



ANZSCO 2411-11 Western Australia

Early Childhood (Pre-primary School) Teacher March 2014

Current labour market rating

No shortage

Previous labour market rating (April 2013)

No shortage

Comments

There have been no shortages of early childhood teachers for several years. The most recent research (March 2014) shows that the majority of employers across the state, experienced few difficulties with the recruitment of qualified and suitable applicants to fill their vacancies. Employers favoured experienced teachers and few employed new graduates.

Survey results

- There was a small difference between the experience of employers advertising vacancies for early childhood teachers in regional and metropolitan areas of WA. Employers in regional areas filled all of their vacancies, while those in the metropolitan area filled 80 per cent. Overall the majority of employers reported no significant problems filling their vacant positions within six weeks of advertising, with about 83 per cent of all vacancies filled. This was a lower proportion of vacancies filled than in 2013, when all surveyed vacancies were filled.
- This survey found there was an average of about two suitably qualified and experienced applicants per vacancy.
- There were high numbers of applicants per vacancy, with an average of about 22 applications per advertised vacancy.
 - Employers commented that there were numbers of new graduates applying for these positions with not only early childhood teaching qualifications, but also primary school qualified teachers.
- The vacancies advertised came from the public education sector, catholic education system, independent schools and child care centres. Some directors of child care centres reported difficulties filling vacancies during the survey period and about half of their vacancies remained unfilled.
 - These directors commented that a number of early childhood teachers applying for positions had no appreciation of the different working environments between a school and a child care centre.
- About one third of vacancies were for new positions at public and catholic primary schools in response to increased enrolment numbers and consequently the need to increase staffing levels.
- Some vacancies required specialist teaching areas such as, music as well as a degree in early childhood education.
- This survey recorded approximately 87 per cent of qualified applicants being rated as unsuitable by employers. This data reflects the number of qualified primary school and early childhood teachers presently unable to find teaching positions in schools or child care centres.

Reasons for rating

- A high proportion of vacancies were filled and there were multiple qualified and suitable applicants to fill these vacancies.

- The majority of employers reported they experienced no significant difficulties filling their advertised positions.

Unsuitable applicants

- Applicants were deemed unsuitable for a variety of reasons with the most common being: lack of experience teaching kindergarten children using the National Quality Standards (NQS), familiarity of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), the curriculum, inadequate professional qualifications to teach young children and not being eligible for accreditation with the Teachers Registration Board WA.
- Applicants from qualified early childhood teachers who applied for positions in child care centres were considered unsuitable if they had no experience working in some capacity in a child care centre.

Demand and supply trends

- Demand for early childhood teachers is driven by population growth and in particular the number of four year old children in the population. In WA demand for early childhood teachers has been rising.
- Government policy has also been a factor linked to demand for this profession. The National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education aims to ensure that every child has access to a quality early childhood education program with a focus on participation by vulnerable and disadvantaged children. The program must be delivered by a degree-qualified early childhood teacher for a minimum of 15 hours per week to all children in the year before they attend full-time school (usually referred to as kindergarten). Delivery can happen across a variety of settings.
- In 2012 there were 24,507 children enrolled in kindergarten across 879 schools. This represented 95.6 per cent of all four year olds across the state. There were 1,883 teachers, of which 96.25 per cent were four year university trained, early childhood qualified working at least one hour per week with these children¹. By contrast in 2011 there were 12,199 children enrolled in kindergarten across 520 schools. This represented 97.8 per cent of all four year olds across the state. There were 1,654 teachers, of which 86.2 per cent were four year university trained, early childhood qualified working at least one hour per week².
- The Internet Vacancy Index for January 2014 recorded the highest number of advertised vacancies for early childhood teachers since 2006³.
- The ABS 2011 census recorded 1,990 early childhood teachers being employed in WA, an increase of 21 per cent compared with 2006 census data. The majority of early childhood teachers were working in primary schools and in preschool centres⁴.
- The main source of supply of early childhood teachers in WA is by completion of a university degree. An undergraduate degree consists of four years of full-time study and is available from Curtin, Edith Cowan, Murdoch and Notre Dame Universities. All of these universities and the University of Western Australia offer postgraduate qualifications in early childhood education.
- In 2012 the number of students commencing studies in early childhood education increased by about 47.35 per cent compared to 2011 student commencements. This increase may have been related to government policy regarding fee reductions for students undertaking an undergraduate degree in early childhood education. In 2012 the increase in the number of students completing their degrees was an increase of 1.3 per cent compared to 2011 student completions⁵.

¹ Department of Education, *2012 Annual Report on Achieving Universal Access to Early Childhood Education in WA*

² Department of Education, *2011 Annual Report on Achieving Universal Access to Early Childhood Education in WA*

³ Department of Employment, Internet Vacancy Index, January 2014

⁴ ABS, *Census of Population and Housing, 2011 and 2006*

⁵ Department of Employment, *Higher Education- Commencements and Completions, 2013*

Other indicators and issues

- Some directors of child care centres thought the perceived difference in salary and conditions placed them at a disadvantage with regard to recruitment of early childhood qualified teachers compared to schools and kindergartens.