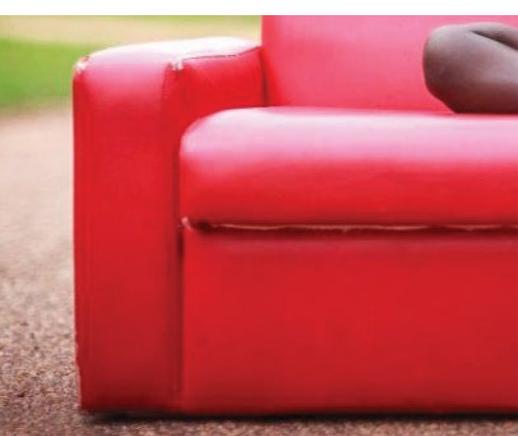




# Early Years Rewarding Careers

The Essential Guide



WARNING: This document may contain images and stories of deceased persons.

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# A note from the Chief Executive

Early childhood education and care is a growing, dynamic sector with opportunities to enter and expand careers in all kinds of stimulating and professionally rewarding ways. The *Early Years Rewarding Careers - The Essential Guide* provides a roadmap that will help navigate the career options available in early childhood education and care in the Northern Territory.

Whether a secondary or tertiary student, looking for work or already in the early childhood education and care workforce, this booklet is a go-to resource.

*Early Years Rewarding Careers - The Essential Guide* presents some inspiring Northern Territory early childhood professionals and shares their personal experiences. The booklet also contains information about courses, entry requirements and vocational education training pathways for early childhood education and care career qualifications.

*Early Years Rewarding Careers - The Essential Guide* is an initiative of the Department of Education which aims to showcase professional opportunities available in early childhood education and care. The department extends its gratitude to the Northern Territory Key Stakeholders Advisory Group for Early Childhood and School Aged Education and Care whose members contributed their expertise to the development of the Early Years Rewarding Careers initiative by conducting an in-depth early childhood education and care workforce analysis.



**Vicki Baylis**  
Chief Executive  
Department of Education  
Northern Territory



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# Early childhood making a difference



Children develop rapidly in their early years and their experiences between birth and age eight will have a major impact on their future life outcomes. Good parenting and high quality early learning gives children a broad range of knowledge, skills and understanding. Together, this combination provides a strong foundation for future outcomes through school and life.

Getting the right start in life is essential for children's later success. It shapes a child's ability to thrive at school, stay healthy and socially connected and contribute to society - socially and economically. From an economic perspective, there is substantial evidence to show that investing in early childhood and improving educational outcomes are vital drivers of economic growth, productivity and social progress.

Early childhood education and care services that are high quality: set high expectations for every child; engage children in experiences that encourage and extend their learning; have well-qualified, responsive educators; focus on the whole child; build collaborative relationships

with families; have effective leadership service management committed to continuous improvement; and are essential across the Northern Territory.

High-quality early childhood education and care services provide children with early skills and knowledge to build on for the rest of their lives.

