

# ***Putting Children First* and NCAC Website Reader's Survey April 2003**



## **Report of Findings**

### **About the Survey**

The *Putting Children First Reader's Survey* was provided as an insert in the March 2003 issue of the National Childcare Accreditation Council's (NCAC) quarterly newsletter.

The four-page survey questioned *Putting Children First* readers about the newsletter and their website usage. To allow for comparative data the current survey was based on the surveys distributed in March 2000 and April 1998. This report compares and contrasts results from the 2000 survey. The current survey expanded on and refined previous questions.

Although the newsletter is posted to Validators, Moderators, and other contacts such as Resource and Advice Agencies and Peak Bodies, the survey was only sent to NCAC's primary customers, long day care centres and family day care schemes. Please note: outside school hours care services were not included as they were not yet registered with NCAC.

The survey was mailed to approximately 4232 Long Day Care Centres and 325 Family Day Care Schemes registered with NCAC. A reply paid envelope was included to promote a good response rate. 1336 responses were received, or a response rate of 29%.

### **2000 Survey Comparison**

A two-page self-completion survey was inserted in the March 2000 issue of *Accreditation Update*, the previous incarnation of *Putting Children First*. The questionnaire was mailed to approximately 4,060 Long Day Care Centres on the NCAC database. At the time, family day care schemes were not registered with NCAC. 1,512 responses were received with a response rate of 37%.

The 2003 survey was distributed to more services than the 2000 survey but received a lower response rate. This could be due to the length of the 2003 survey which was double the size of the 2000 survey to accommodate questions about specific service types and more precise analysis of reader's needs.

## Profile of respondents

Of the 1336 responses received, 86% were from long day care centres, 10% were family day care schemes, the remaining 4% did not specify. Centre directors formed the vast majority of respondents.

As the table below shows, the proportion of responses from each state is similar to state proportions of all services registered with NCAC, allowing confidence in the data accurately representing the attitudes of all services registered with NCAC.

<b>Combined Breakdown as at 25/07/03 LDC &amp;FDC active summary by state</b>					
	<b>FDC</b>	<b>LDC</b>	<b>Combined</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>PCF Survey Results</b>
<b>ACT</b>	5	87	92	<b>2%</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>NSW</b>	104	1736	1840	<b>40%</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>NT</b>	5	48	53	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>QLD</b>	88	981	1069	<b>23%</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>SA</b>	15	198	213	<b>5%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>TAS</b>	11	58	69	<b>1%</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>VIC</b>	74	814	888	<b>19%</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>WA</b>	21	360	381	<b>8%</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>4282</b>	<b>4605</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Approximately 43% of services reported that they were located in the capital city centre or suburb, with a further 24% reporting that they were located in a regional area centre or suburb. 11% of respondents were located in a large rural town and 10% located in a small rural setting. 4% of respondents were from a remote rural area or town.

### 2000 Survey Comparison

As with the 2003 survey, the vast majority of respondents to the 2000 survey were the Director, Co-ordinator or Authorised Supervisor of the Centre (77%). The proportion of responses from each state closely followed the state proportions of all centres registered with NCAC, allowing confidence that both surveys were proportionate.

The 2003 survey had more respondents from regional/rural remote services than the 2000 survey where 51% of respondents reported that they were located in the capital city or suburb of a capital city.

## Main Findings – *Putting Children First*

### Readership

- In family day care schemes, the majority of *Putting Children First* readers were the coordination unit staff (38%), followed by the Carers (29%), then Management (20%). Carers mostly read *Putting Children First* from photocopies of relevant articles sent to them by Schemes (44%). Coordination unit staff also made the newsletter available to read when carers visit (36%). 8% of schemes responded that they photocopied every newsletter and sent it to carers.
- In long day care centres, the majority of readers were directors (28%) followed by child care staff (26%), group leaders (16%) and management (15%).

### Relevance of the Newsletter

- Over the past 12 months, the majority (80%) of readers found *Putting Children First* ‘very easy’ or ‘mostly easy’ to read.
- 70% of respondents felt that *Putting Children First* is ‘very helpful’ or ‘mostly helpful’ in relation to their service’s Quality Assurance information needs.
- With regard to the relevance of specific topics covered in *Putting Children First*, readers indicated that the most useful topics were:
  - Health, safety and child well-being (72% rated very useful to mostly useful)
  - Keeping evidence and records of quality practices (71% rated very useful to mostly useful)
  - Relationships with children (68% rated very useful to mostly useful)
  - Relationships with families (68% rated very useful to mostly useful)
  - Developing and Documenting policies (66% rated very useful to mostly useful)
  - Planning for children’s learning and development (66% rated very useful to mostly useful)
- The least relevant topics were:
  - Managing and administering a child care service (37% rated useful to not useful)
  - Diversity in child care (35% rated useful to not useful)
  - Issues and trends in early childhood research and theory (34% rated useful to not useful)
- With regard to the importance placed on aspects of the QA Systems, respondent rated the following as “Very Important” (1) to “Mostly Important” (2):
  - Meeting the FDCQA/QIAS Principles = 85%
  - Self-study Process (Step 2) = 77%
  - Validation Visit (Step 3) = 76%
  - Interviews with Validators = 74%
  - Moderation (Step 4) = 69%
  - Accreditation Decision (Step 5) = 69%
  - Interviews with Moderators = 67%
  - Features on individual services = 63 %
  - Administration of FDCQA/QIAS = 62%

