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Current requirements for tertiary qualifications in early childhood education : implications for policy : final report

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FINAL REPORT

Current Requirements for Tertiary Qualifications in Early Childhood Education: Implications for Policy

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Relations

October, 2011



GLOSSARY

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACECQA	Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority
ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Work Relations
EC	Early Childhood
ECA	Early Childhood Australia
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
EPPE	Effective Provision of Preschool Education
EYLF	Early Years Learning Framework
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
NICHD	National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
NQF	National Quality Framework
NQS	National Quality Standard
OECECC	Office of Early Childhood Education and Child Care
UA	Universal Access
UN	United Nations

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Executive Summary

The Office of Early Childhood Education and Child Care (OECECC) within the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) commissioned the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) to map and analyse currently available Early Childhood education and care (ECEC) tertiary courses across Australia. ACER is undertaking this project in partnership with Monash University. This report considers issues raised by the project and sets out four key issues raised by this work, detailing the possible policy implications that could flow from the findings, in addition to potential further research implications.

Issue 1: While there is diversity in the age span for which Early Childhood educators are prepared, there is lack of clarity between course focus and outcome registration potential. This is not fully addressed by course descriptions available to prospective students.

Policy Implications

1. The age range on which a course is focused and the age range a graduate is qualified to teach, need to be clearly stated in documentation.
2. Agreement needs to be sought on guidelines for course/unit/subject descriptions in university handbooks that achieve greater transparency with respect to content, modes of delivery, assessment requirements, pre-requisites as well as expectations for practical experience throughout the course (see Issue 3).
3. Some standardisation of course titles would be desirable.

Issue 2: The requirement for all courses to provide essential and sufficient Early Childhood Education and Care content irrespective of length of program.

Policy Implications

4. Consultation needs to occur within the profession to identify the core content that should be included in all courses that prepare students to become Early Childhood educators, even when the graduates qualify to teach in Primary schools as well.
5. A set of knowledge and skills essential to the Early Childhood sector need to be included in all Early childhood courses.
6. Work needs to be undertaken to identify the professional learning needs of experienced Early Childhood educators, and developing courses (including upgrade and transfer courses) to meet those needs.
7. Tertiary institutions need to be encouraged to offer upgrade and transfer course descriptions that make clear links between the course content and the kind of professional learning that the course seeks to achieve.
8. Employers need to work with university course providers in order to inform course development and content.

Issue 3: The need to ensure that there is adequate and appropriate provision of professional experience in Early Childhood settings during the variety of training courses.

Policy Implications

9. Resources need to be directed at supporting course providers and providing incentives to employing bodies, to ensure that sufficient and appropriate places are available for Early Childhood practicum placements.
10. In combined Early Childhood/Primary courses, the amount and nature of the professional experience provided in Early Childhood settings needs to be carefully monitored to ensure that an appropriate balance is achieved.
11. Documentation about the provision and assessment of professional experience needs to be more complete and transparent.
12. Adequate supervision of student teachers needs to be established, along with strong partnerships with professional experience providers.

Issue 4: The availability of qualified academic staff in Early Childhood Education.

Policy Implications

13. More than any other field in Education, tertiary staff in the Early Childhood field need to be given support and encouragement by their employers to complete higher degrees, and take part in other research opportunities. (The support could take several forms, including scholarship programs and more generous study leave provisions).
14. The major employers (State and Territory departments responsible for the provision of education in Primary school and Early Childhood settings) might consider ways to provide incentives in the form of professional advancement for employees in priority areas (of which Early Childhood would surely be one) who complete relevant advanced-level studies in their fields of employment.

Implications for Further Research:

15. There is a need for research using a qualitative multiple case study design to increase the Australian knowledge base about how research informs curricula and pedagogy in Early Childhood teacher education programs and how Primary curricula and the EYLF influence the nature of coursework, and
16. There is a need for research to increase knowledge of the outcomes of different types of Early Childhood teacher education programs for teacher effectiveness, teacher career trajectories and the staffing of Early Childhood provisions.
17. There is a need for research gathering data while students are completing their final units of study, identifying their chosen professional and career choices and the reasons for these decisions.

ACER
Monash University
October 2011.

Introduction

Background to the project

Evidence from around the world points to the importance of having well-qualified teachers working in Early Childhood settings. The pattern of research findings indicates that outcomes for children can vary based on teachers' qualifications. Some examples are listed below.

- The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) project in England collected information from over 3 000 children aged three to seven years, their parents, and the preschool settings they attended (Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford, & Taggart, 2010). Various preschool settings were included in the sample, and a group of children were also recruited who had no or minimal contact with preschool settings as a means of comparison. Of particular relevance here, is the finding that settings with a higher proportion of qualified educators generally provided higher quality services and children made more progress in those settings compared to other settings (see Siraj-Blatchford, Sylva, Muttock, Gilden & Bell, 2002; Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford, Taggart & Elliot, 2003; Siraj-Blatchford, Taggart, Sylva, Sammons & Melhuish, 2008 for more information).
- The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) undertook a large-scale study to assess the effects of child care on the development of infants and toddlers. Their US results showed that caregivers with more formal education had more specialised training with children, had less authoritarian child rearing beliefs, and tended to work in safer, cleaner and more stimulating settings than their less well educated counterparts (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2005).
- The Effective Pre-School Provision in Northern Ireland (EPPNI) project tracked over 800 children aged 3 to 8 years, and found that children who attended a preschool where the leader had a degree qualification, decreased in their conduct problems in comparison with children who attended a preschool where the leader had no qualifications (Melhuish, Quinn, McSherry, Sylva, Sammons & Siraj-Blatchford, 2000).
- Moyles, Adams and Musgrove (2002) reported observations from their UK research which identified that care dominated in some settings at the expense of education. They also found that qualified teachers were more generally able to offer a critique of their practice and achieve higher standards of performance and outcomes. They argued, therefore, that the development of critical reflection skills needs to be at the basis of initial training and professional development.
- In 2004, Barnett identified in excess of 12 US studies that indicated young children's learning and development depended on the educational qualifications of their teachers. The most prominent finding was that the most effective teachers have at least a four year college degree **and** specialised training in Early Childhood. The analysis focused less on the number years of training and more on the content of courses including Early Childhood development knowledge.
- Ryan and Ackerman (2004) argued that qualifications are only the first step in creating a 'highly qualified' workforce. Their report called for a 're-tooling' of the college/university teaching with respect to Early Childhood courses to ensure that teachers of young children receive up-to-date knowledge in the teaching domain of specific knowledge; child development, and meeting the needs of children from a diverse population of families. What little evidence was available (Early & Winston, 2001) would suggest that most faculties of teacher education (in the US) did not have the capacity to meet this expectation.

- In further research, Ackerman (2004) pointed out that quality in Early Childhood settings relies on care giving behaviours, interactions between teachers and children, and the types of activities available in Early Childhood settings. Most important, these latter aspects of quality were present more often when Early Childhood teachers had received education and training specifically related to Early Childhood. The data reported here suggest that increasing Early Childhood teachers' qualifications probably requires more than merely authoritatively raising either preservice requirements or the ongoing number of training hours. The content of the program matters, and the direct linking of training and practice needs to be ensured.
- In a further American study, children cared for by trained professionals tended to have higher academic and social success (Fontaine, Dee Torre, Grafwallner & Underhill, 2006).
- Saracho and Spodek (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of 40 predominantly US studies and reported that the strongest relationship was between number of years of education and appropriateness of teachers' behaviour with children. These researchers also noted that preschool teachers who teach in the early years of school (i.e., children up to the age of 8 years) were required to have at least a bachelors degree from an accredited four-year, five-year or postgraduate teacher education program; and that qualifications vary widely.
- Sheridan and colleagues (2009) argued that research in the field of Early Childhood suggests, when seeking to build the knowledge of professionals who work with young children and families, information-giving alone is not as effective in developing knowledge as information combined with demonstrations, practice and feedback, thus emphasising the value of practical experience in the training of Early Childhood professionals.
- A recent paper published by Downer, Sabol and Hamre (2010) at the University of Virginia reported that the link between teachers' levels of education and training and outcomes for children is neither consistent nor strong. Interestingly however, specialist training in Early Childhood or child development was more important than a Bachelor degree per se.

In the Australian context, a 2009 Australian Government project reported health and development outcomes for infants and social and cognitive outcomes for children in child care and early education settings (see Harrison, Ungerer, Smith, Zubrick & Wise, 2009). This study found that social development and cognitive outcomes were enhanced when teachers were more experienced, were university qualified, and when there were lower ratios of qualified staff to children.

In addition, McDonald's report (2010) from the Australian Institute of Family Studies, acknowledges that Early Childhood professionals are inadequately prepared for work with such a diverse population of families and children currently living in Australia. The challenges and demands of working with children and families in contemporary Australia highlight the importance of post-qualification development and training for professionals. Professionals who work with children and families will benefit from keeping their skills current and keeping up to date with the latest findings regarding what is effective practice. Post-qualification development and training has benefits not only for professionals themselves, but may also have a positive impact on children and families who interact with those professionals.

It is important to note however that there is a complex relationship between practitioner skills and knowledge, and outcomes for children and families. For example, whilst some professional development techniques may bring about a change in knowledge, they may not bring about a change in practice (Zaslow, 2009: 529). Furthermore, research in the field of Early Childhood suggests that not all professional development will lead to an improvement in child outcome (Zaslow, 2009: 530).

A current Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development project aims to provide a comprehensive picture of course effectiveness in terms of preparing and developing the

Early Childhood Education and Care workforce in Victoria (Melbourne Graduate School of Education, 2010-11). However, direct evidence in the Australia-wide context is lacking.

Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce

Employment for Child Care Workers has risen strongly over the past five years (between November 2005 and November 2010), with an increase of 28.2% to reach 115 700. Employment for Early Childhood Teachers has risen over the past five years (between November 2005 and November 2010), with an increase of 29% (or 1200) to reach 23 000¹

In terms of demographics, the early childhood sector has a mixed age profile; however there is a higher than average share of 20-24 year olds working in the sector. The median age for early childhood educators is 41 years, and the median age for childcare workers is 31 years (ABS Labour Force Survey, 2010). Further, the early childhood education and care workforce is overwhelmingly female (95.4%), and about 50 percent of the workforce are employed on a part-time basis (ABS, 2011; ABS Labour force survey to February 2010).

More recently, the Productivity Commission has published an Issues Paper (2010) where it has been specifically asked to consider Early Childhood Development (ECD) workforce concerns. The final report will be submitted to the Australian Government in November 2011 and will provide advice on:

- Current and future demand for ECD workers, and the mix of knowledge and skills required within the workforce to meet quality objectives.
- The current and future supply of the ECD workforce, and the impact of quality objectives on that supply.
- The structure of the ECD workforce, and its efficiency and effectiveness.
- ECD workforce planning and development in the short, medium and long-term.
- Institutional arrangements impacting on the ECD workforce.

This Issues Paper notes that the Australian Governments' commitments to provide Universal Access (UA) to preschool, and to improve the quality of childcare, are likely to have significant implications in terms of increased demand for more qualified ECD workers. In addition, it notes that many workers may also be required to upgrade their qualifications to meet the new standards (Productivity Commission, 2010: 16). In addition, it identifies that many teachers are qualified to teach in both Early Childhood settings **and** Primary schools, with such differences in pay and conditions possibly explaining why vacancies for preschool teachers are more widespread than vacancies for Primary school teachers (DEEWR, 2010; Productivity Commission, 2010). It is remarked on here that the attractiveness of employment, such as professional development opportunities, work-life balance, access to leave and career pathways may also be reasons for leaving the ECD workforce.

Council of Australian Governments' Agenda for Early Childhood

The Australian Government and all state and territory governments are working together to ensure Australian children get the best possible start in life. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to a National Quality Framework (NQF), which will be implemented in long day care, family day care, outside school hours care and preschool settings (DEEWR, 2011a).

The National Quality Agenda (NQA) for Early Childhood Education and Care (DEEWR, 2011c) aims to provide

¹ Source: ABS Labour Force Survey, DEEWR Trend Data, 2011

- (a) nationally consistent standards for Early Childhood Education and Care;
- (b) a quality ratings system that will provide parents with important information about the services their children receive;
- (c) streamlined regulatory arrangements that improve national consistency and reduce the administrative burden on service providers; and
- (d) an *Early Years Learning Framework*, that will guide practice and support quality teaching and learning.

COAG also endorsed a National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education (COAG, 2009), and bilateral agreements have been entered into between the Australian Government and each of the State and Territory governments. These Agreements specify the actions and strategies to be undertaken to achieve Universal Access (UA) (DEEWR, 2011b).

UA aims to ensure that every child has access to a quality Early Childhood education program that is to be delivered by a four-year university-trained Early Childhood educator, for 15 hours a week, 40 weeks a year, in the year before formal schooling. The commitment is to be fully implemented by 2013 (DEEWR, 2011b). This initiative will therefore increase the demand for four-year qualified Early Childhood educators.

