Family Day Care
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Family Day Care Workforce Development
Research Project Final Report

Family DAY CARE AUSTRALIA

Community Services & Health
Industry Skills Council

Australian Government
Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

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ABBREVIATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS

Terminology

During this project there was a shift in terminology for the role of a Family Day Care **carer**. A Family Day Care carer is now known as a Family Day Care (FDC) **educator**. This report adopts this new terminology.

Abbreviations

AQF	Australian Qualification Framework
AQTF	Australian Quality Training Framework
CALD	Cultural and Linguistically Diverse
CHC08	Community Services Training Package
CS&HISC	Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
EBPPP	Enterprise-Based Productivity Places Program
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECDC	Early Childhood Development and Care
EYLF	Early Years Learning Framework
FDC	Family Day Care
FDCA	Family Day Care Australia
LLN	Language Literacy and Numeracy
NTIS	National Training Information Service
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
TAFE	Technical and Further Education Institute
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WELL	Workplace English Language and Literacy

GLOSSARY

Accredited Training	Training that leads to a nationally-recognised qualification.
Australian Qualification Framework	A unified system of national qualifications for schools, VET and higher education sector.
Australian Quality Training Framework	Comprises of standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and standards for State and Territory registering and course accrediting bodies.
Coordination Units	Refers to the central administrative body for educators in localised settings. The role of the coordination unit is to assist in the training, resourcing and monitoring of educators in their area.
	Educators must be registered with their local coordination unit to be considered part of the family day care sector. Coordination units may comprise of child development officers, field workers, managers, directors, placement officers, administrative staff and others.
Co-educator	A partner of the primary family day care educator who assists with the care of children.
Distance Education	Education that is not delivered face to face e.g. on-line, e-learning or self-paced learning.
Enterprise-Based Productivity Places Program	A program that funds up to 90% of the cost of training from Certificate III to Advanced Diploma level. It is designed to increase the skills of existing workers especially in occupations on the priority occupations list.
	This program is managed by Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.
Enterprise RTO	An enterprise where the principal business is not training and education and is an RTO and can deliver nationally-recognised qualifications.
Family Day Care	Family day care provides families with an opportunity to have their children participate in an early childhood education and care program, in small groups, in a home-based setting.
Family Day Care Educator	Refers to those in the family day care sector who are registered with a coordination unit to provide education and care to children within their own home.
Private Provider	A VET provider that is privately owned or a private Enterprise Registered Training Organisation.
Public Provider	A VET provider that is publically owned such as TAFE and some Enterprise RTOs.

Recognition Assessment	An umbrella term used to describe a process of identifying and assessing the relevance and value of an individual's prior experience and/or un-accredited learning against the requirements of a qualification to determine the exemptions or advanced standing that may be granted towards that qualification.
Recognition of Prior Learning	A process of identifying and assessing the relevance and value of an individual's prior experience and/or un-accredited learning against the requirements of a qualification to determine the exemptions or advanced standing that may be granted towards that qualification.
Registered Training Organisation	A Registered Training Organisation (RTO) is a vocational education organisation that provides students with training resulting in qualifications and statements of attainment that are recognised and accepted by industry and other educational institutions throughout Australia. Registered Training Organisations can be State and Territory government or privately owned training organisations. All Registered Training Organisations in Australia and the qualifications they are registered to deliver are listed on the National Training Information Service (NTIS).
Schemes	Refers to the collective network of family day care educators, coordination unit sponsor and families. Family day care schemes operate within a framework of local government, community based or privately owned services.
Skill Cluster	Units of competency from endorsed training packages grouped together that reflect variation in job roles, client services or organisational needs.
	Skills clusters are not endorsed (agreed to) by industry. Instead they meet the needs of individuals and/or organisations.
Skill Sets	Single units of competency or combinations of units of competency from an endorsed training package which link to a licence or regulatory requirement or defined industry need.
Statement of Attainment	Formal certification issued by a RTO to provide evidence of partial completion of a qualification.
Un-accredited Training	Training that does not lead to a nationally-recognised qualification.
Traineeship	A structured employment based training program that leads to trainees gaining a nationally recognised qualification. Traineeships may be full-time or part-time, generally take one to two years and are part of the Australian Apprenticeship system.
Training Packages	A set of national endorsed competency standards, assessment guidelines, and national qualifications for training, assessing and recognising peoples' skills, developed by industry to meet the training needs of an industry or group of industries.

Vocational Education and Training	Post-compulsory education and training, excluding degree and higher level programs delivered by further education institutions, which provide occupational or work-related knowledge and skills.
	VET also includes programs which provide the basis for subsequent vocational programs.
	Alternative terms used internationally include technical and vocational education and training (TVET), vocational and technical education and training (VTET), technical and vocational education (TVE), vocational and technical education (VTE), further education and training (FET), and career and technical education (CTE).
WELL program	A national competitive grants program that aims to assist organisations to train workers in English language, literacy and numeracy skills. This funding is available on a competitive grants basis to organisations for English language and literacy training linked to job-related workplace training and is designed to help workers meet their current and future employment and training needs.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) funded the Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council (CS&HISC) to undertake research into the Australian Family Day Care (FDC) workforce. The aim of conducting the research was to guide recommendations to build the capacity of the FDC workforce in light of recent policy reforms in the early childhood education and care sector.

The policy reforms are of particular relevance to the FDC sector and to this project, including changes to staff-to-child ratios as well as greater emphasis being placed on skill development via the introduction of mandated qualifications. Gaining insight into how the FDC workforce would respond to the policy reforms was a key part of the research.

Throughout the life of the project CS&HISC worked closely with Family Day Care Australia (FDCA).

Family Day Care Workforce

The FDC workforce provides early childhood and care services in small groups in a home based setting. Children are cared for in homes of approved FDC educators who predominately operate as sole traders providing care to children from birth to 12 years of age. A FDC educator's income is proportionate to the number of children in their care and the length of time a child is in care. A small number of educators are employed by local council or community-based organisations.

FDC educators are supported, resourced and monitored from central coordination units that employ a number of workers including unit coordinators, field staff, administrators, play group coordinators and managers. For the purpose of this study, staff employed within a coordination unit are referred to as *unit coordinators*.

The network of educators, coordination units and families is collectively referred to as a family day care scheme. Schemes can operate privately with the majority operating within a framework of local government and community-based organisations.[1]

FDC Educator Profile

Well over half of the FDC educator workforce is between 41-60 years of age and work between 30-50+ hours per week. Hours of work are generally Mondays to Fridays, business hours as well as early morning and evenings. Some FDC educators provide care on weekends and overnight support. Just under half of the FDC educator workforce has been working in the sector between three and ten years with the remaining FDC educator workforce participating in the FDC workforce for over ten years, and anywhere up to 30 years.

This longevity can be explained by a great fondness for working with children as well as access to flexible working options and an income stream whilst caring for their own children, and grandchildren.

The vast majority of the FDC educator workforce holds qualifications in Children's Services or equivalent, however, these qualifications were on average obtained over 11 years ago. During this time it is likely that the skills, knowledge and practices necessary to work in the early education and care sector have shifted and changed. The new mandated qualification requirements for FDC educators provides great opportunity for FDC educators to benchmark themselves against current

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[1] Working for a Stronger Future: Family Day Care Five Year Plan, Family Day Care Australia. 2010.

standards (qualifications), update their existing qualifications, and undertake new training and professional development opportunities.

Unit Coordinator Profile

Just under half of unit coordinators have been employed in the FDC workforce anywhere between three and ten years, with one quarter of the unit coordinator workforce working less than two years in the FDC sector. Unit coordinators work predominately in business hours working between 31-40 hours week with a small portion of unit coordinators working part time hours.

Similar to educators, most unit coordinators hold qualifications in Children's Services or equivalent however these qualifications were obtained between six and 16 years ago. This data suggests that staff working within the coordination units may need to update their skills and qualifications in order to bring them in line with current practice.

Research Stages

This research project was undertaken in two stages.

Stage One focused on gaining an accurate 'profile' of the FDC workforce, involving the identification of:

a. training and assessment barriers
b. skill demands and gaps
c. career development opportunities
d. recruitment and retention practices.

Stage Two of the project focused on the completion of a targeted eight month exercise where educators provided feedback about their experiences with training and assessment. This activity assisted in creating a FDC specific *Best Practice Training and Assessment Model*.

Stage Two also included case study modelling where four high performing partnerships between FDC schemes and RTOs were highlighted and reported on. The outcome of this activity was the consolidation and strengthening of the FDC Best Practice Training and Assessment Model.

KEY FINDINGS

Representation of Minority Groups

In creating the FDC workforce profile it was evident that there is low representation of minority groups working in the FDC sector, this includes:

- people living with a disability
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Mandated Qualifications for the FDC sector

The introduction of mandated qualifications and the changes to staff-to-child ratios, that ultimately affect the level of income of educators, created a great deal of passion and robust debate. During Stage One of this project, the sector grappled with the new regulations and feelings of being coerced into a 'classroom' to gain a qualification that does not acknowledge the skills and knowledge that the educator currently holds.

The introduction of mandated qualifications produced a strong emotional reaction within the FDC educator workforce. With a large portion of the workforce not being engaged in formal study for some time, the thought of being 'forced' into formal study was distressing. During Stage One many educators voiced their concerns and expressed a desire to leave the FDC sector rather than being 'forced' to return to study.

Others FDC educators voiced a preference for an early retirement rather than being pushed into study. As a large portion of educators are close to or of retirement age this poses a real risk to the FDC sector.

The negative association attached to the mandated qualifications was seen to influence the data gathered both formally and anecdotally during Stage One and particularly at the national consultation forums. However, during Stage Two more positive data about FDC educators' training and assessment experiences was evident. This may be explained as a result of the sector having had more time to understand the new regulations as well as becoming more informed about how meeting the mandated qualification requirements could occur within the context of their existing skills, knowledge and practices.

> Access to recognition assessment (sometimes referred to as Recognition of Prior Learning or RPL) processes will provide educators and unit coordinators with a starting point in determining how their existing skills, knowledge and practices align with the mandated qualifications.

Barriers to Undertaking Training

The identification of potential barriers to undertaking recognition assessment and/or training and assessment as well as developing a best practice model for skill development, is seen as critical to maintaining the existing workforce as well as attracting new workers into the FDC sector.

The barriers to FDC educators undertaking training included:

- a lack of flexible delivery options that catered to the unique work environment of educators
- a lack of support and access to trainers
- the expense of training
- poor recognition assessment processes.

Qualification Levels

The research indicated that the breadth, depth and level of complexity of the work performed by a FDC educator, reflects a Certificate IV level rather than Certificate III. There is also a need for the development of additional units of competency to reflect the unique work undertaken by FDC educators. This includes units of competency that support operating a small business, as well as the provision of care to children in group situations from birth to 12 years of age.

The analysis of the unit coordinator role against the Diploma of Children's Services demonstrated that this qualification did not accurately represent the type of work or level of work performed by unit coordinators. Instead, the data indicated that an Advanced Diploma level qualification would more accurately reflect the level of work and type of work being performed.

Workforce Growth via Skill Sets

The proposed development of two skills sets is seen as a means to encourage practitioners who currently hold a qualification in Children's Services into the FDC sector. This includes a skill set for practitioners wanting to become educators and another skill set for practitioners seeking work in a coordination unit.

A third skill set for unit coordinators has been recommended. This is an existing skill set focusing on assessment in the VET sector. It would provide opportunity for job enrichment and skill development that would enable unit coordinators to undertake workplace assessment.

FDC Best Practice Training and Assessment Model

A best practice approach to training and assessment was identified. This includes:

- flexible delivery options – outside hours of care
- FDC educator centred and unit coordinator centred recognition assessment practices
- alignment of existing induction and orientation processes to accredited children's services qualifications
- FDC specific training and assessment practices and materials
- subsidised training
- assessment, training, coaching and mentoring support provided by unit coordinators.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

To support growth and development of the FDC workforce, this report has a number of recommendations. The recommendations and actions cover the development of new qualifications, units of competency, skill clusters and skill sets as well as changes to existing qualifications. The recommendations cover the following areas:

Recommendation Area One	Options for better recognising skills and developing pathways within the CHC08 Training Package
Recommendation Area Two	Effective Promotion of FDC Sector
Recommendation Area Three	Access to Funding and Support for Training and Assessment

Recommendation Area One: Options for better recognising skills and developing pathways within the CHC08 Training Package

As a means to promote the FDC sector as a viable career choice as well as to provide job enrichment opportunities for existing workers, the following options are recommended for addition to the CHC08 Training Package. If agreed to they would be developed in line with the Training Package Development and Endorsement Process[2].

Draft Certificate IV in Family Day Care Work

The research identified that a Certificate IV level qualification would more accurately represent the work being undertaken by FDC educators rather than the existing Certificate III in Children's Services qualification.

This new qualification would be designed specifically to describe the work of the FDC educator and would include three areas of work specific to FDC educators:

1. Compliance and regulatory work
2. Education and care – including early childhood development
3. Small business operations

Advanced Diploma of Children's Services

The research indicated that the Advanced Diploma of Children's Services more accurately reflects the work of scheme staff rather than the Diploma of Children's Services.

Family Day Care Unit Coordinator – Elective Skills Cluster

The role of the unit coordinator ideally requires skills in mentoring and/or coaching, leadership, training and assessment, monitoring regulatory compliance as well as having a specific focus on promoting and engaging in all aspects of childhood development.

In order to meet the needs of the FDC sector it is recommended that a FDC elective skills cluster be added to the existing Advanced Diploma of Children's Services. This could include the following mix of units:

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[2] http://www.deewr.gov.au/skills/overview/policy/tpdep/Pages/TPDEndorsementProcess.aspx

- CHCFDC6XXX   Promote educator role in early childhood development (new unit)
- CHCFDC6XXX   Support educator role to operationalise family day care business (new unit)
- CHCCS427A   Facilitate adult learning and development
- TAEASS401A   Plan assessment activities and processes*
- TAEASS402A   Assess competence*
- TAEASS403A   Participate in assessment validation processes*

*These units of competency are the required units of competency for an assessor working within the VET sector.

Draft Skill Set 1: Family Day Care Skill Set (Educators)

This skill set aims to support Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) practitioners who want to move into the role of FDC educator. It includes the development of the necessary skills in operating the small business of a family day care service.

This skill set is for individuals who are currently working in the ECEC sector and hold a Certificate III in Children's Services or commensurate industry skills as evaluated through a recognition assessment process.

- CHCFDC4XXX   Provide experiences for children of mixed age groups (new unit)
- CHCFDC4XXX   Establish and maintain fee management policies and processes (new unit)
- BSBSMB306A   Plan a home based business
- BSBSMB305A   Comply with regulatory, taxation and insurance requirements for the micro business
- BSBWOR204A   Use business technology

Draft Skill Set 2: Family Day Care Skill Set (Educator Support Workers)

This skill set provides opportunity for individuals who are currently working in the ECEC sector and want to move into the role of a unit coordinator. It focuses on supporting FDC educators to meet their operational requirements via a coaching and training framework.

An ECEC practitioner will hold the Advanced Diploma of Children's Services (Early Childhood Education and Care) or commensurate industry skills as evaluated through a recognition assessment process.

- CHCFDC6XXX   Support educator role to operationalize Family Day Care Business (new unit)
- CHCFDC6XXX   Support educator role to comply with regulatory requirements of the Family Day Care sector (new unit)
- CHCORG529B   Provide coaching and motivation
- CHCCS427A   Facilitate adult learning and development

Recommended Skill Set 3: Assessor Skill Set

To increase the opportunity for educators to participate in workplace assessment it is recommended that unit coordinators undertake the existing Assessor Skill Set. Unit coordinators who successfully complete this skill set will be able to plan, organise and conduct competency based assessment in the workplace.

- TAEASS401A   Plan assessment activities and processes
- TAEASS402A   Assess competence
- TAEASS403A   Participate in assessment validation processes

Action	It is recommended that CS&HISC work with DEEWR to identify funding opportunities for the development of the proposed FDC specific qualifications and skill sets.

Recommendation Area Two: Effective Promotion of FDC Sector

Analysis of the research identified a need to develop a Promotion and Communication Strategy to encourage recruitment and retention within the FDC sector. The Promotion and Communication strategy would include the development of a number of tools and promotional materials as outlined below.

Targeted Recruitment Strategy - Increasing the participation of minority groups within the FDC workforce

This strategy aligns with the Early Years Learning Framework (ELYF) for Australia with a particular relevance to children's sense of '*belonging*'. The ELYF has been developed to assist practitioners provide young children with opportunities to maximise their potential and develop a foundation for future success in learning.[3] Experiencing '*belonging*' is about knowing where and with whom you belong and includes family, culture groups and the wider community.

This strategy was seen as a way to ensure that there are greater opportunities for children to be provided care and education by educators from the same cultural, social and/or racial background. This includes targeted recruitment strategies for:

- people living with a disability
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

This strategy will require careful thinking and consultation in order to address the existing challenges faced by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander educators and CALD educators where some existing cultural practices, beliefs and traditions may at times be incongruent to mainstream practices.

For example, for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander educators staff-to-child ratios challenge their kinship responsibilities and expectations.

Action	It is recommended that an 'Inclusion Working Group' be formed. This working group would focus on developing culturally-specific recruitment strategies as well as assist in the implementation of the new standards within a cultural context.
Action	Further research is to be undertaken into the Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander and culturally diverse family day care workforce to determine what support is needed in order to maintain the existing workforce within the scope of the reforms.

[3] Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (2009) Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: Belonging, Being Becoming. Canberra .

Development of Job Descriptions

The research identified a lack of job descriptions within the FDC sector. The development of job descriptions for educators and unit coordinator staff was seen as an effective way to promote the FDC sector as well as promote consistency and quality services delivery across the sector.

Action	CS&HISC will work closely with the Family Day Care Australia (FDCA) to develop job descriptions for the FDC workforce.

Career Pathway Chart

The development of a career pathway chart that shows potential horizontal and vertical career pathways within the FDC sector and the broader Children's Services industries is recommended. It is believed that this career pathway chart will promote the FDC sector as a career of choice for early childhood education and care.

Action	A Career Pathway chart was developed as part of this project and can be found in the body of the report.

Development of Induction Kit

In order to promote quality service delivery and a national approach to compliance it is recommended that a national 'Induction Kit' be developed.

This resource kit will include the mapping of existing induction and orientation processes to suitable units of competency that sit within the accredited Family Day Care qualification (draft Certificate IV in Family Day Care work).

The FDC Induction Kit could include:

- an induction training program
- learning resources
- assessment tools.

The FDC Induction Kit would be a valuable national resource available to all RTOs and FDC Schemes to support accredited training requirements.

At the completion of the induction training program educators (subject to being deemed competent) would receive credit towards an accredited Family Day Care or Children's Services qualification.

This recommendation aligns to a key strategy within the Family Day Care Australia's five year plan; *Working for a Stronger Future* (2010) which supports the inclusion of accredited Children Services' specific qualifications into FDC induction processes.

Action	CS&HISC is skilled in this area of development work however, the development of these materials is a substantial piece of work and would require additional funding to be undertaken.

Training and Assessment Promotional Kit

Through this research a best practice approach to training and assessment for the FDC sector was identified. Therefore, it is recommended that this best practice approach be articulated in a promotional kit that would guide schemes, unit coordinators, RTOs, educators and parents. The kit would include a number of promotional materials and tools including:

- key features of the Training and Assessment Best Practice Model for the FDC sector
- case study descriptions – true partnerships stories
- partnerships building promotional material
- development of recognition assessment tool and processes
- development of a specific resource to inform FDC educators on how to participate in the RPL process as well as how to identify and choose an appropriate RTO to best meet their development needs.

Action	The case study description has been developed as part of this project as well as the key features of the FDC best practice training and assessment model. This material will need to be prepared for publication.

The development of recognition assessment tools is an area of work in which CS&HISC is skilled and would require additional funding to carry out this work. The development of recognition assessment tools would be initially based on the Certificate III in Children's Services and the Diploma of Children's Services. If the recommendation to develop the new qualification and skills cluster is adopted then additional tools may need to be developed.

Promotional Material for Parents – Features and Benefits

The development of promotional materials for parents that includes linking the key features of the reforms to the provision of family day care from an end user's (parent, main care giver and child) perspective (the benefits). This includes the correlation between the qualifications held by the educators and the provision of quality care and education.

Action	CS&HISC will work closely with FDCA to develop the promotional material for parents.

Recommendation Area Three: Access to funding and support for training and assessment

The majority of FDC educators have historically been excluded from mainstream funding due to their self-employed status. Access to funded recognition assessment, gap training and training and assessment is vital for the continued growth of the FDC sector and the successful implementation of the policy reform.

As part of the reform, the Commonwealth has dedicated funding ($115 million) for 2008-2009 to 2013-2014 for the removal of TAFE fees for Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas in Children's Services (early childhood education and care)[4]. This funding provides opportunity to the FDC sector to undertake training however it excludes funding to undertake training in the Certificate III in Children's Services as well as excludes private RTOs from providing subsidised training to the FDC sector.

The majority of the FDC workforce (educators and unit coordinators) hold qualifications in Children's Services and are currently working in the sector, suggesting that recognition

[4] http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy_Agenda/Quality/Pages/FrequentlyAskedQuestions.aspx. Accessed 13/1/11.

assessment is a viable pathway for the sector to meet the mandated qualification requirements.

Therefore, access to seed funding for FDC workers to undertake recognition assessment is recommended. Seed funding would allow individual FDC workers to benchmark themselves against the current standards and in doing so gain the necessary qualification and/or identify a training plan to address any skill or knowledge gaps.

Action	CS&HISC and FDCA to meet with DEEWR to discuss seed funding for FDC workforce to undertake recognition assessment

In addition to access to a funded training and recognition assessment process, access to additional support whilst undertaking training and assessment is also critical for the FDC sector. Support from coordination units, and RTOs for example would have a positive impact on completion rates for the sector.

Types of support include:

- language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) support
- orientation to study programs – learning how to learn
- flexible delivery options outside of the normal hours of care – evening and weekends
- coaching and mentoring provided by coordination units (including training and assessment where appropriate)
- study groups and/or workshops facilitated by coordination units
- trainers and assessors with family day care experience.

The provision of LLN support may also serve as an incentive for individuals considering becoming a FDC Educator and who may have previously struggled with the LLN requirements of the job role. This level of support may also prove to be significant in attracting educators from minority groups.

1. INTRODUCTION

This final research report of the Family Day Care Workforce Development Project provides a detailed overview of the project processes and project outcomes as well as providing an analysis of the data gathered. The research findings have informed the development of recommendations for consideration of the project's Industry Reference Group (IRG) and the broader sector.

1.1 Background

The Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council (CS&HISC) was funded by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to undertake research into the Family Day Care (FDC) workforce. This project has occurred against a backdrop of a landmark policy shift where for the first time there is a shared vision of early childhood education and care across the country. This shift in policy has created a national framework that will guide the actions of all governments to improve outcomes for children and their families in Australia.

This framework is articulated within '*Investing in the Early Years – A National Early Childhood Strategy*'[5] (The Strategy). The Strategy focuses on all aspects of children's development including learning, physical, social, emotional and cultural wellbeing for children from birth to 8 years of age. The FDC sector is an important stakeholder within this shared vision.

The Strategy articulates the benefits of building a more effective and better coordinated national early childhood development system and will guide future responses by the FDC sector to ensure that all children experience a positive early childhood, from before birth through the first eight years of life. The Strategy represents a national effort to improve child outcomes and foster the health and wellbeing and productivity of our next generation.

> Throughout the life of the project CS&HISC worked closely with Family Day Care Australia (FDCA) and was guided by a project Industry Reference Group (IRG). For a list of members on the project IRG see Appendix A .

