



Careers in early childhood education & care

A toolkit for school students, parents/ carers and careers advisers



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IN LITTLE LIVES.COM

Why does early childhood education and care matter?

The human brain develops faster in the first few years of life than at any other time. Children's experiences in the years before school build the foundation for learning, development, health and happiness throughout life. For this reason, early childhood education and care is one of the most important parts of Australia's education system.

Job prospects

There's never been a better time to start a career in early learning! Early childhood educators are in demand across Australia, at all qualification levels.

In 2024, the Australian Government forecast that we will need an additional 54,000 qualified educators over the next ten years.

Big government investment

In the last few years, governments across Australia have announced new investment in early learning worth billions of dollars. These reforms will make early learning affordable for many more families.

A bigger early learning system means thousands of new jobs for educators, at all qualification levels: from Certificate III to Bachelor degree and beyond.

What do early childhood educators do?

Early childhood educators are responsible for the education and care of children in early learning centres.

Educators develop play-based programs that support and extend children's skills and wellbeing through play, exploration, and inquiry.

They work in partnership with families to support children's learning.

What makes a great educator?

- High levels of emotional intelligence
- A passion for ongoing learning
- A strong focus on community and inclusion
- Flexible and creative thinking skills
- Communication and teamwork skills.



Where do early childhood educators work?

Early childhood educators work in a variety of settings: long day care centres, preschools/ kindergartens, outside school hours care services, family day care or schools.

Roles and job titles

There are different roles and responsibilities in early learning and care services. While job titles vary across services, common roles and titles are:

- Assistant Educator
- Educator
- Lead Educator
- Early Childhood Teacher
- Centre Manager

Qualifications and pathways

There are different pathways into an early childhood education career. All early childhood educators must hold an approved qualification, or be actively working towards one. Early Childhood Teachers require a Bachelor degree or an equivalent postgraduate qualification. It is increasingly common for educators to upskill to higher qualifications over the course of their careers.

	Higher education	Vocational education and training	School-based*/work-based traineeship
Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care			
Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care			
Bachelor of Early Childhood Education			

*Traineeships are available in some schools, along with units of competency from the Certificate III.

Wages and conditions

Wages and conditions vary across employers. In addition to wages, educators may receive: time for planning; paid professional development; and support for health and wellbeing. Employers often support their educators to undertake additional study (e.g. at Bachelor level).

++ STOP PRESS - NATIONAL WAGE RISE! ++

The Australian Government is funding a 10% wage rise for educators from December 2024, with a further 5% increase in December 2025.

Contact us

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