This fact sheet outlines the early childhood teacher requirements that apply to Victorian centre-based services providing education and care to children preschool age or under and operating under the National Quality Framework.

The information is about the early childhood teacher requirements in the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (National Regulations). Information about the additional early childhood teaching requirements as they apply to services operating a funded kindergarten program can be found in the following resources:


What is the role of the early childhood teacher?

The early childhood teacher should contribute to the quality of education and care and better learning outcomes for all children being educated and cared for in a range of ways including working directly with the children and providing mentoring, coaching and support to other educators.

Does my service need to have an early childhood teacher?

- An early childhood teacher is not required for services whose main purpose is to provide education and care to children over preschool age.
- All other centre-based services operating under the National Quality Framework are required to have an early childhood teacher. The number of hours you are required to have an early childhood teacher will depend on the number of children aged preschool age or under at your service. The following table outlines the requirements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of children preschool age or under</th>
<th>Early childhood teacher requirements</th>
<th>What does this mean?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fewer than 25 approved places (r130)</td>
<td>The service must have access to an early childhood teacher working with the service for at least 20 per cent of the time that the service provides education and care.</td>
<td>The early childhood teacher is not required to be present at the service and may be working with the service by means of information communication technology. The period that the early childhood teacher works with the service may be calculated on a quarterly basis. Any period that an early childhood teacher is in attendance at the service, as required by regulation 132, may be counted towards the period of access to an early childhood teacher.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 or more approved places but fewer than 25 children being educated and cared for (r131)</td>
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1 The requirement for a second early childhood teacher for services with 60 or more children (regulations 133(1)(b) and 134(1)(b)) does not come into effect until 1 January 2020.


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<thead>
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</tr>
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</table>
| 25 or more children being educated and cared for on a given day (r132-134) | An early childhood teacher must be in attendance at the service:  
- at least 6 hours on that day, if the service operates for 50 or more hours a week; or  
- 60% of operating hours of the service on that day, if the service operates for less than 50 hours a week.  
OR  
The service engages a full time or full time equivalent early childhood teacher (regulations 132(2), 133(2), 134(2)). | An early childhood teacher is in attendance at the service if they are physically present at the service and carrying out education and care activities at the service including:  
- working directly with children;  
- planning programs;  
- mentoring, coaching or supporting educators;  
- facilitating education and care research;  
- performing the role of educational leader of the service (see regulation 118). |

**Early childhood teacher qualification requirements**

**What is an approved early childhood teaching qualification?**

The Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) publishes on their website the qualifications that have been approved for the purposes of the National Law. This list includes the qualifications that are approved for early childhood teachers, diploma level qualified educators and certificate level qualified educators.

If the educator’s qualification is not on the approved or former approved qualifications lists refer to the Educator to child ratios from 1 January 2016 – centre-based services fact sheet available at:  

For information about the assessment of qualifications by ACECQA (see under ‘approved qualifications’).

**Who can be recognised as an early childhood teacher?**

Any of the following are recognised:

- The person holds an approved or former approved early childhood teaching qualification, or equivalent, as listed on the ACECQA website. For more information, see: Qualification list available at:  

- The person is actively working towards an approved early childhood teaching qualification AND -  
  - has completed 50% of the course OR  
  - holds an approved diploma level education and care qualification.²

Note: actively working towards means that a person can provide the approved provider with documentary evidence from the training organisation that they are enrolled in a course, have commenced the course, are making satisfactory progress towards completion and meet the requirements to maintain enrolment.

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²This is a transitional provision which ends on 1 January 2018 (regulation 242)
The person holds a primary teaching qualification that includes at least a focus on children aged 5-8 (e.g. a qualification with a focus on children aged 3-8 or 5-12); and has -

- Australian teacher registration or accreditation, **AND**
- obtained or commenced an approved diploma level or higher education and care qualification.

Any of the other circumstances that are outlined in regulation 241 (If you believe that any of these circumstances apply to an educator at your service please contact the Department for further information. The Department’s contact details are at the end of the fact sheet).

### Counting the early childhood teacher in the diploma level qualified educator to child ratios

To be included in the diploma level educator to child ratios the early childhood teacher must be *working directly with children*.

An educator who is actively working towards an early childhood teaching qualification and can provide evidence to the approved provider that they have completed 30 per cent of the course can be counted in the diploma qualified educator to child ratios. Once the educator has completed 50 per cent of the course they meet the early childhood teacher qualification requirements (regulation 242).

A table identifying when an educator can be counted in the diploma level ratios can be found in the *Early childhood teacher requirements for funded kindergarten programs* fact sheet, available at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqffactsheets.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqffactsheets.aspx)

A person is *working directly with children* at a given time if at that time the person:

- is physically present with the children; and
- is directly engaged in providing education and care to the children (regulation 13).

### Early childhood teacher leave and absences

If the early childhood teacher is absent due to short term illness or leave, they can be replaced by a person who holds an approved diploma level qualification or primary teaching qualification for no more than 12 weeks (regulation 135). This person may be counted in the diploma qualified ratios when they are working directly with children. However, a person holding a diploma level qualification does not meet the kindergarten funding criteria.

### Record of access to early childhood teachers

The National Regulations require the approved provider of a centre-based service to keep a record of the children's access to an early childhood teacher (regulation 152):

- **If the service provides education and care to fewer than 25 children preschool age or under** the record must include the period that an early childhood teacher is working with the service in accordance with regulation 130 or 131(2) and the periods that the early childhood teacher is *working directly with children* and is *not working directly with children*.

- **If the service provides education and care to 25 or more children preschool age or under** the record must include the period that an early childhood teacher is *in attendance at the service*.

### Waivers

If the service is unable to comply with the early childhood teacher requirements the approved provider may apply for a temporary waiver. The purpose of the waiver is to give the service additional time to meet this requirement. The waiver, if granted, will generally be subject to certain requirements that the service must meet. These requirements will depend on the particular circumstances of the service including, for example,
the maximum number of children the service is approved to educate and care for. The service’s compliance
with all other requirements of the National Quality Framework is taken into consideration when assessing a
waiver application.
Further information about the waiver application process can found in the Waivers (general information) fact

Funding support

Kindergarten funding

If you have an early childhood teacher at the service working directly with children who holds a
qualification published by ACECQA as an approved early childhood teacher qualification you may wish
to consider providing a funded kindergarten program. Service providers must meet the criteria set out
in the Kindergarten Guide 2015 in order to receive any type of kindergarten funding.
Note that funding eligibility has particular requirements for early childhood teachers. For further
information is provided in the Early childhood teacher requirements for funded kindergarten programs fact
and the Kindergarten Guide 2015 – available at:

Qualifications scholarships and incentives

A range of scholarships and incentives are available to assist services to meet the qualification
requirements of the National Quality Standard and the National Regulations. For example, the Early
Childhood Qualifications Fund provides scholarships to existing early childhood educators working in
an approved education and care service to upgrade or attain an early childhood qualification. Further
information, including eligibility criteria and the application process, is available at:

Further information

The Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority is the national, independent
statutory authority governing the National Quality Framework.
Phone: 1300 422 327
Email: enquiries@acecqa.gov.au
Web: www.acecqa.gov.au

The Department of Education and Training is the Regulatory Authority in Victoria.
Phone: 1300 307 415
Email: licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au