



National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection

Concepts, Sources and Methods

2011



National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection: Concepts, Sources and Methods

Australia

2011

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AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
CCB	Child Care Benefit
CCMS	Child Care Management System
CCR	Child Care Rebate
CD	Collection District
CEaCS	Childhood Education and Care Survey
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DEEWR	Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
ECE	Early childhood education
ECEC	Early childhood education and care
IRSD	Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage
LDC	Long day care
MCEECDYA	Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs
METeOR	Metadata Online Registry
NIA ECEC	National Information Agreement on Early Childhood Education and Care
NMDS	National Minimum Data Set
NP ECE	National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education
NSSC	National Schools Statistics Collection
ROGS	Report on Government Services
SEIFA	Socio-economic Indexes for Areas
SLK	Statistical Linkage Key
UA	Universal Access
URL	Unit Record Level
YBFS	Year before full-time schooling

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE COLLECTION

The National Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Collection has been established to provide nationally comparable statistics on early childhood education and care (ECEC). The collection also enables improvements in the quality and accessibility of national ECEC data and assists in the progress reporting for the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education (NP ECE). [Chapter 7, Collection Background and Governance](#), provides further context to the collection and background information, including information on governance and the NP ECE.

The collection is underpinned by standards specified within the Early Childhood Education and Care National Minimum Data Set (ECEC NMDS). Further information on the ECEC NMDS is available on the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare website: <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/442053>.

Data standards and collection instructions for the National ECEC Collection are also outlined in detail within the *National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection: Data Collection Guide, 2011* (cat. no. 4240.0.55.002).

Data collected through the National ECEC Collection are published annually, with the second iteration being *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* (cat. no. 4240.0).

PURPOSE OF THIS PUBLICATION

The *National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection: Concepts, Sources and Methods* publication details information for data users relating to the 2011 National ECEC Collection. It includes an overview of the collection and discussions on collection scope and coverage, key concepts and definitions, data quality, the availability of data, and background and governance information.

The *Data Collection Guide* is published in conjunction with the *Concepts, Sources and Methods* publication. The *Data Collection Guide* provides detailed guidelines, instructions and definitions to assist jurisdictions in the collection and reporting of ECEC data.

USE AND MAINTENANCE OF THIS PUBLICATION

The *Concepts, Sources and Methods* publication has been developed by the National Centre for Education and Training Statistics within the ABS. Further collection improvements are planned, and changes in data collection capabilities and methodologies across jurisdictions will necessitate updates to this publication on an annual basis.

For further assistance or information, please contact the ABS by emailing education.statistics@abs.gov.au.

CHAPTER 1: COLLECTION SCOPE AND COVERAGE

SCOPE OF THE COLLECTION

The collection scope of the National Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Collection consists of all service providers delivering a preschool program during the August reference period. See [Chapter 2, Collection Overview](#) for further information on the collection reference period.

For the National ECEC Collection, a preschool program is defined as a structured, play based learning program, delivered by a degree qualified teacher, primarily aimed at children in the year before they commence full-time schooling. This is irrespective of the type of institution that provides it or whether it is government funded, or privately provided. Programs may be delivered in a variety of service settings including separate preschools or kindergartens, long day care centres or in association with a school. Terminology and definitions for preschool programs vary considerably across the jurisdictions. Further information on jurisdictional terminology and other key definitions for the collection, can be found in [Chapter 3, Concepts and Definitions](#).

For Long day care (LDC) information was collected from all LDC service providers that have children enrolled aged 3-6, however only data from those delivering a preschool program were considered in scope.

The National ECEC Collection aims to compile service provider, child, worker statistics from all service providers delivering an in-scope preschool program. The following statistical entities are in-scope for the collection population:

Service provider

A service provider is considered to be in-scope if it was providing a structured, play based learning program, delivered by a degree qualified teacher, aimed at children in the year before they commence full-time schooling (a preschool program) during the reference period.

Child

All children who as at 1 July in the collection year were between 3 and 6 years of age (inclusive), are in-scope of the collection if they were enrolled during the reference period in a preschool program. To be considered as enrolled, the child must have attended the preschool program for at least one hour during the reference period, or be absent due to illness or extended holiday leave and expected to return.

Worker

All paid employees who were working at an in-scope service provider during the reference period are in-scope of the collection. This includes both contact and non-contact workers, irrespective of whether the worker delivered a preschool program during the reference week.

CHAPTER 1: COLLECTION SCOPE AND COVERAGE

COLLECTION COVERAGE

All state and territory governments of Australia, as well as the Australian Government, currently collect data on service providers who deliver preschool programs. The current governance responsibilities for ECEC within each jurisdiction are outlined below:

1.1 GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS RESPONSIBLE FOR ECEC, 2011

<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>Government Department</i>
Australian Government	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
New South Wales	Department of Education and Communities
Victoria	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Queensland	Department of Education and Training
South Australia	Department for Education and Child Development
Western Australia	Department of Education
Tasmania	Department of Education
Northern Territory	Department of Education and Training
Australian Capital Territory	Education and Training Directorate

In an effort to achieve complete coverage of all ECEC services delivering preschool programs in Australia, ECEC data were sourced from state and territory education departments and compiled together with data from the Australian Government. The collection coverage in each state and territory for the 2011 National ECEC Collection is outlined below. For more detailed information on each jurisdiction's data collection activities, refer to [Chapter 5, Jurisdictional Data Quality Statements](#). Data sources for the National ECEC Collection for each sector within the states and territories are outlined in [Chapter 2, Collection Overview](#).

Coverage in New South Wales

Within New South Wales (NSW) full collection coverage was achieved for all preschools delivered within government schools through the Government School Census

Full coverage was achieved for all government funded preschools through the Children's Services Annual Data Collection. Within these preschools, only children who did not receive or were not eligible for the Child Care Benefit (CCB) or the Child Care Rebate (CCR) were included in the collection.

In NSW, data for the LDC sector was sourced through the Australian Government's Child Care Management System (CCMS). All services approved for the purposes of CCB were required to provide data through the CCMS. However, LDCs delivering preschool programs were not mandated to complete the preschool program component of the CCMS, which resulted in under-coverage due to non-response. Service providers that were not approved for CCB purposes were not included in the CCMS.

CHAPTER 1: COLLECTION SCOPE AND COVERAGE

There were a small number of non-government preschools not covered in the 2011 collection because they were not funded by NSW Department of Education and Communities and not within the CCMS. The majority of these providers are school-based preschools, associated with non-government schools. The appropriate mechanism to include these preschools in the collection is still under investigation.

See [Chapter 4, Overview of Early Childhood Education and Care in Australia](#), for further information on the sectors that deliver preschool programs in NSW.

Coverage in Victoria

Within Victoria (Vic.) full collection coverage was achieved for all preschool programs delivered in services that were licensed and funded by Vic. Department of Education and Early Childhood Development through the Confirmed Kindergarten Funding Data Collection (conducted in April) and the August Data Collection. The majority of service providers delivering preschool programs in Vic. were covered within these collections, irrespective of their management type and service delivery setting.

A small number of LDC centres operating a preschool program were not funded or licensed by Vic. DEECD and represent a small collection under-coverage within Victoria.

See [Chapter 4, Overview of Early Childhood Education and Care in Australia](#), for further information on the sectors that deliver preschool programs in Vic.

Coverage in Queensland

Within Queensland (Qld) full collection coverage was achieved for all approved service providers in receipt of Qld government funding through the Early Childhood Education and Care Services Census (ECECSC). This included coverage of LDC's. Participation in the ECECSC was voluntary for unfunded providers and therefore there was not complete coverage of this sector due to non-response. The size of this provider under-coverage was small.

See [Chapter 4, Overview of Early Childhood Education and Care in Australia](#), for further information on the sectors that deliver preschool programs in Qld.

Coverage in South Australia

Within South Australia (SA) full collection coverage was achieved for all government managed and government funded preschool programs in SA through the Annual Census of Children's Services (ACCS). Participation in the ACCS was compulsory for all government managed, and government funded preschool programs. Participation was voluntary for independent and Catholic school managed preschool providers and for unfunded community managed providers. As a result, there was not complete coverage of this sector. The ACCS was voluntary for LDC providers however the ACCS still achieved complete coverage of all LDC providers known to be approved for CCB purposes. There may be a small number of LDC providers operating a preschool program that were unfunded and not registered for CCB, and this represents a possible under coverage within South Australia.

See [Chapter 4, Overview of Early Childhood Education and Care in Australia](#), for further information on the sectors that deliver preschool programs in SA.

CHAPTER 1: COLLECTION SCOPE AND COVERAGE

Coverage in Western Australia

Within Western Australia (WA) full collection coverage was achieved for all preschool programs delivered in registered and funded schools (both government and non-government) and community-based preschools through the WA School Census.

All services approved for the purposes of CCB were required to provide data through the CCMS. However, LDCs delivering preschool programs were not mandated to complete the preschool program component of the CCMS, which may have resulted in under-coverage due to non-response. Service providers that were not approved for CCB purposes were not included in the CCMS, so this may have resulted in under-coverage within WA.

See [Chapter 4, Overview of Early Childhood Education and Care in Australia](#), for further information on the sectors that deliver preschool programs in WA.

Coverage in Tasmania

Within Tasmania (Tas.) full collection coverage was achieved for all preschool programs delivered in government and non-government schools through the Tas. Government School Census and the Tas. Non-government Preschool Census.

All services approved for the purposes of CCB were required to provide data through the CCMS. However, LDCs delivering preschool programs were not mandated to complete the preschool program component of the CCMS, which may have resulted in under-coverage due to non-response. Service providers that were not approved for CCB purposes were not included in the CCMS, so this may have resulted in under-coverage within Tas.

See [Chapter 4, Overview of Early Childhood Education and Care in Australia](#), for further information on the sectors that deliver preschool programs in Tas.

Coverage in Northern Territory

Within The Northern Territory (NT) full collection coverage was achieved for all government and registered non-government preschools through the NT Age/Grade Census.

All services approved for the purposes of CCB were required to provide data through the CCMS. However, LDCs delivering preschool programs were not mandated to complete the preschool program component of the CCMS, which may have resulted in under-coverage due to non-response. Service providers that were not approved for CCB purposes were not included in the CCMS, so this may have resulted in under-coverage within NT.

See [Chapter 4, Overview of Early Childhood Education and Care in Australia](#), for further information on the sectors that deliver preschool programs in NT.

Coverage in Australian Capital Territory

Within The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) full collection coverage was achieved for all ACT government managed schools delivering preschool programs through the ACT Public School Census. Catholic schools, independent schools, and community (not for-profit) and private for-profit managed preschools were not covered in the collection and therefore there was under-coverage.

CHAPTER 1: COLLECTION SCOPE AND COVERAGE

All services approved for the purposes of CCB were required to provide data through the CCMS. However, LDCs delivering preschool programs were not mandated to complete the preschool program component of the CCMS, which may have resulted in under-coverage due to non-response. Service providers that were not approved for CCB purposes were not included in the CCMS, so this may have resulted in under-coverage within ACT.

See [Chapter 4, Overview of Early Childhood Education and Care in Australia](#), for further information on the sectors that deliver preschool programs in ACT.

PRESCHOOL PROVIDER FRAME

In 2011, the ABS began the development of a Preschool Provider Frame to deliver a more comprehensive national picture of the number of known service providers delivering preschool programs in Australia.

The two primary purposes for the Preschool Provider Frame were:

- to better determine the coverage of the National ECEC Collection
- to assist with the supplementation of jurisdictional data with data from the Child Care Management System for 2011, at both the service provider and child levels.

The project initially focused on improving and confirming the list of LDCs providing preschool programs that could be sourced from the CCMS, to ensure that data were of a sufficient quality to include in the National ECEC Collection.

A summary of the results of the 2011 Preschool Provider Frame is included as an appendix to the second release of the publication *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* (cat. no. 4240.0), released in April 2012.

CHAPTER 2: COLLECTION OVERVIEW

COLLECTION DATE AND REFERENCE PERIOD

The collection date for the National Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Collection is the first Friday in August of each year. In 2011, the collection date for all jurisdictions was Friday, 5 August 2011, with a reference period of 1 – 5 August 2011. Some jurisdictions preferred to incorporate a reference period of two weeks that included the collection date, to better reflect their preschool program delivery models. Jurisdictional collection dates and reference periods for 2011 are summarised in the table below.

2.1 JURISDICTIONAL COLLECTION DATES AND REFERENCE PERIODS, 2011

<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>Collection Date</i>	<i>Reference Period</i>
Australian Government	5 August 2011	1 – 7 August 2011
New South Wales	5 August 2011	1 – 12 August 2011(a)
Victoria	5 August 2011	1 – 6 August 2011
Queensland	5 August 2011	1 – 7 August 2011 and 25 July – 7 August 2011(a)(b)
South Australia	5 August 2011	25 July – 5 August 2011(a)
Western Australia	5 August 2011	25 July – 5 August 2011(a)
Tasmania	5 August 2011	25 July – 5 August 2011(a)
Northern Territory	5 August 2011	1 – 5 August 2011
Australian Capital Territory	5 August 2011	1 – 12 August 2011(a)

(a) Jurisdiction collected data for a fortnightly reference period to reflect their preschool delivery model.

(b) Reference period for community-based preschools in Queensland.

For the National ECEC Collection to be comparable across the states and territories, it is necessary for all jurisdictions to have consistent collection dates and overlapping reference periods. The use of the recommended collection date of the first Friday in August also aligns the National ECEC Collection with the census date used for the National Schools Statistics Collection to ensure that children are only counted in one sector of education.

COLLECTION METHODS

Jurisdictions collect and report data for the National ECEC Collection using either a Unit Record Level (URL) collection methodology or an Aggregate collection methodology, or sometimes a combination of both depending on the data collection abilities within certain sectors.

A URL data collection methodology collects child enrolment and attendance level data, corresponding to service provider record level data for each child in the data set. It also collects confidentialised worker record level data corresponding to service provider record level data.

An Aggregate data collection methodology collects totals of children enrolled in and attending preschool programs at the service provider record level only. Data collected at this level does not contain detailed child record level information. Worker level data was collected using a URL data collection methodology.

For further information on these concepts, including definitions for child, worker and service provider record level data, see [Chapter 3, Concepts and Definitions](#).

CHAPTER 2: COLLECTION OVERVIEW

The National ECEC Collection aims to report accurately on the number of children who have received a preschool program within the collection reference period. To achieve this, an important goal of the collection is to count each child once in the total number of children within each state and territory who are enrolled in and attending preschool programs. Given the complexity of the service delivery models for ECEC across Australia, it is a statistical challenge to ensure that children attending multiple preschool programs are only counted once in these total counts.

A URL collection with appropriate methodologies and protocols is the most appropriate method for ensuring a child who is enrolled in multiple preschool programs is only counted once in child level estimates. Aggregate data collection methodologies are limited in their capacity to identify children attending multiple preschool programs. Consequently all data from jurisdictions with a collection process that produced Aggregate data for the 2011 National ECEC Collection could only be presented in terms of episodes of preschool program provision. See [Chapter 3, Concepts and Definitions](#) for further information on this concept.

The following table shows the collection methodologies adapted by each jurisdiction in 2011. Further information on each jurisdiction's collection capabilities are outlined in [Chapter 5, Jurisdictional Data Quality Statements](#).

2.2 JURISDICTIONAL DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGIES, 2011

<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>Collection Method</i>
Australian Government	Unit Record Level
New South Wales	Unit Record Level
Victoria	Unit Record Level
Queensland	Unit Record Level / Aggregate
South Australia	Unit Record Level(a)
Western Australia	Unit Record Level / Aggregate(b)
Tasmania	Unit Record Level
Northern Territory	Unit Record Level
Australian Capital Territory	Unit Record Level

(a) SA collected all data from service providers using a Unit Record Level data collection methodology. However, not all data collected could be reported in compliance with the URL ECEC National Minimum Data Set so it has been reported at the Aggregate level.

(b) WA collected data from a small number of non-government schools using an Aggregate data collection methodology.

Jurisdictions that provided only Aggregate level ECEC data for 2011, or provided a combination of URL and Aggregate data, are working towards the collection of complete URL data for future cycles of the National ECEC Collection. Those jurisdictions that were able to provide complete URL level ECEC data for 2011 are also working towards enhancing the information that they collect and/or provide to the ABS for the National ECEC Collection, where relevant, to improve child level estimates.

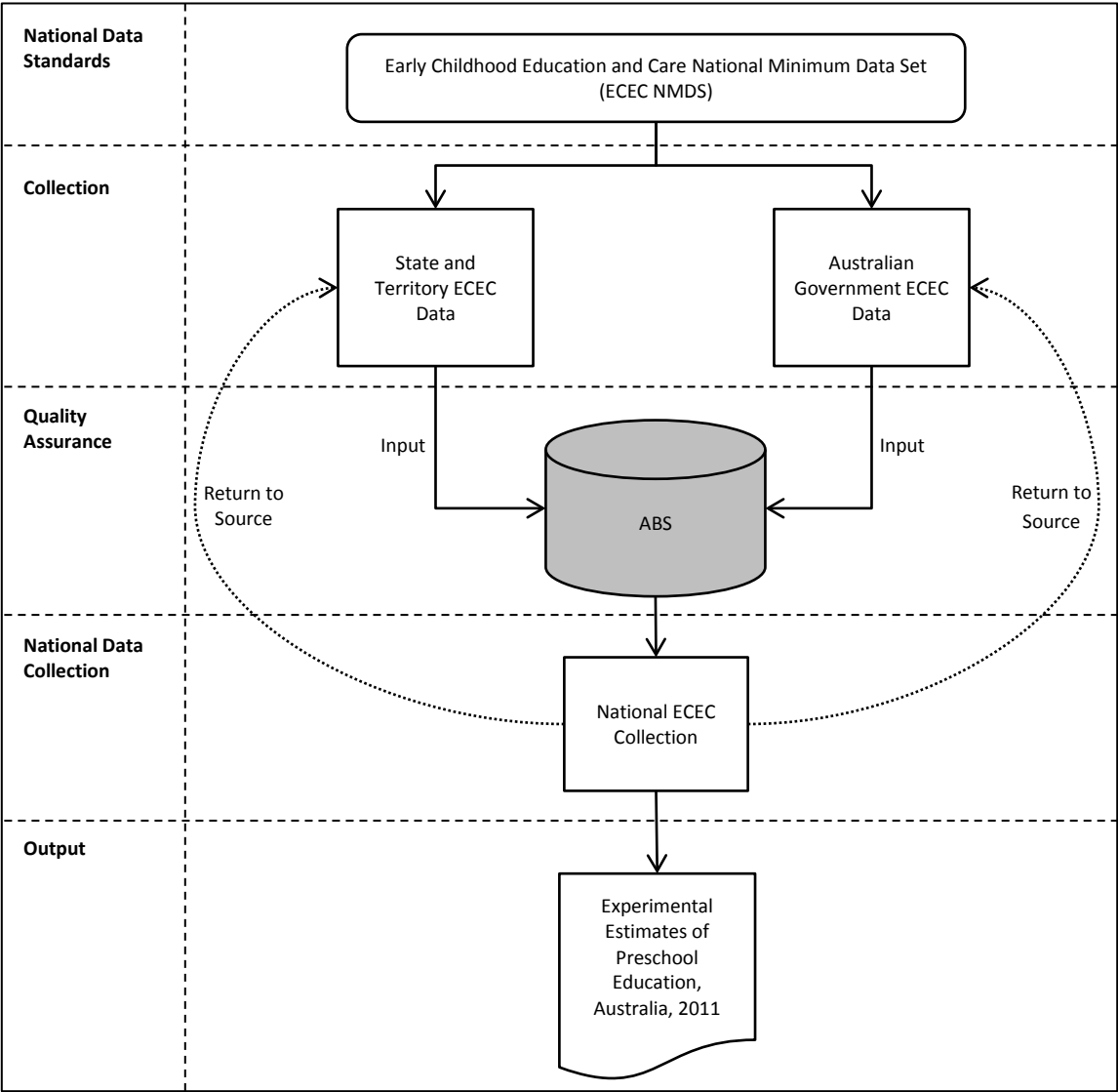
CHAPTER 2: COLLECTION OVERVIEW

DATA SOURCES

Due to the collection capabilities within each state and territory, data for the National ECEC Collection were derived from a number of data sources. In most states and territories, data from the Child Care Management System (CCMS) has been used as the data source for Long Day Care (LDC) centres. This is because state and territory data may not be of sufficient quality or have sufficient coverage of that sector. In other states and territories jurisdictional LDC data was of a sufficient quality, and in this instance CCMS data was not used as a data source. An overview of the National ECEC Collection is provided in the diagram below.

Further information on the CCMS can be found in [Chapter 5, Jurisdictional Data Quality Statements – Australian Government](#).

Figure 2.1: Overview of National ECEC Collection



The following table and accompanying flow diagrams summarise the sources for ECEC data within each of the states and territories that have been used for the 2011 National ECEC Collection.

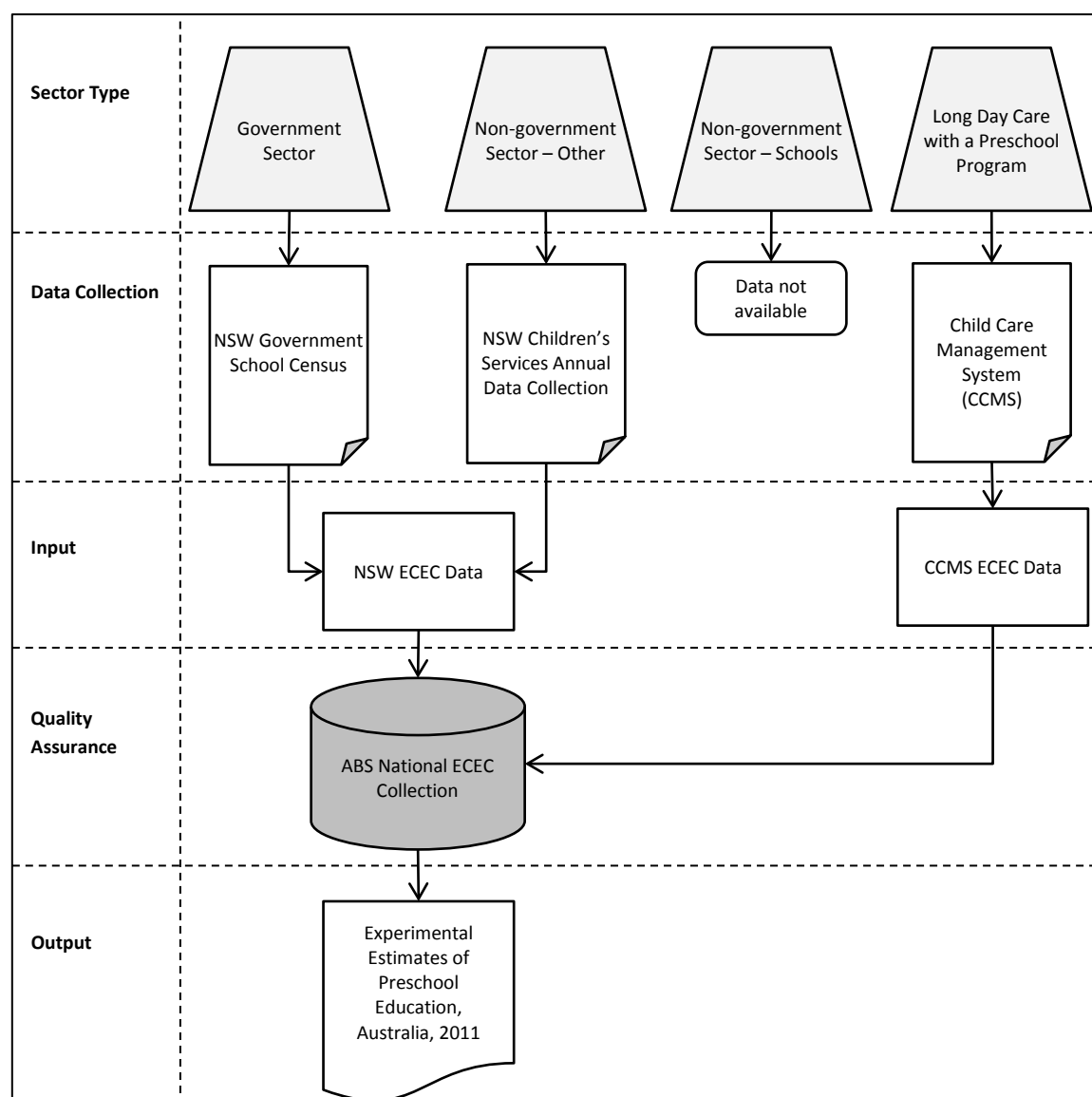
CHAPTER 2: COLLECTION OVERVIEW

2.3 NATIONAL ECEC COLLECTION DATA SOURCES FOR EACH STATE & TERRITORY, 2011

<i>State/Territory</i>	<i>Sector</i>	<i>Data Source</i>
New South Wales	Government	NSW Government School Census
	Non-government - Schools	Not available
	Non-government - Other	NSW Children's Service Annual Data Collection
	Long Day Care	Child Care Management System
Victoria	Government	Vic. August Data Collection
	Non-government	Vic. August Data Collection
	Long Day Care	Vic. August Data Collection
Queensland	Government	Qld. Early Childhood Education and Care Services Census
	Non-government	Qld. Early Childhood Education and Care Services Census
	Long Day Care	Qld. Early Childhood Education and Care Services Census
South Australia	Government	SA Annual Census of Children's Services
	Non-government	SA Annual Census of Children's Services
	Long Day Care	SA Annual Census of Children's Services
Western Australia	Government	WA School Census
	Non-government	WA School Census
	Long Day Care	Child Care Management System
Tasmania	Government	Tas. Government School Census
	Non-government	Tas. Non-government Preschool Census
	Long Day Care	Child Care Management System
Northern Territory	Government	NT Age/Grade Census
	Non-government	NT Age/Grade Census
	Long Day Care	Child Care Management System
Australian Capital Territory	Government	ACT Public School Census
	Non-government	Not available
	Long Day Care	Child Care Management System

CHAPTER 2: COLLECTION OVERVIEW

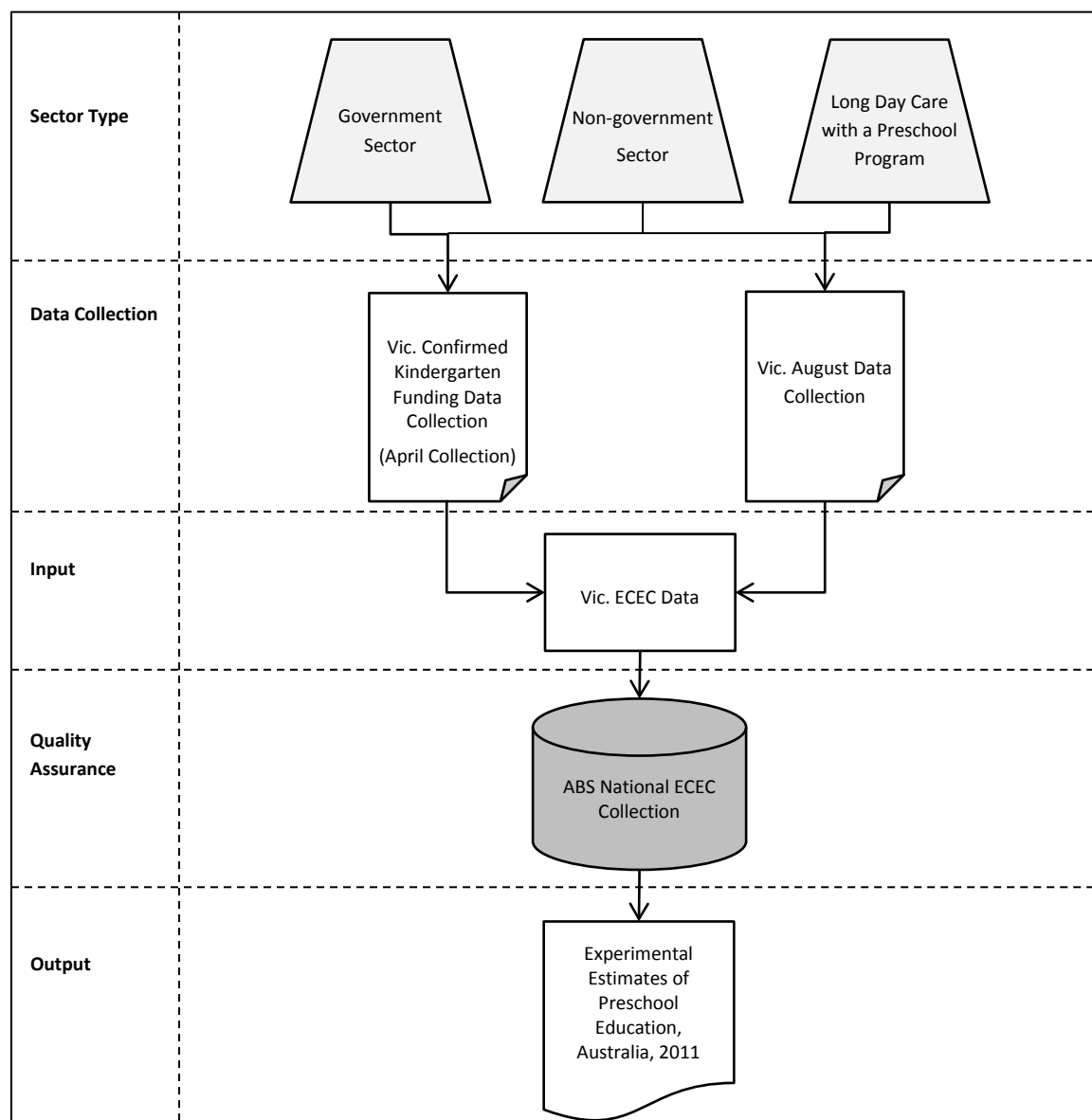
Figure 2.2: Data Sources – New South Wales



A data quality statement for the NSW Government School Census and the NSW Children's Services Annual Data Collection can be found in [Chapter 5, Jurisdictional Data Quality Statements – New South Wales](#).