From 1 January 2012, the NQF will introduce a new integrated national approach to the regulation and quality assessment processes. This will provide a national curriculum framework which will include the *Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* (DEEWR, 2009, 2011d) and set a new [National Quality Standard](#) (NQS) to ensure high quality and consistent Early Childhood education and care across Australia. The NQS (DEEWR, 2011e) aims to improve quality through:

- improved staff to child ratios to ensure each child gets more individual care and attention;
- new staff qualification requirements to ensure staff have the knowledge and skills to help children learn and develop;
- a new quality rating system to ensure Australian families have access to transparent information relating to the quality of Early Childhood education and care services; and
- the establishment of a new National Body to ensure Early Childhood education and care is of a high quality.

This new national body, the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), will monitor national consistency and assure quality implementation of the NQF. The functions of ACECQA, as set out in the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* No. 69 of 2010 (see pages 164-166), are as follows:

- (a) to guide the implementation and administration of the National Quality Framework and to monitor and promote consistency in its implementation and administration;
- (b) to report to and advise the Ministerial Council on the National Quality Framework;
- (c) to report to the Regulatory Authorities and the relevant Commonwealth Department in relation to the following—
 - i. the collection of information under this Law;
 - ii. the evaluation of the National Quality Framework;
- (d) to establish consistent, effective and efficient procedures for the operation of the National Quality Framework;
- (e) to determine the arrangements for national auditing for the purposes of this Law;
- (f) to keep national information on the assessment, rating and regulation of education and care services;

- (g) to establish and maintain national registers of approved providers, approved education and care services and certified supervisors and to publish those registers;
- (h) to promote and foster continuous quality improvement by approved education and care services;
- (i) to publish, monitor and review ratings of approved education and care services;
- (j) to make determinations with respect to the highest level of rating for approved education and care services;
- (k) in conjunction with the Regulatory Authorities, to educate and inform education and care services and the community about the National Quality Framework;
- (l) to publish guides and resources—
 - i. to support parents and the community in understanding quality in relation to education and care services; and
 - ii. to support the education and care services sector in understanding the National Quality Framework;
- (m) to publish information about the implementation and administration of the National Quality Framework and its effect on developmental and educational outcomes for children;
- (n) to publish practice notes and guidelines for the application of this Law;
- (o) to determine the qualifications for authorised officers and to provide support and training for staff of Regulatory Authorities;
- (p) to determine the qualifications required to be held by educators, including the assessment of equivalent qualifications;
- (q) any other function given to the National Authority by or under this Law.

Early Years Learning Framework

The *Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF) (DEEWR, 2009) is Australia’s first national framework for Early Childhood Education which is being delivered across a range of Early Childhood services types. When the National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care comes into effect from 1 January 2012, Early Childhood services will be required to demonstrate the inclusion of the EYLF in the design and delivery of their programs for children aged from birth to five years. The Framework represents a first in Australia for a nationally agreed approach to the principles, practices and learning outcomes for all young children. This is a new context for many Early Childhood educators in Australia, but is an important step for the sector.

The Early Years Learning Framework is part of the Council of Australian Government’s (COAG) reform agenda for early childhood education and care and is a key component of the Australian Government’s National Quality Framework for early childhood education and care. It underpins universal access to early childhood education and will be incorporated in the National Quality Standard in order to ensure delivery of nationally consistent and quality early childhood education across sectors and jurisdictions.

The Early Years Learning Framework describes the principles, practice and outcomes essential to support and enhance young children’s learning from birth to five years of age, as well as their transition to school. The Framework has a strong emphasis on play-based learning as play is the best vehicle for young children’s learning providing the most appropriate stimulus for brain development. The Framework also recognises the importance of communication and language (including early literacy and numeracy) and social and emotional development (DEEWR, 2011d).

Copies of the *Early Years Learning Framework*, *Educator’ Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework* and *Families Guide* have been provided to Early Childhood services across Australia so that they can familiarise themselves with the EYLF, which provides a non-prescriptive framework to guide Early Childhood educators to develop and deliver quality programs. The intention is that under

the Framework, Early Childhood Education and Care services will develop their own strategies for children's learning outcomes based on approaches to assessment for learning and programming that pays heed to their unique contexts. This new innovation will have important consequences for initial training programs in the future.

Commissioning of the work

The Office of Early Childhood Education and Child Care (OECECC) within the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) commissioned the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) to map and analyse currently available Early Childhood education and care (ECEC) tertiary courses across Australia. ACER has undertaken this project in partnership with Monash University.

Methodology

This section details the analyses of 83² Early Childhood Education courses available at Australian Universities during 2010. The section commences with an introduction to the analyses undertaken, followed by the methodology used to analyse course objectives and content.

Introduction to the analyses

A review of relevant research (Elliott, 2006: 21-32) demonstrated that access to quality Early Childhood Education and Care programs with appropriate curriculum and pedagogy can provide children with social and cognitive experiences that promote independence and positive attitudes to learning. Such quality programs facilitate transition to school and underpin later educational success. As in the school sector, staff quality is pivotal to the effectiveness of Early Childhood Education and Care programs. Given these important links, there are a number of issues relating to the quality of staffing in Early Childhood Education and Care settings. These include staff preparation, staff shortages and turnover, professional development, and teaching standards (Watson, 2006).

In the 1980s and 1990s, Colleges of Advanced Education and Universities developed three- and later, four-year degree courses in Early Childhood Education and Care. These courses focused on children aged from birth to five years. More than a quarter of a century later this commitment to dedicated Early Childhood courses has been expanded to include a greater emphasis and provision of courses that combine Early Childhood studies with studies of lower Primary education and sometimes with the full range of Primary education. In some institutions, the Early Childhood focus has been reduced to a specialism within a broader Primary teaching course. In others, courses focus on children aged three to eight years or on children aged three to twelve years³.

Staff in Early Childhood Education and Care settings across Australia have a wide range of qualifications and experience. Currently, there is no national agreement about the content or focus of courses preparing Early Childhood educators (except in Victoria). Further, there are no national expectations around content standards, graduate outcomes, or registration requirements (uniform across all States) for all Early Childhood Education and Care professionals. However, the *National Quality Framework*, through the *Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)* and *National Quality Standard (NQS)*, will have a significant impact on moving towards national requirements for the Early Childhood Education and Care profession. The new body, ACECQA, will have a role in accrediting qualifications and courses, and will therefore greatly assist with ensuring national consistency across the sector. Recent work by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL, 2011) on the National Professional Standards for Teachers will also have an impact on establishing the expectations required of Early Childhood educators

In an attempt to understand any differences or similarities amongst the various course types identified through this project, the research team categorized them identified according to their purpose and duration. This led to 11 categories⁴:

1. Three -year initial training (0-5 years);
2. Four -year initial training (0-5 years);
3. Four -year initial training (0-8 years);
4. Four -year initial training (0-12 years);
5. Four -year initial training (3-8 years);
6. Four -year initial training (3-12 years);
7. Four -year initial training (age unspecified);
8. Upgrade from three-year to four-year degree, or equivalent;

² Actual number of courses is 83 with two serving dual purposes

³ Birth – 8 years is the international definition of Early Childhood (OECD, 2001. 2006)

⁴ These courses are listed (by University in alphabetical order) in Appendix A with linked URLs

9. Upgrade from diploma to degree; and
10. Transfer from Primary to Early Childhood.
11. Transfer from degree (not education) to Early Childhood

The research team then undertook the task of identifying and analysing all Early Childhood these courses offered at Australian universities (as at December 2010 – see Appendix A). This analysis involved two main aspects:

1. an analysis of stated objectives for each course; and
2. an analysis of course content.

How the analyses were undertaken

Course Objectives

Statements of course aims and objectives are located in university handbooks available on websites and listed for each of the courses identified. These objectives were compared across the different course types seeking to assess consistent similarities or differences across them.

Course Content

Course outlines were examined to determine how well each of the curriculum areas was represented in the various courses. To do this, the research team used a model developed by the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Victorian Branch Qualifications Advisory Committee in March 2010. This model sets out recommendations for courses in Early Childhood teaching, including six curriculum areas to be covered in Early Childhood Education courses. These six components, briefly described below, form the basis of analyses of course types reported later in this section.

- i. ***Psychology and Child Development.*** Curriculum falling under this category introduces students to a range of physical, personal, social, emotional, cognitive and spiritual perspectives on children's learning and development over the age range which is the focus of the course. Differing paradigms and perspectives on development across all domains are explored, with implications for practice and observational frameworks. Conceptions of stages of development may well be contrasted with the continuity of development, and how learning drives this development. Attention is given to individual learning needs and different means of assessing development, as well as the development of appropriate relationships with other professionals who support the development of young children.
- ii. ***Curriculum Studies.*** Students are introduced to the main areas of the early years curriculum, typically language development along with early literacy and numeracy development. In addition, aspects of the creative arts are addressed, along with ICT, science and other environmental issues. Different methods of assessing children's strengths and interests may also be addressed.
- iii. ***Pedagogy.*** These subjects introduce students to play-based approaches to teaching and learning and their role in planning learning experiences, meeting individual learning styles and interacting directly to support children's learning and further development. Appropriate forms of assessment through observation may be identified that directly inform teaching and learning plans.
- iv. ***History and Philosophy of Early Childhood Education.*** The Early Childhood field has arisen historically from a range of theoretical perspectives and philosophies. Subjects in this area introduce students to this history of ideas and identify how they are currently embedded in Early Childhood Education and Care practices that they will encounter in the field.

- v. ***Family and Community Contexts.*** Partnerships with families concerning their child's care and education are an essential component of early years teacher education. As Early Childhood educators, students need to develop skills in building relationships with parents and other community members, as well as becoming able to identify and adopt appropriately inclusive practices that address issues of diversity, along with cultural, social and linguistic influences, with particular attention to the needs of Indigenous families and communities. Students will develop skills in recognizing and acknowledging children's foundational learning in homes and communities as the core of the Early Childhood curriculum.
- vi. ***Early Childhood Professional.*** The legislative and policy frameworks that surround Early Childhood Education and Care are used to provide students with a clear understanding of the expectations of their professional behaviour. Issues covered are likely to include the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, professional codes of ethics, along with the roles and responsibilities of Early Childhood educators. Building positive relationships with colleagues and other stakeholders will be a focus for these subjects, as well as aspects of leadership and management within the field.

The research team searched each university internet site to identify course outlines for each of the courses identified. These were examined to determine the extent to which each of the curriculum areas listed above was represented in the various courses. In some cases, the curriculum area was easily identified by the title of the unit (e.g., Language and Literacy Development). In a number of cases, it was necessary to examine unit descriptions to make a decision regarding appropriate placement of the unit. In many cases, it was apparent that a given unit integrated material from two curriculum areas (most commonly Curriculum Studies and Pedagogy), and in these cases, a professional judgment needed to be made as to which area predominated.

The assignment of subjects to curriculum areas was a complex task that necessarily involved professional judgment. For all courses, the initial decision was made by an experienced Early Childhood academic project staff member, which was then checked by two other experts in the field. The authors acknowledge the subjective nature of these judgments, and in particular the imprecision that results when a unit that integrates a number of the component categories has to be assigned to just one. For this reason, the account that follows presents general statements rather than precise aggregate data.

Findings:

Roles and functions of available courses

This section details the findings from the analysis of course types; including a list of all available course objectives, general comments about course content, and a comparison among degree types, including three- and four-year degrees.

Unless they plan to seek teacher registration and teach in schools, Early Childhood educators are not currently required in all states and territories to undertake a minimum of four years of tertiary study. However, the greater range of employment opportunities available to four-year graduates is making the three-year qualification increasingly unattractive to potential applicants, and the higher education market is responding by moving progressively toward this outcome. Market forces, in combination with the COAG agreement and policy developments for Universal Access, are effectively setting the four-year qualification as the standard for preschool teachers.

There are a number of avenues to becoming a four-year qualified Early Childhood educator; including:

- a four-year program focussed fully on Early Childhood Education and Care (titled Bachelor of Early Childhood Education, or similar)
- a four-year program covering both Early Childhood and Primary Education (titled Bachelor of Early Childhood and Primary Education, or similar) leading to a dual qualification in most cases.
- Graduate Certificates and Diplomas: typically one year of study following a three-year degree program in Primary Education or in another discipline, and therefore including at most one year's study of Early Childhood education (titled Graduate Certificate/Diploma of Early Childhood Education, or similar)
- Double degrees: usually an integrated four-year program that includes at most two years' study of Early Childhood education (titled Bachelor of Arts/ Bachelor of Early Childhood Education, or similar)
- Masters degrees: typically a total of five years that includes, an undergraduate degree, followed by (in most cases) two years' study of Early Childhood education. Graduates emerge with an undergraduate degree (BA, BSc, etc.) and a Master of Teaching (Early Childhood) or similar.

To add to the complexity of the situation, there are many practising Early Childhood educators who completed three-year degree programs, but who now seek an extra year of study to upgrade to a four-year qualification. In response to this need, university upgrade programs have been put in place in universities around Australia, typically providing an upgrade to a four-year degree from a three-year degree, but sometimes from a Diploma of Children's Services, or similar. For qualified Primary teachers, there are also transfer programs that enable them to extend their qualifications into the Early Childhood area. In addition, graduates from any discipline can qualify for Early Childhood through a one or two year transfer Diploma or Certificate course.

