Australian Government
Department of Education

Early Childhood Education and Care
National Workforce Census

2026 Early Childhood Education and Care National Workforce Census Privacy Notice

Please ensure that this notice is made available to all persons employed at your service/s that are included in the National Workforce Census and ensure a copy is made available to parents/guardians, including by posting in a prominent place for parents/guardians.

The Australian Government Department of Education (the department) invites all approved child care services/providers and preschools/kindergartens to complete the 2026 Early Childhood Education and Care National Workforce Census (the Census). The Social Research Centre (SRC) is conducting the Census on behalf of the department.

Why we are collecting this information

The information collected through the National Workforce Census supports governments to understand the availability, characteristics and distribution of the early childhood education and care workforce. This information is used to inform workforce planning, program design, policy development and reporting at the Australian, state and territory levels.

Before a service completes the Census, the department provides the SRC with service contact information so the SRC can contact services for the purpose of administering the Census.

What information is collected

The 2026 Census **does not** collect the names of **workers or children**, however, it will collect certain information including:

- the type of service and operational matters relating to the service such as the service's preschool program delivery;
- head counts of children attending the service and the characteristics of those children (e.g. number of children who identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin or number of children with a long term health condition);
- head counts of workers and some characteristics of those workers such as the number of workers identifying as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person or number of workers with less than 1 year of experience; and
- limited business information about service providers, including sole traders, where this is necessary for early childhood education and care workforce analysis. In some cases, this information may be reasonably identifiable and is handled in accordance with applicable privacy obligations.

If you are a parent or guardian and do not want your child to be included in the head count outlined above, or if you are a worker and do not wish to be included in the Census, you may opt out of participation. Your participation helps improve the quality and usefulness of Census data. However, participation is voluntary, and there are no consequences if you choose to opt out.

If you wish to opt out, you should notify your service by 21 September 2026. If you do not opt out by this date, you will be taken to have consented to participate, and the information outlined above will be provided to the SRC as part of your service's Census response.

The Census also collects limited personal information about the person completing the Census or the service's nominated contact person, such as their name, work email address, work phone number and position title. The SRC uses this information to administer the Census, respond to enquiries, help services complete the Census, and contact services if follow-up is needed for data quality or clarification.

How the information will be used and disclosed

The department publishes the Census data on its website, which you can visit at www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/early-childhood-data-and-reports/national-workforce-census.

Information collected as part of the Census may be used or disclosed by the department:

- for early childhood education and care workforce analysis and related policy development;
- for programs administered by the department that support the early childhood education and care sector;
- to support the delivery and administration of the Preschool Reform Agreement; and
- to link with other information to improve programs, policies and outcomes for the early childhood education and care workforce and young children.

Information collected as part of the Census may also be disclosed to:

- other Australian Government departments, the Productivity Commission, or entities (such as the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) and 'SNAICC - National Voice for our Children') with responsibility for early childhood education and care policy development;
- the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) for the purposes of the ABS, including but not limited to statistical analysis of child care providers or services;
- state and territory government departments, authorities and agencies with responsibility for early childhood education and care policy development or administration of the Education and Care Services National Law; and
- researchers with a genuine interest in the field of early childhood education and care and for research for the public benefit.

Census data handled by the SRC is stored on servers located in Australia as described in srcentre.com.au/privacy. The department will not disclose personal information submitted as part of the Census to any overseas recipients.

More information

For any queries in relation to the matters contained in this notice, or the Census more broadly, please contact:

The Social Research Centre:
1800 800 996 (free call)
nwc@srcentre.com.au

The Department of Education:
ecec-nwc@education.gov.au

Detailed information on the 2026 NWC can be found at:
srcentre.com.au/nwc

For more information about how the SRC and the department handles personal information, including information about how to make a privacy complaint and seek access to and correction of your personal information see:

- the SRC's Privacy Policy at: srcentre.com.au/privacy
- the department's Privacy Policy at: https://www.education.gov.au/using-site/privacy