



**ACT**  
Government  
Education

# ACT PUBLIC PRESCHOOLS STAFFING GUIDELINES

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**Education Directorate**

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## Glossary

| <b>Term</b>                 | <b>Definition</b>  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Regulatory authority</b> | Children’s Education and Care Assurance (CECA), who undertake investigation, compliance, enforcement and assessment and rating functions against the <a href="#">National Quality Standard</a> .   |
| <b>Approved provider</b>    | Approved providers must operate approved services that meets the obligations in the <a href="#">National Law</a> . Approved providers must exercise effective leadership, governance and management to meet their legal obligations. Providers must also employ suitably qualified and experienced nominated supervisors, educational leaders, coordinators and educators.<br><br>In the case of government preschools in the ACT, the approved provider is the ACT Education Directorate. |
| <b>Setting</b>              | An early childhood education and care service (centre-based) under the <a href="#">National Law</a> that provide education and care services. For the purposes of this procedure, these settings are public preschools (managed by ACT Education Directorate as the approved provider and undertaking the government preschool program for four-year-olds).  |
| <b>Enrolment</b>            | The term used for the administrative procedure by which a person becomes a student of an education provider.   |
| <b>Orientation</b>          | The act of supporting familiarity and understanding with reference to a setting, processes and people.   |
| <b>Placement</b>            | The process of allocating a student to a particular preschool.   |
| <b>Preschool age</b>        | A child is considered of preschool age if they turn 4 prior to 30 April during the year they start preschool.  |
| <b>Guardian</b>             | A person who is legally responsible for the care and wellbeing of a child.   |
| <b>Authorised person</b>    | A parent* or family member of a child who is being educated and cared for by an ACT public preschool; or an authorised nominee of a parent or family member of a child who is being educated and cared for by an ACT public preschool.<br><br>* Does not include a parent who is prohibited by a court order from having contact   |

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|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
|                                    | with the child.   |
| <b>Authorised nominee</b>          | A person who has been given permission by a parent or family member to collect a child enrolled in an ACT public preschool.   |
| <b>Nominated supervisor</b>        | <p>As part of an application for service approval, approved providers must identify the nominated supervisor for the service. The nominated supervisor must be over 18 years old, have adequate knowledge and understanding of the provision of education and care to children, and have the ability to effectively supervise and manage an education and care service.</p> <p>In the case of government preschools in the ACT, the nominated supervisor tends to be the principal of the associated school campus.</p>   |
| <b>Person in day-to-day charge</b> | <p>The approved provider and/or nominated supervisor needs to designate a responsible person to be placed in day-to-day charge of a service if the approved provider and/or nominated supervisor is not present. The person in day-to-day charge must be over 18 years old, have adequate knowledge and understanding of the provision of education and care to children, and have the ability to effectively supervise and manage an education and care service.</p> <p>The person nominated to be in day-to-day charge must accept this responsibility in writing. The nominated person must have adequate knowledge and understanding of the provision of education and care to children and be able to effectively manage a service.</p> <p>A record that demonstrates who is the responsible person in day-to-day charge should be in place. Being in day-to-day charge of a service does not place any additional legal responsibilities on the person under the <a href="#">National Law</a>. The responsibilities relevant to educators under the <a href="#">National Law</a> continue to apply.</p> <p>An approved provider does not have to appoint a person in day-to-day charge if a nominated supervisor(s) or an approved provider is to be the responsible person in attendance during service operational hours.</p> |
| <b>Educators</b>                   | Qualified staff who work directly with children to meet their developmental and educational needs. It includes staff who are tertiary qualified teachers.   |
| <b>Educational leader</b>          | The <a href="#">National Law</a> requires approved providers to designate, in writing, a suitably qualified and experienced educator, coordinator or other individual as educational leader.  |
| <b>Blue Book</b>                   | Personal Child Health Record used to record a child's health, illnesses, injuries, growth and development.  |
| <b>Centre-based service</b>        | An education and care service other than a family day care service.   |
| <b>Obligations to notify</b>       | Approved providers and services have an obligation to notify CECA about incidents, complaints and changes to information about the approved provider or approved service. This includes serious incidents, complaints and circumstances where the health, safety or wellbeing of children may have been put at risk.  |

