# CAREERS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

YWCA CANBERRA

@ywcacanberra

**www.ywca-canberra.org.au**

## Acknowledgement of Country

YWCA Canberra proudly recognises the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to own and control their culture and pays our respect to these rights. YWCA Canberra acknowledges the need to respect and encourage the diversity of Indigenous cultures and to respect Indigenous worldviews, lifestyles and customary laws.

We extend our respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who for thousands of years have preserved the culture and practices of their communities on country. This land was never surrendered, and we acknowledge that it always was and will continue to always be, Aboriginal Land.

YWCA CANBERRA

# Careers in Early Childhood Education and Care

Early childhood education and care offers the opportunity to have a fulfilling career working with children as they undertake their journey from infancy to childhood.

The first five years of a child's life are the most important. It is when they develop the skills to become autonomous, independent people with their own sense of agency.

It is a privilege to be such an important role in their growth and development. As an educator, you are responsible for providing children with opportunities to learn in a safe learning environment.

# Is a career in Early Childhood Education and Care for you?

Unlock a dynamic future with a career that grows alongside you. Explore new horizons with early childhood education and care.

If you have a passion for working with children, then great—you are already half way there—but let's dive a bit deeper to see if you're made for a future career in early childhood.

## Are you a future early childhood educator?

### As an Early Childhood Educator you need:

**Enthusiasm and passion for children**

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the most important characteristic for teachers of early childhood education is enthusiasm and passion for children.

**Great communication skills**

Early childhood educators need to have great communication and negotiation skills. It's important to be able to use a variety of different communication styles, especially since each day you will be talking to different audiences like, children, parents, and colleagues. Great early childhood educators advocate for children every day, so being able to articulate yourself (or learning how to) is very important.

**Respect for diversity**

Every child and family has a unique culture, personality and learning style. To support each child's individual development effectively, early childhood professionals must understand and respect these differences.

Working in a sector that has multiple generations of passionate educators who come from a diverse range of cultures and backgrounds also demands a high level of respect and an understanding for different people, their ideas and perspectives. Great early childhood educators embrace and value this diversity.

**Creativity and flexibility**

A successful early childhood professional uses creativity, innovative thinking, and flexibility to make every day an exciting adventure for children. Resources like Pinterest and other social media platforms, as well as research are great ways to get creative about delivering your educational curriculum.

**Patience and humour**

Working with children all day takes huge amounts of patience. The nature of their age makes young children full of energy, excitable and adventurous. Great early childhood educators are able to channel this energy in to interesting, engaging learning experiences that lay the foundation for a lifelong love of learning.

Does this sound like you? Excellent! Let's keep going.

## Types of careers in Early Childhood Education and Care

**There are many different early childhood professions.**

Early childhood education and care is a dynamic sector with opportunities to learn on the job, and gain experience and knowledge from amazing professionals who have worked with children for decades. This unique opportunity allows you to expand your career in stimulating and rewarding professional directions.

Early childhood is a career for life, with opportunities for progression into leadership positions in every state and territory around Australia and internationally.

There are a range of leadership roles within the early childhood sector to support the learning, development, and health and wellbeing of young children.

The types of roles available include:

- Education and care educators
- Early childhood teacher
- Educational leaders
- Preschool and children's services Directors/Managers
- Operational Managers (i.e. Quality support, Accounts, Compliance)
- Policy or Compliance Officer, Regulatory Authority/Body.

**Education and care careers**

Early Childhood Educators and early childhood teachers work in a range of early childhood settings including long day care, family day care, occasional care, preschool and outside school hours care.

**Early Childhood Educator**

Early Childhood Educators were previously known as preschool assistants, child care workers or child care assistants.

The new title reflects a shift in the sector and wider community to professionalise the work they do. Research shows that 95 per cent of human brain development happens in the first five years of life. The same research demonstrates the huge benefits of play-based learning for children's growth and development.

To start your career in the early childhood sector, you can undertake a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care (CHC30125)*.

If you are already in the sector and hold your Certificate III but want to upskill, you can complete a Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care (CHC50125)**.

These courses can also be done as traineeships or school-based apprenticeships in children's services.

* This supersedes qualification CHC30113.

** This supersedes qualifi cation CHC50121.

**Early Childhood Teacher**

Early childhood teachers support the learning, development, health and wellbeing of young children, including babies and toddlers.

To qualify to become an early childhood teacher, you generally need to complete at least four years of tertiary study, including at least one year of teacher education study.

Studying your Diploma in Early Childhood is a great way to start on this career path, as many universities now offer automatic credit units for relevant Diploma qualifications.

Degree-qualified early childhood teachers work with parents, health and wellbeing professionals, and other educators to promote children's learning and develop their sense of identity, wellbeing, sense of their place in the community and communication skills.

Early childhood teachers work within the National Quality Framework to develop a curriculum in services that makes sure that all children receive the best possible start to life, educationally.

Early childhood teachers:

- observe and assess children's development and learning
- record children's progress and liaise closely with parents and other professionals to support children's learning and development
- plan and provoke experiences to develop learning for children
- promote language development and self-identity
- encourage children to question, be curious and explore their world
- promote health and safety concepts and social interaction with other children
- work to help children as part of a team with professionals such as maternal and child health nurses, other educators and teachers, early childhood intervention specialists such as speech pathologists and psychologists.

