

Early Childhood Education and Care sector:

Guide to Workforce Planning

This guide can be used in conjunction with the Workforce Plan template.



Why have a Workforce Plan?

How would my service benefit from having a Workforce Plan?

The purpose of Workforce Planning is not to decide what an organisation will do in the future, it is about determining what the organisation can do now to be best prepared for the future. To maximise the benefits of workforce planning, it should be integrated into the organisation's strategic planning.

Workforce Planning will assist the organisation to have the right people, at the right time and place, with the skills and knowledge to implement appropriate practices to achieve the organisation's goals. Along with the strategic plan, the workforce plan will guide the organisation to ensure the workforce is ready to respond to any changes in the early childhood education environment. The workforce plan should be regularly reviewed as changes and challenges occur.

Effective Workforce Planning will assist in ensuring that an early childhood service has qualified, capable, skilled and confident educators now and into the future to address challenges as they arise and enable the long-term sustainability of the workforce in the early childhood service. It is important for an early childhood provider to understand educator supply and demand and be able to implement effective workforce planning to meet current and future workforce needs.

Workforce planning involves planning for the people, the staff, who will enable the early childhood service to deliver quality early childhood education and care for children, families and the community it serves. Similar to business planning, it is a continuous process of identifying the current and existing skills within the workforce, the desired future skills, workforce gaps, and the strategies and actions to close those gaps. These strategies and actions can include, but not be limited to training, professional development, recruitment, attraction and retention strategies.

A good Workforce Plan will document a solid understanding of the current workforce and how to prepare the workforce for the future.

What would my Workforce Plan look like?

Workforce planning involves five steps:

1. Define the organisation's Goals, Mission Statement or Philosophy.
2. Know the current workforce — who they are, what skills they have, where they are located and what their plans are. Consider the staff schedule and performance appraisals.
3. Consider the future workforce requirements to align with minimum legislative requirements.
4. Analyse and develop strategies and actions to fill any identified workforce gaps.
5. Implement, monitor and review the workforce plan to make ensure it is implemented.

Where do I start?

What is the current organisation's Goals, Mission Statement and Philosophy?

The goals, mission statement and service philosophy will provide guidance on the service's key objectives and intended outcomes. It is important to consider the intended outcomes of the service when developing the Workforce Plan. Staffing ratios, qualifications, wellbeing, capability and skills affect the way in which an ECEC workforce educate and care for children.

Who will be developing the Workforce Plan?

Workforce planning should be a collaborative process involving all staff, and possibly led by the Approved Provider.

Regardless of the size of the workforce, it is important that workforce planning is considered at both the Approved Provider level and at an individual ECEC service level. Localised input to service level workforce planning is imperative to success and ensures plans are tailored to each service's needs and context.

What workforce information do you already have?

What workforce information can you collect relatively easily? For example staff schedules and performance appraisals. It is important to consider roles, functions and skill sets when workforce planning to best understand what the service is doing well and what areas could be developed.

What is the best way to communicate to the workforce and stakeholders?

It is important to remember that workforce planning does not need to be complicated, but it does require thought and engagement with the staff.

Areas to consider when developing your Workforce Plan

1. Supply and Demand

- What does the current staff structure look like?
- Are there employees with a long tenure?
- Working preferences – would the employees prefer to work full-time, part-time or on a casual basis?
- Do you have an induction program for new employees?
- What are industry challenges?
- Are you likely to have future workforce shortages?
- What internal and external factors will or may impact on the future workforce demand?
- What are the legislative requirements?
- Do you have staff who are at higher risk of leaving and what are our risk mitigation strategies?

2. Attraction

- How can you promote and value the early childhood education and care profession within the service and amongst our network/region/cluster?
- Consider the salary and conditions to attract staff to the service and how these will be advertised.
- How do you promote diversity in the workforce?
- How do you form trusting and respectful relationships with Higher Education Institutions and Registered Training Organisations to support the current staff with their study pathways and attract potential staff for the future?

