Stage 2

The new classification structure

1. Introduction of the new classification structure

From **1 March 2026**, the Children's Services Award moves from a **30-level classification structure** to a **simplified 8-level structure**.

All Children's Services Employees (CSEs) covered by the Award must be classified under one of the new levels from this date.

The new classification structure is aligned to:

- qualifications
- experience, and
- role responsibilities

The introduction of the new classification structure is accompanied by **translation arrangements in Schedule I of the amended Award**, which are designed to ensure employees are transitioned to the new structure without losing existing rate protections.

The new classification levels are:

Level	Title
Level 1	Introductory Educator
Level 2	Educator
Level 3	Qualified Educator
Level 4	Experienced Educator
Level 5	Advanced Educator

Who this is for:

Directors and HR managers

What this fact sheet is for:

To explain the new classification structure under the Children's Services Award and how existing classifications translate from 1 March 2026.

Level	Title
Level 6	Room Leader
Level 7	Assistant Director
Level 8	Director

2. Translation of existing classifications (Schedule I)

From **1 March 2026**, CSEs under the Children's Services Award must be **translated** to the new classification structure.

The translation process is governed by **Schedule I of the amended Children's Services Award**, which provides the formal rules and detailed guidance for translating employees from their existing classification to the new structure.

The table below summarises how **previous classification levels translate to the new classification levels**, based on the Award variations.

Translation summary – previous to new classifications

New Classification Level	Title	Previous Classification
Level 1 - Introductory Educator	An employee whose primary role is to work directly with children and who has less than 12 months' experience as a CSE.	Level 1.1 - On commencement
Level 2 - Educator	An employee whose primary role is to work directly with children and who has at least 12 months' experience as a CSE.	Level 2.1 - On commencement
		Level 2.2 - After 1 year
		Level 3A.1 - On commencement (Former Western Australian 'E' worker classification)
		Level 3A.2 - After 1 year (Former Western Australian 'E' worker classification)

New Classification Level	Title	Previous Classification
Level 3 - Qualified Educator	An employee whose primary role is to work directly with children and who has obtained an approved Certificate III-level early childhood education and care qualification.	Level 3.1 - On commencement
		Level 3.2 - After 1 year
		Level 3.3 (< 4 yrs' exp. at L3) - After 2 years
Level 4 - Experienced Educator	An employee whose primary role is to work directly with children, who has obtained an approved Certificate III-level early childhood education and care qualification and who has obtained four years' post-qualification industry experience at CSE Level 3—Qualified Educator.	Level 3.3 (4+ yrs' exp. at L3) - After 2 years
Level 5 - Advanced Educator	An employee whose primary role is to work directly with children and who has completed a Diploma-level early childhood education and care qualification or an equivalent approved qualification for out-of-school hours care.	Level 3.4
Level 6 - Room Leader	An employee who has been appointed: • as a Room Leader; or • in out-of-school hours care, to assist a Level 7 or a Level 8 employee.	Level 4A.1 - On commencement
		Level 4A.2 - After 1 year
		Level 4A.3 - After 2 years
		Level 4A.4 - After 3 years
		Level 4A.5 - After 4 years

New Classification Level	Title	Previous Classification
		Level 4.1 - On commencement
		Level 4.2 - After 1 year
		Level 4.3 - After 2 years
Level 7 - Assistant Director	An employee who is appointed as: • the Assistant Director of a service; • Children's Services Coordinator; • Family Day Care Co-ordinator; • Family Day Care Trainee Supervisor; • Children's Services Coordinator; or • School Age Care Co-ordinator and who has completed an AQF Level 5 or Level 6 qualification in early childhood education and care or equivalent, or is deemed by the employer or relevant legislation to hold such qualification or possess such experience as appropriate or required for the position.	Level 5A.1 - On commencement
		Level 5A.2 - After 1 year
		Level 5A.3 - After 2 years
		Level 5.1 - On commencement
		Level 5.2 - After 1 year
		Level 5.3 - After 2 years
		Level 5.4 - An Assistant Director who holds an Advanced Diploma (AQF 6/3 year qualified) must be paid no less than Level 5.4
Level 8 - Director	An employee who is appointed: • as the Director of a Service; or	Level 6A.1 - On commencement
		Level 6A.2 - After 1 year
		Level 6A.3 - After 2 years

New Classification Level	Title	Previous Classification
	• in an out-of-school hours or vacation care service, to be responsible for the overall strategic, financial, compliance and operational management of a service	Level 6.1 - On commencement
		Level 6.2 - After 1 year
		Level 6.3 - After 2 years
		Level 6.4 - On commencement
		Level 6.5 - After 1 year
		Level 6.6 - After 2 years
		Level 6.7 - On commencement
		Level 6.8 - After 1 year
		Level 6.9 - After 2 years

3. Translation safeguards (Schedule I)

Schedule I includes provisions that preserve existing pay outcomes during translation.

- **Preserved higher rates (clause I.4):**
  Where an employee's existing rate of pay exceeds the new minimum rate, the existing higher rate continues to apply.
- **Level 4A calculation rule (clause I.3):**
  For employees translating from a **Level 4A classification**, the initial staged increase is calculated by reference to the employee's existing Level 4A rate, rather than the Level 4.1 rate.

4. Consequential changes to the Children's Services Award

The classification changes are accompanied by several consequential amendments to the Award.

Standard rate and allowances

- The definition of the **standard rate** is updated to the weekly rate for a **CSE Level 3**.
- Allowances expressed as a percentage of the standard rate are adjusted to ensure their **dollar value remains consistent** with the existing Award.

Qualification allowance

- The qualification allowance for Directors and Assistant Directors (clause 15.6) is removed, as the new classification rates incorporate work value for these roles.

Cooks

- A cook must be paid under the CSE minimum rates where the cook:
  - is required to hold, or is actively working towards, an approved ECEC qualification; and
  - may be required to work directly with children to maintain educator-to-child ratios.

  Where these criteria are met, the cook must be paid the CSE minimum rate corresponding to their ECEC qualification.

  Cooks who do not meet these criteria remain covered by the **Support Worker** classification.

ECEC Qualification	CSE Classification
Actively working towards qualification with less than 12 months' experience	Level 1 – Introductory Educator
Actively working towards qualification with more than 12 months' experience	Level 2 – Educator
Certificate III	Level 3 – Qualified Educator
Certificate IV	Level 4 – Experienced Educator
Diploma	Level 5 – Advanced Educator

5. OSHC clarification (classification application)

The revised classification definitions have been refined to ensure accurate application in **out-of-school-hours care (OSHC)** settings.

- Leadership roles in OSHC with responsibilities equivalent to a service Director, but without the title "Director", are recognised under **Level 8**.
- The **Room Leader (Level 6)** descriptor clarifies that, in OSHC contexts, employees at this level may assist **Level 7 (Assistant Director)** or **Level 8 (Director)** roles when required.

This fact sheet summarises classification and Award changes arising from the Fair Work Commission's Gender Undervaluation Decision. It is provided for information purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. Services should refer to the Children's Services Award and seek independent advice where necessary.

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Further support

For further advice, guidance materials and updates, members are encouraged to contact the Workplace Relations Team on **1300 346 818**, adminWRT@cela.org.au or adminWRS@itav.org.au