 hours per day; *Kindergartens* provide programmes for 3- to 6-year-olds with over half of the centres offering all-day programmes; *Hort* are after-school day care centres (OSP), generally open before and after school – at 7:00 and up to 18:00; *Kindergruppen* (parent-toddler and playgroups – mainly in West Austria) are organised by parents as private initiatives, mostly offering a half-day (playgroups) or a full-day (parent-toddler groups) programme; *mixed age day care facilities* run as full-day kindergartens: in this type of service, children under the age of 3 may make up to a maximum one-third of the children.

Rate of access to regulated services: Children 0-3 years: 8.9%. Children 3-6 years: 80%. OSP for children 6-12 years: not available.

Designation and qualifications of key staff: *Kindergartenpädagoginnen* or kindergarten pedagogues are the main staff in kindergartens, while in crèches and *Hort*, *Erzieherinnen* are the majority staff. Over 60% of staff in both kindergartens and crèches have a professional diploma.