

ANZSCO 2411-11 South Australia

Early Childhood (Pre-Primary School) Teacher April 2018

Current labour market rating: **No Shortage**

Previous labour market rating (April 2017): No Shortage

Comments

Employers of early childhood teachers were able to attract sufficient qualified and suitable applicants to fill vacancies across the state.

Survey results¹

- A greater proportion of vacancies were filled in 2018 (88 per cent), compared with 2017 and 2016 (respectively, 71 and 67 per cent), indicating the labour market for early childhood teachers has eased in the last year.
- The majority of early childhood teachers in South Australia are employed within the private sector.²
- All surveyed employers were from the private sector and were either non-government child care centres, early learning centres or schools providing early education services.
- Vacant positions for early childhood teachers in the government sector are not typically advertised as recruitment is managed centrally by the South Australian Department of Education and Child Development (DECD). Therefore, it was not possible to survey advertised government school vacancies.
 - DECD advised at the beginning of the 2018 school year there was only 1 vacant teaching position in government preschools, which had an interim arrangement of cover by relief teachers.
- The average number of applicants per vacancy was lower in 2018 (14.9) than last year (21.0).
- On average, there were fewer qualified and fewer suitable applicants per vacancy compared with last year.
 - Qualified applicants - decreased to 6.3 applicants per vacancy from 7.9 in 2017.
 - Suitable applicants - decreased to 1.9 applicants per vacancy from 3.1 in 2017.

Unsuitable applicants

- All vacancies required applicants to have a Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) and all required state teacher registration.
- Around 54 per cent of applicants were determined unsuitable as they lacked the minimum qualifications. Some unqualified applicants held a Diploma or Certificate 3 in Early Childhood Education and Care, despite applying for positions requiring a bachelor's degree.
- A proportion of qualified applicants were unsuitable because they demonstrated poor written skills in applications, or failed to demonstrate sufficient communication skills during interviews.
- Some qualified applicants were unsuitable because they lacked experience (recent university graduates).

¹ The methodology underpinning this research is outlined at [Skill Shortage Research Methodology | Department of Jobs and Small Business - Document library, Australian Government](#) and can also be accessed by the QR code.

² ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2016.



- Other qualified applicants were rejected by employers for indicating their goal was to work in schools rather than child care centres.

Demand and supply trends

- Early childhood school teachers mainly work in the education and training and health care and social assistance industries, particularly in pre-primary school education and child care services.³
- Demand for early childhood school teachers is influenced by demographic trends, particularly the number of children eligible to attend pre-school education programmes. In South Australia if a child turns four before 1 May, they can start preschool on the first day of term 1 in that year. If a child turns four on or after 1 May, they can start preschool on the first day of term 1 the following year.⁴
- Regulatory changes driven by the National Quality Framework (NQF) improved early childhood teacher to child ratios nationally from 2012 to 2016⁵ which led to increased demand in recent years.
- Available indicators present a mixed picture of demand for early childhood teachers in 2018.
 - The population of four years olds in South Australia has been trending upwards since 2007 despite a marginal decrease (from 21,034 to 20,973) in 2016-2017. The current population of four year olds is historically high.
 - There was a 2.4 per cent decrease in the number of children enrolled in preschool programs in South Australia in 2017 (22,211), compared with 2016 (22,745).⁶
- The number of South Australian internet advertised vacancies increased over the year to February 2018 to a level slightly above the 5 year average, suggesting a marginal increase in demand.⁷
- The major source of new supply to the occupation comes from university training via completion of a Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood). The supply of early childhood teachers appears subdued.
 - Completions increased from 2008 to 2014 before decreasing by around a quarter in 2015. Completions again fell, albeit less dramatically, in 2016 to a level below the 10 year average.⁸
- Commencement numbers followed a similar pattern trending upward from 2008-2014, decreasing by around 29 per cent in 2015, and further decreasing by approximately 23 per cent in 2016. This suggests completions will remain subdued in the next two years.

Other indicators and issues

- Although most vacancies were filled, employers consistently reported challenges attracting quality candidates to childcare settings because primary schools generally offer better remuneration and more attractive working conditions.

³ ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2016.

⁴ Government of South Australia, sa.gov.au, Early Childhood Education and Care

⁵ Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, New Educator to Child Ratios for Education and Care Services, 1 January 2016

⁶ ABS Preschool Education, report no. 4240.0, Australia, 2017

⁷ Department of Jobs and Small Business, Internet Vacancy Index, February 2018, 12 month moving average

⁸ Department of Education and Training, Higher Education Student Data Collection, 2016, customised tables