From a search of university handbooks and websites, the following programs were identified as being available in Australia during 2010⁵.

⁵ Excluded from this listing are programs that were in the process of being discontinued, and while still running in 2010 for continuing students, had ceased to admit new students.

Three-year degrees – birth to 5 years

The three-year degree, once the standard preparation for Early Childhood and for Primary teaching, no longer exists at the Primary level and has almost disappeared as a qualification for Early Childhood educators. The few such programs that remain are early exit points from a four-year degree (as at Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education and Australian Catholic University), or serve a special purpose for which the reduced length is seen to be more attractive (in particular, the program for Indigenous students offered at Macquarie University). Five three-year courses were identified:

Australian Catholic University	B Teach (Early Childhood)
Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education	B Teach (Early Childhood)
Macquarie University	B Teach (Early Childhood Services)
Queensland University of Technology	B Early Childhood Studies
University of Southern Queensland	B Early Childhood

At the Australian Catholic University, the standard four-year program - Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood and Primary) – has two exit points, so that a student may exit after two years with an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education, or after three years with a Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood). Similarly, at Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, students enrolled in the four-year Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) may exit after three years with a Bachelor of Teaching, and Advanced Diploma of Teaching, or a Diploma of Teaching respectively. In all of the cases listed above, only the four-year graduates are recognised as being fully qualified. The early-exit option provides a way for students who, for whatever reason, find themselves unable to complete the full course, to exit with a lesser qualification that will still secure them a position in the sector.

Even though the number of three-year graduates is decreasing, there are many thousands of them in the Early Childhood Education and Care workforce. Consequently there is a need and demand for courses that allow three-year trained graduates to upgrade and become four-year trained. This need is likely to decline as current three-year graduates upgrade or retire.

Four-year degrees

The majority of Early Childhood programs are of four years duration, although it is rare for the full four years to be focussed solely on Early Childhood Education and Care. Most programs include Early Childhood as a component of a four year degree that combined Early Childhood and Primary Education. The OECD (2006: 61) sees this dual qualification as leading to a unity of goals across the sectors and reinforcing pedagogical continuity. However, because there is much essential knowledge that is common to both, and handbook documentation is necessarily limited in detail, it is impossible to quantify how much content was Early Childhood and how much Primary education. Of importance in determining the quality and quantity of the Early Childhood content in these programs is the number of university staff who have qualifications and experience in Early Childhood education and who teach directly into these programs.

Four-year programs differ from one another in many respects, but most noticeably in the age-span that graduates are qualified to work with. While a small number of programs focussed exclusively on children prior to compulsory school-age (birth-5 years), the majority combined this with some aspect of Primary schooling. As a result, six categories of four-year initial training courses have been identified. These categories, and the courses identified within each, are listed below:

Four year initial training: Focus Birth to 5 years

University of Southern Queensland	B Early Childhood
University of Sydney	B Ed (Early Childhood Education)
University of Wollongong	B Ed: The Early Years (0 - 5)

Four year initial training: Focus Birth to 8 years

Avondale College	B Ed (Early Childhood)
Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education	B Ed (Early Childhood)
Curtin University	B Ed (Early Childhood Education)
Edith Cowan University	B Ed (Early Childhood Studies)
Flinders University	B Ed (Early Childhood)/B Arts
Flinders University	B.Ed (Early Childhood and Special Education)/B. Disability Studies
James Cook University	B Ed (Early Childhood Education)
Queensland University of Technology	B Ed (Early Childhood)
Southern Cross University	B Ed (Early Childhood)
University of Notre Dame (Fremantle)	B Ed (Early Childhood & Care: 0 - 8 years)
University of South Australia	B Early Childhood Education
University of Southern Queensland	B Ed (with Early Childhood specialisation)
University of the Sunshine Coast	B Early Childhood Education
University of Tasmania	B Ed (Early Childhood)

Four year initial training: Focus Birth to 12 years

Australian Catholic University	B Ed (Early Childhood & Primary)
Charles Sturt University	B Ed (Early Childhood & Primary)
Griffith University	B Child & Family Studies/ B Ed Primary
Macquarie University	B Ed (Early Childhood Education)
Monash University	B Early Childhood Education
RMIT University	B Ed
University of Ballarat	B Ed (Early Childhood)
University of Canberra	B Ed in Early Childhood Teaching (Birth-8)
University of Newcastle	B Teach (Primary)/Early Childhood Studies
University of Notre Dame (Sydney)	B Ed (Birth to Twelve Years)
Victoria University	B Ed (Early Childhood/Primary)

Four year initial training: Focus 3 to 8 years

Charles Darwin University	B Teach & Learning (Early Childhood)
Charles Darwin University	B Teach & Learning (Preservice) with EC Specialisation
Charles Darwin University	B Teaching & Learning/ B App Sci or B Creative Arts
University of Canberra	B Ed in Early Childhood Teaching (3-8 years)

Four year initial training: Focus 3 to 12 years

Central Queensland University	B Learning Management (Early Childhood Education)
Edith Cowan University	B Ed (Kindergarten through Primary)
Murdoch University	B Ed (Early Childhood & Primary Education)
University of Notre Dame (Broome)	B Ed (K - year 7)

Four year initial training: Focus not stated

University of Notre Dame

B Ed (Early Childhood Education)/Double Degree

In initial training, the focus is predominantly on the preparation of professionals whose expertise spans both Early Childhood and Primary education, and increasingly this has been extended to cover the full range of Primary education through to Grade 6. All but eight of these courses included the period from birth to five years, but only three focussed exclusively on this period.

Initial training: Graduate programs

The Graduate Diploma has for many years had the role of providing an avenue for graduates in other fields of study to enter teaching, predominantly at the Secondary level. Graduates in any field may enter teaching by adding a single year of Pedagogy studies – typically called a Graduate Diploma. More recently, there has been a rise of Masters programs, which entail two (or more) years of teacher preparation following an initial degree in almost any field. The graduate programs identified are listed below:

Charles Darwin University	B Early Childhood Learning
Charles Darwin University	Grad Dip in Teaching & Learning
Edith Cowan University	Grad Dip of Educ (Early Childhood Studies)
Flinders University	M. Teach (Early Childhood)
Griffith University	Grad Dip of Early Childhood Education
Monash University	Grad Dip Ed (Early Childhood Education)
Montessori World Educational Institute	Grad Dip Ed (Montessori)
RMIT University	Grad Dip of Education (Early Childhood)
University of Canberra	B Ed in Early Childhood Teaching (Graduate Entry)
University of Melbourne	M Teach (Early Childhood) 0-8
University of Melbourne	M Teach (Early Years) 0-8
University of Melbourne	Post-Graduate Dip Teach (Early Childhood) 0-5
University of Notre Dame (Broome)	M Teach (K - Year 7)
University of Sydney	M Teach (Early Childhood Education)
University of Western Australia	Master of Teaching
University of Western Sydney	M Teach (Birth - 12 yrs)
University of Western Sydney	M Teach (Birth - 5 yrs)

Upgrade and transfer courses

Upgrade and transfer courses fell into several categories, on the basis of their intended purpose. These categories, and the courses under each, are listed below

Upgrade from three-year degree to four-year degree

Charles Darwin University	B Teach & Learning Inservice (Early Childhood)
Deakin University	B Early Childhood Education *
Deakin University	B Early Childhood Education (Hons) *
James Cook University	B Ed Professional Development (Early Childhood Major)
Macquarie University	Grad Dip in Early Childhood ⁶
Murdoch University	Grad Dip Ed Studies (Early Childhood Education) ⁷
University of Canberra	B Ed in Early Childhood Teaching (Conversion)
University of New England	B Ed (Early Childhood)
University of Notre Dame (Broome)	B Ed (Conversion) Early Childhood Specialism
University of South Australia	B Early Childhood Education (Inservice)
University of Wollongong	Grad Cert in Early Years Education
Victoria University	Grad Dip in Early Childhood Education

* The two Deakin University courses can be used to upgrade from a Diploma to a Degree, or from a three-year degree to a four-year degree.

Upgrade from diploma to four-year degree

Charles Darwin University	B Children's Services
Charles Sturt University	B Ed (Birth to 5 years) ⁸
Charles Sturt University	B Teach (Birth to 5 years)
Deakin University	B Early Childhood Education *
Deakin University	B Early Childhood Education (Hons) *
Monash University	B Early Childhood Studies
Queensland University of Technology	B Early Childhood
Queensland University of Technology	B Ed (Preservice Early Childhood)
RMIT University	B Ed (Early Childhood Education)
University of Ballarat	B Teach (Early Childhood Education)
University of New England	B Teach (Early Childhood Education)
University of Western Sydney	B Ed (Birth - 5 years)

* The two Deakin University courses can be used to upgrade from a Diploma to a Degree, or from a three-year degree to a four-year degree.

Transfer from Primary to Early Childhood

Edith Cowan University	Grad Cert of Education (Early Childhood Studies)
Murdoch University	Grad Cert in Early Childhood Education
RMIT University	Grad Dip in Early Childhood Teaching ⁹

In addition to the opportunity for three-year qualified Early Childhood educators to upgrade to a four-year Early Childhood qualification, teachers may seek to undertake additional studies for many reasons, including:

- to engage in professional development and preparation for leadership roles in Early Childhood education and care services.

⁶ This is also a transfer from a Primary qualification and from non-education degrees

⁷ Open to graduates from any field.

⁸ Can also be used as an upgrade from a three-year degree to a four-year degree, depending on the qualifications held on entry.

⁹ Transfer from any degree other than education.

- to develop capacity in the area of teacher research and reflective thinking as a basis for informing practice and early years curriculum.
- to add Early Childhood education to their existing qualifications to support transfer from Primary education into the Early Childhood Education and Care sector.
- to enter the Early Childhood Education and Care sector after graduation from a non-education degree.

These are all valid reasons for participating in upgrade studies, but only the third dot point was specifically addressed in the statements of aims and course content provided on university websites. This is of particular interest given that some upgrade and transfer candidates may have personal and professional reasons for participating in studies, whilst others may be seeking only to meet new qualification requirements. The information provided in course handbooks and descriptions appeared to be directed entirely, or almost entirely, towards the latter group.

Course objectives

This section examines the statements of course objectives that universities put forward via their websites. Although different terminology may be used (aims, objectives, anticipated outcomes) each represented the university's formal statement of what its course was intended to achieve.

What might one expect from a statement of course objectives? At one level, one could expect a listing of knowledge, skills and capabilities, perhaps supplemented with statements of values and professional responsibilities. At another level, one might expect to find statements of what roles a graduate will be qualified to undertake and what registration requirements will have been met. While all statements of objectives address some of these, most fell short of addressing all of them.

Course objectives were found to be variable across courses, across universities and among universities offering nominally the same courses. For instance, where a three year degree was an early exit point from a four year program, there was, in one case, no additional information regarding this qualification with respect to professional recognition or career pathways. However, a three year degree offered by another university gave clear guidance on the outcome qualifications and professional accreditation available for that exit point.

It was necessary to interrogate a number of different web pages within each university portal to ensure that all available information was tallied. Pre-requisites for programs were often not stated for initial degrees, however, the length of the study programs were universally available, while modes of study were not always evident.

Course content was available in different ways, either being addressed in the web-based handbook with a link to more detailed subject descriptions, or listed in course outlines, structure and contents. General statements of the objectives for each subject were listed but little information was available with respect to forms of assessment or hours spent on particular aspects of the course. Credit points for each subject were generally noted and a matching against those required for the whole course was provided. Due to the diversity of contexts across Australia, and the state specific institutions, no common approach could be assumed for what counted as a credit point, with requirements varying widely, so that essentially the same qualification was recorded as 96 credit points at one university and 1000 at another. For this reason, generalisations have been made only in terms of the proportion of course content (apparently) devoted to the various content areas.

Course objectives clearly varied according to the purpose of the programs. Eleven different categories of program were identified (see page 11) all with the purpose of preparing educators to work with young children. All three-year degrees and three of the four year-degrees prepared students to work with children from birth to age 5 years. The objectives for these courses were clearly articulated,

direct and well-focussed. Due to state and territory differentials, specifically the diversity of employment needs and working conditions across the Early Childhood sector and Primary schools, many of the Early Childhood courses prepared students to also teach in the Primary school years.

This confusion between the ‘focus’ of a course and its registration outcomes with respect to professional recognition clearly provides a tension within a course as to how time is allocated between different subjects designed to meet different purposes. Of further concern here is the need to cover practicum requirements across the Primary school age range as well as allowing for specific attention to practical experience with children in the age range specified as a focus for the course. (Victoria has a specific number of days required of courses training Early Childhood educators and child care workers.)

Many universities have taken the opportunity to identify what their course in particular has to offer for their students. For instance, some have a religious focus (e.g. Australian Catholic University), an Indigenous focus (e.g. Macquarie University), a child-centred philosophy (e.g. Southern Cross University¹⁰), a globally transferrable qualification (e.g. RMIT), and a focus on regional communities (e.g. University of Ballarat). This makes some programs distinctive and attractive to different groups of students. In addition, some universities market their courses specifically for regional and/or international students and make their courses available on-line, off campus and in other forms of external mode.

