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Suggested citation
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive Summary</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Australian family day care regulatory environment</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Current debates in Australian family day care</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Summary</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Methodology</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 New Zealand</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Recent policy debates</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Regulations</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Indigenous culture</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Funding models</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Summary</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 United Kingdom</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Sector context</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Policy context and recent developments</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Regulations</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Funding models</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Summary</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Innovative models of family day care</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Specialist family day care for children with disabilities</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Multicultural and Indigenous family day care</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Integrated services</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 Before- and after-school care</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5 Short-term and emergency FDC</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6 Support for family day care educators</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7 Summary</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7 A research agenda for the sector

7.1 Theme One: Documenting and evaluating innovative models of FDC

7.2 Theme Two: Developing high quality national datasets

7.3 Theme Three: Developing regulations to support high quality provision

7.4 Theme Four: International comparative research

8 Conclusion

References
List of Tables

Table 1: Children attending ECEC services, March 2016 4
Table 2: NZ ECE Enrolments, 2014 11
Table 3: Number of home-based services by funding band and ownership, 2014 12
Table 4: Number of home-based services by educators employed per coordinator, 2014 12
Table 5: Number of home-based educators by employment status, 2014 13
Table 6: Number of children enrolled per educator, 2014 13
Table 7: Quality funding options for home-based ECE 21
Table 8: ECE funding rates for home-based ECE (NZ$) 22
Table 9: Qualifications and curriculum compared across ECEC settings: England and Scotland 30
Table 10: ECEC services for children 0 to 5 years, registration and funding approval, UK 34
## List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>Elements of the Early Years Learning Framework</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>The Principles and strands of Te Whāriki</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>NZ Quality Assessment Tool: Ngā Pou Here</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4</td>
<td>Indices of average ECE fees paid by households, average earnings, and average fees relative to earnings (Indices based to equal 1000 in quarter ended March 2005)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Glossary</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACECQA</strong></td>
<td>Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Childminders</strong></td>
<td>Home-based ECEC educators – UK term</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECE</strong></td>
<td>Early childhood education – NZ term</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECEC</strong></td>
<td>Early childhood education and care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home-based ECE</strong></td>
<td>Family day care and sometimes nanny services in NZ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NZ</strong></td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ofsted</strong></td>
<td>UK Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PACEY</strong></td>
<td>Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pākehā</strong></td>
<td>New Zealander of European decent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UK</strong></td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whānau</strong></td>
<td>Māori for extended family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive Summary

Family day care and other forms of home-based early childhood education and care (ECEC) are important elements of the early years’ sector. In Australia, as in New Zealand (NZ) and the United Kingdom (UK), home-based ECEC is often regarded as particularly suited to toddlers and infants. It is also seen as a flexible solution for families who cannot readily access centre-based ECEC, either because they work non-standard hours, or because issues like disability or remoteness make centre-based ECEC less suitable.

In Australia, the Productivity Commission (2014) report on Childcare and Early Childhood Learning led to considerable reflection on the nature of home-based ECEC services and their role in providing flexible childcare and education. As Australia considers how best to support families with flexible home-based services that also provide high quality education and care for children, it is timely to look to other countries for inspiration.

Family Day Care Australia (FDCA) commissioned the Social Policy Research Centre to investigate the regulations, funding and quality assurance processes in NZ and the UK, focusing particularly on England. This report summarises the regulatory environment in those two countries. In NZ, it is of particular note that regulations for family day care are identical to the regulations for nannies. As a result, it is commonplace for family day care services to provide support and monitor quality for nannies as well as family day care educators. In the UK, family day care has undergone a massive transformation in recent years, with the introduction of agencies that bring educators together into networks like those that operate in Australia. To encourage educators to join agencies, the UK has trialled many innovative models of delivering family day care and supporting educators. Innovations include: providing specialist services to particular groups of children; integration with other childhood services, including foster care and schools; using family day care as an emergency care service; and models for supporting family day care educators in their training and professional development.

Funding ECEC has been a topic of considerable debate in the UK, where it is argued that subsidies do not meet the cost of service provision. In NZ, by contrast, subsidies are informed by routine data collection about the cost of ECEC in all service types.

In NZ, England and Australia, independent bodies monitor quality in all ECEC, including family day care. All apply a rating to services that indicates if they meet, exceed or need support to meet quality standards. In the UK, individual educators are also rated.

Regulations are similar in the three countries. Notable differences regarding family day care are that Australia requires qualifications for home-based educators, whereas England and NZ do not. NZ requires family day care services to visit educators monthly. Neither Australian nor English regulations provide these specifications.

Reflecting on the regulatory environments in NZ, the UK and Australia, and on the innovations that have been introduced, the report presents a research agenda for Australian
family day care. Research questions clustered into four themes are presented:

1. Documenting and evaluating innovative models of FDC
2. Developing high quality national datasets
3. Holistic assessment of the effectiveness of the current regulatory framework
4. International comparative research

At present, there are many gaps in knowledge. Basic data is needed to provide a baseline by which to measure changes in the sector over time. Research into Australian innovations is needed to understand what practices are already in place. Australian ECEC regulations are of a high standard, but we need to know more about how these work to support high quality family day care, especially if new quality assurance mechanisms are introduced for family day care\(^1\). International comparative research would set a high research standard by which to measure the accessibility, affordability and quality of Australian home-based ECEC in an international context.

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\(^1\) A review of the National Quality Framework has recommended a number of regulatory changes, several of which focus particularly on family day care (Education Council, 2017).
1 Introduction

Internationally, many children receive early childhood education and care (ECEC) in a home setting, whether their own home or the home of a provider. In some jurisdictions, home-based ECEC forms part of the formal ECEC sector, regulations are highly developed and expectations for quality provision are high. Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom all regulate home-based ECEC and expect family day care educators to provide ECEC that is comparable to the rest of the sector (Davis et al., 2012).

There is a growing interest in determining how to ensure that families working in non-standard employment have access to ECEC that is flexible and of high quality. In Australia, trials of flexibility in family day care and of providing government assistance to families using nannies have raised questions about how to increase the flexibility of home-based ECEC (Baxter and Hand, 2015). Family day care, with its long history of flexible approaches to ECEC, is ideally placed to meet some of the unmet need for non-standard services (Brady and Cook, 2016). International examples of funding and regulation for home-based ECEC could offer important insights that could help make family day care more flexible.

Following recent debate in Australia around family day care and other home-based ECEC services about flexibility, quality and ECEC data (for example, Education Council, 2017; Productivity Commission, 2014; Productivity Commission 2016), it is timely to reflect on what Australia might learn from other countries. This report considers home-based ECEC policy, regulation, funding and administration in New Zealand and the United Kingdom.
Family day care is one part of the Australian formal ECEC sector. The In-home Care program is another home-based service. ECEC is also provided through long day care, occasional care, out of school hours' care, and preschool. Family day care educators work in their own homes to provide ECEC to a small group of children. One educator may work with up to four children under school age at any one time. Outside school hours, an additional three school aged-children may join the group. Educators are networked together into a family day care service that is managed by a coordination unit. Representatives from the coordination unit support educators in the care and education of children, and in administration and business management. Coordinators visit educators regularly to provide this support and to monitor quality. Educators must hold, or be working towards, a Certificate III in early education and coordinators must hold a diploma or degree in ECEC. In November 2016, there were 1,056 family day care services in Australia (ACECQA, 2016a). Family day care has experienced a period of rapid growth, more than doubling since March 2013 when there were just 472 services (ACECQA, 2013). Of Federal Government-funded services targeting children before school age, 24 per cent of children attended family day care or In-home Care in 2016 (see Table 1).

Table 1: Children attending ECEC services, March 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long Day Care</td>
<td>677,380</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Day Care and In-Home Care</td>
<td>212,820</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional Care</td>
<td>5,960</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>896,160</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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Source: DET (2016)

The In-home Care program is a program funded by the Australian Government to support children in particular circumstances. This includes when the child or a family member has a disability, the child lives in a rural or remote part of Australia, there are three or more children in the family who are younger than school age, or the family work hours mean that there is no other ECEC service that the family can access. Unfortunately, however, many families in these situations cannot access In-home Care. Educators work in the home of the child and are supported by an approved agency. In-home Care is not regulated under the National Quality Framework, but services and educators must abide by the 2008 Interim Standards and state and territory regulations. There were 64 In-home Care services operating in Australia in 2016 (SCRGSP, 2017: 3A.8).

Long day care and occasional care are both centre-based services, with occasional care providing for flexible attendance. Preschool, kindergarten and prep are usually short day services targeted at children in the year or two before they start school. Australian
Governments at both the state and federal level have agreed that every child should attend at least 15 hours per week of early education in the year before they start school. These hours can be provided in any of the above regulated ECEC settings.

Financial support for ECEC services in Australia derives from a combination of payments from families and government funding, primarily through Federal Government-funded fee subsidies for families. To attract these subsidies, services must meet regulatory and quality standards. The current subsidy schemes, Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate, are scheduled to be replaced by a new Child Care Subsidy in 2018 if legislation passes through parliament. Until 2015, all family day care services received operational funding from the Federal Government, but then eligibility was significantly restricted and most services lost funding (Cortis et al., 2014). Funding for preschool, kindergarten and prep largely comes from state governments.

All ECEC services in Australia must operate within the National Quality Framework. First implemented in 2012, the National Quality Framework introduced new, nationally consistent quality standards across family day care, preschool and kindergarten, long day care and out of school hours’ care. Previously, standards had differed between the states and territories. For family day care, the key changes in the National Quality Framework were: setting the ratio of educator to child at 1:4 for children under school age; and the requirement that educators hold at least a Certificate III in ECEC.

Figure 1: Elements of the Early Years Learning Framework

Source: DEEWR (2009)
Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (known in the sector as the EYLF) is the national ECEC curriculum (DEEWR, 2009). Introduced in 2009, the Early Years Learning Framework provides guidelines around learning outcomes, principles and practice for ECEC services (see Figure 1). The National Quality Framework requires all services to develop and implement a Quality Improvement Plan that includes the national curriculum. Where family day care includes older children, they must also follow My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Aged Care in Australia (DEEWR, 2011).

The Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) oversees the implementation of the National Quality Framework. State and territory authorities regulate ECEC services to assess their performance against the National Quality Standard. Services receive a rating as follows:

- Excellent
- Exceeding National Quality Standard
- Meeting National Quality Standard
- Working Towards National Quality Standard
- Significant Improvement Required

At December 2016, 86 per cent of services had been assessed and 72 per cent of those were rated as ‘Meeting the National Quality Standard’ or above (ACECQA, 2017). The Excellent rating is different to the others in that it is only given after services apply directly to ACECQA and meet a different set of very high quality standards that demonstrate that the service is a sector leader. Only 53 out of 13,312 ECEC services that have been rated were assessed as ‘Excellent’.

2.1 Current debates in Australian family day care

The current debates in Australia that are relevant to the issues that arose in the review of NZ and UK policy relate to flexibility, data and quality.

2.1.1 Flexible ECEC

Over the past decade in Australia, a key debate has focused on how to provide ECEC services that can accommodate the diverse needs of children and families. There has been particular concern that ECEC has not adapted to provide for the children of the increasing numbers of people who work in employment with non-standard hours (Baxter, Hand and Sweid, 2016). In response, the Australian Government implemented the Child Care Flexibility Trials in 2013/14. Family day care was a key player in these trials, which attempted to provide flexible ECEC to families with highly flexible ECEC needs: police, nurses and paramedics. A key challenge for the trial was matching the flexible needs of families with a local family day care educator prepared to work non-standard hours herself, given the potential consequences for her own wellbeing and that of her family (Baxter, Hand and Sweid, 2016).