Also consider:

- what are other early childhood services offering to attract staff; and
- the types of benefits you can offer to current and potential employees as a point of difference.

3. Retention

- Consider what have the staff told the employer about what would support them to stay employed at the service.
- Consider the salary and conditions to retain staff.
- What does the service do to foster employment stability, continuity and reliability?
- Does the service offer additional study leave to support career pathways for staff?
- Are flexible work arrangements available for staff at the early childhood service?
- How does the service enable educators to transition into different roles in the service or across the sector, while supporting educator career progression and the priorities for early childhood education and care locally?

- Does the service conduct regular performance and career aspiration reviews for each staff member to examine opportunities to inspire the staff member e.g. leadership/higher level opportunities.

4. Succession Planning

- How does the service ensure and plan for succession planning to identify the replacement of employees who may be retiring or phasing their exit, resigning or taking extended leave such as long service leave, practicum placement, parental leave, carer's leave?
- Are regular conversations held with staff to discuss their performance and succession planning as part of promotional/leadership opportunities?
- Is there a pool of qualified and skilled staff available that the service can employ when staff need to take extended leave/unplanned leave?
- Are study days offered to staff to support their qualification completion and career progression?
- Are staff supported to upskill?

5. Capability

- How does the service support educators to upskill to become qualified?
- What are the strengths and development needs of the current workforce? How does the service document and address strengths and areas of need?
- What does the employer need from the workforce, in terms of number of staff, qualifications, skills and capabilities to deliver outcomes now and over time E.g. the next one, two, three and four-plus years?
- How does the service enhance professional development and capability building, offer quality on-the-job training experiences, provide contemporary equipment and resources to upskill and promote leadership opportunities?

6. Wellbeing

Initiatives to retain employees and support their wellbeing do not need to be complicated or expensive, but employees need to be actively supported by senior management and the strategies need to also be directed to address employee attraction, retention and sustainability.

- How does the employer support the health and wellbeing of the staff and provide experiences and resources to optimise their time at work and create work life balance?
- Does the service have wellbeing policies for staff at the service?
- What is the employer offering the staff to ensure a quality work environment?
- How does the employer celebrate and recognise the accomplishment of team organisational goals and personal achievements of employees?
- Is there a process that the service uses to enable staff to contribute to new ideas and develop innovation in the workplace?
- Is the employer able to offer employee assistance, wellness and health programs for employees?
- Are staff aware of the wellbeing initiatives available at the service?

7. Continuous Improvement

It is important for all stakeholders in the service to regularly review the workforce plan to ensure it is relevant and current.

Each area of the workforce plan should give consideration to issues that have been identified, actions to address the issue, measures to ensure the issue is addressed, due dates to hold the service accountable and progress notes to ensure continuous improvement. The employer may wish to consider the following questions:

- How will the employer implement improvement strategies?
- Does the employer conduct individual performance reviews to ensure workforce planning accommodates employees career goals, and wellbeing at work?

- How often is the Workforce Plan reviewed?
- What is the review process?
- How is the review process documented?
- How are actions measured?

National Quality Framework

Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations

As part of determining the supply and demand considerations of an early childhood service's workforce needs, legislative requirements need to be examined and incorporated into a workforce plan to ensure compliance with the *Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations*.

Current legislative requirements state that ratios are calculated across the service as long as the ratio for each age range is maintained and adequate supervision is maintained at all times.

National Regulations

Regulation 123 - Educator to child ratios—centre-based services

(1) The minimum number of educators required to educate and care for children at a centre-based service is to be calculated in accordance with the following ratios—

- (a) for children from birth to 24 months of age—1 educator to 4 children;
- (b) for children over 24 months and less than 36 months of age—1 educator to 5 children;
- (c) for children aged 36 months of age or over (not including children over preschool age)—1 educator to 11 children;
- (d) for children over preschool age, 1 educator to 15 children.