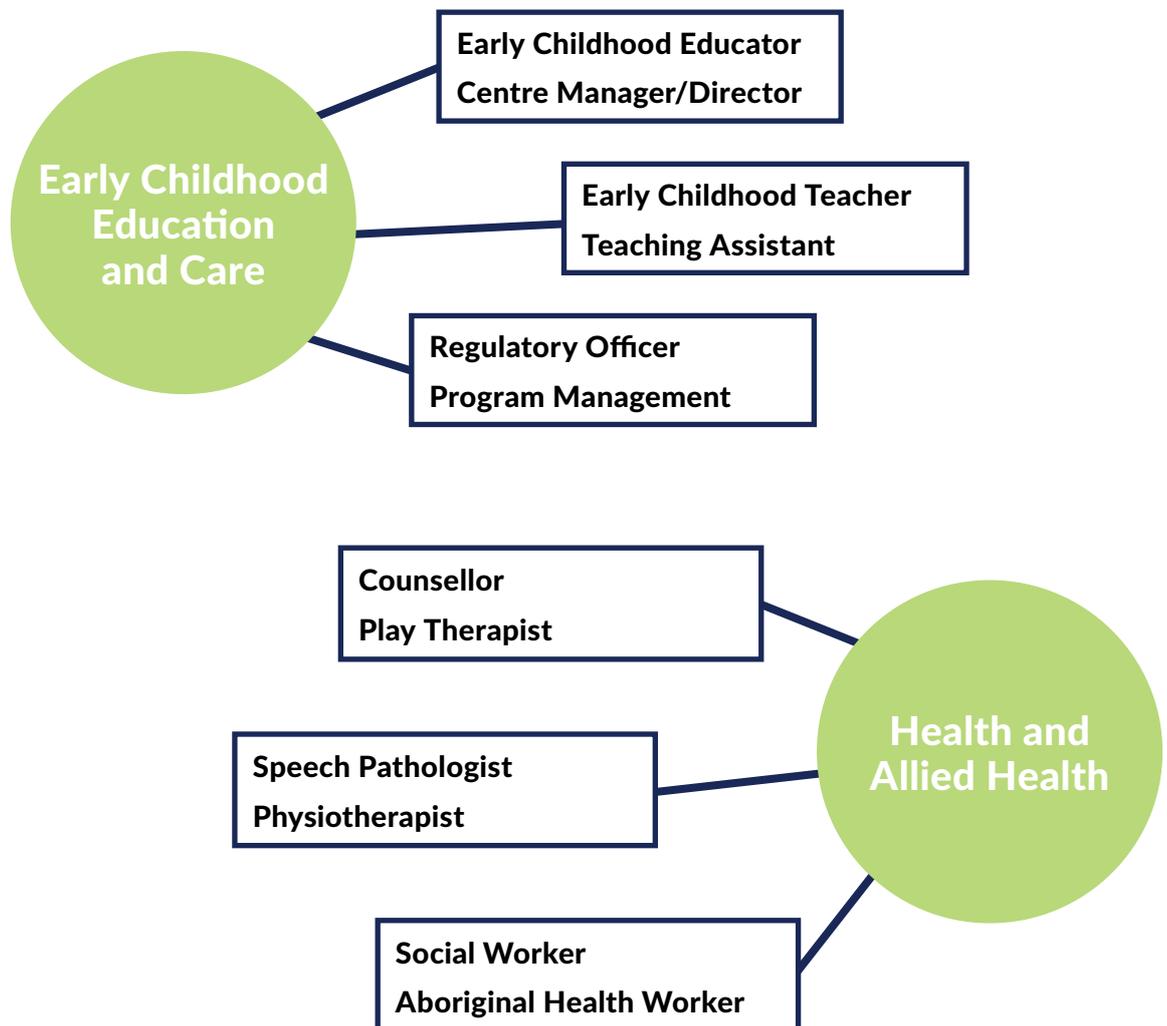
# Did you know?

## Early childhood education and care is one of Australia's FASTEST growing sectors for careers!

A career in early childhood education and care is very rewarding and job opportunities are in abundance. Early childhood professionals in fields like education and care, health and allied health are in significant demand in the Northern Territory. In fact, Commonwealth Government labour market forecasting shows that by 2020, jobs in early childhood education and care, social services and health care will grow by 18 per cent.

If you want to work with children, now is the time to start your career in early childhood education and care. The nationwide drive to support the highest standards in the sector means that demand for early childhood professionals such as educators, teachers and health and allied health practitioners is strong and growing both nationally and in the Northern Territory.

Right now, there is a wide variety of rewarding opportunities for early childhood professionals in education, health and management.





“the first eight years of children’s lives set the pathway for their future”

# Growing our own

In the Northern Territory, there is strong recognition of the importance of engaging with young people in positive and innovative ways. Our young people are highly valued for their life experiences, cultural diversity and the energy they bring to the workforce.

Across the Territory, young people enter the early childhood education and care sector upon completion of their senior studies or while undertaking tertiary education. Take the opportunity to meet some of our growing stars now...





**Meet our people**

# Meet our growing stars



**Kieran Joyce**  
Area Manager - Outside  
School Care NT

After my Year 12 completion and Certificate IV in Community Recreation, I started working with Outside School Care NT as an educator.

