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Outside school hours care services in Australia 1996

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**Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
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Preface

This report was prepared by Helen Moyle, Paul Meyer, and Ann Evans of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

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All responsibility for the views expressed in the report, however, remain with the authors.

1 Introduction

The rapid growth in children's services in Australia, particularly in the past decade, has highlighted the need to develop a national data collection to monitor growth and change and to inform policy development in the children's services sector (CCCWG 1995, p. 25; EPAC 1996). A national children's services data collection is difficult to implement, however, without an understanding of the structure of children's services and how they operate. One of the legislative functions of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare is to collect, collate, analyse and develop children's services data. As a preliminary step in developing a national data collection, the Institute has published a comprehensive report on the structure, funding, administration and regulation of preschool and child care services for children under school age (Moyle et al. 1996); this second report extends this coverage to services providing care and activities for primary school age children out of school hours.¹ Various names are used for the sector, including 'outside school hours care', 'out of school hours care', 'out of school hours services' and 'school age care'. This report uses the term 'outside school hours care' to refer to all three major types of care in the sector, that is, 'before school', 'after school' and 'vacation care'.²

It is important to note that the terminology used in describing the sector is very confusing. 'Outside school hours care' sometimes refers to the entire sector and at other times refers to before and after school care only and specifically excludes vacation care. Similarly, the term 'service' is often used both for the agency providing care and for the type of care itself.

In this report, the following terminology is used:

- outside school hours care services—care and activities provided to children of primary school age out of school hours. The term includes before school care services, after school care services, vacation care services and care services on pupil free days;
- location—the premises used by an agency to deliver an outside school hours care service;
- agency—the individual, organisation, body or enterprise which provides one or more types of outside school hours care services at one or more locations;
- sponsor—the individual, organisation, body or enterprise which is responsible for the agency or agencies which provide the service. Where services are funded, for instance, the sponsor signs the funding agreement and is accountable for the funds. The sponsor and the agency may be one and the same;
- service provider—this term is used when referring to sponsors and their agencies.

1. This report does not cover services providing care and activities for older children, such as Youth Activities Services (YAS) which are funded under the Children's Services Program (CSP) of the Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services. This program funds services which provide after school activities and support to young people aged 11–16 years living in disadvantaged areas.

2. This report also does not cover the five Adventure Playgrounds in inner urban areas of Melbourne funded by the CSP.

The aim of this report is to document the structure, funding, administration and regulation of outside school hours care services, and the responsibilities of the various partners in their provision and delivery. The report focuses on the roles and responsibilities of the Commonwealth Government and the State and Territory Governments, with some information about the roles of local government and non-government organisations. It is important to note that this report describes outside school hours care services as at December 1996. Major changes to Commonwealth funding of outside school hours care services were announced in the 1997-98 Federal Budget (see Appendix 7), which will have a significant impact on the provision and delivery of these services.

The following chapter provides a brief history of the development of outside school hours care services. Subsequent chapters describe current funding arrangements, developments in the licensing and regulation of services, and information from the census of services funded by the Commonwealth's Children's Services Program (CSP). The final substantive chapter looks at State- and Territory-specific arrangements for the provision and delivery of outside school hours care services, and presents some basic State and Territory data, where these data are available. The data are reported using the definitions applicable in the particular jurisdiction, with comparisons made between the jurisdiction's data definitions and those set out in the paragraph above. These comparisons give some indication of the lack of consistency of data definitions in the outside school hours care sector.

The report focuses on services which have been set up specifically to provide care for children of primary school age at times when those children are not in school. While other services also provide this form of care,³ these types of services have been discussed in a previous report relating to services for children under school age (Moyle et al. 1996), and only aspects of these services relating particularly to children of primary school age will be discussed here.

3. For example, children classified as 'attending school' comprised 21% of children in family day care services and 4% of those in long day care centres in 1993 (ABS 1994, p. 6).

2 Growth of outside school hours care services

2.1 Description of outside school hours care services

Outside school hours care services are designed to assist parents, primarily those working or studying, who need care for their primary school age children when children are not in school. Outside school hours care 'takes the form of supervised and planned recreational activities in an informal setting' (LRC 1994, p. 19). The main types of services provided are before school care, after school care and vacation care, with some service providers also assisting parents to care for their children on pupil free days and days on which school finishes early. Before school care is generally provided for 1 to 2 hours before the start of the school day, with after school care provided from the end of the school day until about 6 pm. Vacation care is usually provided from 8 am or 8.30 am until 6 pm for each week day of the school holidays (Victoria DHCS 1996a, p. 24), although in some jurisdictions care is provided from 7 am.

An agency may offer one or a combination of these services, depending on demand, availability of facilities, and funding arrangements (see Chapter 3). Originally, government funding for before and after school care services was provided separately from funding for vacation care services, so that the two types of services tended to operate in isolation from one another. In recent years, however, the Commonwealth Government has given priority to a new funding model, known as 'year round care', which enables parents to access before/after school care⁴ and vacation care through one contact point (LRC 1994, p. 19).⁵ Outside school hours care services have generally been sponsored by local government, community groups or by school committees, although a growing number of vacation care services are now sponsored by profit-making enterprises. Such private-for-profit services are ineligible for government funding⁶ (see Chapter 3).

2.2 History

Outside school hours care services have been provided for a number of decades—the first services were probably the supervised playgrounds operated by Melbourne and

4. In this report the term 'before/after school care' is used in place of 'before and/or after school care'.

5. Prior to the introduction of the year round care model funding, however, some agencies provided both before/after school care services and vacation care services funded under separate funding arrangements (see Chapters 3 and 6).

6. However, there are a small number of private-for-profit services funded under the Outside School Hours Care Pilot Program (see Chapter 3).

Sydney City Councils in the first years of this century (Brennan 1996, p. 7). More recently, these types of services have been sponsored by programs such as 'the Australian Assistance Plan, the Disadvantaged Schools Program and the community arts and leisure centre movements' (Finlason 1993 quoted in Brennan 1996, p. 7). The primary purpose of the original services was to meet the recreational and social needs of the children attending the service (Brennan 1996, p. 7), although with the involvement of the Commonwealth Government in funding services, meeting the child care needs of working parents became an important priority. From 1986 agencies providing outside school hours care services funded by the Commonwealth Government were required to give first priority to parents using these services for work-related reasons⁷ (see Appendix 3).

The Commonwealth Government first funded non-profit community managed outside school hours services for primary school age children in the early 1970s (Brennan 1994, p. 90). Funding for outside school hours care was provided directly to sponsors in all States and Territories, except Victoria and South Australia where the States offered to administer the funding. From 1978 onwards, the Commonwealth Government provided annual block grants to the States and Territories to fund vacation care services.

During the 1980s and early 1990s, the Commonwealth Government implemented several strategies to expand the total number of child care places, with a high proportion of the promised places designated for outside school hours care (see Appendix 1). Under these strategies, the Commonwealth Government promised to fund:

- 1,124 outside school hours care places (before/after school care) as part of the 1983–85 expansion;
- a number of places for outside school hours care (before/after school care) as part of the 1984–87 Triennium;
- 20,000 of the 30,000 National Child Care Strategy (1988–92) places as outside school hours care places (before/after school care), since care for primary school age children had been singled out as needing 'serious and immediate attention' (Brennan 1994, p. 196);
- 30,000 of the 50,000 National Child Care Strategy (1992–96) places as outside school hours care places (before/after school care and vacation care) funded under the year round care model (see Chapter 3);
- 40,000 of the 60,000 New Growth Strategy (1994) places as outside school hours care places (before/after school care and vacation care) funded under the year round care model;
- an additional 2,000 outside school hours care places (before/after school care and vacation care) to be established under a 3-year Pilot Program as part of a National Outside School Hours Care Research and Pilot Program, a 1995–96 Federal Budget initiative.

As a consequence of all these funding initiatives, the number of CSP-funded outside school hours care places increased from 7,900 in June 1982 to 71,846 in June 1996 (see below, Section 2.3). Several thousand of the outside school hours places promised under the most recent strategies are also yet to be established.

7. Although 'priority of access' guidelines were introduced in July 1984, they were modified to their present form in April 1986 (Hurford 1987, p. 6).

Under the National Outside School Hours Care Research and Pilot Program, a number of research projects were undertaken to investigate family preferences and best practice in the outside school hours sector (Commonwealth of Australia 1995a, p. 132). The additional outside school hours care places were established 'to test out different models of offering care for school age children in accordance with family preferences and best practice', addressing the issues of affordability, appropriateness and use of care. The Pilot Program currently in operation focuses on funding innovative services, more appropriate services for children of different ages, services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, services for children with a disability and services in rural and remote areas. Different models of administering outside school hours care agencies are also being piloted (see Appendix 4).

Measures to improve the affordability of care for low-income families using Commonwealth-funded outside school hours care services were first introduced in July 1990, when a special outside school hours care rate of fee relief became available for parents using before/after school care services (DCSH 1990, p. 156). From 1992, this type of fee relief has also been available for the vacation care services funded under the year round care model (see Chapter 3). In July 1994, the Commonwealth Government introduced the Childcare Cash Rebate which can be claimed by parents of children under 13 years of age using funded or unfunded outside school hours care services and/or informal care arrangements. The rebate can only be claimed for care used where parents are working, looking for work, training or studying (see Appendix 3).

The *Fringe Benefits Tax Assessment Act 1986* was also amended to exempt from fringe benefits tax (FBT), from 1 June 1993, payments made by an employer to agencies providing CSP-funded outside school hours care services, for the purpose of securing access to add-on places for his or her employees' children (DHFS 1996b, Section 10.4). The 'add-on' places provided under these arrangements are called 'employer-sponsored outside school places'. The FBT exemption does not apply to employer contributions made to subsidise fees. Child care facilities provided by employers and located on their 'business premises' have been exempt from FBT since the enactment of the 1986 legislation.

2.3 Administrative statistics

In the CSP statistics, agencies funded to provide outside school hours care services are termed 'services'. Information on the numbers of 'services' and places funded by the Commonwealth prior to the early 1980s is sparse. At 30 June 1977 there were 106 'services' funded to provide before/after school care (DSS 1977, p. 41). By June 1982, the number of funded 'services' had more than doubled to 226 'services', with 7,900 places (DSS 1982, p. 71; Brennan 1994, p. 203). Between June 1982 and June 1996, the number of funded 'services' increased more than tenfold to 3,055 outside school hours care 'services' with 71,846 places (Table 2.1). CSP 'services' and places are funded jointly by the Commonwealth and the States and Territories or solely by the Commonwealth (see Chapter 3).

Table 2.1: CSP-funded outside school hours care 'services' and places, by State and Territory, June 1996

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Operational 'services'	915	739	637	191	391	64	89	29	3,055
Operational places	24,092	18,215	13,587	5,488	6,076	1,685	1,989	714	71,846

Source: DHFS 1996a.

It is important to note that these data do not represent the entire sector providing outside school hours care in Australia. The CSP statistics do not include the vacation care places funded under the block grant arrangements nor before/after school or vacation care services funded by some of the State Governments outside the National Child Care Strategy (NCCS) agreements (see Chapters 3 and 6). Additionally, some proportion of the outside school hours care sector receives no funding from Commonwealth, State or Territory Governments.⁸ Where available, information on these various parts of the sector is presented in the sections relating to the various States and Territories.

State and Territory data on outside school hours care services are included in the appropriate section in Chapter 6. No attempt has been made, however, to reconcile State and Territory data with Commonwealth data, because of differences in the scope and coverage of data collections and in their data definitions.

Even within the Commonwealth administrative data collection, in order to measure progress against the planned strategy targets, 'places' are counted in two different ways, depending on whether they were established prior to the introduction of the year round care model or under the year round care model. Where places were established prior to introduction of the year round care model, a before school care place is counted as one place and an after school care place as one place. Where places were established under the year round care model, however, a before school care place and an after school care place count as a proportion of a year round care place (see Appendix 2).

8. Employer-sponsored outside school hours places (see above) in CSP-funded services do not receive any operational funding nor do they attract Childcare Assistance (DHFS 1996a, Section 10.3.2).

3 Funding and funding conditions

3.1 Before/after school care and vacation care (year round care model)

Non-profit organisations, including community organisations, local governments, religious and charitable organisations and school boards or councils established under State or Territory legislation, are eligible to apply for CSP outside school hours care funding (DHFS 1996b, Section 2.1). The Commonwealth Government directly funds these organisations to provide before/after school care services and vacation care services funded under the year round care model, except in Victoria and South Australia where funding is administered by the State Government.⁹

Depending on the specific initiative under which places were established, Commonwealth-funded before/after school care and vacation care (year round care model) is funded either solely by the Commonwealth or jointly by the Commonwealth and the States and Territories (see Appendix 1). Under joint funding arrangements, the Commonwealth provides funding to establish services and operational funding is provided jointly by the Commonwealth and the States and Territories.

Currently (at December 1996), all agencies funded by the CSP to provide new before/after school care and/or new vacation care services are eligible for capital funding in the form of equipment, establishment and set-up grants. These grants are also payable to agencies providing services which were previously unfunded and to agencies receiving funding for additional places (DHFS 1996b, Section 6.3).

At December 1996, these one-off grants were as follows (DHFS 1996b, A.2):

- an equipment grant of \$100 per year round care place;
- a set-up grant of \$33 per year round care place; and
- an establishment grant of a minimum of \$942 and a maximum of \$2,827, based on the number of new services offered by an agency. A proportion of the grant is payable to agencies receiving add-on places based on the number of places.

An operational subsidy is paid for before school care, after school care, and vacation care (year round care model) places approved for Commonwealth funding. Currently (at December 1996), there are two levels of operational subsidy, with a higher rate of 57 cents per approved place per hour for the first 30 places, and 49 cents per approved place per hour for any other approved places (DHFS 1996b, Section 6.2, A.2).¹⁰ In order to

9. A small number of Commonwealth-State funded before/after school care places in Victoria are funded according to a State model of funding (see Chapter 6).

10. The operational subsidy is paid on 'the number of approved hours of operation', so that the definition of 'approved place' used in assessing the level of subsidy is not the same as the definition of 'place' used in counting a 'year round care place' (DHS 1995b, p. 6) (see Appendix 2).

receive 52 weeks of Commonwealth funding, agencies must provide before/after school care and vacation care (year round care model) services for 48 or more weeks a year, that is, 41 weeks of before/after school care and 7 weeks or more of vacation care. Services operating for less than 48 weeks are eligible only for funding for the weeks in which they operate (DHFS 1996b, Section 3.7.2). Vacation care services (year round care model) must operate for a minimum of 8 hours a day during school holidays, while before/after school care services may operate for several hours, 5 days a week, during school terms (DHFS 1996b, Section 3.7.1).

The Commonwealth Government has four priorities for funding services under the year round care model (see Appendix 2):

- First priority is given to sponsors who propose to operate a before/after school care service and a vacation care service at the same or a different location. At least one of these services must be a new service. If one of the services is already established, it must be an unfunded service.
- Second priority is given to sponsors who propose to operate a new before/after school care service or a new vacation care service where the sponsor can demonstrate that children attending the new service have access to an existing funded before/after school care service or vacation care service so that they have access to care throughout the year.
- Third priority is given to agencies already funded by the CSP to provide before/after school care services or vacation care services (year round care model), where the agency is requesting funding for additional places. These agencies must also demonstrate a link with another agency providing an outside school hours care service so children have access to care throughout the year.
- Sponsors proposing to provide a new service, which will not have links to an existing service to provide care throughout the year, are given the lowest funding priority.

The outside school hours care rate of Childcare Assistance is available to parents using Commonwealth-funded before/after school care and vacation care (year round care model) services (see Appendix 3). This rate of Childcare Assistance is lower than the long day care rate, the payment is subject to a more stringent means test and the two payments are administered differently. While eligibility for the long day care rate is assessed by the Department of Social Security (DSS), families using an outside school hours care service are required to present the outside school hours care agency with the family's annual DSS Family Payment letter. This letter contains a code which tells the outside school hours care agency if the family is eligible for Childcare Assistance and, if so, at which rate. These administrative arrangements will change from 1 January 1998, when Childcare Assistance will be administered by the Commonwealth Government's new Service Delivery Agency and families will be able to have their child care payments paid to the approved outside school hours care agency or to receive these payments directly (DHFS 1996c, p. 186).

Parents using services for work-related reasons are also eligible to receive the Childcare Cash Rebate (see Appendix 3). At present (December 1996), the rebate is administered by the Health Insurance Commission, but from 1 January 1998 it will be paid through the Service Delivery Agency.

Currently (at December 1996), new services are subject to the needs-based planning process and priority of access guidelines must be followed by all service providers in allocating places to users (see Appendix 2). As announced in the 1996–97 Federal Budget, however, a new National Planning Framework is being developed in consultation with State and Territory Governments and non-government organisations, and priority of access guidelines are being reviewed as part of this process (DHFS 1996c, p. 179).

3.2 Vacation care services funded under the block grant arrangements

The Commonwealth vacation care block grant is an untied grant, paid through the CSP, with funding distributed by the States and Territories according to their own criteria. Under the 1988 NCCS agreements, all States and Territories, except New South Wales and the Northern Territory, contribute funding to expand vacation care (see Appendix 1) and some States and Territories, including New South Wales, provide substantial funding for vacation care services in addition to the NCCS contribution. In many jurisdictions, all funding for vacation care services is pooled, so that it is not possible to separate out the numbers of services and places funded under the block grant arrangements (see Chapter 6). The Commonwealth block grant is not adjusted for increases in the Consumer Price Index, so it declines in real value over time. From 1997, as a Commonwealth Special Purpose Payment, the block grant will also be affected by the Efficiency Dividend announced in the 1996–97 Budget, which will decrease funding by 3% in the first year (Commonwealth of Australia 1996, p. 3-111).

Agencies providing vacation care services funded under block grant arrangements are not eligible to offer Childcare Assistance, but parents using these services for work-related reasons are eligible for the Childcare Cash Rebate (see Appendix 2). In some States and Territories, agencies providing vacation care services funded under the block grant arrangements also offer some form of fee relief for low-income families using these services (see Chapter 6). Commonwealth government priority of access guidelines do not necessarily apply to vacation care services funded under these arrangements (see Chapter 6).

