

<b>Child Care Worker</b>	<b>Queensland</b>
<b>ASCO Code:</b> 6312-11	February 2008
<b>Labour market rating</b>	Shortage
<b>Comment:</b>	

### **Occupational demand**

Child care workers care for the social, emotional, physical and educational needs of infants and young children in various care settings. The two occupations listed under this code include group leaders, who plan activities and provide care to enable positive developmental outcomes, and child care assistants, who work towards the same goals under the direct supervision of a group leader. Demand for child care workers has grown in line with Queensland's growing population, rising levels of female participation in the labour force along with the subsequent increases in child care services needed to support that growth.

### **Occupational supply**

Queensland's *Child Care Act 2002* and *Child Care Regulation 2003* outline the qualification requirements for staff members of child care services in this State. People working in child care services are also required to have a current positive prescribed notice (Blue Card) which is available through the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian. Entry as a child care assistant requires completion of, or enrolment in, a 12-month course in early childhood or child care studies from a higher education institution or a Certificate in Children's Services. Group leaders must complete a two-year qualification in early childhood or child care studies or a Diploma of Children's Services. Data from Queensland's Department of Education, Training and the Arts show that supply from training has not increased with demand, with the combined intake of child care students averaging 1130 per annum since 2000. Historically, wastage from training has been approximately 40 per cent therefore 700 newly qualified child care workers have entered the labour market each year over the time period.

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

This year, 44 per cent of surveyed vacancies for child care workers were filled within six weeks of advertising. Employers regarded two thirds of the applicants as unsuitable because they lacked experience or qualifications, or they were unwilling to study. The regulation of the industry has ensured that group leaders attain their qualifications prior to employment but employers are demanding applicants with experience. Employment opportunities are therefore limited for full-time Diploma graduates. Of the two occupations, employers had greater difficulties recruiting group leaders but reported difficulties retaining staff at all levels. They ascribed the low retention rate to low remuneration, staff burn-out and study pressures. In an effort to attract and retain workers, a number of employers have instituted internal training and promotion strategies. Surveyed employers this year did not consider overseas recruitment as a viable option for aiding supply as they consider sponsorships too costly and they were seeking applicants to commence immediately. Respondents agreed that while wastage and turnover are significant factors impacting on supply, they attribute much of the current shortages to the growing number of child care centres opening across the State.

### **Labour market outlook**

Queensland's steady population and employment growth is expected to continue. According to the Department of Communities, the average number of child care services in Queensland has increased by 9.4 per cent each year since 2003. If this trend continues, it is anticipated that an additional 230 services will come into operation over the next 12 months and demand for child care workers will respond accordingly. Based on this study however, the current supply of child care workers is below demand and unless supply through training or immigration improves or retention rates recover, the shortages are will continue.