I have always had a passion for sport, particularly running clinics with children. This career has led me to do things such as interacting with children, facilitating sport clinics, day to day running of my own site at Outside School Care NT and now progressing on to be a manager.

Since being in the child care industry, I have learned a lot about how important the role of an educator is and how rewarding the career can be. This industry needs more male educators and I would love to be an advocate to have more males choosing this industry as a career path.

Being an educator has taught me to step up to any challenge; educators are required to adapt to their environment and the children in their care.

Throughout my career, I hope to train new educators to become as passionate about this industry as I am.



**Patrick Kingham**  
Early Childhood Educator -  
Scallywags Child Care Centre

I've been working in outside school hours care and long day care as an assistant educator for the past six years.

It has been, and continues to be, the most rewarding career choice I have made in my life.

I enjoy the challenges, opportunities and experience I have gained. The other staff have taught me so much and there is always so much more to learn.

I love following the children's interests and where they lead us every day. It's such a fascinating journey discovering the different things and how they work from the child's perspective - I love seeing a child's reaction as they achieve something new.

I have built many positive relationships with the children, families and other educators throughout my early childhood career which helps me feel a part of the community.

# Early Childhood Education and Care

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## **Emily Hoult**

**Families as First Teachers Family Liaison Officer - Mimik-ga**

Born and bred in Darwin, I'm a proud Larrakia and Anmatjere woman.

Working as a school administrative officer and then in the school homework centre since the age of 15, I have grown my career and discovered my passion for working with young children.

Today, I work in the Families as First Teachers program as a family liaison officer. I love my new job, especially hearing the 'pitter-patter' of feet that walk in through the door every day and the smiles and look of excitement on the children's faces, it is so rewarding to see.

An early childhood educator is being a part of a child's daily achievements and watching them grow. That's what I love most about my job, knowing that I've contributed to children's learning is truly an amazing feeling and I wouldn't trade it for the world.

Every day is a learning experience and the most rewarding part of working with children is watching them grow and helping them learn.



## **Sarah Carmody**

**Indigenous Coordinator - Larapinta Child and Family Centre**

At 17, I began an Indigenous traineeship in administration and from there I have had multiple training and development opportunities in the public sector.

I have completed a number of certificate and diploma level qualifications and have experience within community services and in early childhood education. I have run playgroups, parent engagement and family support programs and worked in childcare.

These experiences and also being a mother of two young children have all led me to my role at a child and family centre.

I am lucky to have the opportunity to build relationships and work in a holistic way with families with young children.

As an Indigenous mother, having the opportunities to engage and empower other Indigenous families and build on their strengths is truly inspiring and magical.

# Meet our people

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**Holly Telford**  
Families as First Teachers Family  
Educator - Lajamanu

I have discovered my passion for working alongside families and their young children through my current role as a family educator. I hold a Bachelor of Education degree and have been teaching for four years in remote schools.

Building positive relationships with parents is a rewarding experience when working in early childhood. It is also an important aspect which enables me to deliver innovative programs inclusive of traditional cultural practices by building two way relationships for teaching and learning. I embrace the opportunity to bring both worlds together.

I feel honoured to work with families and to support them in their role as their child's first teacher.



**Gordon Canning**  
Preschool Teacher  
- Gunbalanya

Working in preschool is an incredible responsibility and privilege bestowed upon us by families and our employer.

Endless research has shown us how massive and important the impact we, as early childhood teachers and educators, can have on our learners' future school careers and beyond.

Being given the opportunity to make such an incredible difference so early in a child's life and the trust from families to keep their most precious possession safe is humbling.

There are few jobs that allow and demand that an employee combine such critical development with the need for joy and happiness. We are, quite literally, employed to play with children.

My greatest measure of impact and the greatest reward that I can receive is seeing happy children engaging, learning and being in my care.