3.3 Pilot Programs

As part of the 1995–96 Federal Budget initiatives, four funding models are being piloted in order to address the inequities in funding between the outside school hours care sector and the long day care sector. One inequity relates to the more tightly targeted and lower rate of Childcare Assistance available to parents using Commonwealth-funded outside school hours care services compared with the rate of Childcare Assistance available to parents using Commonwealth-funded long day care services for primary school age children. The other inequity addressed in these Pilot Programs relates to the ineligibility for Childcare Assistance of outside school hours care services provided by

private-for-profit agencies compared with the eligibility of private-for-profit long day care centres for this type of Commonwealth assistance.

Currently, Pilot Programs are funded under the following four models (see Appendix 4):

- 32 community-based non-profit agencies are provided with an operational subsidy, Childcare Assistance, establishment, equipment and set-up grants;
- 11 private-for-profit agencies are provided with a higher rate of Childcare Assistance;
- 7 non-profit agencies are provided with the higher rate of Childcare Assistance and with equipment, establishment and set-up grants; and
- 5 agencies in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas are provided with an operational subsidy, a flat rate of Childcare Assistance with no minimum fee and establishment, equipment and set-up grants. Funding is provided through a block grant paid monthly in advance.

One of aims of the Pilot Program is to evaluate the relative effectiveness of each funding model, for instance, by comparing the operation of non-profit agencies receiving Childcare Assistance and equipment, establishment and set-up grants but no operational subsidy, with the operation of private-for-profit agencies receiving Childcare Assistance only (Models 2 and 3).

3.4 Summary

Commonwealth government strategies have led to a situation in which outside school hours care services are provided under a complex set of funding arrangements (Table 3.1). It is important to note that agencies providing year round care, that is, before/after school and vacation care services, are not necessarily funded under the year round care model. Some agencies were funded to provide before/after school care services and vacation care services under separate funding arrangements prior to the introduction of the year round care funding model in 1992 (see Chapter 6).

Table 3.1: Funding arrangements for outside school hours care services

Type of service	Funding	
Before/after school care only	CSP outside school hours care funding	
	CSP year round care funding	
	State funding (Vic)	
	Unfunded	
Vacation care only	CSP block grant funding	
	CSP year round care funding	
	State funding (NSW, Vic, Qld, SA, Tas)	
	Unfunded	
Combined services	Funding for B/ASC service	Funding for vacation care service
One agency provides both before/after school care and vacation care	CSP outside school hours care funding	CSP block grant funding
	CSP year round care funding	CSP year round care funding
	State funding (Vic)	State funding (Vic)
	Unfunded	CSP block grant funding
	CSP outside school hours care funding	Unfunded
	CSP year round care funding	Unfunded
	Unfunded	CSP year round care funding
One agency providing before/after school care is linked with another agency providing vacation care	CSP outside school hours care funding	CSP year round care funding
	CSP year round care funding	CSP block grant funding

Notes

1. CSP outside school hours care funding is provided jointly by the Commonwealth and the States and Territories (except in New South Wales and the Northern Territory) or by the Commonwealth only, to services established prior to the 1992 NCCS.
2. CSP year round care funding is provided jointly by the Commonwealth and the States and Territories, or by the Commonwealth only, to services established under the 1992 NCCS.
3. CSP block grant funding is provided jointly by the Commonwealth and the States and Territories.
4. Services established under the Pilot Program are not included in this table.

4 Service quality

The licensing and regulation of child care services is a responsibility of State and Territory Governments (DHFS 1996b, Section 1.3.2). 'Regulations are a legal statement of basic standards determined by government to be appropriate for a service or industry. As such regulations are enforceable by law and cannot be changed except through government processes' (SCSWA 1993, p. 8). Regulations, or standards, relate to the 'quantifiable inputs' which are considered necessary to provide a high quality service. In the case of child care services, these standards relate to factors such as the physical environment of the service, health and safety aspects, staffing and activities (Brennan 1994, p. 201; Moyle et al. 1996, p. 29).

The Australian Capital Territory is currently the only jurisdiction in which outside school hours care is licensed and regulated (see Chapter 6). In some other jurisdictions, where State and Territory Governments administer the funding for outside school hours care, 'input standards' have been incorporated into funding guidelines or funding agreements, although these standards vary somewhat in the different States and Territories (see Chapter 6 and Appendix 5). 'Input standards' are not incorporated into the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) recurrent grants agreements with service sponsors.

Commonwealth and State and Territory departments have field staff who monitor and support agencies providing outside school hours care services. This process ensures a degree of compliance with standards incorporated in funding conditions and guidelines, where these standards exist. The extent of regulation or maintenance of standards through such arrangements, however, has been limited (SCSWA 1994, pp. 6-7). There is also believed to be a significant unfunded sector, as noted earlier, which, except in the Australian Capital Territory, is not required to comply with any standards.

A set of national standards for outside school hours care has been developed by the representatives from each of the relevant State and Territory departments and the Commonwealth, through a similar process by which national standards were developed for centre-based long day care and family day care. The national standards for outside school hours care were endorsed by Commonwealth and State government ministers at the Community Services Ministers' Conference in June 1995 and are due to be implemented by 1997. The responsibility for implementing these standards rests with State and Territory Governments. The ways in which State and Territory Governments are implementing the standards or plan to implement the standards are discussed in Chapter 6.

The national standards for outside school hours care (CSMC 1995), like their counterparts for centre-based long day care and family day care, cover the following areas:

- the facilities within which the services operate (space requirements, toilets, food preparation areas);
- health and safety procedures;
- service procedures (hours of operation, equipment, excursions);
- administrative functions (record keeping and insurance); and
- staffing.

Staff-child ratios and staff qualifications have been found to be positively related to the quality of child care services (Ochiltree 1994). The staff-child ratios in the national standards are shown in Table 4.1, along with those currently applicable in the various States and Territories. The national standards for outside school hours care specify a maximum of 15 children per staff member, with a maximum of 8 children per carer for excursions and 5 children per carer for swimming. The ratios for supervision of children on excursions and swimming activities may include carers other than the regular staff. A minimum of two staff members must be present at all times, with some exceptions possible 'in certain defined circumstances', such as small, single-staff agencies in rural areas (CSMC 1995, p. 15).

At a minimum, there must be one qualified staff member to 'every 30 children or part thereof', with a 'qualification' for the purposes of the standards defined as a degree in teaching (primary and/or early childhood) or an associate diploma in child care and/or in youth or recreation (see Appendix 5). Experience in working with children aged 5-12 years is also desirable. The coordinator of an outside school hours care agency must be qualified. Although the national standards do not include any requirements relating to the minimum age of staff, all qualified staff would necessarily be 'adult', that is, 18 years of age or older.

Some concern has been expressed by service providers and workers regarding the requirement relating to qualifications. This is because there are few courses specifically targeted to this sector (in contrast to other child care services), and also because many of the current staff have extensive experience working in the sector, rather than holding formal qualifications. The standards document notes this and states that:

- courses should be developed specific for the sector;
- prior learning should be recognised in such courses;
- until such courses are developed, qualifications in child care, early childhood teaching or primary teaching, and recreation should be considered as acceptable; and
- the requirements for qualifications should be phased in (CSMC 1995, p. 14).

Information on the qualifications, experience and age of staff working in CSP-funded outside school hours care agencies was collected in the 1994 Census of Child Care Services. These data are presented in the following chapter.

The national standards apply only to agencies specifically set up to provide outside school hours care services. They do not apply in situations where primary school age children are being cared for in family day care or in a long day care centre. Although family day care is not licensed and regulated in every State and Territory, some State and

Territory children's services regulations specify the maximum number of children under 12 years who may be cared for in a family day care provider's home at any one time (see Appendix 6). In some States and Territories statutory regulations for centre-based children's services also include regulations relating specifically to the care of primary school age children. In the Australian Capital Territory, there are specific licence conditions for child care centres caring for primary school children under 9 years of age (see Chapter 6).

Another aspect of determining quality, accreditation, focuses on outcomes, that is, 'the way in which [a service] actually functions' (Brennan 1994, p. 201). Currently there is no accreditation for outside school hours care services, but in the 1996-97 Federal Budget it was announced that 'the Government will extend accreditation in an appropriate form throughout the children's services sector' (Moyle 1996, p. 9).

Table 4.1: Staff-child ratios in outside school hours care: national standards and State and Territory regulations and guidelines, 1996

State and Territory	Ratio of staff to children	Activity
National standards^(a)	1:15	General centre-based activities
	1:8	Excursions
	1:5	Swimming
New South Wales	1:15	General centre-based activities
	1:10	High number of children under 8 years or with behavioural problems
	1:10	Vacation care centres where children are known to staff
	1:10	Where services integrate children with disabilities
	1:5	For services specifically for children with disabilities
	1:5	Beach, river, lake, dam
	1:10	Supervised municipal pool
	1:10	Water fun park
Victoria		National standards apply
Queensland	1:12	Vacation care centre-based activities
	1:12	Excursions other than swimming

(continued)

Table 4.1 (continued): Staff-child ratios in outside school hours care: national standards and State and Territory regulations and guidelines, 1996

State and Territory	Ratio of staff to children	Activity
Western Australia^(b)	1:10	Vacation care
	1:15	Before and after school care
	1:10	Excursions
	1:5	Excursions to recognised surf beaches
South Australia	1:10	Children aged 5–8 years
	1:15	Children aged 8 years and over
	1:4	Children with disabilities
	1:8	Excursions for children aged 5–8 years
	1:10	Excursions for children aged 8 years and over
	1:1	Excursions for children with disabilities
Tasmania		None specified or recommended for vacation care
Australian Capital Territory	1:10	General centre-based activities
	1:8	Excursions to a supervised pool
	1:5	Excursions to river, beach, lake or dam
	1:5	Canoeing, sailing and other water-based sports
	1:8	Other excursions
	1:8	Holiday camps
Northern Territory	1:10	Vacation care (average across all activities)

(a) One staff member must be qualified for every 30 children or part thereof.

(b) Ratio of qualified to unqualified staff is detailed in Appendix 5.

Source: National standards and State and Territory guidelines (see Appendix 5).

5 Outside school hours care services in 1994

The data presented in this chapter are taken from the CSP's 1994 Census of Child Care Services. The 1994 census collected information from agencies which received operational funding from the Commonwealth Government to provide before/after school care services. The census also collected information from agencies providing vacation care services funded under the year round care model (see Appendix 3 and Chapter 3).

The terminology used in the census is somewhat confusing:

- The term 'service' is used both for the agency providing a service and for the service itself.
- The term 'outside school hours care services' is used in the census to refer to agencies providing only before/after school care, and excludes agencies providing vacation care.
- When an agency providing before/after school care also provides vacation care, the vacation care service is referred to in the census as a 'program'.

Because of these confusions, the CSP census data are reported here using the terminology set out in Chapter 1 of this report.

In 1994 the census collected information from 1,353 agencies providing before/after school care services—a response rate of 96%—and 216 agencies providing vacation care services—a response rate of 98%. The census covered outside school hours care agencies, their staff and the children using the services.

When examining data on service venues and staff, it is important to note that there is some overlap between before/after school service venues and staff, and vacation care service venues and staff. While agencies providing before/after school care services and agencies providing vacation care services are counted separately in the census, an unknown number of these agencies are one and the same, since an agency may be funded by the CSP to provide a before/after school care service and a vacation care service. The agency may provide these services at the same location with some or all of the same staff.

5.1 Provision of before/after school hours care

At the time of the 1994 census, 52% of agencies providing before/after school hours care services Australia-wide provided only after school care (Table 5.1). Only 10 agencies provided before school care only and the remaining 47% provided both before and after school care.

Agencies that provided after school care only were predominant in most States and Territories, with the exception of New South Wales and South Australia. In New South Wales, 68% of agencies provided both before and after school care, and in South Australia the figure was 80%.

In the Northern Territory there were no agencies providing a before school care service. The four largest States had at least one agency providing before school care only, while in South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory, before school care was provided only by agencies which also provided after school care.

Table 5.1: Agencies providing before/after school care services, by type of service and State and Territory, 1994

Type of service	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
	Number								
Before school only	2	6	1	1	0	0	0	0	10
After school only	128	229	176	70	28	26	33	15	705
Before and after school	278	126	72	28	114	8	12	0	638
Total number of agencies	408	361	249	99	142	34	45	15	1,353
	Percentage								
Before school only	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
After school only	31	63	71	71	20	76	73	100	52
Before and after school	68	35	29	28	80	24	27	0	47
Total number of agencies	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: DHFS 1996d, Tables 1 and 9.1.13.

5.2 Links to vacation care

The 1994 census contains information about the different vacation care arrangements offered by CSP-funded agencies at that time.

Of the 1,353 agencies providing before/after school care, 19% offered no vacation care service or assistance, 43% of agencies provided their own vacation care service and 38% offered other assistance with vacation care (Table 5.2). Other forms of assistance ranged from simply providing information to offering places in a vacation care service provided by another agency operated by the same or a different sponsor.

Table 5.2: Vacation care assistance offered by agencies providing before/after school hours care services, by State and Territory, 1994

Type of arrangement	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
	Number								
Agency does not offer any assistance	69	116	26	12	15	9	7	0	254
Agency provides own service	193	69	144	58	86	15	8	6	579
Agency offers other assistance ^(a)	143	169	78	29	41	10	29	9	508
Offers places (same sponsor)	51	56	23	15	10	7	11	0	173
Offers places (different sponsor)	20	18	13	2	6	1	5	0	65
Provides information	81	98	45	15	26	2	15	9	291
Other	12	11	6	1	1	0	1	0	32
Assistance not specified	3	7	1	0	0	0	1	0	12
Total number of agencies	408	361	249	99	142	34	45	15	1,353
	Percentage								
Agency does not offer any assistance	17	32	10	12	11	26	16	0	19
Agency provides own service	47	19	58	59	61	44	18	40	43
Agency offers other assistance ^(a)	35	47	31	29	29	29	64	60	38
Total^(b)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(a) Services may offer more than one type of assistance.

(b) Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Source: DHFS 1996d, Table 9.1.16.

There was considerable variation between the States and Territories in the type of assistance offered by agencies with regard to vacation care. In Victoria, 32% of services offered no assistance compared with 10–12% in Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia. A high proportion of agencies in these three States provided their own vacation care service.

Vacation care services funded under the year round care model can be provided in conjunction with a before/after school care service through a variety of arrangements, for instance:

- one agency may be funded to provide both a before/after school care service and a vacation care service; or
- one sponsor may receive funding to operate one agency which provides a before/after school care service and another agency which provides a vacation care service; or
- one sponsor may receive funding to operate an agency which provides a vacation care service and has links with an agency, operated by another sponsor, providing a before/after school care service.

There were 579 agencies funded by the CSP to provide a before/after school care service which also provided a vacation care service (Table 5.2). Of the agencies which were funded by the CSP to provide a vacation care service (year round care model), there were

185 which were funded in conjunction with a before/after school care service (Table 5.3). An unknown number of these 185 agencies provided both a vacation care and a before/after school care service. This indicates that many of the 579 agencies which were funded by the CSP to provide a before/after school care service, and also provided a vacation care service, were funded to provide the vacation care service under separate funding arrangements or did not receive any funding for the vacation care service (see Table 3.1). Thirty-one (15%) of the 216 agencies providing vacation care (year round care model) were not funded in conjunction with an agency providing a before/after school care service. Services in Victoria were more likely than those in any other State or Territory to be in this category. These are probably services funded under the lowest priority—priority four—for year round care funding (see Appendix 3 and Chapter 3).

Table 5.3: Agencies providing vacation care services: links with before/after school hours care (B/ASC) services, by State and Territory, 1994

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Funded in conjunction with B/ASC	59	25	55	15	27	0	4	0	185
Not funded in conjunction with B/ASC	8	15	2	3	2	0	1	0	31
Total number of agencies	67	40	57	18	29	0	5	0	216

Source: DHFS 1996d, Table 10.1.9.

5.3 Hours of operation

The majority (74%) of before school hours services operated for less than 3 hours per day (Table 5.4), since most schools begin classes around 9 am.¹¹ This pattern was consistent across all of the States and Territories. The pattern was reversed for after school care, with the majority of services operating for 3 or more hours per day, although in South Australia close to 40% of services operated for less than 3 hours per day. In contrast to the other States and Territories, after school hours care services in Victoria were most likely to operate for less than 3 hours (65%).

11. It is important to note that the unit of analysis in Section 5.3 is 'service', not 'agency'. The hours of operation of an agency may not be the same as the hours of operation of a service, since one agency can operate more than one service, for instance, both a before school care service and an after school care service.

Table 5.4: Hours of operation of before and after school care services, by State and Territory, 1994

Hours of operation	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Before school care									
< 3 hours per day	273	131	72	29	114	8	12	0	639
3+ hours per day	7	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	8
Total number of services	280	131	73	29	114	8	12	0	647
After school care									
< 3 hours per day	36	230	10	9	53	4	5	6	353
3+ hours per day	370	125	238	89	88	30	40	9	989
Total number of services	406	355	248	98	141	34	45	15	1,342

Note: Number of missing cases: before school care = 1, after school care = 1.

Source: DHFS 1996d, Tables 9.1.2 and 9.1.8.

For vacation care, the majority of services operated between 10 and 11 hours per day (Table 5.5). This was true in all States and Territories except the Australian Capital Territory. A higher proportion of services in Queensland (42%) operated for 11 hours or more per day than in the other States and Territories.

Table 5.5: Hours of operation of vacation care services, by State and Territory, 1994

Hours of operation	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Vacation care									
< 10 hours per day	13	5	3	6	1	0	3	0	31
10 – < 11 hours per day	33	24	29	10	20	0	2	0	118
11+ hours per day	21	11	23	2	8	0	0	0	65
Total number of services	67	40	55	18	29	0	5	0	214

Note: Number of missing cases: vacation care = 2.

Source: DHFS 1996d, Table 10.1.2.

5.4 Type of venue

Before and after school care services usually operate in schools or in nearby community facilities, such as neighbourhood houses, community centres or recreation facilities. The distributions of venues for before school care services and after school care services were very similar, with two-thirds of services located at schools (Table 5.6). This is probably because many agencies provide both a before school care service and an after school care service which they operate at the same location.