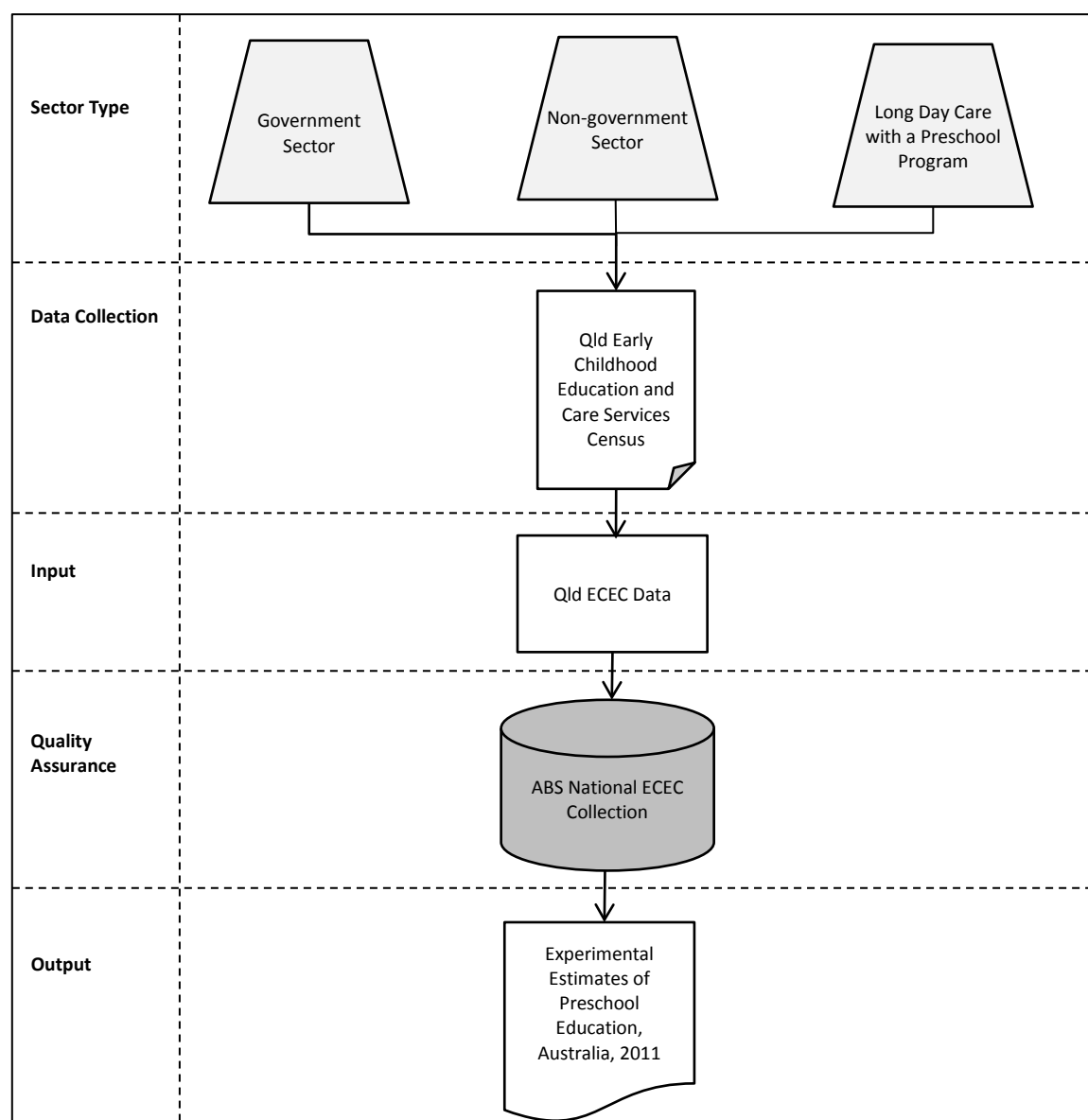
A data quality statement for the Child Care Management System can be found in [Chapter 5, Jurisdictional Data Quality Statements – Australian Government](#).

Figure 2.3: Data Sources – Victoria



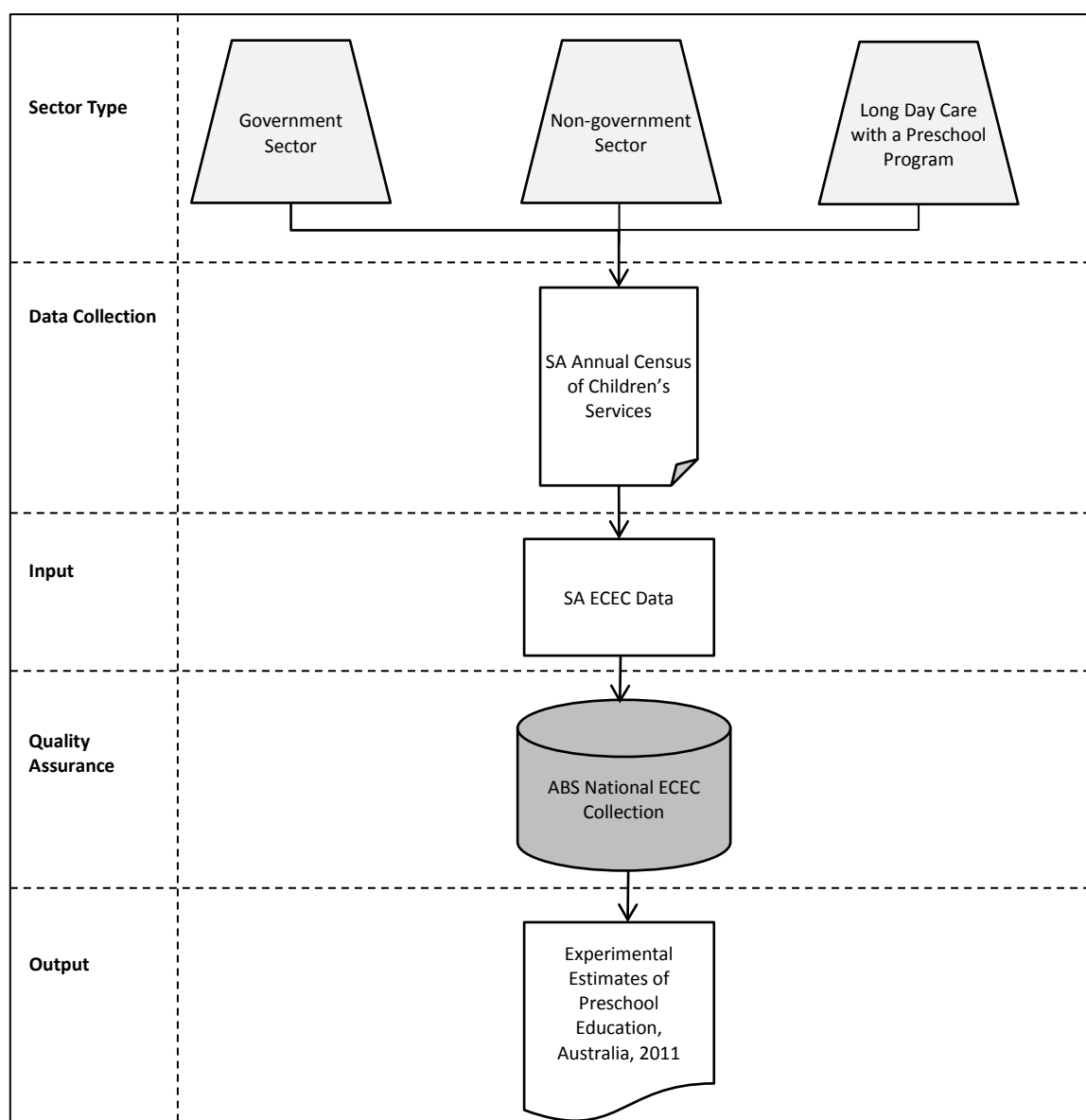
A data quality statement for the Victorian August Data Collection and the Confirmed Kindergarten Funding Data Collection can be found in [Chapter 5, Jurisdictional Data Quality Statements – Victoria](#).

Figure 2.4: Data Sources – Queensland



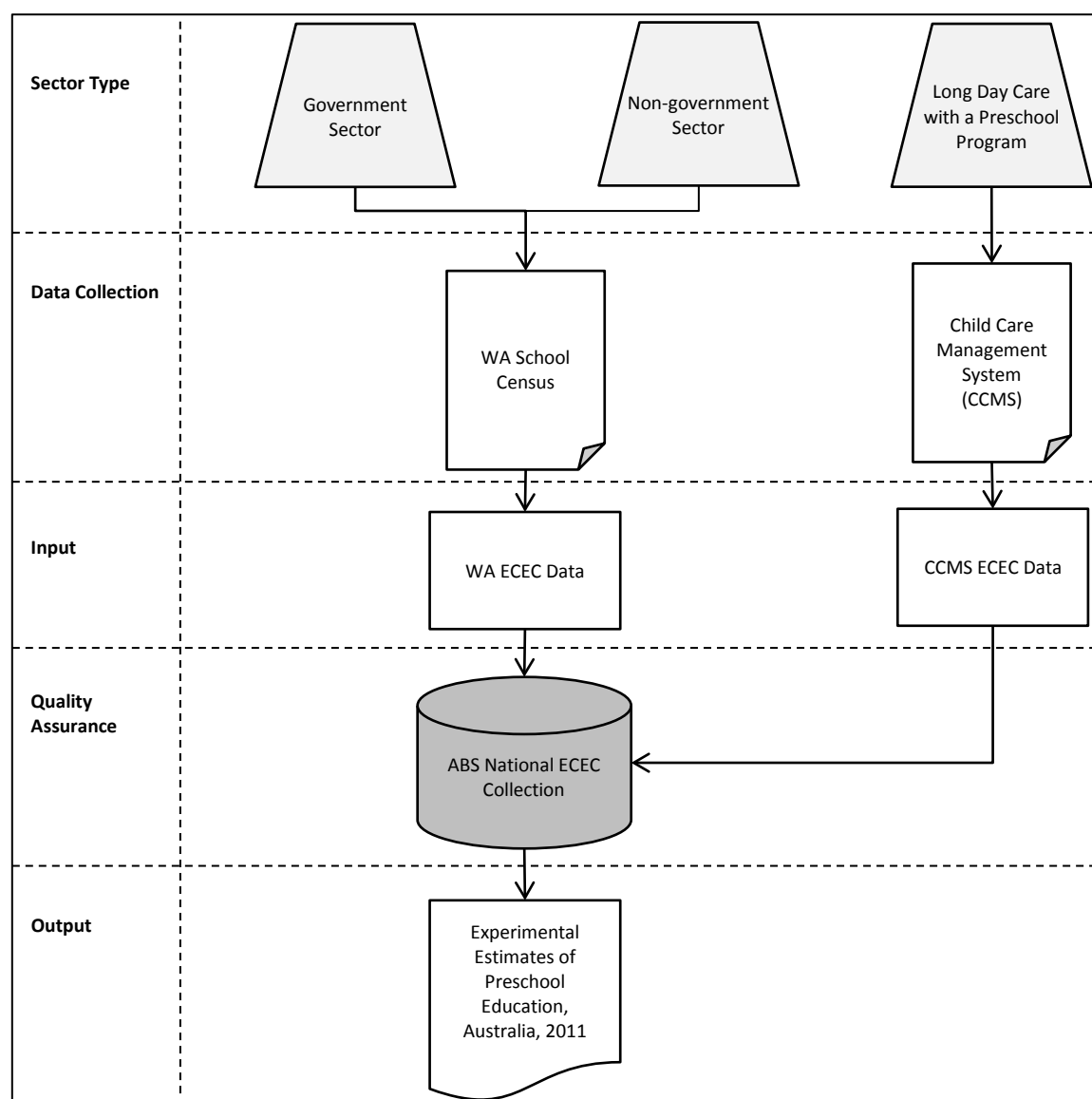
A data quality statement for the Queensland Early Childhood Education and Care Services Census can be found in [Chapter 5, Jurisdictional Data Quality Statements - Queensland](#).

Figure 2.5: Data Sources – South Australia



A data quality statement for the South Australian Annual Census of Children's Services can be found in [Chapter 5, Jurisdictional Data Quality Statements – South Australia](#).

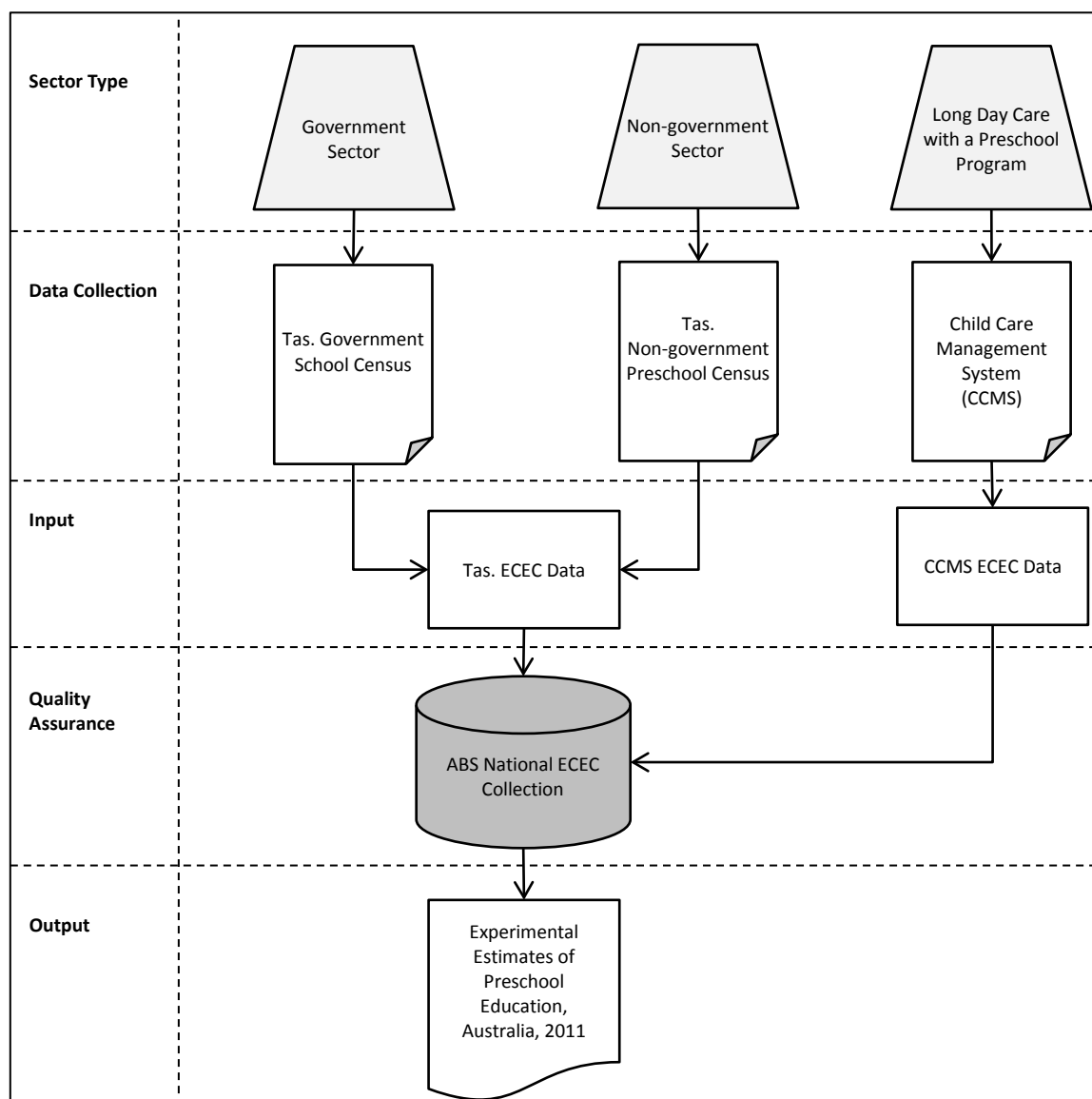
Figure 2.6: Data Sources – Western Australia



A data quality statement for the Western Australian School Census can be found in [Chapter 5, Jurisdictional Data Quality Statements – Western Australia](#).

A data quality statement for the Child Care Management System can be found in [Chapter 5, Jurisdictional Data Quality Statements – Australian Government](#).

Figure 2.7: Data Sources – Tasmania

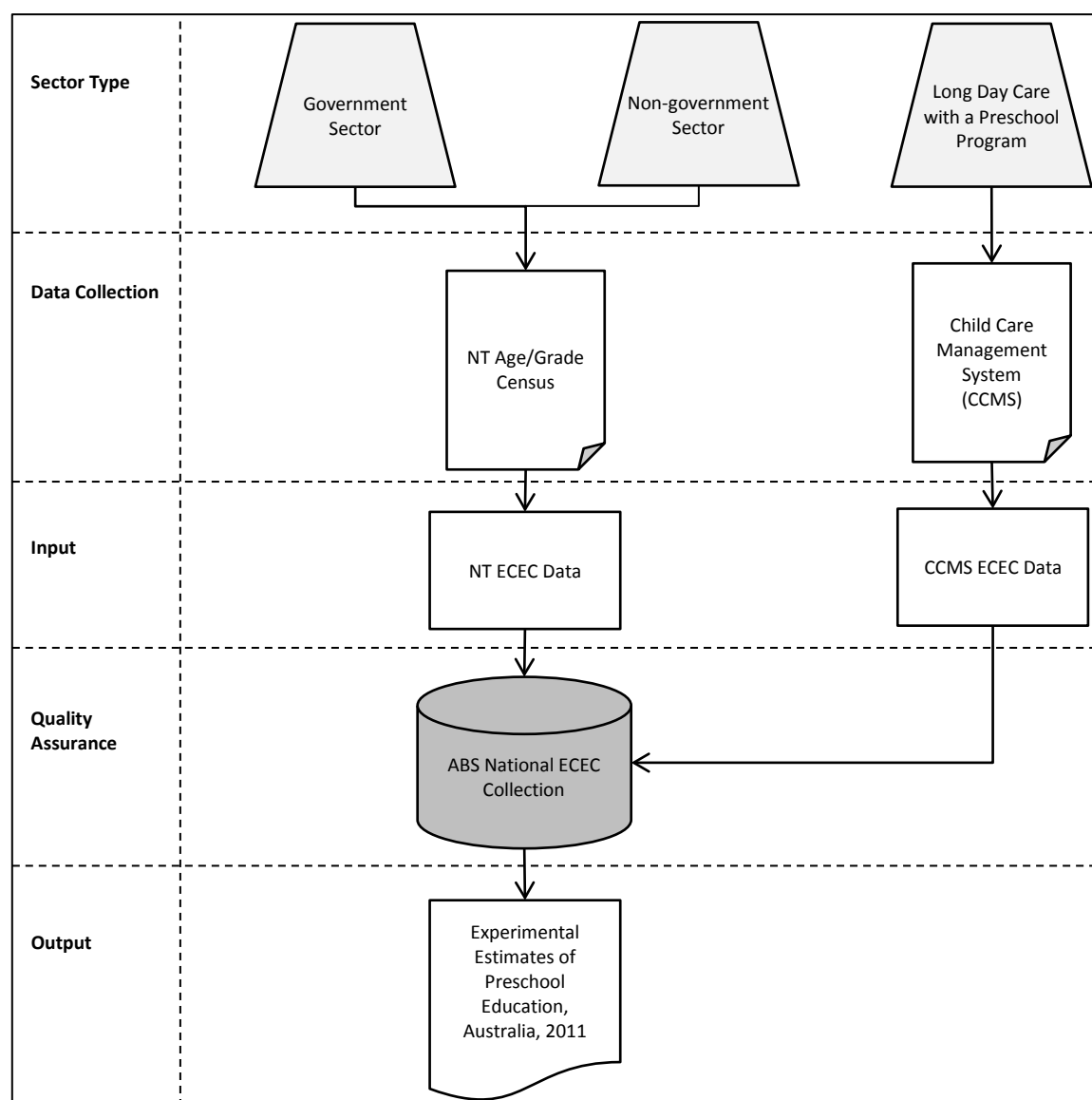


A data quality statement for the Tasmanian Government School Census and the Non-government Preschool Census can be found in [Chapter 5, Jurisdictional Data Quality Statements – Tasmania](#).

A data quality statement for the Child Care Management System can be found in [Chapter 5, Jurisdictional Data Quality Statements – Australian Government](#).

CHAPTER 2: COLLECTION OVERVIEW

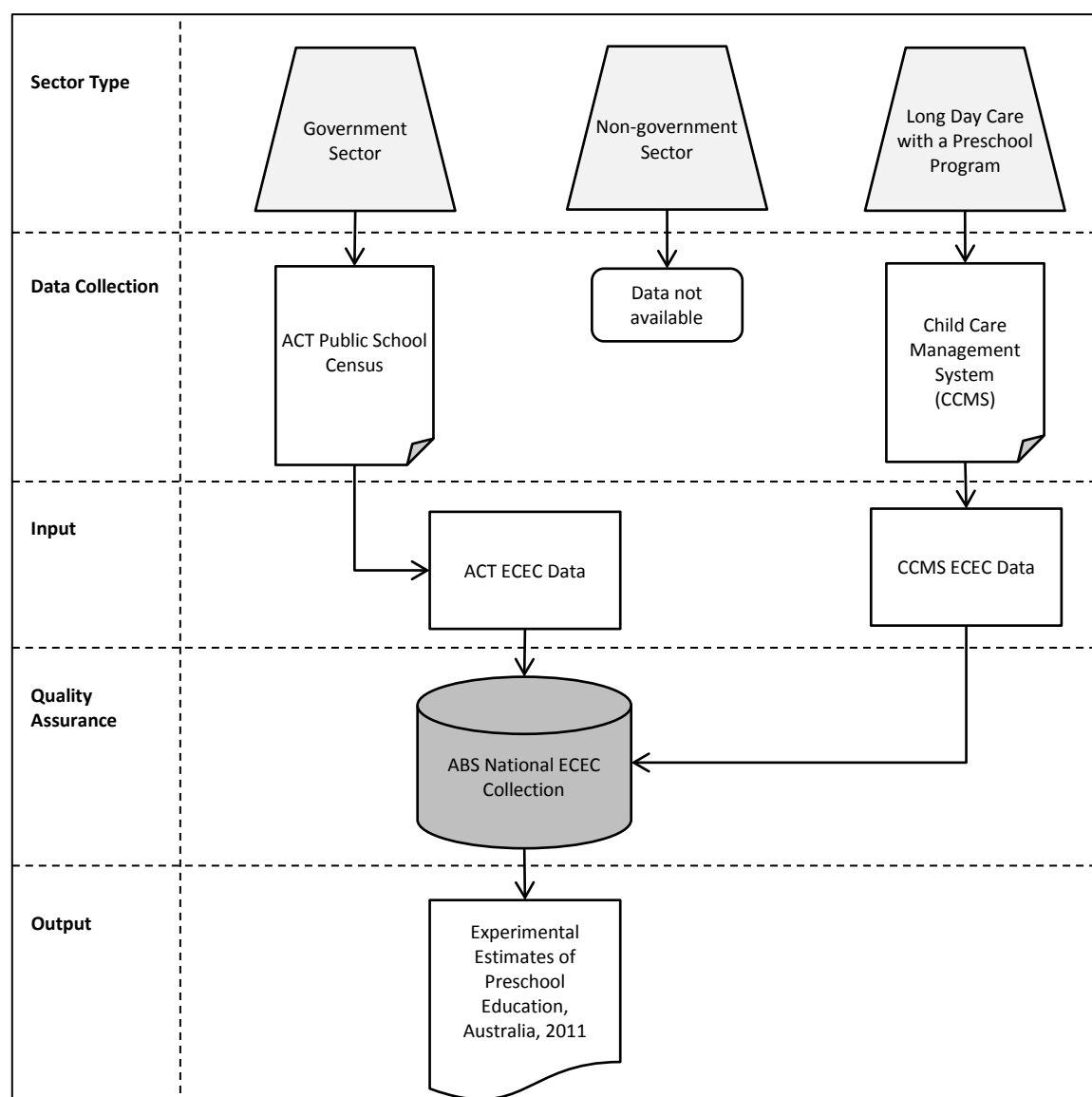
Figure 2.8: Data Sources – Northern Territory



A data quality statement for the Northern Territory Age/Grade Census can be found in [Chapter 5, Jurisdictional Data Quality Statements – Northern Territory](#).

A data quality statement for the Child Care Management System can be found in [Chapter 5, Jurisdictional Data Quality Statements – Australian Government](#).

Figure 2.9: Data Sources – Australian Capital Territory



A data quality statement for the ACT Public School Census can be found in [Chapter 5, Jurisdictional Data Quality Statements – Australian Capital Territory](#).

A data quality statement for the Child Care Management System can be found in [Chapter 5, Jurisdictional Data Quality Statements – Australian Government](#).

CHAPTER 2: COLLECTION OVERVIEW

NATIONAL COMPARABILITY

To ensure national comparability, all jurisdictions were required to follow national data standards for the 2011 National ECEC Collection. For 2011, not all jurisdictions were able to completely align their collection methods directly with these standards, details of which are outlined in [Chapter 5, Jurisdictional Data Quality Statements](#).

The data standards for the National ECEC Collection are outlined in the Early Childhood Education and Care National Minimum Data Set (ECEC NMDS) and the *National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection: Data Collection Guide, 2011* (cat. no. 4240.0.55.002).

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE NATIONAL MINIMUM DATA SET

The ECEC NMDS is a set of national data standards which has been established by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), in conjunction with the ABS, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, and state and territory departments responsible for early childhood education. The ECEC NMDS is designed to support jurisdictions with the collection of ECEC data under the National Information Agreement for Early Childhood Education and Care. Compliance with these standards will mean ECEC data is consistent and comparable within and between state and territories. More information on the ECEC NMDS can be found on the AIHW website, <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au>.

NATIONAL ECEC COLLECTION: DATA COLLECTION GUIDE

The *National ECEC Collection: Data Collection Guide* provides detailed guidelines, instructions and definitions to assist jurisdictions in the collection and reporting of both URL and Aggregate level data. The guide was used by jurisdictions in conjunction with the 2011 ABS National ECEC data request and the 2011 ECEC NMDS. The guidelines contained within the *National ECEC Collection: Data Collection Guide*, are aimed at facilitating the delivery of nationally comparable ECEC statistics.

