

Child Care Worker	Western Australia
ASCO Code: 6312-11	March 2008
Labour market rating:	Shortage
Comment	

Occupational demand

There is a strong demand for qualified child care workers in the child care industry. The industry is regulated as there is a pre-determined ratio of staff to children. The childcare centres are divided into rooms and each room has a set number of children in a specific age group. 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. Most centres require that the assistants have Certificate III level in Children's Services. Employers report the greatest need for centres is Diploma qualified staff.

Occupational supply

In 2007 over 280 people completed the Certificate III in Childcare Services and 915 completed the Diploma in Children's Services. ABS Education and Work data show nationally 19 per cent of child care workers have Advanced Diplomas or Diplomas, and 18 per cent have a Certificate III or IV.

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship net migration data indicate supply to Children's Care Workers (includes child care worker) from overseas migration has been minimal averaging 16 persons per year over the past four years.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A survey of employers who had recently advertised for child care workers showed 33 per cent of vacancies were filled within six weeks of advertising. There were 2.2 applicants per vacancy of whom 0.5 per vacancy were considered by employers to be suitable. Almost half of the advertisements did not attract suitable applicants even after repeated advertising.

All employers surveyed said that it is very difficult to find people qualified to Diploma level and the centres cannot operate without them. Employers who were also training providers reported that many people entering the occupation had little understanding of the demands of this occupations and leave the industry soon after completing their courses. Employers reported that many applicants for positions are unsuitable because they lack formal qualifications or the required experience with particular groups of children. Some employers mentioned they would recruit any qualified child care worker who was available to enable them to meet required staffing ratios.

Labour market outlook

Relatively low wages and high staff turnover mean the shortage of qualified people is likely to continue.