Course content

This section examines the content that students were likely to undertake as part of an Early Childhood Education course in Australia during 2010, broken down by course type. It examines what may or may not have been taught.

It was not possible to make universal, definitive statements about what was included or omitted from particular courses for several reasons, including (i) the absence of up-to-date handbook entries or course outlines on university websites; and (ii) the ‘embedded’ nature of some topics or content within the subjects offered in a program. Universities often place strict limitations on the numbers of words or even characters used in descriptions of both course titles and content, limiting, sometimes severely, the information readily available for review. Having reviewed many subject descriptions in a wide range of handbooks, there seems to be a need for greater scrutiny and quality control to ensure handbooks more clearly reflect course content. However, it should be noted that university handbooks are contractual documents and their lack of precision in course descriptions may be purposeful, as a means of allowing for staff changes and other course developments.

Content universally available

This section details the content that students were likely to undertake as part of an Early Childhood Education course in Australia during 2010, broken down by course type and analysed against the six components set out in page 12.

Three-year initial training

Because these three year initial training courses were explicitly directed to Early Childhood Education and Care, subject descriptions were more clearly directed at the prior to school age group, and even though it may not have been fully spelt out, it appeared that content and pedagogy descriptions were directed to education at these levels, and not to general Primary

¹⁰ Although one might expect that this would be a feature of all or most Early Childhood Education course, only Southern Cross University made explicit mention of it, putting it forward as a distinctive feature of their course.

levels. With the strong emphasis in these courses on the years before school, Child Development studies were offered in all courses, although the amount of coursework devoted to this area was very small (typically 5-10%). However, there appeared to be Child Development content integrated into either Curriculum or Pedagogy subjects. There are sound arguments for this type of integration as it places Child Development into context as opposed to a de-contextualised study of children.

Pedagogy made up the greatest proportion of subjects for these courses. However, the allocation of subjects to Pedagogy, rather than to Curriculum Studies, was often unclear, as they tended to be integrated in nomenclature (e.g. Early Childhood Pedagogy and Curriculum) and in the content of subjects (handbook checks showed the integrated nature of many subjects).

The universal or common content areas in the Pedagogy strands in three-year degrees were: inclusion or inclusive practice, and the teaching of Science, Technology, Numeracy, Literacy and Creative Arts. In Curriculum Studies, the universal or common areas offered were: Literacy and Language, Numeracy/Mathematics, Science and Technology, Health and Physical Education, and Creative Arts. Of these, Literacy was the discipline area that was given the most attention. Studies relating to the Early Childhood Professional and Family and Community Contexts were common to these courses, although there seemed to be different approaches to these studies and they formed relatively small proportions of the overall program. The most common topic in the Professional Studies strand was Leadership.

Four-year initial training

Little was found in the way of systematic difference between the four-year initial programs preparing for different age spans.

Each course offered a significant number of units in Curriculum Studies and in Pedagogy. The dominant characteristic of the courses analysed in this group was the emphasis on Curriculum content material, which accounted for up to 60 percent of course credit. The majority of courses offered more than half of their coursework in Curriculum subject areas. Within this component, Literacy and Numeracy were particularly emphasised, and it was typical for approximately one-third of the subjects to be devoted to each of these two disciplines with the remaining one-third spanning curriculum content in the disciplines of Science, Society, Technology, Health and Well-being and the Arts.

Pedagogy was the next most common component, accounting up to 40 percent of subject content, but more typically from 20 to 35 percent. The balance between Pedagogy and Curriculum content was not always clear from the unit descriptions, but in general they tended to focus on “how to teach” the curriculum content. In addition, these units may have had some Child Development theory embedded, particularly the principles of inclusion of children with special needs.

The study of Child Development/Educational Psychology was generally included for this course type, but only a minimal proportion of any course was devoted to it. Although in some courses, as much as 20 percent of subjects were in the Child Development/Educational Psychology areas, it was on average, less than 10 percent.

In many cases, content areas from different strands appeared to be embedded within the one subject. This was not always evident in handbook explanations but aside from the Curriculum-Pedagogy overlap mentioned previously, many of the subject descriptions strongly suggested an overlap of Pedagogy with Child Development and with Early Childhood Professional Practice.

One might expect that courses intended for age spans birth-12 years and 3-12 years would contain much higher proportions of Primary curriculum at the expense of Early Childhood curriculum.

This may be so, but subject descriptions were rarely specific enough to determine the extent that this was happening. Many such descriptions refer to Literacy Curriculum and Pedagogy, Numeracy Curriculum and Pedagogy, etc., but rarely did they specify the age span, except in the few cases where Early Childhood was identified.

Initial Training: Graduate Programs

Until recently, these transfer courses were all one-year programs (Graduate Certificates and Diplomas), and the content coverage was inevitably much less than for the three and four-year programs that have been examined above. Students enter with an undergraduate degree, transferring from a field other than education, and the content they had studied prior to entering their education studies may have had some relevance (e.g. in English, Mathematics, Art, Music). Equally it may have been quite unrelated to the education duties for which they are being prepared. Given that these students have one year in which to become qualified Early Childhood educators, the content coverage in their one-year graduate program is crucial.

Students of these courses were likely to complete units associated with understanding Early Childhood Pedagogy including play, curriculum and working with families. Other core units identified focused on content knowledge in the early years and included Science and Technology, Language studies, Expressive and Creative Arts and Numeracy/Mathematics. Content units were more likely to be a focus of the degree where the qualification covered both the prior-to-school setting and the early Primary years (for example birth-8 years, 3-8 years or up to 12 years). In those degrees addressing the birth-5 years setting, there was less focus on content units and a greater focus on perspectives and philosophies in Early Childhood education.

In recent years, Masters degrees have emerged (typically a Master of Teaching, requiring 2 or 2.5 years of study in education, following a three-year undergraduate degree). These courses are able to include more education content than the one-year graduate diplomas, and include longer professional placements.

Upgrade and Transfer courses

These upgrade and transfer courses were generally of a single year's duration, so the subject coverage was much less than in the three- and four-year courses described in previous sections. It should be noted that upgrade and transfer courses serve a great variety of purposes. Transfer courses provide specialist Early Childhood knowledge to teachers who are already trained and often quite experienced Primary or Secondary teachers. Upgrade courses provided a fourth year to enable already experienced Early Childhood educators to meet 4th year requirements, while others provided one year towards a professional teaching qualification after graduating with a degree other than education.

The courses identified in this project were not always explicit about their ultimate purpose, and some made it clear that they served more than one purpose (e.g. courses that allowed an upgrade from 3 to 4 years or a transfer from Primary to Early Childhood, depending on the qualifications of the entrant). Where there were multiple purposes, it was less easy to formulate clear expectations of the content that ought to be included.

Almost all of these courses include Psychology and Child Development studies. It could be argued that the study of Child Development subjects focused on children from birth to five years, is essential for those transferring from Primary or Secondary, and desirable (although possibly of a different nature) for those upgrading within the Early Childhood field.

All but one course had a Curriculum Studies strand. The one program without a Curriculum strand was an upgrade specifically designed to enable three-year trained Early Childhood

educators to gain a fourth year qualification. It appeared that the course was designed on the basis that these graduates would have studied Early Childhood curriculum in their previous degree. Three of the courses had an 'Integrated EC Curriculum' subject rather than separate discipline studies. There was only one discipline area universally present in the Curriculum Studies strand - Literacy & Language studies. Numeracy/Mathematics, Science, Creative or Expressive Arts were present in most of the courses.

A clear majority of these courses included some studies of Family and Community Contexts. Although the proportion of course offerings in this area was generally very small, it ranged as high as one-third for one course. Nearly all of these courses included Early Childhood Professional subjects. As the students enrolled in these courses were upgrading from another education degree/diploma, it would be expected that all would include specific subject/s concerned with the roles and responsibilities of an Early Childhood professional, as these can be different from other sectors of education because of very different contexts. For example, Early Childhood educators may work as a team member in a Long Day Care setting, or as a sole practitioner in a stand-alone preschool settings, reporting to a committee of management, with quite different accountability requirements (e.g., local government, church groups, etc).

Content that may or may not be taught

Three-year initial training

Documenting, assessment, and evaluation of children's learning, were not visibly present in the subject titles for these three year initial training courses, but they may have been embedded in Pedagogy or Curriculum Studies. Play-based approaches to learning were not mentioned in the subject titles for any of the three-year courses but handbook descriptions indicated that play-based learning was taught in either Curriculum or Pedagogy subjects. ICT was listed as a specific subject in one out of the three courses but it may well have been embedded in Curriculum or Pedagogical subjects. Professional Ethics was not identified in subject titles but it was sometimes mentioned in subject handbook descriptions in either the Early Childhood Professional Studies strand or the Early Childhood Education Philosophy strand.

While having ethics 'embedded' in course subjects is commendable, it is also problematic and potentially risky. Professional Ethics has a well defined body of knowledge with its own research foundation and subsequent theorising and as such it is a content area that many tertiary educators may not see themselves as qualified to teach. In addition, it would have been impossible to ensure that every staff member, including all sessional staff, was committed to ensuring that ethics was embedded in the subjects they were teaching. There may be greater certainty that a topic such as Ethics will be given the attention that it warrants if it is a major focus of one or two subjects than if it is the joint responsibility of many staff, embedded within a diverse range of subjects

Four-year initial training

History and Philosophy of Early Childhood was rarely present and the Early Childhood Professional was not offered in many four year initial training courses. While most of these courses specified coursework in the area of Family and Community Studies, the proportion of content in this area was uniformly small. It was difficult to discern where this content might be embedded in other parts of the courses, and there was some overlap in the range of elective studies in courses where these were offered. It is possible that content of this kind sometimes gets lost during course development and reaccreditation because it is given lesser priority by Early Childhood staff, or because of the difficulty in obtaining staff from other disciplines who can orient their teaching to specifically Early Childhood issues.

Initial training: Graduate Upgrade and Transfer programs

Units associated with Leadership and Communities, and Understanding Contexts and Issues in Early Childhood Education, also appeared in these graduate upgrade and transfer courses. These were not as common as core philosophical perspectives in Early Childhood education such as play. For example, five courses offered units associated with Understanding Contexts and Issues in Early Childhood Education, whilst only two offered units of study on Leadership and Communities. Opportunities to participate in research were offered by two courses of study and usually in the final year/semester.

Technology, Health, Physical Education, Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) were not commonly included in upgrade and transfer courses, and there were some which had no Pedagogy subjects listed. The subjects listed under the Pedagogy strand in these courses were so diverse it was difficult to provide a meaningful summary. Of the courses that offered Pedagogy subjects, they were mostly of a 'general' nature such as 'Teaching & Learning', 'Program Planning', 'Play & Pedagogy', rather than Pedagogy focusing on a Curriculum area such as the teaching of Literacy or Numeracy.

Inspection of university handbooks shows that many of the Curriculum and Pedagogy subjects were integrated with limited demarcation between discipline content and pedagogy matters. Play-based approaches to teaching and learning, for example, were generally embedded or integrated into a range of subjects. This may present some risks for students if they do not gain a well-developed theoretical understanding and the knowledge and skills necessary to be able to provide a play-based curriculum or program if they only studied this approach as an integrated study.

It should be noted, however, that many universities recognise the constraint to deliver Early Childhood core content within a short period of time (traditionally 12 months) and have progressively expanded their offerings to 1.5 to 2 years to allow for greater Early Childhood course content. Upgrading and transferring students have more life experience, and their prior studies and professional experience mean that they have a more substantial base upon which to build their learning than students in the first two years of their initial undergraduate program.

Content rarely or never taught

Across the whole range of programs, History and Philosophy of Early Childhood Education was often completely absent, and where it was present, it was usually in the form of a single subject, occupying a tiny proportion of content taught. It is possible that this strand has in some cases been subsumed by the curriculum content area as it dealt with the traditional materials used in play-based curricula such as Montessori puzzles and Froebelian blocks etc.

Although Curriculum Studies were dominant in most courses, there was little evidence that the Early Childhood specialisation was embedded in broader disciplinary studies such as Sociology or Philosophy of Early Childhood Education, or that other academic disciplines were studied as a core component. Further, there was little evidence that disability studies or additional learning needs were included in any of the courses examined. These could have been embedded in Psychology or Pedagogy units, and were sometimes offered as electives. Moreover, the pedagogical use of digital technologies did not feature in any of the degrees (although science and technology education were offered). The courses also did not appear to include much in the area of Indigenous education (although units were offered on diversity), and there was very little taught in the areas of sustainability and environmental education.

Alignment with the Early Years Learning Framework

An important analysis of Early Childhood content in the future will be its relationship to the EYLF. However, all the university programs evaluated for this project were developed prior the introduction of the EYLF. With course development and accreditation processes occurring approximately every five years, no match could be expected or assumed to occur within the development phase of the EYLF. It is likely, though, that some academic staff in the Early Childhood area, particularly those involved with the development of the EYLF, would be incorporating EYLF material into their teaching before it was officially incorporated into university handbooks.