Table 5.6: Type of venue for before and after school care services, by State and Territory, 1994 (%)

Type of venue	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Before school care									
School-based	55	74	75	24	89	50	67	0	66
Church hall	8	6	8	17	2	0	0	0	6
Community centre	18	7	8	31	4	0	25	0	13
Other	19	13	8	28	5	50	8	0	15
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>100</i>						
Total number of services	280	132	73	29	114	8	12	0	648
After school care									
School-based	54	74	78	33	90	47	91	67	67
Church hall	7	6	7	9	1	3	0	0	6
Community centre	21	8	8	37	1	18	5	27	14
Other	18	12	7	21	7	32	5	7	13
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>								
Total number of services	406	354	246	98	142	34	44	15	1,339

Note: Number of missing cases: after school care = 4.

Source: DHFS 1996d, Tables 9.1.5 and 9.1.11.

There was, however, considerable variation in the distribution of venues between the States and Territories. In South Australia, nearly all before and after school care services were located in schools, while in Western Australia and Tasmania, unlike other States and Territories, school-based services were not in the majority. In Western Australia, community centres were a more common venue than in other States and Territories. For vacation care, most services were located in schools.¹² Community centres and 'other' locations were the next most common venues, with church halls providing a venue for only 11 services Australia-wide (Table 5.7). Again, Western Australia stands out as the only State where schools are not the most prominent location for vacation care.

Table 5.7: Type of venue for vacation care services, by State and Territory, 1994

Type of venue	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
School-based	44	18	45	5	27	0	4	0	143
Church hall	4	1	3	3	0	0	0	0	11
Community centre	11	13	3	5	0	0	1	0	33
Other	8	8	6	5	2	0	0	0	29
Total number of services	67	40	57	18	29	0	5	0	216

Source: DHFS 1996d, Table 10.1.6.

12. See introduction to Chapter 5.

5.5 Fees

The fees charged by agencies for before and after school care services reflect the hours of operation as indicated in Table 5.4. Most of the before school care services operated for less than 3 hours per day and 85% of agencies charged less than \$5 per session for the service (Table 5.8). On the other hand, most of the after school care services operated for more than 3 hours per day and nearly 70% of agencies charged more than \$5 per session for the service.

In most States and Territories, the majority of agencies charged less than \$5 per session for a before school care service. Agencies in South Australia were most likely to charge under \$3 for before school care. A higher proportion of agencies in New South Wales than in the other States and Territories charged \$4 or more for before school care, with 25% of agencies charging \$5 or more.

Table 5.8: Fees charged by agencies for before and after school care services, by State and Territory, 1994

Fees charged per session	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Before school care									
					Percentage				
\$0-\$2.99	11	25	59	24	65	38	25	0	30
\$3-\$3.99	29	34	23	41	26	38	42	0	30
\$4-\$4.99	35	30	10	21	7	25	25	0	25
\$5-\$5.99	20	7	7	14	1	0	8	0	12
\$6-\$6.99	4	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
\$7+	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>100</i>
Total number of agencies providing before school care	280	131	73	29	114	8	12	0	647
After school care									
					Percentage				
\$0-\$2.99	2	2	2	5	12	24	0	0	4
\$3-\$3.99	4	8	19	5	11	15	0	0	9
\$4-\$4.99	17	21	28	11	17	18	5	0	19
\$5-\$5.99	28	27	37	47	29	12	11	36	30
\$6-\$6.99	29	38	10	13	20	21	20	0	25
\$7+	21	5	3	18	11	12	64	64	14
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>
Total number of agencies providing after school care	404	352	248	98	142	34	44	14	1,336

Note: Number of missing cases: before school care = 1, after school care = 7.

Source: DHFS 1996d, Tables 9.1.3 and 9.1.9.

For after school care services, agencies in Tasmania were most likely to charge less than \$3, with almost one-quarter of agencies falling into this category. It appears that the Australian Capital Territory had the most expensive after school care services, with over two-thirds of agencies charging \$7 or more per session.

For vacation care, more than half of the agencies (127 out of 213) charged \$10 or more but less than \$15 per day (Table 5.9). In New South Wales over half of the agencies charged less than \$10 per day. In the Australian Capital Territory, all five agencies charged more than \$15 per day, again suggesting that agencies in the Australian Capital Territory are the most expensive.

Table 5.9: Fees charged by agencies for vacation care services, by State and Territory, 1994

Fees charged per day	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Vacation care									
< \$10	36	4	9	2	4	0	0	0	55
\$10–\$14.99	26	26	45	7	23	0	0	0	127
\$15+	4	10	2	8	2	0	5	0	31
Total number of agencies providing vacation care	66	40	56	17	29	0	5	0	213

Note: Number of missing cases: vacation care = 3. These fees are not, in most cases, inclusive of excursions.

Source: DHFS 1996d, Table 10.1.4.

5.6 Qualifications of staff

Information on the 'relevant qualifications' of staff in agencies providing CSP-funded services was collected in the census. In addition to teaching, child care and recreation, the list of 'relevant qualifications' in the census included nursing, social work, psychology, accountancy and business management. The census found that 43% of the 5,884 staff in agencies providing before/after school care services and 45% of the 1,301 staff in agencies providing vacation care services had some form of relevant qualifications (Table 5.10).¹³

Higher levels of qualifications among staff were found in agencies in Victoria, Western Australia and New South Wales. In the Australian Capital Territory, a relatively high proportion of staff in agencies providing vacation care services had relevant qualifications, but the opposite was the case for staff in agencies providing before/after school care services. Some of the staff without relevant qualifications at the time of the census were either working towards obtaining qualifications or had 3 years of experience working in outside school hours care. Overall, less than one-third of staff had no relevant qualifications, were not taking courses leading to qualifications, and had less than 3 years work experience.

13. See introduction to Chapter 5.

Table 5.10: Staff in agencies funded by the CSP to provide before/after school and vacation care services: number and percentage of staff with and without qualifications, by State and Territory, 1994

Qualification type	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Agency providing before/after school care service									
	Number								
Qualified staff	812	672	414	182	246	85	101	15	2,527
Staff with no qualifications									
Undertaking qualification	286	71	205	41	79	27	55	5	769
No qualification but worked 3 years	278	249	178	45	142	46	69	12	1,019
Neither	441	326	360	96	139	44	146	17	1,569
Total number of staff	1,817	1,318	1,157	364	606	202	371	49	5,884
	Percentage								
Qualified staff	45	51	36	50	41	42	27	31	43
Staff with no qualifications	55	49	64	50	59	58	73	69	57
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Agency providing vacation care service									
	Number								
Qualified staff	176	126	127	52	74	0	24	0	579
Staff with no qualifications									
Undertaking qualification	50	30	64	18	22	0	6	0	190
No qualification but worked 3 years	35	21	33	9	29	0	4	0	131
Neither	107	79	131	27	45	0	12	0	401
Total number of staff	368	256	355	106	170	0	46	0	1,301
	Percentage								
Qualified staff	48	49	36	49	44	0	52	0	45
Staff with no qualifications	52	51	64	51	56	0	48	0	55
Total	100	100	100	100	100	0	100	0	100

Note: Number of missing cases: B/ASC = 4.

Source: DHFS 1996d, Tables 9.3.3 and 10.3.3.

Teaching was the most common form of qualification, with nearly one in five workers (17% in agencies providing before/after school care services and 19% in agencies providing vacation care services) having early childhood qualifications. A further 9% of staff had primary teaching qualifications (Table 5.11). Around 10% of workers had qualifications in child care (about half of which were from 2- or 3-year courses), and a further 12–14% had 'other relevant' qualifications, including nursing, recreation, social work, psychology, accountancy or business management. Given that some workers held more than one qualification and that the proportion having 'recreation' qualifications is

not given separately, it is not possible to state precisely the proportion of workers who had qualifications matching those identified as 'acceptable' in the national standards (see Chapter 4), but it appears that in the 1994 census about one-third of the workers were in this category.¹⁴

Table 5.11: Staff in agencies funded by the CSP to provide before/after school and vacation care services: staff with specified qualifications, by State and Territory, 1994 (%)

Qualification type	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Staff in agencies providing before/after school care services									
Teaching (early childhood)	13	28	13	14	18	10	13	12	17
Teaching (primary)	13	8	4	20	6	7	2	0	9
Nursing	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	3
Child care (1 year)	4	4	5	5	2	1	4	6	4
Child care (2 years)	7	2	4	2	5	9	1	0	5
Child care (3 years)	2	2	1	2	2	1	0	2	1
Other relevant	13	12	10	12	9	15	7	10	11
Total number of staff	1,817	1,318	1,157	364	606	202	371	49	5,884
Staff in agencies providing vacation care services									
Teaching (early childhood)	17	30	15	14	18	0	9	0	19
Teaching (primary)	10	10	7	12	5	0	26	0	9
Nursing	2	2	3	2	5	0	0	0	2
Child care (1 year)	6	2	5	6	2	0	2	0	4
Child care (2 years)	10	1	2	4	5	0	0	0	5
Child care (3 years)	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
Other relevant	11	11	7	15	8	0	15	0	10
Total number of staff	368	256	355	106	170	0	46	0	1,301

Notes

1. Percentages shown in the table represent the proportion of all staff holding the specified qualification. As staff may hold more than one qualification, the columns may total to more than the percentage of staff with qualifications as shown in Table 5.10.
2. Staff may have more than one 'other relevant' qualification, thus the figures shown here may overstate the actual percentage of staff with such qualifications.
3. Number of missing cases: before/after school care = 4.

Source: DHFS 1996d, Tables 9.3.3 and 10.3.3.

14. For instance, 32% of staff in agencies providing before/after school care services had an early childhood or primary teaching qualification, or a 2- or 3-year child care qualification (assuming that very few staff had more than one of these qualifications). An unknown percentage of staff also had recreation qualifications, which are included in the 'other relevant' category.

5.7 Age of staff

The CSP census also collects information on whether staff working in agencies providing outside school hours care services are aged 18 years and older. While the national standards have not specifically addressed the issue of staff age, in some jurisdictions there are recommended standards relating to the age of workers in agencies providing outside school hours care (see Chapter 6 and Appendix 5). The 1994 census found that relatively small proportions (10% in agencies providing before/after school care and 17% in agencies providing vacation care) of the staff in the agencies covered in the census were categorised as 'junior'—under age 18 (Table 5.12).¹⁵ Agencies in the Australian Capital Territory employed a higher proportion of 'junior' staff (18% in agencies providing before/after school care services and 26% in agencies providing vacation care services).

Table 5.12: Age of staff in agencies funded by the CSP to provide before/after school care services and vacation care services, by State and Territory, 1994 (%)

Age of staff	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Agencies providing before/after school care services									
Senior	93	88	87	91	92	91	82	92	90
Junior	7	12	13	9	8	9	18	8	10
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>
Total staff	1,819	1,320	11,57	364	606	202	371	49	5,888
Agencies providing vacation care services									
Senior	83	86	83	81	86	0	74	0	83
Junior	17	14	17	19	14	0	26	0	17
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>100</i>
Total staff	368	256	355	106	170	0	46	0	1,301

Source: DHFS 1996d, Tables 9.3.6 and 10.3.5.

15. See introduction to Chapter 5.

6 Services in the States and Territories

This chapter outlines the involvement of State and Territory Governments in the provision and delivery of outside school hours care services. The chapter examines the administration of outside school hours care funding in the different States and Territories, the provision of State and Territory funding outside the NCCS agreements, the mechanisms in place to monitor standards of provision of care, and State and Territory plans and procedures to implement the national outside school hours care standards. Where available, State and Territory data on the number of agencies providing outside school hours care services and number of places are presented, along with Commonwealth data for the same time period.¹⁶ No attempt is made to combine these data to provide a complete picture of government-funded outside school hours care in a State and Territory because of differences in the classifications and definitions used in the various data collections.

6.1 New South Wales

Funding

In New South Wales, the State Government has little involvement in the provision of before and after school care. The State Office of the Commonwealth Department (DHFS) administers CSP funding for before and after school care, for vacation care (year round care model) and for the Outside School Hours Care Pilot Programs. Most of this funding is provided by the Commonwealth Government, although the State Government makes a contribution for some of the places established under the 1992 NCCS (see Appendix 1).

The New South Wales Department of Community Services (DCS) administers the vacation care block grant funds and provides additional funding for vacation care services outside the NCCS agreements. In 1995–96, DCS provided over \$3 million in funding for vacation care services. Some of the agencies funded by the State Government to provide vacation care services, however, also receive funding from the CSP to provide before and after school care services (Network 1995).

Sponsors of DCS-funded vacation care services, like all sponsors of services funded by the department, are required to enter into a Deed of Funding Agreement and abide by

16. In general the terminology in this chapter follows that used earlier in the report. Where data are presented for a State or Territory, however, the terminology used is that of the particular jurisdiction, with comparisons made between these data definitions and those used in the rest of the report. Extracts from some State and Territory documents, retaining the original State and Territory terminology, are included in Appendixes 3, 4 and 5.

accountability and policy requirements (NSW DCS, personal communication) (see Appendix 3). There is a uniform level of funding, with the department providing no subsidy for families with economic or special needs (NSW DCS 1995). Many agencies, however, offer fee reductions for the second or third child from the same family (Network, personal communication).

Vacation care sponsors in New South Wales include local government, neighbourhood centres and non-government organisations (NSW DCS 1996). Agencies operate outside school hours care services in a number of different types of venues in New South Wales, but an emerging trend is the location of new services in schools.

Standards and conditions of operation

According to the DCS policy statement for funded services, in New South Wales 'vacation care services aim to provide a safe caring environment for children during school vacations to meet the need of parents who require support with child rearing or child care' (NSW DCS 1995, p. 10). The policy statement outlines some general principles service providers should follow in relation to staffing (see Appendix 5), activities and access to care. No staff-child ratios or staff qualifications are specified, although there should be 'an adequate number of qualified and experienced staff' to provide a quality program. Children in care for work-related reasons should not be given priority of access, since 'vacation care services are open to children of families who are in the unpaid or paid workforce' (NSW DCS 1995, p. 10). As a general principle, vacation care services should be accessible to all children regardless of their circumstances. The policy statement does not set out specific hours or weeks of operation for vacation care services.

A Voluntary Code of Practice for Out of School Hours Services in New South Wales (NSW DCS 1993) was released in July 1993. This code of practice was developed by Network,¹⁷ with financial assistance from the DCS. The voluntary code of practice has detailed recommendations about a number of aspects of outside school hours care services including staffing, health and safety, premises, transportation, program activities and programs for children with special needs.

The code of practice recommends a minimum of two centre employees on duty at all times. The recommended staff-child ratio for before/after school care is the same as the national standards, while staff-child ratios for vacation care, excursions and swimming are different to the national standards (see Appendix 5). The code of practice also recommends staff-child ratios for children with disabilities and children with special needs.

According to the code of practice, 'potential staff' should have 'experience/ qualifications in working with children aged 5-12 in Out of School Hours services or similar recreational settings' (NSW DCS 1993, p. 4). 'Appropriate' qualifications include the Out of School Hours Care Certificate Course offered by TAFE in New South Wales, teaching, child care and leisure or recreation qualifications (see Appendix 5). Regarding minimum staff age, the code of practice recommends that the outside school hours

17. The Network of Community Activities (Network) is a non-government organisation which provides support and resourcing for agencies providing before/after school care services and vacation care services and is the peak body in New South Wales for outside school hours care services.

coordinator be at least 21 years old; that all staff members should be at least 16 years old; and that for every staff member under 18 years who is on duty, there should be at least two staff members 18 years of age or older present at all times (see Appendix 5).

The code of practice does not recommend priority of access for work-related care, but states that 'an Out of School Hours Service should aim to...enable parents/guardians to pursue work/study/training or other activities, in the knowledge that their children are being well cared for in a safe and happy environment' (NSW DCS 1993, p. 2).

All service providers are required to follow the Excursion Policy Guidelines, which cover the planning of excursions, transport and supervision of children (NSW DCS 1993). Staff-child ratios and minimum age of children attending different types of excursions are outlined in these guidelines (see Appendix 5).

National standards

Currently (December 1996), the DCS is considering the implementation of the national standards for outside school hours care services. The department has contracted Network to undertake a survey of agencies providing outside school hours care services to investigate their status in relation to the national standards (NSW DCS, personal communication).

Current developments

New initiatives from DCS have improved access to outside school hours care services. Access for children with disabilities, for example, has been improved in recent years with funding provided by the Ageing and Disability Department (Network, personal communication).

Funding for vacation care services will be a major issue beginning in 1998, when New South Wales changes to a new school calendar with equal length terms. Services will then operate during the break between Terms 1 and 2, which previously has been only the Easter holidays, and thus will require increased levels of funding (Network, personal communication).

Statistics

The CSP statistics indicate that the Commonwealth Government administered funding for 22,292 places in 793 outside school hours care 'services' (agencies) at 31 December 1995 in New South Wales (DHFS 1996a).¹⁸

In 1995-96, in New South Wales, the DCS funded 221 sponsors to operate 317 agencies providing vacation care services, a small number of these agencies providing services specifically for Aboriginal children or children with disabilities (NSW DCS 1996,

18. The CSP statistics are referred to in each State and Territory section of this chapter. It is important to note that these statistics cover all before and after school care places and vacation care (year round care model) places funded solely by the Commonwealth or jointly by the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments.

pp. 35–41). At 31 December 1995, the DCS administered funding for 13,695 vacation care places (NSW DCS, unpublished data).

6.2 Victoria

Funding

The Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS) administers all Commonwealth and State funding for outside school hours care places, except for the 1992 NCCS Commonwealth-only funded year round care places (see Appendix 1) and for places in the Pilot Programs. The State Government also provides funding outside the NCCS agreements. State-only funded outside school hours care has been provided in Victoria since the early 1980s. Unlike other States and Territories, Victoria distributes funding according to two funding models, the Commonwealth model and the State model (formerly known as the DOL [Department of Labour] model). These two different funding models are described in Appendix 3. DHS provides fee relief for before/after school, vacation and pupil free day care services funded under the State model; these services are not eligible for Commonwealth Childcare Assistance.

Where funding is State-administered, service providers receive information, advice and support from Children's Services Advisers located in DHS regional offices. Service providers also have access to specialist support from Playworks, a non-government organisation, to promote the inclusion of children with disabilities in outside school hours services.