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## Obligations

ACT Public Preschools must meet the obligations of the [National Law](#), including Regulation 168, which states that education and care services must have policies and procedures in relation to the following:

- health and safety, including matters relating to:
  - nutrition, food and beverages, and dietary requirements;
  - sun protection;
  - water safety, including safety during any water-based activities;
  - the administration of first aid; and
  - sleep and rest for children.
- incident, injury, trauma and illness procedures;
- dealing with infectious diseases;
- dealing with medical conditions in children;
- emergency and evacuation;
- delivery of children to, and collection of children from, education and care service premises;
- excursions;
- providing child-safe environments;
- staffing, including:
  - a code of conduct for staff members;
  - determining the responsible person present at the service; and
  - the participation of volunteers and students on practicum placements.
- interactions with children;
- enrolment and orientation;
- governance and management of the service, including confidentiality of records;
- the acceptance and refusal of authorisations;
- payment of fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the education and care service; and
- dealing with complaints.

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## 1. Overview

- 1.1. This procedure outlines strategies for engaging qualified staff with a range of experiences to provide quality education and care in the public preschool environment.

## 2. Rationale

- 2.1. The following procedures are in place to assist in the development of a collaborative and ethical culture where professional standards guide all aspects of practice.

## 3. Procedures

- 3.1. It is important that all educators are aware that they are employed under the ACT Public Service Code of Conduct, ACTPS Values and Signature Behaviours and the Teachers' Code of Professional Practice.
- 3.2. The ACTPS Employment Portal is an online management system which provides support for managing staff across the ACT Public Service, including the ACT Education Directorate.

### *Staffing allocation*

- 3.3. School staffing is allocated via a staffing formula, with guidelines provided to principals. Each principal is responsible for staffing funding through the School Resource Allocation. Funding is allocated in the previous year based on enrolment projections. Human resource guidelines for school staffing and recruitment are available. Staff Safety and Wellbeing information is also available to assist with key staff support issues.

### *Preschool team*

#### *Nominated supervisor*

- 3.4. As part of an application for service approval, approved providers must identify the nominated supervisor for the service. The nominated supervisor must be over 18 years old, have adequate knowledge and understanding of the provision of education and care to children, and can effectively supervise and manage an education and care service. In the case of government preschools in the ACT, the nominated supervisor tends to be the principal of the associated school campus.
- 3.5. The nominated supervisor is the person who has overall responsibilities for the management and operation of the setting and therefore, to maintain compliance with the [National Law](#). The nominated supervisor consents in writing that they understand their responsibilities.

#### *Educational leader*

- 3.6. The [National Law](#) requires approved providers to designate, in writing, a suitably qualified and experienced educator, coordinator or other individual as educational leader.
- 3.7. In ACT public preschools, the educational leader is designated in writing and is typically a member of the executive leadership team or an experienced preschool

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educator.

- 3.8. The nominated supervisor and educational leader work together to strategically plan the development of a consistent staff team and lead the ongoing quality improvement of educational programs provided to children and their families.

*Person in day-to-day charge*

- 3.9. The nominated supervisor and educational leader will elect specific educators to be a responsible person in day-to-day charge.
- 3.10. The person nominated to be in day-to-day charge must accept this responsibility in writing. The nominated person must have adequate knowledge and understanding of the provision of education and care to children and be able to effectively manage a service.
- 3.11. A record that demonstrates who is the responsible person in day-to-day charge should be in place. Being in day-to-day charge of a service does not place any additional legal responsibilities on the person under the [National Law](#). The responsibilities relevant to educators under the [National Law](#) continue to apply.
- 3.12. An approved provider does not have to appoint a person in day-to-day charge if a nominated supervisor(s) or an approved provider is to be the responsible person in attendance during service operational hours.