- Registration (Step 1) = 57%
- 291 respondents made suggestions for other topics they would like to see covered in *Putting Children First*. 14% stated they would like to see more of the same type of articles currently in the newsletter. Of those who stated which topics they most want to see in the newsletter, responses varied but the most frequent requests were:
  - 16% - Tips on how to get Accredited (checklists, evidence, portfolios etc)
  - 10% - Profiles on individual services
  - 6% - Management and Staffing Issues
  - 5% - Articles for parents or on how to get parents involved
  - 4% - Programming and evaluation
  - 4% - Useful resources or where to get more information
  - 4% - Health, safety and nutrition
  - 3% - OH&S in child care
  - 4% - More information on Validation
  - 3% - Multiculturalism and Diversity
  - 3% - Policy Development
  - 3% - Child Development/how children learn
  - 3% - Feedback Column/Letters to the editor
  - 2% - Licensing and Regulations, Broadband, Other Government
  - 2% - Behaviour management
  - 2% - Practical Ideas (recipes, arts and crafts, games)
  - 2%- Networking with other services

### **2000 Survey Comparison**

- Ninety percent of readers in 2000 felt the newsletter was "very" or "mostly" easy to read. This result was better than the 2003 survey where only 80% felt the newsletter was "very" or "mostly" easy to read.
- Eighty-three percent of readers said the newsletter is "very" or "mostly" useful for their Centres current QIAS information needs. Again, this result was better than the 2003 survey where only 70% was helpful in relation to their QA information needs.
- The responses to questions about the types of articles included in the newsletter show that in 2000 the usefulness of the newsletter is strongly linked to the information it supplied about the QIAS Principles and about the Review Visit. 86% of readers in 2000 said that that they found the articles which focus on particular QIAS Principles to be "very" or "mostly" useful. This corresponds well with the 2003 survey where 85% of readers wanted information on meeting the Principles of the QA Systems.
- The most important information to be included in the newsletter in 2000 was information on the QIAS Principles (95%), followed by information about the Review Visit and about the Self-study Process. This also corresponds with the 2003 survey.
- In 2000, twenty percent of readers took the opportunity to nominate other topics for the newsletter. The main areas mentioned were "tips/ideas to meet the Principles" and features on the "experience/examples of Centres". Again, this corresponds well with the 2003 survey where approximately 21% of readers added comments and rated these two topics highest.

### **Distribution and Size of the Newsletter**

- When profiled on whether the newsletter should remain a quarterly publication 71% of readers agreed, however 26% said it should be monthly.
- 95% of readers also believed that article length was 'about right', while 3% felt articles were too long.
- 90% believed that the newsletter should stay at 8 pages each edition. 7% felt that this was too much, and 3% felt that this was too little. Please note, since this survey the size of the newsletter has increased to 12 pages.
- 57% of respondents are happy with the 2 copies of *Putting Children First* each service receives. 24% indicated they would like 3-5 copies.
- 51% of services kept past issues of *Putting Children First* to 'refer to regularly', and 40% kept the issues to 'refer to occasionally'.

### **2000 Survey Comparison**

- The vast majority of readers in 2000 said that they agree with the current length (4 pages) and frequency of the newsletter and its articles.
- 29 percent of readers said that the newsletter could be more regular than quarterly.
- Very few readers said that the length of the articles or of the whole newsletter should be changed.
- Ninety-five percent of readers in 2000 said that their Centre keeps all issues of Accreditation Update, saying that they refer to it occasionally (42%), regularly (33%) or when completing their Self-study Report (20%).

## **Main Findings – NCAC Website ([www.ncac.gov.au](http://www.ncac.gov.au))**

### **Access to the Internet and e-mail**

- 87% of services have access to the Internet. 51% said they accessed the Internet at their service and 37% said they accessed it at home.
- 84% of respondents have access to e-mail. 51% said they accessed the Internet at their service and 36% said they accessed it at home.

### **Statistics about NCAC's website usage**

- 71% of respondents had accessed the NCAC website in the past 12 months.
- 36% indicated that they visit NCAC's website every 2-3 months, 21% said once a month and 14% said several times a month. 18% said they had only ever been to the website once.
- 87% said they found the website address printed on an NCAC newsletter/ brochure/ letterhead or advertisement. 4% found NCAC's site while browsing the web for child care services.