Starting in early 2016, the Australian Government began to trial subsidising the cost of nannies for families, with a focus on families working in shift work, living in rural or remote areas, or unable to access other ECEC. Nanny services have not traditionally been part of the formal ECEC sector in Australia. As an informal provider of ECEC, nannies do not
operate under the National Quality Framework and do not need to implement the Early Years Learning Framework. The Nanny Pilot Program will operate until June 2018. Nannies and families participating in the Pilot are required to be registered with an approved agency. The Nanny Pilot provides guidelines regarding the number of children per nanny, but does not require ECEC qualifications for nannies.

The Nanny Pilot was an Australian Government response to a recommendation in the Productivity Commission (2014) report, *Childcare and Early Childhood Learning*, which recommended significant changes to the structure of home-based ECEC in Australia. This included dismantling the In-home Care Program and instead providing government subsidies for nannies. The Nanny Pilot is a step towards adopting these recommendations by the Australian Government. A number of submissions to the Productivity Commission suggested that family day care services are already well placed to provide the support and coordination that nannies would require, and additionally argued that subsidised nanny services should operate under the National Quality Framework like other ECEC services eligible for Australian Government fee subsidies.

### 2.1.2 ECEC data

In 2016, the Australian Productivity Commission was tasked with investigating and making recommendations on education data and evidence in Australia. This inquiry includes consideration of ECEC data. The Commission's final report has been presented to government but, at the time of writing, was not yet publicly available. However, the draft report highlighted ECEC data as a key gap in evidence (Productivity Commission, 2016). The Commission suggested further developing existing data sets to build evidence around ECEC, for example, funding a new cohort in the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, using the Australian Early Development Census to monitor early learning and development and exploring longer term outcomes through the National Early Childhood Development Researchable Data Set being developed by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Family day care is a particularly under-researched element in the Australian ECEC sector, as many studies focus instead on centre-based services (Bohanna, et al., 2012). Family day care educators are even less well represented in quantitative research because the data is often collected at a service, rather than educator, level. As one example, the National Early Childhood Workforce Census, presents data on qualifications, but only for ‘paid contact staff’ (see Department of Education and Training, 2013, table 1.4.1). It seems this would overlook most family day care educators, who are not paid staff, but predominantly work as sole traders running a small business. The publication of the *Family Day Care Sector Profile* goes some way towards filling the gap in knowledge about educators (FDCA, 2017).

### 2.1.3 Quality

High quality family day care services demonstrate creativity in their strong commitment to quality (Blaxland, et al., 2016). Providers argue that family day care is particularly well suited to implementing the Early Years Learning Framework as the small numbers of children allow them to more readily tailor learning to children's interests and develop strong relationships with children and their families (Blaxland, Adamson and Cortis, 2016). Three of the 53 ECEC

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2 Nannies participating in the Pilot are required to be at least 18 years old, hold a current working with children check in the state or territory where they intend to work, and have a current first aid qualification.
services rated by ACECQA as ‘excellent’ are family day care services.

Like all ECEC services, family day care services are being assessed under the National Quality Framework. First assessments of all services are still underway. In December 2016, a majority (91%) of long day care services had a quality rating, while just over half (56%) of family day care services had been assessed. Of those family day care services that have received a quality rating, ACECQA has raised concerns over the higher proportion rated as ‘working towards NQS’ when compared to centre-based services (Curtis, 2016). In December 2016, 49 per cent of family day care services were rated as ‘working towards NQS’, 29 per cent as ‘meeting NQS’ and 17 per cent as ‘exceeding NQS’ (ACECQA, 2017: 14). This compares to 26 per cent, 42 per cent and 31 per cent for centre-based services respectively.

There is insufficient information publicly available about why family day care is performing differently to centre-based services under the National Quality Framework. It is taking significantly longer for family day care services to be assessed than centre-based services. This might be partly explained by the rapid growth in the sector. With a constant flow of new services being registered, there is a constant flow into the group of services not yet assessed. Also, different jurisdictions have prioritised the assessment of particular services for reasons such as the date of the last accreditation, opportunities to mitigate risks or the extent to which they were prepared for assessment (ACECQA, 2017).

An early evaluation of the National Quality Framework showed that family day care was performing well compared to other service types in five of the seven Quality Areas (see Figure 2) (Rothman, et al., 2012). These were: Quality Area 2, Children’s health and safety; Quality Area 4, Staffing arrangements; Quality Area 5, Relationships with children; Quality Area 6, Collaborative partnerships with families and communities; and Quality Area 7, Leadership and service management. Two areas for improvement were Quality Area 1, Educational program and practice and Quality Area 3, Physical environment.

More recently, a review of the National Quality Framework recommended several changes, including a number focused on family day care (Education Council, 2017). These include recommendations for a maximum number of educators that can be registered with a given service, and a coordinator to educator ratio of 1:15 during the first year of operation and 1:25 thereafter.

Family day care organisations have noted that there is a dearth of information about family day care and what models might provide the highest quality care (see, for example, Family Day Care Association of Queensland, 2015; Family Day Care Australia, 2015). More research is needed, particularly if new quality measures are introduced, to explore quality in family day care and how it is assessed.

2.2 Summary

In response to current policy developments and debates, the ECEC sector, and family day care in particular, has raised the possibility of new models of home-based ECEC. In this report, we review the policy and administration of home-based ECEC in NZ and the UK, focusing on England but with some examples from Scotland. We present information about

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3 Authors’ calculation, based on data in ACECQA (2017).
the regulation of home-based ECEC, funding and innovative models in NZ and the UK in Sections 4 and 5. Section 6 provides short descriptions of innovative models of family day care in NZ and the UK, including services for specific groups of children, services collaborating or integrated with other services, and interesting approaches to providing support to educators. We then reflect on the implications for Australia of aspects of the NZ and the UK experience and conclude by charting a research agenda for family day care in Australia.
3 Methodology

Family Day Care Australia commissioned the Social Policy Research Centre to review policy and research about different models of family day care/home-based childcare in NZ and England. In particular, the review examined:

1. How do NZ and England structure funding and regulation of home-based childcare? What significant changes to these models have occurred in the past two decades?
2. What are the implications of different models of home-based childcare for access, affordability and quality of home-based childcare?
3. What features of international models of home-based childcare might have relevance for Australia?

This report is based on extensive internet and research database searches focused on NZ and the UK. The research team reviewed regulations, guidelines and legislation for early childhood education in each jurisdiction. Grey literature was sourced from government and non-government websites and included evaluations and reviews of government policy and programs. Database searches (APAIS, Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science) were conducted to find academic literature on family day care in each country, including searches targeting the writings of lead researchers in each nation. Many publications, especially NZ grey literature, did not arise through database searches, but were sourced instead from the reference lists of other academic and grey literature. These many strategies make the documents referenced in this report a detailed representation of the relevant literature on NZ and the UK.
4 New Zealand

Like in Australia, family day care in New Zealand is a rapidly growing part of the ECEC sector. Known as home-based early childhood education (ECE), family day care provides care for around 1 in 10 NZ children enrolled in ECE, that is, for more than 19,000 children (Table 2). This is almost double the number of children enrolled in home-based ECE in 2006 (Carrol-Lind and Angus, 2011). The highest area of growth is for ECE for under two year olds, in both home-based ECE and in centres (Carrol-Lind and Angus, 2011).

It seems that growth in home-based ECE is meeting families' needs. Although many families wait to access other ECE service types, those wanting home-based services usually find a place quickly, only facing delays if they are seeking an exact match with their needs (Carrol-Lind and Angus, 2011).

Table 2: NZ ECE Enrolments, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Type</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher-led services</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home-based ECE</td>
<td>19,162</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education &amp; Care Centres</td>
<td>126,804</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergartens</td>
<td>31,877</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent/whānau-led services</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playcentre</td>
<td>12,723</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kāhanga Reo</td>
<td>8,936</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>199,502</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NZ Ministry of Education, 2015

In NZ, services that meet a set of high quality criteria receive higher levels of funding than other services (see Section 4.4 for details on quality and standard funding). In 2014, there were 371 home-based ECE services; of these, 107 received 'quality' funding and 264 received 'standard' funding (Table 3). Nearly three-quarters of all home-based ECE services are privately managed (270 services) with the remainder (101 services) community managed. It is notable that the majority of private services receive standard funding, while the majority of community services offer the higher standards necessary to qualify for quality funding (Table 3).
Table 3: Number of home-based services by funding band and ownership, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Education (2015b) Home-based Educators
Note: Services are funded as either ‘standard’ services or ‘quality’.

The formal ECE sector in NZ categorises services as ‘teacher-led’ or ‘parent/whānau-led’. Home-based ECE is one of the teacher-led services. Other teacher-led services are early childhood education and care centres; kindergartens and hospital-based education and care services.

At parent/whānau-led services, parents and family are the primary educators of children. Whānau means extended family or family group in Māori. Licensed parent-led services include playcentres and Te Kāhanga Reo. Te Kāhanga Reo are important providers of ECE based in Māori language and culture (Te Kāhanga Reo National Trust, 2016). Playgroups are also parent-led services, but not licensed.

Home-based ECE operates in NZ following a similar structure to Australian family day care. Networks or schemes employ early childhood teachers who support educators operating in their own homes. A significant difference, however, is that in NZ, nannies working in children’s homes are governed under the same regulations as home-based ECE. As a result, many home-based ECE agencies provide the same supports and home visits to nannies as they do to home-based ECE educators. (Some models of services that provided both nanny and family day care services are described in Section 6). A home-based ECE service consists of a network of educators supported by coordinators. Educators are usually self-employed. On average, services contracted 11.2 educators per coordinator, with most coordinators responsible for between 5 and 15 educators (see Table 4). In services receiving standard funding, coordinators supported an average of 12.2 educators, compared to 10.6 in quality funded services.

Table 4: Number of home-based services by educators employed per coordinator, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 5 educators per coordinator</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 6 and up to 10 educators per coordinator</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 11 and up to 15 educators per coordinator</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 16 and up to 20 educators per coordinator</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20 educators per coordinator</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Education (2015b) Home-based Educators

Most educators work full-time (Table 5). And most have only very small numbers of children enrolled with them at any time (Table 6). In 2014, 84 per cent of educators had four or fewer children enrolled with them in total. This is not the number who attended on a particular day, which would need to adhere to the 1:4 educator to children ratio, but the total number
enrolled across the whole week.

Table 5: Number of home-based educators by employment status, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>5,383</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>1,701</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>7,084</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Education (2015b) *Home-based Educators*

Table 6: Number of children enrolled per educator, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 1 child per educator</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 1 and up to 2</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 2 and up to 3</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 3 and up to 4</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 4 and up to 5</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 children per educator</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Education (2015b) *Home-based Educators*

In reporting this data, it is interesting to note for the Australian context that all of this data is available through the Ministry of Education website, *Education Counts*, [http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/early-childhood-education](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/early-childhood-education). Researchers can access a wide range of information in Excel spreadsheets and calculate whichever cross-tabulations are of interest. The data are collected annually in the *ECE Census*. The Census gathers information about children's participation in ECE and hours of attendance; service data including management, waiting times, language spoken; and staffing, ethnicity and qualifications. Australian researchers do not have access to such frequently collected, publicly accessible and detailed information about the early childhood sector.