KEY METHODOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

For 2011, there were a number of jurisdictions that collected data using an Aggregate data collection methodology. This has resulted in data not being as comparable as it would be if the collection methods were aligned across jurisdictions and all were collecting data using a URL data collection methodology. For the 2011 Collection some jurisdictions were not able to provide the ABS with certain data elements, or only data elements that were not aligned with the national standards.

As a result, data limitations for the 2011 collection included:

- Under-coverage of preschool programs in some sectors, for example limited non-government coverage
- URL data not currently available for all jurisdictions, particularly for the non-government sector or unfunded preschools
- Children enrolled in multiple preschool programs are not identifiable within all jurisdictions
- Children enrolled in their second or subsequent year of preschool not identifiable within all jurisdictions
- Differences between data element collection methodologies and alignment to national data standards across jurisdictions.

Further information on methodological differences between jurisdictions and their alignment to the national standards can be found in [Chapter 5, Jurisdictional Data Quality Statements](#).

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

KEY COLLECTION CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

This section describes key concepts and definitions used in the 2011 National Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Collection. Further terms and definitions are provided in the [Glossary](#).

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

'Early childhood education and care' (ECEC) incorporates all early childhood education and child care programs. ECEC programs are delivered in a variety of service provider delivery settings such as stand-alone preschools, preschool within schools or in Long Day Care (LDC) centres, and may be delivered to children of all ages.

Responsibility for ECEC is shared between the Australian Government and the state and territory governments, and is administered through a wide range of service provider management types including government, local government, community, schools (both government and non-government) and private organisations.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

A preschool program for the purposes of the National ECEC Collection, is defined as a structured, play based learning program, delivered by a degree qualified teacher primarily aimed at children in the year before they commence full-time schooling. This is irrespective of the type of institution that provides it or whether it is government funded or privately provided. This guide uses the term 'preschool program', notwithstanding that the terminology varies considerably across the jurisdictions.

A preschool program can be delivered in a variety of settings such as stand-alone preschools, preschools within a school (both government and non-government), and preschools within a for-profit long day care (LDC) centre. A child may attend both a preschool and a separate or adjoined child care facility, such as family day care, outside school hours care, vacation care, in-home care and occasional care services. LDC centres may or may not offer preschool programs within their service offering. Participation in preschool is not compulsory and is influenced by parental preference and on other factors, such as school starting age within the particular jurisdiction.

Terminology and age entry requirements differ across states and territories, these differences are summarised in the following table.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

3.1 PROGRAM TERMINOLOGY AND AGE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS, BY STATE AND TERRITORY, 2011(a)

<i>Preschool (Year before full-time schooling)</i>			<i>First year of School (Year prior to Grade 1)</i>	
<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>Program name</i>	<i>Age entry requirement</i>	<i>Program name</i>	<i>Age entry requirement</i>
New South Wales	Preschool	3 and 4 year olds	Kindergarten(c)	5 by 31 July
Victoria	Kindergarten	4 by 30 April	Preparatory (Prep)(c)	5 by 30 April
Queensland	Kindergarten/Pre-Preparatory (Pre-Prep)	4 by 30 June	Preparatory Year (Prep)(d)	5 by 30 June
South Australia	Preschool/Kindergarten	Entry after 4 th birthday(f)	Reception(c)	Entry after 5 th birthday
Western Australia	Kindergarten	4 by 30 June	Pre Primary(d)	5 by 30 June
Tasmania	Kindergarten	4 by 1 January	Preparatory(e)	5 by 1 January
Northern Territory	Preschool	4 by 30 June(b)	Transition(c)	5 by 30 June
Australian Capital Territory	Preschool	4 by 30 April	Kindergarten(c)	5 by 30 April

(a) Sourced from the 2011 Report on Government Services (SCRGSP, 2011).

(b) For Indigenous children in remote areas, age requirement is 3 years old by 30 June.

(c) Program is compulsory from age 6.

(d) Program is non-compulsory. Children starting school from age 6 can enrol into Year 1.

(e) Program is compulsory from age 5.

(f) Indigenous children and children under the guardianship of the Minister may commence preschool from 3 years of age.

YEAR BEFORE FULL-TIME SCHOOLING

The year before full-time schooling (YBFS - also referred to as the 'year before formal schooling') is a term used to describe the 'preschool' cohort of children, due to the varying delivery models of early childhood education across the jurisdictions (McEwin and Ryan, 2009). The year before a child begins full-time schooling is further defined as Year 1 (or Grade 1) minus 2 years. This cohort may be a combination of children aged 3, 4, 5 and sometimes 6 years old. Children who are 6 years old and attending a preschool program have usually attended more than one year of a preschool program, or may have been delayed from starting preschool at the usual age. The 3 year old children include those that are eligible for early entry due to special needs or giftedness, or that attend the first year of full-time schooling as 4 year olds due to the jurisdictions school starting age. Children eligible for early entry as 3 year olds that remain for a second year of preschool as 4 year olds (i.e. early entry for Indigenous children or children with special needs), are in their YBFS when they attend preschool as 4 year olds.

Operationally for the National ECEC Collection, children are only included in the YBFS cohort when they are in their final year of preschool, as determined by their age at the time of the reference period.

The count of preschool enrolments in the YBFS is estimated by including children aged 4 and 5 years old that are attending their first year at a preschool program. Operationally, children who are enrolled and attending a preschool program for more than one year (i.e. as a result of repeating or service delivery model) are then removed from the count of enrolments and attendance and not considered to be in the YBFS.

In this respect, a 4 year old child who attends preschool in 2011 and then again in 2012 as a 5 year old, would be included in the 2011 counts but removed from the 2012 counts.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

The methodology for estimating the YBFS concept for the National ECEC Collection will be reviewed annually to ensure that the most appropriate measurement is being used for this concept.

SERVICE PROVIDER

For the purposes of the National ECEC Collection, a service provider is defined as an establishment that directly provides child care and/or educational services to children at a specific geographical location. These services could include long day care (LDC), stand-alone preschool, occasional care, outside of school hours care and vacation care services. Service providers may provide multiple services within a single geographical location, however for the purposes of the National ECEC Collection, only service providers delivering preschool programs are considered in-scope.

A single service provider may deliver multiple preschool programs within the same geographical location. Due to legislative requirements in some jurisdictions, separate licences may be issued to each preschool program within a single service provider, even though the programs are being delivered within the same geographical location. For the purposes of the National ECEC Collection, this would be considered as a single service provider delivering multiple preschool programs.

There are also instances where two different service providers, with different management structures, can operate within the same geographical location. An example of this is a school that has a preschool program located on the same grounds as a LDC that also happens to be delivering a preschool program, however each provider has different management arrangements.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

COLLECTING DATA FOR THE NATIONAL ECEC COLLECTION

DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGIES

Jurisdictions provide data for the National ECEC Collection using either a Unit Record Level (URL) or an Aggregate level data collection methodology.

Unit Record Level Data Collection

A URL data collection methodology contains data for individual statistical entities in a collection population.

For the purposes of the National ECEC Collection, a URL data collection methodology collects child level enrolment and attendance data, and corresponding service provider record level data for each child in the data set. A URL data collection methodology also includes worker record level data corresponding to service provider record level data for each worker in the data set. In 2011, all jurisdictions were able to collect worker data using a URL data collection methodology.

Aggregate Level Data Collection

An Aggregate level data collection methodology contains data from statistical entities within the collection population that are grouped together and aggregated into broader categories.

For the National ECEC Collection, an Aggregate data collection methodology collects totals of children enrolled in and attending preschools programs at the service provider record level only. Data collected at this level does not contain detailed child record level information. It is not operationally possible to identify children enrolled and attending multiple services because data collected using an Aggregate methodology is collected at the service provider level. Therefore, all child data collected at the service provider record level is reported as episodes of enrolment and attendance.

STATISTICAL ENTITIES

Within each jurisdiction's collection, data were collected for the following statistical entities using either an Aggregate or URL data collection methodology.

Child Record Level Data

Child record level data contains data for each individual child in a data set. Data at the child record level includes personal characteristics and enrolment and attendance information for each child.

The aim of collecting data at child record level is to enable reporting of the number of children who have received a preschool program in the year before full-time schooling. Child record level data that includes a non-unique identifier, such as a statistical linking key, assists to ensure that for child counts, each child is only counted once. The importance of child counts is further explained below in '[Child Episode Counts vs Unique Child Counts](#)'.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

Worker Record Level Data

Worker record level data contains confidentialised data for each individual worker at each service provider within the data set. Data at the worker record level includes educational qualifications, role and type of work activity, and information on whether the worker delivered a preschool program. It is possible for a single worker to be employed across multiple service providers. Worker level data did not include a unique identifier and as a consequence it can only be output as episodes of workers delivering preschool programs. See the [Glossary](#), for further information on the concept of an 'episode'.

Service Provider Record Level Data

Service provider record level data contains data for each individual service provider delivering a preschool program within a data set. Data at the service provider record level includes location information, management type, activity type and service delivery setting, as well as information on preschool programs.

Age Reference Date:

The National ECEC Collection age reference date for child data collected at the service provider record level is 1 July of the collection year. In 2011, those jurisdictions that are utilising an Aggregate data collection methodology derive children's ages based on the 1 July age reference date. Jurisdictions with URL data collection methodologies collect and provide the date of birth of the child, with the age of the child as at the reference date derived by the ABS.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

PROCESSING DATA FOR THE NATIONAL ECEC COLLECTION

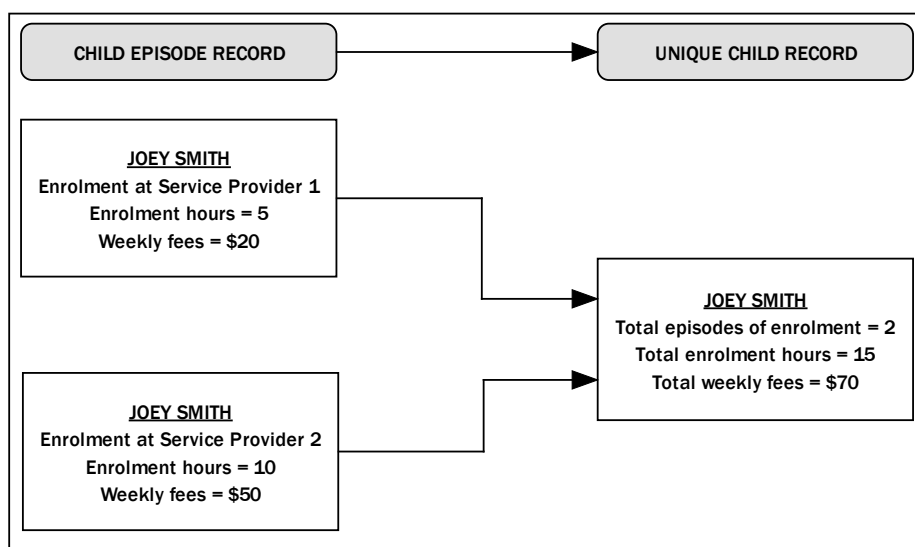
CHILD EPISODE COUNTS VS UNIQUE CHILD COUNTS

A key outcome of the National ECEC Collection is to collect data on children enrolled in and attending preschool programs. In order to report accurately on the number of children who have received an early childhood education program, a requirement of the collection is to count each child once. Given the complexity of the service delivery models for ECEC across Australia, it is a statistical challenge to identify children attending multiple preschool programs within the collection reference period and accurately report the number of children enrolled in and attending a preschool program, without counting an individual child more than once.

When one child attends two different preschool programs, this is described as a child attending two episodes of preschool. However, this child should only be counted once when counting total numbers of children enrolled and attending (child counts). Only unique child records are included in the count for the total number of children enrolled in and attending a preschool program. All child episode records are included in the count for the total episodes of enrolment and attendance in a preschool program.

The following flow chart shows the difference between episode counts and counts of children.

Figure 3.1: Child Episode Record to Unique Child Record



For the purpose of reporting on hours enrolled, hours attended, maximum hours available and fees, child episode records are combined to obtain the total hours and total fees for children who are enrolled in multiple preschool programs.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

Identification of Unique Child Records

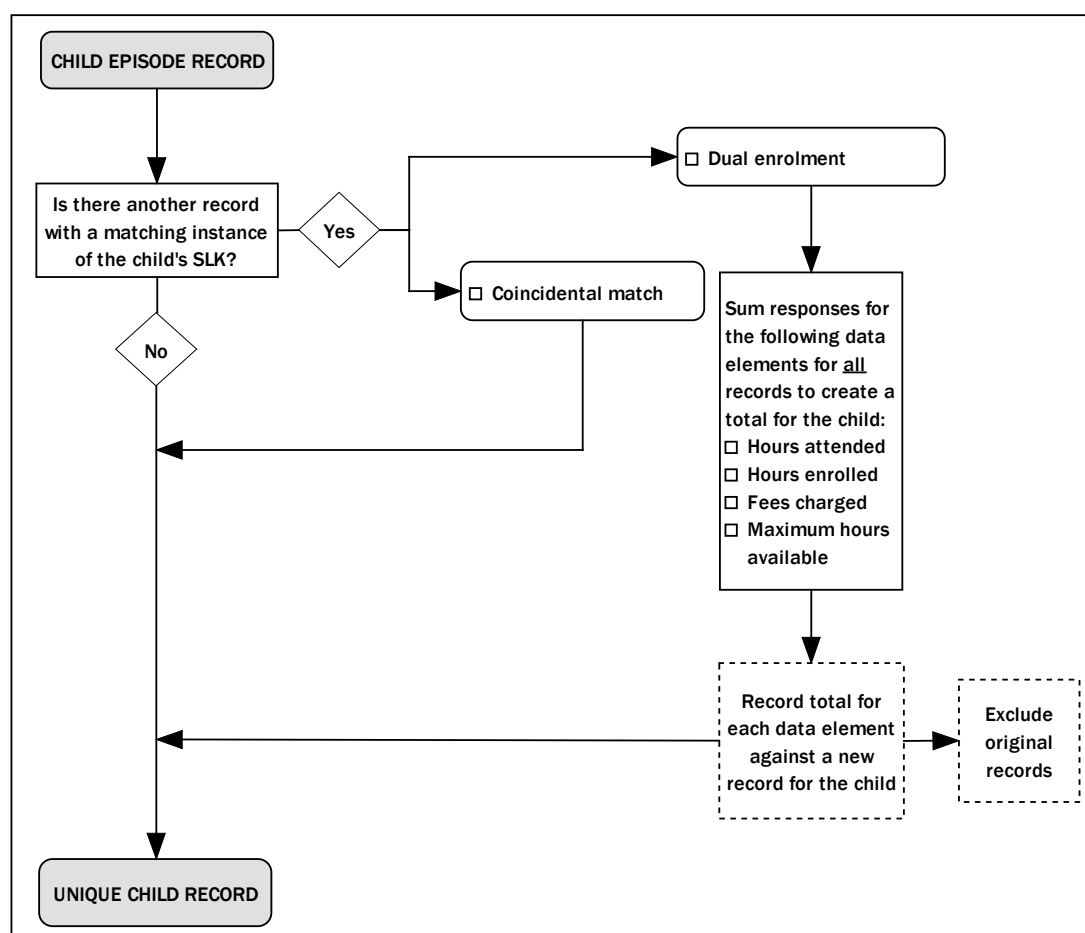
Identification of unique child records can be achieved by application of a child/client database which contains detailed name, date of birth and address information for each child in a data set. Alternatively, a statistical linkage key (SLK) can be used to identify matching child records. Without a child/client database, the SLK can only provide estimated unique child records as it is possible for more than one child to have an identical SLK.

For the National ECEC Collection, child records with identical SLKs were flagged and investigated by the jurisdiction in their child/client database. This process confirmed whether the matching SLK related to the same child enrolled in multiple preschool programs, or whether the SLK was a coincidental match (i.e. another child with a similar name).

Alternatively, where a jurisdiction did not have a child/client database, matching SLKs were considered to be dual enrolments and combined accordingly into an estimated unique child record.

The conceptual process which ensures that each child is only counted once for the total number of children enrolled and attending a preschool program is outlined in the diagram below.

Figure 3.2: Creating a Unique Child Record



CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

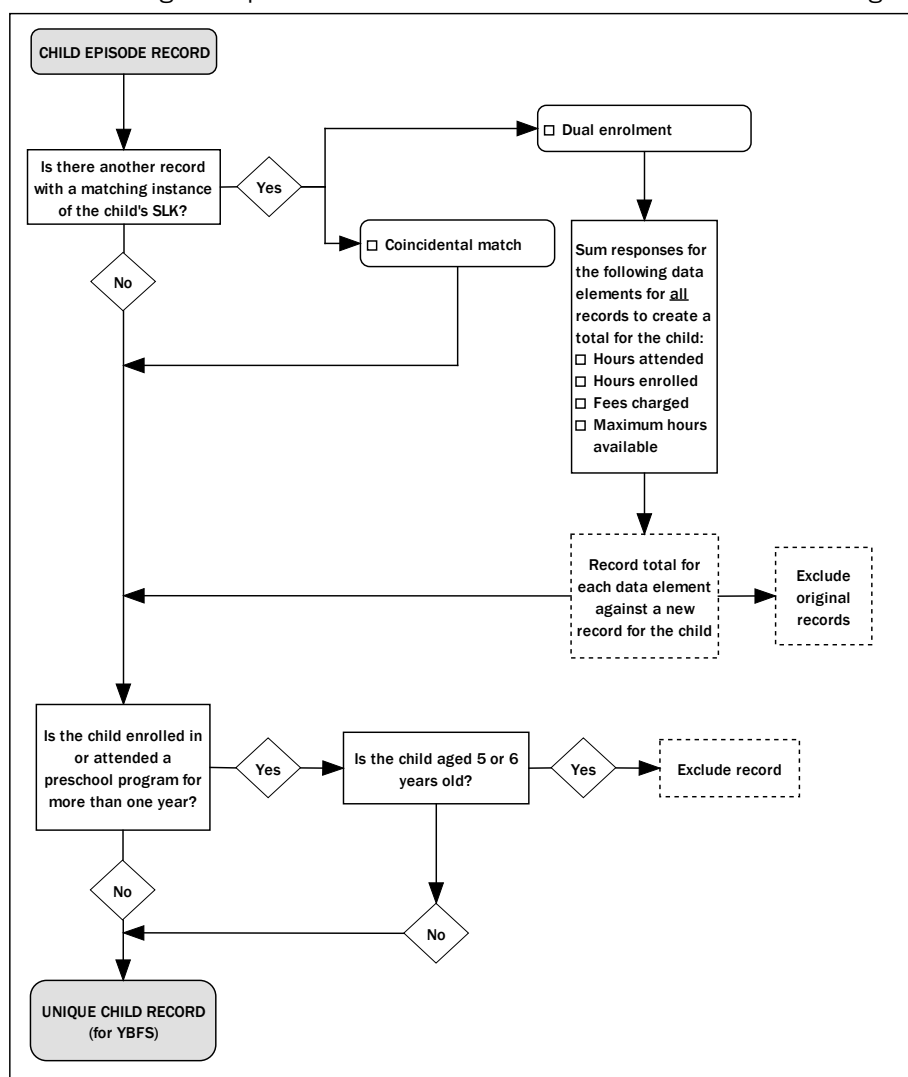
Identification of Unique Child Records in the Year before Full-time Schooling

Identification of unique child records in the YBFS can be achieved with 2 years of data collected using a URL data collection methodology and a child/client database. Where a child/client database is not available, the application of a SLK is used as an alternative unique identifier.

For the National ECEC Collection, children who are enrolled for more than one year of a preschool program are identified and if these children are aged 5 or 6 years old, their records are excluded from the number of children in the YBFS. Four year old children who are enrolled in more than one year of a preschool program are not excluded because they would not have been attending a program intended for children in the YBFS in the previous year (i.e. they would have been attending as an eligible early entry child but not included in the count of children enrolled and attending in the YBFS).

The conceptual process which ensures that each child is only counted once for the total number of children enrolled and attending a preschool program in the YBFS is outlined in the diagram below.

Figure 3.3: Creating a Unique Child Record for the Year before Full-Time Schooling Concept



For the 2011 National ECEC Collection, identification of unique child records using appropriate methods was achieved for some jurisdictions, however, for other jurisdictions it was not achieved. See [Chapter 5, Jurisdictional Data Quality Statements](#) for collection specific assessments.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

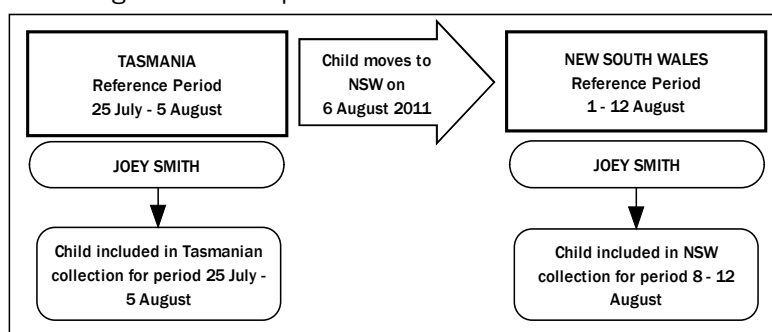
REASONS A CHILD COULD BE ENROLLED IN AND ATTENDING MULTIPLE PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

Below is a summary of the different ways that a child could be included more than once in the National ECEC Collection.

Across jurisdictions

When children move interstate during the reference period, they may still be on the enrolment list of their former preschool as well as on the enrolment list of their new preschool. In this situation, the child would be recorded legitimately in both jurisdictional data sets. In the 2011 collection this occurrence is significantly reduced, due to the alignment of collection reference periods for each jurisdiction. In 2011 the collection did not include any further reconciliation processes to further manage this occurrence

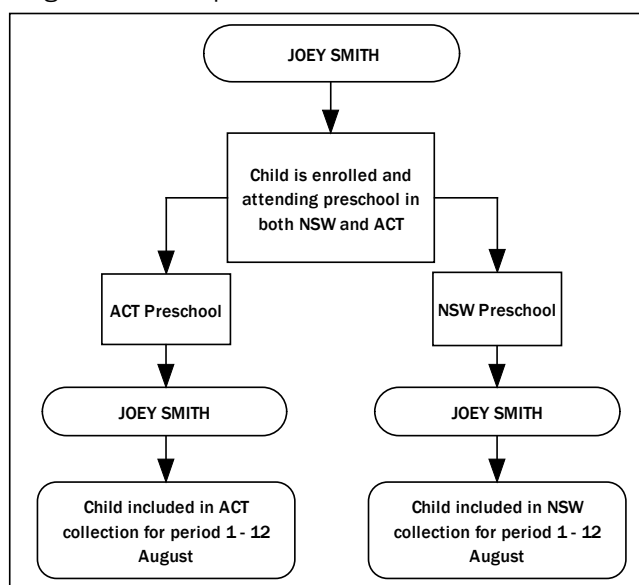
Figure 3.4: Multiple Enrolments – Across Jurisdictions



Cross border issues

Where a child is enrolled in and attending two or more preschools in two separate jurisdictions (e.g. NSW and ACT), the child would be recorded in two different jurisdictional data sets. This could occur when a family uses a mixed preschool program delivery model that is located within different states/territories.

Figure 3.5: Multiple Enrolments – Cross Border Issues

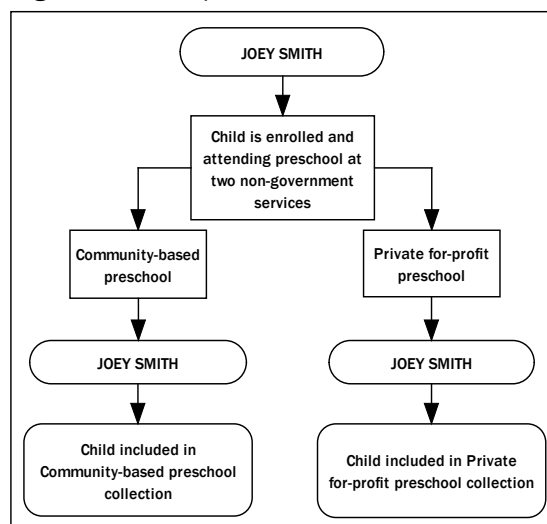


This is an instance where a child is enrolled in and attending two preschools and subsequently this child would be included in both jurisdictional collections.

Within a sector

Where a child is enrolled in and attending two or more preschool programs within a sector, the child would be recorded for each enrolment within a jurisdictional data set. This could occur because a child's family has decided to use two or more non-government services, two or more government services, or two or more LDCs, reflecting work life arrangements, or to increase their child's preschool attendance hours.

Figure 3.6: Multiple Enrolments – Within Sector

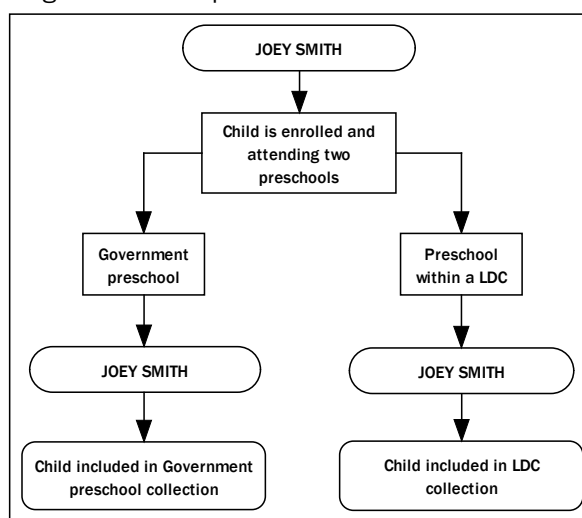


When jurisdictions can collect data using a URL methodology and a child/client database and/or SLK is available, these records could be matched to produce a unique child record. Although this is an instance where a child is enrolled in and attending two preschools, this child should only be counted once within 'Counts of Children'.

Across sectors

Where a child is enrolled in and attending two or more preschool programs across sectors the child would be recorded for each enrolment within a jurisdictional data set. This may occur because a child's family has chosen to use a combination of government preschool, non-government preschool or preschool in an LDC, reflecting work life arrangements, or to increase their child's preschool attendance hours.

Figure 3.7: Multiple Enrolments – Across Sectors



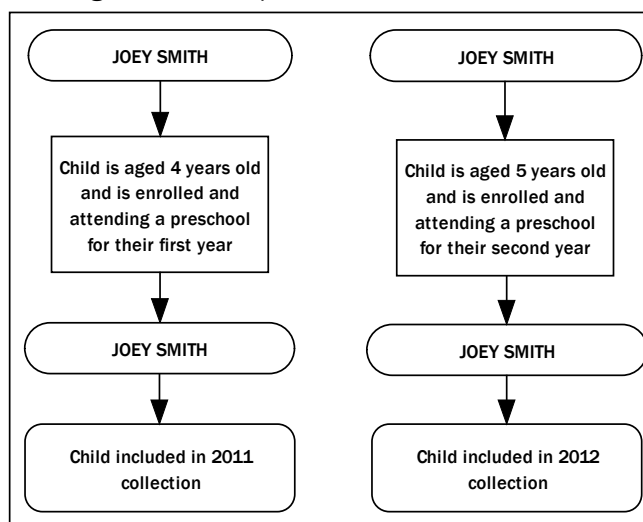
CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

When jurisdictions can collect data using a URL methodology and a child/client database and/or SLK is available, these records could be matched and combined to produce a unique child record (See [‘Identification of Unique Child Records’](#)). Although this is an instance where a child is enrolled in and attending two preschools, this child should only be counted once when counting numbers of children enrolled in and attending preschool.

Across time

Where a child attends preschool for more than one year (e.g. a child who was enrolled in an 'early entry' preschool program) the child would be recorded in a jurisdictional data set over two years.

Figure 3.8: Multiple Enrolments – Across Time



When jurisdictions have collected data using a URL methodology for at least two years with a repeater flag and a child/client database and/or SLK is available, these records could be matched to create a unique child record. This child would be counted in both years when counting the number of children enrolled in and attending preschool in 2011 and 2012, however, the child would only be counted once (in the 2011 count) when counting the number of children enrolled in and attending preschool in the YBFS.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

REPORTING DATA FOR THE NATIONAL ECEC COLLECTION

Within the publication *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* (cat. no. 4240.0) four table concepts are presented:

- Episodes of preschool program
- Children in a preschool program in 2011
- Children in a preschool program in the YBFS
- Episodes of workers delivering preschool programs.

