

Educator-to-child ratios and qualification requirements for centre-based care



Education
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Minimum requirements for educators in centre-based care

This factsheet is intended as a guide to support voluntary compliance with the National Law SA and Regulations. Approved providers, services, nominated supervisors and educators must ensure children are adequately supervised at all times (s164 National Law SA).

Minimum educator-to-child ratios

Centre-based services in South Australia must maintain the following educator-to-child ratios:

Age of children	Educator-to-child ratio	Regulation
Birth to 24 months	1:4	123(1)(a)
Over 24 months and less than 36 months	1:5	123(1)(b)
36 months or over (under preschool age)	1:11	123(1)(c)
Over preschool age	1:15	123(1)(d)

Early childhood teachers may be included in the educator-to-child ratio, provided they are working directly with children (r123(3)).

An educator is working directly with children at a given time if the person is:

- physically present with the children; and
- directly engaged in providing education and care to the children (r13).

Determining educator-to-child ratios

To calculate the minimum educator-to-child staffing ratio and qualifications required at a service:

1. Determine the educator-to-child ratio for each age group
2. Calculate the total number of educators required to meet the minimum ratio
3. Determine the qualifications of educators:
 - at least 50% of the educators must have, or be actively working towards, a diploma-level education and care qualification.
 - the remaining 50% of educators must have, or be actively working towards, an approved certificate III-level education and care qualification.

ACECQA provides an [educator-to-child ratio calculator](#) to assist with planning ratios in centre-based education and care.

Staffing ratios for mixed age groups of children

When children attending the service are from a mix of the four age groups set out in r123(1), services may consider children in older age groups as part of the ratios for children in younger age groups.

Educator qualifications

At least 50% of the educators who are required to meet the educator-to-child ratios must have, or be actively working towards, at least an approved diploma-level education and care qualification.

All other educators who are required to meet the ratios must have, or be actively working towards, at least an approved certificate III-level education and care qualification ([r126\(1\)\(a\)](#)).



‘Actively working towards’ an approved qualification

Working towards approved certificate III-level qualification

Regulation 10 states that educators are ‘actively working towards’ at least an approved certificate III-level education and care qualification if they:

- are enrolled in a course for an approved certificate III, diploma or early childhood teaching qualification; and
- give the approved provider documentary evidence such as a transcript or letter from the course provider that they:
 1. have started the course; and
 2. are making satisfactory progress towards completing the course; and
 3. are meeting the requirements for maintaining the enrolment (including deferring study where approved by the course provider).

Further resources:

[Information sheet: Educators who are ‘actively working towards’ a qualification \(April 2023\)](#)

[Qualifications for centre-based services with children preschool age or under](#)

Working towards approved diploma-level qualification

Regulation 10 states that an educator is ‘actively working towards’ an approved diploma level qualification if they:

- are enrolled in a course for an approved diploma-level or early childhood teaching qualification; and
- are making satisfactory progress towards completing the course (including deferring study where approved by the course provider); and
- are meeting the requirements for maintaining the enrolment; and
 - a) hold an approved certificate III-level education and care qualification; or
 - b) have completed a percentage of total units of study required for completion of an approved early childhood teaching qualification, as determined by ACECQA (30% or more of the total units required).

Transitional workforce provisions for meeting ratios and qualifications requirements

Meeting early childhood teacher requirements in centre-based services

Until 31 December 2024, under regulation 242 an educator is taken to be an early childhood teacher if they:

- are enrolled in a course for an approved early childhood teaching qualification; and
- give the approved provider documentary evidence such as a transcript or letter from the course provider that they:
 1. have started the course; and
 2. are making satisfactory progress towards completing the course; and
 3. are meeting the requirements for maintaining the enrolment; and
 4. hold an approved diploma level educator qualification; or have completed at least 50% of the course.

ACECQA has determined that until 31 December 2024, a person is recognised as equivalent to an early childhood teacher if they hold all three of the following:

- a primary or secondary teaching qualification; and
- teacher registration in South Australia; and
- an ACECQA approved certificate III level or higher education and care qualification.

Educator qualification requirements in remote and very remote centre-based services

Until 31 December 2024, under regulation 240 an educator at a centre-based service in a remote or very remote area of South Australia can be included in the relevant educator-to-child ratio for the service without having, or actively working towards, a certificate III level education and care qualification, if:

- the educator has been continuously employed as an educator in an education and care service or children's service for a period of at least 15 years up to immediately before 1 January 2012; and
- they are employed by the same approved provider as they were employed by immediately before 1 January 2012.

This fact sheet is current at May 2024 and is intended as a guide to support voluntary compliance with the National Law SA and Regulations. Approved providers and services are responsible to understand and comply with their current obligations under the National Law SA and National Regulations.

National Law SA: [Education and Care Services National Law \(South Australia\)](#)

National Regulations: [Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011](#)