### **NCAC Website Content**

- Only 69% of those surveyed said that finding the information on the website was 'very easy' or 'mostly easy'. 16% expressed that they had some difficulty in finding information on the website.
- The data indicated that the majority of people visiting the NCAC website wish to find general information about the Quality Assurance Systems (16%). This is followed by accessing the website to prepare for the Validation Visit (12%), for help when completing a *Self-study Report* (10%). 8% of website users visited the site to see what was new on site, to print a support document, or to find information suitable for parents.
- Of those surveyed, respondents felt the following aspects currently included on the website were 'very important':
  - Printable copies of FDCQA/QIAS publications (67%)
  - Information for services about the FDCQA/QIAS (65%)
  - Printable copies of FDCQA/QIAS Support Documents (64%)
  - Printable copies of forms (63%)
  - Information for parents about quality child care (60%)
  - On-line training about the FDCQA/QIAS (50%)
  - Contact details and website links for other children's services (44%)
  - Information for students and researchers (40%)
  - Search facility for finding child care services in the local area (35%)
- 88% of respondents have never had any technical difficulties using the NCAC website. 12% have had problems with the website. Those who indicated the nature of the difficulties most often said it related to downloading or printing PDF documents. Please note, these problems have been addressed to some extent by dividing large documents into smaller segments for download by slower connection speeds and by more visible troubleshooting links. We are continually monitoring this situation and are looking for other ways to assist customers.

- When asked how interested services would be about receiving and submitting their *Self-study Report* electronically via e-mail or the internet, 44% said they were only 'somewhat interested' with 40% saying they were 'very interested' and 16% indicating they were 'not interested'.

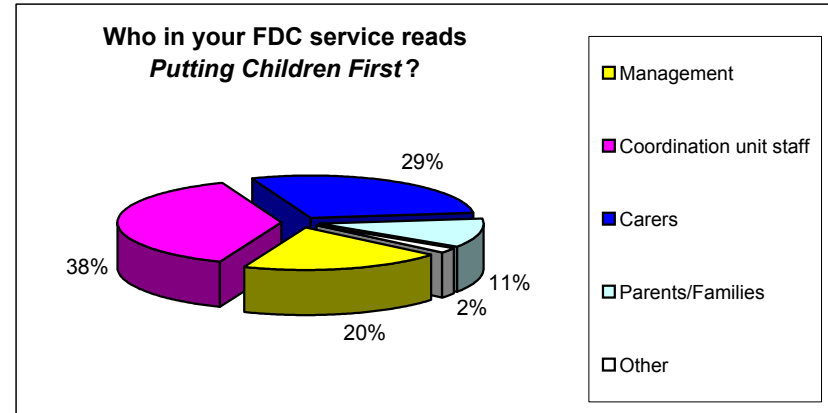
### **2000 Survey Comparison**

- Around half of all readers said that they had access to the Internet. This access was more likely to be at the readers home (52%), however many were able to access it at the Centre (29%). Comparison with the 2003 survey shows that the number of customers with access to the Internet has increased dramatically over the last three years(2003=87%, 2000=49%). Further, more services have access to the web onsite (2003=51%, 2000=29%).
- At the time of the 2000 survey, only 14 % of readers reported that they had visited the NCAC website in the previous 12 months. 71 % of respondents in 2003 had visited the NCAC site in the previous 12 months
- Of those who had visited the NCAC website in 2000, the vast majority (73%) found the web address on a newsletter, brochure or other document produced by NCAC. The next most popular way to have found the NCAC website was while the reader was browsing for child care related web sites (17%). These figures correspond with the 2003 results.
- While many of the readers who had visited the NCAC website had done so only once in the past 12 months (44%), a similar proportion had visited the site at least every 2-3 months or more (25% every 2-3 months, 11% once a month and 6% several times a month). Services in 2003 visit the NCAC website more often than in 2000.
- The main reason given for visiting the NCAC site in 2000 was to see a past issue of the NCAC newsletter (75%), followed by searching for general information about the QIAS (52%). Around one-third of visitors gave no particular reason or said that they were just browsing (32%). The more detailed response in 2003 shows the greater level of information provided on the NCAC website today than in 2000.

**Please see the following sheets for the complete statistical analysis.**

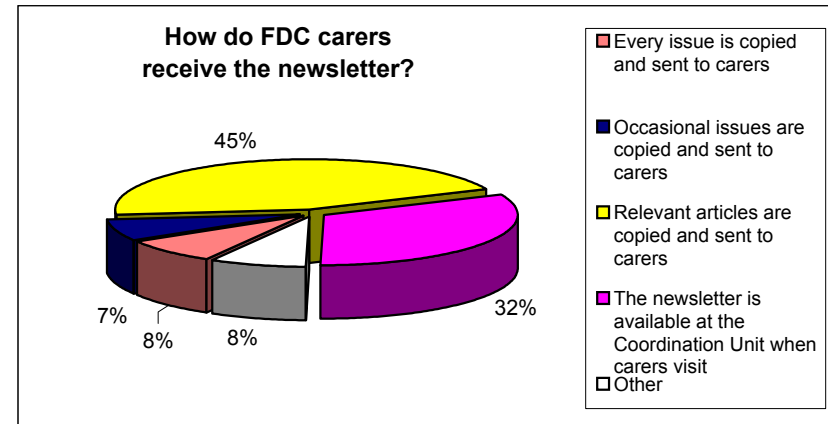
**1A. Who in your FDC service reads *Putting Children First*?**