Episodes of Preschool Program

The tables presented using this concept included episode counts of children aged 4 and 5 years old who were enrolled in and attended a preschool program in the 2011 reference period.

For the 2011 National ECEC Collection, not all jurisdictions were able to supply child data collected with a URL data collection methodology to enable counts of children to be derived. For these jurisdictions, child data were only able to be provided at the service provider record level as totals of children enrolled and attending preschool programs at each service provider. Data collected at this level could only be reported as episodes of preschool program enrolment and attendance.

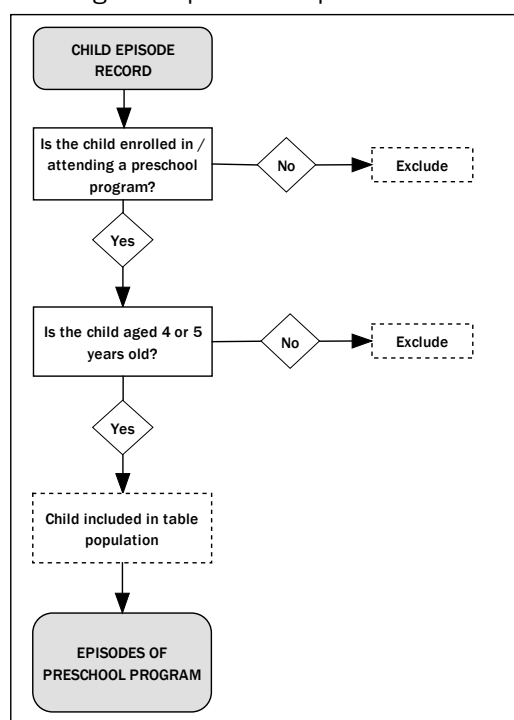
All jurisdictions, irrespective of whether child data were provided at the child record level or at the service provider record level, are included in these tables.

A child episode record was included in these tables if they:

- were enrolled in / attending a preschool program
- were aged 4 or 5 years old

The following conceptual map outlines the base population for episodes of children in a preschool program in 2011.

Figure 3.9: Defining the Population - Episodes of Preschool Program



CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

Children in a Preschool Program in 2011

The tables presented using this concept included all children aged 4 and 5 years old that were enrolled in and attended a preschool program in the 2011 reference period. This occurred regardless of whether children also attended a preschool program in a previous year (i.e. including children who were enrolled in and attended more than one year of a preschool program).

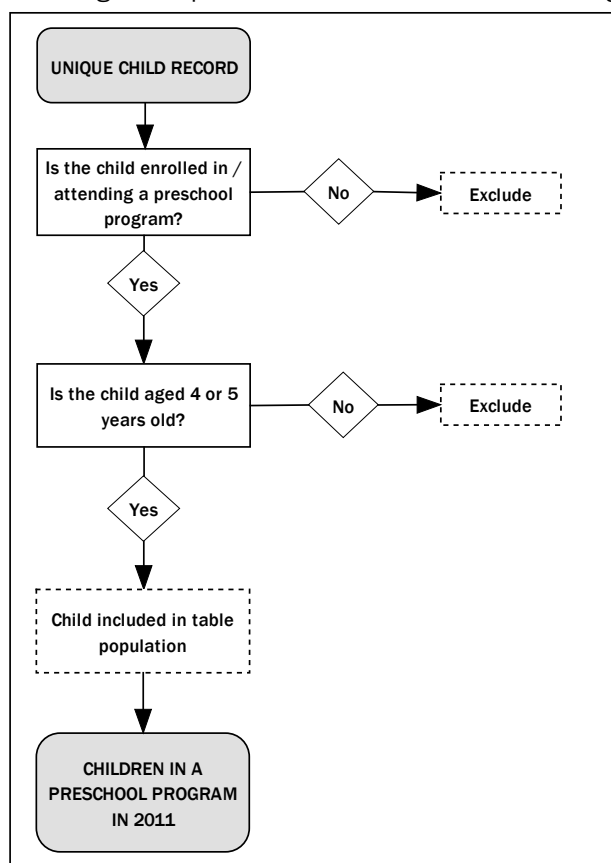
To be included in these tables, data must be of a quality that allows the accurate identification of unique child records to ensure that each child is only counted once in the totals. This requires child data collected with a URL data collection methodology and a client/child database. See '[Identification of Unique Child Records](#)'.

A child was included in these tables if they:

- were enrolled in / attending a preschool program
- were aged 4 or 5 years old

The following conceptual map outlines the base population for children in a preschool program in 2011.

Figure 3.10: Defining the Population -Children in a Preschool Program in 2011



CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

Children in a Preschool Program in the YBFS

The tables presented using this concept included all children aged 4 and 5 years old who were enrolled in and attended a preschool program in the YBFS for the first time in 2011 (i.e. excluding children who were enrolled in and attended more than one year of a preschool program).

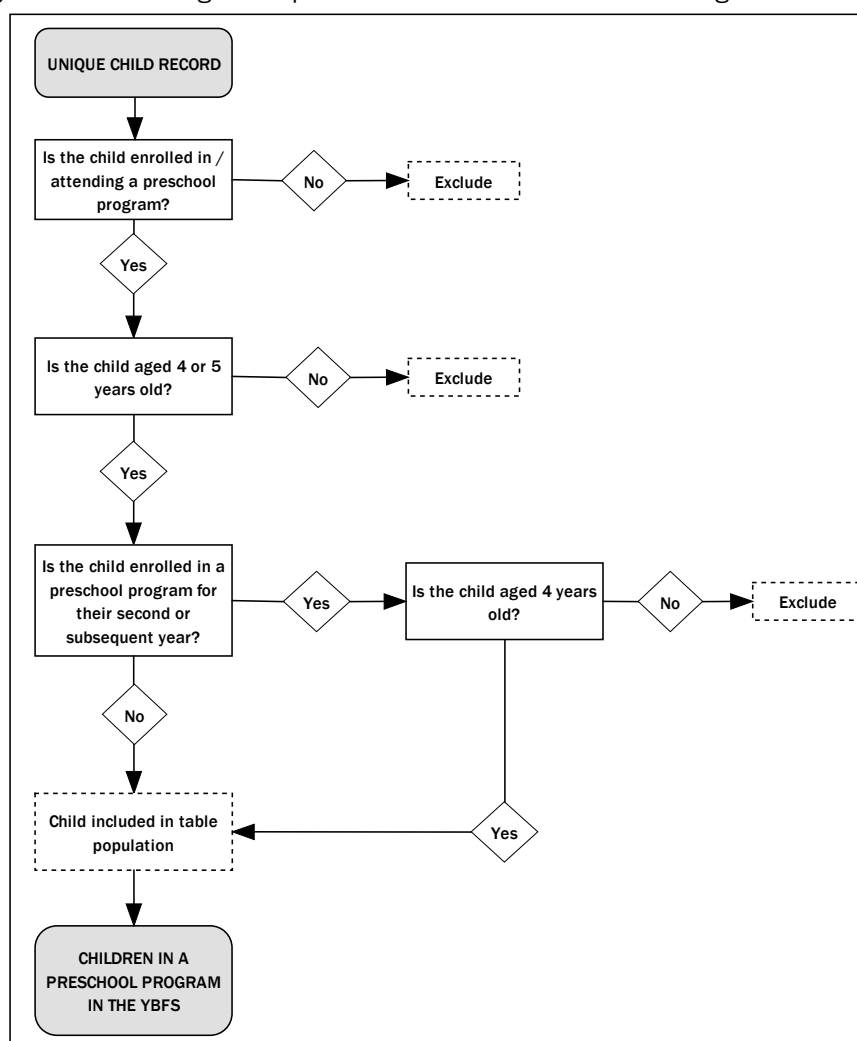
To be included in these tables, data must be of a quality that allows the accurate identification of unique child records to ensure that each child is only counted once in the totals. This requires child data collected with a URL data collection methodology and a client/child database. The data in these tables also require two years of data and the ability to identify children in their second or subsequent year of a preschool program, to enable accurate determination of whether a child is enrolled in multiple years of a preschool program. See '[Identification of Unique Child Records in the YBFS](#)'.

A child was included in these tables if they:

- were enrolled in / attending a preschool program
- were aged 4 or 5 years old
- were enrolled in a preschool program for the first time in 2011.

The following conceptual map outlines the base population for children in a preschool program in the YBFS.

Figure 3.11: Defining the Population - Children in a Preschool Program in the YBFS



CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

Episodes of Workers Delivering Preschool Programs

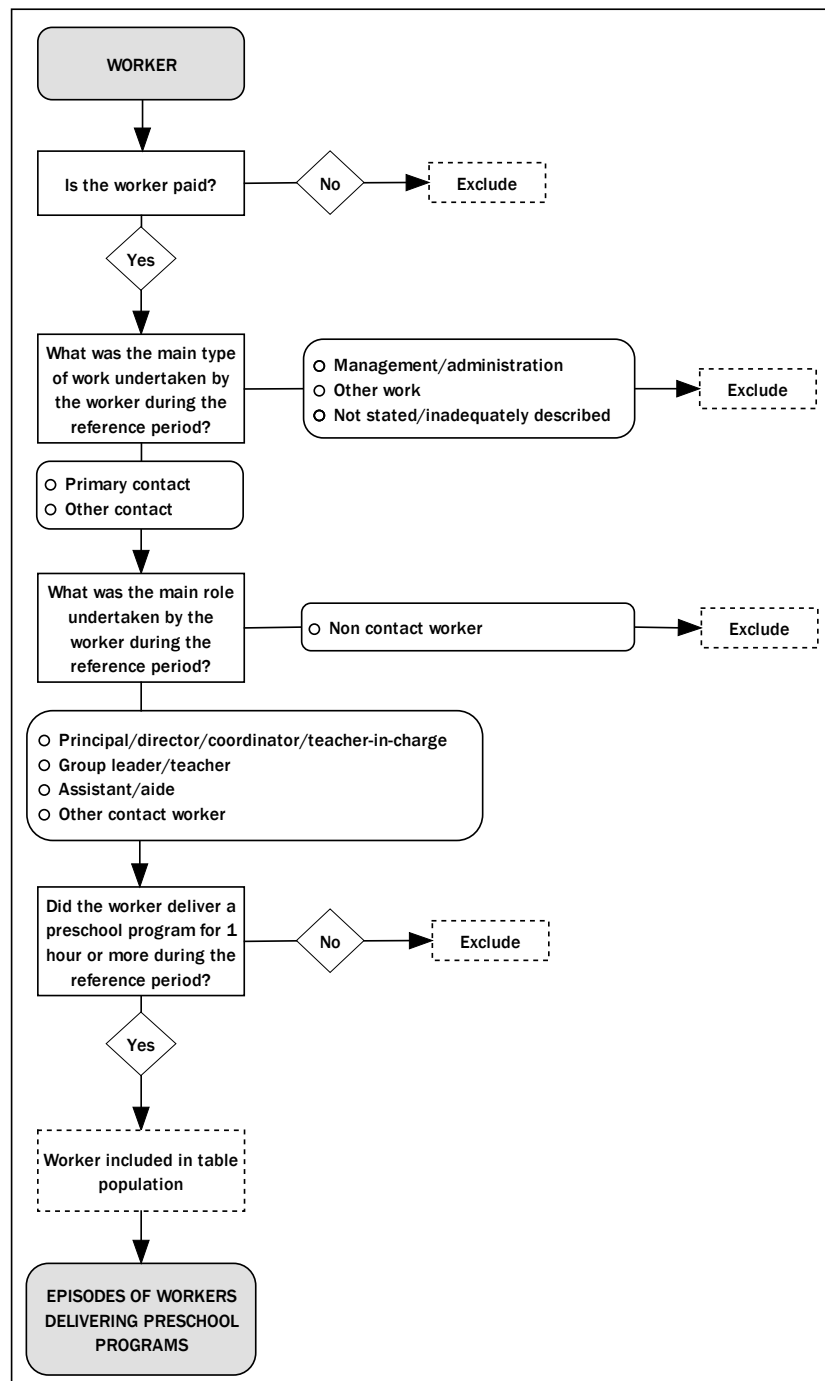
The tables presented using this concept included episode counts of workers delivering preschool programs. In 2011 it was not possible to identify workers who worked for more than one service provider and therefore these counts included double-counting of some workers. This meant that all worker data for all states and territories are presented as episodes.

A worker was included in these tables if they:

- were employed (and paid) by the ECEC service provider
- spent the majority of their time in contact with children in the preschool program during the reference period (i.e. primary and other contact workers)
- had a main role of either:
 - Principal / director / coordinator / teacher-in-charge
 - Group leader / teacher
 - Assistant / aide
 - Other contact worker
- delivered a preschool program for at least one hour during the reference period.

The following conceptual map outlines the base population for workers in ECEC service providers that are considered to be delivering a preschool program.

Figure 3.12: Defining the Population - Workers Delivering Preschool Programs



It is important to note that the terminology ‘worker’ within this flow chart does not represent the definition of a ‘teacher’ for the purposes of the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education, Performance Indicator 2: The proportion of teachers delivering preschool programs who are four year university trained and early childhood qualified (COAG 2008a).

CHAPTER 4: OVERVIEW OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN AUSTRALIA

NATURE OF PRESCHOOL PROGRAM DELIVERY BY STATE AND TERRITORY

OVERVIEW

The nature and delivery of preschool programs across states and territories differs significantly and are largely based on historical and legislative environments. For this reason, state and territory departments responsible for ECEC may not be required to collect data from all preschool programs within their jurisdiction, as they may not fund, register, regulate or supply the program.

LDC centres may also be delivering preschool programs that align with the definition for the National ECEC Collection. However, for the purposes of a jurisdictional collection, these programs may not be recognised as a preschool program if they are not funded, regulated or licensed by the relevant state or territory education department. Despite this, these LDCs are still considered to be within the scope of the National ECEC Collection.

This section provides an outline of the state and territory preschool delivery models, including terminology and age entry requirements. This section does not reflect the source for data in relation to preschool programs. Data for a state or territory may be collated from a number of different data sources, including from the Australian Government. See [Chapter 2, Collection Overview](#), for information on the source of data within each state and territory.

LEGISLATION AND LICENSING

This section will broadly outline the nature of preschool delivery for each state and territory, including relevant information on legislation requirements and licensing arrangements that were in effect at the time of the National ECEC Collection in August 2011. The regulatory arrangements within each state and territory for LDC centres have changed with the introduction of the National Quality Framework in January 2012, and these changes will be reflected in the 2012 National ECEC Collection and associated materials.

SECTOR DESCRIPTIONS

This section will provide an overview of the management arrangements for preschool delivery within the state or territory. The content presented aligns with the sector types published in the tables within *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* (cat. no. 4240.0). In some instances the sectors have been collapsed within the tables presented, however data are available from the ABS by request.

Broadly, the two main sectors are presented as 'Preschool' and 'Long Day Care' service activity types. Within the 'Preschool' activity type, the management arrangements are explained in terms of government and non-government managed. The distinction between Preschool and LDC are as follows.

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Preschool

A preschool delivers a preschool program in a stand-alone facility or is co-located or integrated as part of a school. A preschool provides structured educational programs to children in the year before they commence full-time schooling. Government preschools include those managed by state and territory and local governments, or by state and territory government schools. Non-government preschools include those operated by private for-profit organisations, private not-for-profit organisations (community managed and other organisations), independent schools and Catholic schools.

Long Day Care

A LDC is a centre-based form of child care service providing all-day or part-time care for children. Included in these care services may be the delivery of a preschool program. LDCs primarily provide care services for children aged 0-5 years, though children of older ages may also be attending. LDCs are primarily operated by for-profit and not-for-profit organisations, local councils, community organisations and employers, and are usually provided by a mix of qualified and other staff. The service may operate from stand-alone or shared premises, including those on school grounds.

CHAPTER 4: OVERVIEW OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN AUSTRALIA

NEW SOUTH WALES

OVERVIEW

In New South Wales (NSW), 'Preschool' is the term used for educational programs provided to children mostly but not exclusively in the year before full-time schooling (i.e. Year 1 minus 2 years). 'Kindergarten' is the term used for a child's first year of school (i.e. pre-Year 1 year). Children in NSW can attend a preschool program in a variety of settings, including preschools operated by non-government (typically not-for-profit) and government managed service providers and by both not-for-profit and commercial LDC centres. The majority of NSW preschools operate in line with public school terms and close during school holidays.

LEGISLATION AND LICENSING

All children's services in NSW, including preschools and LDCs, must comply with the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* (NSW) and the *Children's Services Regulation 2004* (NSW).

The NSW Department of Education and Communities (NSW DEC), regulates all children's services across the state, including preschools, LDC, occasional care, family day care and home-based care. Licenses are granted without a fixed term. Prior to 2011, children's services were licensed by the NSW Department of Family and Community Services.

SECTOR DESCRIPTIONS

Preschool

Service providers in NSW that offer a preschool program as their main type of activity have the following management arrangements.

Government Managed

Government managed preschools are preschool programs which are located on government school sites and are operated by the NSW DEC. These services are regulated under the *Children's Services Regulation*.

Non-government Managed

Community managed: Community managed preschools are not-for-profit preschools owned and operated by community organisations or local government and have a main service activity type of preschool. These preschools are regulated by NSW DEC under the *Children's Services Regulation* and most are also funded by NSW DEC.

Independent school managed: Independent school managed preschools are non-government private schools which also provide preschool programs.

CHAPTER 4: OVERVIEW OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN AUSTRALIA

Long Day Care

Service providers in NSW that offer a LDC as their main type of activity and may also offer and deliver a preschool program have the following management arrangements.

Long Day Care with a Preschool Program

Community managed: Community managed LDCs are not-for-profit LDCs owned and operated by community organisations or local government. These include services where the main service activity type is not preschool but a preschool program is delivered by the service provider. These preschools are regulated by NSW DEC under the *Children's Services Regulation* and some are also funded by NSW DEC.

Private for-profit: Private for-profit managed LDCs are services provided by commercial for-profit corporations or entities, where the main service activity type is not preschool but a preschool program is delivered by the service provider. These services do not receive funding from NSW DEC.

CHAPTER 4: OVERVIEW OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN AUSTRALIA

VICTORIA

OVERVIEW

In Victoria, 'Kindergarten' is the term used for educational programs provided to children in the year before full-time schooling (i.e. Year 1 minus 2 years) which is referred to within this manual as 'preschool'. 'Preparatory', or 'Prep', is the term used for a child's first year of school (i.e. pre-Year 1 year).

Children in Victoria are eligible to enrol in and attend a funded preschool if they turn 4 years old prior to 30 April of the same year. Preschool programs for 3 year old children are not funded by Victoria, except for the Early Start programs that cater specifically for Indigenous children and children known to the Child Protection Service.

LEGISLATION AND LICENSING

All Victorian preschools are bound by the conditions set out in the *Children's Services Act 1996* (Vic.) and the *Children's Services Regulations 2009* (Vic.). The Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Vic. DEECD) licenses child care services including preschool, LDC, family day care, in-home care, occasional care and outside school hours care. All regulations and conditions of applications for licenses are covered under the *Children's Services Regulations*.

The Victorian state government provides contributory funding towards one year of preschool for each child in the year before they commence full-time schooling. To be in receipt of funding, preschools must be licensed under the *Children's Services Act*, and operate a preschool program that meets the criteria for funding eligibility. Some children are funded for a second year of preschool if eligibility requirements are met.

SECTOR DESCRIPTIONS

Preschool

Service providers in Victoria that offer a preschool program as their main type of activity have the following management arrangements.

Government Managed

Government preschools in Victoria are those managed by local government.

Non-government Managed

Community managed: Community managed preschools include those managed by incorporated associations and cooperatives, companies limited by a guarantee, (government) school councils and church groups, where the main service activity type is preschool.

Independent schools: Independent schools are schools that are governed, managed and accountable at the level of the individual school.

CHAPTER 4: OVERVIEW OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN AUSTRALIA

Catholic schools: A small number of Catholic affiliated schools in Victoria provide preschool programs.

Private for-profit managed: Preschools managed by the private sector include for-profit private providers (companies limited by shares), colleges or universities, and individuals, where the main service activity type is preschool.

Long Day Care

Service providers in Victoria that offer a LDC as their main type of activity and may also offer and deliver a preschool program have the following management arrangements.

Long Day Care with a Preschool Program

Community managed: Community managed LDCs include those managed by incorporated associations and cooperatives, companies limited by a guarantee, (government) school councils and church groups, where the main service activity type is not preschool but a preschool program is delivered by the service provider.

Private for-profit managed: LDCs managed by the private sector include for-profit private providers (companies limited by shares), colleges or universities, and individuals, where the main service activity type is not preschool but a preschool program is delivered by the service provider.

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QUEENSLAND

OVERVIEW

In Queensland (Qld), 'Kindergarten' and 'Pre-Preparatory' are the terms used for the educational programs provided to children in the year before full-time schooling (i.e. Year 1 minus 2 years) which is referred to within this manual as 'preschool'. 'Preparatory' or 'Prep' are the terms used for a child's first year of full-time school (i.e. pre-Year 1 year). Children in Qld are eligible to enrol in a funded preschool program if they are at least 4 years of age prior to 30 June of that year.

LEGISLATION AND LICENSING

The Qld Department of Education and Training (Qld DET) is responsible for the licensing and monitoring of child care services under the *Child Care Act 2002* (Qld) and the *Child Care Regulation 2003* (Qld). All services offering approved preschool programs are licensed under this legislation and are bound by its conditions. Qld DET provides funding to all approved service providers for each eligible child enrolled through the Qld Kindergarten Funding Scheme (QKFS) to support the delivery of preschool programs. Approved service providers include all government managed providers and all non-government managed providers that meet the approval requirements.

SECTOR DESCRIPTIONS

Preschool

Service providers in Qld that offer a preschool program as their main type of activity have the following management arrangements.

Government Managed

There are a small number of government managed schools that provide preschool programs in Qld under the Bound for Success pre-prep program, which operates in Indigenous communities. This program is offered in very remote communities where there are little or no early childhood education and care infrastructure. These programs are provided by Qld DET under the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (Qld).

Non-government Managed

Community managed: Community managed preschools include those managed by parents, a church or a cooperative, where the main service activity type is preschool.

Private for-profit: Private for-profit preschools are approved stand-alone preschools provided by for-profit corporations or entities, where the main service activity type is preschool.

Private not-for-profit: Private not-for-profit preschools are approved stand-alone preschools provided by not-for-profit organisations or entities, where the main service activity type is preschool.

CHAPTER 4: OVERVIEW OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN AUSTRALIA

Independent schools: Independent schools are services providing approved preschool programs in registered non-government schools.

Catholic schools: Catholic schools are services providing approved preschool programs in registered Catholic schools.

Other (TAFE, university, corporate): Other management types include approved preschool programs delivered in educational facilities (for example TAFE or universities) or in corporate settings (for example preschools provided for employees of an organisation), where the main service activity type is preschool.

Long Day Care

Service providers in Qld that offer a LDC as their main type of activity and may also offer and deliver a preschool program have the following management arrangements.

Long Day Care with a Preschool Program

Private for-profit: Private for-profit LDCs are approved centre-based integrated services provided by for-profit corporations or entities, where the main service activity type is not preschool but a preschool program is delivered by the service provider.

Private not-for-profit: Private not-for-profit LDCs are approved centre-based integrated services provided by not-for-profit corporations or entities, where the main service activity type is not preschool but a preschool program is delivered by the service provider.

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SOUTH AUSTRALIA

OVERVIEW

In South Australia (SA), 'Preschool' is the term used for the educational programs provided to children in the year before full-time schooling (i.e. Year 1 minus 2 years). 'Reception' is the term used for a child's first year of school (i.e. pre-Year 1 year). All children in SA are eligible to commence preschool at the beginning of the school term following their 4th birthday, although Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children under the Guardianship of the Minister may commence preschool from 3 years of age.

LEGISLATION AND LICENSING

The SA Department for Education and Child Development (SA DECD) licenses, regulates or operates the majority of all child care and preschool centres in SA. The SA DECD licensing and standards unit collects information on child care services via licensing applications. SA DECD maintains a register of all services that it operates or funds, and collects service, worker and child level data from these services through an annual census process.

SECTOR DESCRIPTIONS

Preschool

Service providers in SA that offer a preschool program as their main type of activity have the following management arrangements.

Government Managed

SA DECD manages the majority of preschool programs in SA. There are two models of preschool operations in the government managed sector:

- Stand-alone or integrated centre-based programs where the main service activity type is preschool. These preschools are operated under the provisions of the *Children's Services Act 1985* (SA).
- School-based programs attached to SA DECD schools. These preschools are operated under the provisions of the *Education Act 1972* (SA) and the *Education Regulations 1997* (SA).

Non-government Managed

Community managed: Community managed preschools include stand-alone preschools and integrated centre-based programs where the main service activity type is preschool. Non-government community managed providers (not attached to a school) are licensed as child care centres under the *Children's Services Act*.

Independent schools: Non-government preschools can be provided through independent private schools or colleges in SA. Preschools attached to independent schools frequently incorporate 'Early Learning Centre' as part of their name and are subject to the *Education Act* and the *Education Regulations*.

Catholic schools: Non-government preschools can be provided through Catholic primary schools or colleges in SA. These preschools are subject to the *Education Act* and the *Education Regulations*.

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Long Day Care

Service providers in SA that offer a LDC as their main type of activity and may also offer and deliver a preschool program have the following management arrangements.

Long Day Care with a Preschool Program

Private for-profit: Private for-profit managed LDCs are those provided by for-profit corporations or entities, where the main service activity type is not preschool but a preschool program is delivered by the service provider. LDCs that operate as private for-profit centres are regulated by the *Children's Services Act* and the *Children's Services (Child Care Centre Regulations) 1998* (SA). The majority are registered as a business, company or incorporated under the *South Australian Associates Incorporation Act 1985*.

Private not-for-profit: Private not-for-profit managed LDCs are those provided by not-for-profit corporations or entities, where the main service activity type is not preschool but a preschool program is delivered by the service provider. LDCs that operate as private for-profit centres are regulated by the *Children's Services Act* and the *Children's Services (Child Care Centre Regulations)*.

Community managed: Community managed LDCs include those that are managed by parents, a church or a co-operative where the main service activity type is not preschool but a preschool program is delivered by the service provider. Preschool programs can be managed and delivered in these community-based LDC settings. Non-government community managed providers (not attached to a school) are licensed as child care centres under the *Children's Services Act*.

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WESTERN AUSTRALIA

OVERVIEW

In Western Australia (WA), 'Kindergarten' is the term used for the educational programs provided to children in the year before full-time schooling (i.e. Year 1 minus 2 years) which is referred to within this manual as 'preschool'. 'Pre-primary' is the term used for a child's first year of full-time school (i.e. pre-Year 1 year). Children in WA are eligible to enrol in a preschool program at the beginning of the year if they are 4 years old on or prior to 30 June of the same year. The provision of preschool education is generally integrated with school education in WA.

Preschool is provided in nearly all schools which cater for WA primary school aged children. Preschool is provided in both the government and non-government sectors, and in a small number of community and independent preschools.

LEGISLATION AND LICENSING

Under WA legislation, the *School Education Act 1999* (WA), a program is only recognised as a preschool program if it is provided within a school setting. Therefore preschool programs provided in LDC settings or those not being provided under the *School Education Act* are not officially recognised as preschool in WA.

SECTOR DESCRIPTIONS

Preschool

Service providers in WA that offer a preschool program as their main type of activity have the following management arrangements.

Government Managed

Government managed preschool programs are provided in all public schools which cater for primary school aged children. Government preschools in WA are funded by the WA Department of Education (WA DoE) and are operated from public schools and independent public schools. These preschools are operated under the *School Education Act*, as well as the *School Education Regulations 2000*.

WA also regards community-based preschools as government managed preschools. Community-based preschools are registered by the Minister of Education and are staffed, funded and quality assured by the public education system. Parent management committees are responsible for financial management and daily operations in these preschools. Community-based preschools which have been registered under the *School Education Act* are bound by the conditions of this Act, as well as the *School Education Regulations*.

