



Australian Bureau of Statistics
ANZSCO Review Team
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Submission to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) comprehensive review consultation ('Childcare Services')

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Review of Classifications of Occupations.

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) is the independent national authority established under the *Education and Care Services National Law* to guide the implementation and administration of the National Quality Framework (NQF).

The NQF is the national system for regulating children's education and care services, including long day care, outside school hours care and family day care services, as well as most preschools and kindergartens.

Background

The children's education and care sector is large and diverse, with more than 17,000 services approved under the National Quality Framework (NQF). This includes more than 8,000 long day care services and more than 3,000 preschools/kindergartens.

Around 200,000 teachers and educators work in the children's education and care sector, with most of the sector workforce being certificate III and diploma qualified educators, but an increasing proportion being degree trained teachers.

There are six occupation classifications that relate directly to our sector:

- 134111 Child Care Centre Manager
- 241111 Early Childhood (Pre-primary School) Teacher
- 421111 Child Care Worker (including 'Child Care Worker Group Leader' specialisation)
- 421112 Family Day Care Worker
- 421114 Out of School Hours Care Worker
- 422115 Preschool Aide

The ANZSCO classifications are the basis for several national data collections such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Labour Force Estimates. These national data collections are used to inform policy and programs, including the skilled migration visa program.

The current misalignment of the classifications to the occupations in the children's education and care sector presents a barrier to informed policy making and makes it difficult for governments and researchers to assess current workforce supply and demand, and identify meaningful solutions.

On behalf of all governments, we coordinated the development of *Shaping our Future*, the ten-year (2022-2031) national children's education and care workforce strategy, which was co-designed with the education and care sector, and responds to persistent workforce concerns around the recruitment and retention of high quality educators and teachers.

The strategy includes 21 nationally agreed actions to be delivered over the short (by the end of 2024), medium (by the end of 2027) or long term (by the end of 2031), grouped by six inter-related focus areas. One of the focus areas is 'Data and evidence', with the overall aim being to enhance national data collection, analysis and strategic discussion. This will be crucial to inform the monitoring and evaluation of the strategy.

The strategy is complemented by an implementation and evaluation plan, a summary of workforce related initiatives from across the country, and an online workforce snapshot, all publicly available on ACECQA's website.

1. Are there any occupations in your sector that are not accurately described?

The current ANZSCO classifications have not kept pace with reforms in the sector or the goals of the national system. The description of skills does not reflect the current skills and knowledge or professional language associated with the occupations that relate directly to the NQF.

For example, early childhood teachers (ECTs) fall within the category of 'Unit Group 2411 Early Childhood (Pre-Primary School) Teachers'. This unit group is a sub-set of schoolteachers and includes teachers in the early years of primary school. As such, this data likely over-represents estimates for the number of early childhood teachers working in NQF settings.

Similarly, the language used in the occupation classifications does not reflect contemporary early childhood practice and employment settings (e.g. 'students' and 'classroom' are not appropriate terminology for ECTs and educators working with young children in early childhood settings) and terms such as 'child care' and 'entertaining children' in other classifications do not reflect the key role of educators in ensuring the safety, health and wellbeing, and improving the educational and developmental outcomes, of children attending education and care services.

Recommendations to refresh and update the structure and terminology of the six occupation classifications relevant to the children's education and care sector, and the corresponding classification structure, are provided in [Attachment A](#).

2. Are there any occupations in your sector for which ANZSCO does not accurately reflect the skill level (1 to 5)?

One of the fundamental features of the NQF was the introduction of new mandatory staffing and qualification requirements, including improved educator to child ratios, a requirement to employ an ECT in all relevant services, and a requirement for at least half of educators included in relevant ratios to hold, or be actively working towards, an approved diploma level (or higher) qualification.

These requirements have been progressively introduced over the past decade, supported by transitional and savings provisions designed to enable a staged approach to higher staffing and qualification requirements.

The skill levels assigned to the current occupation classifications do not reflect these regulatory requirements and has a flow-on effect for programs that utilise the ANZSCO classifications. For example, the '421111 Child Care Worker' occupation is considered a 'skill level 3' and often ineligible for skilled migration pathways, despite a regulatory requirement for at least half of all educators employed in relevant services to hold, or be actively working towards, an approved diploma level (or higher) qualification, equivalent to a 'skill level 2'.

Recommendations to update the skill level of a number of the occupation classifications relevant to the children's education and care sector, and the corresponding classification structure, are provided in [Attachment A](#).

Updating the ANZSCO classifications to better reflect the contemporary structure and language of the sector will have a flow-on effect to national data collections informing workforce supply and demand, and policy decision making to support the implementation of national workforce initiatives. We support further targeted consultation with governments and the children's education and care sector to ensure the occupation classifications are relevant and fit-for-purpose.

I trust that this information is of assistance in informing this important review. If you would like to discuss our submission, or would like further information please contact Michael Petrie, General Manager, Workforce, Engagement and Research (michael.petrie@acecqa.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

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