A. For Family Day Care	
Management	20%
Coordination unit staff	38%
Carers	29%
Parents/Families	11%
Other	2%



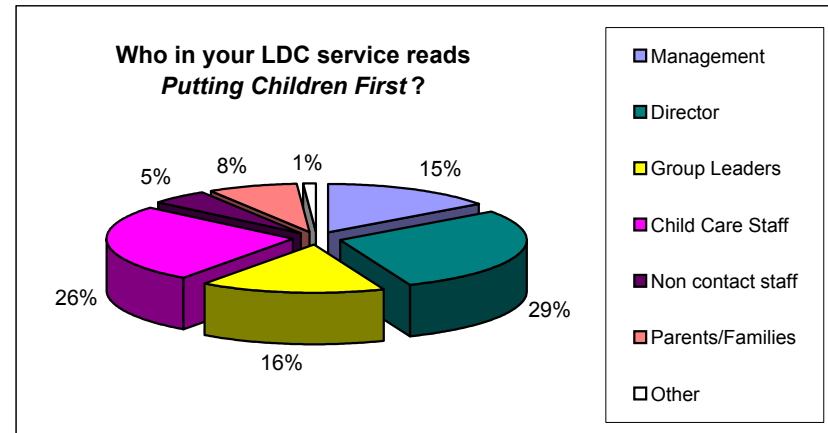
**How do FDC carers receive the newsletter?**

Every issue is copied and sent to carers	8%
Occasional issues are copied and sent to carers	7%
Relevant articles are copied and sent to carers	45%
The newsletter is available at the Coordination Unit when carers visit	32%
Other	8%



**1B. Who in your LDC service reads *Putting Children First*?**

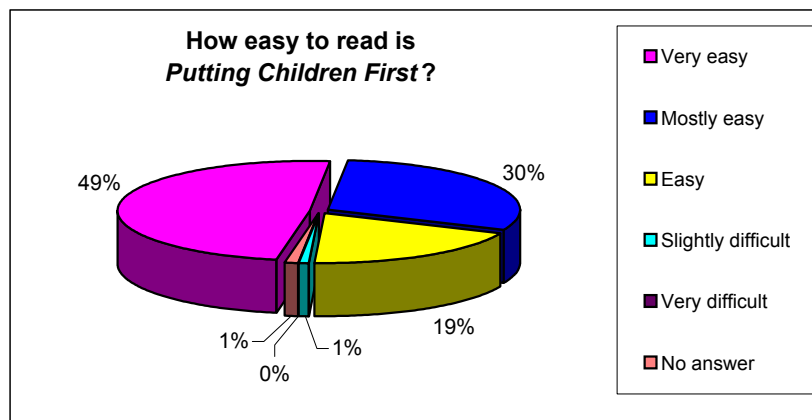
For Long Day Care	
Management	15%
Director	29%
Group Leaders	16%
Child Care Staff	26%
Non contact staff	5%
Parents/Families	8%
Other	1%





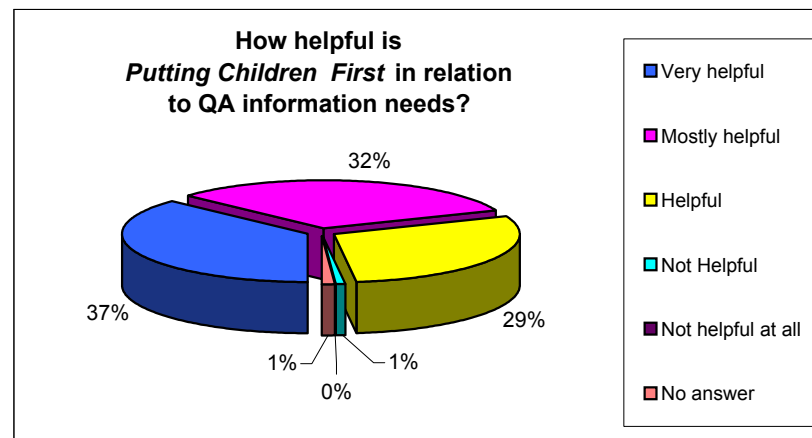
**2. Thinking back over the last 12 months, how easy to read have you found *Putting Children First*?**

Very easy	49%
Mostly easy	30%
Easy	19%
Slightly difficult	1%
Very difficult	0%
No answer	1%