1.2 Key Policy Documents

The Early Years Learning Framework

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) is part of the Council of Australian Government's (COAG) reform agenda for early childhood education and care and is a key component of the Australian Government's National Quality Framework for early childhood education and care. It underpins universal access to early childhood education and will be incorporated in the National Quality Standard in order to ensure the delivery of nationally consistent and quality early childhood education across sectors and jurisdictions.

The EYLF describes the principles, practices and outcomes essential to support and enhance young children's learning from birth to five years of age, as well as their transition to school. The EYLF has a strong emphasis on play-based learning, as play is the best vehicle for young children's learning, providing the most appropriate stimulus for brain development. The EYLF also recognises the importance of communication and language (including early literacy and numeracy) and social and emotional development.

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[5] Council of Australian Governments 2009, *Investing in the Early Years – A National Early Childhood Development Strategy*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

The National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework (NQF) is an important reform which aims to deliver a higher standard of care for children in the critical areas of education, health and safety and will provide clearer and comprehensive information for families so they can choose the best services for their child.

The NQF will establish a new National Quality Standard to ensure high quality and consistent early childhood education and care across Australia.

These changes will help providers to improve their services in the areas that impact on a child's development and empower families to make informed choices about which service is best for their child.

The National Quality Standard

The National Quality Standard (NQS) comprises guiding principles, quality areas, standards and elements[6]. There are seven quality areas in the NQS, which capture aspects critical to the provision of quality early childhood education and care and outside school hours care services, including educational concepts and practice, structural quality, interactions between educators and children and targeting services to meet the needs of families and local communities.

> The introduction of minimum qualification requirements for the FDC sector is of significant importance to this project. FDC educators will be expected to hold a Certificate III in Children's Services and unit coordinators will need to hold a Diploma of Children's Services.

[6] Council of Australian Governments 2009, *National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

This project sought to determine a strategy to build capacity in the FDC workforce by:

- undertaking national research and analysis regarding the FDC workforce
- identifying training needs, barriers and solutions for FDC workers
- evaluating potential solutions to meet the skills and training needs of the national FDC workforce to develop recommendations for consideration by the FDC sector.

The project was undertaken in two stages.

Stage One involved the undertaking of both qualitative and quantitative research via consultation forums and an on-line survey.

Stage Two included the evaluation and analysis of the data collected during Stage One as well as completion of an eight month training and assessment tracking exercise and the development of four case studies.

3.   STAGE ONE RESEARCH

The research phase of this project involved creating a profile of the FDC workforce by collecting demographic data and analysing the current skills and qualification needs of workers. The purpose of the research was to understand the barriers, demands and gaps in qualifications and/or skills across the FDC workforce. It included an analysis of the Children's Services qualifications within the CHC08 Community Services Training Package and the application of these qualifications for the FDC sector.

Stage One saw the beginning of an eight month monitoring exercise where 176 educators were tracked in order to provide feedback on their experiences in undertaking training and assessment. This exercise was completed in Stage Two and provided insight into FDC educators' perceptions and experiences, both positive and negative. The outcome was the development of a FDC Best Practice Training and Assessment Model.

In addition, the research sought to explore the relevance and/or suitability of qualifications and units of competency against the reforms and the early childhood development sector as a whole. This exploration provided insights into possible career pathways for the FDC workforce.

The research findings have informed recommendations for skills development. Workforce growth of the FDC workforce must ultimately be considered in the context of Australia's Early Childhood Education and Care policy reforms. In particular, the research findings identified the necessary support required in order for the FDC workforce to be a sustainable supplier of childcare and education whilst meeting the obligations of the NQF including the NQS and the EYLF.

It is worth noting that during Stage One there was a great deal of uncertainty, confusion and strong emotion in the FDC sector in relation to policy reforms. This was particularly in relation to the introduction of mandated qualification requirements and changes to staff-to-child ratios. This strong emotion was particularly evident during the national consultation forums. This may have impacted upon the data gathered during the forums especially the qualitative data.

3.1 Research Methodology

A number of research methods were used to gather information about the FDC workforce. Data sources included:

Consultation forums

There were 13 consultation forums conducted nationally and attended by a combination total of 272 educators and coordination unit/scheme staff. Forums were held on a weekday evening between 6.45pm and 9pm with the exception of the Hobart forum which was held on a Saturday morning to accommodate distances travelled by participants.

For a list of discussion questions presented at consultation forums see Appendix B.

Surveys

The survey aimed to gather data from a sample of the FDC sector with a minimum participation rate being 250 educators. The survey was promoted via FDCA, state and territory FDC associations as well as via coordination units. A total of 305 educator surveys and 115 coordination unit and/or scheme staff surveys were completed.

Surveys were designed to obtain data from:

- A minimum of 250 FDC educators including representation from:
  - all States and Territories
  - culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
  - Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander educators
  - remote and regionally located
  - working in excess of 50 hours per week
  - holders of relevant qualifications
  - without relevant qualifications
  - currently completing relevant qualifications
- FDC unit/Scheme coordinators
- RTOs providing accredited training and assessment for FDC workforce.

Surveys were available online via CS&HISC's dedicated FDC project webpage and in hard copy distributed by CS&HISC's project team, FDC Schemes and peak bodies as requested. Copies of surveys were also available for collection at consultation forums. The aim was to ensure that maximum opportunities existed for the FDC workforce to contribute to the research data. Surveys were designed and approved in consultation with the IRG, FDCA and CS&HISC.

The educator and coordination unit or scheme surveys were designed to capture data relevant to the individual completing the survey including:

- key demographic indicators
- qualification types
- work environment
- work history, satisfaction and incentives
- training and assessment experiences.

For a list survey questions see Appendix C and Appendix D.

RTO Interviews

There were ten RTOs interviewed as part of this research project. The interviews were conducted in person or via telephone.

RTO interviews included questions relevant to the provision of training and assessment for the FDC workforce in Certificate III in Children's Services, Diploma of Children's Services (Early Education and Care) and Advanced Diploma of Children's Services. The questions covered:

- location and types of delivery and assessment modes
- completion rates
- views on issues related to training and assessment strategies appropriate to the FDC workforce
- recognition assessment processes
- number of qualifications partially or fully obtained via recognition assessment.

The RTO survey can be found at Appendix E.

3.2 Family Day Care Profile

The FDC profile was created from data collected from Stage One consultation forums and an on line survey. There were 13 consultation forums conducted throughout the country where 272 delegates attended. There were 305 educators and unit coordinators that completed the on-line survey.

The majority of FDC educators are self-employed and work from their homes providing care to children from birth to 12 years of age. A small portion of FDC educators are employed by local councils or community-based organisations. FDC educators work Monday to Friday including early morning and/or evenings. A small percentage of educators provide weekend and overnight care. The majority of educators work between 31-50 plus hours a week.

Diagram 1: FDC educator average hours of work per week (paid)
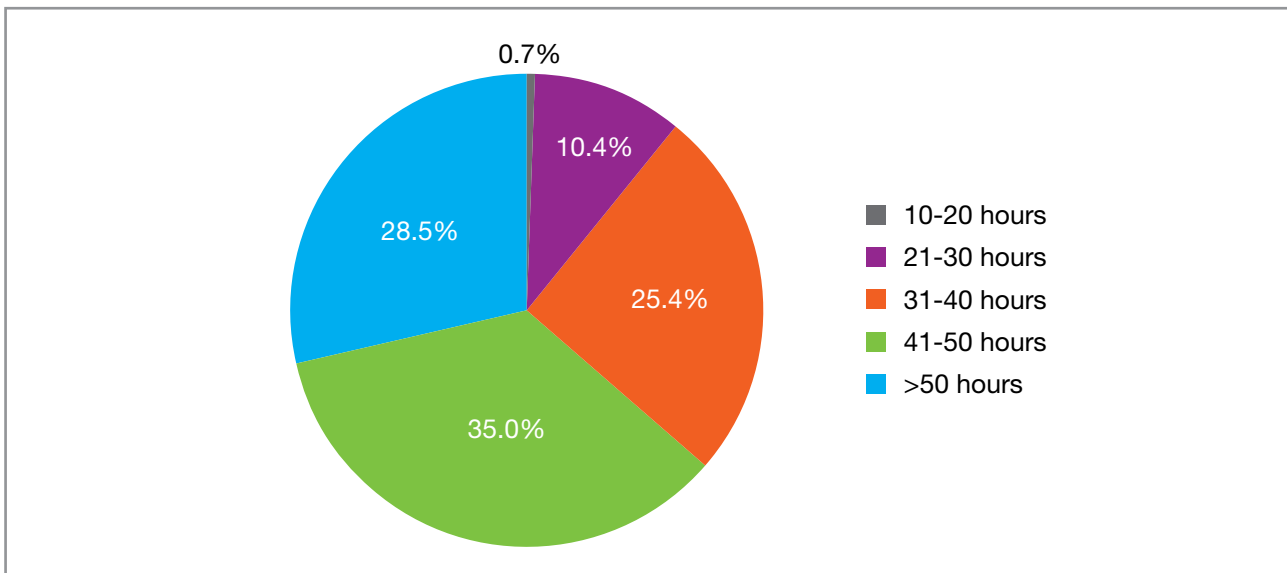
FDC educators are supported by coordination units and schemes that provide regulatory and legislation advice and guidance as well as the provision of information, induction and orientation type training and operational advice. The majority of unit coordinators work within business hours, Monday to Friday between 31-50 hours a week.

Table 1: Average paid weekly work hours for unit coordinator staff

Answer Options	Percentage
10 - 20 hours	9.8%
21 - 30 hours	28.6%
31 - 40 hours	52.7%
41 - 50 hours	5.3%
More than 50 hours	3.6%

The FDC workforce is a primarily female workforce with 99% of the workforce being female. Collectively, educators and coordination unit staff fall within the 41-60 year age range.

Table 2: Age Range of FDC Workforce

Age range	Educator	Coordinator Unit Staff
21 - 30 Years of age	5.0%	6.30%
31 - 40 Years of age	24.7%	24.30%
41 - 50 Years of age	35.9%	29.80%
51 - 60 Years of age	27.8%	30.60%
61 - 70 Years of age	6.3%	9%
71 - 80 Years of age	0.3%	0.0%

FDC Educators report on being motivated to work in the sector by an enjoyment of working with children as well as being able to remain at home with their own children and receive an income.

Table 3: Educator motivations for becoming a FDC educator

Motivators	Percentage
I enjoy working with children	84.7%
It suited me to work from home as I had children of my own	70.5%
I like the idea of working from home	62.6%
The flexibility to determine my hours of work	58.0%
I wanted to run my own business	48.4%
To work with children in a non-centre based environment	45.9%
Suited my career development plan	14.6%
To work from home while completing study	12.5%

FDC Educators' Job Satisfaction

The project sought to identify to what extent educators were satisfied with their job. Overall, as shown in the below table the responses indicate that FDC educators perceive their work in FDC as satisfying and rewarding with a feeling that they are part of a wider Children's Services sector.

Table 4: Educator Job Satisfaction

Positive Responses	Percentage of Educators who selected response
Find the work rewarding	94.2%
Proud to work in the family day care sector	92.7%
Feel like part of the wider Children's Services sector	74.2%
Negative Responses	
Work in Family day care will not lead to other career opportunities	35.5%
Don't feel they are part of the wider Children's Services sector	25.3%

Unit Coordinator Job Satisfaction

There were 114 coordination unit and/or scheme staff that provided information about their job satisfaction. Overall the responses indicated that staff perceives their work in FDC as satisfying and rewarding with a feeling that they are part of a wider Children's Services sector.

Table 5: Unit coordinator Job Satisfaction

Positive Response	Percentage of unit coordinators who selected response
Feel satisfied with their work in the FDC sector	96.4%
Find the work rewarding	94.7%
Feel like part of the wider Children's Services sector	84.2%
Negative Response	
Work in FDC will not lead to other career opportunities or are unsure	85.9%

There is little understanding about career pathway opportunities within the FDC sector with unit coordinators being more uncertain about career opportunities than FDC educators.

Length of time working in the FDC Workforce

The majority of FDC educators on average have worked as FDC educators between three and ten years with just under half of educators having worked 11 years or more as FDC educators.

Diagram 2: Length of time working as a FDC educator
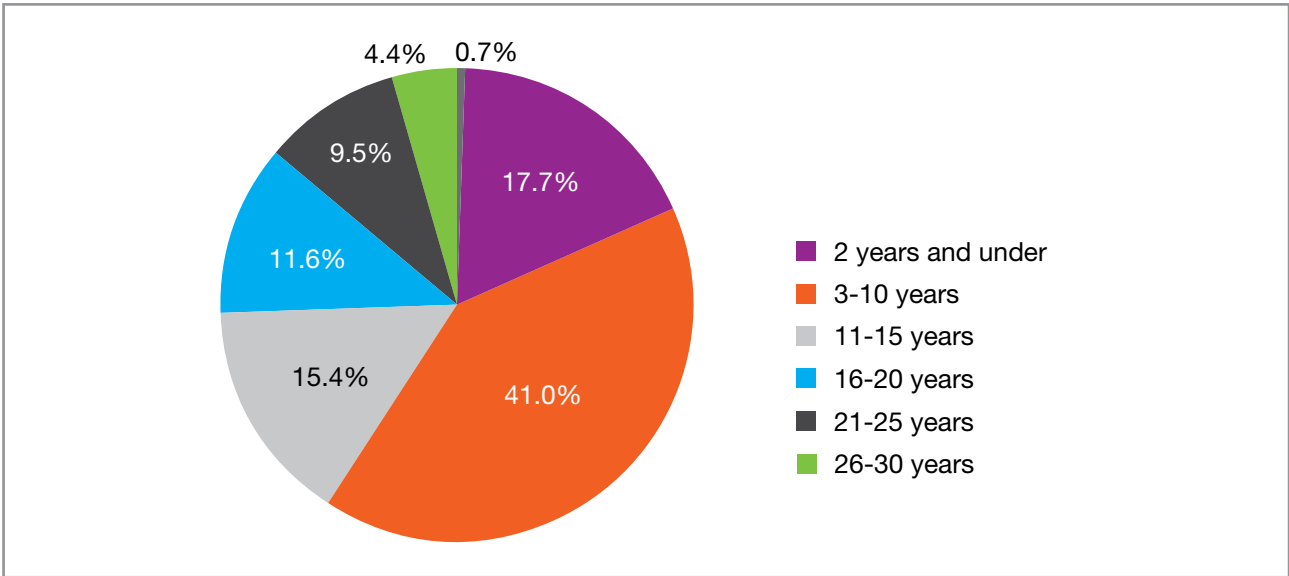
Similarly, 44 precent of unit coordinators had been employed between 3-10 years with one quarter of unit coordinators working less than two years in the sector.

Diagram 3:   Staff reported length of time employed in FDC Sector
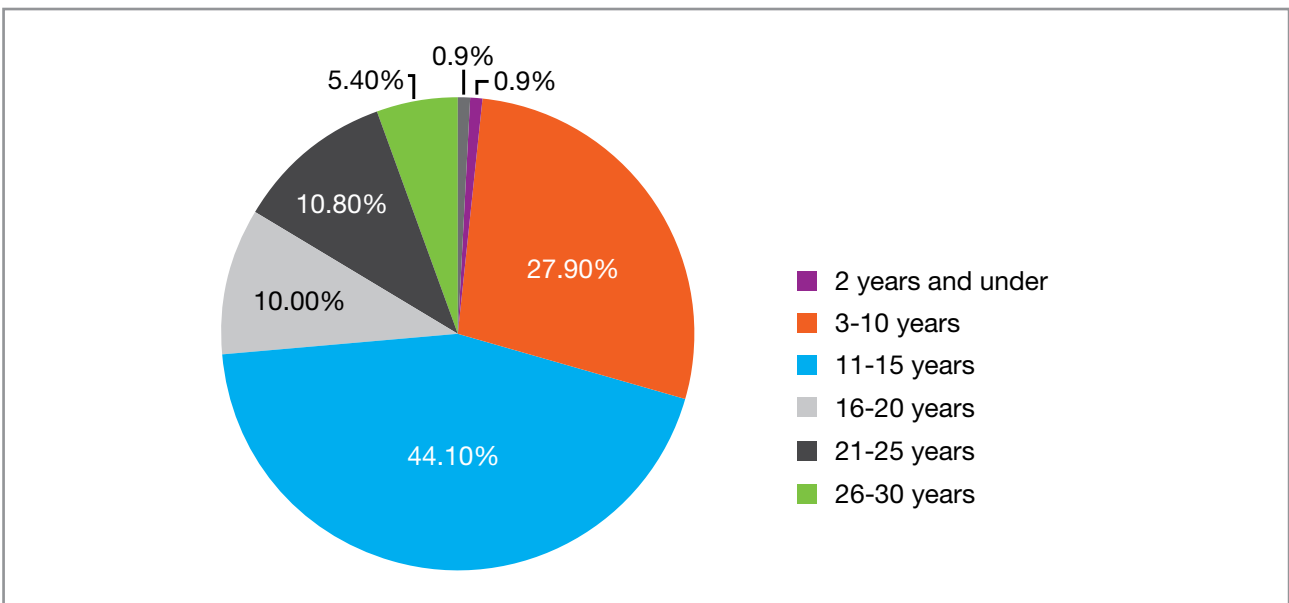
Children's Services Qualification

The majority of educators and unit coordinators hold qualifications in Children's Services however these qualifications were more often than not obtained anywhere between six and 15 years ago.

Diagram 4: Recency of Children's Services qualification held by FDC educators
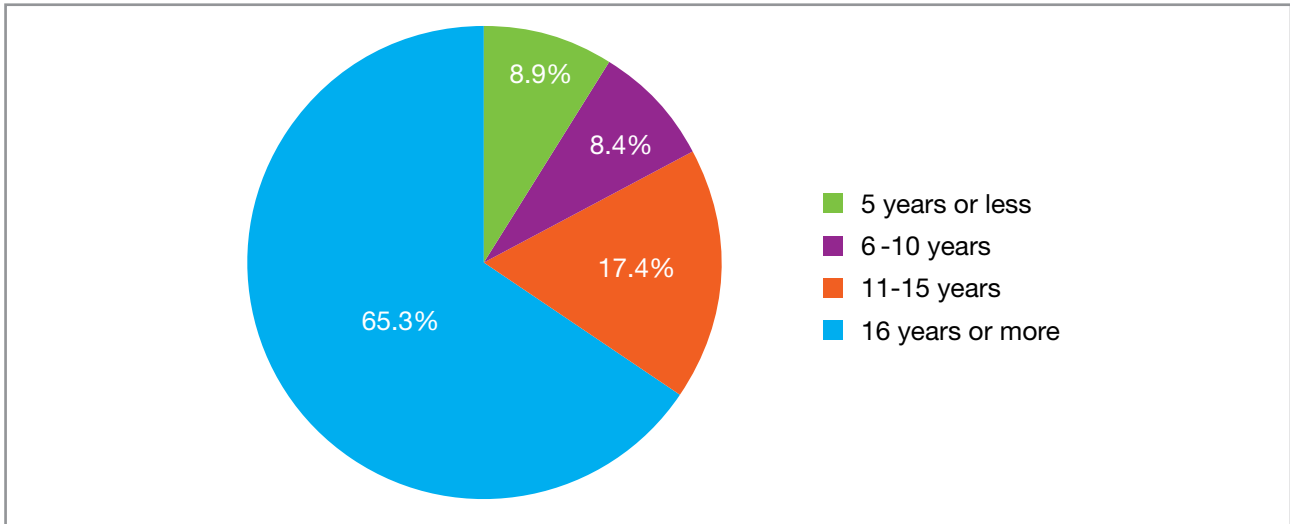
Diagram 5: Recency of Children's Services qualification held by unit coordinators
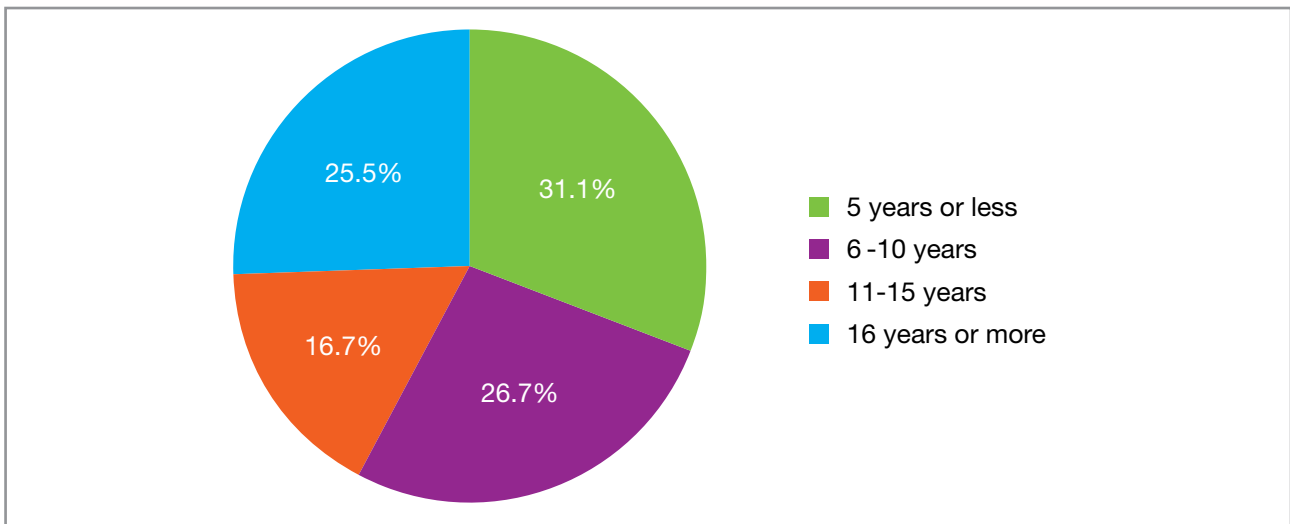
The prevalence of Children's Services qualifications within the FDC sector coupled with current work practice suggests that recognition assessment would be an ideal pathway and starting point for the FDC workforce to meet the mandated qualification requirements.

Reasons for obtaining Children's Services qualifications

The reasons for educators and unit coordinators obtaining their existing Children's Services qualifications may indicate future incentives for the sector in meeting the mandated qualification requirements.

Table 6: FDC educator reasons for obtaining a Children's Services qualification

Reason	Percentage
For professional development of my own choice	83.7%
It is a registration or licensing requirement for my work	16.3%

FDC educators indicated professional development opportunities as the main reason for obtaining their qualification however this statement highlighted the decision being the educator's own choice. The introduction of mandated qualifications was certainly a point of contention during the consultation forums of Stage One. This created robust debate and strong emotion with a portion of FDC educators expressing a desire to leave the workforce.

Table 7: FDC educator intention to obtain a Children's Services qualification*

Yes I will obtain a qualification	No I will not obtain a qualification
75%	25%
Comments	**Comments**
• Will only obtain this qualification because I am being forced to do so • Too meet the new regulations • Not by choice	• I will retire as I am too old to be studying and I have been doing this for 23 years • I can't afford to study • How can I balance work, my family, and study? • I do not have a computer to do online study • I will retire if I am forced to do this to keep my job • Is it worth it for only three days a week? • Too much commitment to have to study

based on educator consultation forum data only

The data obtained from unit coordinators about their reasons for obtaining their qualifications essentially mirror those of the educators.

Table 8: Unit coordinator reasons for obtaining a Children's Services qualification

Reason	Percentage
It is a registration or licensing requirement for my work	17.4%
For professional development of my own choice	82.6%

Likewise the sentiment provided by unit coordinators in terms of their intention to gain the Children's Services qualification was similar to that of educators.