# Early Childhood Education and Care



## **Alison Wunungmurra**

Families as First Teachers  
Family Educator - Gapuwiyak

Early childhood education and care is a sacred place, where children are painted and prepared for the tasks and challenges ahead. In this space, the foundations are laid for all our children. Here, they are learning, developing, expressing and exploring appropriate behaviors through everyday interactions.

I believe early childhood education and care is extremely important so I am working in my own community and building strong relationships with my families. Our children need nurturing, so they can build resilience and grow to be strong minded people.

Becoming an early childhood educator has provided opportunities and experiences to learn new skills and understanding. It has allowed me to see how different ideas can be seen and used to influence local, national and international education and health outcomes and policies.

I am very proud of what I have achieved, established and what I have become today. I have appreciated the richness and satisfaction through my early childhood journey by having fun and excitement.



## **Jackie Bradshaw**

Manager - Palmerston  
Child and Family Centre

I have 20 years' experience in the early childhood profession; working in a variety of roles and settings including non-government and government.

I hold a Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood) and I'm currently the manager of an integrated Indigenous focused child and family centre located in Palmerston, providing early childhood and family support services.

Growing up, I was lucky to be part of a large family which has shown me the importance of encouragement, respect and supportive relationships; values I hold close and believe are fundamental in my work.

I am passionate about providing quality early childhood education and care and believe that the early years are crucial and the foundation for a successful future.

It is important to provide a safe, secure and caring environment which reflects the individuality of the children, families and staff; as well as the wider community.

# Meet our people



**Leticha Russell**  
Indigenous Coordinator -  
Palmerston Child and  
Family Centre

I currently work as an Indigenous coordinator at the Palmerston Child and Family Centre. I have an understanding of the needs and barriers faced by families and children in accessing services.

The centre provides a range of services under one roof to assist children and families in the Palmerston area. In my role, I also get to work with other service providers to provide quality programs for our families and children.

The early years of our children's lives are pivotal in their development both physically and emotionally. It lays the foundation for their future lives. I believe it is imperative that all children are able to feel safe and nurtured and have equal opportunities to access quality early childhood education.

Being a Territory woman and having worked in many roles focusing on families and children in both government and non-government sectors. I feel blessed to be able to support families to engage with their children in their early years.



**Danielle Saunders**  
Director - NT Explorers

I have always been passionate about children, and from an early age I knew that I was destined to work in the early childhood industry.

During my school years, I completed my first work experience at a long day care centre. The director where I did my practicum was amazing, I could see the passion in her eyes, hear it in her voice and I aspired to have an impact like she had on me.

Once I completed Year 12, I began working full time as an assistant at the local childcare centre. I completed my Certificate III and then a Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care in the same year.

Being a director has so many unique roles. It is not always an easy role, but it is an extremely rewarding one. To lead, guide and support a team of amazing educators, learn from each other and encourage (each other) to be the best they can be.

Being a director comes with large responsibility, knowing that your team and every family that attends your centre depend on you and the work that you do daily.

# Early Childhood Education and Care

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## **Hup Lye**

Early Childhood Teacher -  
Scallywags Childcare Centre

I was born into a family of teachers who instilled in me a love of learning. I earned a Bachelor of Education degree with a specialisation in mathematics and English as a second language.

My career began with two years in primary school teaching in the classroom in Malaysia. Then, I gained my Masters degree in 2014 at Charles Darwin University. I went on to work at Wanguri Outside School Hours Care as a second in charge for two years and then started as an Early Childhood Teacher in 2016.

After working in different educational settings, I found the early childhood industry to be one of the most enjoyable and inspirational jobs. It is helping me to understand better in knowing children's developmental milestones at different ages.

As the father of two sons, I realised how important their early years were and the positive impact I had on their growth. Hence, I strongly believe that my role is absolutely vital as every little effort that I make every day will make a little difference in them.



## **Tara McLennan**

Education and Care Service  
Coordinator - Murray Children's  
Centre

I started my career as a school based apprentice and have recently finished a Bachelor of Teaching and Learning (Early Childhood).

Throughout my journey as an early childhood educator, I have taken every opportunity to learn and develop my pedagogy, practice and leadership skills.