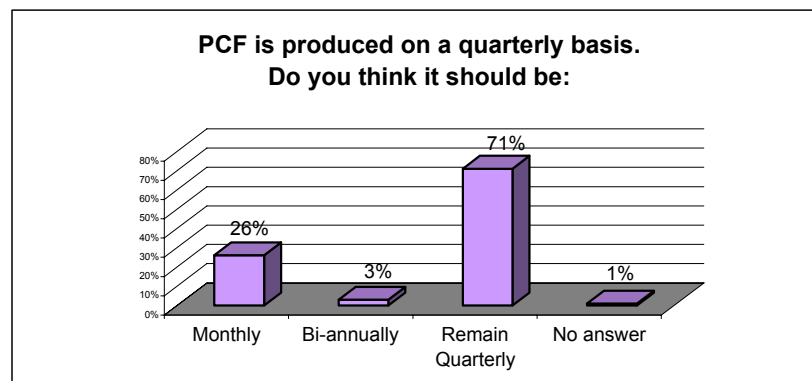
**3. How helpful is *Putting Children First* in relation to your service's current Quality Assurance information needs?**

Very helpful	37%
Mostly helpful	32%
Helpful	29%
Not Helpful	1%
Not helpful at all	0%
No answer	1%



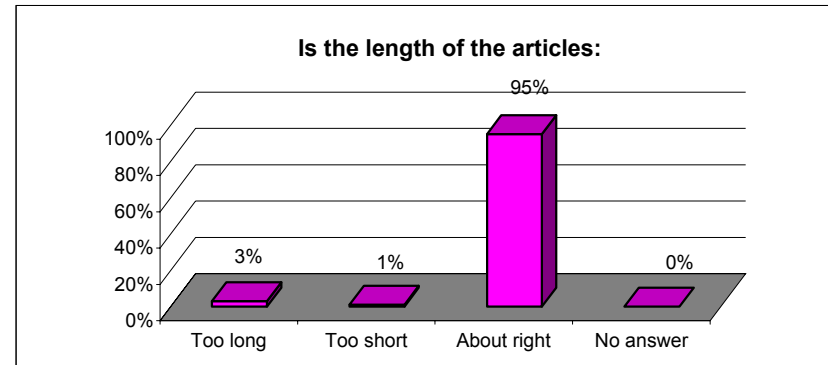
**4. *Putting Children First* is produced on a quarterly basis. Do you think it should be:**

Monthly	26%
Bi-annually	3%
Remain Quarterly	71%
No answer	1%



**5. Is the length of the articles:**

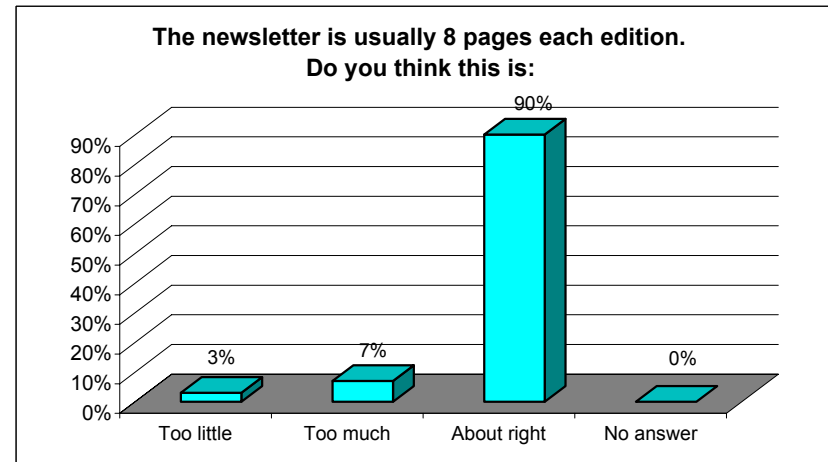
Too long	3%
Too short	1%
About right	95%
No answer	0%