Table 9: Staff intention to obtain a Children's Services qualification

Yes	No
89%	11%
Comments	**Comments**
• Only due to the fact that I will be required to have this qualification • Only to upgrade my old qualification	• Feels too old to study • Cannot see how this will advantage me in my career

The value of training and qualifications for the FDC workforce

Coordination unit staff reported valuable gains for FDC educators and users of the service upon FDC educator participation in professional development and obtaining qualifications. Data from surveys, consultation forums and interviews with unit coordinators indicated the following value of qualifications for FDC educators:

- FDC educators report feeling more confident in their interactions and discussion with parents and other service providers
- FDC educators perceive themselves to be equal in status to industry peers in other care environments
- FDC educators are considered professional educators by themselves and other parts of the childcare sector
- FDC educators feel valued as professionals when participating in an "effective" and respectful recognition process
- provided that training has been a positive experience FDC educators in approximately 33% of cases were inspired to undertake the Diploma of Children's Services qualification once they had successfully obtained the Certificate III in Children's Services. There was also a small portion of FDC educators who after completing the Diploma chose to enrol in the degree
- unit coordinators observed that FDC educators completing the Certificate III improved their confidence, knowledge and skills in literacy and completing workplace documentation to QA standards
- unit coordinators and educators report value in completing the Certificate III as it improves knowledge of specific methods and strategies for managing children's challenging behaviours
- Diploma qualified educators demonstrated and reported having an increased knowledge about child development that improves their ability to articulate to parents their approaches to child care.

Additional Support to Undertake Training and Assessment

FDC educators considered additional support systems from a range of sources to be critical to successful completion of training and assessment. FDC educators reported significant success undertaking training and assessment when the following factors are present:

- small, face-to-face training groups of FDC providers at convenient location e.g. on site at Schemes, where the trainer attends on a regular basis either fortnightly or monthly
- external or remote delivery with phone and email support available after educator hours of work for regional or isolated educators
- online learning that provides for access to live sessions outside FDC educator hours of work

- trainers and assessors possess FDC experience/background and appreciation of unique context of FDC care environment
- formalised partnerships between schemes and RTOs to support training, assessment and recognition processes
- educator experience and knowledge is valued and given equal status/consideration as that of other care workers in the recognition assessment process
- respect for the work of a FDC provider is demonstrated by the assessor and workplace assessment is undertaken in the FDC educator's home as a legitimate workplace
- assessors take responsibility for their role in recognition assessment, i.e. provide a range of options for evidence collection and FDC educator competency demonstration
- training and assessment material is inclusive of relevant examples of all care environments including FDC
- FDC educator's choice of RTO is not restricted to financial viability (some RTOs receive funding to provide training at a lower cost than others). FDC educators perceive this as limiting their options due to training costs.
- schemes and unit co-ordination staff are supportive of the educator undertaking training and assessment and provide opportunity for third-party evidence and workplace assessment skills demonstration
- scheme or unit coordination staff hold Certificate IV in Training and Assessment qualifications to provide opportunity for workplace assessment in FDC educator home as their workplace. (This issue was repeatedly reported in regional areas where access to a formal training environment is several hours away and assessors from the RTO are not able to conduct workplace assessment).

Barriers for undertaking training

FDC educators and unit coordinators were also asked to provide comments or select standard responses about what factors would discourage them to study. The comments below have been summarised.

- time required to study
- cost of training
- loss of income when an RTO requires FDC educators to undertake workplace assessment or placement outside the educator's workplace
- poor recognition assessment process
- work hours do not allow access to training
- family commitments
- geographical location of training
- length of time since last studied
- proximity to retirement
- self confidence - in my ability to successfully undertake training
- lack of support
- access to technology
- language and literacy needs
- cultural appropriateness
- lack of flexibility
- lack of weekend workshops and training.

FDC educators and unit coordinators report having mixed experiences in undertaking training and assessment. Stage Two of this project further analysed the experiences of FDC educators undertaking training and assessment.

Registered Training Organisation Interviews

As part of the research methodology ten RTOs were interviewed. The purpose of the interviews was to identify innovative processes and models that supported the FDC workforce to obtain qualifications. The RTOs interviewed were either nominated by schemes or the RTO had expressed interest in the research project and requested an interview.

All interviews were conducted with an RTO staff member who was either the Children's Services Training Manager or trainer/assessor. Four of the RTOs interviewed are public RTOs and receive a range of funding opportunities to support Children's Services sector to complete Certificate III and Diploma in Children's Services.

Funding included Productivity Places Program (PPP) funding and expression of interest in supporting employers to access Workplace English Language and Literacy Program (WELL) funding for candidates requiring assistance with Language, Literacy and Numeracy.

The RTOs were asked what modes of training delivery are available to the FDC sector and all responses included a range of options, with some RTOs more flexible than others to accommodate FDC sector needs.

Table 10: RTO training and assessment options for FDC workforce

Training and/or assessment options	No. of RTOs offering this option	Additional comments
Attending full time study	3	NA
Part time study	8	• Part time at scheme one night per week for new educators • Tailored training to embed Certificate III units in induction process for new FDC educators. Workshop one Saturday morning per month
Distance learning	5	• No support available after hours for FDC educators
Online learning	1	• Live sessions available but not at appropriate times for FDC educator • No IT support provided to FDC educators
Workplace assessment in educator home or scheme/unit	8	• Individual training plan developed with learner and the scheme
Combination of recognition and gap training	10	• Processes varied across RTOs
Award whole qualification via recognition assessment based on evidence	5	NA

3.3 Preliminary Recommendations

From the data gathered as part of Stage One a number of preliminary recommendations were made. It is important to note that these recommendations were preliminary and were tested further during the FDC educator monitoring and case study modelling processes.

Preliminary recommendations include:

1. FDC workforce has access to subsidised opportunities across a range of RTOs for training, assessment and recognition and LLN support to obtain Certificate III and Diploma of Children's Services regardless of employment status, i.e. self-employed or employee. Funding models should include a broad scope of public and private RTOs to permit the FDC workforce to choose the "best fit" RTO. The FDC workforce supports the access to PPP and WELL funding opportunities.

2. Develop a funding model for FDC Schemes/units/workforce that supports the appointment of an identified Training Support Officer within schemes to support educators and staff to undertake training. An extension of this recommendation is to provide subsidised training in Certificate IV in Training and Assessment for existing scheme/unit coordination staff and

educators to provide coaching and mentoring support for educators and unit staff to undertake training and assessment in the workplace via a partnership model with a preferred RTO.

3. Develop best practice models of recognition assessment and associated resources to support the FDC workforce to engage in productive and sustainable partnerships with RTOs to maximise recognition assessment outcomes.

4. Establish a consistent workforce induction system that embeds identified compulsory units of competency from Certificate III in Children's Services.

5. Identify gaps in the competency standards needed for the FDC educator job role which could involve the inclusion of competencies for small business operators within a possible FDC skill set and/or an elective group within the Certificate III in Children's Services.

6. Articulate an evidence-based, best-practice training and assessment model for the FDC workforce incorporating the following six key factors for success:
   a) formalised relationship and role clarification between RTO and schemes
   b) trainers and assessors with experience and appreciation of FDC work context
   c) face-to-face training workshops held in small groups during the evening and/or weekend (minimum once per month)
   d) learner access to trainers and assessors outside FDC work hours
   e) FDC induction programs reflect units of competency in Children's Services.
   f) Recognition Assessment is a supportive process implemented as a partnership between educators, assessors and scheme coordination staff.

7. Map articulation pathways from Children's Services qualifications to higher education qualifications to support the:
   a) implementation of universal access as part of the EYLF within the FDC environment
   b) career pathways for the FDC workforce.

4. STAGE TWO RESEARCH

Stage Two consisted of the analysis of the data gathered as part of Stage One. These findings have informed the development of recommendations.

4.1 Research Methodology

Parent Survey

A parent survey was developed to gain insight into the end users of the FDC service and was distributed via FDC schemes to parents.

There were 116 parents that responded to the survey. FDC Schemes and Coordination Units distributed surveys to parents via a mailing database or in person via FDC educators. The survey was developed to gain insight into why and how users chose Family Day Care as well as what parents consider the most important factors when choosing a FDC provider.

The survey questions and corresponding responses are included below:

Question 1 What are the ages of the children you have in FDC?

Response: The responses are not reported here as there was a large range of ages that upon examination did not appear to have an impact on the parent's responses to the following questions.

Question 2 For what reason did you choose FDC over other childcare types?

Please select from the following list (you may select more than one):

- I like the family-based care environment
- The hours of care provided meets my specific needs
- It's close to my home
- Cost
- It's the only type of care service available at the time I was seeking care
- It's culturally appropriate
- My child has specific needs (e.g. disability, development) which I feel only FDC can support
- The educator was recommended by someone else (e.g. relative or friend)
- I like the option of choosing an individual educator
- Other.

Response: The most common response was the importance of the family based care environment as well as for a parent to be able to choose their own educator.

Question 3 Rank from 1 to 4 which of the following factors was most important for you when you chose your FDC provider

- My child's educator has qualifications in Children's Services (childcare)
- My child's educator is experienced in providing childcare
- My child's educator meets national standard (e.g. quality standards like child-to-educator ratio, hygiene, safety, etc.)
- My child's educator has individual educator qualities (e.g. empathy, nurturing, compassionate).

Response: In response to this question the all but three parents selected that the most important factor was an educator's individual qualities. There were three parents that did select the educator's qualifications in children's services or the educator's ability to meet the national standards.

Data Analysis

The responses to the parent survey yielded some interesting insights. It would appear that when a parent is choosing a FDC provider it is of little significance or importance if a FDC educator has a qualification. Instead, the most important quality for parents in choosing a FDC educator was the educator's personal qualities. Parents choose FDC over other forms of education and care because of the family environment as well as having greater control when choosing an educator.

It may be that parents have little understanding or do not place significance on the correlation between the provision of quality care and qualifications or the influence or impact that a highly regulated sector may have on provision of quality care.

4.2 Monitoring of Educators

The research included monitoring and tracking educator training over an eight month period between February and September 2010. The aim of this exercise was to canvas the views of educators' experience in training and assessment as they journeyed along their learning and assessment pathway.

This data gathering processes included:

• tele-interviews
• focus groups
• case study modelling.

This monitoring was critical in order to establish a clear understanding of what is required to support FDC workforce growth and sustainability in the climate of Early Childhood Education and Care policy reform.

Initially the methodology for monitoring included recruiting FDC educators to participate in phone interviews. FDC educators were recruited through consultation forums, nominations from coordination staff, and the promotion of the research to FDC educators engaged in training through RTOs. However, this approach was not as successful due to the fact that FDC educators are generally time poor, often working in excess of 50 hours per week and then having to meet training commitments and their own family responsibilities after hours.

Further the individual telephone interviews proved to be an ineffective method of gathering data, as they were time consuming for a small amount of data return. Other factors impacting telephone interviews were:

• Cultural and religious protocols – a small number of participants were not permitted to speak directly to the researcher. Instead their partner had to be involved in the conversation and acted as a type of interpreter. This created substantial barriers to obtain valid information.
• English as a second or third language for FDC educators created substantial barriers when communicating over the telephone.
• The phone conversations more often than not had to occur after care hours – after 7.00 pm. This stretched out the work hours of the FDC educators, leaving them at times less able to engage.

- The telephone as vehicle of communication is not conducive to in-depth discussions and exploration.

> A list of focus group questions used to facilitate discussion with FDC educators about their training and assessment experiences is at Appendix F.

FDC educators participating in focus groups completed registration forms to facilitate follow up sessions to determine qualification completion rates in September 2010. A number of schemes have a positive relationship with an RTO and therefore work together in a partnership model to support FDC educators to obtain their qualifications. These schemes invited CS&HISC to attend training/workshop sessions held at their scheme allowing CS&HISC access to FDC educators.

The benefits of this process include:

- FDC educators are not participating in the tracking exercises in their down time thus are more energised and able to engage and participate
- FDC educators appear to provide more detailed information in a group setting bouncing ideas off each other and sharing information with their peers
- researchers can readily target the expected demographics for this process
- multiple data was collected in one contact rather than through individual phone or in person interviews
- opportunity to explore recommended "good practice models" of training and assessment at the same time as tracking FDC educator experiences
- accessing the groups of FDC educators through the RTO and Scheme partnership enabled the monitoring of the three types of participants (new, current and recently completed across the three qualifications levels (Certificate III, Diploma and Advanced Diploma) and targeted demographic representation.

The Sample Group

The sample group of FDC educators included a proportional mix from diverse backgrounds including FDC educators who identified with one or more of the following categories:

- experiencing challenging socio-economic circumstances
- are from a CALD background
- are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- have a disability
- work in a remote locations
- have no previous qualifications or formal study
- work 50+ hours.

The Monitoring Process

The monitoring process was negotiated with the sample group and relevant RTOs and included:

- periodic interviews and surveys with the sample group of 176 educators
- a case study approach to monitoring the experiences of disadvantaged groups allowed for in depth comparative analysis of educator training and assessment experiences
- a blend of data collection methods in the tracking process accommodated for the cultural, linguistic and location diversity of up the 176 sample group as well as the project timeframes.

Monitoring occurred at a range of points in the FDC educators' training and assessment experience including:

- application and entry
- seeking recognition assessment
- upon attainment of one third of the qualification (via assessment or training and assessment)
- midway attainment of the qualification
- completion – qualification issued.

Application & Entry	Recognition Assessment	One third completed	Midway completed	Completion
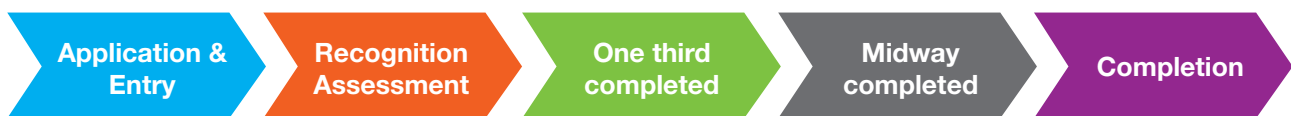
Different questions were explored according to the FDC educator's circumstances along the continuum as described above.

Tracking also explored a range of delivery and assessment modes including:

- workplace training and assessment
- classroom attendance
- on line or self-paced learning
- blended delivery and assessment.

> For a list of the questions explored as part of the monitoring and tracking process please refer to Appendix F.

4.3 Demographics of Monitored FDC educators

Location of FDC educators

The 176 FDC educators that participated in the monitoring exercise were drawn from across each State and Territory except South Australia (SA). The lack of participation from SA FDC educators was due to the difficulty in accessing FDC educators in a training group as most training in SA is conducted online. However, data was gathered during Stage One from the FDC workforce located in SA.

The breakdown of FDC educators from each State and Territory is shown in Diagram 6.

Diagram 6: Location of FDC educators

Bar chart — Location of FDC educators:
WA 46, QLD 38, VIC 22, TAS 21, NT 21, ACT 19, NSW 13, SA 0
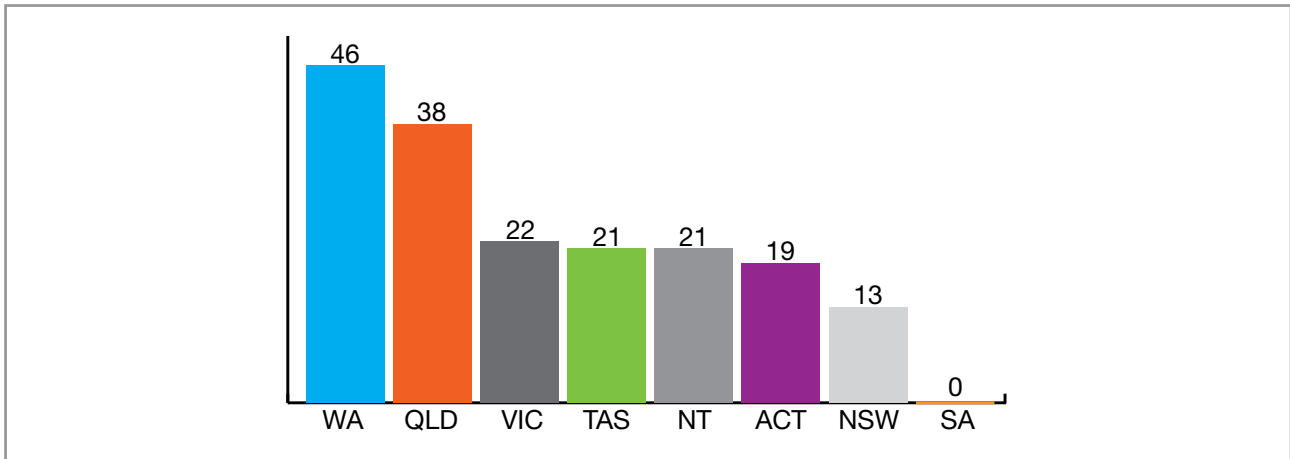
Metropolitan, Regional and Remote Regions

FDC educators who participated in the tracking exercise came from metropolitan, regional and remote areas as illustrated in Diagram 7 below. The remote area included Alice springs and regional areas included Taree (NSW), Mt Gambier (SA), Geraldton (WA), Darwin (NT) and Brighton (TAS).

Diagram 7: Location of FDC educators

Bar chart — Location of FDC educators:
Metropolitan 104, Regional 69, Remote 3
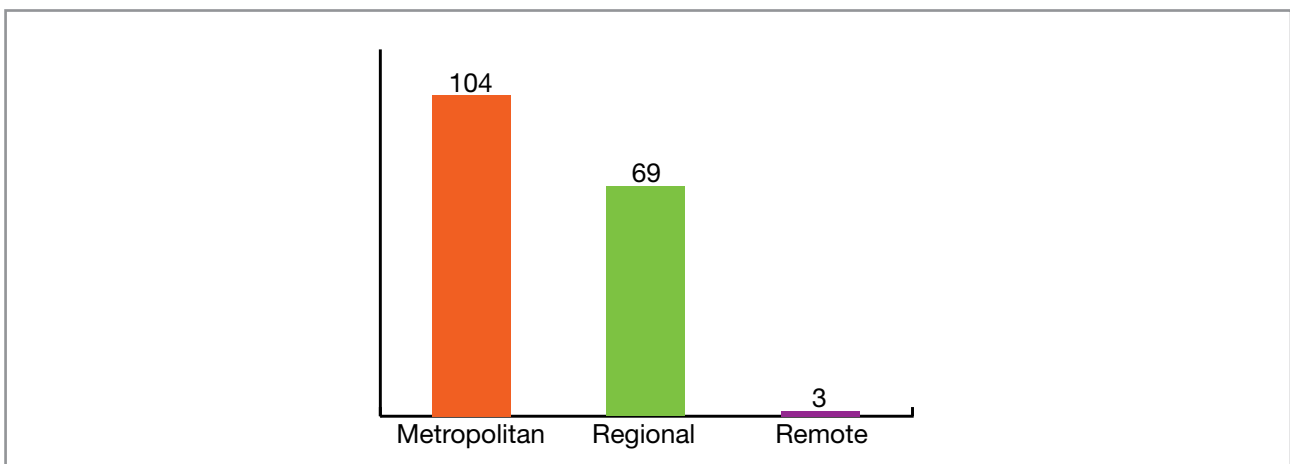
Disability

Two FDC educators indicated that they were living with a disability. No further information was collected about the disability however one FDC educator indicated that they had a learning disability.

Hours of Work

FDC educators were asked to indicate if they worked in excess of 50 hours per week. As shown in Diagram 8 below, the following information was provided:

- 70 work more than 50 hours per week
- 97 work less than 50 hours per week
- 7 did not respond to this question.

Diagram 8: Average hours of paid work
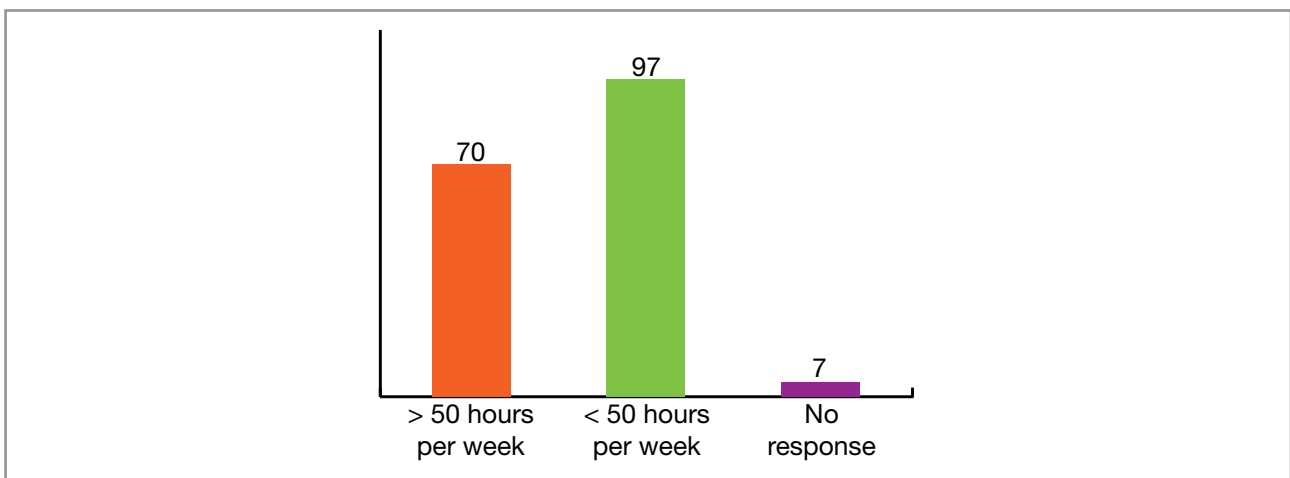
Types of Children's Services Qualification

There was a range of Children's Services qualifications being undertaken by the FDC educators that participated in this monitoring process as illustrated in Diagram 9 below.

Diagram 9: Existing Children's Services Qualifications
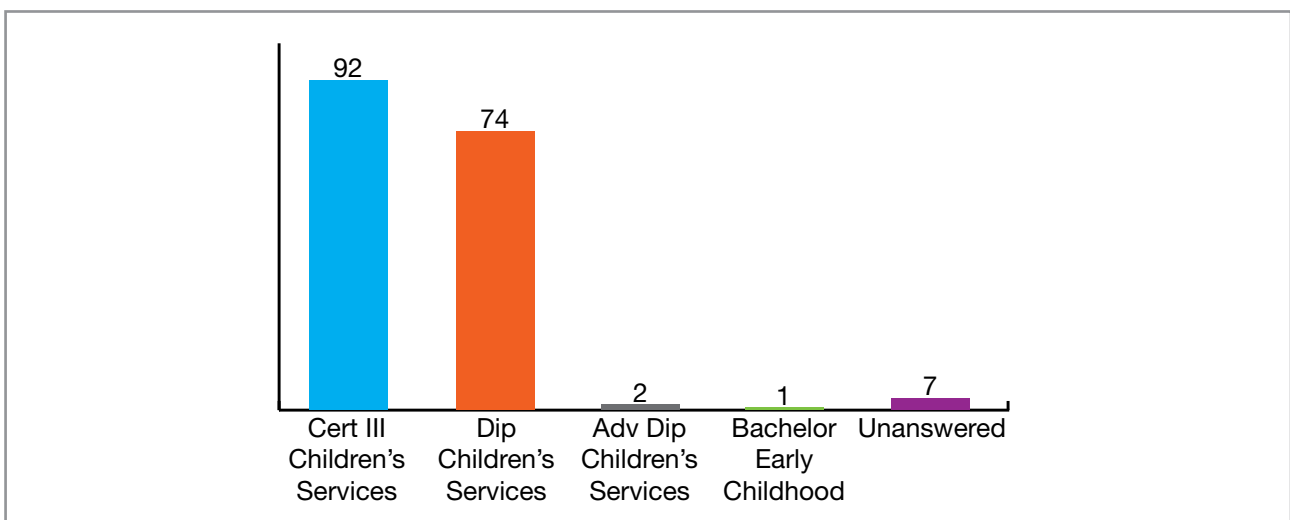
Enrolment Status

The FDC educators varied in how long they had been engaged with study (refer to Diagram 10 below). This included:

- 47 who were new enrolments
- 48 who were midway through their study
- 81 recently completed their study.