In my role as a centre coordinator, I take every opportunity through my work to advocate for excellence in curriculum delivery and better outcomes for children.

What I love about my job is that I have the opportunity to work directly with children and families and mentor educators to be the best early childhood professionals they can be.

# Meet our people

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**Carla Hayes**  
Former Assessor - Quality  
Education and Care NT

My passion to make a difference with young children, families and communities has been a driving force in my career. Over the last 16 years I have worked in a variety of early childhood services from occasional care to long day care, preschools and school settings. Completing a Bachelor of Education Early Childhood in 2011 opened up exciting opportunities that I never dreamed possible.

In 2017 I became an assessor with Quality Education and Care NT. This position encompasses a variety of shared professional experiences involving travel to urban, remote and very remote services across the Top End to provide guidance in maintaining a focus of quality outcomes for children.

Previous to this role, I was an early childhood teacher with the Department of Education at Stuart Park and Berry Springs primary schools.

As an early childhood teacher and an assessor there is no greater achievement than helping others to realise their full potential and improve the outcomes for all children.



**Angela Sikyr**  
Compliance Officer - Quality  
Education and Care NT

I started my career in early childhood as an unqualified casual assistant in a local long day care setting. I gained my Certificate III, Diploma and Advanced Diploma in Children's Services and went on to become a group leader, centre director and assistant territory manager after four years.

To play a part in each child's journey and watch them grow into capable competent learners was a privilege and very rewarding.

In 2015, I commenced the role of compliance officer. In this role I monitor education and care services to ensure they are operating in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations and that the health, safety and wellbeing of children are paramount to everyone involved.

This role offers the challenge I was seeking, along with being able to make a real difference in the community which is also very rewarding.

# Department of Education



## **Grant Dukes**

**Project Manager Universal Access  
– Early Years Strategic Policy**

Working in early childhood education and care for the past two years has been an amazing experience for me. The energy, passion and commitment of my team exemplify the passion of the people working in this sector.

My career in the Northern Territory Government has stretched over the past ten years and has seen me work in various roles and agencies. Over the years I have developed strong analytical skills around data and data systems

In my current role, these skills have provided me the opportunity to influence and shape decision making for early childhood education and care in the Northern Territory.

I am privileged to be part of a team that is responsible for leading early childhood within the Northern Territory and the incredibly rewarding work we do.

## **Jody Dixon**

**Project Manager - Young Mothers  
Strong Mothers Program**

I am very passionate about working with people and believing in them until they believe in themselves. I particularly love working with and empowering our youth and women; providing a safe environment to build and raise self-esteem and the capacity to further education and training.

As Confucius said - "Choose a job you love to do and you'll never have to work a day in your life." I can definitely say that I do not work! I provide energy and encourage a strengths based approach to develop and grow all with whom I come into contact. Even though it can be challenging and testing at times, it is very fulfilling work.

I am privileged and honoured to make a difference in people's lives and create a ripple effect into their families and community.

# Meet our people



## **Prideaux Joyce**

Early Years Physiotherapist

I am exceptionally lucky to work as part of a team providing health services in remote areas of the Northern Territory.

As a physiotherapist, I help people with injured joints, muscles and assist with scar healing. I love teaching people about how their bodies work, and how to make them feel better, stronger and healthier.

One of my favourite roles is working with an amazing developmental education team, where I assist children in learning new movement skills.

Sometimes a child can have an injury or be born with a movement challenge. I love finding ways to help them move better, grow stronger and enjoy play. It is very important to engage their parents and teachers to keep the treatment fun and rewarding.

I have been lucky enough to work all around Australia, in big cities like Sydney, country towns like Myrtleford, and now I'm lucky enough to visit remote communities like Maningrida and Galiwin'ku.



## **Michael Spry**

Environmental Health Officer

I enjoy the variety and challenge of working in environmental health. We work with food businesses to ensure they are providing safe food to the public and we provide advice on public health safety on a wide range of issues. Investigations are a favourite part of my job because I have to think critically to find the problem and work with businesses to find a resolution.