### 4.1 Recent policy debates

#### 4.1.1 Quality

Quality in NZ ECE has been a key topic of debate in recent years. Discussion has focused on concerns about the youngest children in ECE and the ability of ECE services to provide them with quality care and education, and on the home-based educators and their qualifications, and the support they receive from services (Layland and Smith, 2015). While regulations require monthly visits to educators, home-based educators are not required to have any ECEC qualifications.

These concerns have been highlighted in three recent reports. The first report focused on quality in home-based ECE and was written by the Education Review Office (2009), which is responsible for monitoring and evaluating quality in ECE and schools. *The Quality of Education and Care in Home-based Early Childhood Services* noted that there were issues with compliance in around one-third of home-based services, mostly regarding health and safety. This was nonetheless a significant improvement from the 2001 review, which found
that three-quarters of services needed to improve safety.

The second report detailed an inquiry conducted by the Children’s Commissioner into ECE for children aged less than two. Janis Carrol-Lind and John Angus (2011) in *Through Their Lens: An Inquiry into the Non-parental Education and Care of Infants and Toddlers* raised concerns about the quality of ECE for very young children in all ECE settings, including home-based ECE. Regarding home-based ECE, the authors pointed particularly to a lack of educator qualifications and too little support from coordination units.

Current regulatory and funding structures provide minimum qualifications and professional learning of home-based educators and minimum standards for their support…If the trend continues towards greater use of home-based services, it would be very much in the interests of infants and toddlers to review the regulations and funding settings with a view to enhancing the levels of knowledge and skills expected of educators and levels of support provided by their employers. (Carrol-Lind and Angus, 2011: 180)

The third report was written by the Early Childhood Taskforce for the Ministry of Education (2011). The Taskforce questioned the quality of home-based ECE, particularly the qualifications of educators, in *An Agenda for Amazing Children*. Taskforce wrote:

In general, home-based services are structured so that a qualified educator supervises a number of unqualified educators, who in turn directly engage with children in their care. One teacher can be responsible for educators in charge of 80 children in total. Despite this, homebased services are funded as teacher-led services in the existing funding system. This is unacceptable. (cited in Smith, 2015: 74).

The Taskforce recommended an investigation into home-based ECE to determine current quality and the adequacy of licencing criteria and quality measures (Ministry of Education, 2011: 109). This review was announced by the NZ Government, but later retracted. No further indication has been given that this or any similar review will proceed.

### 4.1.2 Funding

ECE in NZ has experienced repeated funding cuts over recent years. However, most of this has affected centre-based ECE more than home-based. The most significant funding cut saw the removal of the highest quality funding band for centres. Prior to 2013, government provided this higher funding to centres employing 100 per cent teacher-qualified staff. In 2013, this additional support was removed, leading to protests that this was a disincentive to high quality and that centres with 100 per cent teacher-qualified staff would suffer financially or be forced to reduce quality (Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand, 2011).

Since then, funding for grants to support staff to engage in teacher training and registration has also been cut (HELO, 2013). These moves appear to have caused tensions between centre-based and home-based ECE. A 2013 media release by the peak body for home-based ECE, the NZ Home Early Learning Organisation, for example, supported these cuts, adding:

> HELO believes that quality learning and care comes from the strength of the relationship between the child, the family and the educator in a secure home environment - not a formal teaching qualification. (HELO, 2013)

In this statement, the Home Early Learning Organisation would seem to be opposed to the introduction of any form of teaching qualifications for home-based educators.
4.2 Regulations

The legal framework for ECEC services in NZ was substantially revised in 2008 when the Education Act 1989 was amended and the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 introduced. Now all NZ ECEC services must be licensed under the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008. In addition, home-based ECE services are governed by the Licensing Criteria for Home-based Education and Care Services 2008 (Education Review Office, 2015).

Under these regulations, no more than 80 children may be in attendance at a home-based ECE service at any one time. Home-based ECE services must have a coordinator. Each coordinator can be responsible for no more than 50 children. Each educator can teach no more than two children aged less than two, unless they are siblings. Four children under the age of six can be at an educator’s home at any one time.

The coordinator must hold a recognised early childhood teacher qualification, such as a three-year bachelor degree in early childhood education, or another bachelor degree with a graduate diploma or masters in early childhood education. At ECE centres, at least 50 per cent of staff must hold a recognised qualification, but home-based services are exempt from this requirement.

Educators may operate out of their own home, the child’s home, or another home nominated by the child’s parents. As a result, it is common for services to support both family day care educators and nannies working in children’s own homes.

At the home-based ECE service, the coordinator is responsible for:

• Overseeing the education and care, comfort, and health and safety of the children
• Providing professional leadership and support to educators within the service
• Being in contact with each educator at least fortnightly
• Visiting each educator at least monthly
• Observing each child while they are receiving education and care at least monthly.

All licensed services, including home-based ECE, must offer the Te Whāriki Early Childhood Education Curriculum principles and strands. These include the interwoven elements of:

• Well-being
• Holistic development
• Empowerment
• Belonging

• Contribution
• Family and community
• Relationships
• Communication
• Exploration
4.2.1 Quality assurance

As in Australia, quality in ECE services in NZ is overseen by an independent agency, the Education Review Office. The Education Review Office is focused on ‘the capacity for the [ECE] service to promote positive learning outcomes with the purpose of contributing to improved wellbeing and learning for all children’ (Education Review Office, 2015:1). However, unlike Australia, where state regulatory authorities visit and assess services, overseen by ACECQA, in NZ, the Education Review Office is responsible for all elements of the quality assurance process.

Quality assurance involves internal and external review processes. All services are required to undertake internal evaluations or self-review, and document:

- A process for reviewing and evaluating their operation
A schedule showing timelines for planned review of different areas of operation

Recorded outcomes from the review process (Education Review Office, 2015: 12).

Supporting documents and guidelines to assist services in their internal evaluations process are provided by the Education Review Office and the Ministry of Education.

External reviews are conducted by the Education Review Office. The external reviews include examining services’ internal evaluations as well as visits to the services to assess them according to evaluation criteria. The frequency of external reviews depends on ‘how well placed a service is to promote positive learning outcomes for children’ (Education Review Office, 2015: 50).

- Very well placed – the next Education Review Office review in four years
- Well placed – the next Education Review Office review in three years
- Requires further development – the next Education Review Office review within two years and the service is supported by the Ministry of Education to become ‘well placed’ during that time.
- If the service is not performing adequately and has limited capacity to make improvements, then the next Education Review Office review data is determined in consultation with the Ministry of Education.

Most services are considered to be well placed and reviewed every three years (Education Review Office, 2015).

The rating and a detailed report for each ECEC service are both publicly available on the Educator Review Office Website (see http://www.ero.govt.nz/review-reports/te-whare-whaihua-06-10-2016/ and http://www.ero.govt.nz/review-reports/mataniu-feagai-ma-le-ata-aoga-amata-26-09-2016/ for examples). As well as reporting on the quality and practices at the service, the reports include detailed service information, such as the number of children, the percentage of qualified teachers, and child ratios.

The Education Review Office also produces a series of guides and reports on good practice in ECE (see http://www.ero.govt.nz/publications/). These include examples of good practice in early learning, literacy and providing a quality service, and supporting Māori children.

Overall, in discussing quality ECE, the Education Review Office (Education Review Office, 2010: 4) reports that:

In high quality services, it is the interrelationship between the following features, rather than any one on its own, that underpins the quality of education and care provided.

- leadership
- philosophy
- vision
- relationships and interactions
- teaching and learning
- assessment and planning
- professional learning, qualifications and support
Regarding home-based ECE, the Education Review Office (2009: 4-5) found that at quality home-based services:

- There was a philosophy that affirmed the value of children learning in a home setting
- Children participated in a wide range of activities and experiences at home and in the community, learning through play
- Coordinators helped educators to identify and build on children’s strengths and interests
- Children had access to appropriate equipment indoors and outside
- Interactions between adults and children were warm, caring, respectful and responsive
- Coordinators were qualified
- Services were engaged in self-review.

It is important to note that the Education Review Office expressed concern in a number of the above areas that a significant proportion of services struggled to meet quality standards and required further training, guidance and development. Concerns were raised, in particular, about health and safety; and understanding of children’s education in terms of assessment, planning and evaluation. In this regard, NZ home-based ECE is similar to family day care in Australia, where there is also concern about the proportion of services rated as ‘working towards the National Quality Standard’. Unlike NZ, however, health and safety has not been an issue for Australian family day care services.

A study by Layland and Smith (2015) sheds some light on possible reasons for concerns about quality in home-based ECE. They conducted focus groups with different stakeholders, including parents and families, educators and nannies, coordinators, and representatives from the Ministry of Education and the Education Review Office. They found that there was consensus between the groups about quality in home-based ECE and that this aligned with Te Whāriki and international early childhood literature. However, within this general agreement about quality, each group placed emphasis on different elements. These findings suggest a need for similar research in Australia, where it is also possible that different stakeholder groups might understand or approach quality in family day care differently.

Earlier research found that there are two important aspects to the role of coordinators in home-based ECE: the practical support they provide and the relationships they build with educators (Peters et al., 2008). Sharing of useful information with educators on observing and documenting children’s learning, for example, was found to be accomplished more readily through relationships based on positive reassurance and encouragement.

### 4.3 Indigenous culture

All NZ ECEC services must acknowledge the unique place of Māori in the Treaty of Waitangi (Education Review Office, 2015). In Australia, too, the Early Years Learning Framework
encourages services to respect the culture and diversity of children's families and communities. In NZ, this involves a requirement that all services give children an opportunity to learn of the cultural heritage of both Māori and Pākehā. There are some targeted early childhood services for Māori children, most notably Te Kāhanga Reo a Māori parent/whānau-led ECE service. However, three-quarters of Māori children attend mainstream ECE (Education Review Office, 2010). The Education Review Office (2010: 25) evaluated the provision of ECE in 576 mainstream services in 2008 and 2009. Its report outlined nine case studies of good practice that were all focused on 'realising Māori children's potential to become competent and confident learners'. To do this, the case study services emphasised the importance of responsive and respectful relationships with Māori children and their families and communities, wove Māori culture through the curriculum and, in doing so, made particular reference to local people, places and history. The services worked to increase their own understanding of Māori language and culture, and engaged in reflection and evaluation to continue to improve their engagement with Māori children. The home-based ECE services that featured in this review particularly emphasised the importance of first impressions for Māori families, and the management team would take time to offer families a cup of tea and a chat at their first meeting. Coordinators saw themselves as an essential element of families' relationships with the service.

Despite these model examples, many services struggle to cater appropriately for Māori children. The Education Review Office (2010) found that less than one third of ECE services were focused on the learning of Māori children and less than half tried to understand the aspirations of Māori families for their children.

Engagement with Māori culture is encouraged by the NZ government bodies. For example, Te Whāriki, the curriculum outlined above, incorporates Māori culture and Māori terms throughout. As another example, the Education Review Office (2015) uses indicators derived from Māori Ngā Pou Here to assess services for their capacity to promote positive learning for children (see Figure 3). The Office states that:

The use of Māori terminology and concepts in Ngā Pou Here is one strategy Education Review Office uses to realise its commitment to equitable outcomes for Māori...The use of Ngā Pou Here will help services and Education Review Office to foreground success for Māori children in each evaluation.