Diagram 10: Enrolment Status
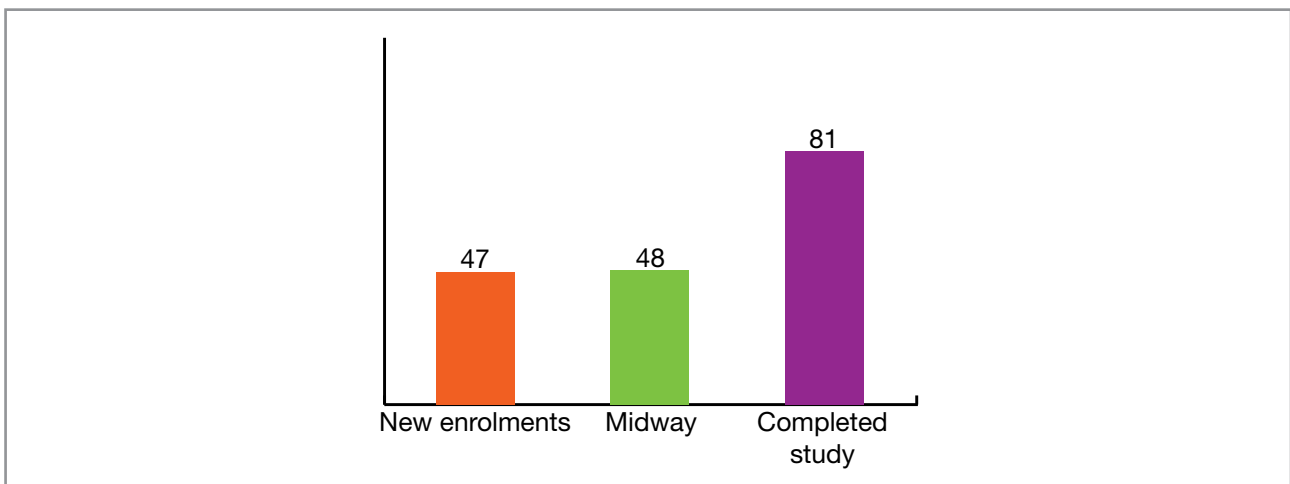
Cultural Background

FDC educators were asked to identify if they were from a cultural or linguistically diverse background (CALD) or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Diagram 11 below shows the numbers of FDC educators in each group.

Diagram 11: Cultural Background
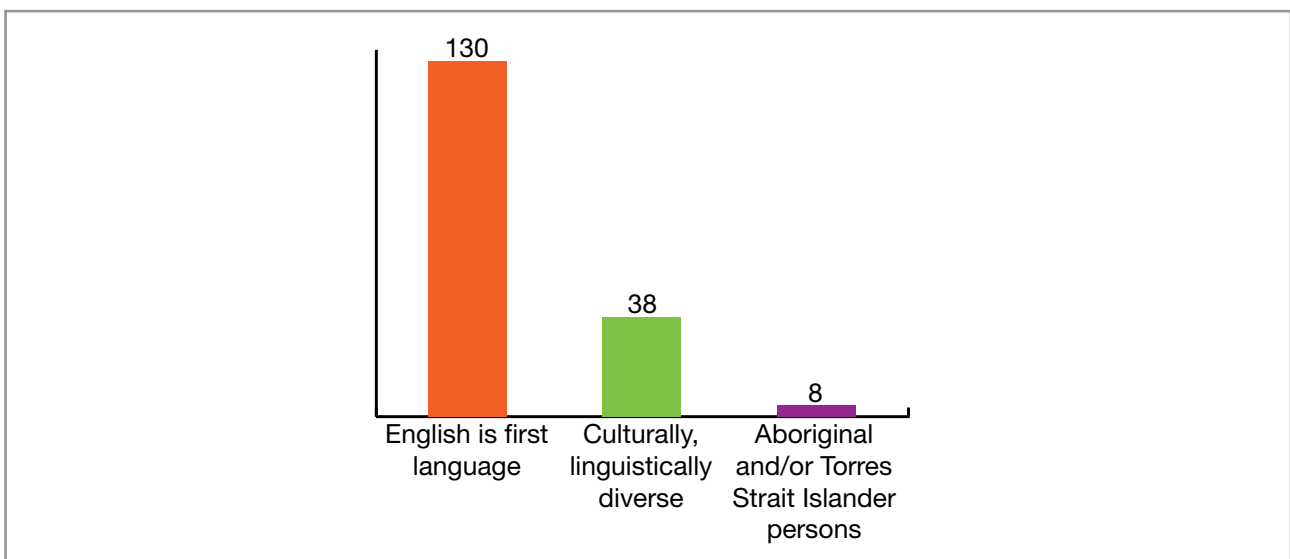
Training Provider

FDC educators were asked to indicate if their training provider was a public RTO or a private RTO. The responses were as follows:

- 122 undertook their training with a public RTO
- 54 undertook their training with a private RTO.

These responses are also shown as a percentage below in Diagram 12.

Diagram 12: RTO Type
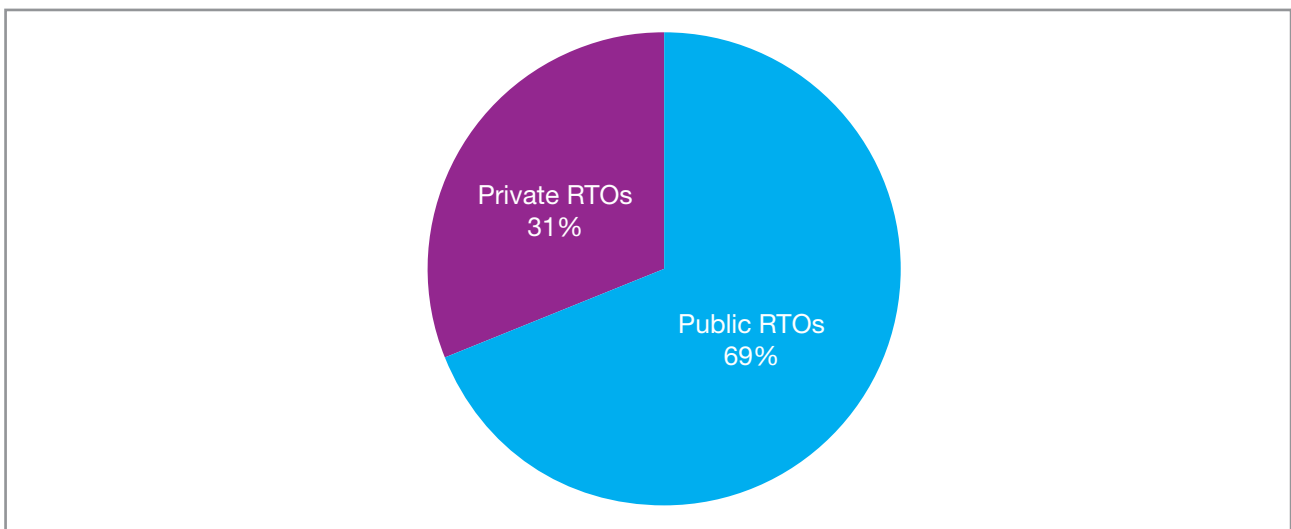
4.4 Data Analysis of Monitoring Process

Experience with Registered Training Organisations

FDC educators were asked to comment on their experience with the RTO they were undertaking study with. Their responses are reflected in Diagram 13 below:

Diagram 13: Experience with RTOs
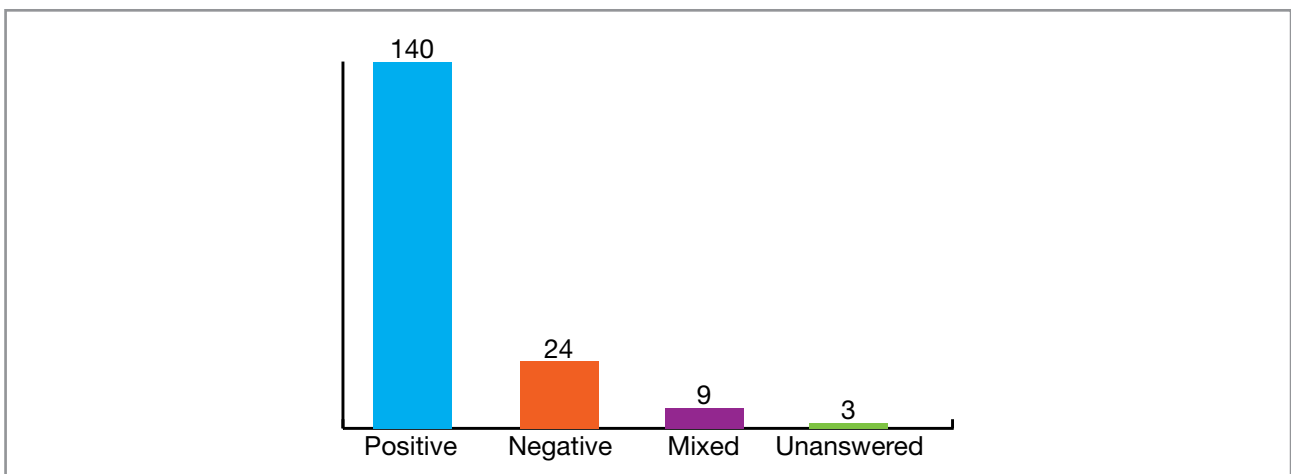
Summary of Comments

Some common characteristics contributed towards a FDC educator's view of whether their experience was positive or negative. These characteristics along with comments are listed below.

Positive characteristics	FDC educator comments
Flexibility in the course, the trainer and the assessment process	• "The RTO was flexible and willing to work around my job" • "The RTO was supportive, flexible, accommodating and positive" • "The RTO was flexible and helped me through my study"
Access to information about their course as well as access to their trainers	• "The RTO answered questions and returned calls promptly" • "Very helpful, discussed all aspects of the learning program" • "RTO explained responsibilities of the learner and the responsibilities of the RTO" • "Very helpful, especially with clarifying items and answering questions"
Helpful and Supportive RTOs	• "Lots of support" • "Supportive, positive, accommodating, flexible and understanding" • "Very supportive and helpful" • "Very good, very helpful, answer any questions"
Inspiring and career choice-affirming learning experiences	• "Rewarding, provided framework for explaining what we do, life-changing with self and own family" • "Fantastic experience, teacher was encouraging about students continuing their study" • "Exciting - recognising that what I'm doing within FDC is right" • "Confidence-building"
Negative characteristics	**FDC educator comments**
Lack of support	• "Lack of support, little feedback and no clear direction about program and student requirements • "There was lack of support, difficulty in contacting trainers" • "Unsupportive" • "I felt very unsupported"
Lack of FDC sector understanding and/ or references by RTOs, trainers and within training materials	• "No understanding of FDC" • "Course tailored to centre based care only"
Lack of communication including difficulties in contacting the RTO and/or training as well as access to information	• "Communication with RTO has completely broken down. I have called emailed and even written letters to obtain forms that were not included in original study pack. Is now half way through studies and still missing these items" • "…felt lied to in terms of training program, teachers and the number and complexity of assignments" • "...difficulty in contacting trainers - this experience has put me off completing further study" • "No follow-up, no returned phone calls, poor processes" • "Conflicting and inconsistent information"

Recognition Assessment

Recognition assessment is a formal assessment process that encompasses a number of concepts including:

- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- Recognition of Current Competencies (RCC)
- National Recognition (previously known as Mutual Recognition).

Please note that **Recognition of Prior Learning** (RPL) is a common term used to describe recognition assessment. The survey tool refers to RPL whilst the analysis of the data uses the term recognition assessment.

As all participants in the monitoring exercise were currently enrolled in a qualification, it was expected that they would have an understanding about RPL. This expectation was based on the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF 2007) requirement that all learners enrolling in a course must be provided with information about RPL and if appropriate, offered RPL.

Level of understanding about RPL

The 176 participants were asked to rate their knowledge about RPL. They responded (as also shown in Diagram 14) in the following way:

- 65 rated themselves as having a good knowledge about RPL
- 59 rated themselves as having minimal knowledge about RPL
- 26 rated themselves as having no knowledge of RPL
- 26 did not respond to the question[7].

Diagram 14: Understanding of RPL

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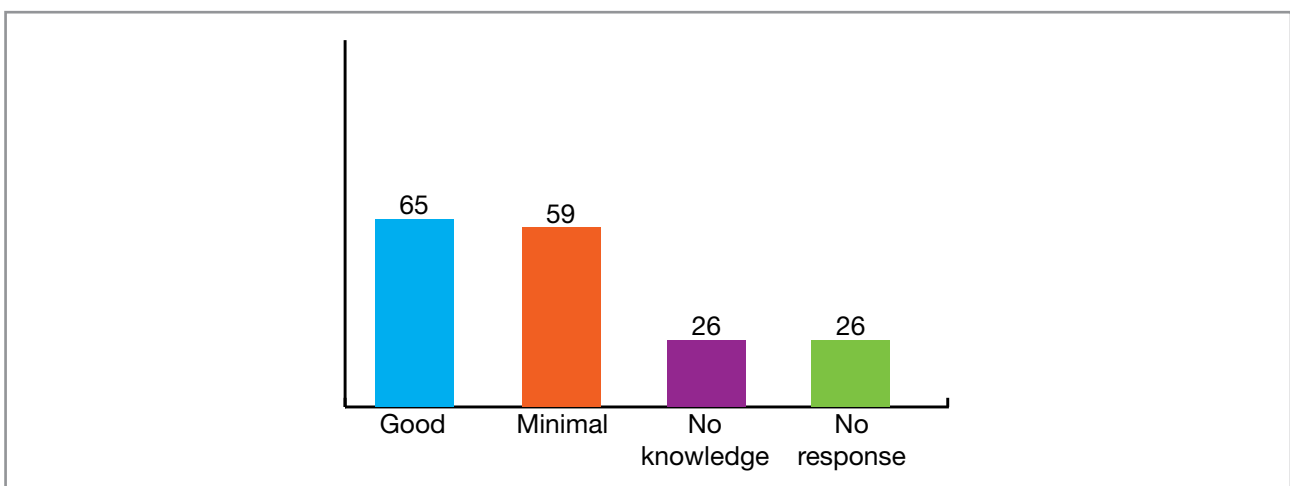
[7] There is indication from further information provided that the 26 participants that did not respond to this question did so because they had little or no knowledge of RPL.

RPL as part of enrolment

Participants were asked if they were offered RPL as part of their enrolment process. The following information was provided and is also shown in Diagram 15:

- 99 indicated yes
- 40 indicated no
- 2 were not sure
- 9 indicated that this was not applicable to them
- 26 did not respond to this question[8].

Diagram 15: RPL offered as part of enrolment
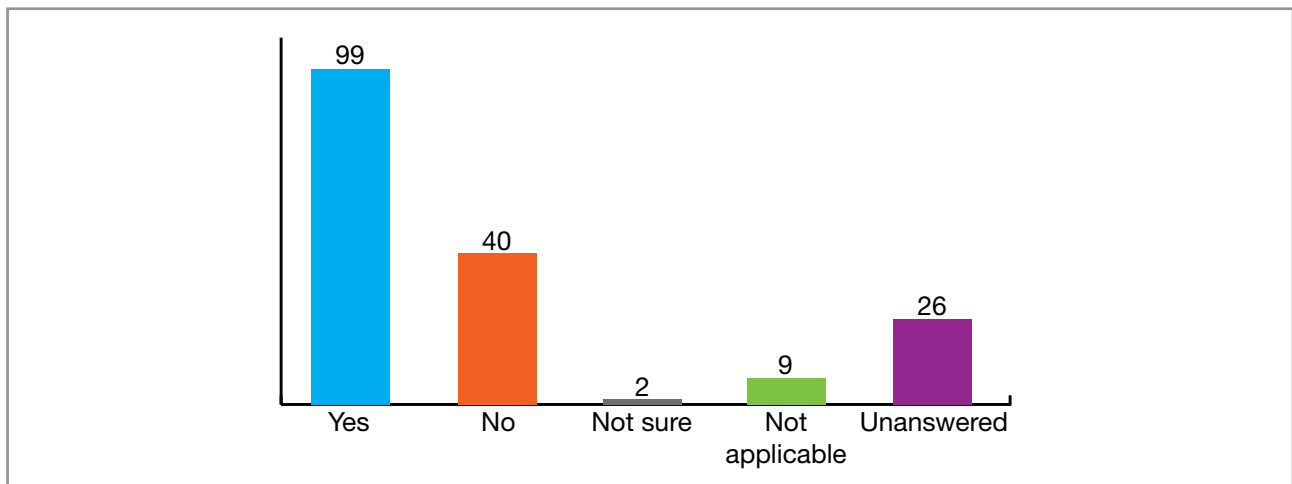
The response to these questions is quite significant when you consider that FDC educators generally do hold an existing Children's Services qualification and are currently working in the sector, suggesting that FDC educators are ideal candidates for RPL.

Furthermore, the standards that regulate RTOs (AQTF 2010) outline that all learners enrolling in a qualification must be provided with information about RPL and as appropriate on a case by case basis offer learners an opportunity to undertake RPL. It would therefore be expected that all respondents should have answered yes to this question. This result may suggest that these RTOs are not adhering to the AQTF.

RPL – Positive or Negative

Participants were asked to comment on their experience with RPL as being a positive or negative experience. 108 participants responded.

- 62 found RPL a positive experience
- 46 found RPL a negative experience.

These responses are also shown below as a percentage in Diagram 16.

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[8] There is indication from further information provided that the 26 FDC educators that did not respond to this question did so because they had little or no knowledge of RPL.

Diagram 16: Experience of RPL
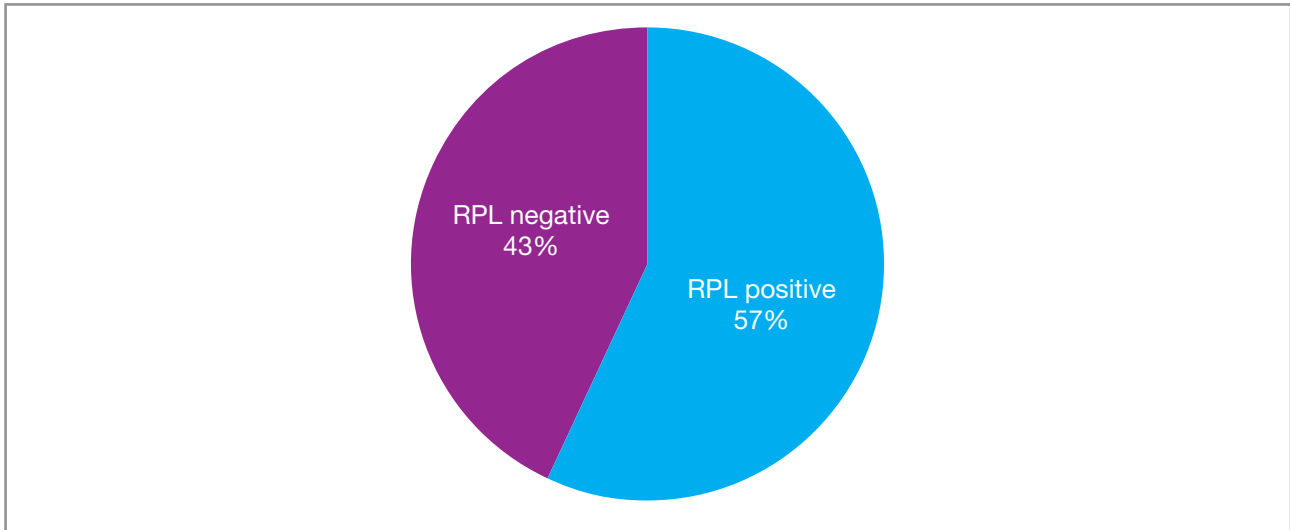
It is worth noting that respondents who indicated a positive rating of RPL may have rated the experience as positive as a result of gaining a favourable outcome. For example, they may have gained advanced standing, credit, and statement of attainment and/or recognition for the full qualification. A positive outcome may therefore have influenced their rating. Alternatively, a negative outcome may have had the opposite effect (negative response).

Comments about RPL

Some of the comments that FDC educators provided about recognition assessment included that the process was unclear, time consuming and confusing. Other FDC educators commented that they received some recognition for compliance-related units such as first aid and occupational health and safety but not for working with children.

FDC educator comments included:

- "The RTO was very open about recognition and the RPL process was easy to understand"
- "I was advised by RTO that the recognition option is sometimes more complicated than enrolling in qualification and felt I was encouraged NOT to undertake RPL"
- "I had to do a lot of evidence gathering and I was not clear on how much information is needed"
- "I needed further guidance to know exactly what evidence is required"
- "It's very time consuming"
- "I got no recognition for my years of service".

Delivery Mode

Participants were asked to indicate the delivery mode in which they were enrolled. The modes of delivery included:

- face to face
- distance
- online
- self-paced.

Face to face

Participants that were enrolled in face-to-face learning predominately found it a positive experience due to their ability to participate in peer group learning, share their experiences, and help each other along the learning journey. Participants commented that the social aspect was particularly beneficial as they work in isolation with children.

FDC educator comments included:

- "I attended classes one day per week; I enjoyed the interaction and ability to share ideas with other students"
- "Excellent for networking and peer support"
- "I enjoyed getting together with other participants".

The difficultly with face-to-face delivery however, was engaging with an RTO that scheduled classes at suitable times that did not interfere with their work.

Distance

There was a mixed response in terms of FDC educators participating in distance learning with some FDC educators finding the experience extremely isolating and difficult whilst others thrived in the ability to undertake study when it suited them.

A common theme attributed to their positive experience was the ability of the students to participate in workshops facilitated by their RTO or their scheme.

FDC educator comments included:

- "I would attend one day a month on a Saturday and I found this to be an enjoyable experience"
- "I enjoy attending workshops in conjunction with distance delivery."
- "The workshops provide rich learning experiences and opportunity to network and share learning".

Online learning

A small number of FDC educators participated in online learning. There was a mixed response to this learning approach. Some FDC educators thrived in this environment whilst others felt restricted and frustrated with the lack of trainer support. For example their trainers were only contactable during business hours however most FDC educators would undertake their online program outside business hours when the children in their care had gone home.

A large number of distance students were offered online learning however did not feel comfortable taking this option. A lack of familiarity with using computers as well as LLN issues also cited as creating barriers to participating in this learning approach.

FDC educator comments included:

- "I chose this mode of delivery because of the flexibility and convenience. However I would have liked assessor to come to my home to undertake workplace observation. Instead I had to go to a centre to undertake placement"
- "I did not choose to go online due to learning difficulties".

Self-paced study

Self-paced study differs to distance learning in that there is normally no timeframes stipulated around the completion of assignments or learning modules.

Again there was a mixed response to this learning approach due to the lack of: opportunities to participate in regular workshops; support from their trainer in terms of negotiating timeframes and deliverables; and access to their trainer.