My role includes investigating complaints about food safety and ensuring that shops, restaurants and food processes comply with public health regulations. This includes inspecting early learning centres and ensuring their food practices are compliant with health regulations.

I also deliver health education programs and public information campaigns on important public health issues across the Northern Territory. This includes visiting NT schools to deliver important health promotion sessions using Gerry the Germ, Mr Germ and the No Germs on Me face and hand washing campaign.

# Health and Allied Health

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**Franceska Edis**  
Speech Pathologist

I have been a speech pathologist for 25 years and I'm still learning every day.

I am a 'generalist' in private practice, which allows me to work with people of all ages and many different conditions.

I love working with little ones and their families, but also love chatting to older people about their rich experience of life.

In early childhood intervention we get to play and have fun at work, and keep up with all the latest toys, games and kids' TV shows!

There's great satisfaction in making a difference to a child's ability to participate in their family and community.



**Josephine Martin**  
Play Therapist

Currently the director of Play Therapy NT, I was the very first registered play therapist and play therapist supervisor in the NT.

I have a staff group of five at Play Therapy NT comprising students and registered play therapy practitioners.

I have been practicing for 13 years now and have worked with a large range of children from all sorts of diverse communities.

A part of my work includes traveling to remote communities to visit clients as well as managing our service in Darwin.

I have trained and presented play therapy modules all across Australia and have been lucky enough to present internationally.

I am extremely passionate about working with young children and providing specialised early childhood intervention.



# Career Pathways

## Could this be the year you embark on your dream career?

If you've always wanted to work with children, why not make it happen! Early years careers are among the most rewarding and starting your dream career could be easier than you think.

## Start here

### Education and Academic

- Early childhood educator – diploma or certificate courses
- Early childhood teacher – bachelor degree in early childhood education and/or postgraduate qualification
- Vocational Education and Training trainer or lecturer, university lecturer, tutor, researcher – range of graduate and/or postgraduate qualifications depending on role

### Health and Allied Health

- Early years physiotherapist, speech pathologist, audiologist, paediatrician, play therapist – bachelor degree in relevant discipline or postgraduate qualification
- Child and family health nurse, Aboriginal health worker, family support worker, social worker – certificate, diploma and bachelor degrees, depending on role

## and you could become...

### Education and Academic

- a centre manager
- a director
- a children's services coordinator
- an outside school hours program coordinator
- a family day care coordinator
- a policy, compliance, assessment manager or advisor in government
- an educational leader
- an assistant teacher
- a primary teacher
- a student support officer

### Health and Allied Health

- a health team leader
- a health program coordinator
- a children, youth and families services manager
- a health promotion/advocate
- a child protection case manager
- a social worker
- a sociologist
- a welfare officer
- a registered nurse/practice nurse
- a principal psychologist
- a consultant or advisor in government



# Vocational Education and Training Pathways

In the Northern Territory, quality early childhood education and care are essential services so it is vital that we grow our own workforce.

To assist in meeting the demand for early childhood educators, the Department of Education has developed a vocational education and training (VET) package for Northern Territory secondary school students and Aboriginal people seeking a traineeship in early childhood.

The VET package blends work experience and work placement in early years school environments as well as quality education and care settings. The program is available to students commencing year 11 and Aboriginal people aged between 17 and 25.

## Training components include:

- delivery of the Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care
- face to face training provided to students in a centralised regional hub
- classroom workshops and job assessments during work placements
- 120 hour practicum in a regulated long day care service
- tailored, individualised and culturally appropriate support to all students
- Career planning to encourage students and trainees to further study a diploma level qualification, tertiary education or gain full time employment.

At program completion, students can then move into mainstream employment, undertake a traineeship or continue on to higher education.

Endless opportunities: the employment possibilities for school leavers in long day care, family day care and three year old kindy, preschool and outside school hours care in the Northern Territory remain high.

With such an array of professional opportunities, your early childhood education and care qualifications are for life, and not just in Australia. All over the world early childhood educators are in demand so if you like to travel, you can take your job on the road!

A Certificate III in Education Support or a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care is the **MINIMUM QUALIFICATION** required to enter the early childhood education and care sector.



Further information:

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