Nevertheless, an analysis of the existing courses shows that some aspects of these courses align strongly with the ELYF. For example, the focus on play and pedagogy meets the ‘learning through play’ practice and the inclusion of the sociology of childhood and contexts of the early years provided important grounding for responding to the principles which address:

- i. Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships; and
- ii. Partnerships.

However, when aligned with the *Early Years Learning Framework*, many courses seemed to be at odds with the three overarching concepts of “being, belonging and becoming” which emphasise relationships, family and community contexts and the growing ability of children to participate as a member of a group within these contexts.

Practicum requirements

Information on the number of days students were required to undertake, as well as the settings they must be taken in, was obtained from University websites.

- The total number of days specified as on placement varied considerably to a maximum of 160 days.
- For four-year initial programs, the required number of practicum days ranged from 20+ to 160.
- Some courses specified that their practicum must be taken as a scheduled block of time, while others had one or more days per week for a set number of weeks during the semester, and others required both modes.
- Block placements ranged from 1 to 10 weeks.
- Some courses offered immersion programs, often referred to as an *internship*, and these could occur during the course or in the final semester only.
- There was a variety of settings in which practicum could take place, including childcare, preschool and schools. Some programs enabled students to undertake placements in a wide variety of community agencies, including zoos and museums.
- Some courses had clear regulations on the age spans with which students were required to undergo practicum (e.g., birth-2 years; 3-5 years).
- Supervision and assessment of practicum experience was not clearly specified, and
- Assessment criteria and methods were not clearly specified.

Issues and policy implications

This section outlines a number of issues that have been identified in this project, and considers their possible implications for policy. While there is a need for policy decisions to be made in the broad, whole-of-government context, the aim here is to set out policy needs and possible directions, rather than to prescribe the decisions that should flow from this work.

Issue 1: Lack of clarity about course purpose

While there is diversity in the age span for which Early Childhood educators are prepared, there is lack of clarity between course focus and outcome registration potential. This is not fully addressed by course descriptions available to prospective students.

The majority of Early Childhood Education and Care courses in universities also include some focus on Primary teacher preparation, sometimes in the lower grades only (the birth to 8 years and 3-8 years programs), but in some cases for the whole range of Primary age range (birth to 12 years and 3-12 years courses). There were a number of courses covering the 0-5/8/12 and 3-8/12 years age spans, which means that some Early Childhood teachers are being prepared to work across the whole of the prior-to-school age span (birth – 5 years) and some are not. Over time, it may be that large numbers of Early Childhood educators are four-year qualified and eligible to be registered as Primary school teachers. However, it is not always possible to identify precisely the course focus and/or the career options available to graduates from university handbooks.

OECD (2001: 129) argue that Early Childhood pedagogy should be broad and holistic, and that much training in the pedagogy of Primary school teaching is different (see Watson & Axford, 2008: 33). The entrenched differences in the regulatory and funding environments of Early Childhood and school education perpetuate what Elliott (2006) refers to as the “care-education dichotomy in EC provision”. It therefore seems appropriate to ask “*Why would pre-service Early Childhood educators spend considerable time learning about teaching in Primary schools?*”

As noted by Saracho and Spodek (2007) in the US, there is also in Australia a diversity of qualifications for teaching particular age spans across awards. Such diversity can be celebrated because it enables providers of Early Childhood education programs to be responsive to local circumstances and conditions. However, diversity does not in itself lead to desirable outcomes; instead it sets up situations where desirable outcomes can be achieved. If this is to happen, the content of the awards offered should not only be driven by employer needs (or perceived employer needs), but also be responsive to the needs of graduates for a qualification that has sufficient Early Childhood content to provide them with the skills and knowledge needed for working with very young children.

However, one factor of concern is that, in many jurisdictions, to qualify for registration to teach in a Primary school, students need to be trained across the entire Primary school age range (5/6 – 12 years of age), whatever the declared focus age range of the degree. This is also an issue for graduate upgrade and transfer programs, all of which varied with respect to the age range students are being prepared for as a result of completing the course. The majority (8 of 12) of these Diploma to Degree courses were focussed on the birth to 5 years age range, 2 of the 4 courses upgrading students from Primary training qualifications also focussed on the birth to 5 years age range, while only 2 of the three year to four year degree qualifications specifically focussed of the birth to 5 years age range.

There is diversity in the pay and conditions of teachers within the early childhood sector depending on the setting in which they are employed. In some situations, the working conditions and salaries

available to Early Childhood educators in Australia are different to those available to Primary school teachers. In general, Early Childhood educators see themselves as working longer hours, with shorter holidays and less pay, than Primary school teachers. While this perception may ignore some of the responsibilities assumed by Primary school teachers, it may be one reason why many university-qualified Early Childhood educators seek positions with higher status, income and career pathways found within the school sector.

Universities have responded to these ambitions by offering dual qualified awards that allow graduates to teach across the preschool and Primary school sectors. The movement of staff between sectors not only affords greater career opportunities, but facilitates a higher level of collaboration between sectors, and this potentially added to the quality of children's transition programs and potentially, the respect of staff across sectors. In cases where the Early Childhood teacher is qualified to take the same group of children into their first year of teaching (and the reverse) is seen as a valuable means of reducing anxiety, both for young children and their families. However, while OECD (2001) supports the positive outcomes of dual qualifications, the dangers of perhaps sacrificing the Early Childhood content are also signaled:

Stronger co-operation with schools is a positive development as long as specific character and traditions of quality Early Childhood practice are preserved (2001:129).

The problem is not that multiple and dual qualifications are available. It is the perception (and, in many cases the reality) that pay and conditions available in the Early Childhood sector are often seen as unattractive by graduates whose qualifications allow them to make a choice between careers in Early Childhood and Primary Education. Nolan and Rouse (2011) directly address this issue of understanding the factors impacting on choices and perceptions of Early Childhood students toward their employment destinations. In addition, Watson (2006: xv) signaled these dual qualification courses being seen as routes "out of childcare into the relatively well-paid and *comparatively* respected profession of teaching" (*italics added*).

With respect to the issue of course titles, while there were some common patterns, it was not possible to discern the role or function of a course simply by inspecting its title. For example, a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education might be any of:

- A four-year Initial training program focusing on birth to 5 years (University of Newcastle);
- A four-year Initial training program focusing on birth to 8 years (University of South Australia);
- A four-year Initial training program focusing on ages 3 to 12 years (Edith Cowan University);
- A four-year Initial training program focusing on birth to 5 years (University of Newcastle);
- A one-year upgrade program for three-year trained kindergarten teachers (Deakin University);
- A two-year upgrade program for pre-school teachers and child care staff (Deakin University);
- or
- A one-year upgrade program for three-year trained teachers with at least two years' experience (University of South Australia).

There was some commonality however. A Graduate Diploma of Education always meant a one-year program following a degree in another discipline, and a Master of Teaching generally meant a two-year program following a degree. Beyond that, there were few guarantees.

University handbooks (now freely available on university websites) are the first and often the only port of call for potential students and others seeking information about available courses. For courses in education, the key information most often sought might include at least the following:

- Upon what age range does the course focus?
- What career paths are available to graduates of the course?

- What professional recognition do graduates of the course receive (e.g. from professional organisations, registration bodies, etc.)?
- What are the distinguishing features of the course – its underlying philosophy, its unique characteristics, its selling points?
- What are the pre-requisites for entry into the course? If applicants have qualifications and experience in excess of that required, how much credit can be granted in the course?
- How long does the course run (full-time equivalent)?
- What study modes are available (full-time, part-time, on campus, external, online, etc.)?
- What content will be taught in the course? (Normally, one would expect to find subject descriptions, including topics covered, hours of attendance, assessment requirements.)
- What practical experience is provided in the course? How many days will be spent in supervised practical experience, in what settings, and how is it distributed over the years of the course?
- What skills does the course develop (Normally a statement of the aims/objectives of the course.)

In assembling information for this project, university handbooks and additional websites were found to be of variable quality. In many cases, multiple websites needed to be visited to assemble information about a single course. It was often difficult to locate what could be considered the basic minimum information that could be considered essential information for prospective students.

In some cases, there was a mismatch between the declared age-span focus of the course and the career opportunities that it opened up. In one case the course title included “3 to 8 years,” but graduates obtained full Primary registration, so they needed to be prepared to teach the full age span to 12 years. Other courses with a “3 to 8” focus did not enable graduates to gain Primary registration. In addition, universities have seen the market for Early Childhood programs (birth – 5 years) decreasing, with vocational courses like a Diploma in Children’s Services being seen as the more appropriate pathway into the ECD workforce working with children birth – 2 years.

Although there were some common patterns among course titles, it was not possible to discern the role or function of a course simply by inspecting its title. For example, a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education could be of one, two or four years’ duration, and its focus could be on the age span’s birth to 5 years, birth or 3 to 8 or 12 years, or even (in one case) birth to 12 years.

More recently there has been a move toward the development of postgraduate courses, including Graduate Diplomas and Master of Teaching Degrees, and this move is likely to gain strength in years to come. For these programs, the title gives a clear indication of the length of the course, although a Master of Teaching might still be of two or two and a half years in length, even within the same university.

An informal survey of university course providers in different States and Territories identified these discrepancies between course focus and outcome professional registration as a current concern that needs to be resolved as a matter of some urgency.

Policy implications

1. The age range upon which a course is focused and the age range a graduate is qualified to teach, need to be clearly stated in documentation.
2. Agreement needs to be sought on guidelines for course/unit/subject descriptions in university handbooks that achieve greater transparency with respect to content, modes of delivery, assessment requirements, pre-requisites as well as expectations for practical experience throughout the course (see Issue 3).
3. Some standardisation of course titles would be desirable.

Issue 2: Maintaining sufficient Early Childhood content in Early Childhood courses

It is essential that all courses provide essential and sufficient Early Childhood Education and Care content, irrespective of length of program. The need to prepare Early Childhood educators to work with children in both Primary schools and Early Childhood settings leads, inevitably, to an impact on the Early Childhood content in both undergraduate and graduate programs, as a result of the potential for over-prioritisation of some areas, for example Primary school curriculum requirements. The overall trend of limited Early Childhood Education content can compromise the quality and extent of students' preparation for employment in Early Childhood settings. It was also found that there was a variation in course content apparently preparing students for similar employment outcomes. In addition, many upgrade and transfer programs lacked clear objectives other than providing a fourth year of training and this was also found to have consequences for course content.

From the subject descriptions, it is clear that course content is dominated by Curriculum and Pedagogy subjects, and few would dispute the appropriateness of this emphasis. There is little attention given to Child Development (sometimes a single unit, sometimes 3 or 4 units) which is surprising given the clear indication of the significance of this subject for children's subsequent learning and development outcomes (Ryan & Ackerman, 2004; Downer et al, 2010). Family and Community Contexts are usually present although the development of skills and knowledge for working with CALD families is limited, as found by Ryan and Ackerman (2004). Similarly, the Early Childhood Professional was also usually present. In most courses, History and Philosophy of Early Childhood are notable for their absence. This presents a significant challenge to the field, requiring further analysis and more deliberation to find potential solutions to this emergent problem.

In many cases Curriculum and Pedagogy are integrated, with subject titles such as "Teaching Science" rather than "Science," and it was necessary to infer that the subject includes what may be taught in Science, as well as how Science may be taught. Because of this integration, it can be confidently reported that, across the board, more than two-thirds of course content fall into the Curriculum/Pedagogy area, but it was not possible to specify how much of this was Curriculum and how much was Pedagogy, and it may not be necessary to do so.

But what is the focus of the Curriculum and Pedagogy that is taught? The majority of initial preparation programs combined early childhood and primary teaching, and from the course descriptions and subject outlines, it appeared that there is considerably more focus on primary curriculum and pedagogy than on Early Childhood curriculum and pedagogy. Also, there are teacher registration requirements in all states and territories that may specify what must be included in Primary teacher preparation programs for graduates to be registered. While no such requirements exist in the Early Childhood field, the question that inevitably arises is whether early childhood curriculum and pedagogy are being neglected in these combined courses.

The ready availability of Primary curriculum frameworks in all states and territories provides a clear basis for designing the curriculum elements of courses for Primary teachers. Until recently, the Early Childhood Education and Care field has lacked authoritative statements about curriculum and pedagogy. In Early Childhood education, without an authoritative national statement, there has been room for greater variety in curriculum and pedagogy. Hence, there is one program focussing entirely on Montessori methods, and the possibility exists that other programs are designed around the skills and philosophies of the available staff.

With the release of the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009), the opportunity exists to design programs for teachers of Early Childhood Education and Care around this framework¹¹. Programs based on particular approaches and philosophies (e.g., Montessori) can still be constructed taking account of this framework, since this approach to program development allows for different routes to the same Learning Outcomes.

Given the recency of the EYLF, the courses examined here would mostly not have been designed with the intention of matching their outcomes to those of the EYLF.