**6. The newsletter is usually 8 pages each edition.**

**Do you think this is:**

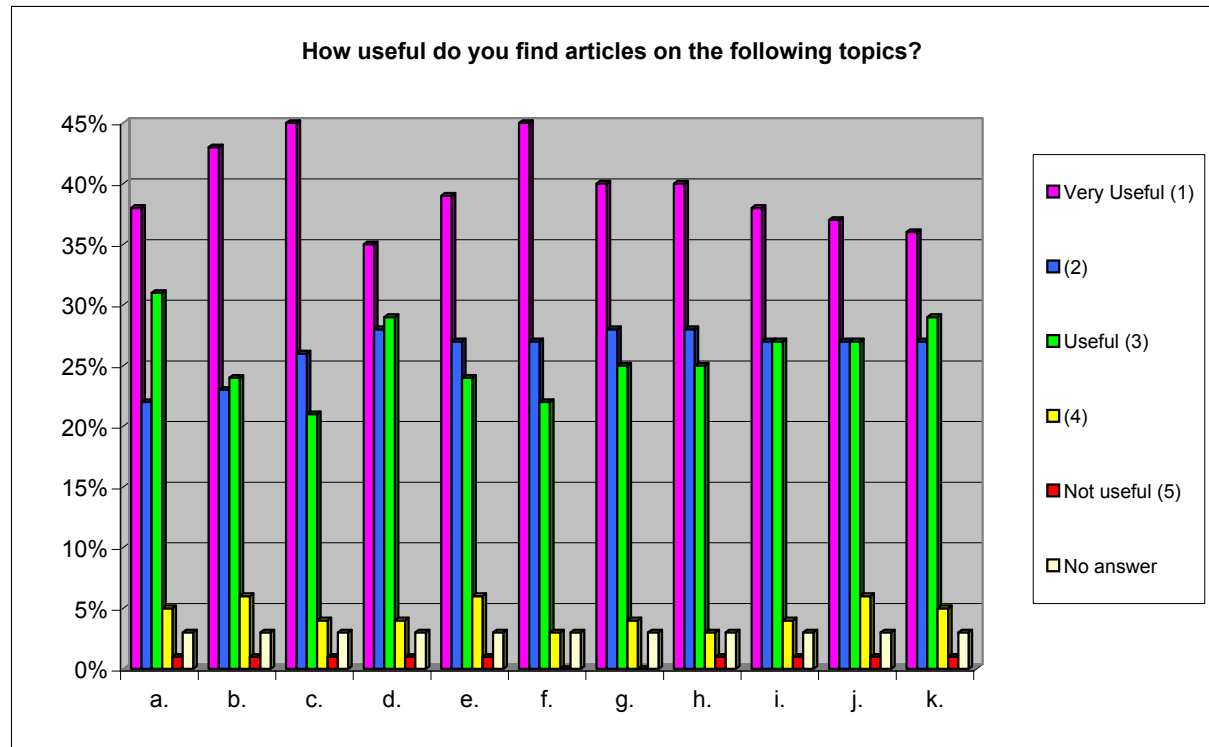
Too little	3%
Too much	7%
About right	90%
No answer	0%



**7. How useful do you find articles on the following topics?**

	Very Useful (1)	(2)	Useful (3)	(4)	Not useful (5)	No answer
a.	38%	22%	31%	5%	1%	3%
b.	43%	23%	24%	6%	1%	3%
c.	45%	26%	21%	4%	1%	3%
d.	35%	28%	29%	4%	1%	3%
e.	39%	27%	24%	6%	1%	3%
f.	45%	27%	22%	3%	0%	3%
g.	40%	28%	25%	4%	0%	3%
h.	40%	28%	25%	3%	1%	3%
i.	38%	27%	27%	4%	1%	3%
j.	37%	27%	27%	6%	1%	3%
k.	36%	27%	29%	5%	1%	3%

- a. Managing and administering a child care service
- b. Developing and documenting policies
- c. Keeping evidence and records of quality practices
- d. Issues and trends in early childhood research and
- e. Planning for children's learning and development
- f. Health, safety and child wellbeing
- g. Relationships with families
- h. Relationships with children
- i. Staff/Carer interactions
- j. Planning and evaluation
- k. Diversity in child care

