



Inspire the future.

Choose a career in early childhood.

About this guide

Working in early childhood is life-changing. You can make a difference and be a positive influence in shaping young lives.

This guide gives you information on the types of opportunities available in the early childhood sector, the qualifications needed and the wide range of roles available – from working directly with children to supervising teams of educators.

Start your new career

“This job suits anybody who wants to make a difference in a family’s life.” Cassie Bell – Service Manager, Lady Gowrie Child Centre

It’s a great time to start a career in early childhood. The sector is expanding and those with the right qualifications are in demand.

The National Quality Framework means that approved early childhood qualifications are recognised across Australia and in many cases graduates can work anywhere in the country. Studying for an approved qualification may also mean you can learn while you earn if you are working at an early childhood education and care service.

National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework regulates early childhood education and care services across Australia to ensure that children receive consistently high quality education and care.

It recognises the importance of play-based learning as an essential part of children’s development and has a quality standard to ensure better educational and development outcomes for children.

Areas you can work in

Around 32,000 people are employed in more than 2,800 approved early childhood services across Queensland.

“Every day is different. You explore what the children are interested in.” Sue Eadie – Early Childhood Teacher, Kindy Kapers Early Learning Centres

With a qualification in early childhood, you can work in different early childhood settings – from large, privately-owned organisations, community-based or not-for-profit services, to services located on school grounds. You can also provide family day care from your own home.

Your role could vary depending on the type of service you work in and your qualifications. You can work directly with children or in a range of support, leadership or management roles.

Service types

Long day care

- Centre-based setting with over 1,450 services in Queensland
- Provide education and care for children from birth to school age
- May offer an approved kindergarten program or outside school hours care for school-aged children
- Generally operate for at least 10 hours a day, Monday to Friday.

Kindergarten

- Centre-based setting with over 500 services across Queensland
- Provide structured, play-based education and care programs in the year before Prep
- Led by a qualified early childhood teacher
- Usually operate during school hours for 6 hours a day.

Family day care

- Operate in the private homes of registered educators as part of an approved scheme
- Provide flexible education and care
- Cater for children from birth to school age
- Can also provide before and after school care for school-aged children
- Educators are monitored and supported by family day care coordinators.

Outside school hours care

- Operate in schools, community centres and youth clubs
- Provide play and leisure-based programs for school-aged children before and after school, during school holidays and on pupil-free days.

Leadership, management and support

A qualification in early childhood opens up a wide range of opportunities in leadership, management and support roles.

You can be a coordinator, director or manager of an early childhood service or several services, and be responsible for planning, managing and coordinating the running of the service, including staffing and resources.

You could also use your early childhood qualifications and experience to:

- provide specialised support for children with additional needs in early childhood services
- work in government to regulate and monitor early childhood services, or develop and implement early childhood policy
- teach early childhood at a training organisation or higher education institution.

Qualifications you will need

The approved levels of early childhood qualifications are:

- Certificate III educator
- Diploma level educator
- Early childhood teacher.

Certificate III level educator

You need to: hold or be studying towards an approved certificate III qualification at a registered training organisation.

Study time: 6 to 12 months full-time.

With an approved Certificate III, you'll provide education and care to a group of children and plan and develop educational programs.

You could:

- become an educator in a long day care or kindergarten service
- become a family day care educator
- work in an outside school hours care service (youth work, health, sport and recreation, or community services qualifications are also eligible).

Diploma level educator

You need to: hold or be studying towards an approved diploma at a registered training organisation or university.

Study time: 1 to 2 years full-time.

With an approved diploma, you could:

- support children's learning and development in a long day care and kindergarten service where you'll design, plan, implement

and evaluate the service's educational program, supervise other educators and engage with parents and the community

- become a family day care coordinators where you'll support the educators and manage the standards across a family day care scheme
- work in an outside school hours care service (youth work, health, sport and recreation, or community services qualifications are also eligible).

If you already hold a diploma, you can do further study to become an early childhood teacher. You may be given credit for subjects you have already completed.

Early childhood teacher

You need to: hold or be studying towards an approved early childhood teaching qualification at university, usually a bachelor degree in early childhood. Some universities offer alternative entry for those who have been working for a number of years or don't have formal secondary school or tertiary qualifications.

Study time: 4 years full-time, with some flexible options available such as online study.

Your qualifications will be in demand as all centre-based services with children under school age need to employ or have access to a qualified early childhood teacher.

As an early childhood teacher, you will:

- work with children (and their parents) in a centre-based service to support their learning and development
- plan and deliver the educational program
- supervise and mentor other educators or manage the day-to-day running of the service (depending on the service).

Already teaching or have a degree?

Registered primary teachers can upgrade their qualifications by completing an approved diploma or higher qualification in early childhood. The Early Childhood Teacher Bridging Program can help by recognising existing knowledge and skills from a primary teaching degree.

If you have a degree in an unrelated field or in secondary education and wish to become an early childhood teacher, you can complete an approved postgraduate qualification in early childhood.

Approved qualifications

Early childhood services have to employ staff who hold or are studying towards an approved qualification so they comply with the National Quality Framework.

All approved qualifications are listed on the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority's (ACECQA) website at www.acecqa.gov.au.

Before you enrol in a course, check that it is on this list of approved qualifications. It is also a good idea to confirm with your education institution that the course you wish to study is approved.

If you have a qualification from overseas, contact ACECQA to see if it is recognised here in Australia.

More information

Visit earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/inspirethefuture to find out more about careers in early childhood.