

Overview of the 2026 National Workforce Census (the Census)

Phase	Key actions	Timeframe
<p>Phase one</p> <p>Register for the Census</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Go to education.gov.au/early-childhood/nwc Click the 'Login' button and enter the service Login Code provided in this letter and complete the short form: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Confirm the service contact details. ✓ Nominate a key contact person who will receive the Census communications and be responsible for reviewing, preparing and submitting the Census data. Provide the total number of workers expected to be working during the reference week. 	<p>Non-vacation services, preschools and kindergartens in all states register before 14 September 2026</p> <p>Vacation services in QLD, VIC, SA, NSW, ACT and NT register before 28 September 2026</p> <p>Vacation services in TAS, WA register before 5 October 2026</p>
<p>Phase two</p> <p>Review and prepare the Census data</p>	<p>Before the Census opens for completion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), the registration video tutorial, checklist and other supporting materials to understand the Census requirements. Review the PDF version of the Census which will be provided in advance and identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ the information that will be required for each question and ✓ where that information will come from, including who within your organisation can provide it. Gather the information you will need to answer each question from relevant sources, which may include staff records, service records, HR or payroll systems, the Child Care Management System (CCMS), service managers, or other staff. Have this information ready for when the Census opens for completion. Distribute the Privacy Notice. 	<p>July – August 2026</p>
<p>Phase three</p> <p>Complete the Census</p>	<p>When the Census opens for completion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Enter the prepared data into the Census portal. Submit Census data before the deadline. <p><i>Submission in advance of the deadline is recommended to allow sufficient time for support if required. If any discrepancies are identified in the submitted data, you may be contacted for clarification or amendment.</i></p> <p>The Census will request information for each service based on a seven-day period, referred to as the 'reference week'. The 2026 reference weeks and Census opening dates by service type and state are as follows:</p> <p>Reference week 1: Monday 14 September – Sunday 20 September 2026 For Family Day Care, In-Home Care, OSHC (Before and/or after School Care), Centre Based Day Care, and dedicated Preschools and Kindergartens in all states. The Census opens on Monday 21 September 2026</p> <p>Reference week 2: Monday 28 September – Sunday 4 October 2026 For OSHC (Vacation Care services) in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. The Census opens on Monday 5 October 2026.</p> <p>Reference week 3: Monday 5 October – Sunday 11 October 2026 For OSHC (Vacation Care services) in Tasmania and Western Australia. The Census opens on Monday 12 October 2026.</p>	<p>September – December 2026</p>

If support is required at any stage, please contact the NWC team:
1800 800 996 (free call from 9:00am to 5:00pm AEST on Monday to Friday) or email: nwc@srcentre.com.au