Regulation 126 - Centre-based services—general educator qualifications

(1) The qualification requirements for educators at a centre-based service educating and caring for children preschool age or under are as follows—

(a) at least 50 per cent of the educators who are required to meet the relevant educator to child ratios for the service must have, or be actively working towards, at least an approved diploma level education and care qualification; and

(b) all other educators who are required to meet the relevant educator to child ratios for the service must have, or be actively working towards, at least an approved certificate III level education and care qualification.

(1A) The qualification requirements in subregulation (1)(b) do not apply to an educator if the educator has been employed by an approved provider on a probationary basis for not more than 3 months, at one or more centre-based services operated by the approved provider.

(1B) Subregulation (1A) does not apply in relation to New South Wales.

(2) The qualification requirements for educators at a centre-based service educating and caring for children over preschool age in a jurisdiction are the qualification requirements (if any) set out in Chapter 7 for that jurisdiction.

(3) If Division 5 requires an early childhood teacher to be in attendance at a centre-based service, that teacher, or a person taken to be an early childhood teacher under regulation 135(1), is to be counted as meeting the requirements of subregulation (1)(a).

(4) If Division 5 requires a second early childhood teacher or a suitably qualified person to be in attendance at a centre-based service, that person, or a person taken to be a second early childhood teacher or a suitably qualified person under regulation 135(2), is to be counted as meeting the requirements of subregulation (1)(a).

Regulation 132 - Requirement for **early childhood teacher—centre-based services—25 to 59 children states:**

(1) If a centre-based service provides education and care to 25 or more but less than 60 children preschool age or under on a given day, an **early childhood** teacher must be in attendance at the service—

- (a) for at least 6 hours on that day, if the service operates for 50 or more hours a week; or
 - (b) for 60 per cent of the operating hours of the service on that day, if the service operates for less than 50 hours a week.
- (2) A centre-based service is not required to comply with subregulation (1) if—
- (a) the approved number of places for children preschool age or under at the service is 25 or more but less than 60; and
 - (b) the service employs or engages a full-time or full-time equivalent **early childhood** teacher at the service

Regulation 133 - Requirement for early childhood teacher—centre-based services—60 to 80 children

- (1) If a centre-based service provides education and care to 60 or more but not more than 80 children preschool age or under on a given day—
- (a) an early childhood teacher must be in attendance at the service—
 - (i) for at least 6 hours on that day, if the service operates for 50 or more hours a week; or
 - (ii) for 60 per cent of the operating hours of the service on that day, if the service operates for less than 50 hours a week; and
 - (b) a second early childhood teacher or a suitably qualified person must be in attendance at the service—
 - (i) for at least 3 hours on that day, if the service operates for 50 or more hours a week; or
 - (ii) for 30 per cent of the operating hours of the service on that day, if the service operates for less than 50 hours a week.
- (2) A centre-based service is not required to comply with subregulation (1) if—
- (a) the approved number of places for children preschool age or under at the service is 60 or more but not more than 80; and
 - (b) the service employs or engages—
 - (i) a full-time or full-time equivalent early childhood teacher at the service; and

- (ii) a second early childhood teacher or a suitably qualified person for half of the full-time or full-time equivalent hours at the service.

Regulation 134 - Requirement for early childhood teacher—centre-based services—more than 80 children

- (1) If a centre-based service provides education and care to more than 80 children preschool age or under on a given day—
 - (a) an early childhood teacher must be in attendance at the service—
 - (i) for at least 6 hours on that day, if the service operates for 50 or more hours a week; or
 - (ii) for 60 per cent of the operating hours of the service on that day, if the service operates for less than 50 hours a week; and
 - (b) a second early childhood teacher or a suitably qualified person must be in attendance at the service—
 - (i) for at least 6 hours on that day, if the service operates for 50 or more hours a week; or
 - (ii) for 60 per cent of the operating hours of the service on that day, if the service operates for less than 50 hours a week.
- (2) A centre-based service is not required to comply with subregulation (1) if—
 - (a) the approved number of places for children preschool age or under at a centre-based service is more than 80; and
 - (b) the service employs or engages—
 - (i) a full-time or full-time equivalent early childhood teacher at the service; and
 - (ii) a second full-time or full-time equivalent early childhood teacher or suitably qualified person.