In this way, the NZ Government models the integration of Māori culture and concepts throughout ECE. While the Australian curriculum encourages activity support and engagement with children's home culture, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are not as deeply integrated within ECEC documents and guidelines as they are in NZ. Moreover, in NZ, support for diverse language practice in ECE services is funded. Services that use a language other than English more than half of the time are eligible for additional funding (for more information see Equity Funding in Section 4.4).
4.4 Funding models

In order to be eligible for NZ government funding, services must be licensed and registered under the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008. Funding is designed to cover the full cost of delivering up to 30 hours per week of ECE to three- to five-year-old children. In addition, families can access up to nine hours per week of a means-tested subsidy. In NZ, unlike Australia, the focus of funding is in the two years before school, during which time children can access free ECE. This funding system stands in contrast to Australia where all subsidies are means-tested and none are designed to cover the full cost of early childhood services. Only relatively small amounts of NZ funding are directed to ECE for younger children, whereas in Australia, age does not determine eligibility for subsidies.

There are six types of government funding for ECEC in NZ:

- ECE Funding Subsidy
- 20 Hours ECE
- Plus 10 ECE
- Equity Funding
- Annual Top-up for Isolated Services
- Childcare Subsidy
All but the last of these are funding paid directly to services. The Childcare Subsidy is paid to families. The rates paid to different service types vary. All payments are made to services three times per year, with the exception of the Annual Top-up for Isolated Services, which is paid annually.

As in Australia, funding cannot be claimed for the educator’s own children or other children not enrolled at the service. But, funding can be claimed for children in the educator’s family who are not their own son or daughter, such as nieces and nephews, only if other children from outside the family are also present. There are occasional exemptions in isolated communities to this rule. In contrast to Australia, if educators’ own children are attending ECE with another home-based educator, the children can attract funding. In NZ, unlike Australia, school-aged children attending ECE services do not attract funding.

There are two funding rates for Home-based ECE:

- **Standard Rate**
- **Quality Rate** for services that meet additional requirements beyond the standards in the *Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008*.

To be eligible for the higher Quality Rate of funding, home-based ECE services must comply with one of the following two quality requirement options (Table 7). These outline a model of high quality home-based ECE that is a small, possibly locally based, service in which educators have at least Level III education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Size</th>
<th>Option One</th>
<th>Option Two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator requirements</td>
<td>Coordinators must be:</td>
<td>Coordinators must be:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• locally based within normal commuting distance for that location</td>
<td>• work for only one service at a time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• work for only one service at a time</td>
<td>• be on duty during normal hours and be on-call after hours on weekdays and weekends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educator requirements</td>
<td>All educators have completed Level III or higher of an ECE qualification, or be studying towards Level IV, or be qualified primary teachers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Centre-based services have similar quality funding measures that depend on the proportion of certified teachers employed. However, in centres, there is no size or supervision element as there is in home-based services.

### 4.4.1 ECE Funding Subsidy

The ECE Funding Subsidy is the primary type of government funding for early childhood services. The Subsidy contributes to the operating costs of ECEC service by paying for part of each hour a child attends, up to six hours per child-place per day and 30 hours per week. Children from birth to five years old can attract funding, but children enrolled in school are

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4 This and the following funding descriptions are derived from the NZ Ministry of Education (2016), *ECE Funding Handbook*. 
not eligible.

Levels of 20 Hours ECE funding are NZ$8.76 per child-hour in a standard service and NZ$9.27 in a quality service (see Table 8). As a comparison, in centre-based services the 20 Hours ECE rates are NZ$8.34 to NZ$11.43, depending on the proportion of staff who are certified teachers. Kindergarten rates are very similar to rates in centres.

The Subsidy is designed to share the cost of ECEC between government and families. Services must be open for at least a 2.5-hour session per week and children enrolled in school are not eligible for funding.

Table 8: ECE funding rates for home-based ECE (NZ$)\(^5\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ECE Funding Subsidy</th>
<th>20 Hours ECE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Under 2 years</td>
<td>2 years and over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>8.31</td>
<td>4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard</td>
<td>7.28</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.2 20 Hours ECE

20 Hours ECE is paid at a higher rate than the ECE Funding Subsidy, as it is designed to meet the full cost, on average, of ECEC for children aged three to five years old.

As the name indicates, 20 Hours ECE is available for up to six hours per day to a maximum of 20 hours per week. Services cannot charge families any fees if their child receives 20 Hours ECE, but services can request donations or ask that parents pay optional charges for additional services such as food, sunscreen, sunhats, dance teachers or excursions. Optional charges cannot include administrative costs or higher wages.

ECE Funding Subsidy rates for under two year olds are NZ$7.28 and for older children NZ$3.94 in a standard service (Table 8 above). In a quality service the rates are NZ$8.31 and NZ$4.45 respectively. This compares to NZ$7.57 to NZ$12.12 for under two year olds in a centre-based service, and NZ$3.83 to NZ$6.70 for older children.

4.4.3 Plus 10 ECE

If children eligible for 20 Hours ECE attend a service for between 21 and 30 hours per week, the service can claim ECE Funding Subsidy and Plus 10 ECE for those additional hours. Plus 10 ECE, when added to ECE Funding Subsidy, provides a service with funding per child-place hour equivalent to 20 Hours ECE.

This means that the average full cost of three-, four- and five-year-old children’s participation in ECEC is funded up to 30 hours per week. The first 20 hours are 20 Hours ECE and additional hours a combination of ECE Funding Subsidy and Plus 10 ECE.

4.4.4 Equity Funding

Equity Funding is available to all licenced ECE services. The funding is intended to:

- Reduce educational disparities between different groups in New Zealand communities

\(^5\) Rates at 1 July 2014
• Reduce barriers to participation faced by those groups that are under-represented in ECE services
• Support ECE services in raising their level of educational achievement (Ministry of Education, 2016: 127).

Equity funding must be spent on measures to further the above equity objectives and be in line with the type of equity measure it is addressing.

Funding is available to services who enrol children from low socio-economic communities. The level of funding is based on the proportion of children who live in low socio-economic areas.

Services that have large numbers of children with special needs or children from non-English-speaking backgrounds might also be eligible for Equity Funding. This funding is not allocated for spending on individual children and so is not available in services where a small proportion of the children in attendance have special needs or are from a non-English-speaking background. Other funding is available for individual children with moderate to high special needs.

Equity funding also supports bi-cultural, bi-lingual and immersion services that provide more than half of their service in a language other than English (including sign language). In recognition that accessing goods and services is more costly at remote sites, isolated services may receive Equity Funding.

4.4.5 Annual Top-up for Isolated Services

Small services operating in remote parts of NZ are eligible for an additional payment each year. They may receive $15,000 per annum if the service attracts between $5,000 and $10,000 ECE Funding Subsidy, or $20,000 if the service attracts $10,000 to $20,000 ECE Funding Subsidy. This is a separate payment to the isolated component of Equity funding.

4.4.6 Childcare Subsidy

In addition to the above payments, which are made to services, NZ families can claim Childcare Subsidy to help with the cost of ECE. Childcare Subsidy is only paid for hours a child is not enrolled in 20 Hours ECE.

All families may receive up to nine hours per week. However, families that are employed, studying or where there is disability may receive up to 50 hours per week. The Subsidy provides $5.00 per hour for low income families, decreasing to zero for families earning $1,400 or more per week (Work and Income, 2016).

4.4.7 Affordability

The average cost of ECE for NZ families dropped in 2007 with the introduction of 20 Hours ECE. Figure 4 shows that, since 2007, the cost of ECE has risen slightly (blue line marked CPI-childcare) but so have wages. Thus, the average cost of ECE remained quite steady as a proportion of the Quarterly Employment Survey’s average hourly ordinary-time earnings.
The NZ government routinely collects data from services about the costs of providing ECE. Data on how costs change over time and across service types are used to inform government funding decisions – in particular, to ensure that 20 Hours ECE is adequate. Among other concerns, the survey addresses the question of what proportion of the cost of ECE is paid for by government subsidies. Arnold (2015) reports that 20 Hours ECE covers the average costs for home-based ECE and all other service types, except playcentres. This stands in contrast to England where there is significant concern that free early education is inadequately funded (see Section 5.4.1). In NZ, subsidies for zero to one year olds covered 70 per cent of costs in home-based ECE and 46 per cent of costs for two to five year olds (Arnold, 2015).

4.5 Summary

When compared to Australia, NZ home-based ECE appears very similar. Regulations for home-based services and quality-assurance processes are alike in the two nations. Key differences of interest to Australia include that:

- Nannies and family day care are governed by the same regulations
- Regulations stipulate the frequency of support and monitoring visits to educators by family day care service teachers
- Māori early education is strongly encouraged and services should provide bi-cultural ECE
- Data is regularly collected, used to set subsidies, and publicly available

These points of interest inform the research agenda for Australian family day care outlined in Section 7.
5 United Kingdom

As in Australia and NZ, in the UK there are distinct types of ECEC, including home-based services known as childminding. This section will provide a brief overview of the types of ECEC services in the UK. The focus is England, with some reference and comparison to Scotland to highlight examples of local models and practices.

Childminding is well-established within the ECEC system in the UK and is integrated within the overarching early years’ sector. Childminding is regulated home-based ECEC akin to family day care in Australia and home-based ECE in New Zealand. However, there are important differences between childminding in the UK and family day care in Australia, and there are also differences within the UK, as childminding is regulated by each of the jurisdictions of England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

5.1 Sector context

Until the 1990s, childminding had been the main type of non-parental care used by young children; however, this trend reversed as the number of private nurseries trebled through the 1990s (Fauth et al., 2011). Some researchers suggest that the decline in childminding numbers may partly be due to a rise in unregistered childminding, and a rise in other home-based care, such as nannies (Simon et al, 2015). One of the reasons for the recent introduction of changes to the childminding model (as outlined below) is the significant decline in the number of childminders between 2003 and 2010 (Fauth et al., 2011). This trend is directly opposite to the rapid growth in home-based ECEC observed in Australia and NZ in recent years.

There is a big push at the moment in England to increase childminding within the early years’ sector. The Department for Education is encouraging the expansion of childminding agencies within the childcare market, and sees the potential for childminding agencies and childminders to play a bigger role in the provision of quality ECEC. The Department is interested in better integrating and connecting childminders to other early years’ services, and believes that childminding agencies can help provide a seamless service to parents by linking childminders with other services.

In 2014, there were over 50,000 registered childminders on the Early Years Register, with a capacity to provide over 260,000 places for children under the age of eight years. This represents approximately 21 per cent of all early years’ places (Otero & Melhuish, 2015:12). Eighty-three per cent of childminders are rated good or outstanding (Department for Education, 2016c:12).

In England, there are six types of ECEC that are regulated and part of the ECEC system:

- Children’s centres (services for children and parents)
- Day nurseries (similar to long day care in Australia)
• Playgroups and preschools (similar to preschools in Australia)
• Early education and nursery classes/maintained nursery schools (in schools)
• Childminders (similar to family day care)
• Nannies

5.2 Policy context and recent developments

The ECEC landscape is undergoing significant change in the UK. There are funding and regulatory changes that have, and are, taking place, all of which are relevant to childminding. These changes are introduced below, in order to provide policy context for the more detailed discussion of the regulations and funding structure in 5.3 and 5.4.