As in other States and Territories, a proportion of school age care is unfunded, partly because there is insufficient funding for all eligible services. In some instances, the costs of unfunded services are covered by sources such as grants from school councils and the fees paid by parents. Some organisations—for instance, independent schools providing before and after school care services—do not apply for funding (Victoria DHS, personal communication).

Standards and conditions of operation

All sponsors¹⁹ receiving outside school hours care funding from DHS must sign funding and service agreements in which they agree to provide an outside school hours care service in accordance with the national standards and with a number of other departmental requirements (Victoria DHS 1996). If a sponsor does not comply with its funding and service agreement, then DHS has the option of withdrawing the funding.

Other service requirements relate to priority of access criteria, which are in line with Commonwealth criteria, and hours of operation. Children in care for work-related reasons must be given first priority of access (see Appendix 3). Vacation care services are

19. In Victoria, the term used for 'sponsor' is 'funded agency'. A 'funded agency' is the organisation which receives the outside school hours care grant from the department and is responsible for managing the funds (Victoria DHS, personal communication).

required to operate for a minimum of 10 hours per day and 8 weeks per year at the one location. On pupil free days, they are expected to provide care for at least the hours covered by the existing before/after school service and the normal school day.

National standards

The DHS has adopted a staged implementation of the national standards. While service providers were expected to implement most standards from February 1996 onwards, phase-in periods are provided for key standards, such as those relating to qualified staff. Many of the funding requirements under previous agreements were similar to the national standards. Sponsors have therefore had some preparation for the national standards prior to their implementation.

During 1996, the State Government introduced a number of initiatives to assist service providers to implement the national standards. In the first half of 1996, DHS published guidelines to assist service providers with implementation (Victoria DHCS 1996b). During this period sponsors were also provided with a one-off grant to assist them to meet the national standards, for instance, by modifying their equipment or upgrading their facilities. In late 1996 and early 1997, service providers were required to complete a checklist of items from the standards and were asked to inform the DHS about their progress in complying with each of the standards.

Current developments

DHS has been examining more flexible models of delivering outside school hours care in the State. In certain circumstances, DHS may waive the requirement for a minimum of two staff members where before school or after school care is required for small groups of children, for instance, in rural areas. Before/after school care services run according to this model, which is known as the single staff model, operate under strict DHS approved safety and security procedures.

DHS is also examining the quality of outside school hours care services and has contracted a consultant to develop a curriculum framework for outside school hours care. The document will identify underlying principles of good programming and provide practical guidance. Once this document is launched, the department anticipates funding an organisation to provide training for, at the minimum, outside school hours care coordinators (Victoria DHS, personal communication).

Statistics

State-administered funding

State government statistics show that, at February 1996, the State administered funding for 28,690 outside school hours care places, more than half of these (58%) being after school care places (Table 6.1). Before school care places accounted for only a small minority (13%) of places. The majority (75%) of outside school hours places were funded under the Commonwealth model. More than half of the State-administered places (58%)

were funded jointly by the Commonwealth and the State; 24% of the places were funded only by the Commonwealth and 18% of the places were State-only funded.

Table 6.1: State-administered outside school hours care places and locations by 'program type' and by funding model, Victoria, February 1996

'Program type'	Commonwealth model		State model		Total
	100% Commonwealth funding	Commonwealth-State funding	100% State funding	Commonwealth-State funding	
Places^(a)					
Before school	755	1,950	810	105	3,620
After school	6,120	4,335	4,190	1,890	16,535
Vacation care	n.a.	8,310	225	n.a.	8,535
Total	6,875	14,595	5,225	1,995	28,690
Locations					
Before school	23	68	32	4	(b)
After school	151	130	113	52	(b)
Vacation care	n.a.	170	5	n.a.	(b)

(a) Commonwealth-State funded year round care places are included in these totals. They are, however, not counted here according to the year round care formula, but disaggregated according to the various 'program components'.

(b) No total is given. Some of the locations have been double counted because one location may provide a number of 'program components', e.g. a before school and an after school 'program'.

Note: n.a. = not available.

Source: Victoria DHS, unpublished data.

In Victoria, as in other jurisdictions, a number of different outside school hours care 'program components' (services) may be provided at the one location.²⁰ The Victorian statistics show the different combinations of 'program components' provided at locations with more than one 'program component', according to whether or not they are funded under the year round care model (1992-96 NCCS) (Table 6.2). These data show that at February 1996 there were 29 locations where both after school care and vacation care were provided, and 18 locations at which before school care, after school care and vacation care were provided, where the 'programs' were established prior to the introduction of the year round care model.

20. In Victoria, 'funded agencies' (sponsors) provide one or more 'program components' (services) at one or more locations.

Table 6.2: State-administered outside school hours care locations with more than one 'program component' (service), Victoria, February 1996

'Program components' (services)	Locations
Before and after school ^(a)	74
Before school ^(b) and after school ^(a)	2
Before and after school ^(b)	17
Before school and vacation care ^(b)	1
After school and vacation care ^(a)	29
After school and vacation care ^(b)	6
Before and after school and vacation care ^(a)	18
Before and after school and vacation care ^(b)	12
Before school and vacation care ^(b) and after school ^(a)	2
After school and vacation care ^(a) and before school ^(b)	1
Total	162

Notes

(a) Program established prior to 1992-96 NCCS.

(b) Program established under the 1992-96 NCCS.

Source: Victoria DHS, unpublished data.

Commonwealth-administered funding

Data from the State Office of the DHFS show that at February 1996 the Commonwealth Government administered funding for another 2,723 before school care places, 3,460 after school care places and 2,452 vacation care places in Victoria (DHFS Victoria, personal communication).²¹

CSP statistics

The CSP statistics show that at 31 March 1996 in Victoria, the CSP funded 18,049 places in 727 outside school hours care 'services' (agencies) (DHFS 1996a). These data include all before/after school care places and vacation care (year round care model) places funded by the Commonwealth Government either solely or jointly with the State Government. The CSP data differ from the State data in that the CSP statistics include places for which the Commonwealth administers the funding and exclude State-only funded places.

21. These places are the Commonwealth-only funded 'year round care' places provided under the 1992-96 NCCS. They are, however, not counted here according to the year round care formula, but disaggregated according to the various service types.

6.3 Queensland

Funding

In Queensland, as in New South Wales, before and after school care is predominantly a Commonwealth government responsibility. The Commonwealth Government administers Commonwealth and State government funding for before/after school care, for vacation care (year round care model), and for the Pilot Programs.

The Office of Child Care in the Queensland Department of Families, Youth and Community Care (DFYCC) administers most of the vacation care funding, that is, the Commonwealth block grant funding, the State NCCS contribution and additional State funding. In 1995–96, the Queensland Government administered \$1.8 million in vacation care funding, which included the Commonwealth block grant of \$0.8 million and the State contribution of \$1 million. A limited number of agencies operating vacation care services are provided with funds to facilitate the inclusion of children with a disability. As in other States, many agencies funded by the State government to provide vacation care also receive funding from the Commonwealth to operate before/after school care services (Queensland DFYCC, personal communication).

Sponsors of DFYCC-funded vacation care services, like all sponsors of services funded by the department, are required to enter into a service agreement and abide by funding guidelines and other accountability requirements. Agencies which also provide before/after school care services are given preference for vacation care funding 'in order that children can be provided with continuity of care' (Queensland DFSAIA 1992).

In 1991, the Queensland Government introduced a funding formula for State-administered vacation care services (see Appendix 3). The State Government does not provide any specific fee relief funding for vacation care, but under the funding guidelines agencies providing vacation care services must implement a sliding scale of fees to assist parents with low incomes (Queensland DFSAIA 1992).

Standards of care and conditions of operation

While the DFYCC has funding guidelines for vacation care, it currently has only limited involvement in setting standards for Commonwealth-administered outside school hours care (see below). Under the vacation care guidelines, there must be two staff members in attendance at any one time in funded vacation care services. Staff-child ratios differ from the national standards, in that a staff-child ratio of 1:12 is required for both centre-based activities and excursions, except for activities such as swimming. A 'staff member' for the purposes of the staff-child ratios refers to a person over the age of 18 years (SCSWA 1994). The guidelines state that 'an adequate number of qualified and experienced staff should be employed' but do not specify required qualifications. Agencies funded to provide vacation care services are required to follow priority of access criteria, in line with the Commonwealth criteria, giving first priority of access to children in care for work-related reasons (Queensland DFSAIA 1992).

National standards

The Queensland Government is currently in the process of implementing the national standards in the outside school hours care sector. Over a 4-year period, beginning with the 1995–96 State budget, the Queensland Government is making capital funding available to agencies providing before/after school care services and vacation care services to enable them to upgrade their facilities in accordance with the national standards. The State Government is also undertaking a public consultation in order to determine the community's view on whether the standards should be implemented through legislative regulation or through (non-mandatory) industry guidelines. DFYCC plans to implement the national standards in all outside school hours care services by the end of 1997 (Queensland DFYCC, personal communication).

Current developments

In Queensland, outside school hours care increasingly is being provided in private long day care centres. Queensland child care centre licensing regulations require school age children in long day care centres to occupy a different room from the younger children (see Appendix 6). This has caused problems for the older children, since they cannot be accommodated at a centre until a room can be vacated by a group of younger children, which may be some time after school has finished (Queensland DFYCC, personal communication).

Statistics

The DFYCC Annual Report shows that at June 1996 there were 12,843 'outside school hours care' (before/after school care) places and 7,824 vacation care places in Queensland funded by the Commonwealth and/or the State Government (Queensland DFYCC 1996, pp. 74–76, 22).

According to the CSP statistics at 30 June 1996, the Commonwealth administered funding for 13,587 places in 637 outside school hours care 'services' (agencies) (DHFS 1996a). In 1995–96, the DFYCC administered funding for vacation care services provided by 145 agencies (Queensland DFYCC, personal communication).

6.4 Western Australia

Funding

As in most other jurisdictions, sponsors providing before and after school care services, vacation care (year round care model) services, and services funded under the Pilot Programs receive their funding from the Commonwealth DHFS office in Western Australia. Under the NCCS, Western Australia contributes funding to the Commonwealth's block grant for vacation care services, and these funds are administered by the Children's Services Unit of Family and Children's Services (FCS), a

department of the State Government. Fee relief as such is not provided under State-administered vacation care, but service providers are encouraged to charge fees according to a sliding scale based on family income (CSSU 1993, pp. 19–20).

Standards and conditions of operation

All sponsors of outside school hours care services are expected to follow standards of operation guidelines (CSSU 1993) which were prepared in 1993 by a committee with representatives from the industry, unions, and relevant government departments and published by the Children's Services Support Unit (CSSU), a non-government organisation. Sponsors receiving vacation care funding from the State Government must sign 'service agreements' which state that sponsors must follow the guidelines as a condition of funding. FCS also conducts an annual 'quality audit' of these vacation care services to ensure compliance with standards of operation (WA FCS, personal communication).

The guidelines cover a number of aspects of outside school hours care services including staffing, venues, health and safety, transportation, activities and excursions. In relation to staffing, the guidelines categorise staff members as either 'supervisors' and 'playleaders'. Since the 'Playleaders Award' in Western Australia specifies staff (playleader)-child ratios and the training required for 'playleaders', these standards have been incorporated into the guidelines.

The award and guidelines state that a minimum of two staff should be present at all times, except in small, single-staff agencies in rural areas. The staff-child ratio is 1:15 in before/after school services, which is identical to the national standards, but in vacation care services the ratio is higher, 1:10. The ratios of trained to untrained staff vary according to the number of children using the service and the ages of the staff (see Appendix 5). Trained staff are defined as those who hold the TAFE Certificate in Human Services (Play Leading) or 'another relevant course', or are training and/or experienced. The supervisor of an agency must be over the age of 21 years, and the number of staff under 18 years of age must not exceed the number of staff 18 years of age and older²² (CSSU 1993, pp. 2–4).

Under the guidelines, Commonwealth priority of access requirements also apply to State-administered vacation care.

National standards

FCS intends consulting with outside school hours care service providers and with parent groups regarding the national standards. One issue still to be resolved is the higher standards in the current guidelines, particularly in regard to the staff-child ratios in vacation care and the level of training required for supervisors (WA FCS, personal communication).

22. The Equal Opportunity Commission in Western Australia has ruled that the requirement for a supervisor to be 21 years of age or older is discriminatory. There is a proposal to change the wording to 'a Supervisor should have experience in the field of working with primary school age children' (CSSU, personal communication).

Current developments

An important issue in Western Australia is the care of children attending Pre-primary, the program in the year prior to Year 1, the first full-time year of school in this State. Many Pre-primary programs are located in primary schools. Currently, around 40% of pre-Year 1 programs operate for 4 full-days (6 hours) per week, while the remainder operate for 4 half-days per week (Moyle et al. 1996, p. 17). Parents of children attending the programs for 4 full-days per week have experienced difficulties in finding appropriate care for their children on the fifth day (WA FCS, personal communication). It is anticipated that by 1998 all children in Pre-primary will be attending for 4 full-days and the resulting need for care will be considerably greater.

In Western Australia, home-based care is being trialed as an innovative way of providing care to primary school age children. Under this form of outside school hours care, home-based caregivers provide care for up to seven primary school age children in each caregiver's home. A key objective of home-based outside school hours care is to provide a service in areas where no outside school hours care exists, where the population is too dispersed for a standard outside school hours care service to be viable, or where there are families whose needs may not be met by a standard outside school hours care service. Two family day care schemes have been funded to explore the feasibility of providing home-based outside school hours care. One scheme is in a fringe metropolitan area and has been funded under the New Growth Strategy, while the other is within the metropolitan area and has been funded under the Pilot Programs (DHFS Perth, personal communication).

Statistics

The CSP statistics indicate that the Commonwealth Government administered funding for 5,488 places in 191 outside school hours 'services' (agencies) as at 30 June 1996 in Western Australia (DHFS 1996a). At December 1996, FCS administered funding for 2,064 vacation care places²³ funded under the block grant funding arrangements (WA FCS, personal communication).

Relative to the number of school age children, the provision of outside school hours care is limited in Western Australia compared with other States and Territories. One reason may be because of difficulties in acquiring appropriate venues, with a lower proportion of outside school hours care services being located within school facilities than in other jurisdictions (Pohl and Murphy 1993, pp. 6-8; see also Chapter 5).

6.5 South Australia

Funding

The State Government in South Australia, like that in Victoria, has a major involvement in outside school hours care. The State, through the Department for Education and

23. If these places were counted according to the year round care formula, they would comprise 1,040 places.

Children's Services (DECS), administers all outside school hours care funding, except for the Pilot Program funding. Like many other States, South Australia provides funding in addition to that provided under the NCCS agreements. These State funds are provided for vacation care services, and also to improve access to vacation care for children with a disability (SA DECS, personal communication).

In South Australia, newly funded outside school hours care agencies receive support from field officers funded by the Commonwealth Government and from DECS project officers, while established agencies have access to assistance from State project officers. Several non-government organisations also provide specialist support to agencies providing outside school hours care (SA DECS 1995, p. 18).

Standards and conditions of operation

All sponsors of funded services are required to sign a funding agreement which states that sponsors must meet the guidelines prescribed in the *Out of School Hours Care Kit*. This manual was prepared in 1993 by the Children's Services Office, which is now part of DECS. The manual (SA CSO 1993) has detailed information about staffing, space requirements, health and safety concerns, administration, finances and management requirements.

The staff-child ratio for children aged 8 years and older is the same as in the national standards (1:15), but there are higher ratios for younger children and for children with disabilities (see Table 4.1). Unless validated to operate as a single-staff service, a minimum of two staff should be present at all times, at least one of whom should be a 'senior' or 'trained' person. Qualifications regarded as relevant for staff include child care, teaching, recreation, youth work and community work (SA CSO 1993, pp. 28-29). Single-staff standards were developed in 1995, enabling services to operate with one staff member in situations where this is the only way of providing a feasible service (SA DECS, personal communication).

All funded services are required to meet Commonwealth priority of access guidelines. Funding agreements for vacation care services specify that services are required to operate for 9 hours a day, 5 days a week for the full school holiday period, except during the Christmas holidays when they are required to operate for a minimum of 3 weeks. Funding agreements for before/after school care and vacation care services also specify that fees are to be 'set on a sliding scale taking into account capacity of the family to pay' (SA CSO 1993, pp. 95, 99).

National standards

The *Out of School Hours Care Kit* is being revised to reflect the national standards, although the national standards are regarded as a 'minimum'. It is planned that the new standards will be in place from July 1997. Sponsors of funded services will be required to make a statutory declaration verifying their compliance with the standards, and agencies providing the services will be inspected on a regular basis. Providers of unfunded services will be asked to follow a voluntary code of practice, which will contain guidelines similar to those in the *Out of School Hours Care Kit* (SA DECS, personal communication).

Current developments

There is a high level of cooperation between schools and outside school hours care service providers in South Australia, in part because of the co-location of children's services with education in one State government department (DECS). The department's view is that outside school hours care is one of a range of services it provides and that care should be available at schools where needed. A conference in 1996 on outside school hours care services, involving school principals, councils, management committees, departmental staff, and non-government support groups, raised the profile of outside school hours care services within the department. Another reason for the relatively high level of support from schools is because school councils are offered incentives to provide the services, such as coverage by DECS of insurance costs, workers' compensation, and telephone charges.

DECS is now focusing on the need for outside school hours care services to be more age-specific, for example, by developing services for the different age groups of children within outside school hours care in order to better meet their needs. Another issue receiving attention is the need for care for children in stand-alone preschools at the end of their session (SA DECS, personal communication).

For a number of years DECS has funded a program known as Intervac, which assists the inclusion into vacation care services of children with special needs, such as children with disabilities. In 1994-95, DECS funding of Intervac assisted 19 agencies to employ additional support staff and provide 1,357 hours of care for these children. DECS has been working with the Commonwealth to develop similar support programs for before and after school care, to ensure that children with special needs have access to care throughout the year (SA DECS 1995, p. 18).

While vacation care services in South Australia are strongly school-based, a number of such services were established by women's shelters, using the block grant funds. These services are designed to provide specific assistance during school holidays to children currently residing in the shelter or who have recently been in residence (SA DECS, personal communication).