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Non-government Managed

Independent schools: Independent schools are registered by the Minister under the *School Education Act* and their programs are quality assured by the WA Department of Education Services (WA DES). All independent schools with preschool programs receive a per capita grant from WA DES for age-eligible children enrolled at the school. Independent schools operate under the *School Education Act*, as well as the *School Education Regulations*.

Catholic schools: Catholic schools are registered by the Minister under the *School Education Act*. Through a formal agreement with WA DES, their programs are quality assured by the Catholic Education Office of WA. All Catholic schools with preschool programs receive a per capita grant from WA DES for age-eligible children enrolled at the school. Catholic preschools operate under the *School Education Act*, as well as the *School Education Regulations*.

Long Day Care

Service providers in WA that offer a LDC as their main type of activity and may also offer and deliver a preschool program have the following management arrangements.

Long Day Care with a Preschool Program

Private for-profit: Preschool programs provided in LDC settings are not officially recognised in WA as preschool, unless the LDC provider is also registered as a school. In this situation, the LDC would be included in the non-government school category. Only incorporated non-profit entities can be registered as a school. Non-school preschool programs in LDCs do not therefore receive funding from WA DES. Education regulations and quality assurance mechanisms that apply to schools do not apply to preschool programs in LDCs. In particular, LDCs are not required to implement the WA K-12 Curriculum Framework and are not required to employ teachers who are members of the Western Australia College of Teachers. LDCs are bound by the *Childcare Service Act 2007* (WA), the *Children's Services (Childcare) Regulations 2006* and the *Childcare Services Regulations 2007*.

CHAPTER 4: OVERVIEW OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN AUSTRALIA

TASMANIA

OVERVIEW

In Tasmania (Tas.), 'Kindergarten' is the term used for educational programs provided to children in the year before full-time schooling (i.e. Year 1 minus 2 years) which is referred to within this manual as 'preschool'. 'Preparatory' is the term used for a child's first year of full-time school (i.e. pre-Year 1 year). Preschool programs are offered to children who are a minimum age of 4 years 0 months as at 1 January of the reference year. Exceptions may be granted for gifted children (who must be at least 3 years and 6 months of age as at 1 January of the reference year) or where children were previously enrolled in a preschool in another state or territory.

LEGISLATION AND LICENSING

In Tas., a service provider can only be recognised as offering a preschool program if it is registered as a school. Preschool education provided by government and non-government schools in Tas. is covered under the *Education Act 1994* (Tas.) and associated *Education Regulations 2005* (Tas.). Under the *Education Act*, preschool programs delivered in LDCs are only officially recognised as preschool if the LDC is registered as a school. Preschools provided in government schools are regulated by the Tas. Department of Education (Tas. DoE). Non-government schools and LDCs registered as a school are regulated by the Schools Registration Board.

As preschools in Tas. are registered or delivered as part of the school system (including preschool provided in LDCs registered as a school), all teachers are required to be qualified and registered. Most preschool teachers in Tas. are trained in early childhood education as a part of their degree, but this is not mandatory.

SECTOR DESCRIPTIONS

Preschool

Service providers in Tas. that offer a preschool program as their main type of activity have the following management arrangements.

Government Managed

Government preschools in Tas. are delivered, funded and staffed by the Tas. DoE. All government preschools are integrated with a primary or district high school and are normally located on the same campus. The preschool curriculum is part of the school curriculum.

Non-government Managed

Independent schools: Registered non-government schools with a primary school component that provide preschool programs within their school curriculum. These service providers receive some funding from Tas. DoE.

Catholic schools: Catholic schools with a primary school component that provide preschool programs within their school curriculum. These service providers receive some funding from Tas. DoE.

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Long Day Care

Service providers in Tas. that offer a LDC as their main type of activity and may also offer and deliver preschool programs have the following management arrangements.

Long Day Care with a Preschool Program

While Tas. has a number of LDC providers, only one service provider is currently recognised by Tas. DoE as offering a preschool program. This LDC is regulated under the *Education Act*, is registered with the Schools Registration Board, and is therefore registered as a school for the purposes of providing a preschool program. This LDC did not deliver a preschool program in Tas. in 2011.

There are a number of other LDCs in Tas. that offer preschool programs as defined by the National ECEC Collection, however these services are not registered with Tas. DoE and are therefore not recognised by Tas. DoE as delivering a preschool program. These services are regulated under the *Child Care Act 2001* (Tas.).

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NORTHERN TERRITORY

OVERVIEW

In the Northern Territory (NT), 'Preschool' is the term used for educational programs provided to children in the year before full-time schooling (i.e. Year 1 minus 2 years) and 'Transition' is the term used for a child's first year of full-time school (i.e. pre-Year 1 year). Both Preschool and Transition in the NT are non-compulsory. Children are eligible to enrol in preschool at the beginning of the year if they turn 4 years of age on or prior to 30 June of the same year. Indigenous children living in remote areas are eligible to enrol in preschool if they turn 3 years of age on or prior to 30 June of the same year. Children turning 4 years of age after 30 June are eligible to enrol in a preschool program after their birthday, if places are available in a program and with the understanding that the child will access more than 12 months of preschool.

LEGISLATION AND LICENSING

The NT Department of Education and Training (NT DET) are responsible for the registration of preschool programs in accordance with the *Education Act* (NT) and associated regulations. Child care services are registered and/or licensed under the *Care and Protection of Children Act* (NT) and the *Care and Protection of Children (Children's Services) Regulations*.

SECTOR DESCRIPTIONS

Preschool

Service providers in the NT that offer a preschool program as their main type of activity have the following management arrangements.

Government Managed

In the NT, the majority of preschools are government preschools that are delivered, funded and staffed by NT DET. They are provided either free of charge, or for a small voluntary fee. These government preschools are integrated with a primary school and are almost all located on the same site as the primary school, often with administrative and educational links to that school. While NT DET provides preschool in this sector, a range of management functions are delegated to school councils and parent management committees. Preschool programs operated in a government school setting in the NT are bound by the *Education Act* and associated regulations.

In addition to on-site preschools, NT DET also funds satellite and mobile preschools which operate in a range of remote and very remote areas to service small communities. The mobile preschools visit their respective communities for two days a week on average. They are staffed by qualified teachers (not necessarily an early childhood teacher) and on-site teacher assistants.

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Non-government Managed

Independent school managed: Independent school managed preschools are non-government managed preschools delivered by registered Christian and independent schools. Christian and independent preschools are not funded by NT DET. Preschool programs operated in a non-government school setting in the NT are bound by the *Education Act* and associated regulations.

Catholic school managed: Catholic school managed preschools are non-government managed preschools delivered by registered Catholic schools. In the NT, a small number of remote Catholic schools receive funding from NT DET for preschool services and are provided to children on a non-fee paying basis. Preschool programs operated in Catholic school settings in the NT are bound by the *Education Act* and associated regulations.

Long Day Care

Service providers in the NT that offer a LDC as their main type of activity and may also offer and deliver a preschool program have the following management arrangements.

Long Day Care with a Preschool Program

Private for-profit: Private for-profit managed LDCs are those provided by for-profit corporations or entities, where the main service activity type is not preschool but a preschool program is delivered by the service provider. No data are collected by NT DET for preschool services offered in these centres as they are not registered as preschools and do not receive any funding from NT DET. LDCs are registered and/or licensed under the *Care and Protection of Children Act* and the *Care and Protection of Children (Children's Services) Regulations*.

Private not for-profit: Private not-for-profit managed LDCs are those provided by not-for-profit corporations or entities, where the main service activity type is not preschool but a preschool program is delivered by the service provider. No data are collected by NT DET for preschool services offered in these centres as they are not registered as preschools and do not receive any funding from NT DET. LDCs are registered and/or licensed under the *Care and Protection of Children Act* and the *Care and Protection of Children (Children's Services) Regulations*.

Community managed: Community managed LDCs include those that are managed by parents, a church or a co-operative where the main service activity type is not preschool but a preschool program is delivered by the service provider. No data are collected by NT DET for preschool services offered in these centres as they are not registered as preschools and do not receive any funding from NT DET. LDCs are registered and/or licensed under the *Care and Protection of Children Act* and the *Care and Protection of Children (Children's Services) Regulations*.

Non-government managed schools: There are several non-government schools that provide on-site services for children aged 3 to 5 years, providing LDC and/or sessional programs delivered by an early childhood qualified teacher, in lieu of registered preschools. These services are known as early learning centres and are licensed and funded as children's services as defined by the *Care and Protection of Children Act*. No data are collected by NT DET for preschool programs offered in these centres as they are not registered as preschools and do not receive any funding from NT DET.

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AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

OVERVIEW

In the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), 'Preschool' is the term used for educational programs provided to children in the year before full-time schooling (i.e. Year 1 minus 2 years) and 'Kindergarten' is the term used for a child's first year of full-time school (i.e. pre-Year 1 year). Children in the ACT are eligible to enrol in a preschool program at the beginning of the year if they turn 4 years of age prior to 30 April of the same year. Children with special needs may be placed in a targeted early childhood intervention program from 2 years of age. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, hearing and vision impaired children, children for whom English is a second language, children from mobile families (e.g. Defence Force families) and gifted and talented children, are also eligible to apply for early entry.

LEGISLATION AND LICENSING

The ACT Community Services Directorate (CSD) is responsible for the licensing and monitoring of education and care services, including independent preschools, under the *Children and Young People Act 2008* (ACT) and the ACT Childcare Services Standards 2009.

Licensed children's services include centre-based care (LDC and occasional care), school aged care, independent preschools and play-schools. Educators in independent preschools are required to have early childhood teaching qualifications.

SERVICE ACTIVITY TYPES AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Preschool

Service providers in ACT that offer a preschool program as their main type of activity have the following management arrangements.

Government Managed

ACT public preschools are delivered and funded by the ACT Education and Training Directorate (ACT ETD). These public preschools are amalgamated with primary schools and are staffed by the ACT ETD.

Non-government Managed

Community (not-for-profit): Community (not-for-profit) preschools include churches and community groups. These services do not receive funding from the ACT Government.

Private for-profit: Private for-profit providers include corporations or other entities, which do not receive funding from the ACT Government.

Independent schools: Independent school managed preschools are preschool programs provided by registered non-government schools. These services do not receive funding from the ACT Government.

CHAPTER 4: OVERVIEW OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN AUSTRALIA

Catholic schools: Catholic school managed preschools are preschool programs provided by registered Catholic schools. These services do not receive funding from the ACT Government.

Long Day Care

Service providers in ACT that offer a LDC as their main type of activity and may also offer and deliver a preschool program have the following management arrangements.

Long Day Care with a Preschool Program

Community (not-for-profit): Community (not-for-profit) LDCs include churches and community groups where the main service activity type is not preschool but a preschool program is delivered by the service provider. These services do not receive funding from the ACT government.

Private for-profit: Private for-profit LDCs include corporations or other entities where the main service activity type is not preschool but a preschool program is delivered by the service provider. These services do not receive funding from the ACT government.

CHAPTER 4: OVERVIEW OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

OVERVIEW

For the 2011 National ECEC collection, information on children attending a preschool program delivered by a degree qualified teacher in LDC settings was primarily provided by the Australian Government.

LDCs that provide preschool programs are known by a variety of nomenclature, such as kindergartens, preschools, child care centres, or early learning centres, however they are referred to within this manual as 'LDCs'. The preschool programs delivered in these LDCs are called either kindergartens or preschools (depending on location of service delivery) however they are referred to within this manual as 'preschool programs'.

The delivery of preschool programs, including those delivered in LDCs, varies within and across the different states and territories. These differences are outlined in the table below.

4.1 PRESCHOOL DELIVERY MODELS(a)

<i>Model 1: Government Model (WA, SA, Tas., ACT & NT)</i>	<i>Model 2: Non-Government Model (NSW, Vic. & Qld)</i>
The state/territory government owns, funds and delivers the majority of preschool services.	The state/territory subsidises preschool programs that are provided by non-government organisations.
Preschools are treated in much the same way as primary and secondary schools.	Preschool programs delivered in LDC centres charge some fees and attract Australian Government funding through the CCB and CCR.
The state/territory may provide supplementary funding to preschools, but generally not to preschool programs delivered in LDC centres. These services attract Australian Government funding through the Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Rebate (CCR).	Under this model, the state/territory government owns less than 20% of preschool programs and these services are generally targeted at disadvantaged communities. This is in contrast to government schools, which are comprehensive.

(a) Sourced from the *Evaluation of the National Partnership on Early Childhood Education, Annual Progress Report 2010* (Urbis, 2010).

LEGISLATION AND LICENSING

Authority for approving LDCs and providing funding comes from the provisions in:

- *A New Tax System (Family Assistance)(Administration) Act 1999*
- *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*

The Australian Government and the state and territory governments are involved in the operation, funding and regulation of child care services. Each has a separate and vital role to play.

The key responsibilities of the Australian Government through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) are to:

- administer CCB and CCR to families through the Family Assistance Office (FAO)
- administer payment of CCB and CCR to approved services
- administer financial support to approved services in areas of need. These costs may be shared between state or territory governments and the Australian Government
- maintain some statistical data on the supply of child care places.

CHAPTER 4: OVERVIEW OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN AUSTRALIA

State and territory governments have prime responsibility for family support, child welfare and the regulation of child care services. These regulatory responsibilities include licensing in all states and territories for centre based LDC. From 1 January 2012, most LDCs commenced operation under the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care (the 'Framework'). The new Framework replaced all licensing, accreditation and quality assurance processes for most LDC, family day care, preschool (or kindergarten) and outside of school hours care services, which were previously undertaken by the states and territories and the Australian Government. Under the Framework, approval and regulation of LDCs approved for CCB now occurs through an applied laws system which has been enacted in all jurisdictions, comprising the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*. The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority is the independent statutory authority responsible for ensuring that services are meeting the new requirements as set out in the Framework.

Further information on the Framework can be found on the DEEWR website:

http://www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood/policy_agenda/quality/pages/home.aspx.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the methodology and quality of jurisdictional early childhood education and care data and the sources from which the data were obtained for the 2011 National Early Childhood Education Care (ECEC) Collection. As there is considerable variability in the data collected by each of the jurisdictions, this chapter aims to clarify the quality of the data and the mechanisms used for collecting the data.

The [*ABS Data Quality Framework, May 2009 \(cat. no. 1520.0\)*](#) has been used to evaluate the quality of each jurisdictional collection which contributes data to the National ECEC Collection.

Each jurisdictional collection has been assessed using an individual data quality statement, and as such the statements relate only to the quality and coverage of each individual jurisdictional collection as a separate entity. For example, in those state and territories where data for Long Day Care centres will be sourced from the Child Care Management System (CCMS), information in regard to the quality assessment of the CCMS is not included.

The dimensions which make up the Data Quality Statements are defined as follows.

Institutional Environment

This dimension refers to the institutional and organisational factors which may have a significant influence on the effectiveness and credibility of the agency producing the statistics. This considers the surrounding context, which may influence the validity, reliability or appropriateness of the data. Information contained in this section includes the organisation responsible for collecting and compiling the data, and the authority or legislation under which the data were collected.

Relevance

The assessment indicates how well the jurisdictional data source meets the needs of the National ECEC Collection in terms of the concepts measured, and the populations represented. This criterion also outlines the collection scope and coverage. Information provided includes the original purpose for collecting the data, the collection scope and population of interest for the data collected, and any coverage limitations.

Timeliness

Timeliness refers to the delay between the reference period (to which the data pertains) and the date on which the data become available. This includes the time taken for the jurisdiction to deliver the data to the ABS and the time taken for the ABS to release the data. It also refers to the frequency with which data are collected.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – INTRODUCTION

Accuracy

Data sources employ a range of methods to collect data. In this context accuracy refers to the degree with which the data correctly describes the phenomenon they were designed to measure. This is an important component of quality as it relates to how accurate the data are and impacts on how useful and meaningful the data will be for interpretation or further analysis. An assessment is made on the accessibility and availability of a source and the implications on statistics for the National ECEC Collection. To describe this dimension for the National ECEC Collection, information is provided on the collection mechanism, data processing and validation procedures.

Coherence

Coherence refers to the internal consistency of a statistical collection, product or release, as well as its comparability with other sources of information, within a broad analytical framework and over time. The use of standard concepts, classifications and target populations promotes coherence, as does the use of common methodology across collections. Coherence is an important component of quality as it provides an indication of whether the data set can be usefully compared with other sources to enable data compilation and comparison. In the context of the National ECEC Collection this assessment also examines changes in concepts and alignment with the ECEC National Minimum Data Set.

Counts of Children:

This section also outlines whether jurisdictional data are able to be presented in terms of the following table concepts for the publication *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* (cat. no. 4240.0):

- Children in a preschool program in 2011; and
- Children in a preschool program in the Year before Full-time Schooling.

The concept of child counts is discussed in more detail in [Chapter 3, Concepts and Definitions](#).

Interpretability

Interpretability refers to the availability of information to help provide insight into the data. Assisting with the interpretation of the data may include the variables used and the availability of metadata, including concepts, classifications, and measures of accuracy. This section outlines further information that is available to help users better understand the data source, as well as information made available to data providers to assist with the initial collection and collation of the data.

Accessibility

Accessibility refers to the ease of access to data by users, including the ease with which the existence of information can be ascertained, as well as the suitability of the form or medium through which information can be accessed. For the purpose of the data quality framework, data accessibility relates to the publication *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011*.

Information Source

This section outlines the source of information used to compile the data quality statement.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

DATA QUALITY STATEMENT

In 2011, the Australian Government was responsible for one data collection that enabled data in relation to preschool programs to be reported, the Child Care Management System (CCMS), which collected data at Unit Record Level (URL).

Child Care Management System

Institutional Environment

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and Centrelink all share responsibility for the operation of the CCMS. FaHCSIA are the data custodians for all data reported through the CCMS. Data from the CCMS for the purposes of the National ECEC Collection are managed by DEEWR. Data for the CCMS are collected under *A New Tax System (Family Assistance)(Administration) Act 1999* (Cwlth) and the *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999* (Cwlth).

Relevance

The CCMS is a national child care computer system that enables child care services to exchange child care information online with the Australian Government. It enables the payment of CCB fee reductions on behalf of parents to approved child care services. It also provides for the collection of information about the supply and usage of child care across Australia. All CCB approved child care service providers are required by law to operate under CCMS.

Child care services use their CCMS registered software to record child demographic, enrolment and attendance information. Services report this data to DEEWR via the internet to allow calculation and payment of CCB fee reductions on behalf of children in their service. Services need to supply this information regularly in order to comply with CCMS regulations.

While the CCMS was not initially designed to collect information about preschool programs in Long Day Care (LDC) centres, the CCMS provides an opportunity to gain such information. From June 2010, enhancements were deployed in the CCMS to capture information on whether a child is attending a preschool program in each LDC, and the hours per week of attendance. Reporting capabilities for this data have been available since 1 September 2010.

Scope: The scope of the CCMS extract for the National ECEC Collection included all children aged 3 to 6 years of age who were enrolled during the reference period at an LDC approved for the purposes of CCB that was providing a preschool program.

Coverage: All services approved for the purposes of CCB were required to provide data through the CCMS. However, LDCs delivering preschool programs were not mandated to complete the preschool program component of the CCMS, which resulted in under-coverage due to non-response. Service providers that were not approved for CCB purposes were not included in the CCMS. Refer to [Chapter 1, Collection Scope and Coverage](#) for more information on the strategy undertaken to improve coverage in this sector.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

Data collection methods: The 2011 preschool program component of the CCMS collected data using a URL data collection methodology for the following statistical entities:

- *Child:* Data at the child record level
- *Service provider organisation:* Data at the service provider record level
- *Worker:* Data for workers was not available.

Timeliness

The CCMS involves service providers uploading weekly attendance information for children enrolled at their service. Data were extracted from the system for a collection reference period of 1 to 7 August 2011. Completion of the data processing and validation stage took approximately 2 to 3 months from the collection date, at which time data were delivered to the ABS.

Data sourced from the CCMS for the purposes of the National ECEC Collection are published by the ABS in *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* (cat. no. 4240.0).

Accuracy

Under family assistance law, approved child care services are required to submit certain records such as weekly enrolments and attendance record reports for each child to DEEWR electronically, using child care software registered by FaHCSIA for use with the CCMS. To ensure there are no duplicate enrolments, DEEWR checks dates of birth and Child Record Numbers as well as Service Client Ids so there can only be one current enrolment at a service for the same parent/guardian and child combination.

In September 2011, LDCs previously identified as delivering preschool programs from the National ECEC Workforce Census, were sent information encouraging them to report information about their preschool programs within the CCMS. LDCs were asked to indicate whether the preschool program was delivered at their service (in-house) or at another location, which could include a dedicated standalone preschool (off-site). They were also asked to report information on the number of hours each child spent in the preschool during the reference week. While the recording of child care attendances was a requirement for all service providers, information on a child's attendance in a preschool program was not always reported as it was not a mandatory field for payment of CCB. Furthermore, as not all services use the same software to record the information into CCMS, the various interfaces used to input to CCMS can influence what is recorded.

The CCMS has a high level of accuracy in reporting information on child demographics (such as name, date of birth and address information) and children's attendance in child care services, as this information contributes to the provision of CCB. However, some service provider characteristics and information on children's attendance in preschool programs was subject to a level of service non-response, as the provision of these data by service providers were not mandatory. Data on workers within service providers are also not collected through the CCMS.

The Preschool Provider Frame project undertaken by the ABS identified that a number of service providers listed in the Workforce Census as delivering preschool programs, did not complete the preschool program component of the CCMS. From this analysis, the ABS conducted a survey to confirm the data provided through the CCMS and these results were used to supplement CCMS information. Further details on the Preschool Provider Frame project are outlined in [Chapter 1, Collection Scope and Coverage](#).

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

Extraction programs captured information from the CCMS data repository and stored information in the FaHCSIA Data Warehouse. At this point, data were examined to ensure that the data in CCMS were consistent with the aggregate data run through a statistical analysis process. CCMS data were then further validated to assess any deviation from expected average values, ranges, distributions, and demographic data. The data were also assessed for frequency and characteristics of LDC services and children attending preschool programs in these services, compared with data from state and territory collections and survey sources.

FaHCSIA provided DEEWR with a data extract from the CCMS to meet reporting requirements. Data for the National ECEC Collection were then extracted from this data file by DEEWR ready for delivery to the ABS.

Coherence

2011 was the first year that data from the CCMS were included in the National ECEC Collection.

The preschool program component of the CCMS was designed to collect data in accordance with the 2010 ECEC National Minimum Data Set (ECEC NMDS) due to the timing of development activities. As a result, there are small discrepancies between the national standards defined in the 2011 ECEC NMDS and the data collected from the CCMS, which are outlined in the following table. Despite this, data sourced from the CCMS are of sufficient quality and comparability to allow it to be used with state and territory data to improve coverage of preschool programs being delivered in the LDC sector.

5.1 Deviation of Collection from the 2011 ECEC NMDS

<i>Data Element</i>	<i>Details of Deviation</i>
Indigenous status	Data were based on the Indigenous status of the person receiving the CCB (i.e. the child's parent or guardian), not the Indigenous status of the child. It is assumed that the person receiving the CCB is biologically related to the child and that the child's Indigenous status is the same as their parent's.
Maximum preschool program hours available	Data were not available.
Preschool program repeater indicator	Data were not available in 2011.
Preschool program hours attended	The reporting of this data element by service providers was not compulsory and therefore in some instances was completed using enrolment hours. It is only compulsory to record complete day absences and therefore the hours attended may be overstated.
Management type	Data were not available.
Service delivery setting	Data were not available.
Worker data elements	Worker level data were not available.

Counts of Children:

In the collection reference period, it is possible for a child to be concurrently enrolled in and attending two or more preschool programs. In order to address collection requirements, it is important to be able to collate all matching child records.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

Children in a Preschool Program in 2011:

For data sourced from the Child Care Management System (CCMS), counts of children enrolled in and attending preschool programs in 2011 were able to be derived as data were collected using a URL data collection methodology.

Children in a Preschool Program in the Year before Full-time Schooling:

Two years of comparable data collected using a URL methodology and a child/client database were not available for data collected from the CCMS.

Interpretability

Extensive explanatory information was provided in a handbook and a telephone enquiry help desk was available to assist users with queries about how to report information under the CCMS. The CCMS handbook is available for download from the DEEWR website, along with other instruction sheets and explanatory materials, at <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Programs/ChildCareforServices/Operation/Pages/CCMSPublications.aspx>.

Accessibility

Data sourced from the preschool program component of the CCMS for the 2011 National ECEC Collection are published at the state and territory level in *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* on the ABS website.

Data from the CCMS are also available on the DEEWR website:

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/EARLYCHILDHOOD/Pages/default.aspx>.

Information Source

The information in this report has been sourced from DEEWR in consultation with the ABS. Further information is available from the DEEWR website:

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/EARLYCHILDHOOD/Pages/default.aspx>.

NEW SOUTH WALES

DATA QUALITY STATEMENT

In 2011, New South Wales (NSW) was responsible for two data collections in relation to preschool programs, both of which collected data using a Unit Record Level (URL) data collection methodology:

- NSW Department of Education and Communities (NSW DEC): 'Government School Census'
- NSW Department of Family and Community Services (NSW FACS): 'Children's Services Annual Data Collection', conducted on behalf of NSW DEC.

a] Government School Census

Institutional Environment

The organisation responsible for the Government School Census was NSW DEC. Data for the Government School Census were collected under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* (NSW) and the *Children's Services Regulation 2004* (NSW).

Relevance

The data collected by NSW DEC enabled reporting across the NSW government schools sector for a variety of reporting requirements, as well as to measure progress against Australian Government ECEC targets and COAG reforms.

Scope: The scope of the early childhood component of the Government School Census included all children aged 3 to 6 years old who were attending a preschool program at a government school in NSW.

The scope for data provided on workers included all paid primary contact teachers delivering preschool programs at government schools in NSW.

Coverage: All government schools in NSW participated in the Government School Census. For the purposes of the National ECEC Collection, data were sourced for all government schools offering a preschool program, and therefore full coverage was achieved for the NSW government sector.

Data collection methods: The 2011 Government Schools Census collected data using a URL data collection methodology for the following statistical entities:

- *Child:* Data at the child record level
- *Service provider organisation:* Data at the service provider record level
- *Worker:* Data at the worker record level.

Timeliness

The Government School Census is an annual collection and in 2011 was undertaken on 5 August 2011, with a reference period of 1 August to 5 August 2011. Completion of the data processing and validation stage took approximately 2 to 3 months after the collection date, at which time the data were delivered to the ABS.

Data sourced from the Government School Census for the purposes of the National ECEC Collection are published by the ABS in *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* (cat. no. 4240.0).

Accuracy

All NSW DEC government school-based preschools were required to participate in the Government School Census by completing an on-line collection form. There were three sections to the preschool section of the collection:

- general preschool data (e.g. number of children enrolled, number of Indigenous children)
- class or group data (overall session details for service and individual attendance by child, along with date of birth, sex, Indigenous status, language background other than English and disability)
- teacher data (e.g. qualifications and length of employment).

During the collection period, NSW DEC extracted children's details from the Enrolment Registration Number (ERN) system. Preschool teachers checked enrolment data, allocated children to class groups and entered enrolment details for any children missing from the ERN. Teachers also entered additional information to meet the collection requirements, then submitted forms electronically into the secure NSW DEC Collections portal.

NSW DEC ensured that all preschools submitted compulsory data. The online form used by preschools contained a number of validation rules to prevent inconsistencies and omissions. During the data collection period, preschool teachers could phone NSW DEC to clarify counting rules and data collection procedures. Signoff was required from all Principals whose school provided a preschool program. In addition data anomaly reports were generated identifying problems such as incorrect age, low attendance or duplicate children. All anomalies were checked and data corrected if required.

