

The top 10 key findings in your state:

1. 427 ECEC educators from South Australia responded to our nationwide March survey of almost 4000 educators.
2. Educator retention and turnover will be a major problem for South Australia in the near future. 34% of South Australian educators told us they intend to leave the sector long term. A concerning 73% of those educators intend to leave within the next three years, and 24% intend to leave in the next 12 months.
3. The best and brightest South Australian educators are most likely to leave the sector. South Australian educators currently upskilling to an ECT degree (44%), or a master's degree (40%) are more likely to leave the sector compared to those who are not upskilling (33%).
4. Like educators across Australia, South Australian educators told us that the top three reasons they want to leave the sector are:
 - 'Excessive workload and insufficient time to provide quality ECEC' (69%)
 - 'Low pay – I can't afford to stay' (63%)
 - 'Feeling undervalued' (45%)
5. Concerningly, of the South Australian educators who do intend to stay in the sector 39% say that they think about leaving 'all the time' or 'most of the time'.
6. 41% of South Australian educators would not recommend a career in the sector.
7. The workforce crisis is at breaking point in South Australia:
 - Understaffing is rampant with 61% of educators saying that their centres are understaffed.
 - 62% of educators say that their workload has increased 'greatly' in the last few years.
 - Educators are not able to take leave when sick. Over half (58%) of educators said they 'often' felt pressured to avoid taking leave, and the same amount said they had come to work sick or stayed at work after becoming sick due to staff shortages.
 - Over 90% of educators said they were concerned with 'under-the-roof' ratios. 92% agreed that they compromise quality ECEC for children and 94% agreed that they compromise children's safety and wellbeing.
8. Low pay is putting severe financial stress on South Australia's early educators. 65% of educators surveyed said they 'always' or 'often' worry about their financial situation, and 83% of said they would find it difficult to cover an unexpected, emergency \$400 expense.
9. The impact of all these issues – high turnover, understaffing, excessive workload, and low pay – is compromising the care and education of South Australian children every day:
 - 76% of educators say they feel they do not have sufficient time to provide children with the quality ECEC they need.
 - 78% of educators report feeling rushed when performing key caring and/or educational tasks.
 - Two-thirds of educators 'strongly agreed' that increased workload has compromised their ability to provide high quality early learning to children and to provide them with the emotional support they need for their wellbeing.
10. South Australian educators in their own words on understaffing, excessive workloads, missing out on vital programming time and how this impacts quality care and education for children:
 - "The issue of staff shortages needs to be addressed urgently. In my area it's hard to fill vacancies with permanent staff so we end up relying on agencies, which often means daily staff changes. It's hard to give children and families continuous and consistent care with constant staff changes. It also places added stress on permanent educators within the centre to uphold quality and care."
 - "I love my job, but the conditions are hard to deal with some days. We are overworked, so we don't get enough time to do the important things like programming. We also don't get enough time to spend with children, which makes it hard to provide them with good care and early learning. The ratios are hard too because it makes keeping children safe harder. And we are underfunded: the budget doesn't lend itself to giving the children everything they need."
 - "I don't think people realise how much work we do. We have time on the floor with children, we have to do our programming, we have to set up rooms and these days we spend a lot more time cleaning. But being understaffed means we end up sacrificing programming time (by regulations a maximum of two hours per week off floor) and spending less time with children."