Statistics

According to the CSP statistics, there were 6,076 CSP-funded places in 391 outside school hours care 'services' (agencies) in South Australia as at 30 June 1996 (DHFS 1996a). In addition, in November 1996 there were 92 vacation care 'services' (agencies) with 3,259 places funded under the block grant arrangements (SA DECS, personal communication).

State reporting requirements for June 1996 note that there were 320 'sites' offering before/after school care and 163 'sites' offering vacation care²⁴ (SA DECS 1997, personal communication).

24. In South Australia, sponsors are funded to provide outside school hours care at 'sites' (locations).

6.6 Tasmania

Funding

As in most other jurisdictions, the State Government in Tasmania is not involved in administering funding for before/after school care, vacation care (year round care model) or for services funded under the Pilot Programs. Funding for these services is administered by the Commonwealth DHFS office in Tasmania, using procedures based on the *Outside School Hours Care Handbook* (DHFS 1996b). The Department of Community and Health Services (DCHS) administers funding for vacation care places provided under the block grant arrangements, plus some additional State funding provided outside the NCCS. There is no specific funding to provide fee relief for low-income families using these vacation care services, but service providers are able to use discretion when setting fees. Some providers charge lower fees to parents on low incomes, or where more than one child from the same family attends (Tasmania DCHS, personal communication).

Standards and conditions of operation

While Tasmania licenses agencies providing services for children below the age of 7 years, it does not license agencies providing services for children aged 7 years and above. Agencies which provide before/after school hours care and/or vacation care services for children aged 5 to 12 years have been exempted from the requirement to be licensed (SCSWA 1994, p. 14).

Where vacation care funding is administered by the State Government, service providers are expected to follow guidelines which have been published by DCHS. These guidelines (Tasmania DCHS 1996) do not specify a staff-child ratio for vacation care services, stating only that 'consideration should be given to child-staff ratios, including ratios of senior to junior staff and trained to untrained staff'. A minimum of two staff should be in attendance at all times, including at least one staff member with a current first aid qualification. The suggested minimum age for paid staff is 18 years (Tasmania DCHS 1996, p. 4).

Under the guidelines, these vacation care services must operate for at least 8 weeks per financial year, provide a program of activities for the full day (with hours set according to the needs of the community), and follow the Commonwealth's priority of access guidelines (Tasmania DCHS 1996, p. 1).

National standards

Tasmania is currently investigating the implementation of the national standards (DCHS, personal communication). The Outside School Hours Care Association of Tasmania (OSHCAT) is working with the Commonwealth and DCHS to promote the adoption of the national standards within individual agencies providing outside school hours care services (OSHCAT, personal communication).

Current developments

A new model for providing care for school age children using the same facility as a preschool is being developed by the Glenorchy council. This facility is designed to be used for Kindergarten (the preschool program in Tasmania) sessions during school hours, and for a before and after school hours service at other times (OSHCAT, personal communication).

Statistics

The CSP statistics indicate that the Commonwealth administered funding for 1,685 places in 64 outside school hours care 'services' (agencies) in Tasmania as at 30 June 1996 (DHFS 1996a). At November 1996, State Government statistics show that there were 27 vacation care 'services' (agencies) with 379 places funded under the block grant arrangements, and an additional 204 places funded solely by the State Government. Some of these State-only funded places are within agencies funded under the block grant arrangements, but most are in separate agencies (DCHS, personal communication).

6.7 Australian Capital Territory

Funding and funding conditions

As in most other jurisdictions, in the Australian Capital Territory the Commonwealth Government administers funding for before/after school care, vacation care (year round care model) and the Pilot Programs, while the Australian Capital Territory Government through its Department of Education and Training (DET) administers the Commonwealth vacation care block grant funding plus the Territory's NCCS contribution. No additional funding is provided by the Territory Government outside the NCCS agreements, except to assist with accommodation costs in schools (see section below on current developments).

Where the Territory Government administers the funding, DET has annual service agreements with the sponsors of the vacation care services. The sponsors specify in these agreements the hours their vacation care services will operate, which are usually from 8 am until 6 pm. Priority of access is generally given to children attending services for work-related reasons, although this criterion is not applied rigidly. DET expects the sponsors of vacation care services funded under these arrangements to use a portion of the funding for fee relief, but each sponsor is responsible for developing its own policy on and administering fee relief (ACT DET, personal communication).

Licensing conditions

Unlike the other jurisdictions, in the Australian Capital Territory, all outside school hours care services are required to be licensed in accordance with the Outside School Hours Care Licence Conditions 1993 under the provisions of the *Children's Services Act*

1986 (see Appendix 5).²⁵ The Children's, Youth and Family Services Bureau in DET is responsible for licensing all child care services in the Australian Capital Territory.

The licence conditions for outside school hours cover staffing requirements, health and safety measures, buildings and facilities and children's activities. Staff-child ratios for centre-based activities are higher than in the national standards, although for the purpose of these ratios the definition of 'staff' may include parents and volunteers, in some circumstances (see Appendix 5). When children are at the centre, the licence conditions require a minimum of two 'staff' present at all times, with a 'staff'-child ratio of 1:10 applying. More stringent licence conditions apply to excursions; for instance, a staff-child ratio of 1:8 must be maintained for all excursions other than swimming or water sports, with 'staff' referring to an employee aged 18 years or older (see Appendix 5).

Under the licence conditions, two staff members must have a first aid certificate and one of these staff members should be present at the centre at all times. Other than this, staff members are not required to have specific qualifications, but should be in good physical and mental health and have experience in recreational and community work with young people. In addition, the coordinator is required to be 21 years of age, while all other employees must be at least 16 years. At least half the employees present at the centre must be 18 years of age or older.

A separate set of licence conditions has been developed for long day care centres providing an outside school hours care service to children enrolled in primary school and aged not more than 8 years (see Appendix 6). These conditions are similar to the outside school hours care licence conditions, except that a staff-child ratio of 1:11 is specified for centre-based activities. There are also separate licence conditions for holiday camps (see Appendix 5).

National standards

DET is currently in the process of changing its licensing conditions for outside school hours care services to reflect the national standards. A working party on the implementation of the national standards has been formed and is consulting with various groups and organisations about the issues. One of the problem areas relates to the incorporation of the staff qualification standards into the licence conditions. DET expects that the standards will be implemented by the middle of 1997, although the working party is currently considering whether to delay the qualifications requirement until National Competency Standards are developed, which will occur during 1997 (ACT DET, personal communication).

The licence conditions for long day care centres providing an outside school hours care service and for holiday camps will also be reviewed to comply with the national standards (ACT DET, personal communication).

25. Licences must be issued in respect of both the licensee, that is, the 'operator' (sponsor), and the place of operation, that is, the 'centre' (location).

Current developments

In the Australian Capital Territory, most outside school hours care services operate in schools. Currently, the management of schools is moving from a centralised to a school-based model. Where outside school hours care services are located in schools, these schools will be provided with additional funding and will be expected to use the funding to subsidise the rent paid by the service providers (ACT DET, personal communication).

Statistics

The licensing database of the DET shows that at April 1996 there were 63 'operators' (sponsors) licensed to provide outside school hours care 'programs' (services) at 118 'centres' (locations), with before/after school care 'programs' (services) at more than half the 'centres' (Table 6.3).²⁶ Outside school hours care 'operators' included primary school Parents' and Citizens' Associations, the Catholic Education Office, community services organisations, and, in the case of vacation care 'operators', private-for-profit organisations. A number of 'operators' were licensed to operate 'centres' at which before/after school care was provided and to operate 'centres' at which vacation care was provided. There were also five long day care centres with 86 places licensed for outside school hours care and one holiday camp with 84 places.

Table 6.3: Licensed outside school hours care centres and places in the Australian Capital Territory, April 1996

Type of outside school hours care	Centres	Places
Outside school hours care (including vacation care)—year round care	15	612
Outside school hours care—before/after school care	63	6,255
Outside school hours care (vacation care)—vacation care only	40	2,318

Source: ACT DET, unpublished.

Only seven 'centres' offering vacation care only are funded through the block grant arrangements (ACT DET, personal communication), indicating that most vacation care 'centres' in the Territory are unfunded or are funded under the year round care model, with funding administered by the Commonwealth.

According to the CSP statistics at March 1996, the Commonwealth Government administered funding for 1,889 places in 80 outside school hours care 'services' (agencies) in the Australian Capital Territory (DHFS 1996a).

26. The licensing database divides outside school hours care into three categories: outside school hours care (including vacation care)—year round care; outside school hours care—before/after school care; and outside school hours care (vacation care)—vacation care. The same licensing conditions apply to each category.

6.8 Northern Territory

Funding

Territory Health Services (THS), the department responsible for children's services in the Northern Territory, has very little involvement in the outside school hours sector. The Territory Government does not provide any funding to outside school hours care services except for the contribution to year round care funding agreed to under the 1992-96 NCCS (see Appendix 1). The Commonwealth Government administers funding for before and after school care, vacation care (year round care model) and the Pilot Programs, while the Northern Territory Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR) administers the Commonwealth block grant for vacation care. Agencies funded by the Commonwealth to provide before/after school care services have priority for DSR-administered vacation care funding.

Standards and conditions of operation

Under DSR vacation care program guidelines, community groups are funded to provide a vacation care service for children aged 6-12 years, and are required to sign a sponsorship agreement which covers administrative matters. Funding is also provided to community groups to operate services for children with special needs, such as children with disabilities or Aboriginal children.

The DSR gives priority for funding to community groups who provide vacation care services which meet standards set out in the guidelines, including staff-child ratios, fees structures, hours of opening and access to programs. Priority for funding is given to vacation care services with a staff-child ratio of 1:10²⁷ (see Appendix 5). The guidelines also indicate that agencies which charge approximately \$15 a day for vacation care, but reduce fees for families in specific circumstances, are given priority for funding.

Service providers are not required to give priority of access to children using vacation care services for work-related reasons, since sponsors providing services which all members of the community can access are given priority for funding. Services which operate for a full day, 5 days a week, during school holiday periods have priority for funding.

National standards

Territory Health Services is currently examining how to implement the national standards for outside school hours care. All outside school hours care service providers have been given copies of the standards and asked to comment. No decision has yet been made for the 'framework' for the implementation, that is, whether the standards will be implemented through statutory regulations or through some other type of framework (NT THS, personal communication).

27. This is an average of the staff-child ratios across the various program activities, that is, centre-based activities and excursions.

Current developments

Outside school hours care in the remote areas of the Northern Territory is run on a very different model to that in the urban areas of Australia. Services are generally not targeted at working parents in these areas, since unemployment is very high and even where there is a Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) operating, parents often work part-time. In remote communities there is less emphasis on the 'care' component of the services and a greater focus on developmental and recreational activities for children after school. Vacation care funding is used for 'cultural maintenance' in some Aboriginal communities, for instance, for fishing, hunting and camping activities (NT THS, personal communication). One of the Commonwealth Government's Pilot Programs has been set up in a remote Aboriginal community to try to identify appropriate ways of providing care for school age children in these situations.

Statistics

Territory Health Services does not have a database on school age child care services, relying instead on the figures collected by the Commonwealth and by DSR. According to the CSP statistics, at 30 June 1996, the Commonwealth administered funding for 714 places in 29 outside hours care 'services' (DHFS 1996a). In 1996-97, 36 'vacation care programs' (agencies providing vacation care services) have been funded by DSR through the block grant funding arrangements.

7 Conclusion

This report demonstrates the current complexity in the provision and delivery of outside school hours care services Australia-wide, the fragmented nature of national outside school hours care data, and the lack of any consistent national data classifications, definitions and counting rules. The report also demonstrates the growth and change in the sector since the initial funding of services for school age children by the Commonwealth. It is likely that changes to Commonwealth funding arrangements for outside school hours care services announced in the 1997-98 Federal Budget will have a major impact on the provision and delivery of these services. As is the case for other child care services, the need for an Australia-wide data collection, with agreed data classifications and definitions, providing nationally consistent data on outside school hours care services is essential in order to monitor change and to evaluate outcomes for service users.

Appendix 1

Commonwealth strategies to increase the numbers of child care places 1972–1994

1972 Child Care Act

Under the Commonwealth Government's *Child Care Act 1972*, capital and recurrent funding was provided to non-profit organisations, through a submission-based system, to establish child care services, including outside school hours care services.

1983–85 Expansion of child care places

The Commonwealth entered into joint arrangements with New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia in 1983–84, and with all other States and Territories except Tasmania in 1984–85, to provide new child care places. Under these agreements:

- 5,061 new centre-based long day care places; and
- 1,124 outside school hours care places

were established in 1984–85.

The Commonwealth's capital contributions to the States and Territories were allocated on the basis of the numbers of children 0–4 years and each State and Territory then made individual arrangements with the Commonwealth for its capital contribution. The Commonwealth provided the recurrent funding for the places.

1985 Triennium

In 1984, the Commonwealth Government announced a new 3-year expansion of child care places consisting of 20,000 new places. The 20,000 places originally comprised:

- around 11,500 centre-based long day care places;
- 4,450 family day care places;
- 3,000 occasional care places; and
- the monetary equivalent of 1,000 places, which would be used to fund outside school hours care, support services and services for children with special needs.

In the May Economic Statement of 1987, it was announced that 600 of the promised centre-based long day care places and 600 of the occasional care places would be converted to family day care places as a savings measure.

As a consequence, the following child care places were established under this expansion:

- 10,952 new centre-based long day care places—8,400 of these being cost-shared with the States and Territories and 2,552 Commonwealth-only funded;
- 2,400 occasional care places in 'stand alone' centres, solely funded by the Commonwealth Government except in New South Wales where some operational funding was already provided by the State;
- 5,650 family day care places were established, also Commonwealth-only funded; and
- the cash equivalent of 1,000 places was used for new outside school hours places, and for program support, supplementary services (SUPS) and special services (for children with special needs). The outside school hours care places were Commonwealth-only funded.

1988 National Child Care Strategy

In 1988, following a widespread debate over publicly-funded child care services and increased pressure from the Australian Council of Trade Unions, the Australian Council of Social Services and members of the public, the Government announced the National Child Care Strategy (NCCS). Under this strategy, an additional 30,000 child care places would be created by the Commonwealth through cost-sharing agreements with the States and Territories.

The 30,000 place strategy consisted of:

- 4,000 new centre-based long day care places—3,000 provided through joint agreements with the States and Territories, the other 1,000 through an industry initiative;²⁸
- 4,000 family day care places which were Commonwealth-only funded;
- 2,000 new occasional care places provided jointly by the Commonwealth and the States and Territories; and
- 20,000 outside school hours care places funded jointly by the States and Territories and the Commonwealth. Establishment and equipment funding for these places was provided by the Commonwealth. All States and Territories, except New South Wales and the Northern Territory, provided 15% of the operational subsidy to outside school hours care and an equivalent amount to expand vacation care. The Commonwealth provided all of the operational subsidy in New South Wales and the Northern Territory.

1992–96 National Child Care Strategy

The NCCS was expanded in 1990 to enable the creation of an additional 50,000 child care places by the end of 1996–97. This second phase is now called the 1992–96 National Child Care Strategy.

28. The Industry Initiative did not eventuate in the long run, since it was superseded by other initiatives to increase the number of long day care centre places, such as the extension of Childcare Assistance to employer-sponsored long day care centres in January 1991.

The Commonwealth's original offer to the States and Territories comprised:

- 10,000 centre-based long day care places;
- 10,000 family day care places; and
- 30,000 outside school hours care places (year round care model).

However, because of delays in signing agreements with New South Wales and Victoria,²⁹ the Commonwealth announced in the 1993–94 Federal Budget that it would implement an interim strategy to meet the 1996–67 targets. This involved the Commonwealth funding:

- around 500 centre-based long day care places in New South Wales and Victoria through direct partnerships with local governments and community groups;
- converting 2,200 long day care centre places to family day care places (which were Commonwealth-only funded); and
- fully funding 7,000 outside school hours care (year round care model) places in New South Wales and Victoria.

The arrangements to fund centre-based long day care places through direct partnerships with local governments and community groups were part of a new strategy announced by the Prime Minister in February 1993 (see below).

As a consequence of these changes, the final arrangements for the 1992–96 NCCS were as follows:

- 7,299 centre-based long day care places cost-shared between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories;
- 501 centre-based long day care places in New South Wales and Victoria funded by the Commonwealth through joint partnerships with local governments and community organisations;
- 12,200 family day care places fully funded by the Commonwealth;
- 7,000 outside school hours care (year round care model) places in New South Wales and Victoria, fully funded by the Commonwealth; and
- 23,000 outside school hours care (year round care model) places funded jointly by the Commonwealth and the States and Territories. Equipment funding for these places was provided by the Commonwealth, and all States and Territories, except New South Wales, provided 30% of the operational subsidy. New South Wales provided 15% of the operational subsidy.

In conjunction with the strategy, from 1991 fee relief (now Childcare Assistance) was extended to all long day care centres not receiving any capital or operational funding from the Commonwealth, including private-for-profit, employer-sponsored and other non-profit centres. It was hoped that this would encourage employers and commercial operators to provide another 28,000 long day care centre places.

1994 New Growth Strategy

In February 1993, the Commonwealth made a commitment to meet the work-related demand for child care based on a target of 354,500 places by 2001. The Prime Minister

29. New South Wales and Victoria did not sign the 1992–96 NCCS agreement until early 1995.

announced a Commonwealth-only initiative, now called the New Growth Strategy, to operate from 1 July 1994. Under this strategy, the Commonwealth would directly fund local governments and community groups through grants and loans to provide the necessary places to assist in meeting this target. Loans were also made available to employers to provide new centre-based long day care places. Priority was to be given to providing places for children under 3 years of age.

Under the New Growth Strategy, the Commonwealth promised to fund 60,000 places, comprising:

- 7,000 community-based long day care centre places funded through direct partnerships with local governments and community groups;
- 3,500 centre-based long day care places funded through partnerships between the Commonwealth and employers;
- 7,000 family day care places fully funded by the Commonwealth;
- 3,500 employer-sponsored family day care places, with the fringe benefits tax exemption currently available for employer-sponsored places in long day care centres extended to family day care, outside school hours care and vacation care; and
- 40,000 outside school hours care places (year round care model) fully funded by the Commonwealth.

