

Frequently asked questions

About the Census

What is the Early Childhood Education and Care Services Census?

The Census is an annual data collection from the Queensland early childhood education and care services sector. The Census data creates a set of statistics that are required to be reported by all jurisdictions as part of national funding agreements for early childhood education.

How is Census information used?

Information collected in this Census is used for planning and program development, and monitoring outcomes of early childhood initiatives such as universal access to kindergarten and the implementation of the National Quality Framework. Census data not only helps to inform current and future government initiatives, but is also useful for communities and services in determining the characteristics of early childhood education and care provision in Queensland.

Who is required to complete the Census?

Census participants include all Queensland Government approved Early Childhood Education and Care services, including Long Day Care, Kindergarten, Family Day Care and Outside School Hours Care, as well as state and non-state schools that provide kindergarten programs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and schools participating in the Remote Kindergarten Program.

For services that receive government funding to provide an approved kindergarten program – detailed information about kindergarten participants is required either as a condition of your service agreement with the Department of Education or in accordance with the requirements of your Central Governing Body.



For services that do not receive government funding for an approved kindergarten program – summary questions will be asked for children who participate in kindergarten programs that do not receive Queensland Government kindergarten funding.

Why is each individual service's data so important?

All services are encouraged to take this opportunity to participate in the Census to ensure comprehensive data, representative of all sectors of Queensland's early childhood education and care community, is available.

I have already completed other government surveys, why do I need to provide some information more than once?

Due to information sharing restrictions imposed by privacy legislation, most government departments are unable to share data without your consent. This includes data submitted through the Commonwealth's Child Care Subsidy System and other national surveys, such as the Early Childhood Education and Care - National Workforce Census.

Where can we see the collected data for Queensland?

Data collected within the Early Childhood Education and Care Services Census is published on the Department's website:

<https://qed.qld.gov.au/publications/reports/statistics/early-years>

The website provides an overview of data generated from previous census collections including information on the size and diversity of Queensland's early childhood education and care sector as well as the children enrolled and staff working within services. Data on enrolment and attendance at preschool are also published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) within the annual publication Preschool Education, Australia.

Data Collection Process

When will the Census be held?

The following are the key dates for the 2024 Early Childhood Education and Care Services Census.

29 July – Census opens

29 July – 4 August – All services Reference Period

18 August – Final due date for responses

What time period does the Census cover?

Services will be asked to submit data relevant to a specific time period, which is called the 'reference period' enabling the capture of a consistent snapshot of service information across the state.

For all services the reference period runs from 29 July 2024 to 4 August 2024.

If your service is closed for 1 or more days during the reference period please report the typical enrolment days and hours as though the service was operating. If your service runs a two week kindergarten program, you will be asked to average the fortnightly hours for some questions.

How long will the survey take to complete?

The time it will take to complete the Census will vary depending on your service type and number of staff and children. Planning ahead to have the necessary information on hand to enter into the survey tool may help during the data entry process.

You can stop at any time, exit and continue later. Your previous responses will be saved and you can continue from where you left off. Please ensure you close your browser when you exit the survey and click 'submit' when you have completed the survey.

How can I access the survey?

An invitation to complete the survey will be sent to your service via email on 29 July 2024. Please note the email may not arrive until later in the day. The email will include a unique link to your census. If you do not receive a link to the

Census by 1 August 2024, or misplace your details, please contact the Census Support Team (see contact details below).

Can I do it from any computer?

Yes. Any computer with reliable internet access can be used to enter the data; you just need the link provided in the original email sent on 29 July 2024. If you experience any technical difficulties, please contact the Census Support Team (see contact details below).

Can the survey be viewed before filling it in?

It is not possible to browse through the online survey before filling it in. However, it is possible to go back and forth between the online pages once they have been completed. The data collection manual also provides an overview of the questions that will be asked of your service within the Census.

Can the online survey be accessed multiple times?

Yes. It is possible to go in and out of the online survey using the provided online survey access details at any time.

What happens if I cannot access the Census online?

If you experience any technical difficulties accessing the Census, please contact the Census Support Team (see contact details below).

