

Child Care Coordinator	Western Australia
ASCO Code: 1295-11	March 2008
Labour market rating:	Shortage
Comment	

Occupational demand

There is a strong demand for qualified workers in the childcare industry. The industry is heavily regulated and there is a pre-determined ratio of staff to children. The childcare centre is divided into rooms and each room has a set number of children in a specific age group who are allowed to attend the centre. Each room is required to have a person with the qualification of Diploma in Children's Services to run the room. They can be assisted by an unqualified person but they must abide by the prescribed ratio of qualified staff. Some centres employ people with a Degree in Early Childhood Education, but they cannot work in any room that is for children six weeks to three years old. The most critical need for all centres is for Diploma qualified staff. It is from this group that the coordinators are drawn after they have gained experience in the workplace.

Occupational supply

In 2007 there were 915 people who completed training in the Diploma in Children's Services, however this was 133 fewer than completions in 2006. Employers suggest there is no shortage of people entering the childcare industry, but the attrition rate is high creating strong demand. It is a female dominated industry which offers relatively low wages and long hours. People with entry level qualifications or without qualifications work under the supervision of the Diploma qualified person as a room cannot be opened without this person in attendance. This results in high demand within the industry for these employees. Training providers reported that many young women entering the industry had very little understanding of how demanding the role is and they leave soon after completing their courses. The rapid turnover of staff means the number of people who move through the system and gain the experience needed to become a coordinator remains low.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

In a recent Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations survey of employers who had recently advertised, less than 15 per cent of vacancies were filled. There was less than one suitable applicant per vacancy and a number of vacancies remained unfilled because suitable applicants could not come to an agreement on either salary or conditions with employers. Almost half of the advertisements did not attract any suitable applicants. Many applicants were considered to be unsuitable because they lacked formal qualifications or the required experience with certain age groups. Most centres are managed by people with a Diploma level qualification and several years of experience. Employers pointed out that they view a Diploma qualified person with experience as a coordinator and experience allows the expansion of the role from a room manager to that of a centre. Employers mentioned that should a fully qualified person apply for a position they would normally be offered the job because of the current shortage of experienced coordinators. Some centres use administration staff to carry out the non-childcare tasks such as fee collection and meeting statutory obligations, freeing up Diploma qualified staff to run the childcare aspects of the centre.

Labour market outlook

There will continue to be a shortage of qualified child care co-ordinators as there is an increasing demand for childcare places. Relatively low wages and high turnover of staff mean that the shortage of qualified people will persist.