It is clear that in the near future, teachers of Early Childhood will require four years of training- as is now the case with Primary and Secondary school teachers. At present, this may be met by completing:

- a four-year bachelors degree focussed entirely on Early Childhood education;
- a four-year bachelors degree covering both Early Childhood and Primary education;
- a two- or three-year course following a Diploma in Children's Services, or similar;
- a two- (or two and a half) year Masters degree, following any undergraduate degree;
- a one-year Graduate Diploma following any undergraduate degree;
- a one-year upgrade following a course in Primary education; or
- a one-year upgrade following a three-year bachelors degree in Early Childhood Education.

Just what are the essential knowledge and skills required to teach in early childhood education and care settings, and how long does it take to learn them? One could infer from the above that it requires anything from four years of study in Early Childhood education to just one year, or even less. An experienced teacher with a three-year Bachelors degree in Early Childhood education is considered less than fully qualified, but will be considered four-year trained upon completion of one more year's study in the field. This is the same situation as a person with an undergraduate degree in Arts, Science or Commerce and no qualifications or experience in teaching.

The starting point for consideration appears to be the requirement to complete a minimum four years of post-secondary education, and programs are designed to meet this requirement. School leavers can learn what is needed in four years, so it seems, while university graduates only need one or two years. This is a common feature of postgraduate degree programs, and is built on the assumption that skills obtained in the undergraduate degree transfer to the postgraduate program. While this may be true for many skills, it is unlikely to be true for specific content, so particular attention needs to be paid to the content of postgraduate programs.

Important conditions need to be met if the demands of state and territory accrediting bodies for Primary teaching course content are not to be the main driver for Early Childhood course design and implementation. This project found indications that the pressures for coverage of Primary content in a degree award were contributing to the erosion of Early Childhood content, with consequences for the quality and comprehensiveness of the student experience provided as preparation for employment in Early Childhood settings.

Within universities, it is common for specialists in Primary education to be more numerous, more experienced and more highly qualified than specialists in Early Childhood Education. Often this means that they have a stronger influence on decisions about course design and content, and the risk is that this may lead to course design in Early Childhood/Primary courses that pays insufficient attention to Early Childhood content. If graduates feel better prepared at the Primary level than they do at the Early Childhood level, this is likely to contribute to the loss of these graduates from the Early Childhood sector.

¹¹ University Handbooks examined here would have been prepared during early 2009, while the EYLF was not published until December 2009.

Decreasing Early Childhood content also has an impact upon the current employment cycles within universities because the less Early Childhood content that is taught, the fewer full time qualified Early Childhood academics will be needed to staff the program. Potentially, having fewer dedicated staff can lead to Early Childhood having a minority voice during the redevelopment of courses, and may result in further reduction in Early Childhood course content due to the demands of accreditation for Primary registration. Without an equally strong Early Childhood professional accreditation process nationally or within particular states and territories, Primary units may displace Early Childhood content. This has been the experience of project staff working in universities that have fewer Early Childhood academic staff as a proportion of Primary staff, and that do not have an external Early Childhood accreditation panel through which courses are approved. (It should be noted that in Victoria, Early Childhood Australia does have specification requirements for all Victorian Early Childhood qualifications).

A four-year degree qualification is now the norm for Early Childhood educators to be seen as “fully qualified” and therefore able to take full advantage of opportunities for advancement within their profession. Upgrade and transfer courses serve a variety of functions, one of the most important being to enable educators with a three-year degree to become four-year trained. But upgrade and transfer courses can do more than meet statutory requirements; they can contribute to the professional development of the teaching workforce, as the best of them clearly do. There are many ways in which upgrade and transfer courses can contribute to the professional development of Early Childhood educators. Among these are:

- Providing opportunities for educators with three-year degrees obtained some time ago (say, ten years or more) to update themselves about recent developments in the profession and in theories and research in Early Childhood education, and the changing demands on Early Childhood educators.
- Providing opportunities to engage in professional development and preparation for leadership roles in Early Childhood Education and Care services.
- Providing opportunities to develop capacity in the area of teacher research and reflective thinking as a basis for informing early years practice (see Moyles et al, 2002).
- Providing opportunities to add Primary education to their existing qualifications and skill set, to support movement between the Early Childhood and the Primary school sector.

Course descriptions were searched for statements that identified a clear professional development objective, but very few were found. More often, it appeared that the key purpose was to provide a fourth year so that educators with three-year degrees could become four-year trained, and therefore be “fully” qualified.

In designing a course to enable an upgrade or transfer to Early Childhood education, the key design question should be “What *extra* knowledge do Early Childhood educators need that they would not have gained from a previous program of study or previous experience?” Courses intended to develop leadership skills, or to introduce candidates to new thinking and research about children’s learning and development, as well as dealing with the rapidly changing regulatory and quality assurance environment, may provide a context which more appropriately offers units that specifically address these issues with the intent to develop capacity and future leadership opportunities within the profession. Courses designed which address these questions would look quite different to many of the courses interrogated for this project.

Among longstanding Early Childhood content noted across Early Childhood awards were the following:

- Infant and child development
- Play
- Early Childhood pedagogy
- Early Childhood curriculum theory and design
- Family studies
- Observations and assessment of very young children
- Professional planning and evaluation
- Early Childhood inclusivity (disability, culture, etc)
- Early Childhood pedagogical leadership
- The social context of Early Childhood
- Early Childhood environments

Very few programs included a majority of these topics and some contained very few. The Productivity Commission Issues Paper (2010: 23) identified that ECD workers may well require a range of skills and knowledge in order to effectively educate and care for all children including those:

- from low socioeconomic status backgrounds
- from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and
- with disabilities and additional needs.

It is anticipated that these skills and knowledge will need to be addressed as new courses are developed in the future.

There are teacher registration requirements in all states and territories that may specify what must be included in Primary teacher preparation programs for graduates to be registered. While no such requirements exist in the Early Childhood field (except in Victoria), the question that inevitably arises is whether Early Childhood curriculum and pedagogy are being adequately addressed in these combined courses.

Due to the diversity of state and territory needs, it is not surprising to find a huge variation in course content, even among courses that, on the surface, appear to be preparing graduates to fill similar roles. Interestingly, this has also been found with respect to literacy subjects in 4 year Primary teacher education programs (DEST, 2005: Appendix 2). As noted previously, the diversity of course content is greater in the Early Childhood courses, where there have been until recently no authoritative curriculum statements.

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), coming into effect in 2012, will be responsible for approving educational qualifications, and will compile and publish a national register. It is important that the profession take the initiative in providing the ACECQA with the best possible advice on this.

Policy implications

4. Consultation needs to occur within the profession to identify the core content that should be included in all courses that prepare students to become Early Childhood educators, even when the graduates qualify to teach in Primary schools as well.
5. A set of knowledge and skills essential to the Early Childhood sector need to be included in all Early childhood courses.
6. Work needs to be undertaken to identify the professional learning needs of experienced Early Childhood educators, and developing courses (including upgrade and transfer courses) to meet those needs.

7. Tertiary institutions need to be encouraged to offer upgrade and transfer course descriptions that make clear links between the course content and the kind of professional learning that the course seeks to achieve.
8. Employers need to work with university course providers in order to inform course development and content.

Issue 3: Providing appropriate and sufficient professional experience in Early Childhood settings

Most states/territories specify minimum requirements for practical experience via the teacher registration process, and increasingly through course accreditation requirements, usually in terms of numbers of days of supervised practice, and one has to assume that these requirements are met. But it is almost impossible to confirm this by referring to course documentation. Sometimes practical experience was explicitly mentioned and described as such; in other situations it was presented as part of coursework, and details were almost impossible to identify. The really vital information – the amount and nature of professional experience provided in Early Childhood settings - could rarely be discerned. There is a concern that in some combined Early Childhood and Primary courses, the proportion of Early Childhood placements may be less than optimal, due to the greater ease of arranging Primary placements.

The concerns expressed above in relation to course content apply also to the provision of professional experience. In the Primary teaching sector there is a major employer (the relevant state/territory department) with capacity and a strong incentive to maintain a flow of graduates with appropriate experience and knowledge, and the capacity to direct resources to encourage this flow. The greater decentralisation of the Early Childhood sector makes it more difficult to maintain this flow. Often, therefore, course providers have great difficulty in identifying appropriate placements for Early Childhood sector, and the risk is that this may be addressed by providing additional Primary placements. To the extent that this happens, graduates from combined Primary/Early Childhood programs may enter the profession with insufficient or inappropriate professional experience in Early Childhood settings.

In an ideal world, universities would clearly specify information pertaining to practicum requirements on their websites and in their handbooks. Clear information on the number of practicum days required, number of practicum, whether or not they are to be taken throughout a semester or as a block, and whether or not placements are embedded in units, would all be clearly articulated on websites and in handbooks. Where a course provides a dual qualification (e.g. Early Childhood/Primary) the course description would be explicit about the activities and the number of days devoted to each. State and Territory regulatory authorities would frame their requirements in similar fashion, and how these requirements were being met would be available for all to see.

It was extremely difficult to determine how many of the one- and two-year courses structured their programs to ensure that their students were given experience in an appropriate range of settings. In some cases, it was not at all obvious that graduates of upgrade or transfer programs were receiving the professional experience in Early Childhood settings that they will need to enter the Early Childhood education sector. However, this may prove difficult for universities. Some universities may have restrictions on the amount of information they are able to include on their website or in their handbooks, and hence course specific information such as practicum days, may seem of less importance than other information. On websites, the inclusion of links to more detailed course descriptions can overcome these restrictions.

It is important to note that the role of the practicum in both upgrade and transfer courses requires serious consideration. Where experienced teachers undertake a one-year course to upgrade from a three-year Early Childhood degree to a four-year degree, the most useful experience for them may not necessarily be a *standard* practicum placement in their own or another Early Childhood setting. These teachers may, however, benefit from engaging in structured action research involving observation and reflection on their own teaching and/or that of colleagues. For students transferring from other specialisms, including Primary teaching, there will be a need for greater standard experiences within settings alongside other professionals.

In addition, where the transfer is from a Primary qualification to Early Childhood, practical experience in Early Childhood Education and Care settings would clearly be a necessity. If the program focuses on developing leadership skills, a completely different set of practical experiences (e.g., working with committees of management and local communities) may be appropriate. Where teachers are already employed in a prior-to-school setting (and possibly enrolled as external students), this may extend their experience in ways that are of direct benefit to them and to their employers.

Most states/territories specify minimum requirements for practical experience, usually in terms of numbers of days of supervised practice. While it may be possible that all courses meet these requirements, the mode of presentation of the information was so variable that it was often impossible to ascertain just what the practicum requirements of the course might be. Sometimes practical experience was explicitly mentioned and described; in other situations it was presented as part of coursework, and one had to delve into subject descriptions to find further information such as the number of placement days included, along with project or assignment work, embedded within a single listed subject.

The amount of practicum required varied with the length of the course, and graduates from four-year initial preparation programs might well emerge with more practical experience than graduates from two-year graduate Masters programs or one year Graduate Diplomas. How do the one- and two-year courses structure their programs to ensure that their students are given experience in an appropriate range of settings? Course documentation provides little reassurance that this is happening; rarely did it provide the level of detail required to make that judgment.

As noted on pp. 23-24 of this report, the variation in the total number of days is substantial, and raises more questions, including:

- What is the appropriate balance between practicum experience and subject studies?
- Are the days specified all ‘supervised’ days? If so, how well-trained are the supervisors?
- Who conducts the assessment of practicum experiences?
- How do Universities ensure they have an adequate supply of appropriate practicum sites?
- How are the days funded? There are two major costs involved- the highly visible cost of payments to supervisors in the field, and the largely invisible costs associated with the organisation and administration of a sometimes complex program of placements.

The quality of the placement experience (high quality teaching standards, advanced teachers, supportive settings etc) is important if students are to spend periods of time on placement.

In general, practicum requirements were not well documented and there appeared to be a greater focus on meeting statutory requirements than on addressing the specific educational needs of students. Indeed, a previous mapping study on pre-service teacher education in Australia showed that the quality and quantity of professional experience was an issue for many respondents (Ingvarson, Beavis, Kleinhenz & Elliott, 2004). It seems that little has changed in the intervening years – there is still relatively little evidence-based research on the value and effectiveness of professional experience models and lengths of school placements.

However, Ackerman (2004), along with Sheridan and colleagues (2009), stress the need to clearly link practical experience with other course information and they identify feedback as a part of this experience as essential to consolidate appropriate professional learning.

Policy implications

9. Resources need to be directed at supporting course providers and providing incentives to employing bodies, to ensure that sufficient and appropriate places are available for Early Childhood practicum placements.
10. In combined Early Childhood/Primary courses, the amount and nature of the professional experience provided in Early Childhood settings needs to be carefully monitored to ensure that an appropriate balance is achieved.
11. Documentation about the provision and assessment of professional experience needs to be more complete and transparent.
12. Adequate supervision of student teachers needs to be established, along with strong partnerships with professional experience providers.

Issue 4: The availability of qualified academic staff in Early Childhood Education.

