

The top 10 key findings in your state:

1. 925 ECEC educators from Victoria responded to our nationwide March survey of almost 4000 educators.
2. Educator retention and turnover will be a major problem in Victoria in the near future. 36% of Victorian educators told us they intend to leave the sector long term. A shocking 74% of those intend to leave within the next three years, and 30% intend to leave in the next 12 months. This is higher than the overall national rate of 26%.
3. The best and brightest Victorian educators are also the most likely to leave the sector. Victorian educators currently upskilling to a master's degree are more likely to leave (43%) than those who are not currently upskilling (36%). Over a third (34%) of educators upskilling to an Early Childhood Teacher's degree are also planning to leave the sector.
4. Like educators across Australia, Victorian educators told us that the top three reasons they want to leave the sector are:
 - 'Excessive workload and insufficient time to provide quality ECEC' (71%)
 - 'Low pay – I can't afford to stay' (60%)
 - 'Feeling undervalued' (49%)
5. Concerningly, of the Victorian educators who do intend to stay in the sector 49% say they think about leaving 'all the time' or 'most of the time'.
6. Half of all Victorian educators surveyed said they would not recommend a career in the sector.
7. The workforce crisis is a breaking point in Victoria:
 - Understaffing is rampant with 71% of educators saying that their centres are understaffed. This is significantly higher than national figure of 65%.
 - 67% of educators say that their workload has increased 'greatly' in the last few years.
 - Educators are not able to take leave when sick: 64% of educators said they 'often' felt pressured to avoid taking leave, and 58% 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 and that they compromise quality ECEC for children (90%), as well as their safety and wellbeing (92%).
8. Low pay is putting severe financial stress on Victoria's early educators. 73% of educators surveyed said they 'always' or 'often' worry about their financial situation and 84% 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 education and care of Victorian children every day:
 - 71% of educators say they feel they do not have sufficient time to provide children with the quality ECEC they need.
 - 82% of report feeling rushed when performing key caring and/or educational tasks.
 - Almost 75% of educators 'strongly agreed' that increased workload has compromised their ability to provide high quality early learning to children and provide them with the emotional support they need for their wellbeing (73%).
10. Victorian educators in their own words on workload, low pay and what it takes to be an educator during the pandemic:
 - "I feel that as educators we have a lot of responsibility to do the best we can by the children under our care. but the workloads we carry often takes us away from children who then miss out on getting the best education and care they deserve. It's also disheartening that the pay in the sector doesn't match our level of responsibility."
 - "The pay we receive doesn't reflect the amount of work, care and time we put into our careers, and the care and time we give to children every day. We were classified as essential workers to care and be open for the children of other essential workers through COVID-19 lockdown, yet we still get absolute rubbish wages. We are not respected enough for the work that we do, having such young and vulnerable lives in our hands."
 - "The bottom line is that there is never enough staff, which makes the task of educating children very difficult. We have huge workloads, and pressure to do get it all done on time, things like observations, programming, planning etc. It is physically and mentally hard work: you need to be a carer, nurse, waitress, mediator, teacher, friend, artist, laundry, cleaner, etc etc. But we get paid less than some babysitters."