In order to encourage the growth of the childminding sector, the UK Government has implemented regulatory and funding initiatives regarding childminding and, more broadly, the flexible provision of ECEC. Recent regulatory changes are also encouraging more flexible provision by allowing childminders and child care providers on domestic premises (up to four childminders, or two childminders and two assistants) to provide care on non-domestic premises up to 50 per cent of the time. This is designed to allow childminders to provide care in community spaces, such as schools or local community buildings, outside regular hours (Ofsted, 2016b).

In addition, the government has removed many of the restrictions that were in place for childminders, such as requiring them to be part of a child care network, and substantially reduced the qualifications required in order to offer the free Early Education Entitlement of 15 hours’ early childhood education for three and four year olds. This is in contrast to Australia where the level of qualifications required has increased for family day care educators. The reduction of qualification requirements has led to a significant increase in the number of childminders offering the Early Education Entitlement. Currently 13.3 per cent of the 45,041 childminders registered on the Early Years Register offer the Early Education Entitlement, leaving considerable scope to further increase the provision among childminders (Department for Education, 2016c:23).

5.2.1 Childminding agencies

In 2013, the government introduced a new model for regulating and monitoring childminders: childminding agencies (known as CMAs in the UK). Registration with a childminder agency is not mandatory, as childminders still have the option to register through a childminder agency or to register independently. This differs from Scotland (and Australia and NZ), where childminders must register through a Childcare Agency.

The introduction of childminding agencies was one part of the government’s initiative to increase the profile of childminders. Much the same as Australian family day care coordination units, the aims for childminding agencies include:

• To help retain and support existing childminders
• To promote the quality and professionalism of the childminding workforce
• To support childminders by providing a range of services such as marketing, administrative support, networking, training and development opportunities
But unlike Australia, UK agencies must also aim:

- To improve the service to parents by providing regular updates on the quality of their childminder and potentially matching services, access to holiday and sickness cover
- To attract new childminders to the profession
- To encourage those childminders not currently providing the Early Education Entitlement to do so (4Children, 2016a:38).

In 2014 and 2015, the UK undertook a childminder agency trial, but fewer childminders registered with agencies than the government had hoped. To better understand why, the government undertook a consultation with the sector. They found that there was some confusion about the role of local authorities and childminding agencies and concerns that the level of support/professional development to be provided by childminding agencies to childminders would be too low. The sector was also worried about childminders with an individual quality rating that is poor6, who are registered with a childminder agency that has a good quality rating. There was disquiet about the implications of this for the quality of care offered by agencies (Department for Education, 2014).

In response to the low uptake of childminding agencies in England in the first couple of years, the government commissioned the national foundation, 4Children, to run a campaign to increase the awareness of childminding agencies, provide information and training and, overall, increase the uptake of childminding agencies. Many innovative models of flexible childminding and support for the childminding workforce have been trialled (see Section 6 for details).

### 5.2.2 Funding changes

A second major recent change relates to the funding of early years’ services, which applies to services registered to provide the Early Education Entitlement. Nurseries, children’s centres, childminders and childminding agencies, and some preschools and playgroups are eligible to deliver the Early Education Entitlement, providing they meet certain standards and follow specific curricula (see Section 5.3.3). Providers can choose whether or not they want to apply to deliver the entitlement. In August 2016, the government announced an overhaul to the funding formula for the Early Education Entitlement, with a particular focus on how to increase the number of childminders offering the Early Education Entitlement. In prioritising the funding of early education in the years prior to school, England and NZ are similar to each other, and different to Australia, where Federal Government subsidies apply to all young children, regardless of when they will start school.

A third major change is the introduction of new tax and subsidy measures being rolled out from 2016. This includes the introduction of the Universal Credit (to replace the child care element of the Working Tax Credit) and Tax Free Childcare (to replace employer sponsored Childcare Vouchers). These are discussed further in Section 5.4.

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6 In England, childminders can be assessed individually for the quality of the service they provide (see Section 5.3.3).
5.2.3 Local authorities and childminding in England

Local authorities play a key role in funding and planning ECEC services in England. Whereas in Australia some local governments fund ECEC services, in England all local authorities distribute funding, and are responsible for maintaining adequate places for children within the local area and ensuring that childminders receive adequate training and professional development opportunities. The government ‘intends to refocus the duty on local authorities to provide information, advice and training to childcare providers in their area’ (Department for Education, 2014:14).

Local authorities also play an important role in coordinating access to the Early Education Entitlement. The Childcare Act 2016 states that ‘if children meet the eligibility requirements for the free entitlements [Early Education Entitlement], the local authority must secure a place for them’ (Department for Education, 2016b:45). This gives children a right to an early education that does not exist in Australia.

5.3 Regulations

Education and care services for young children in the UK are legislated under the Children Act 2014, with separate legislation for each respective country. In England, early years’ services must follow the regulations set under the Childcare Act 2016. Licensing and monitoring are the responsibility of an independent body, the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills, commonly known as Ofsted.

Ofsted defines a childminder as ‘one person, who can work with up to two other people at any time, looking after children on domestic premises’. This means that, unlike Australia, three childminders can work together at one time in one residence. Four or more people may provide care on domestic premises at one time, but it is no longer regarded as ‘childminding’ (Ofsted, 2014).

There are four classifications or categories of early years and child care provision for Ofsted registration purposes, three of which relate to home-based ECEC:

- **Childminding** – individuals looking after children on domestic premises, which is not the home of any of the children being cared for
- **Home childcarer** – individuals caring for children of no more than two families at the home of one of the children
- **Childcare on domestic premises** – four or more people looking after children on domestic premises, including childminders and their assistants.

The fourth category is for centre-based ECEC:

- **Childcare on non-domestic premises** – childcare on premises that are not domestic, such as nurseries and preschools.

5.3.1 Overview of Ofsted

Ofsted is responsible for monitoring all education for children and young people in England. The regulation of early years’ services, including childminders, falls within Ofsted’s overarching framework for monitoring education and training, called The common inspection framework: education, skills and early years (Ofsted, 2015).
All early years’ services caring for children from birth to eight years must be registered with Ofsted. This includes nurseries, preschools and childminders. There are different registers depending on the type of care and ages of children. Childminders working with children before school age would be registered on the Early Years Register, and those working with school-aged children on the compulsory Childcare Register.

- **Early Years Register** – for all group-based services caring for children under school age. This includes all nurseries and preschools and childminders who care for children under school age.
- **Childcare Register (compulsory)** – for group-based services that care for children between five and eight years of age.
- **Childcare Register (voluntary)** – for individual home-based services (home childcare) and services providing care for children 8 to 17 years. This includes vacation care and after school clubs.

Providers may be on both the Early Years Register and Childcare Register. For example, a childminder providing care for zero to eight year olds would be required to be on both registers.

The quality standards and procedures established by Ofsted differ for each type of care and register.

### 5.3.2 Ofsted standards and qualifications

As in Australia, Ofsted regulations establish a number of standards and procedures that early years’ services must follow. This includes the qualification levels and training for care providers, the ratios in different settings, and the curriculum that must be followed. The differences across types of services are outlined in Table 9.

The ratios for English childminders are 1:3 for children under five years; and 1:1 for children under one year. These are lower ratios than in Australia. But more than one childminder can work together to care for up to six children aged less than eight years at one time. In exceptional circumstances, childminders can care for four children under five years to maintain continuity of care (Otero & Melhuish, 2015:12).

Childminders are not required to hold the same qualifications as ECEC workers in centres, such as nurseries and preschools. In fact, in contrast to Australia, and like NZ, childminders do not need any early years’ qualifications at all. All childminders are required to implement the early years’ curriculum. But it is only those who are delivering the free Early Education Entitlement for early education who need to complete specific training. This training must be approved by the local authority and usually involves short courses.

Although minimal training is required, recent research shows that approximately 70 per cent of childminders hold a Level 3 qualification or higher, while only 15 per cent do not hold any qualification (Department for Education, 2015). In addition, the childminding workforce is fairly experienced, with a 2012 source showing that over 32 per cent had been childminding for 11 years or more (Fauth et al., 2011).
There has been some concern raised by the sector that childminders can deliver the Early Education Entitlement, even if they do not have their Level 3 qualification. In particular, the Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY), who represents childminders and nannies, believes that childminders should be required to be working towards a Level 3, ‘and have regular contact with a graduate, for example through partnerships with schools, children’s centres and nurseries’. This would make English requirements more like Australia’s. PACEY also believes that the government should consider amending the registration and inspection framework to require childminders to have a minimum number of professional development hours per year (PACEY, 2016b). As the UK equivalent to Family Day Care Australia, PACEY could be a source of insights and inspiration for how to achieve high quality home-based ECEC.

5.3.3 Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage is a statutory framework that was implemented in 2008. It is mandatory for providers registered on Ofsted’s Early Years Register to follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (from birth to five years). This is similar to the Early Years Learning Framework in Australia.

Ofsted is responsible for ensuring that providers delivering the Early Education Entitlement are familiar with the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is established as part of the registration process for childminders and childminding agencies applying to the Early Years Register, as well as the inspection process, outlined below.

Childminders must meet the same ratio, qualifications and curriculum requirements,
regardless of whether they are independently registered or registered through a childminder agency. However, the processes and responsibilities for these two avenues differ, as outlined below.

### 5.3.4 Registration and inspection process for childminders

Since the introduction of childminder agencies in 2014, childminders can choose whether to register directly with Ofsted, as an individual, or whether to join a childminder agency that is registered with Ofsted. If childminders are registered with a childminder agency, they do not need to register directly with Ofsted. Instead, the childminder agency registers with Ofsted and the childminder agency takes responsibility for registering and inspecting the childminders that are part of their agency. This is different to Australia and NZ where all home-based educators must be connected to a service.

Childminders who are directly registered with Ofsted receive a registration visit, during which the inspector checks:

- The childminder’s understanding of any risks to children; the childminder’s understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage; and that the childminder is ready to begin caring for children
- The childminder’s identity; other relevant documents, such as qualifications, first aid certificate, childminder training and documents relating to their car if they intend to transport children (Ofsted, 2016a:12).

Childminders wishing to deliver the Early Education Entitlement must demonstrate (Ofsted, 2016a:18-19):

- Their knowledge and understanding of the seven areas of learning and development
- How they will plan and deliver the educational programs across these areas
- How they will assess children’s starting points and the progress they make and that they know and understand the requirement for a progress check at age two
- How they will help children make progress towards the early learning goals
- How they will help children become effective learners who are ready for school.

Childminding agencies also receive registration inspections from Ofsted, during which the inspector will:

- Use the statement of purpose to assess suitability to register as an agency
- Check how the childminder agency intends to deliver the requirements for childminders
- Check the childminder agency’s understanding of how childminders must deliver the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and/or the Childcare Register
- Check the arrangements for ensuring that childminders are suitable and can deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements
- Check the arrangements for monitoring the quality of childminders.
Ofsted has a duty to inspect all childminding agencies once they are registered. Currently, Ofsted must inspect all childminding agencies within 12 months of them registering their first childminders; and thereafter at least once in a three-year period following their previous inspection. Ofsted checks 10 per cent of childminders registered with each childminder agency.

Inspectors must consider (Ofsted, 2016b:21):

- The quality and accessibility of support, training and guidance to ensure that childminders meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and/or requirements of the Childcare Register
- How well support is targeted to help childminders improve their practice
- The breadth and range of services provided to childminders to enable them to improve the quality of their provision
- The effectiveness and accuracy of the agency’s assessment of the needs of registered childminders and the extent to which support meets their needs
- Any observations of training and support work taking place during the inspection period.

