

# ECEC Regulatory Authority Sector Survey

## 2022 key findings

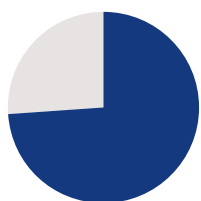
The ECEC Regulatory Authority Sector Survey was first launched in August 2022. The annual survey measures and benchmarks the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector's attitudes to their experience of regulation under the National Quality Framework. Insights shared by service providers and their workforce also identify opportunities for continuous improvement.

The NSW Department of Education is the Regulatory Authority for the ECEC sector in NSW. It administers the National Quality Framework in NSW and has an important oversight function to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all children attending ECEC services.

The survey is an extension of other feedback channels and methods, including advisory groups, phone and email correspondence, ECE Connect and other events. Responses were captured from a range of roles, service types and provider types. At the time of the survey, COVID-19 was one of the key interaction points.

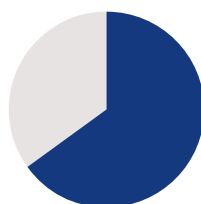
We acknowledge and appreciate the sector's participation in the 2022 survey. This document outlines the key findings provides information about how the NSW Regulatory Authority is responding.

### Highlights



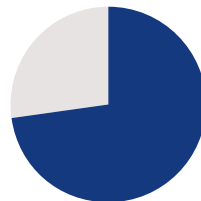
**74%**

of respondents agreed the regulator performs its regulatory functions to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children.



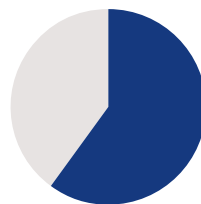
**65%**

agreed the regulator performs its regulatory functions to promote continuous improvement.



**73%**

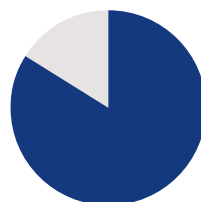
of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that regulatory officers acted professionally during compliance-related interactions.



On average,

**60%**

of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the NSW RA provides the sector with clear information.



**84%**

answered that *direct communication* was the most helpful communication method.

A majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that *most ways the NSW RA communicates with the sector are helpful*.



## About the respondents

Total of 893 survey respondents

# 85%

of respondents had interacted with the NSW RA in the previous 12 months.

The 3 main areas for these interactions were:

- 1 Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- 2 Notifications of incidents and complaints
- 3 Monitoring compliance and enforcement processes.

## Service type

Proportion of respondents by main type of ECEC service provided (n=877)

Service type	%
Long day care	58%
Preschool	23%
Outside school hours care	12%
Family day care	7%

## Main role

Proportion of respondents by main role (n=893)

Role	%
Leadership of a service (manager, director, coordinator, nominated supervisor)	55%
Approved Provider	39%
Early childhood teacher, educator or other staff member	6%

## Provider size

# 4%

operate 25 or more services (large providers)

# 33%

operate 2-24 services (medium providers)

# 63%

operate only one service (small providers)

## Approved Providers

Of those respondents who indicated that they are approved providers:

- 86% do not operate services in states and territories other than NSW
- 89% are private for-profit providers.

## Reflections and actions

As part of our commitment to improving how we communicate and engage with the sector, we have identified a number of priority initiatives which are currently underway or due to commence.

Key learnings from the survey will help to implement change in these following areas.



### Expertise and consistency

81% of responses indicated that they thought the NSW Regulatory Authority performed well in relation to *expertise of staff, quality of advice provided, resolution of queries, and timeliness of response to enquiries.*



75% of respondents indicated that the *regulatory officers acted fairly and without bias.*



We are acting on feedback from the sector through several priority initiatives. These initiatives focus on establishing a risk-based approach to delivering our regulatory functions, which ensures consistent and transparent decision making. This includes the establishment of a quality assurance function to undertake an internal audit regime.

The REAL Staff Training Program is also currently being implemented which ensures our regulatory officers are equipped with the latest skills and knowledge to be confident and capable regulatory practitioners. It will also help us ensure consistency in decision making.

### Engagement

58% of respondents indicated that the *NSW Regulatory Authority demonstrates an understanding of current issues and needs of the sector.*



62% of respondents indicated that the *NSW Regulatory Authority seeks the sector's perspective on key issues.*



We are increasingly meeting face-to-face with the sector through ECE Connect and other events. We also have regular engagement with large providers, the NSW Small Business Commissioner, peak bodies, and advisory groups.

### Sector processes

70% of respondents indicated that the *way processes were conducted was clearly communicated in advance.*



44% of respondents indicated that the *NSW Regulatory Authority considers the administrative burden any new initiatives may have on the sector.*



We are working to improve the sector's experience by reviewing and refining processes. This is highlighted through our consultation on key information and decision making for streamlined national provider approval processes and current work underway to trial and implement changes to assessment and rating. Improvements resulting from these activities will be measured through the next survey in 2024.

\*\*Key 1: ■ Don't know ■ Very poor ■ Poor ■ Neither poor nor good ■ Good ■ Very good

\*Key 2: ■ Don't know ■ Strongly disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly agree