*Educators*

- 3.13. The team who work directly with each group of children are typically two educators: one who holds an approved early childhood qualification and the other who holds, or is actively working towards, a Certificate III qualification.
- 3.14. At least 50% of educators working directly with children must hold, or actively work towards a Diploma level qualification.
- 3.15. The ratio of one educator to 11 children is maintained in a group of children which is typically 22 children, aged from four to five years.
- 3.16. *Preschool philosophy*
- 3.17. The preschool philosophy guides decision making, including the appropriate arrangement of suitably qualified educators, to promote continuity.

*Learning program*

- 3.18. The early childhood teacher is typically responsible for the development of the learning program in collaboration with the certificate III trained educator. Joint planning develops common understanding to provide the optimal learning environment for children's growth and development. Both staff members working directly with children work as a collaborative team to support children's learning in an early childhood environment through the implementation of educational programs. While the early childhood teacher is ultimately responsible for the development of the learning program and reporting of children's learning, the certificate III educator, in partnership, participates in the planning, development and

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implementation of educational programs, communicating with families, liaise with external stakeholders, monitors children, contributes to decision making and assists to maintain a clean safe work environment.

#### *The setting*

- 3.19. A preschool setting may consist of one or more rooms where collaboration across the environment is encouraged for professional growth. In a preschool setting where there is one group of children, ideally the educators will have the opportunity to collaborate with others from alternate settings.

#### *Staff records*

- 3.20. A staff record must be kept in accordance with [Regulation 145](#) of the National Law.

#### *Continuity of educators*

- 3.21. It is recognised that continuity of educators supports continuous improvement, leading to improved learning experiences and outcomes for children.
- 3.22. The timetable, including replacing educators for release from face-to-face, must be designed in such a way that it provides for continuity of educators working with children. If possible, an educator holding the required qualifications will be used to replace key staff, with continuity being the primary focus.
- 3.23. Continuity of educators provides children with stable, responsive learning relationships which, in turn, supports children's learning and development and enables positive and respectful relationships with families.

#### *Professionalism*

- 3.24. A continuous stable team based on understanding the expectations of both the ACT Education Directorate and the public preschool in which they are placed can build a collaborative team environment and nurture relationships.
- 3.25. [Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics](#) can be utilised to further assist and guide the development of positive, nurturing professional relationships.
- 3.26. Updating and maintaining educator's knowledge is seen as a joint responsibility of the approved provider, nominated supervisor, educational leader and each educator. The [Performance and Development Framework](#) is used to develop a strong culture to produce high performing educators. Ideally educators identify and participate in professional learning as a team. This enables the development of a shared understanding and strategic vision for quality improvement.

## **4. Contact**

- 4.1. The Director, School Improvement is responsible for this procedure.
- 4.2. For support contact School Operations on 6205 3313 or email [SchoolOperations@act.gov.au](mailto:SchoolOperations@act.gov.au)

## **5. Monitoring and review**

- 5.1. The procedure owner will be responsible for monitoring the procedure through

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annual scans. A full review will occur as necessary, or within a three-year period.

## 6. Complaints

6.1. Any concerns about the application of this procedure or the procedure itself, should be raised with:

- the school principal in the first instance;
- the Directorate Feedback and Complaints team on (02) 6205 5429 or through the [online form](#); and
- ACT Education's Regulatory Authority, Children's Education and Care Assurance on [\(02\) 6207 1114](#) or [complaintsCECA@act.gov.au](mailto:complaintsCECA@act.gov.au).

6.2. For more information also refer to the [Complaints Policy](#) on the Directorate's website.

## 7. Related Policies and Implementation Documents

- ACT Public Service Code of Conduct
- ACTPS Values and signature Behaviours
- Teachers' Code of Conduct
- Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
- Additional Information
- ECA Code of Ethics
- Induction Manual
- Leadership Profiles
- Education Directorate Induction Checklist
- NQF handbook for Nominated Supervisors
- SA3 Koori Preschool Assistant
- SA3 Preschool Assistant Job Description
- SA Position Description Guide

## 8. References

- [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

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