Childminders registered with an agency are inspected and graded by their agency, while Ofsted inspects and grades the agency as a whole. This is similar to the family day care system in Australia.

All ECEC services registered with Ofsted, including directly registered childminders, receive one of the following grades, similar to those given in Australia and NZ:

- Grade 1 - outstanding
- Grade 2 - good
- Grade 3 - requires improvement
- Grade 4 – inadequate

The grades are publicly available via the Ofsted website. Childminders who are graded by their agency are not required to make their grade public.

Local authorities are required to provide professional development and training to childminders who require improvement or are inadequate. This training may be offered directly through the local authority, or may be outsourced to a childminding network or childminder agencies.

As in Australia, childminding agencies are responsible for carrying out checks on staff working at the childminder agency, and these checks vary depending on their role and whether they have access to the children cared for by childminders.

Agencies must inspect childminders within nine months of their registration, and annually after that. There may be additional visits if there are concerns, or if the childminder has received an inadequate rating.

The childminder agency is obliged by law to (Ofsted, 2016b:3):

- Regulate the suitability of childminders in the agency, including, where appropriate, their capacity to deliver the statutory requirements of the Early Years
Foundation Stage

- Support the training and development of childminders
- Provide a clear way for parents and carers to find and work with a childminder registered with the agency
- Improve the quality of provision
- Monitor the standard of care and education provided by the childminders they register.

In preparation for a childminder agency inspection, childminders are required to complete a self-evaluation form for the visit to allow them to update information the childminder agency has on record (4Children, 2016b). At the end of the visit, the childminder receives immediate feedback on findings and judgements, and an explanation of what needs to be done to improve the provision of service.

5.3.5 Quality improvement and professional development

Childminders can access support, professional development and guidance from a range of possible sources, which vary by area (Otero & Melhuish, 2015:13):

- Local authority co-ordinators, development officers, quality assurance officers
- Local authority training, often provided by sector organisations, such as Action for Children7 and National Children’s Bureau8
- Childminding networks
- Professional associations including PACEY and Pre-School Learning Alliance
- Children’s Centres may hold childminder groups, providing opportunities to meet with peers and colleagues.

As mentioned earlier, local authorities are increasingly building relationships with local childminding agencies to delivery professional development and training to childminders requiring improvement based on the Ofsted inspection, or self-initiated training to learn more about a specific area and to improve their practice.

5.4 Funding models

As introduced earlier, there are considerable changes taking place in relation to the funding of early years’ services in England. This includes the funding formula for subsidies directed to services through the Early Education Entitlement, as well as changes to the mechanisms for delivering financial assistance directly to families. The current funding arrangements and recent developments are discussed below.

Childminding is integrated within the funding system. Childminders are eligible for the same funding as most other early years’ services. However, as noted above, in order to be eligible...
to receive the Early Education Entitlement, they must be registered on Ofsted’s Early Years Register, follow the Early Years Foundation Stage, and have completed training approved by the local authority.

Table 10: ECEC services for children 0 to 5 years, registration and funding approval, UK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of care</th>
<th>ECEC registration or regulation</th>
<th>Eligible to receive Early Education Entitlement</th>
<th>Eligible for Working Tax Credit and childcare vouchers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nurseries and children’s centres</td>
<td>England: Ofsted Early Years Register</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scotland: National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschools and playgroups</td>
<td>England: Ofsted Early Years Register</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childminders</td>
<td>England: Ofsted Early Years Register</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scotland: National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nannies, in-home care/home childcare</td>
<td>England: Voluntary Childcare Register</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scotland: National Care Standards: Childcare Agencies</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Adamson (2016).

5.4.1 Subsidies for services – Early Education Entitlement

Since 2004, children aged three and four years have been entitled to 15 hours of free quality early childhood education and care through a registered early years’ service – day nurseries (long day care), children’s centres, nurseries on school sites, and some preschools and playgroups. Two year olds are also eligible for the early years’ entitlement if parents claim income support payments, the child is looked after by the local authority, or has additional learning needs (PACEY, 2016a).

In 2017, the Early Education Entitlement will be extended so that children with both parents working will be eligible to access 30 hours of free ECEC per week. The additional 15 hours (known as the ‘30 hours offer’) will be available from September 2017 for children in families where (Department for Education, 2016c:16):

- Both parents are working 16 hours or more per week
- The family’s weekly minimum income is equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage or living wage
- Neither parent has an income of more than £100,000 per year.

There has been sector concern about this initiative because the services delivering the entitlement are already underfunded, requiring many services to cross-subsidise the ‘free’ entitlement to children.

As a result of these concerns and the 2015 Review into the Cost of Childcare, the
government announced an increase in annual expenditure on childcare from £5 billion in 2015-16 to over £6 billion in 2019-20. This includes a £300 million increase in the average hourly rate childcare providers receive for three to four year olds and for two year olds (4Children, 2016a:34). The increases to the hourly funding are:

- £4.56 to £4.88 for three and four year olds
- £5.09 to £5.39 for two year olds

Hourly rates are paid directly to services on a per child basis, for children who are eligible for the Early Education Entitlement. The new formula will be made up of three factors:

- A universal base rate for funding for each child (listed above)
- An additional needs factor
- An area cost adjustment reflecting different costs of providing childcare in different areas of the country.

The new system is expected to be brought in from April 2017 for the 15-hour entitlement for three and four year olds.

In addition, the Early Years Pupil Premium is worth £50 million in 2015 and 2016 and given to early years’ providers who are delivering and funding the entitlement for three and four year olds. The funding equates to up to £300 extra per year for each disadvantaged child who meets the eligibility criteria.

PACEY made a submission to the Review into the Cost of Childcare that lays out some of the concerns for the childminder sector. PACEY’s submission notes that childminders are unable to cross-subsidise costs, as is often done in larger settings. This means that many childminders felt that it was not sustainable to take more than one ‘funded’ child (PACEY, 2015). Another concern raised by PACEY is the fact that there has been a ban introduced so that childminders cannot care for their own or related children, similar to regulations in Australia. According to PACEY, both these issues impose a significant barrier to engaging more childminders in the delivery of the Early Education Entitlement.

Another issue raised by PACEY relates to the operation of childminders as small businesses. PACEY suggested that there needs to be improvement in the payment and administration system, particularly because the local authority payments are too infrequent for small businesses. PACEY also encouraged local authorities to ensure that payment systems permit sharing between two providers, as many children use their entitlement across more than one provider (PACEY, 2015:9).

The new funding formula is designed to reduce the current disparities in ECEC funding between local authorities. At present, the UK Government funds local authorities to provide ECEC services. Local authorities then determine what proportion of that funding is given to service providers. Local authorities can also elect to provide extra financial support in addition to central government funding.

Under the new funding model, the amount of funding that local authorities must pass on to providers will be 93 per cent in 2017-18 and 95 per cent after that. In addition, the types of supplements local authorities can offer will be limited to: deprivation, rural areas, flexibility and key policy objectives, such as assisting services offering the 30 hours. The inclusion of ‘flexibility’ in this list is particularly relevant to childminders. Under this proposal, they state
that ‘a flexibility supplement could help local authorities to support growth in the childminder segment of their local childcare market’ (Department for Education, 2016a:41). The role of childminders in policy for flexible ECEC is discussed next.

5.4.2 Funding flexible ECEC

The Department for Education has allocated £4 million to support an additional 25 local authorities to develop innovative flexible childcare for working parents and to make sure that the needs of children with special educational needs, in homeless working families, and in rural communities are met.

This includes local authorities encouraging providers to offer flexible packages of the Early Education Entitlement. In particular, the Department is encouraging flexible provision by mandating that:

- There is no requirement that funded places must be taken or delivered on particular days of the week or at particular times of the day
- As a minimum, parents should be able to access their children’s funded place across three days (five hours/day) or five days (three hours/day)
- Where possible, to allow children’s entitlements to be ‘stretched out’ over more weeks of the year – up to under 11 hours/week over 52 weeks/year (Department for Education, 2016b:13).

Currently, only 13 per cent of the 45,041 childminders registered on the Early Years Register offer the existing entitlement, meaning that there is considerable scope to increase the number of childminders offering funded hours (Department for Education, 2016c:23). Two-year-old children are more likely (3%), compared with three and four year olds (1%) to be accessing the entitlement through a childminder (Department for Education, 2015:16, 39).

Proposed changes to the funding model and Department for Education aims for improved flexibility have put childminders at the centre of flexibility initiatives (Department for Education, 2016c:23-24). In much of the Department’s documentation, childminders and their agencies are promoted as important partners in improving the flexibility of service delivery. Similarly, in Australia, home-based services are seen as providing important flexibility for families but, in Australia, additional emphasis has been placed on nanny services (see, for example, Productivity Commission, 2014)

5.4.3 Subsidies for families: vouchers and tax credits

Across the UK, there are two individualised funding mechanisms that families may be eligible for: the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit, and employer sponsored Childcare Vouchers. Both are in the process of being restructured. Working Tax Credits are being phased out as the Universal Credit is rolled out. Both parents in the family (or sole parent) must be working 16 hours/week or more to be eligible for the Working Tax Credit or childcare vouchers.

The childcare element of the Working Tax Credit provides up to 70 per cent of costs up to £122 per week for families with income up to £6,500. The maximum benefit per year is approximately £6,300 per year per child; however, the maximum rate does not double for two children. Families with income up to £35,000 can receive a lower rate (Gov.UK, 2016).
As mentioned earlier, the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit is being replaced by the Universal Credit (which commenced rollout in April 2016). Under the Universal Credit, low income families will have up to 85 per cent of their costs covered (an increase from the 70 per cent under the Working Tax Credits).

Childcare Vouchers were introduced in the late 1990s as a way to assist working parents with the costs of childcare. They have been facilitated through employers who register with voucher schemes, meaning that in order to access childcare vouchers, the parents’ employer must be registered with a voucher scheme. Families eligible for employer childcare vouchers can receive up to £2,860 per year, or about £55/week back in childcare costs (HM Revenue & Customs, 2015).

From 2017, the childcare voucher scheme will be replaced by Tax Free Childcare, which will extend eligibility to all working families, rather than be determined by employers. Tax Free Childcare will cover 20 per cent of costs, up to £2000/year (Treasury, n.d.). This means that families would have to spend £10,000 to reach the maximum benefit amount. Like the Child Care Rebate in Australia, Tax Free Childcare has been criticised for favouring families with the highest spending on childcare, who also tend to be the highest earning families.

### 5.5 Summary

UK childminding has undergone a transformation in recent years through the introduction of childminder agencies. Coupled with a focus on childminding as a source of flexible ECEC, this has led to significant innovation in the sector. Some of the models trialled during this time are described in Section 6. In developing a research agenda for family day care in Australia, it is of note that there has been considerable research and evaluations of these innovative models in England.

Of particular interest for Australia are the debates in England around the adequacy of the Early Education Entitlement. In NZ, where early education is also provided at no cost to families, the funding level appears to be sufficient due to regular monitoring of the cost of delivering the service. In the UK, childminders in particular struggle to afford to implement the Early Education Entitlement.

Another difference between UK and Australian regulations is the possibility for childminders to be rated by Ofsted as individuals or as part of an agency. As in NZ, in England there have been concerns about childminders delivering the early years’ curriculum when they are not required to hold any ECEC teacher qualifications. Similar to Australia, however, most English childminders are already qualified to a Level 3 standard.

