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:

Employees of Approved Providers covered by the Children's Services Award

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
- **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.
- **If you are on an agreement your classification structure doesn't change**
  classifications under agreements are preserved.

4. Important clarification – minimum rates set the floor

The Award sets **minimum pay rates**. It does not prescribe automatic pay increases for all employees.

At all times, your pay must be **at or above** the applicable Award minimum rate for your classification.

Employers are only required to increase your pay where the rate currently being paid is **below** the new minimum rate.

Where an employee is already paid at or above the new minimum rate:

- **no adjustment is required at that time.**

This includes employees receiving the **Worker Retention Payment**.

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

Updated: February 2026