

Childcare in Australia

Childcare in Australia, is also known as early childhood education and care. It's mainly designed for children aged up to 5 years, but it also includes care for primary school-age children in outside school hours care.

Each State has a 'Department of Education' which regulates early childhood education and care. It assesses providers against the [National Quality Standard](#) and gives them a [quality rating](#).

There are 5 main options for childcare and early education in Australia:

- *Home-based care* - a friend, relative, babysitter or nanny cares for your child in your own home.
- *Center-based care* - includes long day care, occasional care, preschools and kindergartens.
- *Family day care* - is when your child is looked after by an approved educator in the educator's home.
- *Business-related creches* - gyms or shopping centers, offer informal childcare in creches (care for a brief period only).
- *Outside school hours care* - is center-based childcare for families who need care before or after school, on student-free days and during the school holidays. *It's only for primary school-age children.*

Which type of care is right for your child/family?

When you're trying to decide which type of childcare is right for your family, you might want to consider the following questions:

- How many hours of childcare do you need each week?
- The times and days your child needs care
- What are the childcare options in your area, and how much do they cost?
- Do you want your child educated and cared for at home or at a childcare center?
- Are you looking for childcare that matches your family's interests, lifestyle or values – for example, food choices, musical interests and so on?
- Do you want your child to experience different styles of learning and mix with children from a wide range of social and family backgrounds?
- Are you looking for childcare that's similar to or different from learning and care at home?
- What are the quality ratings of the options you're interested in?
- service location – for example, close to home, work or a family member's home
- If your child has any health care needs, can the childcare cater for such needs?



Center-Based Childcare Waitlists in Australia

Why are there waitlists for childcare in Australia?

Top reasons include:

- Supply and demand imbalance
- Demographic shifts including planning/zoning restrictions, shortage of adequately sized land and high rents
- Child to caregiver ratios - ensuring quality care of the child
- Shortage of qualified early educators

Is childcare difficult to arrange?

Not usually for residents/citizens, as they have access to all the relevant required documents and information to enroll. However, places are limited in childcare centers in Australia for the above-mentioned reasons - childcare is in high demand in Australia overall.

What do you need to know about waitlists in Australia?

Waitlists:

- You'll have to put your child's name on a wait list if there are no spots available.
- You can put your child on the wait list at more than one service center at once. Consider doing this if your child needs to be enrolled by a particular age or time - *Note waitlist fees may apply.*
- Most early childhood education and care services charge a wait list fee. The exact amount will vary between services.
- If you must pay a wait list fee, make sure you know the terms and conditions, including if the fee is refundable if:
 - you don't get a place
 - you find a place somewhere else/take yourself off the waiting list
- If you put your name down on a waitlist and you are accepted, you will need to enroll to secure the position (see 'Enrollment below'). **Note – you will not be able to enroll, unless you have an Australian residential address.**



Enrolling into Childcare in Australia

What do I need to do to enrol my child into childcare?

Generally, you'll usually have to:

- Complete an enrolment form
- Provide documents such as birth certificate, immunisation records and proof of address
- Attend an enrolment meeting
- Attend an orientation
- You may have to pay a bond when you enroll your child, depending on the service. You'll get the bond back when your child leaves the service, if you've given the proper notice and your fees are up to date.

Tips for Enrolling into Childcare in Australia

1. Have immunisation/vaccination records translated into English, to assist with the enrollment and application process.
See [childcare-chinese-simplified.pdf](#) or [childcare-chinese-traditional.pdf](#) (brochure) for more information
2. Look at areas of interest for living, to see where centers are located and if there is availability in that area.
[find-a-local-child-care-provider](#)
3. When you start looking for early childhood education and care, it can help you to know:
 - a. the different types of care available [Care-options-Australia](#)
 - b. what to look for when selecting a service [Finding-a-service](#)
 - c. how to enroll your child [Enrolling-in-Australia](#)
 - d. the vaccination requirements for enrolment [Routine-vaccines-for-children-in-Australia](#)
4. Register for and have access to an Australian phone number, to allow for your details to be placed on waitlists.

Childcare Fees in Australia

How much will it cost to send your child to childcare?

Here's a breakdown of the typical costs per day based on the type of childcare service:

Center-Based Daycare	\$70 to \$200 per day
Family Daycare	\$7.50 to \$16.80 per hour
Pre-school/Kindergarten	\$45 to \$80 per day
Outside of School Hours Care	\$15 to \$45 per session

*Each childcare center will have their own rates for childcare.
Please refer to the specific center for costs.