

<b>Child Care Co-ordinator</b>		<b>South Australia</b>
<b>ASCO Code:</b> 1295-11	February 2008	
<b>Labour market rating</b>	Shortage	
<b>Comment</b>		

### **Occupational demand**

Around 70 per cent of child care co-ordinators are employed in the child care services industry with a further 28 per cent employed in preschool and primary education. In the year to the November quarter 2007, employment in the child care services industry group increased by nine per cent. There has been a significant expansion in employment in this industry over recent years as indicated by an increase in the number of child care centres in the State. According to the SA Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS), there were 322 licensed child care centres operating across the State in December 2007 compared to 304 a year ago. This represents a six per cent increase. Additionally, DEEWR's Skilled Vacancies Index data show that newspaper advertisements for child care co-ordinators increased by over 20 per cent in 2007 following strong growth rates in the previous two years.

### **Occupational supply**

Child care coordinators have usually completed a diploma in children's services or a degree in early childhood education. Students completing relevant university degrees do not necessarily enter the child care labour market and therefore it is not possible to obtain a reliable measure of supply from this source. Prior to working as child care coordinators, it is likely that a significant proportion worked in the industry as child care workers. Current State award classification and pay structures determine that only persons with a Diploma in Children's Services, or an equivalent qualification recognised by licensing authorities, may be classified as a Children's Services Professional, or in other words, a 'qualified' child care worker. The number of persons commencing relevant diploma studies increased strongly over the three years to 2006, although the drop-out rate is relatively high. Nonetheless, the supply of child care workers with diploma level qualifications has been steadily improving, with 75 completions in 2006, the highest annual level recorded to date. DEEWR projections suggest that there were around 100 completions in 2007.

### **Employer and industry comments/current labour market**

A survey of employers who recently advertised for child care coordinators indicated that 27 per cent of positions were filled within six weeks, compared with the vacancy filled rate of 80 per cent recorded in 2006. Each vacancy attracted an average of four applicants compared with three in 2006. However, the average number of applicants considered to be suitable for employment was one per vacancy, compared with 1.4 in 2006. The main reason for rejecting unsuitable job applicants was lack of suitable qualifications (that is, a diploma), while lack of relevant experience was also a significant factor. Most contacts agreed that the occupation of child care coordinator is relatively poorly paid, especially given the level of responsibility required, workload and when compared with the occupations of early learning and primary school teaching. Consequently, the occupation is affected by high staff turnover and occupational wastage.

### **Labour market outlook**

Demand for child care services is expected to remain strong and this is reflected in the rising number of government-funded places in early childhood education and care in 2007-08. Although training commencements (Diploma in Children's Services) is rising, the high drop-out rate and continuing high levels of occupational wastage are likely to result in fewer child care workers entering the industry. These trends will have a flow-on impact on the availability of suitably qualified and experienced staff to fill positions as child care coordinators. Therefore, the labour market for child care co-ordinators is expected to remain in shortage over the next twelve months.