FDC educator comments included:

- "My trainer was available 24/7, websites listed where to find information, email and phone support provided"
- "The optional workshops provided me with a chance to network and participate in group learning"
- "I meet up with other students and teacher and a mentor once a month for approximately three hours. This is extremely helpful"
- "The self-paced learning responsibilities are overwhelming"
- "I have tried self-paced study however I preferred doing the work alongside others and having timeframes to work towards".

Experience with Assessment

Participants were asked to provide comment about their experience with assessment. Their responses are listed below and are shown in Diagram 17 below.

- 88 rated their overall experience with assessment was positive
- 23 rated their overall experience with assessment was negative
- 17 rated their experience as being mixed – both positive and negative
- 48 did not answer this question[9].

Diagram 17: Assessment Experience

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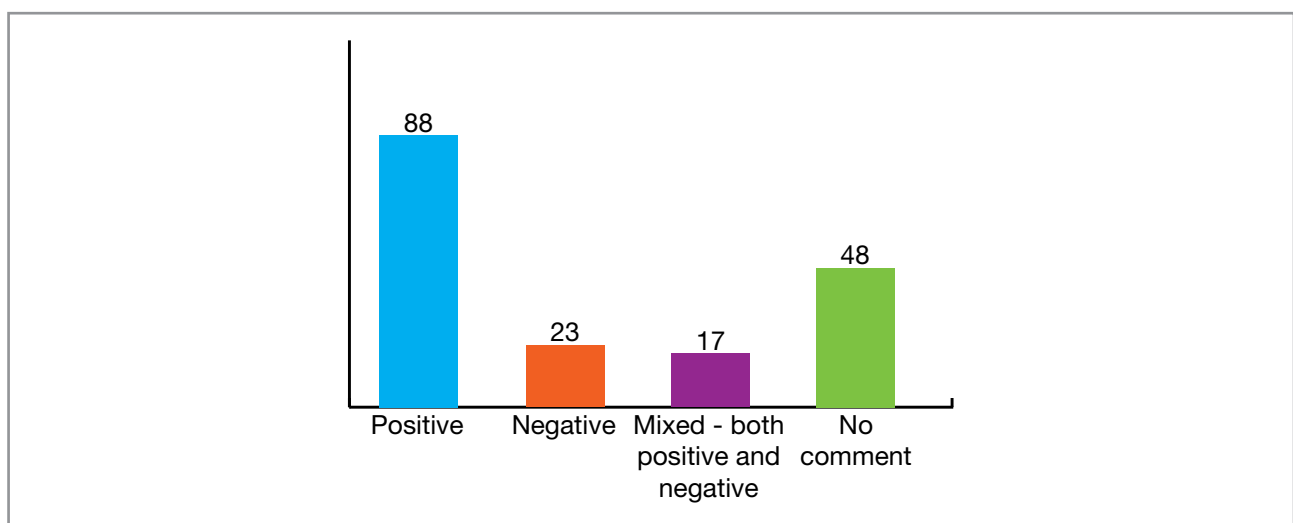
[9] The high incidence of unanswered responses relates to participants not yet undertaking or completing assessments at the time of the participating in the tracking exercise.

Positive characteristics

A large number of participants attributed their positive experience to being able to be assessed in their workplace (their home). Having support from their trainer was also seen as contributing positively to a participant's assessment experiences. In addition, a number of participants noted that a supportive scheme contributed towards their positive experiences.

FDC educator comments included:

- "We had a supportive scheme"
- "Our scheme supports us to complete assessments by holding a Saturday workshop once a month"
- "Our assessments were conducted within educator's home and was still non-intrusive, positive experience"
- "The trainer was willing to come to our homes to assess us"
- "Assessment is carried out within own home. Trainer visits regularly and is supportive".

Negative characteristics

Negative characteristics included participant's being unfamiliar with studying and finding it difficult to navigate the system. Others cited that their assessments were solely written assignments. Others commented that there was a lack of support for LLN issues.

FDC educator comments included:

- "I don't always understand the assessments, hard to put thoughts onto paper in a clear way after not studying for so many years".
- "All assignments were written questions and assignments and research assessments."
- "Assessment were unclear, only written assignments assessor was incompetent and assessments inconsistent and differed between students – inflexible and unsupportive
- "The assessments are NOT contextualised to the FDC sector"
- "I found the assessment tasks to be hard to understand because of the language barrier".

Relationship with trainer

FDC educators were asked to comment on their relationship with their trainer. It is worth noting that not all FDC educators felt comfortable commenting on their trainer's performance especially if their views were leaning towards a negative view. Their responses are listed below and are illustrated in Diagram 18.

- 110 rated their relationship with their trainer as being positive
- 17 rated their relationship with their trainer as being negative
- 27 rated their relationship with their trainer as being both positive and negative
- 22 did not respond to the question.

Diagram 18: Relationship with trainer
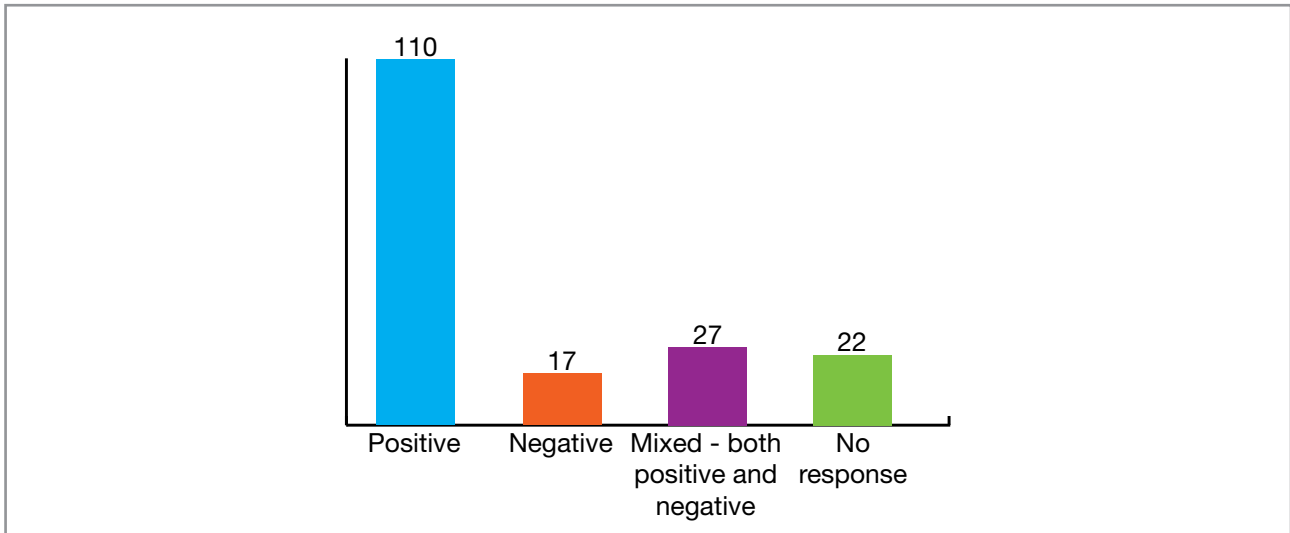
Positive characteristics

Those FDC educators that rated a positive relationship with their trainer cited that their trainers were personable, friendly, helpful, accessible and highly skilled and experienced in FDC.

FDC educator comments included:

- "The trainer was helpful, direct and approachable. And they made an effort to know everyone"
- "Approachable, eager to help, dedicated, full of knowledge, gave confidence"
- "The trainer answered all my questions, knew her industry, explained things well"
- "Trainer is knowledgeable, helpful and experienced in FDC, takes time to explain things - particularly with RPL procedure".

Negative characteristics

Those FDC educators that described their experience as being negative explained that they had great difficulties in accessing their trainer. This was the main reason for a negative rating.

FDC educator comments included:

- "I do not know any of the trainer's names and I speak with a different teacher each time. Email responses take over one week"
- "I have a limited interaction with trainer, classes too big and teachers were difficult to contact"
- "What relationship – the teacher would not know me from a bar of soap".

Training Materials and Resources

FDC educators were asked to comment on the training and assessment materials they received as part of the training course. Their responses are listed below and shown in Diagram 19.

- 104 rated their materials in positive light
- 20 rated their materials in a negative light
- 13 had mixed feelings about their resources – both negative and positive
- 39 did not comment on their materials.

Diagram 19: Quality of training material
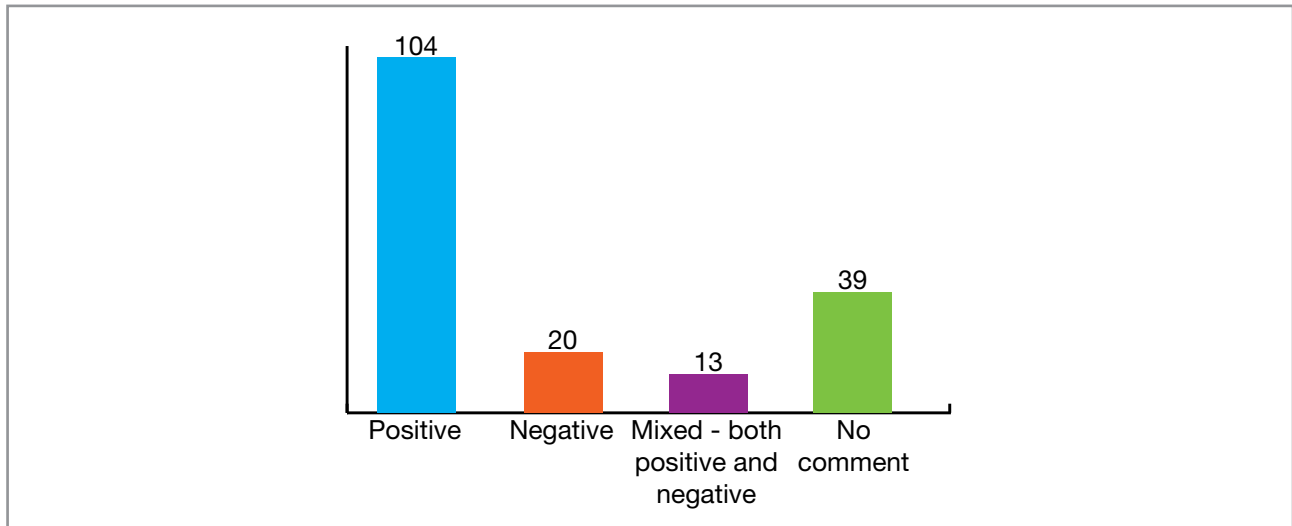
Positive Characteristics

Those participants that rated their materials as being positive did so because they believed the quality to be of a high standard, comprehensive as well as being specific to the FDC sector. Educators also found it helpful when the resources were provided to them in hard copy (and not only on a CD Rom).

Educator comments included:

- "All materials were provided to me in hard copy that included module outline booklets and assessment outlines and web link"
- "The workbooks were modified to accommodate examples of FDC and context of FDC"
- "Hard copies provided which was easy for me to understand with my language difficulties".

Negative Characteristics

Those educators that rated the material as being negative did so due to the materials being of a low quality and not appropriate to FDC sector. Other educators were not provided materials as part of their course fee so had to buy the resources or compete for limited copies in the library.

Educator comments included:

- "There was a two month delay in receiving materials"
- "The materials were not appropriate, they excluded FDC examples"
- "I had to pay for workbooks but was given handouts and website information"
- "The workbooks were available through the library but it was difficult trying to access them so I ended up purchasing the workbooks instead which was a big expense".

Access to Support

Educators were asked to talk about what support was available to them in undertaking their study and provide a rating about if they believed the support that they had access to was positive or negative. Their responses are listed below and shown in Diagram 20.

- 133 participants believed that the level of support was positive
- 30 participants believed that the level of support was negative
- 11 participants did not comment on the level of support they received
- 2 participants were uncertain about the support that was available to them.

Diagram 20: Access to Support
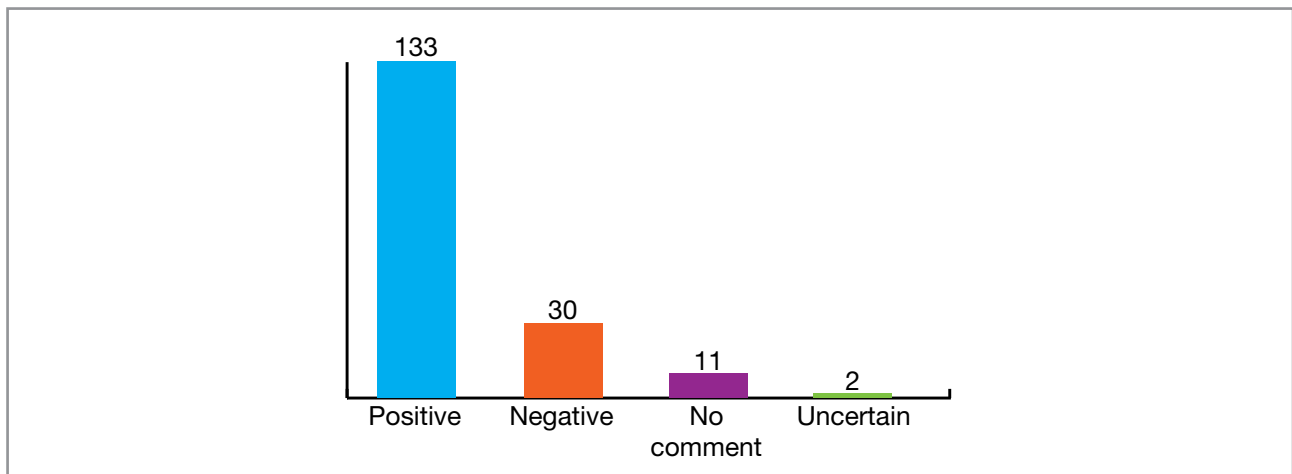
Positive Characteristics

Most educators had a good understanding of what support was available to them and viewed the level of support to be adequate and positive. This included having access to their teacher and/or scheme. One group commented that there was LLN support available and this was well received.

Educator comments included:

- "I was given complete support. My teacher was very accessible and I was able to contact her by phone, fax or email"
- "The Coordinator is very helpful, conducts regular home visits to encourage training".
- "I really appreciated the unit staff coming to my home to care for my charges so I could attend training workshops".
- "My trainer is available by phone & email".

Negative Characteristics

Educators who rated the support they were receiving as negative predominately did so because they could not access any support and felt removed from their trainer, the RTO and at times from the scheme.

Educator comments included:

- "The support from scheme is limited to business hours, which is when I am working"
- "I have no peer support as I am unable to attend workshops because they clash with my work"
- "My RTO won't return my calls".

Barriers to Training

Educators were asked to provide comment on what they perceived to be the most difficult thing in undertaking training. It was common for educators to find it difficult to manage work, life and study as well as maintain their motivation (to study). This was particularly relevant to those educators who had young children of their own. Other educators were concerned about being "forced" to undertake study (due to the reforms) having had little or no exposure to a learning environment for many years.

The common themes included:

• the expense of undertaking study
• managing a work, life and study balance
• isolation and keeping motivated
• learning to learn again
• being time poor
• LLN issues particularly in CALD groups
• assessment processes.

Educator comments included:

• "I found it difficult knowing what was expected of me due to large gap in undertaking study"
• "Finding time to complete assignments and undertake 55+ hours of work"
• "Having to study after long hours at work"
• "Lots of things… having the time, juggling 12 hour days, family time, running business, the cost despite discounted rates"
• "I find assessment tasks very difficult because I have to write everything up and my written English is not good".

Advantages of Training

Educators were asked to comment on what they found to be "the best part about undertaking study". The majority of educators explained that undertaking study had increased their confidence and reinforced and reaffirmed their practice. Others commented that it provided opportunities to gain new knowledge and skills and thus gain a greater understanding about children and their development.

The common themes included:

• increased confidence
• reaffirming educator's career choice and practice
• gaining new knowledge and skills
• interacting with other students
• gaining a qualification.

Educator comments included:

• "I feel better about myself and have a better understanding about children and their development"
• "Participating in a learning process and reinforcing what you already know"
• "It gave me more confidence, assisted with interpersonal skills development"
• "Learning new skills, interacting with others, seeing other professionals, getting new ideas, being qualified"
• "Gives me the confidence to talk with parents about my work".

Changes to Training

Participants were asked to provide feedback and comments relating to what changes they would make to the training and assessment that they are undertaking. A number of educators felt satisfied and would not change a thing about their learning experience. Other educators provided a range of feedback. The common themes included:

• access to face-to-face training and workshops
• access to on the job assessment
• regulate the cost of training
• FDC specific training and assessment to reflect the need of small business
• improvement of the RPL processes
• improved communication and support from RTOs
• support for CALD groups.

Educator comments included:

• "I would like the opportunity to participate in class room style learning"
• "I would like more up to date material that is specific to the FDC sector"
• "There should be more hands on and more of a focus on children and offer on the job assessment"
• "Better communication about sequence of learning and delivery"
• "I found being from a non-English speaking background that the RPL process was very hard".

Other Comments

FDC educators were given the opportunity to provide further comments. The majority of FDC educators did not provide further comment and those comments that were provided tended to repeat comments previously made.

This final comment summarises the potential and positive outcome that training an assessment can have for the FDC workforce.

> "The benefit to me undertaking the Certificate III (in Children's Services) is it has made me equal to others in the child care industry, I can now say I'm qualified, have greater knowledge of child development and it makes me want to do the Diploma"

4.5 Best Practice Approach to Training and Assessment

Based on the data gathered as part of the monitoring and tracking process, a number of characteristics contribute towards a best practice approach to training and assessment for the FDC sector. This includes:

• training and assessment that is flexible
• RTO that provide open communication, support and easy access to information
• distance learning with an option of regular face to face workshops
• workshops to occur outside the FDC educator's operating hours
• a three-way partnership between the FDC educator, scheme and RTO
• provision of assessment and training support from schemes
• on-the-job assessment (in the educator's home)
• FDC educator centred RPL processes (rather than assessor centred)
• support for CALD groups.

4.6 Case Study Modelling Research

This section of the report provides a discussion of the common characteristics that contributed to effective models for supporting FDC workforce development. Four case study sites were nominated to provide insight into best practice models for FDC workforce development. These case study sites provided information about completion rates of training and educators' experiences regarding participation in various training and assessment delivery models.

A range of characteristics were present in each of the four case studies. These include:

- the roles and responsibilities in the scheme and RTO training partnership are clearly negotiated and defined. The relationship is built on respect
- there is a genuine commitment by the scheme and RTO to create the best opportunity and circumstances for educators to achieve their qualification goals
- ensuring that FDC educators have access to trainers and assessors at times that accommodate their hours of work
- regular (weekly, fortnightly or monthly) workshop-style delivery for small peer groups that support learning, is non-threatening to less experienced learners and conducted in convenient locations
- RTO and scheme work together to accommodate special interest groups e.g. cultural sensitivity, LLN, and disability
- cost-effective training options
- trainers and assessors have experience, an appreciation and genuine professional regard for FDC workforce environment
- materials used in training are inclusive of FDC environment and context examples
- the Certificate III Children's Services units are formally embedded in the educator induction process
- recognition assessment is streamlined and supports the recognition of all FDC educators' competency regardless of how they have been achieved, e.g. life experience, work experience, formal and informal learning.

It is worth noting that the case study sites were nominated because of their strong and effective partnerships and as such were likely to yield positive results in terms of best practice in training and assessment.

4.6.1 Approach

Focus groups were held at each site with FDC educators undertaking either the Diploma of Children's Services (Early Childhood Education and Care) or the Certificate III in Children's Services. FDC educator participants engaged at various points in their learning journey. Some FDC educators were new enrolments to the qualifications whilst others were mid-way through their qualifications and some had recently completed their qualifications.

The four case study sites included:

1. **Darwin**   Darwin FDC & Charles Darwin University (CDU) RTO
2. **Queensland**   Wynnum FDC & Source RTO
3. **Queensland**   Bundaberg Baptist FDC & Wide Bay TAFE RTO
4. **Perth**   Bright Futures FDC & Polytechnic West RTO

4.6.2 Case Study Matrix

The case study matrix below provides a snap shot of the positive characteristics of the training and assessment models as reported by FDC educators, schemes and RTOs.

Case Study Location	Darwin FDC & CDU (RTO)	Wynnum FDC & Source (RTO)	Bundaberg Baptist FDC & Wide Bay TAFE (RTO)	Bright Futures FDC & Polytechnic West (RTO)
Scheme and RTO have a partnership approach	X	X	X	X
Small group workshops offered in out of care hours e.g. evenings and weekends	X	X	X	X
Assessor with FDC experience, provides relevant training context	X	X	X	X
Certificate IV TAA or TAE qualification held by scheme staff to support learning	X			X
Training materials contextualised to FDC	X	X	X	X
Units of competency are embedded into Induction process with provision of recognition	X			X
Assessment occurs in workplace (i.e. educator home)	X	X	X	X
Identified positions and qualified training support staff in scheme	X			
RTO does not require educator to undertake placement hours in long day care	X	X	X	X
Flexible delivery options	X	X	X	X
Individual learning plan options	X	X	X	X
Flexible assessment options e.g. using playgroup as an opportunity for Educators to demonstrate skills leading small group activities (not requiring placement hours in long day care)	X	X	X	X
Specific development and application of recognition process for FDC	X	X	X	X

Case Study Location	Darwin FDC & CDU (RTO)	Wynnum FDC & Source (RTO)	Bundaberg Baptist FDC & Wide Bay TAFE (RTO)	Bright Futures FDC & Polytechnic West (RTO)
Cost effective access to funded training initiatives	X	X	X	X
LLN support strategies available and implemented	X	X		
Culturally specific support strategy for CALD and A/TSI groups	X	X		X
Completion rates on average across a qualification delivery for Certificate III & Diploma	95% Cert III 80% Diploma	93% Cert III 89% Diploma	97% Cert III 93% Diploma	96% Cert III 92% Diploma

4.6.3 Case Study 1: Darwin Family Day Care

Case Study Scheme Overview

Darwin FDC Scheme is community managed and has been established for 33 years. It is located on the grounds of Malak Primary School in a suburb of the greater Darwin City area. At the time of writing this report 79 educators were registered with the scheme. The scheme has a total of ten scheme staff including Area Coordinators, one Senior Coordinator and a Manager.

The Senior Coordinator has a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and holds a Bachelor of Children's Services from Charles Darwin University (CDU). The Area Coordinators are qualified with Diploma level qualifications or higher, for example Bachelor of Teaching. The scheme has a Director with eight years of experience in the FDC sector and is a representative for national peak organisations.

The Case Study Focus Group Participants

The Darwin FDC scheme attracts a large number of educators from CALD background. There is a high turnover of FDC educators which may be attributed in part to the Defence Workforce three year location cycle in Darwin. FDC educators relocating from other States and Territories often have previous experience in care-type roles.

There were 12 FDC educators that participated in a focus group. All of these FDC educators were at the beginning of their study in Certificate III in Children's Services. Almost half of the focus group participants reported English as their second or third language. First languages included: French, Swahili, Lingala, Tagalog, Pigini English, Thai, and Indonesian.

Of the 12 focus group participants, three held Certificate III level qualifications in disability and aged care. These qualifications were considered in a credit transfer arrangement by the RTO. In addition, six participants had between two and eight years' experience in FDC from interstate locations.

Two of the experienced educators had recently arrived from large regional areas interstate and explained that the previous schemes they had been registered with had not provided the

opportunity, encouragement or support equal to that offered by Darwin FDC to undertake a qualification.

RTO and Scheme arrangements for educator and staff training and assessment

CDU is a Higher Education Institution with a RTO arm that offers the educators and staff within the Darwin FDC scheme access to the Certificate III and Diploma of Children's Services and a potential pathway to the Bachelor of Children's Services (also offered at CDU).