Who can enter the data?

In most cases, Census correspondence will be addressed to the Director or Nominated Supervisor for your service. However, the survey can be completed and submitted by any person authorised to approve and submit the information contained in the Census on behalf of this service.

How can I save myself time?

Starting your Census early and planning ahead to have the necessary information, such as access to enrolment and attendance records and service level information to enter into the survey tool may help save time during the collection process. There are forms available on the Census webpage to assist you in gathering the required information.

How do I use the Child Record Collection (CRC) report on my Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS) Software?

Some Child Care Subsidy System Software providers have developed a report that will allow services to upload funded kindergarten child enrolments into the Census collection tool. The software companies will provide information about how to find and create this report. You will need to wait until the end of the reference period (after 4 August) to run the report for this Census collection. If your software provider does not provide this report, you can also submit this information via an excel spreadsheet. There is more information on the Census webpage about this functionality.

Which software companies provide the report from my CCSS software?

Companies such as QK Technologies (Qikkids), Kidsoft, HeartBeat4Kidz, Kindy Manager, Xplor, XAP, OWNA and HelloHub (HubWorks!) have all worked with us to develop a report that you can create from your existing administrative data. There are instructions on the Census webpage to support you to upload the report into the Census collection tool. If you are affiliated with these software companies, please contact them directly for more information on how to obtain your report for your service.

Confidentiality

Is my information secure?

The Queensland Government and the department's online survey tool utilises industry best-practices to provide quality safeguards which ensure confidentiality and integrity for network and internet data. Each service is issued a unique link to the survey to ensure that information provided remains secure, and can only be accessed by delegated staff.

Who can view the data?

The department has very strict safeguards in place with respect to access to personally identifiable information. Legislation such as the *Information Privacy Act 2009*, the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994* and the *Public Service Act 2008* governs the management of confidential information by Government agencies and Government employees. Generalised statistical reports which do not include personally identifying items such as names are generated for internal and external reporting purposes.

What information will be collected about my staff?

Information is requested for all people employed in the provision of education and care for children or who provide administrative support in the day to day management of the service. It is recommended that you inform staff about the Census and obtain consent from staff members before providing personally identifying information relating to them and keep a copy of the consent on file. A form is available on the Census webpage for this purpose. Please remember that personal information will not be disclosed to any other agency unless authorised by law. Consent is not required for the provision of workforce or qualification data. Workforce data includes data items such as hours of paid work, years of experience and qualifications and is vital to assist with workforce planning matters.

What can I tell parents about the security of their child's information?

Services receiving kindergarten funding from the Queensland Government are required to provide more detailed information as part of their service agreement or in accordance with the requirements of their Central Governing Body. Services are not obliged to notify parents of the details of the information collected in the Census, however there is an information notice for parents available on the Census webpage. It is important to remember that while individual names are supplied for data collection, an individual child's identity is not disclosed to any party other than Department of Education, unless authorised by law.

How can I be sure my information will not be distributed without consent?

The department will ensure the security of personal information in accordance with the following policies:

1. Data collected will be managed in accordance with the requirements of the *Education and Care Services Act 2013* and the *Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) Act 2011*.
2. Non-identifiable information obtained from the survey may be published by the department, or shared with other government agencies.
3. Information obtained from the survey will be provided to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) for statistical purposes. The ABS and AIHW are required by law to protect personal information provided to them but may publish non-identifiable data.
4. Personal information will not be disclosed to any other agency unless you have given permission or the disclosure is for an authorised purpose described in the *Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) Act 2011*. These authorised purposes include circumstances where expressly permitted or required by law.

Contact Details

Who can I contact if I have any difficulties completing the Census?

If you have any problems completing your Census you can call the Census Support Team help desk on 1300 613 188 between 9:00am and 5:00pm Monday to Friday.

Alternatively, you can email Census.ECEC@qed.qld.gov.au and a member of the Census Support Team will respond as soon as possible.

Where can I find out more?

Further information can be found on the Census webpage located on the Early Childhood Education and Care website

<https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/sector-news-and-resources/reports-and-research/early-childhood-education-and-care-services-census>