The most common qualifications are:

- a four-year undergraduate childhood qualification (e.g. Bachelor of Early Childhood Education)
- a 'pathways' course allowing those with an approved diploma in children's services to complete a degree in early childhood education.

You can find more information on the qualifications and training available for early childhood teachers through the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

**Lead Educator**

A lead educator (also known as 'Room Leader') is responsible for leading and working with educators and children in one room, usually in a long day care service. Lead Educators develop operational processes that deliver high quality education and care for families and children, building strong relationships within a team and within the wider community.

Many early childhood educators look for a lead educator role once they have completed their Diploma, as a pathway of progressing their career.

**Director**

An early childhood Director is responsible for working with educators and children to develop operational processes and policies that deliver high quality education and care for families and children. They usually manage all day-to-day regulatory requirements, including recruitment,

rostering, fees and accounts.

Directors must have knowledge and experience about the way children learn and about quality educator practice as their role is also about promoting positive educational philosophies and managing multiple educators onsite.

Qualifications will vary according to the exact role, but could include:

- CHC50125 Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care
- Bachelor of Early Childhood Education
- Bachelor of Education
- Bachelor Degree plus Graduate Diploma of Education.

**Children's Services Manager**

Children's services managers work in a variety of early childhood services, including long day care, family day care, occasional care and preschools. They may manage multiple sites over large distances or small clusters of services.

Job titles for these roles may include:

- Early Childhood Manager
- Early Childhood Area Manager
- Operations Manager: Early Childhood.

They direct and supervise early childhood educators, liaise with families, parents, educators and regulatory authority officers and ensure centres are safe and comply with relevant government standards, national regulations and laws.

They also maintain budgets, records and accounts for early childhood services and understand and apply relevant legal, regulatory and policy requirements including the National Quality Framework, Education and Care Services legislation and regulations and the My Time our Place Framework for school age children.

**Gaining workplace experience**

Workplace experience helps you to prepare yourself for your dream role as an early childhood educator.

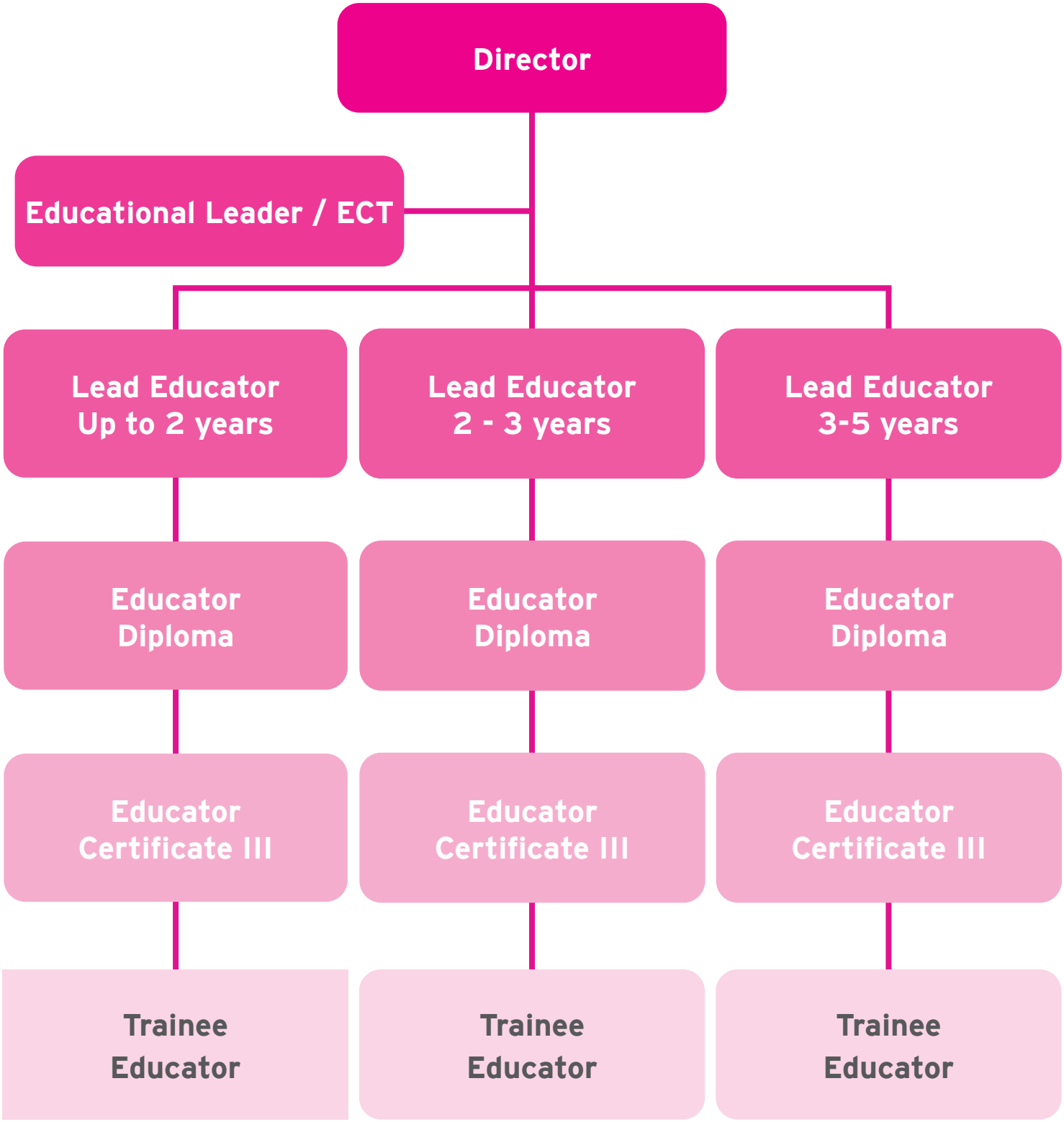
It is also a required component of gaining your nationally-recognised qualifi cations in the sector.