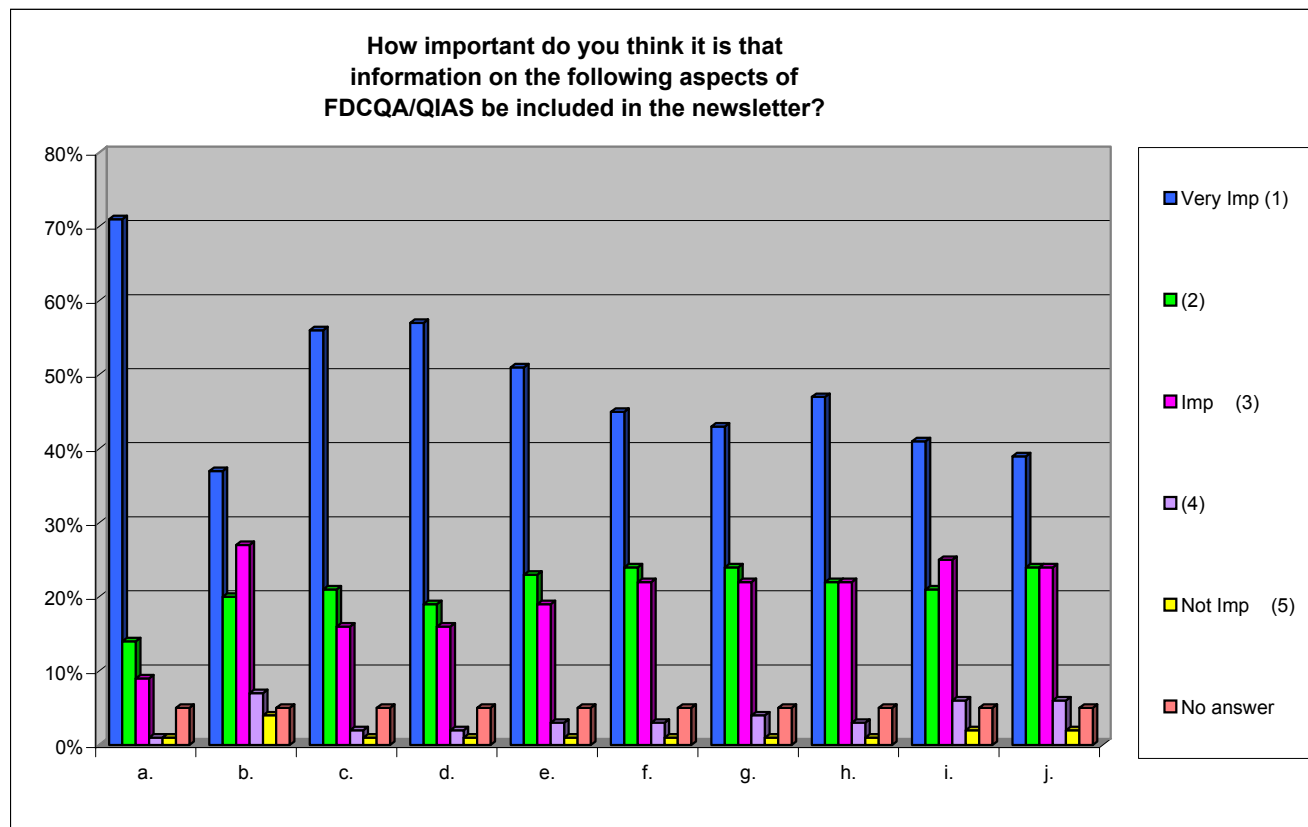


**8. How important do you think it is that information on the following aspects of FDCQA/QIAS be included in *Putting Children First*:**

	Very Imp (1)	(2) Imp (3)	(4) Not Imp (5)	No answer
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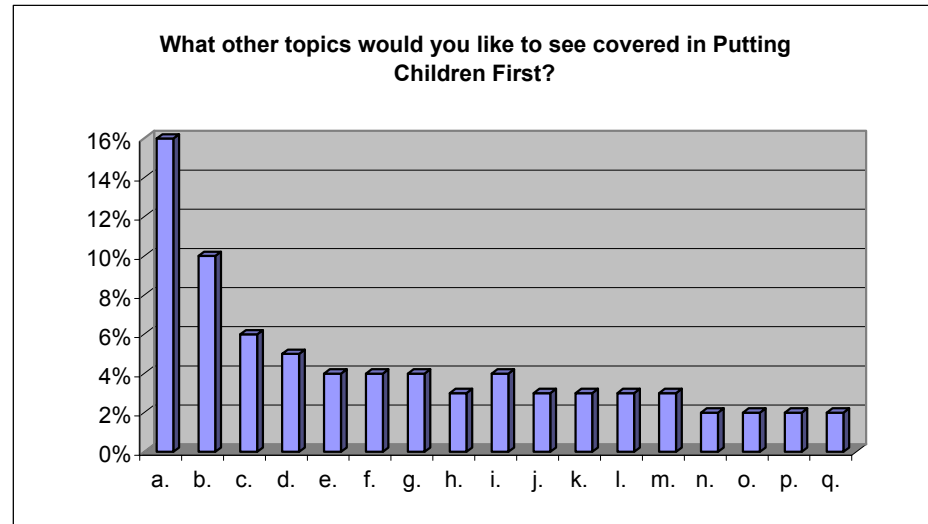
a.	71%	14%	9%	1%	1%	5%
b.	37%	20%	27%	7%	4%	5%
c.	56%	21%	16%	2%	1%	5%
d.	57%	19%	16%	2%	1%	5%
e.	51%	23%	19%	3%	1%	5%
f.	45%	24%	22%	3%	1%	5%
g.	43%	24%	22%	4%	1%	5%
h.	47%	22%	22%	3%	1%	5%
i.	41%	21%	25%	6%	2%	5%
j.	39%	24%	24%	6%	2%	5%

- a. Meeting the FDCQA/QIAS Principles
- b. Registration (Step1)
- c. Self-study Process (Step 2)
- d. Validation Visit (Step 3)
- e. Interviews with Validators
- f. Moderation (Step 4)
- g. Interviews with Moderators
- h. Accreditation Decision (Step 5)
- i. Administration of the FDCQA/QIAS
- j. Features on individual services



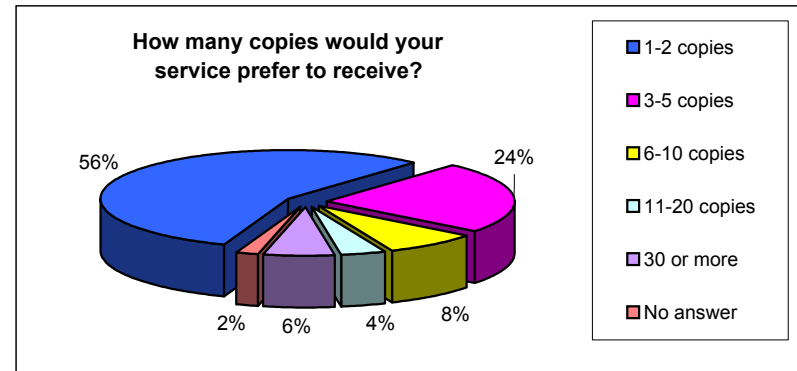
**9. What other topics would you like to see covered in *Putting Children First*?**