In consultation with the Darwin FDC, CDU developed an induction manual that supports and equates to eight units of competency from the Certificate III in Children's Services. This induction process is completed within three months of commencing induction.

The completed induction process is considered as evidence for recognition assessment. The recognition assessment process is further supported by the Senior Coordinator and field officers who are qualified assessors of the scheme and undertake workplace observation. This activity contributes towards additional evidence of a FDC educator's competence and includes the provision of a third party report.

CDU has developed a gap training process for FDC once the initial eight units are completed. Therefore, an educator can complete the Certificate III in Children's Services within a six month period by participating in this supported process.

The scheme works in a true partnership model with the RTO ensuring that recognition assessment and delivery and assessment are appropriate and contextualised to the needs of the educators.

It is worth noting that the Certificate III in Children's Services has been a requirement for educators of this scheme since 2003. This was a decision made by the scheme to ensure a qualified and quality workforce.

The scheme Director (*Heather Havens*, interviewed 24.2.2010) reported that the majority of educators were willing to undertake the training. The flexible nature of the recognition assessment process and training delivery may explain the willingness of educators to undertake the training which has been available since 2003 at this scheme.

Once induction is complete, the remaining units of competency for award of the Certificate III in Children's Services are undertaken via workshops consisting of small groups on site at the FDC scheme one Saturday per month over six months. Training is provided primarily by the two RTO trainers who have an extensive background in Children's Services and FDC.

Workshop numbers are kept small and the location is convenient and familiar to educators. The Senior Coordinator supports the learners by providing coaching sessions as needed by educators. The Senior Coordinator has a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and utilises the skills and knowledge from this qualification to undertake workplace observation and assessment.

Educators and staff of the scheme have the opportunity to also undertake the Diploma of Children's Services (early childhood education and care). The Diploma is offered two nights per week over two years with Saturday workshops being held for elective units of competency. This equates to three units per semester through CDU.

Recognition and Assessment

Assessment is carried out as a combination of workplace observation and some written or oral tasks depending on the learner's negotiated assessment plan. CDU are flexible in their

assessment approach and support a partnership arrangement to assessment. If appropriate the CDU assessor will attend the FDC educator's workplace and undertake a workplace assessment.

The induction process for educators established in partnership with the scheme and the RTO provides opportunity for recognition assessment. FDC educators receive recognition for the completed induction process against eight units of competency from the Certificate III in Children's Services. This approach supports best practice recognition.

During induction, FDC educators complete workbook activities that relate to a range of knowledge and skills that apply to their induction and include opportunities to participate in a workplace demonstration or observation. FDC educators participating in induction are required to gain knowledge and skills in child protection, OH&S and safe food handling. It is therefore logical that an educator would not be required to repeat this learning when embarking on the Certificate III in Children's Services.

FDC educators who have completed partial qualifications or have previous educator experience from other locations are provided with opportunity to seek recognition assessment and are supported to do so with the assistance of the Senior Coordinator. In these situations FDC educators are still required to undertake induction however, the assessment and gap training post induction is tailored to meet the educator's specific training needs.

Completion rates

This case study tracked the learning experiences of 12 FDC educators completing the Certificate III in Children's Services. Of the 12 educators, ten completed the qualification and two have not yet completed the qualification. Of the sample group four educators have enrolled in further training in the Diploma of Children's Services. For those educators not completing the Certificate III qualification personal reasons were cited as the reason.

The high completion rates can be attributed to the educator induction process being mapped to accredited training, a supported learning environment, effective and streamlined recognition assessment process, small group work, facilitation skills of the trainers and assessors and the effective working partnership between the scheme staff and the RTO that allows for flexibility and individual learning plans.

A Best Practice model of training and assessment

The Darwin FDC educators and scheme staff reaffirmed the following characteristics as best practice approaches to training and assessment:

- small group delivery (less than 15) provides a peer supported learning environment
- familiarity with training environment (on site at the scheme)
- trainer and assessor with experience and appreciation of the uniqueness of FDC sector
- access to training support outside normal business hours
- senior coordinator at the scheme being qualified in training and assessment
- FDC educator's home is acknowledged by the RTO as being a legitimate workplace and thus is assessed at home and on-the-job
- flexible assessment options without requiring the FDC educator to close their business to undertake placement hours in a centre based service
- FDC specific learning materials and resources
- scheme and RTO staff with appreciation of cultural diversity, LLN support and preparedness to accommodate individual learning needs.

Additional support is also provided to educators presenting with LLN and culturally-specific training and development needs. It is fortunate that this scheme has a senior coordinator with significant FDC experience and recognised training and assessment qualifications. Potentially this position could be considered to be that of a Training Coordinator position and if so would need to be supported by adequate resourcing for such an appointment.

Career and qualifications pathways

Educators and staff at Darwin FDC Scheme are able to easily access the CDU Bachelor of Children's Services qualification which builds on the Diploma of Children's Services (Early Childhood Education and Care) and aims to provide students with knowledge and skills for advanced reflective professional practice and leadership. The course shares a suite of units with the Bachelor of Teaching and Learning and graduates may seek admission into the Graduate Diploma of Teaching and Learning which is a recognised teaching qualification in the Northern Territory.

4.6.4 Case Study 2: Bundaberg Baptist Family Day Care

Case Study Site Overview

The Bundaberg Baptist FDC is community managed and has been established for 27 years. It provides services to families across Bundaberg and its surrounding areas. The scheme has 89 registered educators and a contingent of 16 scheme staff including the following positions:

• Program Manager
• Coordination Manager
• Senior Coordinator
• Coordinators
• Play session Coordinator
• Play session Assistant
• Administration team.

The scheme staff hold a range of qualifications. Five of the coordination staff has an Advanced Diploma of Children's Services; four hold the Diploma of Children's Services and two staff members are qualified teachers.

At the time of conducting this research, of the 89 educators:

• 60 FDC educators with a completed Certificate III in Children's Services qualification
• 29 of the 60 had further completed the Diploma of Children's Services
• 15 FDC educators were mid-way through the Diploma of Children's Services
• 3 FDC educators have completed the Advanced Diploma of Children's Services.

All FDC educators completing study were undertaking their study with Wide Bay TAFE. Wide Bay TAFE has a strong relationship with the Bundaberg FDC Scheme and provides onsite training, flexible delivery and access to trainers and assessors outside regular business hours.

The Case Study focus group participants

The Bundaberg FDC focus groups included:

• Group One - a group of nine educators newly enrolled in Certificate III in Children's Services
• Group Two - a group of eight educators completing the Diploma of Children's services.

It is worth noting that five of the FDC educators in group 1 were male. The scheme also employs a male coordination unit staff member and this was certainly unique to this case study site.

All FDC educators were without a prior qualification in the area of child care and education however some educators had experience in a care environment. These FDC educators were supported by the scheme and RTO to access a $500 Skilling Solutions grant to assist with recognition assessment and this has enabled a pathway to obtaining a qualification.

Skilling Solutions is an initiative of the Queensland Government to support workforce development. Since the introduction of the Skilling Solutions initiative in excess of 50 FDC educators have accessed the funding to complete a recognition assessment process to obtain the Certificate III in Children's Services.

As previously discussed the FDC participants in group 1 did not hold any prior qualifications in childcare or education. However, in follow up contact made with the scheme they indicated that upon completion of the Certificate III qualification all of Group 1 had enrolled in the Diploma qualification. In addition, four of the eight participants indicated an intention to continue onto further education and study. This included gaining teaching qualifications or early childhood education degrees.

The Bundaberg focus groups included a high proportion of co-educators or FDC educators which was also unique to this case study site.

Bundaberg Baptist Family Day Care - Diploma Students Graduation, December 2010

RTO and scheme arrangements for FDC educator and staff training and assessment

The Bundaberg FDC has well established arrangements with the Wide Bay TAFE for the training and assessment of FDC educators and unit coordinators. The scheme and educators both reported a positive relationship with the lead Trainer from Wide Bay TAFE and have attributed this Trainer as contributing significantly to the success of this training partnership.

The lead trainer has over 20 years' experience in the FDC sector and is supported by two other trainers also with FDC experience. The Wide Bay TAFE uses a recognition assessment process for experienced FDC educators. Training is conducted in small peer groups of between five and 10 educators. Sessions are held at the scheme office. FDC educators reported a preference for face to face training to be held during the evening one night per week so that there is no loss of income or inconvenience to the children in their care.

One-on-one tutorials are also offered by the TAFE trainer in the FDC educator's home and access to training support outside regular business hours was also available and was considered to contribute positively in successfully completing study.

The trainer also has support from coordination staff who conducts workplace observations of educators in their homes (workplace). The trainer has significant knowledge of the role of FDC educators and coordination unit staff so is able to provide contextual examples of how to apply the skills and knowledge learnt during the training.

Several FDC educators provided feedback about the learning materials that were purchased from an external organisation. Their feedback suggested that the examples and information provided in the learning materials were not FDC specific and instead was developed for long day care. However, drawing on her experience the trainer was able to address this issue by making amendments to the materials to ensure the material better reflected the FDC sector.

Recognition Assessment and Assessment

Within this scheme the trainer works with the scheme to ensure that recognition assessment is undertaken in the FDC educator's workplace. The trainer has developed a tool that maps an FDC educator's standard practice including completion of routine documentation and compliance requirements to specific units in the Certificate III in Children's Services. This then is used as evidence as part of the recognition assessment process. This process contributes to a more efficient completion of the Certificate III in Children's Services. It is not uncommon for FDC educators to complete a Certificate III in Children's Services within six months or less if they participate in recognition assessment.

Coordinators are encouraged to complete Third Party Reports based on observed demonstration of an FDC educator's competence. However, currently the process is time consuming if a number of FDC educators need to undertake workplace observation at a similar time. The scheme and RTO are currently working together to negotiate a more streamlined approach to workplace observation and assessment.

Assessment is also undertaken in a formal training environment. In addition, the RTO does not require the FDC educator to attend to a work placement in a long day care environment for either the Certificate III or the Diploma in Children's Services. Instead the trainers accommodate the need to assess group work skills of FDC educators by using play session activities.

Completion Rates

This case study tracked the learning experiences of nine FDC educators completing the Certificate III in Children's Services and eight FDC educators completing the Diploma of Children's Services. All nine FDC educators completed the Certificate III qualification and eight of the nine FDC educators have subsequently enrolled in the Diploma of Children's Services.

Of the eight Diploma students, seven completed the qualification and three indicated a desire to enrol in further study in Children's Services. The FDC educators who had not yet completed their qualification cited the family and work as the reason for the delay in completing their qualification.

FDC educators reported that the success of their training experience was primarily due to the individual support and flexibility of the training provider who had great empathy and understanding of the FDC sector and work role. Similar to the other case study sites, flexibility and access to support when needed is critical to an FDC educator being able to complete training whilst balancing home and work life.

All FDC educators placed significant value on the opportunity to participate in a peer network and discuss their learning, activities and new information as well as being able to participate in discussions via telephone in between workshop sessions. This helped overcome the feeling of isolation that often accompanies the role of the FDC educator.

A Best practice model of training and assessment

The Bundaberg Baptist FDC educators and scheme staff reaffirmed the following characteristics as best practice approaches to training and assessment:

- small group delivery at the scheme with people of similar age and interest
- a trainer with knowledge and appreciation of the FDC environment
- access to a Trainer by phone, email and in person when needed
- recognition assessment processes that are supported by the RTO and scheme including recognition of a FDC educator's life and work skills
- workplace assessment revoked the need to attend 'work placement' at long day care
- one-on-one tutorials with trainers.

4.6.5   Case Study 3: Wynnum Family Day Care

Scheme Overview

Wynnum FDC has been established for more than 27 years and is situated in the southern bay side suburbs of Brisbane. It is a community managed scheme. At the time of undertaking this research, the scheme had 77 registered FDC educators with 68 operational and with some FDC educators on leave or participating in orientation. The scheme currently has nine staff including one administrator, three coordinators, one playgroup coordinator (soon to work on a project creating active environments), two cleaners and one manager.

Qualifications held by the scheme staff include:

- 3 Advanced Diplomas in Children's Services
- 1 Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood)
- 1 Bachelor of Education
- 1 Graduate Certificate in Early Childhood Education
- 1 Diploma of Business
- 1 Diploma Human Resources
- 1 Diploma of Management.

> Wynnum FDC have applied for funding for the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and was allocated six places, this will commence 2011. Scheme staff holding this qualification will support visits to FDC educators to provide targeted training which can be undertaken on site with FDC educators.

There is a growing trend where FDC educators are seeking support to obtain higher qualifications that would support their business in the long-term. A scheme coordinator holding a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education is employed to support FDC educators complete their qualifications and will be supporting 54 FDC educators next year whilst employed for 30.5 hours per week. This project has proven to be extremely valuable and is a great support to FDC educators. The coordinator works in partnership with Source (the RTO). In 2002-2004, Wynnum FDC had 10% of its FDC educators holding a qualification and in 2010 there are approximately 80% holding a qualification.

Wynnum FDC engages the services of a private RTO, Source, which is owned and operated by Queensland FDC. Source is the main provider of accredited training for this scheme.

Focus group participants

For the purpose of this research this site had a total of 14 FDC educators participate in the focus group. Of the 14 participants, eight are undertaking the Certificate III in Children's Services and six are undertaking the Diploma of Children's Services. Two participants reported having higher level qualifications in education and another in wilderness and wildlife studies.

Of the eight FDC educators completing the Certificate III in Children's Services, six indicated their intention to continue onto the Diploma provided it was affordable. Six out of the eight FDC educators commented that the cost of training is a barrier to undertaking further accredited training including recognition assessment. Additionally, the group provided some favourable comments about the Trainer and/or Assessor skills and knowledge in the area of content delivered.

RTO and scheme arrangements for educator and staff training and assessment

Wynnum FDC and Source work together to ensure that accredited training is available to FDC educators seeking to complete the minimum qualification of a Certificate III in Children's Services. Source provides training to FDC schemes across the state of Queensland.

It is worth noting that as a private RTO in Queensland, Source does not have access to all funding streams that are available to Public RTOs. Therefore, unless funding such as the Productivity Places Program or Skilling Solutions is available, the cost of training offered to FDC educators can be higher than undertaking training in Public Training Organisations.

Nevertheless, FDC educators are choosing to undertake training with Source for several reasons. Source provides onsite training outside of a FDC educator's regular work hours, trainers are knowledgeable of and appreciate the FDC context of work and the demands this places on FDC educators attempting to conduct a small business, balance family and study commitments.

Source offers a discounted training rate for groups of eight or more learners. In addition to the training being provided at Wynnum, Source is currently running eight groups across Queensland.

Wynnum FDC educators participate in training delivery one evening per month in workshops containing small numbers of learners for a period of two hours. The FDC educators are supported in between the workshops by the coordination unit staff as well as by a dedicated training coordinator within the scheme.

Prior to attending the workshops, participants are provided with a workbook. The workshop then covers the main points of the workbook as well as a facilitated group discussion on the assessment tasks. FDC educators are then required to undertake the assessment component and submit materials within a set timeframe. Access to the training support from the scheme is crucial to the success of FDC educators successfully completing training.

An interview with the scheme's coordinator responsible for the support of FDC educators undertaking qualifications identified that a significant amount of time and resources are required to support FDC educator learning in this mode of delivery. In particular, self-paced learning requires a certain level of literacy and knowledge about of how to study. These skills and knowledge are often challenging to FDC educators that are experienced in their job but have not been in a formal learning environment for a number of years. The significant variation in FDC educator capacity to study independently can determine the level of resources required by the scheme to ensure FDC educators are supported to complete what is now a mandatory qualification.

Focus group participants reported that although the Source training was often a more expensive option than a public RTO, the access to flexible delivery outside of work hours and having a trainer with FDC experience outweighed the costs. In addition, participants also shared the view that having workplace based assessment as well as validation of competence by coordination unit staff was by far, a more appropriate process than the alternative imposed by public RTOs requiring up to 200 hours work placement in long day care. Source, also uses the remote playgroup situation to support learning and provides for assessment opportunities in skill areas while working with groups.

Source offers online training options for those FDC educators with access and confidence in using a computer and the internet. For example, the use of Elluminate Live which is a virtual classroom, that includes Skype chats and email.

Source reported that on average, a FDC educator can with a combined approach of recognition assessment and gap training; complete the Certificate III in Children's Services within 9-12 months. In addition, learners can on average, complete the Diploma of Children's Services within two years of commencing study.

As in other case study sites, participants collectively shared the view that the value of coming together in a peer learning situation increased their confidence to continue with training while supporting each other in the process. It was also suggested that holding workshops weekly or fortnightly would enhance the learning outcomes for FDC educators.

Recognition and Assessment

Source and the Wynnum FDC Scheme provide a combination of assessment methods including recognition assessment and workplace assessment. Recognition assessment is conducted through an initial interview with the FDC educator, followed by assistance with identifying potential evidence of competency. Source has mapped a list of potential evidence from workplace documents related to compliance requirements such as OH&S, child protection and programming. The recognition assessment processes encourages the FDC educator and scheme to work together to collate and support the recognition of current skills and knowledge.

On average a candidate can gain recognition assessment for up to eight units of competency from the Certificate III in Children's Services. Source, in consultation with the scheme, prepares assessment materials and tools that support workplace-based assessment. Scheme coordinators are provided with Third Party Observation Checklists to complete as they are in the best position to comment on the FDC educator's competency and standards of skills.

Wherever possible, Source attempts to incorporate assessment into existing workplace processes. This approach removes the need for FDC educators and scheme staff to be undertaking additional work, particularly when qualifications have been benchmarked against the actual job role that is being assessed.

FDC educators reported that whilst workplace assessment was helpful it could also be a stressful time having someone watch what you do in the workplace and the relationship between assessment for qualifications and assessment for compliance requirements can become confusing.

Completion Rates

This case study tracked the learning experiences of eight FDC educators completing the Certificate III in Children's Services and six FDC educators completing the Diploma of Children's Services. All eight FDC educators completed the Certificate III qualification and the six remain enrolled in the Diploma.

Of the focus group, seven participants indicated a desire to enrol in further training in either Children's Services or Early Childhood Education. FDC educators attributed the success of their training experience to the training provider that has a specific empathy and understanding of the unique FDC environment. Similar to the other case study sites, flexibility and access to support from scheme staff when needed was critical in the FDC educator being able to complete training whilst balancing home and work life. Training materials providing content relevant to FDC context was another positive factor reported as contributing to the successful training experience.

All FDC educators placed significant value on the opportunity to establish a peer network to support and discuss learning content and share discussions via phone contact in between sessions.

Wynnum FDC have had FDC educators exit the scheme but who have continued their studies with the same RTO. The qualification completion rate for FDC educators is 100%. In fact after a period of time most FDC educators will recommence study at a higher level. Occasionally FDC educators chose to place their study on hold due to a variety of reasons.

A Best practice model of training and assessment

The Wynnum FDC educators and scheme staff reaffirmed the following characteristics as best practice approaches to training and assessment:

• small group delivery at the scheme with people of common interest
• trainer with knowledge and appreciation of the FDC environment
• access to coordinator support when needed
• recognition assessment process that are supported by the RTO and scheme
• workplace assessment such as opportunity to participate in a practical demonstration of skills
• learning about child development in a way that relates to work role in FDC.

Career and qualification pathway

Seven focus group participants indicated that the option for further study was appealing now that they had gained confidence from obtaining a qualification and acquiring study skills. Preliminary intentions for further study included gaining qualifications to progress into careers in early childhood education and teaching. Participants were unclear about qualification pathways and how to proceed with career planning however, and they suggested that this was not a priority whilst their own children were young and remaining in FDC.

4.6.6 Case Study 4: Bright Futures Family Day Care

Scheme Overview

Bright Futures FDC has been operating in the Perth district of Orelia, WA for the past 22 years and is a member of Family Day Care WA. The scheme has a formal partnership with the Polytechnic West (previously known as Swan TAFE). The scheme has 107 registered FDC providers. There is thirteen scheme staff with qualifications ranging from Diploma through to Early Childhood and Management Degrees.

Recently five scheme staff acquired the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment in order to be able to work in partnership with the RTO and support FDC educators in workplace placed assessment. The partnership arrangement between the RTO and Bright Futures began in 2006 and has since grown to ensure a successful model of skills development for FDC educators of this scheme.

Focus group participants

The focus group participants included a total of ten experienced FDC educators undertaking the Diploma of Children's Services qualification after having completed the Certificate III in Children's Services via recognition assessment and minimal gap training. All participants reported a positive experience in the training and assessment environment and all indicated positive outcomes for practice as early childhood FDC educators and FDC educators. Improved knowledge of child development and how to accommodate and extend learning experiences for children were listed as benefits of training and gaining the qualification.

Additionally, participants expressed an increased sense of self confidence and capacity to take on further skills development. These participants had little or no prior formal training. However, they had several years of FDC educator experience and participated in the RPL process which created a pathway to obtaining the certificate III in Children's Services.

One participant in the focus group intended to undertake primary teacher training whilst still working in FDC and another participant expressed a desire to work in child protection once her own children begin school. Nevertheless, each of these participants did not have a clear understanding of the qualification pathway to achieve this career progression.

Overall the feedback on the training and assessment experiences with the scheme and RTO partnership were reported as very positive and the group are keen to continue with Diploma studies.

RTO and scheme arrangements for educator and staff training and assessment

Polytechnic West works closely with FDC WA and with four coordination units (of which Bright Futures is one) to ensure training and skills recognition opportunities are available for FDC educators in their workplaces throughout the metropolitan area. The RTO provides small group workshops onsite at the scheme and also one on one support in the FDC educator's home. The RTO recognised the isolation and inability for many FDC educators to access training opportunities during regular business hours.

The partnership between Polytechnic and FDC WA in the main can be described as an informal arrangement between both parties and has evolved over time and continues to remain strong and mutually beneficial.

Recognition assessment is undertaken in an accumulative way with the scheme staff supporting the FDC educator to collect evidence. Once the FDC educator has obtained a Certificate III qualification they have an opportunity to enrol into the Diploma through a skills recognition or combination pathway. FDC educators who have completed the Diploma of Children's Services are enrolling into the Advanced Diploma in Children's Services.

The close collaboration between FDC WA and Polytechnic West has evolved into a workplace-centred framework that is highly contextualised to the FDC work environment. Collaboration extends to the choice of elective units and how best to implement induction, recognition assessment, gap training as well as the inclusion of workplace assessment.

As a result of the partnership between the RTO and FDC WA, it was identified that many within the FDC workforce have high level skills but limited opportunity to participate in workplace learning and assessment to gain accredited qualifications. Therefore, a flexible approach to training and assessment is taken. Learning and assessment can occur in the FDC educator's home, at the FDC scheme or onsite at the RTO depending on the FDC educator's needs.

The process undertaken by this RTO involves effective recognition assessment processes for obtaining the Certificate III in Children's Services followed by an information session at the scheme to explain the learning and assessment framework for gaining the Diploma level qualification. This includes the opportunity to participate in supportive workshops held at night with follow up visits by the trainer or assessor in the FDC educator's home (workplace).

Training and assessment is organised in a clustered unit approach based on the naturally occurring functions of the FDC educator's job role. This allows the FDC educator to use a work place project to demonstrate their learning and competence. For example, units relating to hygiene, safety, and workplace safety procedures (four units in total) are clustered and a workplace project is negotiated with the FDC educator to demonstrate their competency in this area of their job. FDC educators have access to the necessary equipment as well as the benefit of the familiarity of the environment when undertaking assessment.

Gap training is addressed by a series of re-occurring workshops that address knowledge areas that are essential in a FDC educator's job such as "Working within a relevant legal and ethical framework and first aid".