The preparation of Early Childhood educators, like that of Primary teachers before it, has historically been located in single purpose institutions located outside universities. Its move into the university sector has not been without difficulty. Like Primary education, there has been an acute shortage of Early Childhood educators with the higher degree qualification and research experience that universities demand for advancement and even survival in the university sector. This shortage will take time to overcome, but it is important that it remain a key objective of the profession.

Although it goes beyond the brief of this project, it seems pertinent to ask questions about the qualifications of the staff providing these courses in universities. Since the preparation of Early Childhood educators was absorbed into the university sector, there has been an acute shortage of staff with the higher degree qualifications that universities demand for advancement and even for survival in the university sector. In selecting university staff, superior expertise is important, but it may take second place to the possession of a higher degree or a successful research and publication record. The result is that Early Childhood education staff are often among the most junior within their faculties and compared to other faculties.

There are other factors constraining the development of a highly qualified core of Early Childhood Educators in universities, and among them is the increasing casualisation of University staff (e.g. Coates & Goedegebuure, 2010: 13). As in other professional fields, academic salaries do not compare well with those earned by leaders in the profession, so they tend to be filled by relatively junior staff. Consequently, many have been forced into contract positions or sessional appointments, and may lack the professional status in their dealings with other departments and faculties within their universities.

Very little productive interaction between course convenors in VET and HE sectors occurs in the field of ECEC, even in the dual-sector institution. Lack of institutional support (on one or both sides) was cited as a reason for this, along with a lack of time, as many staff are employed on a sessional basis (Watson, 2006: 47).

In addition, the permanent academic staff may well be qualified in other disciplines, for instance, Psychology or Linguistics, rather than in more specific early childhood studies.. The extent to which this is occurring, and the types of issues it raises, go well beyond the scope of this report, but are

worthy of further serious study. However, it is worth noting that Early and Winston (2001) in the US, point out from their findings that most faculties lacked capacity with respect to Early Childhood staff.

This is not a problem that will be solved overnight, but over time, as with Primary education, it is likely that more and more four-year Early Childhood graduates will complete higher degrees, take part in research and publication activities, and progress into careers in teacher education. It can be accelerated by increasing the opportunities available for able Early Childhood education specialists to progress rapidly to higher degrees.

Policy implications

13. More than any other field in Education, tertiary staff in the Early Childhood field need to be given support and encouragement by their employers to complete higher degrees, and take part in other research opportunities. (The support could take several forms, including scholarship programs and more generous study leave provisions).
14. The major employers (State and Territory departments responsible for the provision of education in Primary school and Early Childhood settings) might consider ways to provide incentives in the form of professional advancement for employees in priority areas (of which Early Childhood would surely be one) who complete relevant advanced-level studies in their fields of employment.

Further Research

The first section of this report noted that international research on the outcomes of teacher education for children who have attended Early Childhood settings has only limited usefulness in shaping policy in the absence of additional Australian research. While it is clear that teacher qualifications are important, there is no evidence documenting the extent to which different qualifications have differential impacts. The issues raised in this project, signal that caution is needed in framing policy implications from the evidence available. The issues raised in this here highlight areas of knowledge about Australian Early Childhood Education that demand caution in the consideration of future research directions that could usefully inform policy.

The mapping and analysis exercise documented the diversity of Early Childhood teacher education programs in Australia. Such diversity may reflect institutional histories, state registration requirements and other systemic regulations, as well as variables related to rurality, indigenous educational needs, increasing cultural diversity, Primary school staffing requirements, and increasing demand for child care places associated with employment profiles in different communities. The variety of program types that has evolved to cater for such diversity is generally seen as a positive feature of Early Childhood teacher education, reflecting a philosophical commitment to community and educational diversity. Furthermore the introduction of the *Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF) which, in contrast to a prescriptive curriculum document, allows for different pedagogical routes to achieve the same Learning Outcomes, and so supports the maintenance of diversity in Early Childhood teacher education. A qualification to the valuing of diversity is that little is known of the outcomes of such diverse provisions for either teacher careers or for children's learning and development. The following suggestions for future investigation arise from this gap in current knowledge.

The difficulties experienced in analysing documents that incorporate different structures and terminology, may to some extent be driven by university constraints on program documentation, and it would be useful to apply qualitative research approaches using a multiple case study design to gain a better understanding of the constraints under which these are produced. This would enable researchers to interact with participants in order to ascertain the rationale and meanings of program descriptions more effectively than this project has been able to do. In addition it would be valuable to explore the ways that some participants use to overcome the limitations that have been imposed.

The difficulty of distinguishing pedagogy and curriculum units and identifying the nature of their content was highlighted during this project. This may be in part a function of the holistic philosophy that has influenced the growth of Early Childhood Education but could also reflect conceptual confusion about the nature of effective teaching and learning in the early years. It is therefore important that teacher educators are able to access research about the nature and outcomes of pedagogy and curriculum in a teacher education program that prepares graduates to teach in both the Early Childhood and Primary sectors.

The project highlighted the preponderance of Early Childhood Education programs that prepare graduates to work in the Primary sector, and the associated potential reduction in Early Childhood content in these programs. The introduction of the *EYLF* for birth to five years also signals a need to research the impact of this framework on both the nature of teacher education programs and the academic research generated by the framework which may inform teacher education. For instance, handbooks that were prepared during 2009 for 2010 courses would not have been expected to address the requirements for meeting the demands of the *EYLF*.

In this regard, it is worth noting New Zealand's experience with *Te Whariki* (also a framework, not a prescriptive curriculum). A review of Early Childhood teacher education programs in New Zealand, commissioned by the New Zealand Ministry of Education (see Kane, 2005; Kane et al, 2000), reported the same difficulty of distinguishing curriculum and pedagogical units as in this current project. Further, commissioned reviews (Meade, 2010; Nuttall, 2010) of the two major strands of Ministry-funded Early Childhood research following *Te Whariki*'s implementation, the Centre of Innovation program and the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative, highlighted the lack of attention to domain (or disciplinary) knowledge and a narrowing of theory in research.

The potential for imbalance in teacher education curriculum draws attention to the desirability of monitoring the influence of Primary and Early Childhood curricula on the content of these Australian teacher education programs. A framework that focuses on processes rather than content may well be dominated by the more visible Primary curricula requirements. Alternatively, there are opportunities to extend knowledge of appropriate pedagogical content knowledge across both Early Childhood and Primary sectors if research agendas target this focus.

Given this, it is suggested there would be value in pursuing the following research directions:

1. *Research using a qualitative multiple case study design to increase the Australian knowledge base about how research informs curricula and pedagogy in Early Childhood teacher education programs and how Primary curricula and the EYLF influence the nature of coursework, and*
2. *Research to increase knowledge of the outcomes of different types of Early Childhood teacher education programs for teacher effectiveness, teacher career trajectories and the staffing of Early Childhood provisions.*

Ultimately, the effectiveness of teacher education is evaluated by its outcomes for children, a focus which was beyond the specifications of the current review. A logical future direction would be to consider an Australian longitudinal study to establish outcomes for children. Research using such a design would allow the investigation of the impact of teacher education variables on outcomes for children using both case study and multivariate statistical procedures.

A further implication for research from the findings of this project, point to the value of tracking of graduates through to their professional and career choices. While efforts to collect these data after students have graduated and entered the workforce have frequently failed to gather such information, a more targeted possibility for success may well be to survey students before their final assessment period; that is, during their last semester/trimester of study.

3. *Research that provides data on the professional and career choices that students make while completing their final units of study, and the reasons for these decisions.*

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APPENDIX A: COURSE DETAILS (2010)

	University	Course Title	Age focus	Length (FT)	Course Grouping	URL
1	Australian Catholic University	B Teach (Early Childhood)	0 - 5 yrs	3 yrs	3-year Initial	http://www.acu.edu.au/courses/undergraduate/education/bachelor_of_teaching_early_childhood/
2	Australian Catholic University	B Ed (Early Childhood & Primary)	0 - 12 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 12 years	http://www.acu.edu.au/about_acu/publications/handbooks/2009/faculty_of_education/coursecampus_tables/undergraduate_courses/bachelor_of_education_early_childhood_and_Primary/
3	Avondale College	B Ed (Early Childhood)	0 - 8 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 8 years	http://www.avondale.edu.au/courses/Undergraduate/bachelor_of_education_(early_childhood)
4	Batchelor Institute	B Teach (Early Childhood)	0 - 5 yrs	3 yrs	3-year Initial	https://www.batchelor.edu.au/files/file/SEASS_Courses/BeD_EC.pdf
5	Batchelor Institute	B Ed (Early Childhood)	0 - 8 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 8 years	https://www.batchelor.edu.au/files/file/SEASS_Courses/BeD_EC.pdf
6	Central Queensland University	B Learning Management (Early Childhood Education)	3 - 12 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 3 - 12 years	http://handbook.cqu.edu.au/Handbook/programs_1.jsp;jsessionid=8a4d179b30d8937e3ee01ee34444abb9ea75d84d72eb.e34MaxeRbhuObi0QbNyQah0Pbhv0n6jAmljGr5XDqQLvpAe?code=CU78
7	Charles Darwin University	B Early Childhood Learning	3 - 8 yrs	2yrs	Graduate Program	http://stapps.cdu.edu.au/pls/apex/f?p=100:30:835079394159659::NO::
8	Charles Darwin University	Grad Dip in Teaching & Learning	3 - 8 yrs	1 yr	Graduate Program	http://stapps.cdu.edu.au/pls/apex/f?p=100:30:835079394159659::NO::
9	Charles Darwin University	B Teach & Learning (Early Childhood)	3 - 8 years	4 yrs	Initial 3 - 8 years	http://stapps.cdu.edu.au/pls/apex/f?p=100:30:835079394159659::NO::
10	Charles Darwin University	B Teach& Learning (Preservice) with EC Specialisation	3 - 8 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 3 - 8 years	http://stapps.cdu.edu.au/pls/apex/f?p=100:30:835079394159659::NO::
11	Charles Darwin University	B Teaching & Learning/ B App Sci or B Creative Arts	3 - 8 years	4 yrs	Initial 3 - 8 years	http://stapps.cdu.edu.au/pls/apex/f?p=100:30:835079394159659::NO::
12	Charles Darwin University	B Teach & Learning Inservice (Early Childhood)	Not specified	1 yr	Upgrade 3-4 years	http://stapps.cdu.edu.au/pls/apex/f?p=100:30:835079394159659::NO::
13	Charles Darwin University	B Childrens Services	0 - 5 yrs	1 yr	Upgrade Dip to Deg	http://stapps.cdu.edu.au/pls/apex/f?p=100:30:835079394159659::NO::
14	Charles Sturt University	B Ed (Early Childhood & Primary)	0 - 12 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 12 years	http://www.csu.edu.au/courses/undergraduate/early_childhood/course-overview
15	Charles Sturt University	B Ed (Birth to 5 years)*	0 - 5 yrs	2 yrs	Upgrade Dip to	http://www.csu.edu.au/courses/undergraduate/teaching_graduate/course

University	Course Title	Age focus	Length (FT)	Course Grouping	URL	
				Deg	-overview	
16	Charles Sturt University	B Teach (Birth to 5 years)	0 - 5 yrs	1 yr	Upgrade Dip to Deg	http://www.csu.edu.au/courses/undergraduate/teaching_graduate/course-overview
17	Curtin University	B Ed (Early Childhood Education)	0 - 8 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 8 years	http://courses.curtin.edu.au/course_overview/undergraduate/early-childhood-education&hideHeader=true
18	Deakin University *	B Early Childhood Education	0 - 5 yrs	2 yrs	Upgrade 3-4 years	http://www.deakin.edu.au/arts-ed/education/ece/index.php
19	Deakin University *	B Early Childhood Education (Hons)	0 - 5 yrs	2 yrs	Upgrade 3-4 years	http://www.deakin.edu.au/arts-ed/education/ece/index.php
20	Deakin University *	B Early Childhood Education	0 - 5 yrs	2 yrs	Upgrade Dip to Deg	http://www.deakin.edu.au/arts-ed/education/ece/index.php
21	Deakin University *	B Early Childhood Education (Hons)	0 - 5 yrs	2 yrs	Upgrade Dip to Deg	http://www.deakin.edu.au/arts-ed/education/ece/index.php
22	Edith Cowan University	Grad Dip of Educ (Early Childhood Studies)	3 - 8 yrs	1 yr	Graduate Program	http://handbook.ecu.edu.au/CourseStructure.asp?disyear=2011&CID=1054&USID=0&UCID=0&UID=0&Ver=6.03&HB=HB&SC=PG
23	Edith Cowan University	B Ed (Early Childhood Studies)	0 - 8 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 8 years	http://www.education.ecu.edu.au/courses/becoming_a_teacher/early_childhood_studies.html
24	Edith Cowan University	B Ed (Kindergarten through Primary)	3 - 12 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 3 - 12 years	http://www.education.ecu.edu.au/courses/becoming_a_teacher/k7.html
25	Edith Cowan University	Grad Cert of Education (Early Childhood Studies)	3 - 5 yrs	1 yr	Upgrade from Primary	http://handbook.ecu.edu.au/CourseStructure.asp?disyear=2011&CID=1261&USID=0&UCID=0&UID=0&Ver=5&HB=HB&SC=PG
26	Flinders University	B Ed (Early Childhood)/B Arts	0 - 8 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 8 years	http://www.flinders.edu.au/courses/undergrad/bedecba/
27	Flinders University	B.Ed (Early Childhood and Special Education)/B. Disability Studies	0 - 8 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 8 years	http://www.flinders.edu.au/courses/rules/undergrad/bedecsebds.cfm
28	Flinders University	M. Teach (Early Childhood)	0 - 8 yrs	2 yrs	Graduate Program	http://www.flinders.edu.au/courses/rules/postgrad/mtec.cfm
29	Griffith University	Grad Dip of Early Childhood Education	0-8 yrs	1 yr	Graduate Program	http://www.griffith.edu.au/education/early-childhood/programs-courses/graduate-diploma-early-childhood-education
30	Griffith University	B Child & Family Studies/ B Ed Primary	0 - 12 yrs	4.5 yrs	Initial 0 - 12 years	http://www.griffith.edu.au/education/early-childhood/programs-courses/bachelor-education-Primary
31	James Cook University	B Ed (Early Childhood Education)	0 - 8 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 8 years	http://www-public.jcu.edu.au/courses/course_info/index.htm?userText=36110-BED-ECE-2010