Coherence

For the purposes of the National ECEC Collection, data collected through the 2011 Government School Census were able to be compared with data collected in 2010, as both collections were undertaken using a URL data collection methodology. Coherence was achieved between the 2010 and 2011 NSW DEC Government School Census. An analysis of the coherence of this collection with other jurisdictional collections should be undertaken on an individual basis, taking into account any data elements that are not consistent with the ECEC National Minimum Data Set (ECEC NMDS) specifications.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – NEW SOUTH WALES

5.2.1 Deviation of Collection from the 2011 ECEC NMDS

<i>Data Element</i>	<i>Details of Deviation</i>
Address line (Child)(a) Area of usual residence (Child)	Full child address information was not provided due to the quality of data in the source system, only the suburb/town/locality name. This impacted on the ability to determine child disadvantage status and remoteness classifications, which affected comparability across jurisdictions.
Worker data	Only information on primary contact teachers in government preschools was collected.
Level of highest qualification relevant to ECEC (Worker)	The collection of this data element did not allow differentiation between Code 4: <i>Bachelor degree pass (4 years or equivalent)</i> or Code 3: <i>Bachelor degree (honours)</i> . These qualifications were all coded as Code 4. The collection of this data element did not allow differentiation between Code 6: <i>Advanced Diploma</i> and Code 7: <i>Diploma</i> . These qualifications were all coded as Code 7.

(a) This was not included in the 2011 ECEC NMDS, however it was requested by the ABS as an additional data element.

Counts of Children:

In the collection reference period, it is possible for a child to be concurrently enrolled in and attending two or more preschool programs. In order to address collection requirements, it is important to be able to collate all matching child records.

Children in a Preschool Program in 2011:

For NSW, counts of children enrolled in and attending preschool programs in 2011 were able to be derived as data were collected using a URL data collection methodology.

Children in a Preschool Program in the Year before Full-time Schooling:

NSW did not have two years of comparable data collected using a URL methodology or have a child/client database, and therefore counts of children enrolled in and attending preschool programs in the year before full-time schooling were not able to be derived.

Interpretability

NSW DEC preschools were notified about the data collection through the regular Principals' newsletter and reminder faxes. Detailed instructions on collecting and entering data using the secure NSW DEC Collections portal were available to preschools at all times during the collection period.

Accessibility

Data sourced from the Government School Census for the 2011 National ECEC Collection are published at the state and territory level in *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* on the ABS website.

b] Children's Services Annual Data Collection

Institutional Environment

The organisation responsible for the Children's Services Annual Data Collection was NSW FACS on behalf of NSW DEC. In 2011, the Children's Services Annual Data Collection was passed on to NSW DEC and submitted together with NSW DEC data to the ABS. Data for the Children's Services Annual Data Collection were collected under the Service Specifications, which are contracts with each service provider outlining the terms of renewable funding under the Children's Services Program.

Relevance

The data collected by NSW FACS were used for state government reporting commitments and to assist with the evaluation and planning of service provision. For preschools, the information obtained was used to determine funding for the following year as well as subsidy amounts for the Early Childhood Teacher Costs Contribution Scheme. Data were also used for monitoring the Children's Services Program funded services and reporting to the Australian Government on achievements against targets.

Scope: The scope for the Children's Services Annual Data Collection included all children aged 0 to 6 years old attending a preschool program that was regulated and funded by NSW DEC. Only those children that did not receive or were not eligible for the Child Care Benefit (CCB) or the Child Care Rebate (CCR) were considered in-scope.

The scope for data provided on workers included all paid workers employed in service providers that were regulated and funded by NSW DEC.

Coverage: NSW government funded preschools were mandated to participate in the Children's Services Annual Data Collection.

A substantial proportion of preschool programs in NSW are delivered by commercial LDCs and these services do not receive funding from NSW DEC. As a result, no data were collected from these services by the NSW Government.

Service providers that were registered for the CCB and the CCR were required to provide information in the Children's Services Annual Data Collection only for children who did not receive the CCB or the CCR. Preschool programs which were not funded by the NSW government and were delivered in non-government schools were also not included in the scope of the collection, and therefore there was under coverage in that sector.

Data collection methods: The 2011 Children's Services Annual Data Collection collected data using a URL data collection methodology for the following statistical entities:

- *Child:* Data at the child record level
- *Service provider organisation:* Data at the service provider record level
- *Worker:* Data at the worker record level.

Timeliness

The Children's Services Annual Data Collection is an annual collection and in 2011 was undertaken on 5th August 2011, with a collection period of 1 August to 12 August 2011. This reference fortnight was adopted by NSW DEC to reflect the preschool delivery model in NSW. This reference fortnight was then derived by NSW FACS to a one week reference period to enable comparison with other jurisdictions for the National ECEC Collection. Completion of the data processing and validation stage took approximately 2 to 3 months after the collection date, at which time the data were delivered to NSW DEC for on-forwarding to the ABS.

Data sourced from the Children's Services Annual Data Collection for the purposes of the National ECEC Collection are published by the ABS in *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011*.

Accuracy

In 2011 service providers used the online data entry system that was introduced in 2010, to complete the Children's Services Annual Data Collection. The on-line collection tool allowed preschool service providers to:

- Enter data for each child and staff member, and to automatically calculate totals
- Enter individual child and staff member details progressively throughout the representative fortnight
- Generate a copy of the data that had been entered for their own records.

Service providers entered data from child enrolment forms into their service provider data repository. During the collection period, data from this repository were used by the service provider to populate child enrolment information and enter other additional data into the on-line database to meet the collection requirements. After this was completed, data entry restrictions were used to ensure the required information was entered before the data could be submitted. The data were then sent to an off-line database (NSW FACS data repository) for storage. The user then received an automatic report via e-mail confirming that data had been submitted successfully and received by NSW FACS.

NSW FACS ensured that all services submitted compulsory data. The online form used by service providers contained a number of validation rules to prevent inconsistencies and omissions. During the data collection period, service providers could phone a 1300 phone number to clarify counting rules and data collection procedures. In addition, all submitted data were cross-checked for consistency with operational characteristics such as approved number of places and opening hours at each service. Prior year data were also compared and, where large variations were apparent, service providers were contacted to confirm data accuracy. Regional staff also undertook random audits of service providers after the collection period.

Coherence

For the purposes of the National ECEC Collection, data collected through the 2011 Children's Services Annual Data Collection were comparable to data collected in 2010, as both collections were undertaken using similar URL data collection methodologies.

Specific data elements which were collected using methods which did not align with the ECEC NMDS specifications are outlined below and should be taken into account when comparing data collected from each dataset.

An analysis of the coherence of this collection with other jurisdictional collections should be undertaken on an individual basis, taking into account any data elements that are not consistent with the ECEC NMDS specifications.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – NEW SOUTH WALES

5.2.2 Deviation of Collection from the 2011 ECEC NMDS

<i>Data Element</i>	<i>Details of Deviation</i>
Child name (Child)	Child family name and given name information was not retained on the data set after the SLK was produced. As name information was not retained, the SLK could not be validated which reduced the quality of the SLK and prevented matching of child records.
Address line (Child)(a) Area of usual residence (Child)	Full child address information was not collected, only the suburb/town/locality name. This impacted on the ability to determine child disadvantage status and remoteness classifications, which affected comparability across jurisdictions.
Indigenous status (Child)	The Indigenous status of the child was not disaggregated below the level of Indigenous and non-Indigenous.
Management type (Service provider)	All service providers were coded to Private not for profit – Community managed. There was no ability to separately identify preschool programs managed by Local government or attached to independent/Catholic schools.
Preschool program delivery indicator (Worker)	This data element was not collected.
Hours worked in preschool program delivery (Worker)	This data element was not collected in accordance with the ECEC NMDS. Data collected related to the worker's typical paid hours per week, not the actual hours worked in the reference period.

(a) This was not included in the 2011 ECEC NMDS, however it was requested by the ABS as an additional data element.

Counts of Children:

In the collection reference period, it is possible for a child to be concurrently enrolled in and attending two or more preschool programs. In order to address collection requirements, it is important to be able to collate all matching child records.

Children in a Preschool Program in 2011:

For NSW, counts of children enrolled in and attending preschool programs in 2011 were able to be derived as data were collected using a URL data collection methodology.

Children in a Preschool Program in the Year before Full-time Schooling:

NSW did not have two years of comparable data collected using a URL methodology or have a child/client database, and therefore counts of children enrolled in and attending preschool programs in the year before full-time schooling were not able to be derived.

Interpretability

NSW provided a range of key information via manuals and fact sheets, such as the 2011 Census Booklet and Coding Instructions, to assist in the reporting of data, correct interpretation and explanation of concepts. The Children's Services data collection tool - user guide, can be found at:

http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/docswr/_assets/main/documents/childcare_reporting_guide.pdf.

Accessibility

Data sourced from the Children's Services Annual Data Collection for the 2011 National ECEC Collection are published at the state and territory level in *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* on the ABS website.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – NEW SOUTH WALES

Information Source

The information contained within this report has been sourced from NSW FACS and NSW DEC in consultation with the ABS. Further information is available at the NSW FACS website <http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/> and NSW DEC website <http://www.educationandcommunities.nsw.gov.au/>.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – VICTORIA

VICTORIA

DATA QUALITY STATEMENT

In 2011, Victoria (Vic.) was responsible for two data collections in relation to preschool programs, both of which collected data using a Unit Record Level (URL) data collection methodology:

- the Confirmed Kindergarten Funding Data Collection conducted in April (the 'April Data Collection')
- the August Data Collection.

Confirmed Kindergarten Funding Data Collection & the August Data Collection

Institutional Environment

The organisation responsible for both data collections was the Vic. Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). Data were collected in accordance with Funding and Service Agreement requirements. Vic. DEECD is authorised to fund services under the *Children's Services Act 1996* (Vic.).

Relevance

Data from the 2011 collections enabled reporting across the Victorian ECEC sector for a variety of reporting requirements. The information collected through the April collection was used by Vic. DEECD to make decisions about the level of funding each organisation was eligible to receive for each preschool child enrolment (per capita funding) and the number of children eligible to receive the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy. The August data collection was conducted primarily to support national reporting requirements.

Scope: The scope of both collections included all children aged 3 to 6 years of age who were officially enrolled during the reference period in Vic. DEECD funded preschool programs delivered by service providers with a current Vic. DEECD Service Agreement.

The scope for data provided on workers included all paid primary contact teachers and teaching assistants who were employed in Vic. DEECD funded preschool programs delivered by service providers with a current Vic. DEECD Service Agreement.

Coverage: Services with a current Funding and Service Agreement were licensed and funded by Vic. DEECD and therefore for these providers, participation in the collections was a mandatory requirement. Full coverage was achieved of preschool programs delivered through these service providers. A small number of Long Day Care (LDC) centres operating a preschool program were not funded or licensed by Vic. DEECD and as a result, no data were collected from these services by Vic. DEECD.

Data collection methods:

The 2011 August Data Collection collected data using a URL data collection methodology for the following statistical entities:

- *Child:* Data at the child record level
- *Service provider organisation:* Data at the service provider record level
- *Worker:* Data for workers were provided from the April Data Collection only.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – VICTORIA

The 2011 April Data Collection collected data using a URL data collection methodology for the following statistical entities:

- *Child*: Data for children were provided from the August Data Collection only
- *Service provider organisation*: Data for service providers were provided from the August Data Collection only
- *Worker*: Data at the worker record level.

Timeliness

The April Data Collection is an annual collection and in 2011 was conducted 4 April to 6 May 2011. The August Data Collection was conducted for the first time in 2011, between 1 August and 26 August, with a reference period of 1 to 6 August 2011.

In Victoria, it is a condition of preschool funding that organisations provide accurate information to Vic. DEECD by the due date of the data collections. The timeliness and accuracy of data provided by each organisation in April is reviewed annually as part of a service agreement. If an organisation fails to provide accurate information or to submit on-line forms by the required date, Vic. DEECD may decide to delay or cease payments of funding.

Completion of the data processing and validation stages for the August Data Collection took approximately 2 to 3 months after the collection date, at which time data were delivered to the ABS.

Data sourced from the collections for the purposes of the National ECEC Collection are published by the ABS in *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* (cat. no. 4240.0).

Accuracy

Organisations with a current Vic. DEECD Service Agreement, who continue to meet the eligibility requirements for funding, were required to submit data to their regional office via an on-line survey. There are two data collections each year and organisations are required to provide data for both collections.

In the April Data Collection, service providers were required to confirm the number of enrolled children eligible for per capita funding, and the number eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy. Information on service provider characteristics and worker details was also required to be confirmed. For the August 2011 Collection, service providers in receipt per capita funding were required to provide enrolment, attendance and fees paid data for each child enrolled at the service.

Victoria adopted the principle of equivalency and considered teachers as qualified if they were deemed as having appropriate qualifications and/or experience as early childhood teachers by Early Childhood Australia. Victoria also used the principle of equivalency for some primary school teachers.

Victoria carried out data validation in response to missing fields of data as well as cross checking data for accuracy. With on-line data collection, fields were entered via drop-down boxes containing only valid options where possible. Intermediate totals were system calculated rather than manually entered. Vic. DEECD staff performed verification checks on every preschool service submission, ensuring that no blanks occurred in data records and comparing enrolments across years.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – VICTORIA

Coherence

For the purposes of the National ECEC Collection, data collected through the August 2011 Collection were not directly comparable with 2010 published data because the base-year was collected using an Aggregate level data collection methodology.

Specific data elements which were collected using methods which did not align with the ECEC National Minimum Data Set (ECEC NMDS) specifications are outlined below and should be taken into account when analysing the data collected. An analysis of the coherence of this collection with other jurisdictional collections should be undertaken on an individual basis, taking into account any data elements that are not consistent with the ECEC NMDS specifications, outlined below.

5.3 Deviation of Collection from the 2011 ECEC NMDS

<i>Data Element</i>	<i>Details of Deviation</i>
Fees charged (Child)	Data were not available for preschool programs in LDC as the preschool program component of the fee could not be separated from the total LDC fee.
Preschool program enrolment hours (Child)	Data were not available for LDCs. Attendance hours were used as a proxy measure for enrolment hours for these services.
Preschool program repeater indicator (Child)	Data were based on whether the child was approved for a second year of preschool. A child could attend a second year of preschool delivered by a different service provider without applying for approval, and therefore the second year would not be classified as a matching record across time.
Maximum preschool program hours available (Child)	Data were based on the number of hours the child was enrolled.
Worker data	<p>Teacher data were collected in the April collection and not updated in the August collection, as it was assumed that teachers that were present in April were still present at the same location at the time of the August collection.</p> <p>As service provider data from August were matched to the worker data collected in April, there were a number of workers that were not attached to any service providers. It is likely that the services that these workers were employed with in April have closed down or undergone business restructure between April and August. There is also no information on workers in new services that began trading between April and August.</p> <p>Only data on teachers and teaching assistants were available.</p>
Level of highest qualification relevant to ECEC (Worker)	The highest level of ECEC related qualification was not collected. Only the qualification that related to the funding eligibility of the service was available.
Delivery of preschool program indicator (Worker)	This data element was not available as data were collected in April. Therefore there was no ability to determine which teachers delivered a preschool program in the reference period.
Hours worked in preschool program delivery (Worker)	<p>Data were only provided for teachers, not teaching assistants.</p> <p>The data provided were the hours of employment as collected in April, which may not accurately represent the number of hours the teacher actually worked in delivering the preschool program during the reference period.</p>
Management type (Service provider)	The legal entity status of the funded organisation reported by each service provider (excluding Independent schools) was used as a proxy measure for management type. This may not have resulted in the reporting of a correct management type for all service providers. Independent schools were identified using 'funding status' flag in the Vic. DEECD funding system and assigned a management type of Code 6: <i>Independent school</i> , regardless of the legal entity status of the funded organisation.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – VICTORIA

Counts of Children:

In the collection reference period, it is possible for a child to be concurrently enrolled in and attending two or more preschool programs. In order to address collection requirements, it is important to be able to collate all matching child records.

Children in a Preschool Program in 2011:

For Vic., counts of children enrolled in and attending preschool programs in 2011 were able to be derived as data were collected using a URL data collection methodology.

Children in a Preschool Program in the Year before Full-time Schooling:

Vic. did not have two years of comparable data collected using a URL methodology or have a child/client database, and therefore counts of children enrolled in and attending preschool programs in the year before full-time schooling were not able to be derived.

Interpretability

Extensive explanatory information was provided in the on-line collection instrument. Information such as a 'frequently asked questions' fact sheet on the data collection process was available from Vic. DEECD. If service providers required clarification about the collection, they were also able to contact a Children's Service Adviser in their regional office.

The Vic. DEECD provide information on funding criteria and data collection responsibilities in the publication 'Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria 2010–12', which is available on the Vic. DEECD website at:

<http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/childrensservices/kindergartenpolicycriteria.pdf>.

Accessibility

Data sourced from the Vic. DEECD Collection for the 2011 National ECEC Collection are published at the state and territory level in *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* on the ABS website.

Information Source

The information contained in this report has been sourced from Vic. DEECD in consultation with the ABS. Further information is available at the Vic. DEECD website <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>

QUEENSLAND

DATA QUALITY STATEMENT

In 2011, Queensland (Qld) was responsible for one data collection in relation to preschool programs, the 'Early Childhood Education and Care Services Census' (ECECSC), which collected data using both Aggregate level and Unit Record Level (URL) data collection methodologies.

Early Childhood Education and Care Services Census

Institutional Environment

The organisation responsible for the 2011 ECECSC is Qld Department of Education and Training (DET). Data for the 2011 ECECSC were collected under the *Child Care Act 2002* (Qld).

Relevance

Data collected from the ECECSC enabled Qld DET to report on a variety of matters, such as the performance of the early childhood education and care sector, to the Qld and Australian Governments, and the community. The data were used to provide evidence for policy and program development and planning and also used to update Qld's child care information system to ensure data were accurate and current.

Scope: The 2011 ECECSC included all children who were enrolled in a licensed child care service in Qld. This included children that were enrolled in services that were providing approved preschool programs and children who were officially enrolled in a Bound for Success pre-Prep program at the time of the ECECSC.

The scope for data provided on workers included all staff employed in licensed child care services that consented to their information being provided.

Coverage: The 2011 ECECSC achieved complete coverage of approved service providers in receipt of Qld government funding. The ECECSC was also compulsory for Bound for Success programs delivered in government managed schools. For government funded preschool programs delivered in non-government managed services and Long Day Care (LDC) centres with a signed service agreement with Qld DET, it was a contractual requirement to participate in the ECECSC, although it was not compulsory. Data were also collected from unfunded providers, however participation in the ECECSC was voluntary, and therefore the ECECSC did not achieve complete coverage due to non-response. Qld reported a high response rate from unfunded providers for the collection.

Data collection methods: The 2011 ECECSC collected data for the following statistical entities:

1. Funded approved programs (URL data collection methodology):
 - *Child:* Data at the child record level
 - *Service provider organisation:* Data at the service provider record level
 - *Worker:* Data at the worker record level.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – QUEENSLAND

2. Unfunded providers (Aggregate level data collection methodology):

- *Child*: Totals for children enrolled and attending preschool programs at the service provider record level
- *Service provider organisation*: Data at the service provider record level
- *Worker*: Data at the worker record level.

Timeliness

The ECECSC is an annual collection and in 2011 was undertaken in the week commencing 1 August. For all service providers excluding community preschools, the reference period was 1 August to 7 August 2011. For community preschools, the reference period was 25 July to 7 August 2011. This reference fortnight was adopted for these service providers to reflect their preschool delivery model. This reference fortnight was then derived by Qld to a one week reference period to enable comparison with other service providers across Qld and other jurisdictions for the National ECEC Collection.

Completion of the data processing and validation stages occurred in the 3 months following the collection, at which time data were delivered to the ABS.

Data sourced from the ECECSC for the purposes of the National ECEC Collection are published by the ABS in *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* (cat. no. 4240.0).

Accuracy

For the 2011 ECECSC, service providers collected child level demographic information via a registration and/or enrolment form. In most instances, this information was stored in a data repository (government or non-government), however some information was stored as filed records.

Service providers were required to record and retain details of staff qualifications. Qld adopted the principle of equivalency and considered teachers to hold 4 year equivalency qualifications in the following situations:

- A teacher that was registered with the Qld College of Teachers (QCT) who held an approved 2 or 3 year early childhood qualification.
- A primary teacher who has full registration with the QCT and who is studying towards an approved 2 or 3 year early childhood qualification.

Data from the repository and files were then used by service providers to complete the relevant on-line ECECSC form. A limited number of services supplied information through paper-based forms that were equivalent to the on-line form. This information was then stored in the ECECSC data repository. Data for the 2011 National ECEC Collection were then sourced from the ECECSC data repository.

As part of the internal validation process for 2011, Qld DET included explanatory notes with the on-line forms to assist service providers with definitions and responses. A limited number of edit checks were built into the online form, which ensured that valid data were supplied. Data supplied by service providers underwent a range of validation and edit checks to ensure that the information was complete, internally consistent and fell within fixed known parameters for relevant questions. During the data validation process, where information was not supplied, data were substituted from other parts of the service's data supply. Only in certain circumstances were service providers contacted to collect missing information.

No adjustment for item or full non-response was undertaken. No adjustment for any known or predicted undercount has been undertaken.

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Coherence

For the purposes of the National ECEC Collection, data collected through the 2011 ECECSC using a URL data collection methodology, were not directly comparable with 2010 data as the base-year data were collected using an Aggregate level collection methodology. Qld's data collected using a URL data collection methodology in 2011 were comparable with data collected using an Aggregate level methodology, at the child episode level only.

Specific data elements which were collected using methods which did not align with the ECEC National Minimum Data Set (ECEC NMDS) specifications are outlined below and should be taken into account when analysing the data collected. An analysis of the coherence of this collection with other jurisdictional collections should be undertaken on an individual basis, taking into account any data elements that are not consistent with the ECEC NMDS specifications, outlined below.

5.4.1 Deviation of Collection from the 2011 ECEC NMDS – Funded Approved Programs

<i>Data Element</i>	<i>Details of Deviation</i>
Statistical linkage key (Child)	There were quality issues with the statistical linkage key.
Preschool program delivery indicator (Worker)	This data element cannot be reported as Qld does not collect data on whether the worker delivered a preschool program for at least 1 hour.
Hours worked in preschool program delivery (Worker)	The number of hours worked in delivering a preschool program is not collected.

5.4.2 Deviation of Collection from the 2011 ECEC NMDS – Unfunded Providers

<i>Data Element</i>	<i>Details of Deviation</i>
Number of children attending a preschool program	This data element could not be disaggregated by the child level data element 'Sex'.
Number of children enrolled in a preschool program	This data element could not be disaggregated by the child level data element 'Sex'.
Number of Indigenous children attending a preschool program	This data element could not be disaggregated by the child level data element 'Sex' and was only available at the level of 'Indigenous' or 'non-Indigenous'.
Number of Indigenous children enrolled in a preschool program	This data element could not be disaggregated by the child level data element 'Sex' and was only available at the level of 'Indigenous' or 'non-Indigenous'.

Counts of Children:

In the collection reference period, it is possible for a child to be concurrently enrolled in and attending two or more preschool programs. In order to address collection requirements, it is important to be able to collate all matching child records.

Children in a Preschool Program in 2011 and in the Year before Full-time Schooling:

For Qld, counts of children enrolled in and attending preschool programs in 2011 and in the year before full-time schooling, were not able to be derived as data were reported using a combination of URL and Aggregate methodologies. As a result, data for Qld. could only be presented in terms of episodes of enrolment and attendance in preschool programs.

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Interpretability

Qld provided a range of information to assist in the collection and reporting of data, such as explanatory notes for providers. The explanatory notes, together with printable copies of ECECSC collection forms, are available from the Qld DET website: <http://deta.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/>.

Accessibility

Data sourced from the ECECSC for the 2011 National ECEC Collection are published at the state and territory level in *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* on the ABS website. Data from the ECECSC are also published in sector fact sheets and various other forms on the Qld DET website.

Information Source

The information contained within this report has been sourced from Qld DET in consultation with the ABS. Further information is available at the Qld DET website <http://deta.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/>.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

DATA QUALITY STATEMENT

In 2011, South Australia (SA) was responsible for one data collection in relation to preschool programs, the Annual Census of Children's Services (ACCS). While data were collected through the ACCS using a Unit Record Level (URL) data collection methodology, data collected from some service providers were not compliant with the URL ECEC National Minimum Data Set (ECEC NMDS). Therefore, all data has been reported for the National ECEC Collection at the Aggregate level.

Annual Census of Children's Services

Institutional Environment

The organisation responsible for the ACCS is SA Department for Education and Child Development (DECD). Data for the ACCS were collected under the *Education Act 1972* (SA) and the *Education Regulations 1997* (SA).

Relevance

Information gathered by the census included patterns of service usage and characteristics of children and families. The data were required by the SA government for forward planning and the analysis of needs and gaps in current service provision. The data from this collection enabled reporting across the SA early childhood education and care sector for a variety of reporting requirements.

Scope: The scope of the 2011 ACCS included children aged 3 to 5 years (extending to 6 years old for a small number of children who were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin or were under the guardianship of the Minister for Families and Communities) attending government managed or government funded preschools, including integrated centres, and funded non-government community managed child care centres with a preschool program.

The scope for data provided on workers included all paid workers employed in government managed or government funded preschools, including integrated centres, and funded non-government community managed child care centres with a preschool program. Workers were included irrespective of whether they delivered a preschool program during the reference period.

Coverage: In 2011 the ACCS achieved full coverage of all government managed and government funded preschools, including integrated centres, and funded non-government community managed child care centres with a preschool program. Only a small number of non-government community managed LDCs with a preschool program receive funding from SA DECD.

Participation in the ACCS was voluntary for Independent and Catholic school managed preschool providers, unfunded community managed providers and for Long Day Care (LDC) centres, and therefore the ACCS did not achieve full coverage of these sectors due to non-response.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Data collection methods: The 2011 ACCS collected data for the following statistical entities:

1. Services that completed the ACCS using the Early Years System (using a URL data collection methodology):
 - *Child:* Data at the child record level
 - *Service provider organisation:* Data at the service provider record level
 - *Worker:* Data at the worker record level.
2. Services that completed the paper-based ACCS (using a non URL ECEC NMDS compliant data collection methodology):
 - *Child:* Data at the child record level, without name, date of birth or address information
 - *Service provider organisation:* Data at the service provider record level
 - *Worker:* Data at the worker record level.

As some service providers did not provide data which complied with the URL ECEC NMDS, all child level data were presented in terms of episodes of enrolment and attendance for SA in the publication *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* (cat. no. 4240.0).

Timeliness

The ACCS is an annual collection and in 2011 was undertaken on the 5 August 2011, with a reference period of 25 July to 5 August 2011. This reference fortnight was adopted by SA DECD to reflect the preschool delivery model in SA. This reference fortnight was then derived by SA DECD to a one week reference period to enable comparison with other jurisdictions for the National ECEC Collection.

The data processing and validation stages took approximately 2 to 3 months after the collection date, at which time the data were delivered to the ABS.

Data sourced from the ACCS for the purpose of the National ECEC Collection are published by the ABS in *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011*.

Accuracy

In 2011, the ACCS collected data from service providers through either a paper-based format or submissions from a web-based preschool administration system. The web-based format collected data using a URL data collection methodology. For those service providers that submitted data using the paper-based format, data were also collected using a URL data collection methodology, however the data collected were not compliant with the URL ECEC NMDS. The new 'Early Years System' (EYS) was the web-based system implemented in SA preschools for the management of preschool enrolments, attendances and fees. Training of service providers commenced in Term 1 and continued throughout 2011. The EYS staffing module was pre-populated with teaching qualifications recorded in the SA DECD Human Resources administrative system prior to the ACCS being conducted. Staff completing the ACCS checked the qualifications listed in the EYS and updated them if required.

For those service providers that had not yet adopted or implemented the EYS system as at the ACCS reference period, and for non-government preschools, paper-based forms specific to each sector, (i.e preschools, child care, Montessori, integrated services and TAFE child care centres) were used.

SA DECD collated both on-line and paper-based census information into their Children Services Information System data repository, or updated service provider details in the Location Sites and Services database. Data for the 2011 National ECEC Collection were sourced from these databases. A data validation database was utilised by SA DECD to ensure the quality of the data collected. Data validations were performed at the service provider, child and staff levels.

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Coherence

For the purposes of the National ECEC Collection, data collected through the 2011 ACCS were not directly comparable with 2010 data as all base-year data were sourced using an Aggregate level data collection methodology.

Specific data elements which were collected using methods which did not align with the URL ECEC NMDS specifications are outlined below and should be taken into account when analysing the data collected. An analysis of the coherence of this collection with other jurisdictional collections should be undertaken on an individual basis, taking into account any data elements that are not consistent with the ECEC NMDS specifications, outlined below.