We offer two courses in Early Childhood Education and Care: **CHC30125 Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care** and **CHC50125 Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care**.

When you undertake these courses with us, we will support you to find a high-quality workplace to complete your placement, including in one of our six early childhood services where appropriate.

# Organisation chart

Our early childhood service structure supports educators in providing the best possible education and care to the children of the Canberra region.



# A day in the life of an Early Childhood Educator

At the beginning of the day, the children begin to be dropped off by their parents and guardians. Through your study you will learn the skills required to make this transition as smooth as possible. Every child is unique and their response to this transition will be different.

By building partnerships with families and relationships with children, educators can help this settling in process through a range of techniques, while ensuring each child is given the same amount of care and attention at the beginning of their day.

The children begin the day engaged in a variety of morning activities. By giving children freedom to choose these activities, they will begin to build their own sense of agency. Like adults, children learn more effectively when engaged in a topic that they enjoy. By providing a range of experiences for children, they are invited to learn, through play, what most appeals to them. This can range from indoor play or puzzles, stories and construction, to outdoor experiences like running, climbing, digging and gardening.

During meal times, children are given the opportunity to build their emergent autonomy. Choosing when they eat and how much is a vital part of beginning to regulate their own needs. Rather than telling children when it is time to eat, educators use their knowledge of children to encourage them to begin the process of progressing to meals in their own time. Early childhood professionals help children to be independent, washing their hands and sitting down in groups for meaningful interactions and eating. After eating, children are encouraged to have a small rest, while others may choose to sleep. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs expresses the importance of meeting children's primary needs to ensure their growth and development, while the National Quality Standards imposes the importance of flexibility and innovative rest practices.

After rest, children may begin to partake in some more experiences of their choosing. Educators can initiate experiences, choosing intentional teaching methods by creating scavenger hunts and chalk drawing letters. Through the combination of spontaneous learning and intentional teaching, children will begin to learn the foundation skills required for life.

At the end of the day, it is time for the children to go home. Their parents will come to pick them up and you will be given the opportunity to share the amazing learning from the day. Parents will want to know what their children have eaten, what they did and if they slept. It is the role of the educator to impart this information using a variety of easy to access methods.

## Other careers/roles

**Research and careers in academia**

The early childhood sector offers a range of opportunities to progress your career, including research and teaching in tertiary settings.

**Trainer and assessor**

Lecturers, tutors, trainers and other educators in universities and TAFE institutions offer technical and vocational education and training and higher education. They help inspire and develop the next generation of early childhood professionals.

**Researchers**

Academics who are researchers within the tertiary education system may conduct studies and field work aimed at improving practice and knowledge about early childhood and early childhood education.

**Qualifications**

Qualifications will vary according to the type of academic position. Possibilities include:

- TAE40116 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment
- Master of Education VET
- Doctor of Education
- Master of Education.

## Still interested and want more information?

**Study with us**

Our Education and Training team provides a safe and enjoyable learning environment. Our students are supported by quality educational experiences provided by a team of dedicated trainers.

We offer on-the-job training, flexible learning plans, and can hold on-site short workshops to help you meet your course competencies quicker and easier.

Our Early Childhood Education and Care courses are dynamic and hands on; they develop your awareness of the developmental needs of children and will introduce you to the roles and responsibilities required in an early childhood education and care setting.

You will have opportunities to apply the learned theories in the workplace, and you will gain experience in interacting with children, families and co-workers through practical placements.

**Ready to enrol?**

Before enrolling in a course, we encourage you to attend one of our information sessions.

For more information, contact our Education and Training team on **02 6185 2079** or email **training@ywca-canberra.org.au**.

**A career with us**

We are an equal opportunity employer. We value and support diversity in our workforce and encourage applications for positions in our services and programs from a wide range of people with a variety of life experiences.

We specifically encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to apply.

We are proud to be an Employer of Choice for Gender Equality, and offer above award wages and generous conditions through our innovative and progressive Enterprise Agreement.

We are accredited through Australian Breastfeeding Association as a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace.

## Ready to apply?

Please see the Careers page of our website, **www.ywca-canberra.org.au** for more information on current vacancies.

## Contact details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