

Child Care Worker	Australian Capital Territory (ACT)
ASCO Code: 6312-11	January 2008
Labour market rating	Shortage
Comment	

Occupational demand

Most child care workers are employed in the Health and Community Services industries. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census data show this is a small occupation in the ACT with an employment size of approximately 1600 in 2006. Demand for workers with a Diploma In Children's Services appears to outstrip supply and the National Children's Services Workforce Study July 2006 reported that over 80 per cent of vacancies were filled by obtaining exemptions for unqualified staff. This is higher than the nationwide average of slightly less than 30 per cent. DEEWR Skilled Vacancies Index data show there was a slight decrease in the number of advertised vacancies for this occupation over the year to September 2007.

Occupational supply

ABS Education and Work data show nationally 19 per cent of child care workers hold Advanced Diplomas or Diplomas, and 18 per cent have a Certificate III or IV. Around 45 per cent of child care workers do not have post school qualifications. In the ACT only those child care workers with either a two year Diploma in Community Services (children's services) or equivalent, or an accredited tertiary course in early childhood care or education are considered to be qualified. They are referred to as Level 4 children's services employees. There are a number of providers for this qualification in the ACT, including the Canberra Institute of Technology, Access, ISA, Optimum and Train to Work. Department of Immigration and Citizenship net migration data show there has been a net gain of around 13 self identified child care workers entering the ACT each year between 2003-04 and 2006-07. Occupational wastage is an issue for the industry with the National Children's Services Workplace Study (2006) reporting that childcare workers in the ACT stay in the occupation less than seven years on average.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A survey of employers who had recently advertised for child care workers found that nearly 60 per cent of vacancies were filled within four weeks, the same as the fill rate recorded nationwide in mid 2007. Employers reported that it was difficult to recruit childcare workers and overall on average there were slightly more than two applicants per vacancy, 35 per cent of applicants were considered to be suitable and less than one applicant per vacancy was deemed suitable.

Employers commented on the difficulty finding qualified child care workers. A number of centres applied for exemptions to take on workers with lower qualifications, mostly certificate IIIs, who were enrolled in a course for their diploma. There are licensing requirements in the ACT that specify that one in every two employees must be a qualified child care worker, and this means candidates who have the qualification are able to pick and choose positions.

Labour market outlook

There is no evidence to suggest the labour market rating for child care workers will change over the next six months.