5.5 Deviation of Collection from the 2011 ECEC NMDS

<i>Data Element</i>	<i>Details of Deviation</i>
Letters of family name / given name	For service providers that reported data using the paper-based census booklet, only the child's initials were available.
Date of birth	For service providers that reported data using the paper-based census booklet, only age information was available.
Address line / Suburb	For service providers that reported data using the paper-based census booklet, only postcode information was available.
Hours worked in preschool program delivery (Worker)	Data were reported for each worker's total paid hours. There were no separation of 'face-to-face contact hours', so data may be over-reported.
Number of preschool program service operation weeks (Service provider)	For some integrated services, data included weeks when the service was operational but not necessarily delivering the preschool component of the service, so data may be over-reported in these services.

Counts of Children:

In the collection reference period, it is possible for a child to be concurrently enrolled in and attending two or more preschool programs. In order to address collection requirements, it is important to be able to collate all matching child records.

Children in a Preschool Program in 2011 and in the Year before Full-time Schooling:

For SA, counts of children enrolled in and attending preschool programs in 2011 and in the year before full-time schooling, were not able to be derived as data were reported using a combination of URL and Aggregate methodologies. As a result, data for SA could only be presented in terms of episodes of enrolment and attendance in preschool programs.

Interpretability

SA provided a range of information to assist in the reporting of data, such as the 2011 ACCS Booklet and Coding Instructions. Key material was provided in the form of manuals and fact sheets to support the correct interpretation and explanation of concepts.

Accessibility

Data sourced from the ACCS for the 2011 National ECEC Collection are published at the state and territory level in *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* on the ABS website.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Information Source

The information contained within this report has been sourced from SA DECD in consultation with the ABS. Further information is available on the SA DECD website <http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/>.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

DATA QUALITY STATEMENT

In 2011, Western Australia (WA) was responsible for one data collection in relation to preschool programs, the WA School Census, which collected data using a combination of Aggregate level and Unit Record Level (URL) data collection methodologies. The WA School Census included an additional component which collected worker data from all service providers.

WA School Census

Institutional Environment

The organisation responsible for the School Census is WA Department of Education (DoE). Data for the WA School Census were collected under the *School Education Act 1999* (WA).

Relevance

The data collected through the School Census by the WA DoE were used to meet national reporting requirements, including the National Schools Statistics Collection and the National ECEC Collection. The data were also used to determine allocation of schools operating grants and forward planning for the government and non-government school sectors.

Scope: The scope for the early childhood component of the WA School Census consisted of all children who were attending a preschool program within a school, including government and non-government schools, and community based preschools.

The scope for data provided on workers included all paid educators (teachers and education assistants) delivering preschool programs at all government, Catholic and independent schools, and community-based preschools.

Coverage: Full coverage was achieved for all registered and funded schools (both government and non-government) and community-based preschools.

As preschool programs provided in Long Day Care (LDC) settings are not officially recognised in WA as providing preschool, these service providers were not included in the WA School Census.

Data collection methods: The 2011 WA School Census collected data for the following statistical entities:

1. Government and community-based preschools, and some non-government schools (using a URL data collection methodology):
 - *Child:* Data at the child record level
 - *Service provider organisation:* Data at the service provider record level
 - *Worker:* Data at the worker record level.

2. All other non-government schools (using an Aggregate level data collection methodology):
 - *Child*: Totals for children enrolled and attending preschool programs at the service provider record level
 - *Service provider organisation*: Data at the service provider record level
 - *Worker*: Data at the worker record level.

Timeliness

The WA School Census is a biannual collection with some components being conducted annually in August. In 2011 the collection was undertaken on 5 August 2011, with a reference period of 25 July to 5 August 2011. This reference fortnight was adopted by WA DoE to better reflect the preschool delivery model in WA. Data were then averaged by WA DoE to provide a weekly figure for reporting, to enable comparison with other jurisdictions for the National ECEC Collection. Completion of the data processing and validation stage took approximately 2 to 3 months after the collection date, at which time data were delivered to the ABS.

Data sourced from the WA School Census for the purposes of the National ECEC Collection are published by the ABS in *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* (cat. no. 4240.0).

Accuracy

Government preschool data were obtained from government primary schools through an administrative system, the INTEGRIS Student Information System (SIS) and a daily data harvesting process. The Census Module was run within SIS to assist in the validation of data at the school, and the harvested data from the INTEGRIS SIS were fed into the Schools Census. All government schools were required to participate in the collection. They were also required to complete an online survey-based collection form (collected using an Aggregate level methodology) to meet additional collection requirements for the National ECEC Collection.

Some non-government schools supplied ECEC data through an online WA DoE Census System using an Aggregate level data collection methodology.

Worker level data: All educators (teachers and education assistants) were required to provide details on their field and level of highest qualification relevant to ECEC. If an educator had no qualifications, they were required to indicate if they were currently working towards an ECEC qualification and to indicate the number of years of experience they had in teaching preschool or Pre-primary (the first year of school in WA).

In 2004 when the WA College of Teaching (WACOT) was established, existing experienced teachers with three-year qualifications working in schools were deemed to be four year trained or equivalent. Since 2004, to gain registration with WACOT, teachers are required to produce evidence that they are four year trained or equivalent. Equivalence is determined by WACOT.

Government and non-government data collected through the Schools Census were then stored in the WA data repository, and extracted for the purposes of the National ECEC Collection.

Internal validation processes for the School Census occurred at three different points of the process. The Census module within SIS had a series of in-built validation rules, some of which required the school to edit data before continuing, while other rules generated warnings alerting the user to anomalies. These warnings allowed the user to decide whether data needed amending before the census return was submitted. For government schools, a validation tool allowed administrators to bulk check the integrity of child date of birth data. This first level of validation only applied to WA government schools/preschools.

WA non-government schools used either a comma-separated values file upload (URL data collection methodology) or direct entry (Aggregate level data collection methodology) into the online Census System, both of which incorporated a number of internal consistency checks. For non-government preschools, a checklist was provided which listed validation prompts for ensuring that:

- Totals were correct
- Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal columns were consistent with totals
- Preschool children were counted by year of birth.

WA non-government school data were also subjected to general validation processes by the Schools Census team. The second set of validation processes were run by the Census team, using both routine and ad-hoc validation methods to examine data while being assembled into working files. These processes were designed to enable effective investigation of new issues.

The third set of validation rules were built into the custom software which loaded school census data into the data warehouse, or into the staging phase.

Coherence

For the purposes of the National ECEC Collection, data collected from government school-based preschools using a URL data collection methodology were not comparable with data collected in 2010, which were collected using an Aggregate data collection methodology.

Specific data elements which were collected using methods which did not align with the ECEC National Minimum Data Set (ECEC NMDS) specifications are outlined below and should be taken into account when analysing the data collected. An analysis of the coherence of the WA collection with other jurisdictional collections should be undertaken on an individual basis, taking into account any data elements that are not consistent with the ECEC NMDS specifications, as outlined below.

5.6 Deviation of Collection from the 2011 ECEC NMDS

<i>Data Element</i>	<i>Details of Deviation</i>
Preschool program attendance indicator (Child)	This data element did not align with the ECEC NMDS as attendance data may include children that were absent during the reference week if parents provided evidence that they were expected to return.
Maximum preschool program hours available (Child)	This data element did not align with the ECEC NMDS as it was collected as minimum hours enrolled.
Preschool program repeater indicator (Child)	This data element was not collected for the majority of child records.
Preschool program hours attended (Child)	This data element was collected using a tick-box style, which did not allow the collection of actual hours.

Counts of Children:

In the collection reference period, it is possible for a child to be concurrently enrolled in and attending two or more preschool programs. In order to address collection requirements, it is important to be able to collate all matching child records.

Children in a Preschool Program in 2011 and in the Year before Full-time Schooling:

For WA, counts of children enrolled in and attending preschool programs in 2011 and in the year before full-time schooling, were not able to be derived as data were reported using a combination of URL and Aggregate methodologies. As a result, data for WA could only be presented in terms of episodes of enrolment and attendance in preschool programs.

Interpretability

For government schools, a manual was provided to assist users with the Census Module, including instructions and validation techniques. For non-government schools, a checklist was provided which included instructions and suggestions for validations.

Accessibility

Data sourced from the School Census for the 2011 National ECEC Collection are published at the state and territory level in *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* and is available on the ABS website.

Information Source

The information contained within this report has been sourced from WA DoE in consultation with the ABS. Further information is available on the WA DoE website <http://www.det.wa.edu.au/>.

TASMANIA

DATA QUALITY STATEMENT

In 2011, Tasmania (Tas.) was responsible for two data collections in relation to preschool programs, the Government School Census and the Non-government Preschool Census. Both the Government School Census and the Non-government Preschool Census collected data using a Unit Record Level (URL) data collection methodology.

a] Government School Census

Institutional Environment

The organisation responsible for the Government School Census was Tas. Department of Education (DoE). Data for the Government School Census were collected under the *Education Act 1994* (Tas.). Worker data were also collected under the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004* (Tas.).

Relevance

The data collected by Tas. DoE in the Government School Census were used to report on Tas. achievements against performance targets, as well as progress against Australian Government ECEC targets and COAG reforms. For preschools, the information obtained was also used in determining the funding of services by the Tas. government.

Scope: The scope for the early childhood component of the Government School Census consisted of all children aged 3 to 6 years old who were enrolled in a preschool program at registered government schools in Tas.

The scope for data provided on workers included all paid contact workers that were employed in government schools during the reference period and were involved in service provision for the preschool program. Workers were included irrespective of whether they delivered a preschool program during the reference period.

Coverage: All registered government schools in Tas. participated in the Government School Census which collected data using a URL data collection methodology. For the purposes of the National ECEC Collection, data were sourced for all government schools offering preschool programs. Data from non-government preschools were collected in a separate census.

Data collection methods: The 2011 Government School Census collected data using a URL data collection methodology for the following statistical entities:

- *Child:* Data at the child record level
- *Service provider organisation:* Data at the service provider record level
- *Worker:* Data at the worker record level.

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Timeliness

The Government School Census is an annual collection and in 2011 was undertaken on 5 August 2011, with a reference period of 25 July to 5 August 2011. This reference fortnight was adopted by Tas. DoE to reflect the preschool delivery model in Tas. This reference fortnight was then derived by Tas. DoE to a one week reference period to enable comparison with other jurisdictions for the National ECEC Collection. Completion of the data processing and validation stage took approximately 2 months after the collection date, at which time data were delivered to the ABS.

Data sourced from the Government School Census for the purposes of the National ECEC Collection are published by the ABS in *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* (cat. no. 4240.0).

Accuracy

Child level data: The process of obtaining and processing data in Tas. commenced with service providers uploading information from each child enrolment form into the Government Schools Administrative Computer System (SACS), which stored the information in a data warehouse. The data warehouse has a number of in-built data quality checks that provided timely data feedback to schools. An exception report was produced daily, with the central business support unit following up all issues. Data from the warehouse were then used to populate the Schools Census. A reference table of children enrolled in Tas. government schools was then created in the Tas. DoE data repository.

Worker level data: Teacher data were collected directly from the government data warehouse. Qualification information for teachers and principals was collected from the Tas. Teacher Registration Board, which registers teachers and holds a record of all qualifications. All non-teacher worker qualification data were collected directly from the government schools, as the government data warehouse does not hold non-teacher data centrally.

If a worker held more than one qualification, the following rules were observed:

- The highest ECE qualification is reported for the worker if applicable
- In instances where the worker does not hold an ECE qualification, then the highest teaching related qualification is reported
- In instances where the worker does not hold a teacher qualification, the highest non-teaching related qualification is reported.

All teachers in Tas. must be registered by the Tas. Teacher Registration Board. As a result of the registration process, some long-term teachers have Certifications of Teaching or 3 year degrees. The registration process requires all teachers to demonstrate, through teaching experience, that they have the same level of qualification as a 4 year degree. If a teacher meets this criterion, they are deemed to have a 4 year teaching qualification for registration purposes.

The census data were reviewed and cleaned by Tas. DoE staff. This process included numerous quality checks such as confirming student ages, hours enrolled, and verifying duplicate enrolments across schools. A declaration report was sent to schools, which the principal reviewed and was required to declare that all data were true and correct. This set of students became the authoritative dataset for the census date. Preschool data were extracted from this census dataset to match with all other data collated for the National ECEC Collection. Extensive quality assurance occurred for the attendance and teacher qualification data, to ensure that data were consistent with other Tas. DoE data sources.

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Some specific validation methods for Tas. government preschools included:

- Identifying and flagging various types of matching records, i.e. duplicates analysis
- Verifying all addresses by child and service provider using specialised software
- Ensuring data were within expected ranges
- Ensuring counts (e.g. of males and females) summed to totals.

Coherence

For the purposes of the National ECEC Collection, data collected through the 2011 Government School Census were able to be compared with data collected in 2010, as both collections were undertaken using a URL data collection methodology.

Coherence was achieved between the Tas. Government School Census and the Non-government Preschool Census, as both collections complied with the significant majority of national standards specified in the ECEC National Minimum Data Set (ECEC NMDS). Specific data elements which were collected using methods which did not align with the ECEC NMDS specifications are outlined below and should be taken into account when comparing data collected from each dataset. An analysis of the coherence of this collection with other jurisdictional collections should be undertaken on an individual basis, taking into account any data elements that are not consistent with the ECEC NMDS specifications.

5.7.1 Deviation of Collection from the 2011 ECEC NMDS

<i>Data Element</i>	<i>Details of Deviation</i>
Maximum preschool program hours available (Child)	The data element 'Preschool program attendance hours' was used as a proxy for this data element.
Child attendance and enrolment data	About 30 schools in Tas. had professional learning days during the reference period and were therefore not operational. For these schools, enrolment and attendance data were not representative. The data for the affected schools were corrected by imputing attendance data for the missing days. Imputation was carried out by Tas. at the child level using the average attendance rate for the days where data were available. Enrolment hours for the missing days were allocated using each school's nominated regular timetable.

Counts of Children:

In the collection reference period, it is possible for a child to be concurrently enrolled in and attending two or more preschool programs. In order to address collection requirements, it is important to be able to collate all matching child records.

Children in a Preschool Program in 2011:

For Tas., counts of children enrolled in and attending preschool programs in 2011 were able to be derived as data were collected using a URL data collection methodology.

Children in a Preschool Program in the Year before Full-time Schooling:

As Tas. had two years of comparable data collected using a URL methodology and had a child/client database, counts of children enrolled in and attending preschool programs in the year before full-time schooling were also able to be derived.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – TASMANIA

Interpretability

An online training system was available to users of the SACS system to assist with collection of the data.

Accessibility

Data sourced from the Government School Census for the 2011 National ECEC Collection are published at the state and territory level in *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* on the ABS website.

b] Non-government Preschool Census

Institutional Environment

The organisation responsible for the Non-government Preschool Census was Tas. DoE. Data for the Non-government Preschool Census were collected under the *Education Act 1994* (Tas.). Worker data were also collected under the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004* (Tas.). In addition, Tas. DoE has a Memorandum of Understanding with the independent and Catholic school sectors which specifies a data collection agreement.

Relevance

The data collected by Tas. DoE were used to meet state and Australian Government reporting commitments and to assist with the evaluation and planning of service provision. For preschools, the information obtained was used to determine the funding that would be provided to services. The data were also used for reporting to the Australian Government on achievements against reporting targets.

Scope: The scope of the Non-government Preschool Census consisted of all children aged 3 to 6 years old who were enrolled in a preschool program that was part of a registered non-government school or registered Long Day Care (LDC) centres in Tas.

The scope for data provided on workers included all paid contact workers that were employed in registered non-government schools during the reference period and were involved in service provision for the preschool program. Workers were included irrespective of whether they delivered a preschool program during the reference period.

Coverage: All registered non-government schools providing a preschool program participated in the Non-government Preschool Census, including one LDC registered with the Schools Registration Board. The Non-government Preschool Census collected data using a URL data collection methodology. Tas. did not collect data from LDCs that were not registered with the Schools Registration Board.

Data collection methods: The 2011 Non-government Preschool Census collected data using a URL data collection methodology for the following statistical entities:

- *Child:* Data at the child record level
- *Service provider organisation:* Data at the service provider record level
- *Worker:* Data at the worker record level.

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Timeliness

The Non-government Preschool Census is an annual collection and in 2011 was undertaken on 5 August 2011, with a reference period of 25 July to 5 August 2011. This reference fortnight was used by Tas. DoE to reflect the preschool delivery model in Tas. This reference fortnight was then derived to a one week reference period to enable comparison with other jurisdictions for the National ECEC Collection. Completion of the data processing and validation stage took approximately 2 months after the collection date, at which time data were delivered to the ABS.

Data sourced from the Non-government Preschool Census for the purposes of the National ECEC Collection are published by the ABS in *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011*.

Accuracy

In 2011 data from non-government preschools were collected using an Excel spread sheet format. There were five worksheets to be completed by each service provider, which included details regarding the school, workforce, students, class sessions and attendance. Detailed explanations and definitions were provided for each question.

The process for collecting data from the non-government sector commenced with service providers uploading information from each child enrolment form into the non-government service provider data repository. Teacher qualification data for independent schools were also stored in this repository. Data from the non-government data repository were then forwarded to the Tas. DoE data repository.

Teacher data for the Catholic school sector were collected directly by Tas. DoE from the Tas. Catholic Education Office. All Catholic school non-teacher worker qualifications data were collected directly from Catholic schools, as the Catholic Education Office does not hold non-teacher worker data centrally.

Worker level data: If a worker held more than one qualification, the following rules were observed:

- The highest ECE qualification is reported for the worker if applicable
- In instances where the worker does not hold an ECE qualification, then the highest teaching related qualification is reported
- In instances where the worker does not hold a teacher qualification, the highest non-teaching related qualification is reported.

All teachers in Tas. must be registered by the Tas. Teacher Registration Board. As a result of the registration process, some long-term teachers have Certifications of Teaching or 3 year degrees. The registration process requires all teachers to demonstrate, through teaching experience, that they have the same level of qualification as a 4 year degree. If a teacher meets this criterion, they are deemed to have a 4 year teaching qualification for registration purposes.

Once all Tas. data were received and quality assured, Tas. DoE reviewed the data and returned a summary to each service provider of the final enrolments.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – TASMANIA

Some specific validation methods for Tas. non-government preschools included:

- Identifying and flagging various types of matching records, i.e. duplicates analysis
- Ensuring all address data fields were populated, with no PO Box addresses. Data were reviewed to establish a valid CD
- Ensuring data were within expected ranges
- Ensuring counts (e.g. of males and females) summed to totals
- Ensuring single sex schools were reported with only one sex
- All main teacher data were confirmed with the Teacher Registration Board to ensure the teacher was registered
- Teacher data were checked against data provided in 2010 and any inconsistencies were investigated.

Coherence

For the purposes of the National ECEC Collection, data collected through the 2011 Non-government Preschool Census were able to be compared with data collected in 2010, as both collections were undertaken using a URL collection methodology.

Coherence was achieved between the Tas. Government School Census and the Non-government Preschool Census, as both collections complied with the majority of national standards specified in the ECEC National Minimum Data Set (ECEC NMDS). Specific data elements which were collected using methods which did not align with the ECEC NMDS specifications are outlined below and should be taken into account when comparing data collected from each dataset. An analysis of the coherence of this collection with other jurisdictional collections should be undertaken on an individual basis, taking into account any data elements that are not consistent with the ECEC NMDS specifications.

5.7.2 Deviation of Collection from the 2011 ECEC NMDS

<i>Data Element</i>	<i>Details of Deviation</i>
Maximum preschool program hours available (Child)	The data element 'Preschool program attendance hours' was used as a proxy for this data element.

Counts of Children:

In the collection reference period, it is possible for a child to be concurrently enrolled in and attending two or more preschool programs. In order to address collection requirements, it is important to be able to collate all matching child records.

Children in a Preschool Program in 2011:

For Tas., counts of children enrolled in and attending preschool programs in 2011 were able to be derived as data were collected using a URL data collection methodology.

Children in a Preschool Program in the Year before Full-time Schooling:

As Tas. had two years of comparable data collected using a URL methodology and had a child/client database, counts of children enrolled in and attending preschool programs in the year before full-time schooling were also able to be derived.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – TASMANIA

Interpretability

The census spread sheet provided to non-government preschools included a definitions page, which explained the relevant concepts and definitions for the census. A contact phone number and email were also provided to assist those completing the form.

Accessibility

Data sourced from the Non-government Preschool Census for the 2011 National ECEC Collection are published at the state and territory level in *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011*.

Information Source

The information contained within this report has been sourced from Tas. DoE in consultation with the ABS. Further information is available at the Tas. DoE website [<www.education.tas.gov.au/>](http://www.education.tas.gov.au/).

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – NORTHERN TERRITORY

NORTHERN TERRITORY

DATA QUALITY STATEMENT

In 2011, the Northern Territory (NT) was responsible for one data collection in relation to preschool services, the Age/Grade Census, which collected data using a Unit Record Level (URL) data collection methodology.

Age/Grade Census

The 2011 Age/Grade Census consisted of three components:

- Student Census
- Staff Census
- Preschool Census (Students and Staff).

Institutional Environment

The organisation responsible for the Age/Grade Census was the NT Department of Education and Training (DET). Data for the Age/Grade Census were collected under the *Education Act* (NT).

Relevance

The data collected from the Age/Grade Census enables reporting on NT schools and the early childhood education and care sector for a variety of reporting requirements. The preschool data collected from this census are used for the National Preschool Census and the Report on Government Services, as well as government budget paper estimates and the NT DET annual report.

Scope: The scope of the Age/Grade Census for the early childhood component of the census consisted of all children enrolled in a preschool program that attended at least once during the four week period prior to the one week reference period (1 – 5 August 2011) at a government and registered non-government preschool.

The scope for data provided on workers included all paid workers employed in government and registered non-government preschools that were registered with the NT Teacher Registration Board. Workers were included irrespective of whether they delivered a preschool program during the reference period.

Coverage: All government and registered non-government preschools participated in the Age/Grade Census, which collected data using a URL data collection methodology. Although the data collection methodology applied to non-government preschools differed to that applied to government preschools, the data collected were at the same level of detail and are comparable to data from government preschools.

Data from Long Day Care centres delivering a preschool program were not within the scope of this collection.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – NORTHERN TERRITORY

Data collection methods: The 2011 Age/Grade Census collected data using a URL data collection methodology for the following statistical entities:

- *Child:* Data at the child record level
- *Service provider organisation:* Data at the service provider record level
- *Worker:* Data at the worker record level.

Timeliness

The Age/Grade Census is an annual collection and in 2011 was undertaken on 5 August 2011. Information gathered for the Preschool Census component of the collection related to the reference period of 1 August to 5 August 2011. Completion of data processing and validation stages took approximately 2 to 3 months after the collection date, at which time the data were delivered to the ABS.

Data sourced from the Age/Grade Census for the purposes of the National ECEC Collection are published by the ABS in *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* (cat. no. 4240.0).

Accuracy

In 2011 data extracts from the Age/Grade Census of child, teacher and service provider record level information were submitted from each government and some non-government school's Student Administration and Management System (SAMS). Some non-government schools provided data via Excel spread sheets. Additional data were collected through an online survey tool and data from both sources were processed centrally for inclusion in the census collection.

Teacher level data: Teachers were required to provide details on their field of highest qualification relevant to early childhood education and care. NT DET considered all teachers registered in the NT with the NT Teacher Registration Board as four year qualified teachers.

After data were processed by NT DET, service providers were required to check the data, edit if necessary, and confirm accuracy. Business rules guided the processing of data. All three components of the Age/Grade Census required formal sign-off from school principals of the final reported data, stating it was a true and accurate representation of their school at that point in time. This ensured the quality and validity of the data being provided. Internal validation of the Preschool Student Census and Staff Census was undertaken using a system that outlined how to validate and edit data.

Detailed validation processes used by NT DET in 2011 were as follows:

- *Schools validation:* schools were provided with a validation report through the Business Intelligence Centre and were required to confirm the information was correct
- *Performance and data management validation:* the validation process included historical comparison of trends, comparison of enrolments and schooling level proportions, cross checking missing data and application of national reporting rules. Schools were also required to carry out validation reporting to maintain data quality, targeting such areas as child Indigenous status, gender and age.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – NORTHERN TERRITORY

Coherence

For the purposes of the National ECEC Collection, data collected through the 2011 NT Age/Grade Census were able to be compared with data collected in 2010, as both collections were undertaken using a URL data collection methodology.

Specific data elements which were collected using methods which did not align with the ECEC National Minimum Data Set (ECEC NMDS) specifications are outlined below and should be taken into account when analysing the data collected. An analysis of the coherence of this collection with other jurisdictional collections should be undertaken on an individual basis, taking into account any data elements that are not consistent with the ECEC NMDS specifications.

5.8 Deviation of Collection from the 2011 ECEC NMDS

<i>Data Element</i>	<i>Details of Deviation</i>
Preschool program enrolment indicator (Child)	The collection of this data element did not align with the ECEC NMDS definition as it is based on the National Schools Statistics Collection definition for enrolment.
Fees charged (Child)	This data element was not available.
Preschool program hours attended (Child)	This data element was not available.
Area of usual residence (CD) (Child)	Geo-coding for some child addresses was less accurate where instances of remote residences or street names were not supplied. For those children in remote localities who did not have an address recorded, the address of the remote preschool was supplied as a proxy.
Date of birth (Child)	Where date of birth was unavailable, it was estimated at 01/01/YYYY.
Geographic location of organisation (CD) (Service provider)	Geo-coding for some remote preschool addresses was less accurate where street address was not supplied.

Counts of Children:

In the collection reference period, it is possible for a child to be concurrently enrolled in and attending two or more preschool programs. In order to address collection requirements, it is important to be able to collate all matching child records.

Children in a Preschool Program in 2011:

For NT, counts of children enrolled in and attending preschool programs in 2011 were able to be derived as data were collected using a URL data collection methodology.

Children in a Preschool Program in the Year before Full-time Schooling:

As NT had two years of comparable data collected using a URL methodology and had a child/client database, counts of children enrolled in and attending preschool programs in the year before full-time schooling were also able to be derived.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – NORTHERN TERRITORY

Interpretability

The NT provided a range of information to assist in the collection and reporting of data, such as manuals and fact sheets, to support correct interpretation and definition of concepts. Detailed reports and instructional papers on the requirements, processes and rules for submitting data through the Age/Grade Census were provided to service providers to assist with data provision.

Accessibility

Data sourced from the Age/Grade Census for the 2011 National ECEC Collection are published at the state and territory level in *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* on the ABS website.

Information Source

The information contained within this report has been sourced from NT DET in consultation with the ABS. Further information is available at the NT DET website: www.det.nt.gov.au.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

DATA QUALITY STATEMENT

In 2011, the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) was responsible for one data collection in relation to preschool programs, the Public School Census, which collected data using a Unit Record Level (URL) data collection methodology.

ACT Public School Census

Institutional Environment

The organisation responsible for the Public School Census was the ACT Education and Training Directorate (ETD). Data for the 2011 census were collected under the *Education Act 2004* (ACT).

Relevance

The data collected from the ACT Public School Census contributed to a variety of reporting requirements and were used to ensure effective delivery of children's education services within the ACT public sector.

Scope: The scope for the early childhood component of the ACT Public School Census, included all children in the year before full-time schooling, who were officially enrolled in a public school on the school census day and who were actively attending a preschool program at that school. Children enrolled in a preschool program at Jervis Bay School were included in the census, as that school is administered by ACT ETD on behalf of the Australian Government. Children who were absent for more than 4 continuous school weeks prior to the census date were included if the principal received written documentation signed by the child's guardian indicating that the child would return to school.

The scope for data provided on workers included all paid primary contact teachers that delivered a preschool program during the reference period at public schools in ACT.

Coverage: The 2011 ACT Public School Census included all government managed schools. Data from Catholic schools, independent schools, and community (not for-profit) and private for-profit managed preschools and Long Day Care centres were not included in this collection.

