

Tip sheet from the series

Getting started in early childhood education and care

Beginner's guide to early education and care services

For young children, care and education cannot be separated. Young children learn through play and learn best when receiving quality care.

The benefits of quality early childhood education and care

- You can place your child in care and know he or she is safe and well cared for by educators who will work with you and respect your child's unique qualities and abilities.
- Your child will have the opportunity to develop skills by playing with others and taking part in activities that build on their abilities and interests.
- You will be supported in caring for your child.
- You will have opportunities to work, attend appointments or recreational activities or have time to yourself.

When looking for early childhood education and care services, it is important to understand that services can be licensed or unlicensed.

Licensing standards in Queensland

In Queensland, licensed early childhood education and care services are required to meet minimum quality standards in areas such as:

- the number of staff and required qualifications
- maximum group sizes
- policies and procedures
- activities and experiences
- facilities and space
- equipment
- health and safety of children
- information for parents and carers.

Authorised officers visit each licensed service at least once a year to ensure that they continue to meet the minimum standards.

Types of licensed early childhood education and care services

Licensed early childhood education and care services are either centre based or home based.

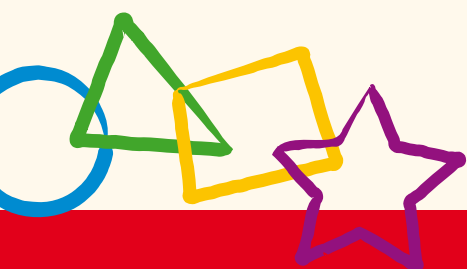
Centre-based services

Long day care centres provide care and education for children from birth to school age, including before and after school care, depending on the individual service. Services generally operate for at least 10 hours a day from Monday to Friday for a minimum of 48 weeks each year.

Kindergartens generally operate for six hours on school days during school terms and provide care and education for children who turn 4 years of age by June 30 in the year they participate in a kindergarten program.

Occasional care services offer care and education to children on an occasional or casual basis.

Limited hours care services operate up to 20 hours a week and are licensed to care for a maximum of 30 children.





School-age care services only offer care for children who are enrolled in and regularly attend school. Generally, services offer before and/or after school care and may also operate during school holidays.

Home-based care

Family day care a service where care and education offered in the private homes of registered carers through a family day care scheme. Carers are monitored and supported by the scheme's coordination unit.

Unlicensed services

The types of child care services that are not licensed in Queensland include:

- vacation care (when not attached to a before or after school care service)
- stand-alone care (including independent home-based care)
- adjunct care (including gyms and shopping centres, where parents remain on-site)
- playgroups
- nannies and babysitters
- resort care (a service, conducted by a hotel or resort, to provide child care to children who are short-term guests).

In addition, from Preparatory Year onwards, the provision of education in schools is covered under the provisions of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* and the *Education (General Provisions) Regulations 2006*.

More information

The State Government provides families with up-to-date information about licensed early childhood education and care services in their local area, and has parent tip sheets on a range of topics including:

- Choosing a quality service
- My child's first day
- What to expect

To access the latest information, refer to our website at: www.education.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood

For more information about the licensing standards in Queensland, you should refer to the *Child Care Act 2002* and the *Child Care Regulation 2003*. The legislation is available from the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel website at: http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/Acts_SLs/Acts_SL.htm



Further information

The Office for Early Childhood Education and Care has developed a series of practical tip sheets for parents, carers and families on topics including: *General parenting, Babies and toddlers, Children 4–12 years and Early childhood education and care services*.

The Office's free, 24-hour Early Childhood Information Service provides families with up-to-date information about local early childhood education and care services, advice on what to look for in a quality service, what to expect as a consumer and how to access support and assistance.

For free tip sheets and information

Freecall 1800 637 711* (24 hrs)

*Calls from mobile phones are charged at applicable rates.

Email: ECIS@deta.qld.gov.au

Web: www.education.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood

Early Childhood Education and Care Services Search

Visit the Office's website to locate early childhood education and care services in your area.

mychild.gov.au

Helpful information about assistance with fees and other issues is also available at www.mychild.gov.au/.

Disclaimer

The information in this tip sheet is offered as a guide only and should not be treated as an exhaustive statement on the subject.

Other languages

For assistance with other languages call Translating and Interpreting Service National on 131 450 and ask to be connected to 1800 637 711.

National Relay Service

If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment you can call through the National Relay Service:

TTY users phone 133 677 then ask for 1800 637 711

Speak and Listen (speech-to-speech relay) users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 1800 637 711.