The administration of ECEC in England is considerably different to both Australia and NZ in the significant role played by local government. In England, local authorities are legislatively required to ensure that all children have a place in an ECEC service. They play an important role in tailoring a range of ECEC services to local needs and provide a point of integration for childminding with other services, and, as will be seen in the following section, provide an avenue for innovation in childminding.
6 Innovative models of family day care

In NZ and the UK, there are innovative models for operating family day care that are of relevance and interest for Australia. These models have developed in different regulatory and funding environments to Australia, which have encouraged the development of different models of family day care. However, as Australia rethinks the role of home-based ECEC in providing flexible ECEC (through the trial of nanny services, for example) and considers introducing new quality measures for family day care, it is timely to consider what other models might also work well here. In this section, we present brief descriptions of the innovative models that we have uncovered through the course of this project. They provide ideas for integrated and flexible services that could benefit both families and family day care educators. Where available, we have included a webpage for the services.

In NZ, as noted in Section 4.2, nanny services are governed by the same set of regulations as home-based ECE, so it is common for a service to provide coordination unit support, both in educators’ homes and in children’s homes. In the UK, as part of introducing childminder agencies, a trial was conducted to test collaborations between various ECEC providers and explore new ways of structuring childminding. Findings from the trial suggested that new possibilities might include partnerships between local authorities and businesses, or between a school, a local authority and private training organisation; social enterprise models; and alternative options for employing childminders (i.e. self-employed or directly employed) (Yates et al., 2014). Many of the models detailed below were documented in the UK trials.

6.1 Specialist family day care for children with disabilities

Rata Home-based ECE\(^9\) is a privately owned service that provides nanny care and education to around 100 children. It was involved in a NZ study of learning and assessment practice (Mitchell, et al., 2015). This service specialises in ECEC for children with disabilities. Educators work in the child’s home and are supported by the service. Educators are trained in the care and education of children with disability medical needs. The service had developed materials to help educators interpret and apply the early years’ curriculum. Educators and families communicated daily, and kept a daily journal to record daily happenings. The home-based ECE service was part of a hub that included two primary schools, a kindergarten and three Pasifika education and care centres.

6.2 Multicultural and Indigenous family day care

All NZ ECEC services, including home-based ECE, must offer bi-cultural services and work in partnership with Māori. There are also services that offer immersion in language and culture in addition to Māori, such as Pasifika. However, in 2009, the Education Review Office

\(^{9}\) A pseudonym used in research reporting.
found that most home-based ECE services do not successfully offer bi-cultural programs or reflect the many cultures of NZ.

An evaluation of an initiative to increase participation of target groups, the Ministry of Education Participation Program, found that the elements of successful home-based ECE for Māori and Pasifika children were (Mitchell, et al., 2016):

- Building trust through quality relationships
- Engaging with the wider community – playgroups, a drop-in centre, attending community events (such as church services)
- Coordinators making regular contact with families by phone and in person
- Flexible start and finish times were appreciated by families, especially when they worked irregular hours
- Some services offered transport from home to the ECE setting on an ongoing or temporary basis (for example, after the birth of a younger sibling)
- Services with existing strong community relationships were more successful at engaging Māori and Pasifika children and their families.
- Supporting families through connections to other ‘wrap-around’ services.
- Employing coordinators and educators who spoke community languages and taught children language and culture.

Hutt Family Day Care has been highlighted as an example of good practice. Hutt Family Day Care is a small, privately owned service that is owned and managed by two teachers. The Education Review Office (2010) commended the service for: building strong and respectful relationships with all families, which includes listening to families' aspirations for their child; involving all practitioners in training in Māori language and culture; providing cultural resources to educators; a commitment to improvement; and acknowledging their limitations in not providing any Māori educators at the time.


### 6.3 Integrated services

Inspired Kindergartens (formerly Tauranga Region Kindergartens) is a not-for-profit service that combines family day care with a kindergarten and foster care support. ECEC-trained teachers visit foster carers every month to provide support with children's educational and developmental needs, just as they do for family day care educators. For foster carers and family day care educators, the service also provides art resources, playgroups and access to a toy library and nursery equipment, such as high chairs and prams. Families can ask for a family day care educator to deliver and collect their children from kindergarten. [http://www.taurangakindergarten.org/](http://www.taurangakindergarten.org/)

Another innovative example is [@HomeChildcare](http://www.taurangakindergarten.org/), which established a childminder agency as a way to expand and diversify its commitment to flexible home childcare in Nottingham.
and Sheffield. The organisation was established in 2007 to offer flexible childcare to parents, mostly single parents and shift workers. The establishment of a childminder agency means @HomeChildcare can provide a mix of standard and non-standard care for families wishing to use childminding and care in their own home. The model allows for families to use a childminder for regular hours and a home childcarer for wrap-around care and non-standard hours, including evenings and weekends. The agency has plans to recruit parents through local schools so that childminders would be linked to a particular school, developing a network of parent childminders, which is detailed further in Support for Family Day Carers below.

City Childcare Childminder agency was established by a nursery. It offers families a mix of services, such as two days per week with a childminder and three days per week at the affiliated nursery. It can also allow children to attend the nursery for standard hours of care for younger children, which could be combined with a childminder for older children who need before- and after-school care. Part of the reason behind the establishment of the childminder agency was the expansion of the Early Education Entitlement from 15 to 30 hours. The nursery and agency directors believe that families eligible for 30 hours can receive the best of both worlds by having their child attend the nursery for 15 hours, and a childminder for the additional 15 hours. There are also benefits to childminders under this model, as they will have access to training, mentorship and support through the agency and nursery (which is detailed further in ‘Support for educators’ below).

Blackpool Council assists families to access flexible patterns of provision by matching them with both local nurseries and childminders in the local area. The council runs its own nurseries, but does not own a childminder agency. Rather it helps families patch together a mix of services. The Council’s role in providing training and professional development for childminders facilitates this coordination between service providers (Department for Education, 2016c:22).

6.4 Before- and after-school care

In addition to providing flexible and mixed models of nursery and childminding for families with young children, some organisations are focusing on the potential for childminders to offer flexible before-and after-school care for school-aged children, and children accessing the Early Education Entitlement through academies and preschools.

Two examples are St Bede's and Northumberland Church of England Academy. Both of these schools have a history of delivering childcare through nurseries attached to their school, and saw the introduction of childminding agencies as an opportunity to expand options for children and families already at the school and nurseries.

St Bede’s is a primary school and was the first school in the country to launch a childminder agency as part of an ongoing commitment to wrap-around childcare (Foundation Years, 2016). They are experimenting with a model for extended day care, where a child may use a childminder from early in the morning (7am), who then takes the child to the nursery or school at 9am. The child could then go to the after-school club in the afternoon and/or use a childminder for increased flexibility in the evening.

Northumberland Church of England Academy has children from age 2 to 19 years. The
academy offers the Early Education Entitlement to two, three and four year olds, and saw the introduction of childminding agencies as an opportunity to provide more flexible options for younger children and for children before and after school. Children eligible for the 30 hours of Early Education Entitlement can access 15 hours at the Academy and 15 hours with a childminder. As will be discussed later in this section, Northumberland also has a strong focus on providing the necessary training and support to childminders who join the agency.

### 6.5 Short-term and emergency FDC

The **Community Childminding** model in Scotland (by the Scottish Childminding Association) offers one example of childminding targeted toward vulnerable children and families, who require short-term or respite care due to complex family circumstances and events. The Scottish Childminding Association partners with local authorities to provide short-term placements to families in need. Training and support for local childminders providing this service are central to the delivery model. The care is generally only for eight hours per week, and up to about 26 weeks per year. Children and families are usually referred by social workers or through health workers. A small research project examined how the community childminding program was working, and found very positive outcomes for children and parents (SCMA, n.d.).

### 6.6 Support for family day care educators

The growth of childminder agencies in the UK has involved developing innovative models for the support, training and monitoring of childminders. As new agencies are established, they must consider how their organisation will address the needs of childminders who join their agency. Some agencies are developing different ways of recruiting and providing support for childminders, as well as linking them to other early years’ services. While most of these relate to childminders that are part of the agencies, there are also initiatives to support childminders who are registered directly with Ofsted. Australian family day care services already offer support for educators and many offer packages of training and additional services. Many of these are similar to those offered in the following accounts, but there are some new ideas that might be of interest in Australia.

**Leap Ahead** is one example of an agency that is developing innovative packages of support for childminders who join their agency, and is also providing support for childminders registered directly with Ofsted on behalf of the local councils of Richmond and Kingston. Leap Ahead offers two different packages: a full-membership package for childminders registered with the agencies, and a Pay-As-You-Go package for all childminders. The full membership offer costs £300 per year and includes:

- An annual quality assessment audit and report that can be shared with parents.
- Additional support visits offered throughout the year to provide advice and recommendations for best practice.
- Sample paperwork and toolkit.
- Up to 16 hours of training, networking and workshops for professional development.
• Access to support on offering additional services to families, such as funded Early Education Entitlement spaces
• Access to support to offer quality inclusive care for children with disabilities
• It also allows childminders to have their own profile on the agency’s website to promote their service to parents looking for childcare.

The Pay-As-You-Go package costs childminders £50 for a support visit, and additional workshops are £25 each. This package is targeted toward independently Ofsted-registered childminders, but who would still like some additional support and professional development opportunities. Family day care services in Australia could consider opening their professional development to educators registered with other services under a similar model.

As mentioned in the previous section, City Childcare Childminder agency was opened by an established nursery. This model offers childminders additional resources, training and mentoring and access to the nursery’s infrastructure and resources, including the expertise of nursery staff, administration and IT systems (Foundation Years, 2016). As one of the directors said: ‘We will be different from some of the other agencies – our unique selling point is the fact we have the nursery backing. Childminders are able to attend the nursery with their children because we have a childminder drop-in zone’.

@HomeChildcare, mentioned earlier in relation to their blended model of home-based childcare, has also introduced innovative practices to recruit and support new childminders. As summarised by the founder and CEO:

We are not a nanny agency; we are different. As we are the end employer for our home childcarers, we ensure we have quality improvement and monitoring procedures in place for our workforce. We also provide continuous professional development opportunities for our home childcarers in the form of short courses and networking events.

The agency is currently focusing on recruiting new childminders, as opposed to those already registered through Ofsted, and is targeting parents from local schools to train as childminders. These childminders would then be linked to a particular school and the school would have a network that parents can draw on. With the focus on recruiting new childminders, the agency is committed to training, mentoring and providing professional support to the childminders that join their agency. In particular, each childminder is matched with a personal mentor who they can call on to improve the quality of their work. The agency recognises the cost of starting up as a childminder and is also offering business grants of £500 for childminders who have completed the training and registration process (Foundation Years, 2016).

Northumberland Church of England Academy Childminder Agency is based in a school and will provide accredited Level 3 training to the childminders they recruit to their agency. Northumberland will offer a package of support to its own childminders, as well as to other childminder agencies across the country. The Northumberland College will fund the course for childminders who join the agency with the expectation that they will pay back the costs once they are childminding and earning an income.

In the UK, up to three childminders can work together in one home. The research team did not find any models of childminding taking advantage of this new regulation, but
collaboration between childminders might offer advantages to workers who are otherwise potentially quite isolated from day to day. Similarly, in Australia, there might be opportunities for collaboration between childminders.