	University	Course Title	Age focus	Length (FT)	Course Grouping	URL
32	James Cook University	B Ed Professional Development (Early Childhood Major)	Not specified	1 yr	Upgrade 3-4 years	http://www-public.jcu.edu.au/courses/course_info/index.htm?userText=38110-BEP-ECE
33	Macquarie University	B Teach (Early Childhood Services)	0 -5 yrs	3 years	3-year initial	http://www.courses.mq.edu.au/public/view/2011/Undergraduate/Degree/Bachelor+of+Teaching+%28Early+Childhood+Services%29
34	Macquarie University	B Ed (Early Childhood Education)	0 - 12 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 12 years	http://www.handbook.mq.edu.au/2010/DegreesDiplomas/Degree/Bachelor+of+Education+(Early+Childhood+Education)
35	Macquarie University	Grad Dip in Early Childhood	0 - 5 yrs	1 yr	Upgrade 3-4 years	http://www.handbook.mq.edu.au/2010/DegreesDiplomas/UGDegree/Graduate+Diploma+in+Early+Childhood
36	Monash University	Grad Dip Ed (Early Childhood Education)	0 - 5 yrs	1 yr	Graduate Program	http://monash.edu/pubs/handbooks/courses/3201.html
37	Monash University	B Early Childhood Education	0 - 12 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 12 years	http://www.monash.edu.au/pubs/handbooks/courses/1515.html
38	Monash University	B Early Childhood Studies	0-5 yrs	3 yrs	Upgrade Dip to Deg	http://monash.edu/pubs/handbooks/courses/3708.html
39	Montessori World Educational Institute	Grad Dip Ed (Montessori)	0-12 yrs	1 yr	Graduate Program	http://www.mwei.org.au/wordpress/?page_id=156
40	Murdoch University	Grad Cert in Early Childhood Education	0 - 8 yrs	0.5 yrs	Upgrade from Primary	http://www.murdoch.edu.au/Courses/Graduate-Certificate-in-Early-Childhood-Education/
41	Murdoch University	B Ed (Early Childhood & Primary Educ)	3 - 12 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 3 - 12 years	http://www.murdoch.edu.au/Courses/Early-Childhood-and-Primary-Education/Course-structure/
42	Murdoch University	Grad Dip Ed Studies (Early Childhood Education)	3 - 8 yrs ?	1 yr	Upgrade 3-4 years	http://www.murdoch.edu.au/Courses/Graduate-Diploma-in-Education-Studies/
43	Queensland University of Technology	B Early Childhood Studies	0 -5 yrs	3 years	3-year initial	http://www.go.qut.edu.au/documents/ug_edu.pdf
44	Queensland University of Technology	B Ed (Early Childhood)	0 - 8 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 8 years	http://www.courses.qut.edu.au/cgi-bin/WebObjects/Courses.woa/wa/selectMajorFromMain?courseID=9538
45	Queensland University of Technology	B Early Childhood	0 - 5 yrs	3 yrs	Upgrade Dip to deg	http://www.go.qut.edu.au/documents/ug_edu.pdf
46	Queensland University of Technology	B Ed (Preservice Early Childhood)	0 - 8 yrs	2.5 yrs	Upgrade Dip to Deg	http://www.go.qut.edu.au/documents/ug_edu.pdf
47	RMIT University	Grad Dip of Education (Early Childhood)	0 - 5 yrs	1 yr	Graduate Program	http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse/Study%20at%20RMIT%2FTypes%20of%20study%2FDegrees%2FAll%20programs%2FE%2FID=GD108;S

University	Course Title	Age focus	Length (FT)	Course Grouping	URL	
					TATUS=A	
48	RMIT University	B Ed	0 - 12 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 12 years	http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse/Study%20at%20RMIT%2FTypes%20of%20study%2FDegrees%2FAil%20programs%2FE%2F;ID=BP046;STATUS=A
49	RMIT University	B Ed (Early Childhood Education)	0 - 8 yrs	3 yrs	Upgrade Dip to Deg	http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse/Study%20at%20RMIT%2FTypes%20of%20study%2FDegrees%2FAil%20programs%2FB%2F;ID=BP260;STATUS=A
50	RMIT University	Grad Dip in Early Childhood Teaching	0 - 5 yrs	1 yr	Upgrade from Primary	http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=GD034
51	Southern Cross University	B Ed (Early Childhood)	0 - 8 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 8 years	http://www.scu.edu.au/coursesin2011/?action=matrix&command=matrix_temp_load&spk_no=302088
52	University of Ballarat	B Ed (Early Childhood)	0 - 12 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 12 years	http://www.ballarat.edu.au/ProgramFinder/displayProgram.jsp?ID=888
53	University of Ballarat	B Teach (Early Childhood Education)	0 - 5 yrs	1.5 yrs	Upgrade Dip to Deg	http://www.ballarat.edu.au/ProgramFinder/displayProgram.jsp?ID=777
54	University of Canberra	B Ed in Early Childhood Teaching (Graduate Entry)	3 - 12 yrs	2 yrs	Graduate Program	http://www.canberra.edu.au/courses-units/ug/education/788aa
55	University of Canberra	B Ed in Early Childhood Teaching (Birth-8)	0 - 12 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 12 years	http://www.canberra.edu.au/courses/index.cfm?action=detail&courseid=446AA&year=2009
56	University of Canberra	B Ed in Early Childhood Teaching (3-8 years)	3 - 8 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 3 - 8 years	http://www.canberra.edu.au/courses/index.cfm?action=detail&courseid=866AA&year=2009
57	University of Canberra	B Ed in Early Childhood Teaching (Conversion)	3 - 8 yrs	1 yr	Upgrade 3-4 years	http://www.canberra.edu.au/courses-units/ug/education/domestic-only/856aa
58	University of Melbourne	M Teach (Early Childhood)	0 - 5 yrs	2 yrs	Graduate Program	https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/current/G04-EA
59	University of Melbourne	M Teach (Early Years)	0 - 8 yrs	2 yrs	Graduate Program	https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/current/G04-EA
60	University of Melbourne	Post-Graduate Dip Teach (Early Childhood)	0 - 5 yrs	1.5 yrs	Graduate Program	https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/current/G04-EA
61	University of New England	B Ed (Early Childhood)	0 - 8 yrs	1 yr	Upgrade 3-4 years	http://www.une.edu.au/courses/2011/courses/BEDEC
62	University of New England	B Teach (Early Childhood Education)	0 - 8 yrs	2 yrs	Upgrade Dip to Deg	http://www.une.edu.au/courses/2011/courses/BTCHEC

	University	Course Title	Age focus	Length (FT)	Course Grouping	URL
63	University of Newcastle	B Teach (Primary)/Early Childhood Studies	0 - 12 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 12 years	http://www.newcastle.edu.au/what-can-i-study/teaching-Primary-early-childhood-studies
64	University of Notre Dame (Broome)	M Teach (K - Year 7)	3 - 12 yrs	2 yrs	Graduate Program	http://www.nd.edu.au/downloads/broome/courses/Master%20of%20Teaching%20(K-7%20Sept10.pdf
65	University of Notre Dame (Broome)	B Ed (K - year 7)	3 - 12 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 3 - 12 years	http://www.nd.edu.au/downloads/broome/courses/Bachelor%20of%20Education%20(K-7)Sept10.pdf
66	University of Notre Dame (Broome)	B Ed (Conversion) Early Childhood Specialism	No focus	1 yr	Upgrade 3-4 years	http://www.nd.edu.au/downloads/broome/courses/Bachelor%20of%20Education%20ConversionSept10.pdf
67	University of Notre Dame (Fremantle)	B Ed (Early Childhood & Care: 0 - 8 years)	0 - 8 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 8 years	http://www.nd.edu.au/downloads/degree_planners/BEd%20ECE%20REVISED%202011%20111110.pdf
68	University of Notre Dame (Fremantle)	B Ed (ECE) double degree	Not stated	5 yrs	Initial Unstated	http://www.nd.edu.au/downloads/degree_planners/ED%20and%20double%20degrees%202011%20111110.pdf
69	University of Notre Dame (Sydney)	B Ed (Birth to Twelve Years)	0 - 12 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 12 years	http://www.nd.edu.au/downloads/courses/sydney/2010%20Semester%201/Undergrad/B%20Edu%20Birth%20to%20Twelve%20JAN%2010.pdf
70	University of South Australia	B Early Childhood Education	0 - 8 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 8 years	http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/programs/program.asp?Program=MBCE&Year=2011
71	University of South Australia	B Early Childhood Education (Inservice)	0 - 8 yrs	1 yr	Upgrade 3-4 years	https://my.unisa.edu.au/programs/program.asp?Program=MBIE&Year=2010
72	University of Southern Queensland	B Early Childhood	0 - 5 yrs	3 yrs	3-year Initial	http://www.usq.edu.au/handbook/current/edu/BECH.html
73	University of Southern Queensland	B Ed (with Early Childhood specialisation)	0 - 8 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 8 years	http://www.usq.edu.au/handbook/current/edu/BEDU.html http://www.myfuture.edu.au/The%20Facts/Education%20and%20Training/Courses%20and%20Programs/Details.aspx?CourseID=3831#QuickFacts
74	University of Sydney	M Teach (Early Childhood Education)	0 - 5 yrs	2 yrs	Graduate Program	http://sydney.edu.au/education_social_work/future_students/postgraduate/M_Teach/early_childhood.shtml
75	University of Sydney	B Ed (Early Childhood)	0 - 5 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 5 years	http://sydney.edu.au/education_social_work/future_students/undergraduate/bed_early_childhood/index.shtml
76	University of Tasmania	B Ed (Early Childhood)	0 - 8 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 8 years	http://www.studentcentre.utas.edu.au/coursesatutas/Details.aspx?course_id=43A
77	University of the Sunshine Coast	B Early Childhood Education	0 - 8 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 8 years	http://www.usc.edu.au/Students/Handbook/Undergrad/ED303/

	University	Course Title	Age focus	Length (FT)	Course Grouping	URL
78	University of Western Australia	Master of Teaching	3-8 yrs	2 yr	Graduate Program	http://www.education.uwa.edu.au/courses/postgraduate/M Teach-early
79	University of Western Sydney	M Teach (Birth - 12 yrs)	0 - 12 yrs		Graduate Program	http://future.uws.edu.au/postgraduate_study/teach_edu/birth_to_five_years
80	University of Western Sydney	M Teach (Birth - 5 yrs)	0 - 5 yrs	5 yrs	Graduate Program	http://future.uws.edu.au/postgraduate_study/teach_edu/birth_to_five_years
81	University of Western Sydney	B Ed (Birth - 5 years)	0 - 5 yrs	3 yrs	Upgrade Dip to Deg	http://future.uws.edu.au/ug/teach_edu/early_childhood_birth_to_5_years
82	University of Wollongong	B Ed: The Early Years (0 - 5)	0 - 5 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 5 years	http://www.uow.edu.au/educ/courses/childhood/index.html
83	University of Wollongong	Grad Cert in Early Years Education	0 - 5 yrs	1 yr	Upgrade 3-4 years	http://www.uow.edu.au/educ/courses/childhood/UOW065425.html
84	Victoria University	B Ed (Early Childhood/Primary)	0 - 12 yrs	4 yrs	Initial 0 - 12 years	http://www.vu.edu.au/courses/bachelor-of-education-early-childhood-Primary-abec
85	Victoria University	Grad Dip in Early Childhood Education	0 - 8 yrs	1 yr	Upgrade 3-4 years	http://www.vu.edu.au/courses/graduate-diploma-in-early-childhood-education-agee

* The two Deakin University courses are each listed twice as they can be used as an upgrade from Diploma to Degree or as an upgrade from a three-year degree to a four-year degree.