In the 1995–96 Budget, it was announced that there would be changes to the composition of the places promised under the strategies:

- 4,250 planned community-based long day care centre places would be converted to family day care places;
- another 500 community-based long day care centre places promised under the New Growth Strategy would be converted to provide more than 500 places in innovative services in remote areas, with services being located in areas of greatest need;
- the limit on the number of employer-sponsored family day care places would be lifted; and
- in order to address issues of affordability, appropriateness of care and use of care, an additional 2,000 outside school hours care places would be provided for a Pilot Program.

In the 1996–97 Federal Budget, it was announced that:

- uncommitted community-based and employer-sponsored long day care centre places planned under the New Growth Strategy (around 5,500 in total) would not be established, and that the private sector would be relied on to provide new centre-based long day care. Some capital funding would be retained to assist in developing services in rural and remote areas; and
- Commonwealth operational subsidies to community-based long day care centres would be removed from 1 July 1997.

It is not yet clear what impact this will have on State and Territory cost-sharing agreements under the NCCS.

Sources: Commonwealth of Australia 1987, p. 42; Commonwealth of Australia 1993, pp. 77–78; Hurford 1987; Staples 1993; Brennan 1994, pp. 177–200; AIHW 1995, pp. 130–131; Commonwealth of Australia 1995b, p. 18; DSHS 1995a; DHFS 1996a; DHFS, personal communication; DHFS 1996c.

Appendix 2

Counting rules for Commonwealth-funded year round care places

Counting of year round care is based on a given number of hours per place. This enables the model to be split into its various components. One year round care (YRC) place equals 1,150 hours per year. This formula is made up of the following:

- before and after school care: 13.8 hours x 41 weeks = 565.8 hours
- plus pupil free days: 6 hours x 6 days = 36 hours
- plus vacation care: 50 hours x 11 weeks = 550 hours
- Total: 1,151.8 hours rounded to 1,150 hours.

The formula is based on average hours only. The 13.8 hours are the average hours per week for a combined before and after school program. This formula will have no bearing on the funding of services. It will only be used to record places. Two approved 30-place year round care services may actually record a different number of YRC places on the Commonwealth's administrative system due to the number of hours the service is offering. For example:

- **Service A** operates vacation care (VC) from 7 am to 6 pm, after school care (ASC) from 3 pm to 6 pm and before school care (BSC) from 7 am to 9 am for 30 children. Below is an example of how to count the YRC places:

VC—30 children x 11 hrs x 5 days x 11 wks = 18,150/1,150 = 16 YRC places

ASC—30 children x 3 hrs x 5 days x 41 wks = 18,450/1,150 = 16 YRC places

BSC—30 children x 2 hrs x 5 days x 41 wks = 12,300/1,150 = 11 YRC places

Total = 43 YRC places

- **Service B** operates vacation care from 9 am to 5 pm, after school care from 3 pm to 5.30 pm and before school care from 7 am to 9 am for 30 children. Below is an example of how to count the places:

VC—30 children x 8 hrs x 5 days x 11 wks = 13,200/1,150 = 11 YRC places

ASC—30 children x 2.5 hrs x 5 days x 41 wks = 15,375/1,150 = 13 YRC places

BSC—30 children x 2 hrs x 5 days x 41 wks = 12,300/1,150 = 11 YRC places

Total = 35 YRC places

- **Service C** requires only the after school care component of YRC. This is calculated in the same way:

ASC—30 children x 3 hrs x 5 days x 41 wks = 18,450/1,150 = 16 YRC places

Places should be rounded up from 0.5 to the next place. Places below 0.5 should be rounded down.

Source: DSHS 1995b, pp. 4–5.

Appendix 3

Commonwealth and State/Territory funding arrangements

Commonwealth funding and guidelines at December 1996

Operational subsidy

The operational subsidy for before/after school care programs and vacation care programs funded under the year round care model is paid on the number of approved hours of operation services require and not according to the formula used for calculating year round care places. The operational subsidy is calculated as follows:

Rate per *place* x number of approved *places* x hours per week x weeks per year.

For example:

- **Service A** wishes to run an after school care and a vacation care service with six pupil free days. Using the rate applying between 1 April 1995 and 31 March 1996, the annual operational subsidy for this service is:

ASC 57c x 30 *places* x 15 hours x 41 weeks = \$10,516.50

plus pupil free days 57c x 30 *places* x 6 hours x 6 days = \$616.60

plus VC 57c x 30 *places* x 50 hours x 11 weeks = \$9,405

Total: \$20,538.10 per annum

(Note: From 1 April 1996 to 31 March 1997, the following rates of operational subsidy applied: first 30 approved places—\$0.57 per hour per place; approved places over 30—\$0.47 per hour per place)

Childcare Assistance and the Childcare Cash Rebate

Childcare Assistance (outside school hours care rate) is a means-tested payment which reduces fees for low-income families using before/after school care services and vacation care (year round care model) services which are funded by the Commonwealth Government.

There are two rates of Childcare Assistance (outside school hours care rate) available: parents who are eligible for the full amount of the higher rate of the Commonwealth Government's Family Payment are eligible for Childcare Assistance of 71 cents per hour per child as at 1 April 1996, while parents who are eligible for a partial amount of the higher rate of Family Payment are eligible for Childcare Assistance of 38 cents per hour per child (DHFS 1996b, Appendix A.3).

Currently (at December 1996), eligibility for assistance is assessed by the service on the basis of a code that is placed by the Department of Social Security on the family's Family Payment letter and the service adjusts fees accordingly.

The Childcare Cash Rebate, introduced on 1 July 1994, is a non-means tested payment which is payable, up to a limit, over and above Childcare Assistance (DHS 1994, p. 4). It is administered by the Health Insurance Commission (HIC) and is paid to parents through Medicare offices on receipt of claims for child care expenses. The rebate can be claimed for part of the costs of work-related child care in formal children's services, including preschools, and of informal care, such as care provided by a paid baby sitter. 'Work-related' child care is defined as care used while parent(s) are undertaking full- or part-time work, studying, training or looking for work (LRC 1994, p. 14). Families and their carers must be registered with the HIC. Carers must be 18 years of age or older.

Under this scheme, parents may claim a rebate of 30% of their work-related weekly child care costs in excess of a set 'minimum fee' up to a 'ceiling fee'. At 1 April 1996, the minimum fee was \$19 per week and the ceiling fee was \$115.00 for one child and \$230.00 for 2 or more children, so that the maximum rebate for one child was \$28.80 per week and for two or more children \$63.30 per week. From 1 April 1997, where family income is above \$70,000 for a one-child family (plus \$3,000 for each subsequent dependent child), the rebate will be reduced from 30% to 20% (DHFS 1996c, p. 186).

Arrangements for claiming Childcare Assistance and the Childcare Cash Rebate will change from 1 January 1998 when such assistance will be assessed through and paid by the Commonwealth Government's new Service Delivery Agency. Parents will be able to have their child care payments made to their approved child care service or to receive these payments directly (DHFS 1996c, p. 186).

Other general forms of Commonwealth funding

(i) Jobs, Employment and Training Scheme

The Jobs, Education and Training (JET) scheme is jointly administered by the Department of Health and Family Services, the Department of Social Security and the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs. Under this scheme, single parents wanting to enter or return to the labour force are assisted to find a place in a CSP-funded child care service, while being provided with advice and access to employment, education and training opportunities. If CSP-funded places are not immediately available, funds are provided for the creation of temporary additional child care places (DHS 1995a, p. 136). These places are above CSP-approved numbers and would not exist without JET funding.

(ii) Supplementary Services (SUPS)

The Supplementary Services (SUPS) Program is intended to 'increase the access and participation of children with additional needs in Commonwealth-funded children's services, and to facilitate developmentally and culturally appropriate programs in these services for children with additional needs' (DHFS 1996e, p. 1). The priority groups of children for this program are:

- children of non-English speaking backgrounds;
- children with a disability;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children; and
- Australian South Sea Islander children (DHFS 1996e, p. 2).

Models for SUPS delivery include:

- regional or State-wide pools of SUPS workers;
- SUPS workers shared by a number of local Commonwealth-funded children's services;
- workers located with an individual child care service in isolated regions; and
- other models as agreed by the department. This could include the use of funds to employ relief workers to allow a regular staff member to work more closely with an individual child where necessary, for a time-limited period (DHFS 1996e, p. 3).

SUPS workers support child care workers primarily through organising and presenting in-service training programs aimed at improving the integration of children with additional needs into the services. They also provide advice on child development practices in different cultural groups, and limited hands-on assistance for children with a disability (DHFS 1996e, p. 8).

D SUPS are extra payments to family day care providers caring for children with a disability, in recognition of the additional care and attention that these children require (DHFS 1996f, Section 7.8.1).

(iii) Advisory and support services

Program support grants are made to agencies or individuals to provide advisory and support services to DHFS and to child care services. For example, recipient organisations may assist the department to plan where new services should be developed, help organisations to establish new services and assist services to manage themselves efficiently (LRC 1994, p. 28). 'The bulk of program support funding goes into grants for resource and advisory agencies. They provide in-service training and resources for staff and management committees of Commonwealth funded children's services' (LRC 1994, p. 28).

Similarly, Resource and Advisory Agencies funded under the Special Services Program 'are complementary to the SUPS program in promoting access and equity in the Children's Services Program' (DHFS 1996e, p. 16).

(iv) Other funding

The Commonwealth also funds organisations to provide support for children's services and improve industry efficiency, with the level of funding being determined on the basis of need. This type of funding is usually for operational purposes although may be used for minor equipment purchases where need is demonstrated (LRC 1994, p. 27).

Needs-based planning

Currently (at December 1996), applications for funding for new year round care places in non-profit services are subject to needs-based planning arrangements. Decisions allocating new places to particular areas are made on the basis of demonstrated need in the area. Needs are demonstrated through a process of examining the CSP's Statistical Local Area database in consultation with State and Territory planning committees, who provide qualitative information and local knowledge. These planning committees are composed of Commonwealth, State and local government representatives, members of community-based organisations including service providers, service users and special needs groups.

At this time (December 1996), consultations are under way on a new National Planning Framework for child care services, which was announced in the 1996–97 Federal Budget (Moylan 1996, p. 9). The framework will 'deliver a more even distribution of places to meet the needs of parents and children, to ensure greater access to care and a sustainable child care sector' (DHFS 1996c, p. 179).

Priority of access

Although the stated objectives of the Commonwealth Children's Services Program (CSP) do not distinguish between work-related care and care which is not work-related (DHS 1994, p. 183), because demand for services exceeds supply the CSP has set priority of access guidelines for all services except occasional care services and multifunctional Aboriginal children's services.

Services are required to give preference (in the following order) to:

- children in families where both parents are (or a sole parent is) in the labour force³⁰ or studying;
- children who have a disability or whose parents have a disability;
- children at risk of abuse or neglect;
- children of parents at home with more than one child under school age and sole parents at home.

Within these four groups, services are required to assess priority in relation to lower income families, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, parents or children with a disability, families with a non-English speaking background, sole parents and families who are socially isolated. In employer-sponsored child care, employers may give first priority to their own employees (LRC 1994, p. 30).

Priority of access guidelines will be reviewed as part of the National Planning Framework consultation process.

Priorities for funding year round care

Initial priority for funding for new places will be determined by the assessed degree of unmet need of an area, relative to other areas in the State. Within the parameters of relative need, priority will be given in accordance with service models as outlined below (DHS 1995b, pp. 2–4).

Priority One

In approving new services, State Offices of DHFS will need to give priority to services applying for full year round care (YRC). Existing unfunded services (i.e. a service that is operating but is not in receipt of Commonwealth operational subsidy) that apply for YRC funding will be considered as new services and given equal priority with completely new services.

For example:

- new full YRC (BSC, ASC, VC) same operator/same or different location;
- new BSC or ASC + VC same operator/same or different location;

30. The labour force includes persons in paid employment and persons who are unemployed and actively looking for work.

- existing unfunded ASC/BSC + new VC; or
- existing unfunded VC + new ASC/BSC.

Priority Two

Services then wishing to offer either after school, before school or vacation care only will need to demonstrate a link with another existing program. The link should be in the form of a letter between the BSC/ASC program and the VC program agreeing that the children will have access to the existing program in the form of reserved places. Parents would need to confirm their need for the other places by arrangement with the service they are using.

For example:

- Sponsor A wishes to open an after school program only. There is a vacation care program run by the YWCA locally. A written agreement by the YWCA that it will give access to the ASC children will provide the necessary documentation to enable the ASC to be eligible to receive priority two funding.
- Sponsor B wishes to open a vacation care program only. Two BSC/ASC programs exist in the local neighbourhood. A written agreement from the service stating that it will give priority to the children of the BSC/ASC services will ensure that the service may be eligible to receive priority two funding.

Examples of services which would receive priority two funding are:

- new BSC/ASC + linking to existing VC;
- new VC + linking to existing BSC/ASC;
- established BSC/ASC + new VC component; or
- established VC + new BSC/ASC component.

Priority Three

Established services wishing to increase their approved places will be given third priority, i.e. a service already in receipt of Commonwealth operational subsidy asking for an increase in places. They must demonstrate a link with another service to offer year round care.

For example:

- established approved BSC or ASC applies for 20 extra places (link to VC); or
- established approved YRC VC applies for 30 extra places (link to BSC/ASC).

Priority Four

A service that cannot demonstrate a link with another service to provide year round care will have the lowest priority for funding.

For example:

- new BSC/ASC only;
- new VC only; or
- established approved BSC or ASC or VC applying for extensions (no link).

State and Territory funding arrangements

New South Wales: Funding arrangements for vacation care

Services are funded quarterly over a 12-month period based on the number of days open each holiday.

The vacation care operational subsidy is based on:

- (Rate per child/hr)
- x (number of funded places)
- x (number of operational hours per day)
- x (number of days open to a maximum of 43)
- + (amount for planning).

The present rate per child/hour is 55.6 cents.

Amount for planning is \$100 per annum.

Source: NSW DCS 1995.

Victoria: Funding arrangements for outside school hours care programs

The funding arrangements (as at December 1996) for the Commonwealth model and State model outside school hours care programs are as follows (Victoria DHS 1996):

- Commonwealth model before and after school care programs are either funded jointly by the Commonwealth Government and the State Government or are funded by the Commonwealth Government only. These programs receive a grant based on a formula of:
 - 57 cents per place for the first 30 places x number of hours of operation per week x 41 weeks per annum;³¹ and
 - 49 cents for places additional to 30 x number of hours of operation per week x 41 weeks per annum.

This formula is also used to calculate payments for pupil free days and early school finishes.

- Commonwealth model vacation care programs are funded jointly by the Commonwealth Government and the State Government. They receive a grant based on a formula of:
 - 57 cents per place for the first 30 places x number of hours of operation per week x number of weeks approved for funding;
 - 49 cents per place for places additional to 30 x number of hours of operation per week x number of weeks approved for funding.
- State model before and after school care programs are either funded jointly by the Commonwealth Government and the State Government or are funded by the State Government only.
 - Lump sum operational subsidy per term of \$1,000 for after school programs, \$500 for before school programs, and \$1,200 for locations with both before and after school programs plus fee relief, with some provision for additional funding for under-utilised programs.

31. The weeks of operation may vary between 40 and 42, depending on the particular year.

- The lump sum operational subsidy is not provided to before and after school programs of 45 places or more.

Pupil free days are funded at the rate of \$150 a day plus fee relief.

- State model vacation care programs are fully funded by the State Government.
 - These vacation care programs are funded at the rate of \$250 per day plus fee relief.

Source: Victoria DHS 1996.

Queensland: Funding arrangements for vacation care services

The funding formula for State-administered vacation care services:

- $\$5.20 \times \text{number of approved places} \times \text{number of approved days}$.

Source: Queensland DFSAIA 1992.

Appendix 4

Pilot Programs—alternative models of provision

The four funding models being trialed under the Pilot Programs are:

Model A—Community-based operational subsidy plus Childcare Assistance

This model provides operational subsidy, a lower rate of Childcare Assistance, and establishment, equipment and set-up grants.

Childcare Assistance is paid in alignment with Family Payment levels (income ranges). Under this model Childcare Assistance is paid at the rate of:

- \$1.00 per hour per child for families on the higher rate of Family Payment; and
- \$0.50 per hour per child for families on the lower rate of Family Payment.

To be eligible to claim Childcare Assistance, families have to contribute a minimum of 60 cents per hour per child to the cost of the care provided.

Operational subsidy is paid at \$500 per year, per year round care place.

Fifty-five per cent of places are funded under this model.

Model B—Childcare Assistance only for private-for-profit operators

This model provides a higher rate of Childcare Assistance which is paid in alignment with Family Payment levels (income ranges).

Under this model Childcare Assistance is paid at the rate of:

- \$1.60 per hour per child for families on the higher rate of Family Payment; and
- \$1.00 per hour per child for families on the lower rate of Family Payment.

To be eligible to claim Childcare Assistance, families have to contribute a minimum of 60 cents per hour per child to the cost of the care provided.

Twenty per cent of places are funded under this model.

Model B—Childcare Assistance only for not-for-profit operators

This model provides a higher rate of Childcare Assistance plus equipment, establishment and set-up grants. This model has been allocated to the larger services with greater attendances, where it is felt that the service has the ability to cope without the assistance of operational subsidy.

Childcare Assistance is paid in alignment with Family Payment levels (income ranges). Under this model Childcare Assistance is paid at the rate of:

- \$1.60 per hour per child for families on the higher rate of Family Payment; and
- \$1.00 per hour per child for families on the lower rate of Family Payment.

To be eligible to claim Childcare Assistance, families have to contribute a minimum of 60 cents per hour per child to the cost of the care provided.

Twelve and a half per cent of places are funded under this model.

Block grant model

This model provides operational subsidy, maximum Childcare Assistance, and establishment, equipment and set-up grants. The block grant is a lump sum payment that is paid monthly in advance. The purpose of this model is to provide services in extremely low socioeconomic areas, where it is expected that 80% of children using the service will be eligible for Childcare Assistance, with a lump sum payment to use in the most practical way.

