



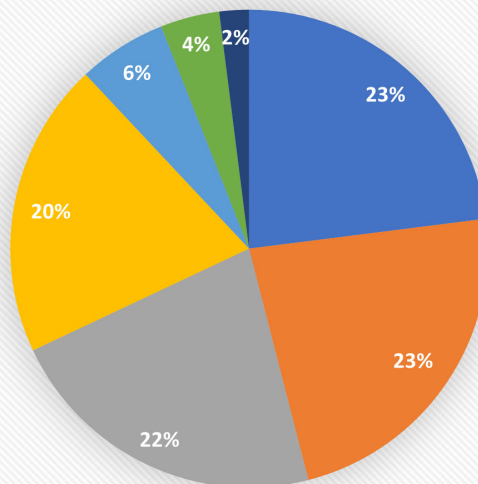
Early
Childhood
Ireland

Early Childhood Ireland Explainers

The Workforce

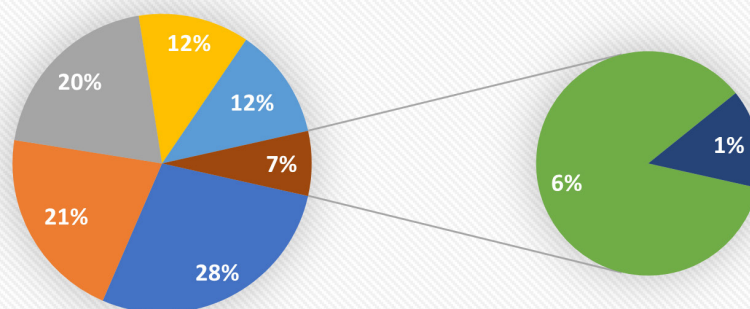
The following graphs give a breakdown of staff in the Early Years and School Age Care (EYSAC) sector. The data from this section is from the [Annual Early Years Sector Profile Report 2020/2021](#), published by Pobal.

Ancillary Staff



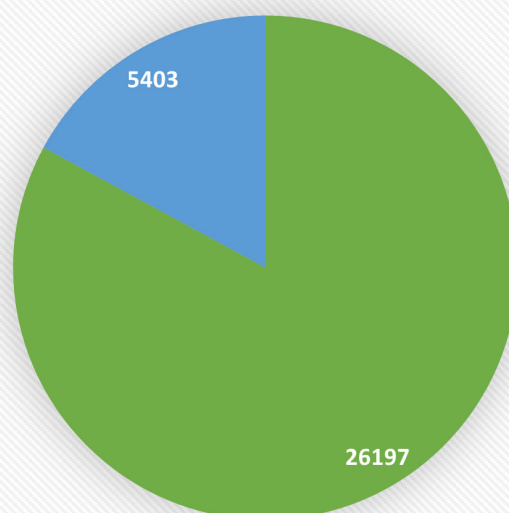
■ Catering
■ Admin/Clerical
■ Transport
■ Centre Manager
■ Deputy Manager
■ Maintenance
■ Student Placement/volunteer

Staff working directly with children by job title



■ Early Years Assistant (ECCE)
■ Room Leader (non-ECCE)
■ Student Placement/Volunteer
■ Early Years Assistant (non-ECCE)
■ Centre Manager
■ Room Leader (ECCE)
■ Deputy Manager

Total Number of staff in ELC and SAC Services 2020/2021



■ Staff working directly with children ■ Ancillary staff

95% of staff working with children hold, at least, a level 5 qualification. The proportion of staff with a level 6 qualification or higher is 70%. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations (2016) dictates that all staff working directly with children of preschool age and employed by services must hold a minimum of a level 5 qualification. Those who signed the Grandfather Declaration are exempt from this. This declaration states their intention to retire or resign before 1 September 2021. Due to the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, this was extended for Early Years educators who agreed to undertake a relevant qualification during the period of extension.

The average hourly wage of staff working directly with children, excluding managers, in 2020/21 was €12.60. Including managers, the average hourly wage was €13.20. In 2020/21, one out of two staff earned below the living wage rate. Centre managers earned the most, being paid, on average, €16.35 per hour. On average ECCE Room Leaders and Early Years Assistants were paid more per hour than their non-ECCE equivalents.

The annual rate of staff turnover was 19%. Leitrim had the highest turnover rate at 43% and Cavan had the lowest at 9%. 57% of services managed to retain all their staff. 22% of providers lost one staff member, 14% lost two or three and 7% lost more than three staff members.

29% of providers reported having at least one staff vacancy. Most vacant posts are for those with Level 6 qualifications and Level 5 qualifications with 34% each. 49% of services experienced difficulties in recruiting experienced staff.

Nurturing Skills

Nurturing Skills: The Workforce Plan for Early Learning and Care and School-Age

Childcare (2022-2028) was published in December 2021 by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY). It sets out five pillars to continue the process of professionalisation of the Early Years and School Age Care workforce and SAC workforce.

1. Career Framework

The first pillar involves establishing a career framework for staff to clarify roles within the sector and make it easier for educators and practitioners to embark on a career in a sector by showing how they can progress their career.

2. Qualification Levels

The second pillar involves raising qualification levels within the sector by providing support to achieve the professional qualifications that will become requirements for the different roles over time.

3. National CPD System

This pillar involves developing and establishing a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) system for staff in the sector. This would be a key factor in ensuring EYSAC provision quality.

4. Recruitment, Retention and Diversity

The fourth pillar involves ensuring there is sufficient recruitment and retention of qualified staff. This is critical to securing enough qualified staff for roles in the sector. This pillar also involves increasing diversity in the sector, including ethnic diversity, gender balance and other forms of diversity.

5. Regulation

The final pillar involves moving towards more regulation of the EYSAC profession. The benefits of this include protecting the public, as regulations set certain standards that must be met, and giving confidence to employers.