A learner logbook has been created in collaboration with the RTO and FDC WA. This is an effective learning and assessment tool as it allows the FDC educator to reflect on workplace activities and projects and to share this with a third party like the FDC scheme coordinators.

Recognition and Assessment

The partnership between the RTO and FDC WA has ensured a responsive approach to recognition assessment and assessment that supports workforce capacity building whilst meeting minimum qualification standards set by recent policy reform.

An experienced FDC educator can undertake recognition assessment for the Certificate III in Children's Service entirely in their own workplace. In the event that gap training is required, this could take the form of an information session, a research task, or collecting or validating information from the scheme.

FDC educators undertaking the Diploma of Children's Services may undertake up to 80% of their training and assessment in their own workplace. Assessment and learning plans are customised to meet individual FDC educator needs. The program acknowledges each FDC educator's individual strengths, skills, experiences, knowledge, interests and background.

Out of all the case studies, the model adopted in this case study has the highest focus on genuine workplace-based delivery and assessment. This approach meets the full requirements of competency based assessment through:

- workplace delivery and assessment
- gap training in workshop settings and/or at FDC educator workplace as one-on-one training and coaching
- individual workplace visits and assessments
- regular telephone contact and workplace visits
- best practice assessment methods e.g. observations, conversations, demonstrations and digital and electronic recordings
- self-paced on the job assessment delivery booklets, third party feedback guides, interview question guides
- play sessions
- regular scheme feedback.

Assessments are flexible and designed to relate directly to real work tasks carried out as per industry job descriptions and standards. For example, demonstrate correct hand-washing can be observed directly, observed by video or a series of photos. Assessments are designed to be undertaken in the workplace.

FDC WA has commented that the skills recognition process developed in partnership with Polytechnic West encourages participation by its very nature. The process includes:

- an initial interview using recognition assessment tool and a learning needs analysis process
- regular visits to the FDC educator's workplace to gather evidence for recognition via demonstration, observations and 'competency' conversations
- mapping and identification of additional types of evidence e.g. programming records, minutes of meetings, dairy entries, logbooks etc.

By facilitating an FDC educator-centred approach to skills recognition which is successful and builds confidence at the Certificate III level, FDC educators are inspired and motivated to undertake further skills development often in higher level qualifications.

Completion rates

All participants in the case study focus group were successful with completing the Certificate III in Children's Services via recognition assessment and immediately enrolled in the Diploma of Children's Services.

This group was not due to complete the Diploma of Children's Services until December 2010. All indications are that they will successfully complete the diploma.

A best practice training and assessment model

The Bright Futures FDC educators and scheme staff reaffirmed the following characteristics as best practice approaches to training and assessment:

- learner-focused delivery and assessment
- genuine regard for recognition of FDC educator skills and knowledge before embarking on training
- individual needs of the FDC educator are catered for in the learning and assessment plan
- convenience is aimed at the learner rather than the RTO
- workplace assessment is valid and allows FDC educators to demonstrate their skills in their workplace environment
- one-on-one support provided by a trainer and assessor
- partnership and support by the scheme to obtain evidence of competency
- tailored learning
- options for access to a trainer with a significant consideration of FDC educator needs and working timeframes
- respectful relationships
- flexibility to engage with learning face to face, phone, email or via video
- relevant learning materials specifically tailored to FDC sector.

Pathways qualifications and careers

Polytechnic West report an 80% take-up rate for the Diploma once a Certificate III in Children's Services has been obtained through recognition assessment.

4.7 Representation of Minority Groups within the FDC Workforce

The monitoring phase of the project captured the following data in relation to representation of minority groups within the FDC workforce. Of the 176 only one FDC educator identified as having a disability (of which was a learning disability):

- 21.5% of FDC educators identified being from CALD groups
- 4.5% of FDC educators identified as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander FDC educators

As part of the case study modelling a number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander FDC educators were interviewed. These FDC educators provided some further insight in relation to the policy reforms of the early childhood education and care sector and the cultural impact of these changes.

The interviews highlighted the existing kinship networks that provide a supported care environment without the restrictions of staff-to-child ratios. Responsibility for child care is most

appropriately provided by extended kinship networks and communities. This fact may explain the lower representation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander FDC educators in the sector as well as participants in the research.

Research participants identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander indicated that the imposed staff to child ratios will impact on their ability to continue in family day care work. In some regional settings the participants stated that changes to staff to child ratios combined with having to now hold a minimum qualification would mean that they would have to leave the industry thus leaving no FDC services in their communities.

Concerns were focused on the real issue of having to refuse family and community early education and care due to the staff-to-child ratios. Ultimately the concept of staff-to-child ratio for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities presents a 'cultural conflict'. Traditionally for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, family and community members raise children as needed in a range of situations and over varied periods of a child's lifetime.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander FDC educators also expressed concern about the minimum qualification requirement. These concerns were similar to those expressed by non-indigenous FDC educators and included:

- meeting the expenses associated with gaining a qualification
- lack of flexibility in training delivery and assessment practices
- not having current skills recognised
- a lack of importance placed on culturally specific care environments.

An additional concern was that age of the FDC educators meant that they had not been in a formal learning environment for some time. Whilst the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander FDC educators is significantly lower than non–indigenous FDC educators they have an important role in their respective communities.

Regulations that are in conflict with cultural practices can cause tensions and may run the risk of limiting the types of early education and care that is available within each community. Potentially, FDC can provide a valuable service to the communities and particularly in regional areas where "grandmothers and aunties" are important care providers.

The limits of this research project did not allow for an in depth analysis of the training and assessment needs of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander FDC educator workforce. The sample group was small (n=8) and thus may not be considered representative of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander FDC educator workforce.

Further research is needed to ensure that culturally significant practices are recognised and embedded into family day care.

5.   SKILL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE FAMILY DAY CARE SECTOR

5.1 Family Day Care Educator Qualifications

This research indicates that FDC educators work as independent small business operators providing unique and personalised education and care environments for children from birth to 12 years of age.

Distinguishing features of FDC educators are that they:

- work autonomously with a small group of children of various ages
- are responsible for all children in the workplace at all times unassisted
- are responsible for the formulation, implementation and review of workplace policies
- are required to analysis situations and problem solve as independent workers
- are responsible for all planning, set up, preparation and delivery of all structured children's experience and activities without assistance.
- provide services outside of regular business hours
- are responsible for the regulatory requirements of provision of care and education as well as small business operations (including taxation, CCB, fee management collection and recording)
- are responsible for ensuring the Quality Assurance/Compliance of services provided.

These features of the FDC educator work role are benchmarked at AQF level IV.

Distinguishing Features of Learning Outcomes AQF Certificate IV

The competencies at Certificate IV level enable an individual with this qualification to:

- demonstrate an understanding of a broad knowledge base incorporating some theoretical concepts
- apply solutions to a defined range of unpredictable problems
- identify and apply skill and knowledge areas to a wide variety of contexts, with depth in some areas
- identify, analyse and evaluate information from a variety of sources
- take responsibility for own outputs in relation to specified quality standards
- take limited responsibility for the quantity and quality of the output of others.

The proposed new qualification incorporates the three areas of work applicable to FDC educators including:

1. Compliance and regulatory work
2. Education and care
3. Small business operations.

A draft qualifications framework for the Certificate IV Family Day Care Educator was developed as part of this research project and will be used as a vehicle to generate further conversation and discussion. Additional consultation is required to undertake further development of the draft framework.

Please note that current national standards based on recent policy reform, require FDC educators to hold a minimum Certificate III in Children's Services qualification.

5.2 Family Day Care Qualifications for Scheme Staff

The qualification for scheme staff is in response to the consistent feedback during the research project indicating that scheme staff work roles are more aligned with units from the Advanced Diploma of Children's Services as opposed to the required minimum qualification of a Diploma of Children's Services.

Co-ordination unit staff require skills in mentoring, leadership, training and assessment, monitoring regulatory compliance. In addition to these skills, the recent introduction of the National Early Childhood Strategy requires all FDC educators to promote and engage in Early Childhood Development practice.

5.3 Family Day Care Skill Sets

Skill sets are defined as single units of competency or combinations of units of competency from an endorsed Training Package, which link to a licence or regulatory requirement or defined industry need.

Skill sets do not replace a qualification and are designed to build on a relevant qualification to enable work to be undertaken in the area addressed by the skill set. Skill sets enable a qualified worker to move laterally into work areas addressed by the skill set or to broaden their skill based in relation to the services they provide.

Draft Skill Set 1: Family Day Care Skill Set (Educators)

This skill set aims to support ECEC practitioners who want to move into the role of FDC educator. It includes the development of the necessary skills in operating the small business of a family day care service.

This skill set has been recommended by industry as appropriate for people who hold the Certificate III in Children's Services or commensurate industry skills as evaluated through a recognition assessment process.

It provides a skill set for operating the small business of a FDC service:

- CHCFDC4xx   Provide experiences for children of mixed age groups (new unit)
- CHCFDC4xxx   Establish and maintain fee management policies and processes (new unit)
- BSBSMB306A   Plan a home based business
- BSBSMB305A   Comply with regulatory, taxation and insurance requirements for the micro business
- BSBWOR204A   Use business technology

Draft Skill Set 2: Family Day Care Skill Set (Educator Support Workers)

This skill set provides opportunity for individuals who are currently working in the ECEC sector and want to move into the role of a unit coordinator. It focuses on supporting FDC educators to meet their operational requirements via a coaching and training framework.

The ECEC practitioner will hold the Advanced Diploma of Children's Services (Early Childhood Education and Care) or commensurate industry skills as evaluated through a recognition assessment process.

- CHCFDC6XXX   Support educator role to operationalize family day care business (new unit)

- CHCFDC6XXX   Support educator role to comply with regulatory requirements of the family day care sector (new unit)
- CHCORG529B   Provide coaching and motivation
- CHCCS427A   Facilitate adult learning and development

Recommended Skill Set - Assessor Skill Set

This skill set provides a set of skills for unit coordinators in supporting FDC educators in undertaking workplace assessment of educators. Unit coordinators who successfully complete this skill set will be able to plan, organise and conduct competency based assessment in the workplace.

1. TAEASS401A   Plan assessment activities and processes
2. TAEASS402A   Assess competence
3. TAEASS403A   Participate in assessment validation processes

5.4 Career Pathway Opportunities

Data gathered as part of this project suggests that generally the FDC workforce do not understand their career pathway opportunities and to a lesser extent how their job fits within the larger early childhood education and care sector. Additionally, a number of FDC educators and unit coordinators reported feeling disconnected to the wider early childhood education and care workforce.

A career map has been developed that demonstrates vertical and horizontal career pathways across the sector and is organised according to nationally recognised qualifications and skill sets. The qualifications and skill sets include a number of existing qualifications and skills sets as well as a number of proposed new qualifications and skill sets that are yet to be developed.

New Qualification and Skill Sets - Family Day Care Specific

The following new qualification and skills sets have been proposed for development and have been discussed above:

- Certificate IV in Family Day Care Work (draft)
- Family Day Care Skill Set - FDC Educator (draft)
- Family Day Care Skill Set - Educator Support Worker (draft).

New Early Childhood Development Qualification and Skills sets

A number of proposed new qualification and skills sets have been included in this career pathway chart. As a result of the early childhood policy agenda CS&HISC has been conducting research into the wider early childhood development (ECD) sector.

This ECD research sought to identify the skills and knowledge that would be required by the sector in order to meet the demands of the reforms. The result of this research was the identification of gaps in the existing Children's Services qualification framework. Therefore, a number of new higher level qualifications addressing ECD in Australia have been recommended as well as a number of skill sets.

Analysis of the research identified skills gaps in:

- early childhood development advanced practices
- leadership in early childhood development
- integrated child and family focused practice.

These skill areas are essential components of an effective and quality ECD workforce described in the ECD strategy.

Recommendations include the development of a vocational graduate level qualification in Advanced Early Childhood Development Practice and another vocational graduate level qualification in Early Childhood Development Leadership.

The development of three skills sets was recommended to support career pathways and workforce capacity building. Skills sets to be developed relate to skills for Integrated Family and Child Focused Practices, Early Childhood Development and Advanced Practice.

Details of proposed ECD qualifications

Vocational Graduate Certificate or Diploma of Early Childhood Development Advanced Practice

This would include core competencies in Early Childhood Development Leadership with elective specialisations in early childhood education, management, and integrated service delivery.

Vocational Graduate Certificate or Diploma of Early Childhood Development Leadership

This would include core competencies in Advanced Early Childhood Development Practice with elective specialisations in early childhood education, counselling, parent education and support, addictions, cultural competence, community education/development, and family support work.

Early Childhood Development Skill Sets

The development of these skills sets would be seen to value-add to current ECD workforce qualifications to ensure consistent standards of practice, opportunities for career pathways and workforce capacity building. Skill sets would be developed in the areas of advanced practice, early childhood development, integrated service delivery and family and child focused practice. They would include:

- ECD Skill Set - Advanced Practice
- ECD Skill Set - Integrated Family and Child Practice
- ECD Skill Set - Developmental domains (physical, social, emotional).

Please note that at the time of writing this report the qualifications and skill sets above have only been proposed and have not yet been developed. The development of these qualifications and skill sets will depend on endorsement and approval by industry including the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.
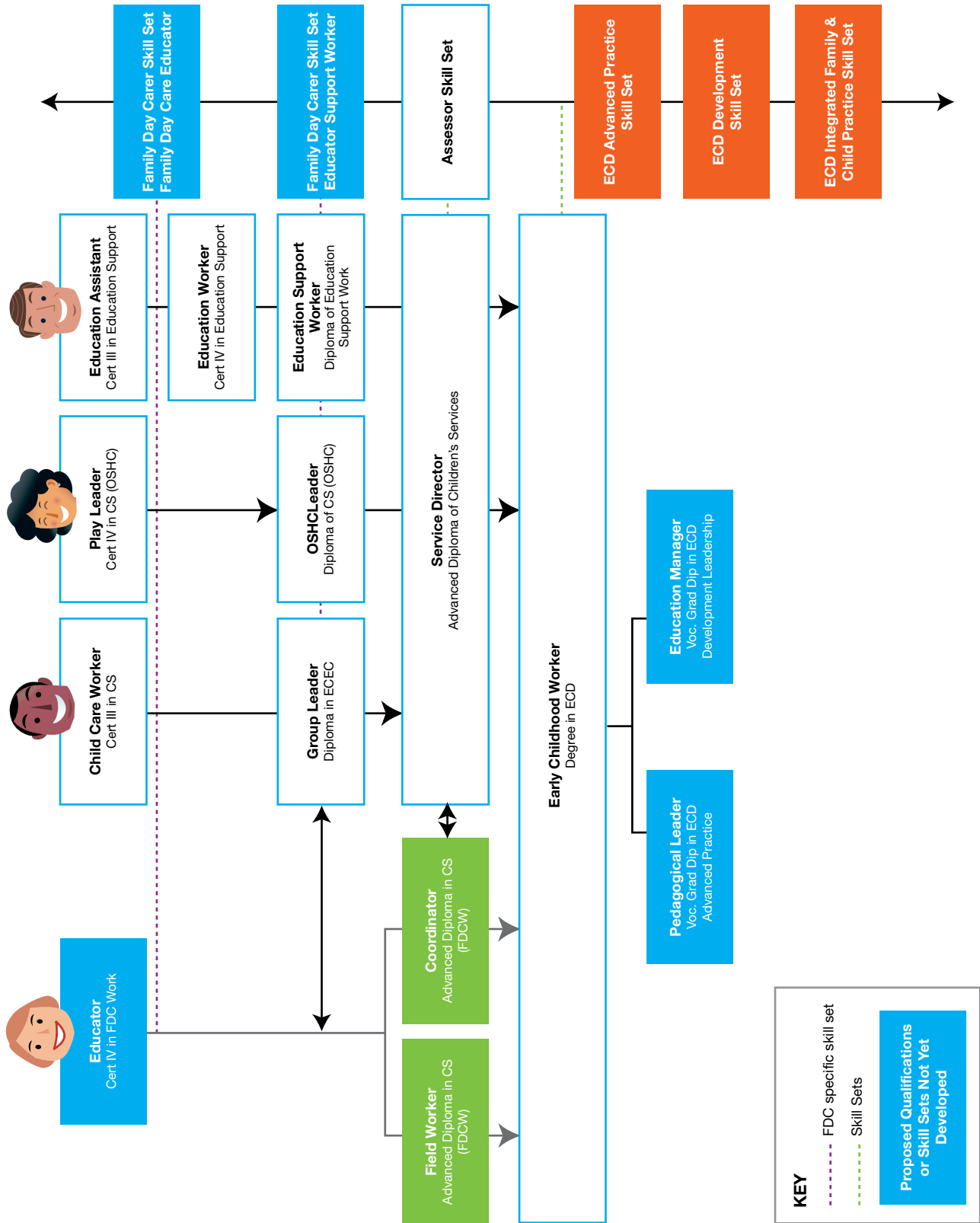
5.5 Self Assessment Checklist

Many FDC educators reported difficulty engaging with and/or participating in the recognition assessment process. Best practice recognition assessment does not rely on the candidate to produce a portfolio of evidence. Instead the recognition assessment process is based around a candidate's job role.

A self-assessment checklist has been developed that lists the job functions of a FDC educator and describes the day to day work activities. Ideally the job function of a particular role mirrors the competency standards contained in a nationally accredited qualification.

FDC Educator	Self Assessment Checklist	Certificate in Children's Services
Job Functions Compliance & Regulatory work Education and Care Small Business operations	**Job Functions** Compliance & Regulatory work Education and Care Small Business operations	**Job Functions** Compliance & Regulatory work Education and Care Small Business operations
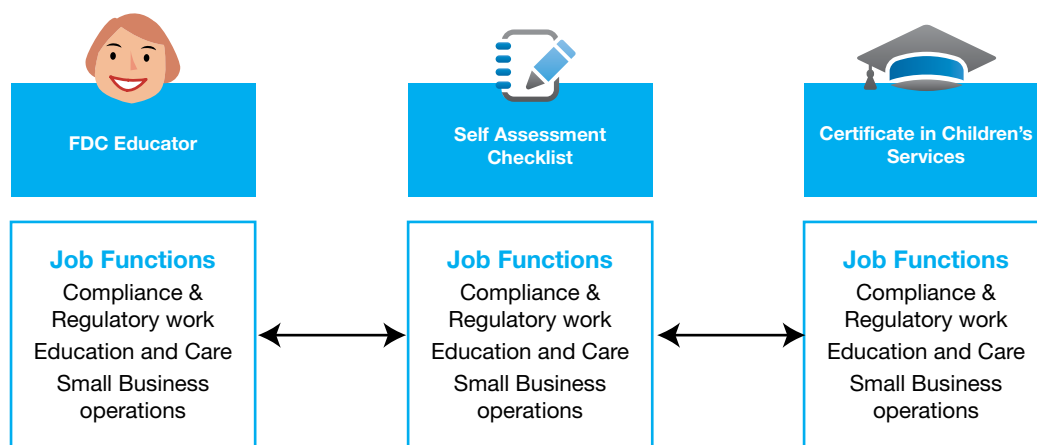
The Skills Audit (see **Appendix G**) can be used as a tool for FDC educators to check their understanding of their work components in readiness for completing an application for recognition assessment. In essence, it is a list of job functions that can be used as an indicator for FDC educator's "readiness" to apply for recognition assessment. This tool when completed can assist a FDC educator to work with a RTO when applying for recognition assessment.

5.6 Vocational, Education and Training Funded Training Initiatives

Existing Funding Opportunities

As part of the reform to the child care sector, the Commonwealth has introduced the removal of TAFE fees for learners enrolling in the Diploma of Children's Services and Advanced Diploma of Children's Services. However this removal of fees does not cover the Certificate III in Children's Services which is the minimum qualification requirement for FDC educators. In addition, this removal of fees is not extended to private RTOs thus limiting the FDC sector's right to choose an RTO of their choice when accessing free and/or funded training.

This strategy may be seen as purposeful in terms of promoting a training pathway for FDC educators. However this strategy does not cater for the entry requirements of the diploma which includes 12 units of competency which are taken from the Certificate III in Children's Services. If a FDC educator has not undertaken the Certificate III in Children's Services they will need to demonstrate competency against these units of competency via recognition assessment.

The cost associated with recognition assessment varies across RTOs and traditionally this expense is not covered as part of mainstream funding programs. However recent changes to the national productivity places program include funding for individuals to undertake recognition assessment.

Due to their employment status, FDC educators as sole traders have in the past been excluded and/or found it difficult to access funding for training. A number of existing funded training programs will now be discussed.

Traineeships

As independent business operators, FDC educators are not entitled to apply for traineeship or apprenticeship training an associated funding.

Enterprise Based Productivity Places Program

The Enterprise Based Productivity Places Program (EBPPP) is a new program making available $50 million by the Commonwealth (through the DEEWR) to increase the skill levels of existing workers.

CS&HISC worked closely with DEEWR in identifying the unmet skill and occupation priority needs. The overall outcome of the EBPPP training places allocation spans over 25 priority community services and health qualifications, 13 sectors and each state and territory.

The FDCA worked closely with CS&HISC and was successful in accessing 80 EBPPP places. The allocations were as follows:

- 22 places for Queensland
- 18 places for New South Wales
- 11 places for Victoria
- 11 places for Tasmania
- 2 places for South Australia
- 12 places for Western Australia
- 0 places for Northern Territory
- 4 places for Australian Capital Territory.

This amount of EBPPP was insufficient to meet the needs of the FDC sector however the EBPPP program attracted only limited places and this amount is expected to service the whole community services and health industries. It is also worth noting that this program is only temporary with no guarantee that this stream of funding will continue.

EBPPP is a funding initiative that does fund recognition assessment for part or full qualification and therefore a suitable funding stream for the FDC sector.

Diagram 21: National EBPPP allocations for FDC sector
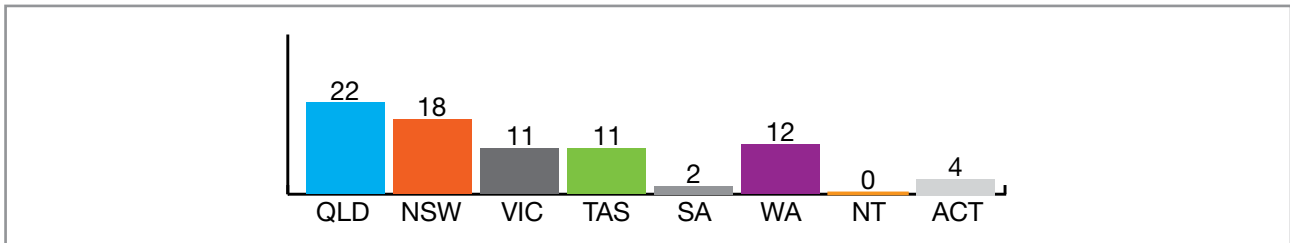
There were three additional applications for EBPPP training that were submitted outside the national strategic approach to workforce development.

Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) Training Program

WELL training supports the development of LLN (Language, Literacy & Numeracy) in the workplace and complements existing workplace training programs. The WELL program is funded by DEEWR.

WELL training is not funded to provide an organisation with a particular qualification for example a Certificate III in Children's Services. Instead, organisations receive funding to increase the LLN skills of employees via sector or industry specific units of competency. The WELL training program uses particular units of competency that are rich in LLN as a vehicle to increase LLN. This model encourages LLN skill development within an industry specific context. This increases the likelihood that a learner will be successful when undertaking an industry specific qualification.

Applications are submitted by an organisation (association, peak body, etc.) or on behalf of an organisation by a RTO. Nevertheless, all applications are developed collaboratively in partnership model between an organisation and a RTO.