Childcare Assistance is paid in alignment with Family Payment levels (income ranges). Under this model Childcare Assistance is paid at the rate of:

- \$1.00 per hour per child for eligible families.

Families are not required to pay the minimum fee of 60 cents per hour per child under this model of funding.

Operational subsidy is paid at \$500 per year, per year round care place.

Twelve and a half per cent of places are funded under this model.

Service characteristics

The following service characteristics are being trialed in conjunction with the funding models:

Central administered (795 places):

Services which may have a number of locations but are administered from one central location.

Standard (360 places):

Services that do not offer any specific or innovative programming. The venue is standard (e.g. school premises) and the focus is on care.

Other innovative (220 places):

Services which offer programs that are innovative, e.g. water sports, martial arts, drama/theatre, art appreciation etc. However, the principal function of the services must be to provide child care as defined in the *Childcare Rebate Act 1993*. A service should be able to provide a range of activities that allow the children to either rest or voluntarily participate in a variety of activities. Operators need to either demonstrate a capacity to provide a choice of activities in their service or a service in a neighbouring location.

Age cohort (210 places):

Services offering age-specific programs (e.g. 8–12 year olds) whether within an existing program or as a separate program. It is important when offering an age cohort program that services are available for all children aged between 5 and 13 either within their program or from a neighbouring service.

Aboriginal (175 places):

Services where children attending the service are from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background. The service offers programs that are culturally appropriate.

Principal administered (160 places):

Services at which the school principal has responsibility for the service in conjunction with the school board. The school board must have at least one outside school hours care parent representative.

Disability (65 places):

Services where children attending the service have a disability. The programming and structure of the service are designed to cater for children with a disability.

Single staff model (15 places):

For services in locations where a standard two staff model is not economically viable. A single staff model will only be considered where an emergency back-up staff member is on call at all times when the service is operational.

Source: DHFS unpublished.

Appendix 5

Licensing, regulation and standards for outside school hours services

National standards

Source: National Standards for Outside School Hours Care, June 1995 (CSMC 1995)

Staff-child ratios

Section 3.1 It is acknowledged that the proposed standard allows for a higher staff-child ratio, as currently exists in some States and Territories and that the ratio for the supervision of children on excursions and/or swimming may include carers other than the regular staff.

Standard

- 3.1.1 There shall be a maximum of 15 children to one staff member.
- 3.1.2 There shall be a maximum of 8 children to one carer for excursions.
- 3.1.3 There shall be a maximum of 5 children to one carer for swimming.

Staff qualifications/training

Section 3.2 While qualifications should form part of standards and regulations, development of such standards needs to take into account the fact that a significant proportion of staff employed in OSHC services have minimal or unrelated qualifications. State courses which are developed should include processes for the Recognition of Prior Learning.

In advance of the development of specific OSHC qualifications or child care courses covering the age range 0-12, qualifications in child care, early childhood teaching or primary teaching and recreation should be considered as acceptable in the sector.

Mandatory qualifications should include a phase-in period.

Standard

- 3.2.1 OSHC coordinators are required to be qualified.
- 3.2.2 OSHC services must employ staff on the basis of a minimum of one qualified staff member to every 30 children or part thereof.
- 3.2.3 A degree in teaching (primary and/or early childhood), or an associate diploma in child care and/or youth or recreation (experience in working with children aged 5-12 years is desirable) shall be considered as an acceptable qualification.

The Commonwealth and the States and Territories may review the listing of qualifications, on an annual basis, to ensure the relevance of the qualifications to OSHC services.

- 3.2.4 Transitional arrangements may be developed to ensure that staff currently working in OSHC services are not disadvantaged by the introduction of the standard on qualifications.

Minimum staff numbers

Section 3.3 The minimum requirement is essentially related to staff and child safety and to emergency situations. If one child is injured or otherwise requires emergency attention, a sole staff member would have to choose between giving that child the necessary attention and continuing to supervise the other children. A minimum of two staff is also required so that one staff member can continue to care for the children if the other is injured or becomes ill during the course of the program.

There are, however, many small groups of school age children whose need for child care cannot viably be met through the large service models which are currently the norm.

Standard

- 3.3.1 There shall be a minimum of two staff members present at any one time.
- 3.3.2 In certain defined circumstances the minimum of two staff members may be waived if appropriate, and approved by the appropriate State, Territory, or Commonwealth department.

Fit and proper persons

Section 3.4 It is essential that persons who may cause physical or emotional harm to children are prevented from any involvement in child care. There is a range of ways of objectively assessing whether a person is fit and proper to provide a child care service. These could include police checks, contacting referees and advertising in the press.

Standard

- 3.4.1 A carer shall be a fit and proper person to undertake paid or unpaid work in the OSHC service.
- 3.4.2 A person is fit and proper if:
- a) the person is capable of providing an adequate standard of child care in the OSHC setting; and
 - b) the person is of good character and is suitable to be entrusted with the care of children.

First aid qualifications

Section 2.5 In the event of an accident or a child falling ill, first aid equipment and expertise must be available.

Standard

- 2.5.2 One staff member present shall be currently qualified in first aid.

New South Wales

Vacation care policy

Source: Children's Services in New South Wales: Policy Statement for Funded Services (NSW DCS 1995, pp. 10-11).

Staff numbers and training

An adequate number of qualified and experienced staff should be employed to ensure the delivery of a quality service.

Employment and working conditions of staff should comply with appropriate industrial awards, and include scheduled time for preparation and programming and opportunities for support and training.

Opportunities should exist for training management committee members and staff on their roles and responsibilities, service delivery functions, and service philosophies, principles, and funding conditions.

Outside school hours services code of practice

Source: Voluntary Code of Practice for Out of School Hours Services in New South Wales (NSW DCS 1993)

All staff

Potential staff should meet the following criteria:

- Have experience/qualifications in working with children aged 5–12 years in outside school hours care services or similar recreational settings.
- Have two recent references outlining good character and ability to work with children. (References should be from either previous employers or a non-related person.) References should be verified by management.
- An interest in and a desire to work with children.
- An ability to communicate with adults and children.
- A commitment to and understanding of equal employment opportunity principles, enabling an acceptance of all children regardless of their social and cultural background or disability.
- Hold a current first aid certificate or be prepared to undertake training in an appropriate course.

Centre coordinator

The management should employ an experienced coordinator, to take responsibility for the day-to-day management of the centre. This person should be at least 21 years old and possess relevant skills and expertise to do the job. It is advisable for the centre coordinator to work with the management committee to recruit and select staff. The coordinator's role is extremely important, requiring:

- experience in working with school age children;
- good administrative and organisational abilities, enabling efficient management of the services on a daily basis;
- an ability to supervise and support staff; and
- good communication skills when liaising with parents, staff, management and children.

Centre assistants

All other staff should be clear about their roles and responsibilities. It is important that coordinators have regular staff meetings to allow good communication between staff.

This is essential if staff are to work effectively as a team and create the right atmosphere for the children.

- There should be a suitably nominated member of staff to take responsibility for the centre in the absence of the coordinator. This person should be at least 18 years old.
- For every centre employee on duty aged under 18 years old, there should be at least two centre staff aged 18 years or older present at all times.
- All other centre employees must be at least 16 years old.
- No person under 18 years old should be left with a group of children.

Recognised qualifications

At present the only specific course for outside school hours care staff is the Out of School Hours Care Certificate Course offered by TAFE. It is therefore essential to take experience in working with school age children into consideration, as well as qualifications. Courses in New South Wales which have components relevant to this type of work include:

- Appropriate degrees or diplomas in the following areas:
 - primary teaching
 - early childhood
 - child studies—TAFE courses
 - leisure, recreation and arts studies
- Other qualifications with child development and/or child care components.

Staff-child ratios

Management have a duty of care to ensure that adequate staff-child ratios are adhered to at all times.

General centre-based activities

There should be a minimum of two centre employees on duty at all times and a staff-child ratio of 1:15.

Special considerations

In centres where there is a high percentage of children under 8 years of age, or children with emotional and behavioural problems, a staff-child ratio of 1:10 should be considered. In vacation care centres where children may be known to the staff, it is recommended that services aim to have a staff-child ratio of 1:10.

- Volunteers should be additional when calculating basic staff-child ratios.
- Students on placement should also be treated as supernumerary.

Disabilities

The abilities and individual needs of children with disabilities should be considered when calculating staff-child ratios. It is impossible to nominate a ratio to cover every situation. The staff-child ratios outlined below should be considered as a minimum only:

- A staff-child ratio of 1:10 for programs which integrate children with disabilities.
- A staff-child ratio of 1:5 for programs which are specifically for children with disabilities.

General excursions

Adequate staff supervision is essential on all excursions away from the centre.

All excursions should have a staff–child ratio of 1:10.

When taking large groups of children on excursions, it is advisable that one staff member has an overall supervisory role and is not part of the staff–child ratio.

Swimming excursions

No children under 6 years old should be allowed on a swimming excursion.

The following staff–child ratios should be followed for swimming excursions:

Excursion location	Staff–child ratio
Beach, river, lake, dam	1:5
Supervised municipal pool	1:10
Water fun park	1:10

Excursions policy and guidelines

Source: Children's Services Excursions Policy and Guidelines (NSW DCS 1993, Appendix A)

Staffing

A delegated supervisor must be appointed to have overall responsibility for the excursion.

The delegated supervisor must be a member of the centre staff (and an adult aged 21 years or older).

First aid

At least one staff member should hold a first aid qualification under Clause 4 (2) (b) of the Code of Conduct (Centre-based Child Care Regulations, 1989).

Minimum age of children

Water fun park slides...should not be considered suitable venues for children under 8 years old.

No child under 6 years should go swimming unless for the express purpose of learning water safety or learning swimming under the direct supervision of a suitably trained and qualified instructor.

No child under 6 years old should go on bush walks other than on well-defined paths.

Staff–child ratios

The minimum adult–child ratio for excursions which do not involve water or other recognised hazards or risk should be:

- 1 adult to 2 children for children under 3 years of age;
- 1 adult to 5 children for children aged 3–5 years (under school age);
- 1 adult to 10 children for children aged 6–12 years (children of school age);
- 1 adult to 10 children aged 4 years 9 months to 6 years where those children are school students attending an outside school hours care service.

The minimum adult-child ratio for excursions which involve water or other recognised hazards or risk should be:

beach, river and lake:

- 1 adult to 5 children for children aged 6-12 years;

municipal pool and water fun park:

- 1 adult to 10 children for children aged 6-12 years.

Parents and volunteers may be included in the child-adult ratios providing that the delegated supervisor is sure they have the ability to supervise the children.

Junior staff who are between 16 and 18 years old may be included in the adult-child ratio provided that there are two adults for every one junior staff.

Children with a disability

Where necessary additional adults and resources should be provided to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children when a child with a disability is included in an excursion.

Victoria

The national standards apply in this State.

Queensland

Vacation care guidelines

Source: Funding Guidelines for Programs Administered by the Office of Child Care: Vacation Care Program (Queensland DFSAIA 1992)

Staff-child ratios

Staff-child ratios should be at least 1 staff member to 12 children. Additional staff may be required when excursions are undertaken.

Western Australia

Outside school hours services guidelines

Source: Out of School Hours Child Care Programmes: Standards of Operation Guidelines 1993 (CSSU 1993)

Section 2.0 It is an Award requirement that a minimum of two staff shall be in attendance at all times, except in centres outside the metropolitan area (not including the cities of Bunbury, Geraldton, Port Hedland and Albany), where one person may be employed with up to 10 children.

Staff-child ratio

Section 2.1 Vacation care: A staff-child ratio of 1:10 will be maintained.

Before and after school care: A staff-child ratio of 1:15 will be maintained, except in country centres outlined in 2.0 above.

Staff–child ratio for children with disabilities

Section 2.2 When children with disabilities are enrolled into the program, the authorised supervisor shall ensure that sufficient staff are available to maintain the safety and wellbeing of all children. This may require additional staff support for the integration process.

Staff training—definitions

Section 2.3 The following definitions apply:

Trained/training

Graduates or students in the TAFE Certificate in Human Services (Play Leading), (formerly called Certificate in Children’s Recreation & Care) or other relevant courses such as CAE Associate Diploma in Children’s Studies, Child Care Certificate NSW (0–12 years), Recreation Diploma (Primary School Age Children), Primary Teacher or Pre-School Teacher Training, or TAFE Associate Diploma in Social Science. Training should relate to primary school age children.

Experienced

Considerable experience working in outside school hours care services with primary school age children.

Some experience

Some previous experience working in outside school hours care services or other activities with primary school age children.

Availability of trained staff

It is recognised that, in some circumstances, appropriately trained staff may not be available. This may be the case in country areas particularly. Where training is available staff should either be trained or be prepared to attend training courses.

The ratio of trained to untrained staff

Section 2.4 It is desirable that all Supervisors and Playleaders are trained or attending training (see 2.3).

Vacation care

20 or fewer children

1 Supervisor—trained/training and/or experienced (21 years or over)

1 Playleader—untrained (18 years or over)

21–30 children

1 Supervisor—trained/training and/or experienced (21 years or over)

1 Playleader—some experience/training (18 years or over)

1 Playleader—untrained

31–40 children

1 Supervisor—trained/training and/or experienced (21 years or over)

1 Playleader—trained/training and/or experienced (18 years or over)

1 Playleader—some experience/training (18 years or over)

1 Playleader—untrained

41–50 children

- 1 Supervisor—trained/training and/or experienced (21 years or over)
- 1 Playleader—trained/training and/or experienced (18 years or over)
- 2 Playleaders—some experience/training (one must be 18 years or over)
- 1 Playleader—untrained

51–60 children

- 1 Supervisor—trained/training and/or experienced (21 years or over)
- 1 Playleader—trained/training and/or experienced (18 years or over)
- 2 Playleaders—some experience/training (one must be 18 years or over)
- 2 Playleaders—untrained

Before and after school care

In the metropolitan area and the cities of Bunbury, Geraldton, Port Hedland and Albany:

30 or fewer children

- 1 Supervisor—trained/training and/or experienced (21 years or over)
- 1 Playleader—untrained (18 years or over)

31–45 children

- 1 Supervisor—trained/training and/or experienced (21 years or over)
- 1 Playleader—some experience/training (18 years or over)
- 1 Playleader—untrained

45–60 children

- 1 Supervisor—trained/training and/or experienced (21 years or over)
- 1 Supervisor—trained/training and/or experienced (18 years or over)
- 1 Playleader—some experience/training
- 1 Playleader—untrained

In country centres outside the metropolitan area (not including Bunbury, Geraldton, Port Headland and Albany):

10 or fewer children

- 1 Supervisor—trained/training and/or experienced (21 years or over)
provided that there is at least one other person over the age of 21 years, whether on the premises or not, available to render assistance in an emergency.

Adult–junior ratio

Section 2.5 The Out of School Care Playleaders Award states that 'A playleader in charge of a Centre must be over the age of 21 years' [21 years or over], and 'The number of staff employed who are less than 18 years of age shall not exceed the number of staff employed who are over 18 years of age' [18 years or over] (clause 16 (2) and (3)).

Health and safety

Section 11.0 Every effort should be made to ensure that children can play in safety. This involves:

- ensuring that at least one staff member who is on the premises possesses a current recognised first aid certificate—Red Cross and St John certificates are valid for 3 years.

Excursions—supervision

Section 12.4 (a) The adult-child ratio shall be: 1 adult to 10 children. Adult volunteers may be used to augment adult-child ratios on outings.

- (b) One staff member attending the excursion is to hold a current first aid certificate.
- (c) All staff will maintain close proximity to the activity for the purposes of supervision at all times.
- (d) The supervisor will be 21 years of age or older. The number of staff who are less than 18 years of age shall not exceed the number of staff who are older than 18 years of age [18 years or older].

Adult-child ratios for swimming excursions

Section 12.7 (a) For all swimming excursions, there must be at least one person, 18 years or older, with an Accompanied Rescue Life Saving 3 Certificate or equivalent; and one person with either a Dry Land Rescue Certificate or who can swim at least 100 metres, as is appropriate for the venue concerned.

- (b) Excursions to open recognised surf beaches require a ratio of 1:5.

South Australia

Outside school hours care services guidelines

Source: Out of School Hours Care Kit, 1993 (SA CSO 1993)

Staff-child ratios

Section 5.1 While no regulations exist at present, it is recommended that services operate at the following ratios:

Children aged 5-8 years	1 staff to 10 children
Children aged 8 years and over	1 staff to 15 children
Children with disabilities	1 staff to 4 children

And for excursions:

Children aged 5-8 years	1 staff to 8 children
Children aged 8 years and over	1 staff to 10 children
Children with disabilities	1 staff to 1 child

Notwithstanding the above ratios, it is advised that a minimum of two staff be present at all times and that one of those staff be a senior or 'trained' person. The reasons for this are the safety of the children and the duty of care responsibilities of the service.

However, on occasions where the number of children in care falls below five, the management committee may exercise some discretion regarding the minimum number of staff required. A single staff person may be adequate for a small group, e.g. at before school care, if another adult is within call in case of emergency.

In considering the above ratios the following factors will also need to be taken into account: total number of children in the program, age mix of children, how they are grouped, activity being undertaken, space and layout of facility, severity of disability, and type and location of excursion.

Age of staff

Section 5.2 There is no prescribed minimum age limit for employment in programs. In considering this issue, management committees should take into account the responsibilities assigned to staff, such as: program development and delivery, care and security of children, behaviour management, administrative functions; and also take into account: age range of children, duty of care obligations, and emergency situations.

Suggested training requirements

Section 5.3 There are no legally prescribed training requirements for staff in before/after school programs or vacation programs; however, qualifications in the following areas should be sought during the selection of staff, in particular senior staff:

child care and teaching; and also:

recreation, youth work and community work.

Experience should not be overlooked, and staff with no formal qualifications but with previous experience are able to provide a wealth of knowledge and skills in programming, planning, organising activities and administration. When considering persons with no formal qualifications for a position of senior/'trained' worker it is suggested that they have at least 3 years experience in out of school hours care or a related field.

A senior first aid certificate (provided by St John and Red Cross) is also strongly recommended as a minimum requirement for all staff.