Data collection methods: The 2011 ACT Public School Census collected data using a URL data collection methodology for the following statistical entities:

- *Child:* Data at the child record level
- *Service provider organisation:* Data at the service provider record level
- *Worker:* Data at the worker record level.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Timeliness

The ACT Public School Census is an annual collection and in 2011 was undertaken on 5 August 2011, with a reference period of 1 August to 12 August 2011. The reference fortnight was adopted by ACT ETD to reflect the preschool delivery model in ACT. The reference fortnight was then derived by ACT ETD to a one week reference period to enable comparison with other jurisdictions for the National ECEC Collection. Completion of data processing and validation stages took approximately 2 months after the collection date, at which time the data were delivered to the ABS.

Data sourced from the ACT Public School Census for the purposes of the National ECEC Collection are published by the ABS in *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* (cat. no. 4240.0).

Accuracy

Child level data: In 2011 data were obtained from a point in time sweep of enrolment and attendance data stored in the school data management system (MAZE). Individual child information was captured from data supplied via an enrolment form which was entered into MAZE by school staff. Each ACT public school had access to their own MAZE database, where teachers or administrators uploaded information on each child enrolment. The principal of each school was required to sign off on their school's total enrolment count by sex and year level. Any inconsistencies were followed up. Every school's MAZE system was linked to a central database, which could only be accessed by central office staff. At census time, child enrolment information was extracted from the central database and cross checked with schools.

The following list includes key approaches undertaken by the ACT in managing the quality of its data processing for 2011:

- ACT's system included automatic edits and mandatory fields, such as date of birth, sex, family details, attendance status and Indigenous status
- ACT cross-checked addresses for the preschools ensuring one existed for each service provider
- Child addresses were geo-coded against ACT block data to ensure the address was valid
- A MAZE manual was available to users to assist in data entry and extraction. Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs guidelines were also used for instances where key data items were unknown. In addition to this, face-to-face training was provided to users of the MAZE system in both entering data and also extracting data, including training on extracting non-routine data.

The ACT carried out validation of the data in a number of ways, including but not limited to:

- Manual data entry was avoided where possible through an automatic transfer of child information when the child had previously attended another ACT government school
- Addresses could be updated through a geo-coding cross check
- Date of birth was checked against year level and outliers were followed up
- Duplicate records of one child attending two schools were followed up
- Data checks included matching back to the original census data and running aggregate counts for each field.

Service provider level data: The process of obtaining service provider information from public preschools in the ACT was managed through the MAZE administrative system.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Worker level data: Teacher data were also sourced from MAZE and was extracted at the same time as child data. Data were provided on the teacher who was normally assigned to the class and recorded by the school in MAZE. Once extracted from MAZE, teacher data were then provided to Human Resources who linked the teacher with the highest level and field of relevant qualification from information within their database.

Human Resources cross checked teacher data against salary data to ensure accuracy. Human Resources also perform manual qualification assessments of all teachers prior to their employment. Teachers are required to provide certified copies of all qualification documents so that a qualification assessment can be undertaken. From this assessment, each teacher is assigned a rating from the following:

- Category A (4 year trained), or
- Category B (3 year trained), or
- Category C (2 year trained).

In 2011, ACT teacher qualifications were manually assessed and aligned with the classifications outlined in the ECEC National Minimum Data Set (ECEC NMDS) specifications. In the event a teacher had more than one qualification, the qualification that specifically related to Early Childhood was recorded. Any teachers with a 3 year undergraduate degree combined with a 1 year post graduate education qualification were assessed as having a 4 year qualification.

Coherence

For the purposes of the National ECEC Collection, data collected through the 2011 ACT Public School Census were able to be compared to data collected in 2010, as both collections were undertaken using a URL data collection methodology.

An analysis of the coherence of this collection with other jurisdictional collections should be undertaken on an individual basis, taking into account any data elements that are not consistent with the ECEC NMDS specifications.

Counts of Children:

In the collection reference period, it is possible for a child to be concurrently enrolled in and attending two or more preschool programs. In order to address collection requirements, it is important to be able to collate all matching child records.

Children in a Preschool Program in 2011:

For the ACT government sector, counts of children enrolled in and attending preschool programs in 2011 were able to be derived as data were collected using a URL data collection methodology.

Children in a Preschool Program in the Year before Full-time Schooling:

As ACT had two years of comparable data collected using URL methodology and had a child/client database, counts of children enrolled in and attending preschool programs in the year before full-time schooling were also able to be derived for the government sector.

Interpretability

In 2011 the ACT ETD provided face-to-face staff training in the MAZE system, as well as providing a handbook, which outlined how to enter data, extract data, find data and validate data.

CHAPTER 5: JURISDICTIONAL DATA QUALITY STATEMENTS – AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Accessibility

Data sourced from the ACT School Census for the 2011 National ECEC Collection are published at the state and territory level in *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* on the ABS website. Data are also made available on the ACT ETD website:

http://www.det.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/publications_a-z/census.

Information Source

The information contained within this report has been sourced from the ACT ETD in consultation with the ABS. Further information is available from the ACT ETD website: <http://www.det.act.gov.au/>.

CHAPTER 6: DATA AVAILABILITY

EARLY CHILDHOOD DATA SOURCES

The publication *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* (cat. no. 4240.0) contains data from the National Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Collection. Data are provided to the ABS by the Australian Government and the state and territory government departments responsible for early childhood education and care (ECEC).

Strengths and limitations of the data presented in *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* are outlined in [Chapter 2, Collection Overview](#), along with information on planned improvements for future collections.

RELATED PRODUCTS

The following section summarises related surveys and sources of ECEC data. Although there are other data sources on ECEC available, the National ECEC Collection aims to provide high quality and detailed ECEC information on an annual basis. Other ABS publications which may be of interest to users of *Experimental Estimates of Preschool Education, Australia, 2011* are also listed.

ABS PRODUCTS

ABS products that present information related to early childhood education statistics include the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC), the Childhood Education and Care Survey (CEaCS), and data from the Census of Population and Housing.

The National Schools Statistics Collection

The NSSC is an annual collection which collects statistics for schools, students and staff involved in the provision, or administration, of primary and secondary education, in government and non-government schools, for all Australian states and territories.

Data from the NSSC is presented in [Schools, Australia \(cat. no. 4221.0\)](#).

The Childhood Education and Care Survey

From 1969 to 2005 the ABS conducted 12 Child Care Surveys (CCS) and consequently has a rich time series available. CEaCS was developed from the CCS in 2008 and is conducted every three years as a supplement to the monthly Labour Force Survey.

CEaCS collects data on the types of care usually attended by children less than 13 years of age, the hours of care, use, cost, and demand for care. Information about the employment, educational attainment and income characteristics of parents is also collected. In 2011, CEaCS also collected data on the informal learning activities in which children may participate with parents or other people. CEaCS examines participation in early childhood education in both preschools and child care settings. The survey also allows the assessment of need for preschool programs and provides information on communication of learning outcomes to parents. This survey provides a timely picture of early childhood education, to inform debate and decision-making in this area.

CHAPTER 6: DATA AVAILABILITY

Data from CEaCS is presented in [*Childhood Education and Care, Australia \(cat. no. 4402.0\)*](#) (formerly called *Child Care, Australia* (cat. no. 4402.0)).

The Census of Population and Housing

The Census of Population and Housing provides limited ECEC information, such as data on unpaid child care and those attending an education institution (preschool). The Census also provides a snapshot of the social and cultural composition of Australian families and households, including language spoken at home, country of birth, ancestry and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander status. The Census is carried out every five years.

NON-ABS PRODUCTS

Report on Government Services

The annual Report on Government Services (ROGS) is produced by the Productivity Commission (SCRGSP, 2011). The ROGS publishes data on the equity, efficiency and cost effectiveness of government services. The ROGS draws data together to provide key indicators of the performance of specified government agencies and programs in delivering services to Australians. The report is used for strategic budgeting, policy planning and evaluation. ROGS includes a range of data on the early childhood education sector including expenditure, enrolment, hours of attendance, staff qualifications, children with special needs and information on Indigenous preschool participation. The ROGS only reports information on government-funded or government provided preschools.

SPECIAL DATA SERVICES

The ABS offers specialised consultancy services to assist clients with more complex statistical information needs. It must be noted that data may not be available at detailed levels due to small cell counts and confidentiality. All specialist consultancy services attract a service charge and clients will be provided with a quote before information is supplied. For further information, contact ABS information consultants on 1300 135 070 (international callers +61 2 9268 4909).

THE NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

In an effort to deliver significant improvements and outcomes for all Australians, in 2007 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) established a partnership between the Australian Government and the state and territory governments to encourage substantial reform in the areas of education, skills and early childhood development. In 2008, COAG endorsed a comprehensive set of goals, outcomes, progress measures and future policy directions in the area of early childhood education (ECE). This included a commitment to ensure that every child in Australia has access to a quality ECE program (COAG, 2008a). This Universal Access commitment will ensure that by 2013, each child will have access to a preschool program that is delivered:

- in the 12 months prior to full-time schooling (also referred to as the year before formal schooling)
- by a four-year university-qualified early childhood teacher
- for 15 hours a week, 40 weeks a year
- across a diversity of settings
- in a form that meets the needs of parents
- at a cost that does not present a barrier to participation (COAG, 2008a).

In November 2008, COAG endorsed the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education (NP ECE). Under the NP ECE the Australian Government and the state and territory governments committed to improving the supply and integration of early childhood services, including child care and early learning and development. This will be achieved through the delivery of the universal access commitment (COAG, 2008a).

The Universal Access commitment is closely underpinned by other elements of the Australian Government's early childhood reform agenda, including the Early Years Learning Framework, early childhood workforce reforms and the National Quality Standards for child care and preschool (COAG, 2008b, DEEWR, 2009). Together, the intention of these reforms is to raise the quality and accessibility of ECE delivered across Australia, regardless of the setting.

Under the NP ECE, the states and territories have agreed to individual Bilateral Agreements with the Australian Government. These Agreements specify the actions and strategies to be undertaken by each jurisdiction to achieve universal access to ECE, including outlining performance indicators to measure the achievement of universal access. Six performance indicators were agreed in order to measure two broader outcomes:

- All children have access to affordable, quality early childhood education in the year before full-time schooling
- All Indigenous four year olds in remote Indigenous communities have access to a quality early childhood education program.

For more information on the performance indicators and the National Partnership on Early Childhood Education, see the COAG website:

http://www.coag.gov.au/intergov_agreements/federal_financial_relations/docs/national_partnership/national_partnership_on_early_childhood_education.pdf.

For more information on the Bilateral Agreements, see the Federal Financial Relations website:

<http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au>.

The National Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Collection is conducted annually as part of data improvement projects in support of the NP ECE, under the National Information Agreement on Early Childhood Education and Care (NIA ECEC).

CHAPTER 7: COLLECTION BACKGROUND AND GOVERNANCE

NATIONAL INFORMATION AGREEMENT ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

There are a number of challenges in measuring progress against the performance indicators, foremost being the lack of nationally comparable data. The NIA ECEC aims to increase the ability to collect and provide quality, comparable and reliable ECEC data, which will enable development of an evidence base for assessing outcomes and informing future policy developments in this area (MCEECDYA, 2010). The activities covered by the NIA ECEC are intended to build a common, shared infrastructure to ensure nationally consistent ECEC data across jurisdictions. The agreement was developed in consultation with the Australian Government, state and territory governments, and key data agencies such as the ABS and AIHW.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE NATIONAL MINIMUM DATA SET

The development and implementation of agreed data standards through the ECEC National Minimum Data Set (ECEC NMDS) (MCEECDYA, 2010) is a key focus of the NIA ECEC. The AIHW has been commissioned to undertake this work within their existing data repository, the Metadata Online Registry (METeOR). The ECEC NMDS includes a set of national data standards and instructions to assist jurisdictions in the collection of comparable ECEC data, which will improve data quality for reporting against the NP ECE performance indicators. The ABS is assisting the AIHW in working towards further development and implementation of the ECEC NMDS.

A detailed description of each of the Unit Record Level (URL) and Aggregate ECEC NMDS data elements are provided in the *National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection: Data Collection Guide, 2011* (cat. no. 4240.0.55.002). Further information is also available on the AIHW website:

- The URL ECEC NMDS is available at: <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/438006>
- The Aggregate ECEC NMDS is available at: <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/441229>.

Each jurisdiction in Australia is currently at different stages of implementing improvements to their ECEC data collections to align with the ECEC NMDS. As systems and procedures for collecting data to the necessary quality standards are still evolving, it will not be possible to produce statistics for all the performance indicators using the 2011 National ECEC Collection.

The extent to which jurisdictions meet the ECEC NMDS standards is summarised in [Chapter 5, Jurisdictional Data Quality Statements](#).

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GLOSSARY

Administrative data	Administrative data are information recorded in administrative records, systems or reports, primarily collected for the purpose of record-keeping.
Aggregate level data collection	<p>An Aggregate level data collection methodology contains data from statistical entities within the collection population that are grouped together and summed into broader categories.</p> <p>For the National ECEC Collection, an Aggregate data collection methodology collects totals of children enrolled in and attending preschools programs at the service provider record level only. Data collected at this level does not contain child record level information.</p>
Attendance	For the purposes of the National ECEC Collection, a child is considered to be attending a preschool program if the child was enrolled and present for at least one hour during the reference period. Children who did not attend a preschool program during the reference period (e.g. children who were absent due to illness or extended holiday leave) are not considered to have attended a preschool program.
Child Care	Child care services provide care to children at a specific location, and can include long day care, family day care, outside school hours care, vacation care, in-home care and occasional care services. Child care services may or may not offer additional preschool programs within their services. Child care services may be provided through a combination of private organisation, community and some state and local government initiatives.
Child Care Management System (CCMS)	<p>The CCMS is a national child care computer system that enables child care services to exchange child care information online with the government. It enables the payment of the Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate fee reduction on behalf of parents to approved child care services. It also provides for the collection of information about the supply and usage of child care across Australia.</p> <p>Child Care Benefit: a payment made to eligible parents or guardians, to assist with the cost of child care for long day care, family day care, outside school hours care, vacation care, in-home care and occasional care services. Eligibility is based on an income test.</p> <p>Child Care Rebate: a payment available to eligible parents or guardians who are working, training or studying, to assist with the out-of-pocket expenses for approved child care services.</p>
Child record level data	Child record level data contains data for each individual child in a data set. Data at the child record level includes personal characteristics and enrolment and attendance information for each child.
Collection date	The recommended collection date is the common date to collect data. For the National ECEC Collection, the collection date is the first Friday in August. For 2011 this was Friday 5 August.

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Council of Australian Governments (COAG)	COAG is the peak intergovernmental forum in Australia, comprising the Prime Minister, State Premiers, Territory Chief Ministers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association. The role of COAG is to initiate, develop and monitor the implementation of policy reforms that are of national significance and which require cooperative action by Australian governments.
Coverage	Coverage explains the extent to which the scope is complete.
Data element	A unit of data for which the definition, identification, representation and permissible values are specified by at least one or more data items. Data elements for the National ECEC Collection are detailed within the ECEC NMDS and the <i>National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection: Data Collection Guide</i> (cat. no. 4240.0.55.002).
Data item	A particular characteristic of units in a population which is measured or observed. For the National ECEC Collection, data items have been adopted by the ABS where appropriate for conducting the collection and for processing activities.
Data processing	The preparation of data for analysis. Data processing involves five steps: data coding, data input, data editing, data cleaning and data modification.
Data validation	A method of confirming the reliability of data through a checking process, to ensure that the data is free of systematic error. A validation study compares data collected using a collection instrument with data considered to represent the "true value" of the data.
Delivery setting	<p>The type of setting in which children's service activities are provided or could be provided by a service provider, as defined within the 2011 ECEC NMDS.</p> <p>Centre-based (school): refers to child care services or preschool programs delivered on school grounds, using school facilities, e.g. a building owned by the school.</p> <p>Centre-based (other): refers to a non-residential building that was purpose-built or renovated for the purpose of delivering early childhood education and care services, but is not located on the property of a State, Independent or Catholic school, e.g. a child care centre or stand-alone preschool that is not part of a primary school.</p> <p>Home-based (child's home): refers to a private residential dwelling where the child lives.</p> <p>Home-based (other): refers to a private residential dwelling where a child care service or preschool program is delivered by someone other than the child's parents, carers or guardians, e.g. a family day care caregiver's home.</p>

General community setting: refers to a non-residential community infrastructure, facility or building that was not specifically built or developed for the provision of early childhood education and care services and is not part of a State, Independent or Catholic school, e.g. a park, community or scout hall, public library, etc.

Other setting: refers to settings not covered under the other categories, such as mobile services which are attended at a specific location, rather than being delivered in settings such as a child's home.

Disadvantage A key requirement of the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education (NP ECE) is that preschool programs should be available to everyone, regardless of their income or background. The NP ECE also recognises that disadvantaged families often face barriers to accessing government services for various reasons.

To measure the extent to which children from disadvantaged families are under-represented in preschool programs, the National ECEC Collection uses usual residence, in conjunction with the geographically based Index of Relative Social Disadvantage (IRSD), which is one of four indexes of the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA). See also 'SEIFA'.

Early Childhood Education and Care National Minimum Data Set (ECEC NMDS) The ECEC NMDS is the document of agreed standards, definitions, classifications and protocols required for nationally comparable ECEC data. Entities within the ECEC NMDS are at the following levels.

Person/child: refers to the child enrolled in the preschool program.

Person (employed)/worker: refers to all persons or staff members who work within an ECEC service provider (both contact and non-contact staff), irrespective of whether they are employed (paid) or working voluntarily (unpaid).

Service provider organisation: refers to the ECEC establishment that delivers the preschool program.

Episode of enrolment/attending a preschool program An episode is the count of the occurrence of a specific characteristic. For the National ECEC Collection, an episode refers to a preschool program provided to a child. When one child attends two different preschool programs, the child is attending two episodes of preschool.

Enrolment A child is considered to be enrolled if they were offered a place in the preschool program and:

- attended the preschool program for at least one hour during the reference period; or
- were absent during the reference period due to illness or extended holiday leave, but were expected to return.

A child is not considered to be enrolled if they were absent during the reference period and not expected to return to the preschool program.

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Fees	For the purpose of the National ECEC Collection, fees refer to the actual tuition fees charged for the child to attend a preschool program after subsidies have been deducted. Preschool fees are collected differently for unit record level (URL) data and Aggregate level data. For URL data, fee information is collected at the child level. As this is not possible for Aggregate collections, fee per child information is based on a service's schedule of fixed fees, for example a charge of \$150 per full term. The fee schedule can differ between programs, organisations and jurisdictions. Fees may be charged daily, weekly, annually, per session or per term. If data are collected or provided at any level other than weekly, the weekly fee is derived from the provided fee and fee schedule.
Hours	Information on preschool hours available, enrolled and attended is necessary to evaluate whether children have access to 15 hours of preschool per week and if so, whether they are enrolled in and attending the program for those hours. Part of the Universal Access commitment is that by 2013 every child will have access to a preschool program for at least 15 hours a week, 40 weeks a year. Information on hours is collected differently for URL data and Aggregate level data. For URL data, hours information is collected at the child level. As this is not possible for Aggregate collections, hours data are collected at the service provider level, and hours per child is derived.
Indigenous status	For the purposes of the National ECEC Collection a child is considered to be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander if he or she is identified by a parent/guardian as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin. The National ECEC Collection uses the ABS standard Indigenous categories, which are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Aboriginal but not Torres Strait Islander origin▪ Torres Strait Islander but not Aboriginal origin▪ Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin▪ Neither Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin▪ Not stated/inadequately described
Jurisdiction	A jurisdiction is defined for the purpose of the National ECEC Collection, as the Australian Government or a state or territory government within Australia.
Licensed service providers	Licensed service providers are service providers that have been issued with a license by the relevant department or authority which grants legal approval or accreditation to operate their service or a particular component of their service, such as a preschool program or child care centre.
Management type	Preschool management type refers to the legal or social entity responsible for managing the service. Data presented from the National ECEC Collection are based on ECEC NMDS categories. Early childhood education and care services may be provided by a number of legal and social entities. The management type categories used in the National ECEC Collection include the following.

Government managed:

State and territory and local government managed: State and territory and local government managed services are services that are managed by the state, territory or local government. Excludes state and territory government schools.

State and territory government schools: State and territory government schools are schools that are funded and managed by the respective state or territory government.

Non-government managed:

Private not-for-profit - community managed: Community managed services include services that are managed by organisations based in the community through a membership made up of community members (e.g. the parents). The membership elects a management committee and the committee is accountable to the membership. No profit is distributed to the management committee or the members, any surplus funds are redirected to the service.

Private not for profit - other organisations: Other organisations include services that are managed by non-profit organisations such as charity organisations, consortium of charity organisations and church groups. Excludes Independent and Catholic schools.

Private for-profit: Private for-profit services include for-profit services provided or managed by a company or private individual.

Independent schools: Independent schools are non-government schools that are governed, managed and accountable at the level of the individual school and are not affiliated with the diocesan Catholic Department of Education.

Catholic schools: Catholic schools are schools that are affiliated with the diocesan Catholic Department of Education. Catholic schools, as with other classes of non-government schools, receive funding from the Australian Government.

Other: Other services include employer sponsored services.

Metadata Online Registry (METeOR)

METeOR is an online repository for national metadata standards for health, housing and community services statistics and information. It is the resource which holds all ECEC NMDS data elements and associated metadata standards.

Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA)

MCEECDYA was established on 1 July 2009 following agreement of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to a realignment of the roles and responsibilities of two previously existing councils - the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) and the Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education (MCVTE). Main areas of responsibility covered by the Council are primary, secondary, international and early childhood education.

For more information see the MCEECDYA website:

[<http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/mceecdya/>](http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/mceecdya/).

On 30 June 2011, MCEECDYA was reformed to the new Standing Council for School Education and Early Childhood.

Performance indicator	Performance indicators are measurement indicators used to assess the progress of the National Partnership on Early Childhood Education (NP ECE) and may be calculated using data from the National ECEC Collection. Performance Indicators relating to the NP ECE are further described in detail in Chapter 7, Collection Background and Governance .
Preschool program	A preschool program is a structured, play-based learning program, delivered by a degree qualified teacher, aimed at children in the year before they commence full-time schooling. This is irrespective of the type of institution that provides it or whether it is government funded or privately provided. Programs may be delivered in a variety of service settings including separate preschools or kindergartens, long day care centres, in association with a school etc. Early childhood education terminology of a preschool program differs across states and territories, and these differences are outlined in Chapter 3, Concepts and Definitions .
Reference period	The period of time for which the data are collected and/or compiled (e.g. calendar year, financial year, last week, last fortnight or a specific day of the month etc.). The reference period may vary for each data element within a collection. For example, fees and hours data could be collected over a 2 week period; however these data would then be derived back to a representative week. For the 2011 National ECEC Collection the reference period was 1 August to 5 August 2011.
Service activity type	<p>The service activity type is the type of service available or provided by an early childhood education and care service provider. Definitions of service activity types include the following.</p> <p>Long day care: Long day care is a centre-based form of child care service providing all-day or part-time care for children of working families and the general community (services may cater to specific groups within the general community). For-profit and not-for-profit organisations, local councils, community organisations and employers may run these services. Long day cares primarily provide long day care services for children aged 0–5 years. Some long day care may also provide preschool and kindergarten programs and care for school children before and after school and during school holidays, where state and territory government regulations allow this. The service may operate from stand-alone or shared premises, including those on school grounds.</p> <p>Occasional care: Occasional care comprises of services usually provided at a centre on an hourly or sessional basis for short periods or at irregular intervals for parents who need time to, for example, attend appointments, take care of personal matters, undertake casual and part time employment, study or have temporary respite from</p>

full time parenting. These services provide developmental activities for children and are aimed primarily at 0–5 year olds. Centres providing these services usually employ a mix of qualified and other staff.

Outside school hours care: Outside school hours care comprises services that provide care for school aged children (5–12 year olds) before school, after school, during school holidays, and on pupil free days. Outside school hours care may use stand-alone facilities, share school buildings and grounds and/or share facilities such as community halls.

Vacation care: Vacation care comprises services provided for school aged children (5–12 year olds) during school holidays only.

Family day care: Family day care comprises services providing small group care for children in the home environment of a registered carer. Care is primarily aimed at 0–5 year olds, but primary school children may also receive care before and after school, and during school holidays. Educators work in partnership with scheme management and coordination unit staff.

In-home care: In-home care comprises services where an approved carer provides care in the child's home. Families eligible for in-home care include families where the parent/s or child has an illness or disability; families in rural or remote areas; parents working shift work or non-standard hours; families with more than two children from a multiple birth and/or more than two children under school age; and families where a breast feeding mother is working from home.

Preschool program: stand-alone: Preschool program (stand-alone) comprises of separately located services dedicated to provide structured educational programs to children in the year before they commence full-time schooling only.

Preschool program: as part of a school: Preschool program (as part of school) comprises services that are co-located with a school that provide structured educational programs to children in the year before they commence full-time schooling. These services may also be integrated with a school.

Service provider record level data

Service provider record level data contains data for each individual service provider delivering a preschool program within a data set. Data at the service provider record level includes location information, management type, activity type and service delivering setting, as well as information on preschool programs delivered by each service provider in the data set.

Socio-economic indexes for areas (SEIFA)

The SEIFA is a product developed especially for those interested in the assessment of the welfare of Australian communities. SEIFA is a suite of four summary measures that have been created from 2006 Census information. The indexes can be used to explore different aspects of socio-economic conditions by geographic areas. For each index, every geographic area in Australia is given a SEIFA number which shows how disadvantaged that area is compared with other areas in Australia. The indexes

provide more general measures of socio-economic status than is given by measuring, for example, income or unemployment alone. The SEIFA index used for the National ECEC Collection is the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD).

Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage: The IRSD summarises a range of information about the economic and social resources of people and households within an area. Unlike other indexes, this index includes only measures of relative disadvantage. Variables that comprise this index include; low income, no qualifications, unemployment, overcrowded housing, disability, no car, and Indigenous status.

**Standing Council for
School Education and
Early Childhood**

The Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood comprises state, territory, Australian Government and New Zealand Ministers with responsibility for the portfolios of school education, early childhood development and youth affairs. With the new COAG Council System, the Standing Council replaces MCEECDYA.

Subsidy

Subsidies are defined as state and territory government funding for preschools and/or preschool programs, as well as any additional financial support provided by the Australian Government and state, territory and local governments to eligible families to make preschool more affordable.

**Unit Record Level
(URL) data collection**

A URL data collection methodology contains confidentialised data for individual statistical entities in a collection population.

For the purposes of the National ECEC Collection, a URL data collection methodology collects child enrolment and attendance level data corresponding to service provider record level data for each child in the data set. A URL data collection methodology also includes worker record level data corresponding to service provider record level data for each worker in the data set.

Usual Residence

The place where the person has or intends to live for six months or more, or the place the person regards as their main residence, or where the person has no other residence, the place they currently reside.

Work activity

The work activity type refers to the type of work performed by a person in the course of their employment in early childhood education and care.

Primary contact: An activity type of primary contact refers to a worker that mainly has direct contact with children. This may include but is not limited to teachers, teacher's assistants/ aides, specialist teachers and therapists.

Other contact: An activity type of other contact refers to a worker that has some duties involving direct contact with children, but deals mainly with staffing or management issues such as supervising staff and handling queries from parents or designing the education program. This may include but is not limited to principals,

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deputy principals, centre managers and coordinators.

Management / administration: An activity type of management/administration refers to a worker who mainly performed management or administration work that contributed to the running of the early childhood education and care service and had no direct contact with children. Work may include clerical or receptionist duties, filing, keeping financial records, staffing and management issues.

Other work: An activity type of other work refers to a worker who provides support services such as cooking, cleaning and gardening. This may include drivers, cooks, cleaners and maintenance staff.

Worker All paid employees who were working at an in-scope service provider during the reference period are in-scope of the collection. This includes both contact and non-contact workers, irrespective of whether the worker delivered a preschool program during the reference week.

Year before full-time schooling (YBFS) The year before full-time schooling (also referred to as the 'year before formal schooling') is a term used to describe the 'preschool' cohort, due to the varying delivery models of early childhood education in the different jurisdictions (McEwin and Ryan, 2009). The year before a child begins full-time schooling is further defined as Year 1 (or Grade 1) minus 2 years.

FOR MORE INFORMATION . . .

www.abs.gov.au the ABS website is the best place for data from our publications and information about the ABS.

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