Regulation 137 - Approval of qualifications

- (1) The National Authority must publish on its website lists of qualifications it has approved for the purposes of the Law including—

- (a) a list of approved early childhood teaching qualifications; and
 - (b) a list of approved diploma level education and care qualifications;
and
 - (c) a list of approved certificate III level education and care qualifications; and
 - (d) a list of approved qualifications for suitably qualified persons; and
 - (e) a list of approved first aid qualifications and anaphylaxis management and emergency asthma management training.
- (2) The National Authority must also publish on its website lists of qualifications it has approved for the purposes of Chapter 7 including—
- (a) a list of former qualifications approved as any of the following—
 - (i) early childhood teaching qualifications;
 - (ii) diploma level education and care qualifications;
 - (iii) certificate III level education and care qualifications; and
 - (b) for Queensland, a list of former qualifications approved as either of the following—
 - (i) diploma level education and care qualifications;
 - (ii) certificate III level education and care qualifications; and
 - (c) a list of qualifications for working with children over preschool age for each participating jurisdiction; and
 - (d) a list of qualifications and former qualifications for family day care coordinators in Queensland.
- (3) The National Authority may publish on its website qualifications and training that it has approved as equivalent to an approved qualification or training for the purposes of the Law.
- (4) The National Authority may publish on its website the following for the purposes of the definition of actively working towards a qualification—
- (a) units of approved certificate III level education and care qualifications;

(b) the percentage of total units required for completion of an approved early childhood teaching qualification.

National Quality Standards

All Quality Areas should be considered when developing the workforce plan with particular focus on Quality Area 4 and Quality Area 7:

Quality Standard 4 – Staffing Arrangements (2020, Guide to the National Quality Standards)

- What processes do you have to recruit and retain staff?
- How does the service celebrate educators' commitment to the service over time?
- How does performance development processes provide educators with targeted feedback that supports continuity?
- Has the employer considered how staffing arrangements have been organised throughout the service to enhance children's learning and development?
- How do the staffing arrangements support consistent practice?
- How does the staffing roster support continuity of care?
- How does the service utilise professional collaboration practices between management and educators to work collaboratively, challenge and learn from each other to enhance strengths, skills and capability development for the workforce?
- How do you provide feedback and support to educators so that they continue to learn and feel fulfilled, resulting in continuity of educators over time?
- How are educators and staff members encouraged to support and mentor each other?

Quality Area 7 – Governance and Leadership (2020, Guide to the National Quality Standards)

- Does the service have in place an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process that is regularly reviewed and updated so that learnings can be examined and modifications made to improve the delivery of the educational program and support the staff in their roles?
- Are the roles and responsibilities of staff clearly defined, understood, and support effective decision-making and career progression, to ensure the sustainable and successful operation of the service?
- Does the service ensure educators, co-ordinators and staff members' performance is regularly evaluated and individual plans are in place to support learning and development?
- Does the service offer quality leadership opportunities, coaching and mentoring to promote a positive organisational culture and professional learning community?
- How is the leadership in the service contributing to the development of a positive organisational culture?
- How does the team develop the skills and capacity of team members in a way that leads to improved shared leadership?
- What does the employer know about the rate of, and reasons for, turnover of educators, co-ordinators and staff members at this service?
- What strategies are proving successful in building a professional learning community? How does the employer know that these strategies are successful?

Reference List

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), (2020), *Guide to the National Quality Framework*

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Jobs Queensland. (2019), *Workforce Planning Connect - A Workforce Planning Toolkit*, Queensland Government

Public Service Commission. (2020), *Strategic Workforce Planning Framework*, Australian Government

Queensland Health. (2020), *Strategic Health Workforce Planning Framework Guide*, Queensland Government

Queensland Health. (2020), *Strategic Health Workforce Planning Framework Toolkit*, Queensland Government