WELL Training for the FDC Sector

The WELL training program is a suitable program to address the LLN needs of the FDC sector. However, one potential barrier for the FDC sector is the requirement of a part (25% to 50%) contribution by the organisation participating in a WELL training project. As such there is an expectation of a FDC educator or scheme contribution towards the WELL training.

Nevertheless, in light of the reforms in the childcare sector particularly relating to mandated qualifications, DEEWR is working with CS&HISC (in the capacity of being a WELL Broker), state DEEWR office and the FDCA to address and develop a national response this requirement. As a result of feedback from the WELL Broker, it has been pleasing to note that considerable flexibility has been offered by several State DEEWR representatives in relation to the usual requirement of 25% employer contribution.

A recent initiative of DEEWR is the establishment **WELL Brokers** within a number of Industry Skills Councils. **WELL Brokers** negotiate WELL projects across Australia in a wide range of industry settings. The brokers liaise with employers, RTOs and Indigenous organisations and work closely with DEEWR state/territory officers in order to establish WELL training projects.

Despite the FDC sector having access to LLN support through the WELL program, and in some cases the removal or lowering of the employer contribution, only one FDC sector application has been successfully submitted by the CS&HISC WELL Broker. Feedback from the sector suggests that the application process is painstakingly detailed and difficult to navigate for first time applicants. Furthermore, there appears to be inconsistencies in the decision making or approval processes of applications in each state thus making it difficult to adopt a national approach.

6. CONCLUSION

The recommendations provided in this report provide a framework that will support workforce growth and skill development within the FDC sector. The opportunity to track a significant number of FDC educators at various stages of their learning journey provided great insight into their experiences as well as enabled the development of a best practice approach for learning and assessment for the FDC sector.

A best practice approach to learning and assessment is critical for the FDC sector. Without a FDC specific learning and assessment model including FDC educator focused recognition assessment, there is a real risk that the sector will experience high rates of attrition. The policy reforms provide an opportunity for the FDC sector to gain recognition for the contribution they make to the community, align themselves with a larger workforce, widen career opportunities as well as contribute and participate in important discussion and debate across the country as well as internationally.

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APPENDIX A: FAMILY DAY CARE RESEARCH PROJECT INDUSTRY REFERENCE GROUP

Organisation	Representation
Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations	Government Employer
NSW Department of Community Services	Government Employer
Family Day Care Australia	Peak Body
National Association of Multicultural and Ethnic Children's Services	Peak Body
Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care	Peak Body
National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc.	Accreditation Council
Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union	Union
Australian Services Union	Union
TAFE Directors Australia	Public RTO
Australian Council for Private Education and Training	Private RTO

APPENDIX B: CONSULTATION FORUM QUESTIONS

Q1. Please record post codes of your workplace for each participant contributing to the discussion and feedback on this work sheet:

Post codes

1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

Q2. For each person in your group, place a tick (✓) in the column that indicates their job role.

Job Role	1	2	3	4	5	6
FDC Carer						
FDC Coordinator						
FDC Manager						
Administration staff						
Child Development Worker						
Other please specify						

Q3. Place a tick (✓) in the column to indicate if people within your group connect with one or more of the following

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Aboriginal						
Torres Strait Islander						
Cultural and Linguistically Diverse Background						

Q4. Does anyone in your group hold a Children's Services (Child Care) Qualification? If so, please tick (✓) which ones.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Short Course (Non Accredited Training)						
Certificate III in Children's Services						
Certificate IV in Children's Services						
Diploma of Children's Services						
Advanced Diploma of Children's Services						
Bachelor Degree						
Graduate Certificate						
Graduate Diploma						
Post graduate Degree						
Other (please specify)						

Q5. If anyone has a Children's Services (Child Care) qualification, how has this qualification assisted them?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q6. For each of your group: If you do not currently have a qualification in Children's Services, (Child Care) are you interested in gaining a qualification in Children's Services (Child Care)? (Tick (✓) Yes or No for each member)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Yes						
No						

Q7. For each member of your group: What would support you to undertake a qualification in Children's Services (Child Care)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q8. For each member of your group: What would make it difficult for you to undertake a qualification in Children's Services (Child Care)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q9. For each member of your group: What professional development opportunities, training and/or education is available in Children's Services (Child Care) in your area?

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Short Course (Non Accredited Training)						
Certificate III in Children's Services						
Certificate IV in Children's Services						
Diploma of Children's Services						
Advanced Diploma of Children's Services						
Other please specify						

Training

Q10. For each member of your group, please provide your comments or perceptions about any training that you have undertaken that is related to your job role or the FDC work.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Q11. In your group, what do you consider to be best practice when undertaking accredited training (and assessment) that is related to your job role? For example, flexible delivery options such as evening and weekend classes or easy access to teacher or trainer?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Recognition Assessment

Q12. Has anyone in your group undertaken non accredited training? Was this training considered within a Recognition Assessment process when enrolling in an accredited training course?

Yes		No	
If YES please specify details			

Q13. If anyone in your group has undergone Recognition Assessment, please provide your comments or perceptions about your experiences with Recognition Assessment (often referred to as recognition of prior learning).

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q14. Did anyone in your group receive Recognition Assessment for the complete qualification?

Yes		No	
If NO please specify how much of the qualification you received recognition for			

Thank you for participating in this survey.

END OF SURVEY

APPENDIX C: SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATORS

Individual Information

Q1. Year of birth

Q2. Gender

Female		Male	

Position Details

Q3. Please indicate which state or territory you are employed.

State of Territory	✓
New South Wales	
Queensland	
Victoria	
Northern Territory	
South Australia	
Western Australia	
Tasmania	
Australian Capital Territory	

Q4. Please enter the postcode of where your service is located.

Q5. In what year did you start working as a Carer?

Q6. Please provide the postcode for the Family Day Care Scheme/Unit with which you are registered.

Q7. What is the funding arrangement of your Family Day Care Scheme or Unit with whom you are registered?

Sponsor Arrangement	✓
Private	
Community managed (e.g. Non-government Organisation such as the Uniting Church)	
State Government	
Local Government	
Other (please specify):	

Children's Services (Child Care) Qualifications

Q8. Do you hold a Children's Services (Child Care) Qualification?

Yes		**No**	

If **no**, please go to Question 14.

If **yes** please specify the highest Children's Services (Child Care) qualification that you completed.

QUALIFICATION	✓
Certificate III level	
Certificate IV level	
Diploma	
Advanced Diploma	
Bachelor Degree	
Graduate Certificate	
Graduate Diploma	
Post graduate Degree	
Other (please specify):	

Q9. What year did you obtain your most recent Children's Service (Child Care) qualification?

Q10. For what reason did you obtain you're most recent qualification?

Reason	✓
It is a registration or licensing requirement for my work	
For professional development of my own choice	
Other (please specify):	

Q11. Where did you obtain your most recent Children's Services (Child Care) qualification?

Qualification	✓
TAFE	
University	
Community College	
Other (please specify):	

Q12. What mode of study did you undertake when you obtained your most recent Children's Services (Child Care) qualification?

Learning Approach	✓
Attending full-time study at a training organisation	
Part- time study at a training organisation	
Distance learning	
On-line learning	
Recognition Assessment (often referred to as Recognition of Prior Learning RPL)	
Combination of Recognition (RPL) and gap training	
Other (please specify):	

Q13. How has having a Children's Services (Child Care) qualification impacted on your career (e.g. increased income, status, career opportunities, inspired to undertake further study)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q14. Are you currently undertaking further study in a Children's Services (Child Care) or a related qualification?

Yes		No	

If **yes** please specify:

_____

_____

_____

Other Qualifications

Q15. Do you hold other qualifications (that are not in Children's Services)?

Yes		No	

If **yes** please specify:

_____

_____

_____

Hours of Work

Q16. On average how many **paid** hours do you work per week as a Carer?

Hours	✓
Less than 10 hours	
10 - 20 hours	
21 – 30 hours	
31 - 40 hours	
41 - 50 hours	
More than 50 hours	
Other	

Q17. Of the paid hours mentioned in Q14, please indicate how many direct care hours and non-direct care hours that you work as a family day care carer

Direct care	No of hours/ week	Non-direct care	No of hours/ week

Q18. Please indicate the no. of hours you work per day as a Carer, including the start and end times at each day. Please include overnight and weekend care times.

Week Day	Hours	Times am	Times pm
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

Q19. Do you spend any hours **outside** your nominated hours of employment undertaking tasks and/or duties relating to your job role (e.g. attending training, meetings, visiting other Carers, support, on call travel)?

Yes		No	

If **yes** how many hours

0-9 hours	
10-20 hours	
21-30 hours	
41-50 hours	

Q20. In **total**, how long have you been working as a FDC Carer?

Length of Time	✓
2 years or less	
More than 2 years but less than 5 years	
More than 10 years	

Work History

Q21. Please indicate if you have worked in other Children's Services employment prior to becoming a Family Day Care provider?

Yes		No	

If **yes** please indicate from the following:

Long Day Care	
Occasional Care	
Kindergarten or Pre School	
Out of School Hours Care	
Vacation Care	
Government Schools	
Non -Government Schools	
In Home Care	
Other (please specify):	

Q22. Why did you become a family day care provider? (you may tick more than one or add one of your own)

Reasons	✓
It suited me to work from home as I had my own child/children at home	
I enjoy working with children	
I like the idea of working from home	
I wanted to run my own business	
It lets me decide my hours of work	
To work with children in a non centre-based environment	
To work from home while completing other study	
Suited my career development plan	
Other (please specify):	

Q23. Which of the following would encourage you to undertake training as a FDC Carer (you may tick more than one or add your own)?

Incentives	✓
Flexible training options	
Training is easily accessed – e.g.	
• On-line options	
• Training venue close to service, public transport etc.	
• Trainers are approachable	
Opportunity to undertake recognition assessment (often referred to as recognition of prior learning)	
Affordable training	
To meet regulations	
No loss of income	
Provides career development opportunities	
Assist me to improve my skills as a Carer	
Other (please specify):	

Q24. What would **discourage** you from undertaking study, training, or further training (you may tick more than one)?

Reasons	✓
Time	
Cost	
Work hours	
Geographical location	
Access to technology	
Language and literacy	
Self Confidence in my ability to successfully undertake training	
Length of time since I last studied	
Family commitments	
Proximity to retirement	
Cultural concerns	
Disability	
Lack of support	
Other (please specify):	

Q25. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements about your **satisfaction** as a FDC Carer.

Place a ✓ against the most appropriate rating for each of the below statements.	Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am satisfied with my work as a FDC Carer.					
I feel I am part of the wider Children's Services Sector.					
I am supported by the Scheme or Unit.					
The work is rewarding.					
The professional status of Carer providers is important to me.					
I am proud to work in the FDC sector.					
Work in family day care can lead to other career opportunities.					

Q26. What do you need as an incentive to remain in FDC sector?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q27. How long do you intend to continue working as a Family Day Care Provider?

Time Frame	✓
Under 12 months	
1 -2 years	
3-5 years	
6 – 10 years	
More than 10 years	

Thank you for participating in this survey.

END OF SURVEY

APPENDIX D: SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR UNIT COORDINATOR

Individual Information

Q1.   Year of birth

Q2.   Gender

Female		Male	

Position Details

Q3.   Please indicate your job role from the following:

Job Role	✓
Coordinator	
Child Development Officer	
Field worker	
Scheme Manager	
Administrative	
Playgroup leader	
Other (please specify):	

Q4.   In what year did you start working in your current position?

Q5. In total, how long have you been working as a Family Day Care provider?

Length of Time	✓
2 years or less	
More than 2 years but less than 5 years	
More than 10 years	

Q6. Please indicate which state or territory you are employed.

State of Territory	✓
New South Wales	
Queensland	
Victoria	
Northern Territory	
South Australia	
Western Australia	
Tasmania	
Australian Capital Territory	

Q7. Please provide the postcode for the Coordination Unit/Scheme in which you work.

Q8. What is the funding arrangement of your Family Day Care Coordination Unit/Scheme where you are employed?

Sponsor Arrangement	✓
Private	
Community managed (e.g. Non-government Organisation such as the Uniting Church)	
State Government	
Local Government	
Other (please specify):	

Children's Services (Child Care) Qualifications

Q9. Do you hold a Children's Services (Child Care) Qualification?

Yes		No	

If **no**, please go to Question 15.

If **yes** please specify the highest Children's Services (Child Care) qualification that you completed.

QUALIFICATION	✓
Certificate III level	
Certificate IV level	
Diploma	
Advanced Diploma	
Bachelor Degree	
Graduate Certificate	
Graduate Diploma	
Post graduate Degree	
Other (please specify):	

Q10. What year did you obtain your most recent Children's Service (Child Care) qualification?

Q11. Which of the following describes the institution that awarded your most recent Children's Service (Child Care) qualification?

Qualification	✓
TAFE	
University	
Community College	
Other (please specify):	

Q12. Please indicate how you obtained your most recent Children's Services (Child Care) qualification

Learning Approach	✓
Attending full-time study at a training organisation	
Part- time study at a training organisation	
Distance learning	
On-line learning	
Recognition Assessment (often referred to as Recognition of Prior Learning RPL)	
Combination of Recognition (RPL) and gap training	
Other (please specify):	

Q13. For what reason did you obtain you're most recent Children's Services (Child Care) qualification?

Reason	✓
It is a registration or licensing requirement for my work	
For professional development of my own choice	
Other (please specify):	

Q14. What has been the impact of obtaining your most recent Children's Services (Child Care) qualification?

Impact	✓
Increased income or pay rate	
Career progression	
Inspired to undertake further study	
To gain a specific position	
Other (please specify):	

Q15. Are you currently undertaking further study in a Children's Services (Child Care) or a related qualification?

Yes		No	

If **yes** please specify:

_____

_____

_____

Other Qualifications

Q16. Do you hold other qualifications (that are not in Children's Services)?

Yes		No	

If **yes** please specify:

_____

_____

_____

Hours of Work

Q17. On average how many **paid** hours do you work?

Number of hours – include out of office time such as attending training and meetings	✓
Less than 10 hours	
10 - 20 hours	
21 – 30 hours	
31 - 40 hours	
41 - 50 hours	
More than 50 hours	
Other	

Q18. Do you spend any hours **outside** your nominated paid hours of employment undertaking tasks and/or duties relating to your job role?

Yes		No	

If **yes** how many hours

0-9 hours	
10-20 hours	
21-30 hours	
41-50 hours	

Q19. Are you on call?

Yes		No	

If **yes** how often/hours per week?

_____

_____

Q20. Have you ever worked in another job role within the FDC sector?

Yes		No	

If **yes** how long?

2 years or less	
3-5 years	
More than 5 years	

Work History

Q21. Please indicate if you have worked in other Children's Services (Child Care) employment prior to working in family day care

Yes		No	

If **yes** please select from the following:

Long Day Care	
Occasional Care	
Kindergarten or Pre School	
Out of School Hours Care	
Vacation Care	
Government Schools	
Non -Government Schools	
Other (please specify):	

Q22:   What do you need as an incentive to remain in FDC sector?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q23.   Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements relating to your career in Family Day Care.

Place a ✓ against the most appropriate rating for each of the below statements.	Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I entered FDC because I like working with children.					
I entered FDC because it suited my lifestyle or life stage.					
I entered FDC as it was the only work available to me.					
I wanted to further my career working in children's services sector.					
I would recommend FDC work to others.					
I entered into FDC as an alternative to direct care.					

Q24. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements relating to your **satisfaction** as a Coordination Unit/Scheme staff member.

Place a ✓ against the most appropriate rating for each of the below statements.	Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am satisfied with my work in FDC.					
I feel I am part of the wider Children's Services Sector.					
I receive equal status to that of other Children's Service types.					
The work is rewarding.					
The professional status of FDC service type is important to me.					
I am proud to work in the FDC sector.					
Work in family day care can lead to other career opportunities.					

Q25. Which of the following would encourage you to undertake training as a Coordination Unit/ Scheme staff member (you may tick more than one or add your own)?

Incentives	✓
Flexible training options	
Training is easily accessed – e.g.	
• On-line options	
• Training venue close to service, public transport etc.	
• Trainers are approachable	
Opportunity to undertake recognition assessment (often referred to as recognition of prior learning)	
Affordable training	
To meet regulations	
No loss of income	
Provides career development opportunities	
Assist me to improve my skills as a Carer	
Other (please specify):	

Q26. What would **discourage** you from undertaking study, training, or further training (you may tick more than one)?

Reasons	✓
Time	
Cost	
Work hours	
Geographical location	
Access to technology	
Language and literacy	
Self Confidence in my ability to successfully undertake training	
Length of time since I last studied	
Family commitments	
Proximity to retirement	
Cultural concerns	
Disability	
Lack of support	
Other (please specify):	

Q27. How long do you intend to continue working as a Coordination Unit/Scheme staff member?

Time Frame	✓
Under 12 months	
1 -2 years	
3-5 years	
6 – 10 years	
More than 10 years	

Thank you for participating in this survey.

END OF SURVEY

APPENDIX E: RTO QUESTIONS

RTO Details

Q1.   Please indicate your job role from the following:

Job Role	✓
Trainer and/or Assessor in Children's Services	
RTO Manager position	
Other (please specify):	

Q2.   Which of the following describes your RTO profile?

RTO Profile	
Government Funded Training Organisation e.g. TAFE	
Community College	
Private Training Organisation	
University	
Other (please specify):	

Q3.   Please indicate in which states and/or territories your RTO operates?

State of Territory	✓
New South Wales	
Queensland	
Victoria	
Northern Territory	
South Australia	
Western Australia	
Tasmania	
Australian Capital Territory	

Q4a. Please indicate the training and assessment options available to the FDC sector through your RTO services.

Training and Assessment Options	✓
Attending full-time study at a training organisation	
Part-time study at a training organisation	
Distance learning	
Online learning	
Award of whole qualification via Recognition Assessment	
Workplace Assessment	
Combination of Recognition (RPL) and gap training	
Other (please specify):	

Q4b. What percentage of learners at your RTO have undertaken training and assessment via the options listed below?

Training and Assessment Options	%
Attending full-time study at a training organisation	
Part-time study at a training organisation	
Distance learning	
Online learning	
Award of whole qualification via Recognition Assessment	
Workplace Assessment	
Combination of Recognition (RPL) and gap training	
Other (please specify):	

Q5. Which of the following Children's Services qualifications do you have on your scope of practice?

Children's Services Qualifications	✓
Certificate III in Children's Services	
Diploma of Children's Services (Early Childhood Education and Care)	
Advanced Diploma of Children's Services	

Q6. Do you have a partnership or contractual arrangement with a Family Day Care Coordination Unit/Scheme for the provision of training and assessment that will lead to a recognised qualification?

Yes		No	

If **yes** please specify the highest level of qualification for which the Family Day Care Coordination Unit/Scheme engages you to deliver and/or assess?

Children's Services Qualifications	✓
Certificate III in Children's Services	
Diploma of Children's Services (Early Childhood Education and Care)	
Advanced Diploma of Children's Services	

Q7. If your organisation provides training and assessment services on a regular arrangement with a Family Day Care Coordination Unit/Scheme what is the management arrangement of the Family Day Care Scheme?

Management Arrangement	✓
Private	
Community managed	
State Government	
Local Government	
Other (please specify):	

Q8. How many Family Day Care providers and/or staff has your organisation assisted to obtain a qualification in the past three years?

Number of FDC staff that have obtained a qualification with your RTO	✓
20 or less	
21 – 30	
41 – 50	
More than 50	

Q9. When offering training in Community Services (CHC08) qualifications do you offer the following electives?

FDC Electives	YES	NO
CSCAL307A Comply with Family Day Care Administration requirements		
CHCCHILD301A Support behaviour of children and young people		
CHCCS310A Support inclusive practice in the workplace		
CHCIC302A Support Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander families to participate in children's services		
CHCRF301D Work effectively with families to care for the child		

Q10. Does your RTO have trainers and assessors who have experience working in the FDC sector?

Yes		No	

If **yes** how many trainers and/or assessors have experience in working in the FDC sector?

_____

If **yes** please specify how long they were employed in the FDC sector for **each** Trainer and/or assessor:

Number of years – Trainer and Assessor 1	✓
Less than 2 years	
3-5 Years	
More than 5 years	

Number of years- Trainer and Assessor 2	✓
Less than 2 years	
3-5 Years	
More than 5 years	
Number of years Trainer and Assessor 3	✓
Less than 2 years	
3-5 Years	
More than 5 years	

Q11. Please indicate whether you provide training to other types of Children's Services employment.

Yes		No	

If **yes** please select from the following (please tick more than one or add your own)

Long Day Care	
Occasional Care	
Kindergarten or Pre School	
Out of School Hours Care	
Vacation Care	
Government Schools	
Non –Government Schools	
Other (please specify):	

Q12. Do you require students working in FDC to undertake workplace learning (practical) outside the FDC context?

Yes		No	

If **yes** please select from the following (please tick more than one or add your own):

Long Day Care	
Occasional Care	
Kindergarten or Pre School	
Out of School Hours Care	
Other (please specify):	

Q13. What training and assessment practices has your RTO found to be most effective for the FDC sector? (please tick)

Flexible Training Options	✓
User friendly approaches to the Recognition Assessment process	
Training that offers FDC specific electives	
On Line Training	
Out of hours Training – Weekend and/or evening classes	
Undertaking Workplace Assessment	
On the Job Training	
Access to funded training for FDC staff	
Undertaking Innovative gap training	
Greater collaboration between Coordination Units/Schemes and RTOs	
Trainers and Assessors with experience in FDC	
Other (please specify):	

Thank you for participating in this survey.

END OF SURVEY

APPENDIX F: QUESTIONS FROM MONITORING EXERCISE

Interview Template (for internal use)

Interview ID Code	
Carer Name	
Contact Telephone	
Contact Email	
Post Code	
Qualification	
Stage of Study	

Background	✓
Low socio economical	
CALD	
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait	
Disability	
Remote	
No previous qualifications	
50+ hours	
Other	

Describe your experience with

What do you know about Recognition Assessment

Do you attend lecture or classes? And if so what is your experience undertaking this style of delivery?

(ask how many hours per week)

Is on-line or self paced study available to you?

What is your experience with assessment?

Describe your relationship with your teacher/trainer .

What materials were provided to you as part of your training

What support is available to you as a student?

What's the most difficult thing about undertaking this training?

What's the best thing about undertaking this training?

What changes would you make to the training and why?

Any further comments

APPENDIX G: SELF -ASSESSMENT CHECK LIST

Family Day Care Educator Job Analysis Audit

This Self Audit checklist is intended to assist FDC educators to identify current job functions that may be evidenced in a Recognition Assessment process.

Work Component	Functions	I do this often (place a tick)
Compliance requirements	Develop, maintain and regularly review the policies and procedures in my workplace	
	Make sure my workplace is safe by doing hazards checks and risk management, in the workplace, on outings, at playgroup, in transportation	
	Undertake regular training to update my skills and knowledge and to meet compliance requirements	
	Research, locate , interpret and apply legislation, regulatory and industry standards relevant to my work	
Provide education and care	Autonomously plan, organise and implement learning and development experiences for mixed age groups of children	
	Contribute to nutritional needs of children through information provision, consulting with parents and children, modeling healthy lifestyle choices	
	Provide care for children and/or babies that supports their development	
	Work unassisted to provide education and care for children 0 -12 years that supports their development	

Work Component	Functions	I do this often (place a tick)
Small business operations	Use business technology including computers and associated programs to produce documents, information and maintain business records	
	Comply with business regulations, tax and insurance requirements of my small business	
	Develop and implement a fee collection procedures and convey this to families using my service	
	Create a small home business plan and comply with family day care administration requirements	

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