6.7 Summary

The regulatory framework and different policy trajectories in NZ and the UK have fostered models of family day care that might provide new possibilities for Australia. However, at present there is no data on the kinds of innovations currently practised in Australia, so it is difficult to assess whether or not any of these services models, or any others, are already in place. Nonetheless, the case studies listed above suggest possibilities regarding:

- The specialist family day care services for children with disabilities or particular cultural services for Indigenous children or children from culturally diverse backgrounds
- New models of integrated and flexible family day care with foster care support, nanny services, schools and out of school hours’ services, as well as centre-based ECEC
- Short-term and emergency care provided by family day care educators
- Coordination unit support services for educators that extend beyond an individual service.
7 A research agenda for the sector

In this section, themes, debates, examples and innovations from NZ and the UK are brought together into a discussion of possible topics of research for family day care in Australia. Four themes are presented in this section:

1. Documenting and evaluating innovative models of FDC
2. Developing high quality national datasets
3. Holistic assessment of the effectiveness of the current regulatory framework
4. International comparative research

In each section, we present research questions that remain unanswered in Australian, and often international, family day care. Research in any of these areas would significantly boost understanding of how to support high quality home-based education and care.

7.1 Theme One: Documenting and evaluating innovative models of FDC

There are many excellent models of innovative family day care provision in the UK and NZ. As the UK trials of childminder agencies evolve, many innovative models are being tested for the structure, administration and support these agencies provide and how they work with other organisations. Some of these models are applicable in the Australian context. Similarly, in NZ, operating in a different regulatory environment, different models of family day care have emerged, most notably, the integration of nanny and family day care into the one agency. In Australia, there is limited information available about the kinds of integrated and innovative practices that are currently in place. While the models collected in Section 6 of this report will be of interest to Australian family day care services, we know little of what models have already developed in the Australian context, with the exception that the In-home Care program often operates from family day care services and that there are services that focus on children with disabilities10.

In this review, we could find no information about family day care in rural and remote areas in NZ and are not aware of any research on the topic in Australia. Yet family day care could be an important provider of early childhood services in areas where population density is too low to allow for centre-based services.

In NZ, although all ECEC services are required to provide bi-cultural materials, evidence suggests that those that adequately meet the needs of Māori children and their families are rare. Nonetheless, NZ research on Māori and Pasifika children in ECEC (Mitchell, et al., 2016) provides a useful starting point for the elements of good practice. In Australia, we know little about Indigenous children or educators in family day care. There might be specialist

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10 See, for example, Autism Family First, http://www.autismfamilyfirst.com.au/
Indigenous services, or services that are especially welcoming and culturally relevant to Indigenous children, or services that model good coordination unit support for Indigenous educators. The findings of research with these services would be a valuable resource for the rest of the sector. Similarly, while there is anecdotal evidence that many providers of family day care in Australia are from non-English-speaking backgrounds, we know little about these educators and the services they work with.

Research questions:

- What innovative models of integrated family day care are already in use in Australia (for example, integration with nannies, in-home care or foster care support)?
- Are there models of collaboration between several home-based educators?
- What flexible models of provision are provided by home-based ECEC services in Australia (for example, collaboration with centre-based ECEC or schools, In-home Care, emergency family day care)?
- Do the services provided by remote home-based educators differ from those offered by their urban counterparts?
- What kind of support works best for remote educators?
- What does good quality family day care look like in rural and remote areas?
- Are there specialist multicultural family day care services for migrant or Indigenous children?
- How can Indigenous knowledge be respected and supported through family day care?
- How can coordination units support multi-cultural ECEC?
- How can coordination units best support Indigenous educators and children?
- How can coordination units best support educators and children from culturally diverse backgrounds?

7.2 Theme Two: Developing high quality national datasets

NZ has high quality data about all forms of ECEC publicly available through the Ministry of Education (http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/early-childhood-education). This data is drawn from an annual census of ECEC services. As well as participation of children in ECEC, the data includes the number of different types of services, waiting times, average number of enrolments per educator, average ratio of coordinators to educators, number of community managed or privately operated services etc. In Australia, it seems especially difficult to find detailed information about family day care educators, as compared to services. One exception is the recent publication of the Family Day Care Sector Profile (FDCA, 2017). Australia is currently considering the most appropriate format for a national education dataset, including ECEC data (Productivity Commission, 2016). But new systems will take time to develop and at present it is very difficult to access good quality data about Australian family day care. In the meantime, better use could be made of national datasets, such as the Child Care Management System, if de-identified data were made more
accessible like, for example, the Australian Early Development Index data explorer\(^{11}\). As the sector grows and develops, the establishment of baseline data would provide a valuable benchmark from which to measure achievements.

Research questions:

- What do existing data sources tell us about the ways the family day care sector in Australia is changing over time?
- What are current data gaps and limitations in family day care data and how can these be filled?

### 7.3 Theme Three: Developing regulations to support high quality provision

In Australia, NZ and the UK, family day care is well regulated. Family day care is part of national ECEC regulations and quality standards and is monitored alongside other forms of ECEC. There are many similarities between the three countries. In Australia, England and NZ, family day care educators must implement an early years’ curriculum. In each country, there are some regulations that are more stringent than they are in the other jurisdictions. For example, in Australia, family day care educators must hold a Certificate III early childhood teaching qualification. In NZ and England, by contrast, family day care educators are not required to hold any ECEC qualifications at all. In England, the educator to child ratio is 1:3 for two to five year olds. In NZ and Australia, the ratio is 1:4 for children under school age. In NZ, regulations stipulate that coordinators must visit each educator and observe each child every month, and must make contact with educators at least every fortnight. In Australia and the UK, regulations require a minimum of annual inspections to the educator’s home. In Australia, this is supplemented with regular visits by a coordinator, but the frequency is not specified.

Despite the detailed regulations in NZ, concern has been raised about the quality of family day care. Particular attention has been paid to the lack of qualifications among educators and the significant proportion of services that have had regulatory compliance issues. In the UK, similar concerns were raised about childminders delivering the Early Education Entitlement when they are not required to hold ECEC qualifications. Despite these concerns, the majority of UK family day care educators, as in Australia, hold Level 3 qualifications and are highly experienced (Department for Education, 2015; Fauth et al., 2011; Williamson, 2011).

Home-based educator networks and agencies are another important source of professional development and support. While the structure of family day care in NZ is similar to Australia, in which educators are organised into a network that provides support, monitoring and guidance from a coordination unit, in the UK, childminding agencies are newly developed. In this process of development, multiple models have been trialled to support the home-based ECEC workforce. In particular, some UK childminding agencies are providing loans and incentives for educators to take up ECEC training and offering start up grants for new educators.

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In Australia, quality in family day care has also been a matter of debate. As this summary has shown, in many areas, Australian family day care regulations are already high quality, even compared to other jurisdictions where family day care is highly regulated. But there are areas in which best practice benchmarks could be developed to better advise family day care services on the kinds of structures and procedures that deliver quality for children and families. These could include aspects of family day care not currently covered by Australian regulations, such as the number of times that coordinators should visit educators, the nature of coordinator visits to educators, and the ratio of coordinators to children. The guidelines could possibly include two levels, like the two categories used in NZ for funding – standard services and high quality services. Previous research shows that quality in family day care develops from high expectations and good practices (Blaxland et al., 2016). Through detailed analysis of regulatory models, it would be possible to set a benchmark for best practice and help services to achieve quality that exceeds the requirements of current regulations.

Research questions:

- How do different models of family day care network support contribute to high quality provision?
- What additional guidelines, support or training might support all family day care to meet or exceed the National Quality Standards?
- What would constitute international best practice for family day care guidelines and regulations?

7.4 Theme Four: International comparative research

One of the tasks of this review was to find evidence for the implications of different models of home-based childcare for access, affordability and quality of home-based childcare. Unfortunately, there is insufficient comparative research evidence to determine what models of home-based ECEC best support children’s access to ECEC, and ensure affordability and quality. Research in each country demonstrates features of quality home-based ECEC, but it is not possible to determine which regulatory models provide the best quality. Similarly, research points to measures that might help particular groups of children access ECEC, such as Māori children in NZ, but cannot at present determine which regulatory environment is best for vulnerable children. International comparative empirical research with countries like the UK, NZ and Australia, in which the policy frameworks are comparable, but slightly different, could fill an important knowledge gap. Such research could draw on existing datasets to compare quality and outcomes for children.

Research questions comparing Australia, UK and NZ:

- How accessible and affordable is home-based ECEC?
- What measures improve the accessibility and affordability of home-based ECEC?
- What are the early learning outcomes for children in home-based ECEC compared to other ECEC settings?
- What policies and support mechanisms are associated with high quality home-based ECEC?
8 Conclusion

New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Australia all have a strong interest in family day care as an important part of the formal ECEC sector. In all countries, family day care is regarded as an important source of care and education for many families, particularly for young children and families who need flexible ECEC. In all three jurisdictions, family day care is regulated and funded as part of the formal ECEC sector and educators implement national curricula.

This report has reviewed family day care regulations, quality assurance and funding in NZ and the UK, mainly focusing on England with some evidence from Scotland. Describing international practice and research has highlighted important differences and issues for reflection for Australia.

In Australia, the Productivity Commission (2014) report on Childcare and Early Childhood Learning led to considerable reflection on the nature of home-based ECEC services and their role in providing flexible childcare and education. As Australia considers how best to support families with flexible home-based services that also provide high quality education and care for children, it is timely to look to other countries for inspiration.

Of particular note is that in NZ regulations for family day care are identical to the regulations for nannies. As a result, it is commonplace for family day care services to provide support and monitor quality for nannies as well as family day care educators. In the UK, family day care has undergone a massive transformation in recent years, with the introduction of agencies that bring educators together into networks like those that operate in Australia. To encourage educators to join agencies, the UK has trialled many innovative models of delivering family day care and supporting educators. Innovations include:

- Providing specialist services to particular groups of children
- Integration with other childhood services, including foster care and schools
- Using family day care as an emergency care service and models for supporting family day care educators in their training and professional development.

Funding ECEC has been a topic of much debate in the UK, where it is argued that subsidies do not meet the cost of service provision. In NZ, by contrast, subsidies are informed by routine data collection about the cost of ECEC in all service types.

In NZ, England and Australia, independent bodies monitor quality in all ECEC, including family day care. All apply a rating to services that indicates if they meet, exceed or need support to meet quality standards. In the UK, individual educators are also rated.

Regulations are similar in the three countries. Notable differences regarding family day care are that Australia requires qualifications for home-based educators, whereas England and NZ do not. In NZ, regulations stipulate a ratio for the number of teacher-qualified staff to the number of educators they support. NZ also requires family day care services to
visit educators monthly. Neither Australian nor English regulations currently provide these specifications, although coordinator to educator ratios have been proposed in Australia (Education Council, 2017).

In considering future research on family day care in Australia, this report has recommended:

1. Documenting and evaluating innovative models of FDC
2. Developing high quality national datasets
3. Holistic assessment of the effectiveness of the current regulatory framework
4. International comparative research

Research could consider unique aspects of the home-based ECEC sector in Australia, in particular rural and remote family day care; services specialising in ECEC for Indigenous children; services providing bi- or multi-cultural ECEC; integration with other services, including nannies and the In-home Care program.

It is evident that additional research in this area is required in order to support high quality home-based ECEC. This report provides a starting point for such a research trajectory.
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