

## Early Years Great Careers

Grow. Lead. Succeed.



### What do early childhood educators do?

Early childhood educators (certificate or diploma qualified) were previously known as kindergarten assistants, child care workers or child care assistants. The new title reflects the growing body of evidence about the importance of learning in fostering children's growth and development in their early years.

Early childhood educators support the social, emotional, physical and educational development of infants and young children. They help them take their first steps in education. They:

- Plan and implement individual programs based on observation of what children know and understand.
- Prepare and supervise play and learning materials, maintain a safe, clean and appealing environment.
- Observe, assess and record children's learning and development, and liaise closely with parents and other professionals.
- Support the participation of children with additional needs in the program.
- Perform basic first aid in emergencies.
- Help children with daily routines and promote health and safety concepts.
- Guide and promote positive social interactions between children.

### Fast facts

- Rapid growth in the number of early childhood education and care and family day care services will underpin a strong increase in the demand for fully qualified early childhood educators.
- Salaries vary according to employer, sector, responsibilities and role. For example, in local government services salaries can range from \$35,766 – \$46,199 a year.
- Early childhood educators are employed in private, local government and community-based early childhood education and care services (family day care, long day care and outside school hours care services).
- They may also work in hospitals, zoos, museums, women's shelters and neighbourhood houses.

Future employment rating ★★★★★

\*Future employment growth 11% PA or more. Source: DEEWR

### What should I study at school?

While there are no prerequisites, suitable subjects may include English, maths, health and human development, VET – Certificate II in Community Services Work and selected units of competency from Certificate III in Community Services Work and Certificate III in Education and Care (previously Certificate III in Children's Services).

### What should I study at TAFE?

A VET qualification in education and care such as:

- Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care** (six months)
- Certificate IV in School Age Education and Care** (one year)
- Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care** (18 months - 2 years)
- Diploma of School Age Education and Care** (one year)
- Certificate IV in Training and Assessment**

Another avenue is via a pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, traineeship or School Based Apprenticeship in Children's Services.

### What are my other career and leadership options?

Experienced early childhood educators may progress to coordinate or manage an education and care service. Other options include being a nanny and pathways to being an early childhood teacher. Self-employment opportunities include becoming a family day care educator in your own home.

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**Robert Nguyen** Early childhood educator in a local government service

## What are your major qualifications?

I have a Diploma of Children's Services and a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

## How long have you worked in early childhood and in your current role?

I've worked in early childhood for eight years mainly in long day care. I've worked as a qualified educator for five years. I've been in my current job since the start of this year but I've worked in a number of different centres and also with an agency.

## What is a typical day?

We provide a play-based program to aid children's learning and development. I present experiences and activities for children and assess and document their learning. I work closely with my team as support and also as a mentor.

## What do you enjoy most about your career in early childhood?

I still view working with children as a privilege. There's nothing more satisfying than knowing that by engaging with them and teaching them you can influence who they are and what they'll become. It's a great feeling to know that I've been a part of children's lives, even for a short time, and that I've been able to build strong connections with them.

## What influenced your interest in an early childhood career?

I've always wanted to teach children. I initially wanted to get into primary education so I did my diploma as a pathway into it but after doing my first placement I fell in love with early childhood and I've been doing it since.

## What is the best experience you have had as an early childhood professional?

The best period of my early childhood career was when I was working in a centre in North Melbourne. I was working as a room leader with two other staff and we had the best team. I had grown as a mentor and I was able to empower my co-workers to be the educators they are today. We were doing lots with the children's education which included cooking, gardening and teaching them about sustainable practices and also excursions to interesting places. The parents were really involved and the children got a lot out of the experience.

## What would you say to others who might be considering a career in early childhood?

Early childhood may not always be easy but it's most definitely a rewarding career. Early childhood educators have the opportunity to shape a child's growth and development in a very positive way. It can be challenging at times but you'll have lots of fun too.

## Where do you see yourself professionally in 10 years' time?

I'm completing a Graduate Certificate in Social Science (Prenatal and Postnatal Care and Family Support). I want to keep learning and I enjoy doing it. I've also completed my Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. I'd like to have the opportunity to teach students the value of working in early childhood and impart to them my knowledge and experience in the field.

## Want to know more?

[education.vic.gov.au/earlyyears Careers](http://education.vic.gov.au/earlyyears Careers)  
[deewr.gov.au](http://deewr.gov.au)  
[myfuture.edu.au](http://myfuture.edu.au)  
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All indicative salaries in the document are gross before tax a year for full time employees. Indicative salary taken from Local Government Early Childhood Education Employees Agreement and Victorian Early Childhood Teachers and Assistants Agreement. Salaries will vary based on employer, role and Award.

Information regarding course and professional pre-requisites is of a general nature. Please consult a career practitioner and/or check with individual institutions to confirm specific course requirements.