Tasmania

While Tasmania licenses and regulates services for children below the age of 7 years, it does not license and regulate services for children aged 7 years and above. Services which provide outside school hours care for children aged 5 and 6 years have been exempted from the requirement to be licensed.

Vacation care guidelines

Source: Vacation Care Guidelines (Tasmania DCHS 1996)

Staffing

All staff

Section 5.2.2 Services and sponsors should maintain staffing arrangements which ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children in their care, by consideration of the following factors:

- a minimum of two staff should be in attendance at all times, one of whom should be a senior staff member;
- one staff member with a current first aid qualification should be present at all times;
- the suggested minimum age for paid staff is 18 years; and
- the personal qualities of all staff should be considered.

Coordinator/Supervisor

The Coordinator/Supervisor should have:

- appropriate experience and proven ability to relate to the 5–12 years age group;
- an ability to supervise staff;
- a receptive and responsive attitude to the needs and interests of individual children and parents; and
- administrative skills.

Volunteers

Section 5.2.5 Using volunteers can provide access to more people with varying experience and skills. Volunteers may also provide an improved level of supervision. Volunteers should demonstrate a responsive attitude to the needs and interests of children.

Staff–child ratios

Section 5.2.3 Consideration should be given to child–staff ratios, including ratios of senior to junior staff and trained to untrained staff.

Excursions

Section 5.2.4 Depending on the nature of the excursion, the service may wish to consider a higher ratio of staff to children than is normally applied in the service.

Australian Capital Territory

Licensing Act and Regulations

Children's Services Act 1986

Children's Services Regulations 1987

Children's Services Regulations (Amendment) 1989

Out of School Hours Care Licence Conditions, April 1993

Holiday Camp Licence Conditions, December 1990

Administering agency

Children's, Youth and Family Services Bureau, Department of Education and Training

Outside school hours care services

Definitions

Adult: A person who has attained 18 years of age.

Children: Children attending primary school and not more than 12 years of age, present at the centre.

Coordinator: (Referred to as Director in the Child Care Award) The person in charge of a child care centre who has responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the centre, and whose duties include:

- the professional leadership and supervision of staff;
- the implementation of the centre's philosophy regarding the care of children; and
- administrative matters.

Staff-child ratios

Centre-based activities

Clause 1. The licensee shall ensure that there is present and on duty at the centre not fewer than the number of appropriate persons indicated in the chart below:

Number of children present	Number of appropriate persons
1-20	2
21-30	3
31-40	4
41-50	5
51-60	6
61-70	7
71-80	8
81-90	9

In an outside school hours program where the number of children present at the centre exceeds 40, and where the coordinator...is responsible for the management of the centre, the coordinator may be included when calculating staff-child ratios under this clause only when he or she is actually engaged in supervising children.

Swimming excursions

Clause 37. The licensee shall ensure the following ratios are maintained at all times:

- (a) in a community pool supervised by the pool management a ratio of 1:8.
- (b) excursions to an unsupervised swimming location (e.g. a river, beach, lake or dam) a ratio of 1:5 must be maintained at all times.

Excursions involving canoeing, sailing and other water-based sports

Clause 38. The licensee shall ensure that:

- (a) a staff-child ratio of 1:5 is maintained at all times.

Excursions involving significantly hazardous venues

Clause 35 The licensee shall ensure that the supervisor of any excursion which involves proximity to water or a significantly hazardous venue or activity will maintain the level of supervision which will maximise the safety of children.

Supervision during excursion

Clause 34 The licensee shall ensure that during the excursions from the centre other than those referred to in Clauses 35-38:

- (a) the staff-child ratio is maintained at one adult...caring for every eight children.

Excursions for children with disabilities

Clause 40 The licensee shall ensure:

- (a) that when children with disabilities are taken on excursions, the delegated supervisor must ensure that sufficient additional staff are available to ensure the safety and wellbeing of both the disabled children and the group as a whole;
- (b) the ratio of supervisors to children should be determined after consideration of the nature and severity of the child's disability (e.g. physical, intellectual, or a combination of both).

Staff qualifications

Clause 2. For the purposes of Clause 1, an 'appropriate person' is any one of the following:

- (a) A centre employee, being a person employed by the licensee or by a person acting with the authority and on behalf of the licensee, and being
 - i. in good physical and mental condition;
 - ii. keen to work with children;
 - iii. experienced in organising leisure activities and in community work with young people; and
 - iv. of good character.
- (b) A parent user of the centre, being a person who is required to work at the centre on a regular basis as part of the condition of his or her child receiving care at the centre.
- (c) A volunteer, being a person who chooses to work at the centre and who is not paid in money or kind for such work, provided that,
 - i. in before and after school care programs, the volunteer is engaged only in excursions; or
 - ii. the volunteer is engaged in vacation care programs in which the number of children does not exceed one hundred.

Note: For the purposes of Clause 1, an 'appropriate person', to be taken into account when determining the number of centre employees required to supervise the children, does not include volunteer workers and persons engaged under the auspices of a work experience scheme and employees engaged in cleaning duties. Persons engaged under the auspices of a work experience scheme may, however, be taken into account in determining staff-child ratios under Clause 1 once they have completed 6 months training at that centre.

Clause 22. The licensee shall ensure that two staff members have a current first aid certificate, one of whom must be at the centre at all times when children are present. A nurse with ACT registration who has had hospital experience within the last 7 years will be deemed as holding a first aid certificate.

Clause 3. The centre coordinator...shall not be less than 21 years old and shall have reasonable experience in organising leisure activities and in community work with young people.

Minimum age of staff

Clause 4. The licensee shall not engage a centre employee unless the centre employee has attained the age of 16 years.

Clause 5. The licensee shall ensure that for every centre employee under 18 years of age present at the centre there must be at least one appropriate person (as defined in Clause 2) 18 years or older present in the centre at all times.

Holiday camps

Staff-child ratios

Clause 1. The licensee shall ensure that:

- (a) One staff member is on duty at any time eight or fewer children aged from 5 to 12 years are present at the centre during daylight hours.
- (b) One staff member is on call at any time eight or fewer children aged from 5 to 12 years are present at the centre during night time hours.

Staff qualifications

Clause 2. The licensee shall ensure that the staff member in charge of any group of children aged from 5 to 12 years possesses at least one of the following qualifications:

- (a) tertiary qualifications in education, child development or psychology, consisting of a diploma or degree from a university, or college of advanced education; or
- (b) Recreation Diploma or Associate Diploma of Child Care from TAFE; or
- (c) successful completion of a Volunteers Training Scheme; or
- (d) 5 years relevant experience in organising leisure activities for children aged from 5 to 12 years.

Clause 3. The licensee shall obtain evidence in writing that all staff are of good character and are keen to work with children.

Clause 12. The licensee of the holiday camp shall ensure that two staff members have a current first aid certificate and are present whenever children are present at the camp.

Minimum age of staff

Clause 4. The licensee shall not engage as a team leader anyone under 16 years.

Clause 5. The licensee shall ensure that where two volunteer group leaders who are included in the staff-child ratios in Clause 1 are under 18 years, then one group leader 18 years or over is also present.

Northern Territory

Vacation care guidelines

Source: Vacation Care Program Guidelines (NT DSR 1996)

To qualify for sponsorship benefit, priority will be given to:

- programs that have a staffing ratio of 10 children to one instructor (excluding disability programs that cater to children with special needs).

Appendix 6

Centre-based child care and family day care—regulations/guidelines relating to school age children

Centre-based care

Note: There are no specific regulations or guidelines relating to the care of school aged children in child care centres in the licensing regulations for South Australia, Tasmania or the Northern Territory.

New South Wales

Licensing Act and Regulations

Children (Care and Protection) Act 1987

Centre Based and Mobile Child Care Regulation (No 2) 1996

Licensing guidelines

Administering agency

Department of Community Services

Licensing guidelines

Guidelines for services which cater for school aged children are as follows:

- i) the total number of children present, including school aged children, should not be more than 10% in excess of the licensed number unless separate facilities are provided, and
- ii) their presence should not be detrimental to the care of the children under school age for which the service is licensed.

If an out of school hours program is offered, it is essential that the proportion of school age children in attendance does not unreasonably diminish access to the facilities, or disturb the program provided for the younger children.

This requirement refers only to children's services which offer before and after school hours care or vacation care for school aged children within existing child care services.

Victoria

Children over 6 years of age may attend a children's services centre regulated under the *Health Act 1958* and the *Children's Services Centres Regulations 1988*. However, Section 208C(4B)(c) of the *Health Act* states: 'Children who are over the age of 6 years or who are enrolled at or attend a school established or registered under the *Education Act 1958* must

not fill more than 30 per centum of the total number of places for children at the centre'. This is a condition of all registrations.

Licensing Act and Regulations

Health Act 1958

Children's Services Centres Regulations 1988

Administering agency

Department of Human Services

Children over 6 years of age

Licensing Regulation 55. Where children over 6 years of age attend a Children's Services Centre, all regulations applicable to children in that centre between the age of 3 and 6 years apply to the children present over 6 years of age, except those regulations pertaining to qualified staff.

Queensland

Licensing Act and Regulations

Child Care Act 1991

Child Care (Child Care Centres) Regulations 1991

Administering agency

Department of Families, Youth and Community Care

School children

Regulation 20. (1) School children cared for at a child care centre must be cared for in an area that is separate from that provided for other children.

(2) A group leader must be in charge of school children.

(3) If the group is more than 12 in number, the group leader must have an assistant.

(4) There must not be more than 24 children in the group.

Western Australia

Licensing Act and Regulations

Community Services Act 1972

Acts Amendment (Child Care Services) Act 1987

Community Services (Child Care) Regulations 1988

Administering agency

Family and Community Services

Children of school age

Regulation 28. (1) Children of school age may be present at child care premises, other than premises licensed for family day care, if—

(a) the total number of children present at any time does not exceed the number of children for which the service is licensed or for which a permit has been issued; and

- (b) the staffing and other requirements of these regulations are met for the total number of children in the child care service at any time.

Australian Capital Territory

Licensing Act and Regulations

Children's Services Act 1986

Out of School Hours Care Licence Conditions for Long Day Care Centres, March 1989

Administering agency

Children's, Youth and Family Services Bureau, Department of Education and Training

Staff-child ratios

Clause 1. (a) 'Children' in these conditions means children attending primary school and not more than 8 years [of age] present at the centre.

The licensee shall ensure that there is present and on duty at the centre, in respect of the number of children indicated in Column 1 below, not less than the number of appropriate persons indicated in Column 2 below for the out of school hours children.

Column 1	Column 2
Number of children	Number of appropriate persons
1-11	1
12-22	2
22-33	3

- (b) In the case of excursions away from the centre the licensee shall ensure that there is present and on duty at least one centre employee for every eight or fewer children on the excursion, provided that where there are more than eight children on the excursion, at least one centre employee shall be not less than 18 years of age.
- (c) In an out of school hours program where the total number of children present at the centre exceeds 40, and where the coordinator, referred to in Clause 21, is responsible for the management of the centre, the coordinator may not be included when calculating staff to child ratios under this clause except in the designated 45 minute overlap period.
- (d) The number of children for whom an Out Of School Hours Licence is issued in a long day care centre is not in addition to the maximum licensed number of children in the Long Day Care Centre. The centre must remain within the maximum number specified in the Long Day Care Licence and the Purpose Clause of the centre's lease. However, a maximum period of 45 minutes per day may exist in which the centre will exceed the licensed number of children as out of school care children arrive at the centre. The licensee is to define this time bracket in the application for licence.

Staff qualifications

Clause 2. For the purposes of Clause 1, an 'appropriate person' is any one of the following:

- (a) A program employee, being a person employed by the licensee or by a person acting with the authority and on behalf of the licensee, and being,
 - i. in good physical and mental condition;
 - ii. keen to work with children;
 - iii. experienced in organising leisure activities and in community work with young people; and
 - iv. of good character.

2. For the purposes of Clause 1, an 'appropriate person' does not include:

- (a) A person engaged at the centre under a work experience scheme, unless that person:
 - i. has been so engaged for not less than 6 months; or
 - ii. is accompanying the children on an excursion.
- (b) A centre employee primarily engaged in cleaning duties.

Clause 3. The licensee shall not engage a program employee unless he/she has attained the age of 16 years.

Clause 4. The licensee shall ensure that for every program employee under 18 years of age present at the centre there must be at least one appropriate person (as defined in Clause 2) 18 years or over present in the program at all times.

Clause 11. The licensee of the child care centre shall ensure that two staff members have a current first aid certificate, one of whom must be present at the centre at all times when children are present. A nurse with ACT registration who has had hospital experience within the last 7 years will be deemed as holding a first aid certificate.

Family day care

The national standards and the regulations or guidelines in each State and Territory for family day care specify the maximum number of children, including children of primary school age, who may be cared for in a family day care provider's home at any one time. These standards, regulations and guidelines are summarised in Table A6.1.

Table A6.1: Number of children who may be cared for in family day care: national standards and State and Territory regulations

State/Territory	Number of children and conditions
National standards	7 children of any age, of whom no more than 4 have not started school
New South Wales	
Family day care	7 children under 12 years, of whom no more than 5 are under 6 years (including own children)
Home-based care	5 children up to 6 years (including children under school age related to the provider)
Victoria^(a)	4 children under 6 years (not including own children)
Queensland	7 children of any age, of whom no more than 4 children have not started school, with no more than 2 children under 1 year of age (including own children who have not started school)
Western Australia	7 children under 12 years of age, of whom no more than 4 are of preschool age (including own children)
South Australia^(b)	3 children under 6 years (including own children). More than 3 children may be cared for by one provider if all the children are from the same family.
Tasmania^(c)	8 children under 12 years, of whom no more than 4 children are under 7 years, with no more than 1 child under 1 year of age (including own children)
Australian Capital Territory	8 children under 12 years, of whom no more than 4 are not yet enrolled at primary school (including own children)
Northern Territory^(d)	4 children under 6 years (legislation to be amended shortly)

(a) Family day care in Victoria has a 'standard' that 7 children under 12 years, of whom no more than 4 may be under 6 years of age, may be cared for at any one time.

(b) The legislation in South Australia does not cover children 6 years or older. However, the State has a 'guideline' of a maximum of 7 children, including own children, to be cared for at any one time by a provider.

(c) An 'extended' licence may be issued in Tasmania under particular circumstances to enable up to 6 children under 7 years to be cared for at any one time. While the legislation in Tasmania does not cover children 7 years and older, the State has a 'guideline' of a maximum of 8 children under 12 years.

(d) The legislation in the Northern Territory does not cover children 6 years or over, however a guideline of a maximum of 7 children under 13 years, including the carer's own children, no more than 5 of whom are not eligible to enrol in a primary school under the Education Act, and no more than 2 of whom are under 12 months of age, is used for home-based care.

Source: CSWM 1995, Appendix 3; personal communication with relevant State and Territory departments.

Appendix 7

Federal Budget 1997–98

A number of major changes to outside school hours care funding were announced in the 1997–98 Federal Budget (Commonwealth of Australia 1997; DHFS 1997).

New Childcare Assistance payment for school age children

From 1 January 1998, all Childcare Assistance for school age children using child care centres and family day care, all operational subsidies for outside school hours care (including year round care), the outside school hours care rate of Childcare Assistance, and (from 1 February 1998) vacation care block grant funding will be incorporated into a new income-tested Childcare Assistance payment for school age children. The payment will be less tightly targeted than the previous outside school hours care rate of Childcare Assistance, with eligibility for this new payment being extended to the same income cut-off as the long day care rate of Childcare Assistance (up to \$65,743 per annum for one child as at May 1997). The same percentage entitlement for Childcare Assistance (83%) will be applied to the new school age ceiling fee of \$1.95 per hour, that is, families with one child eligible for the maximum rate of assistance will pay a minimum fee of 17% of \$1.95 per hour plus any additional amount charged by the service provider. The new payment will be available to families with school age children in Commonwealth approved child care centres, family day care and community-based outside school hours care services. These measures do not apply to families who currently use long day care centres and family day care for their school age children; they will retain eligibility for the long day care rate of Childcare Assistance while they continue to use the same service.

Other funding initiatives

From 1 July 1997, funding will be provide to assist current outside school hours care services in the transition period. Establishment funding has been provided over the next 4 years for approved places in new community-based services during their first 2 years of establishment. Disadvantaged area subsidies will be available over the next 4 years to support eligible outside school hours care services in rural and regional areas where there is no alternative care 'within a reasonable distance'.

Appendix 8

Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
ASC	After school care
BSC	Before school care
BSC/ASC	Before school care and/or after school care
CAE	College of Advanced Education
CCCWG	COAG Child Care Working Group
CCS	Child Care System (Commonwealth)
CDEP	Community Development Employment Program
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CSMC	Community Services Ministers' Conference
CSWM	Council of Social Welfare Ministers
CSO	Children's Services Office (South Australia)
CSP	Children's Services Program (Commonwealth)
CSSU	Children's Services Support Unit
DCHS	Department of Community and Health Services (Tasmania)
DCS	Department of Community Services (New South Wales)
DCSH	Department of Community Services and Health (Commonwealth)
DECS	Department for Education and Children's Services (South Australia)
DET	Department of Education and Training (Australian Capital Territory)
DFSAIA	Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs (Queensland)
DFYCC	Department of Families, Youth and Community Care (Queensland)
DHCS	Department of Health and Community Services (Victoria)
DHFS	Department of Health and Family Services (Commonwealth)

DHS	Department of Human Services (Victoria)
DHSH	Department of Human Services and Health
DOL	Department of Labour (Victoria)
DSR	Department of Sport and Recreation (Northern Territory)
DSS	Department of Social Security (Commonwealth)
EPAC	Economic Planning Advisory Commission (Commonwealth)
FBT	Fringe Benefits Tax
FCS	Family and Children's Services (Western Australia)
HIC	Health Insurance Commission (Commonwealth)
JET	Jobs, Education and Training
LRC	Law Reform Commission
NCCS	National Child Care Strategy
Network	Network of Community Activities
OSHC	Outside school hours care
OSHCAT	Outside School Hours Care Association of Tasmania
SCSWA	Standing Committee of Social Welfare Administrators
SUPS	Supplementary Services
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
THS	Territory Health Services (Northern Territory)
YAS	Youth Activities Services
VC	Vacation care
YRC	Year round care

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