Tips on how to get Accredited	a.	16%
Profiles on individual services	b.	10%
Management and staffing issues	c.	6%
Articles for parents or on how to get parents involved	d.	5%
Programming and evaluation	e.	4%
Useful resources or where to get more information	f.	4%
Health safety and nutrition	g.	4%
OH&S in child care	h.	3%
More information on Validation	i.	4%
Multiculturalism and diversity	j.	3%
Policy Development	k.	3%
Child Development and how children learn	l.	3%
Feedback column/letters to the editor	m.	3%
Licensing and Regulations, Broadband, government	n.	2%
Behaviour management	o.	2%
Practical ideas (recipes, arts and crafts)	p.	2%
Networking with other services	q.	2%



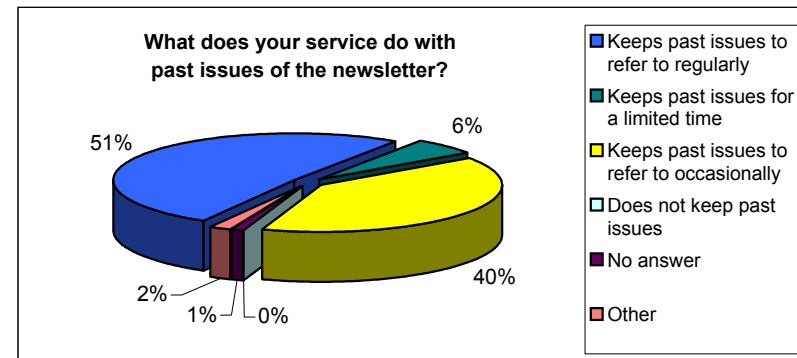
**10. We currently post 2 copies of *Putting Children First* to every service. How many copies would your service prefer to receive?**

1-2 copies	56%
3-5 copies	24%
6-10 copies	8%
11-20 copies	4%
30 or more	6%
No answer	2%



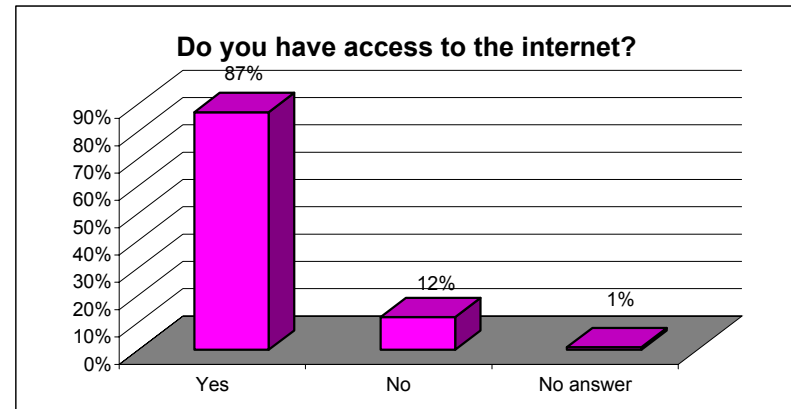
**11. What does your service do with past issues of *Putting Children First*?**

Keeps past issues to refer to regularly	51%
Keeps past issues for a limited time	6%
Keeps past issues to refer to occasionally	40%
Does not keep past issues	0%
No answer	1%
Other	2%



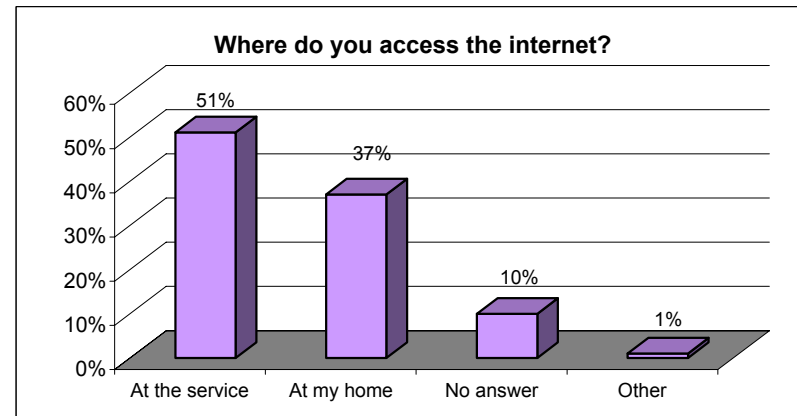
**12. Do you have access to the internet?**

Yes 87%  
No 12%  
No answer 1%



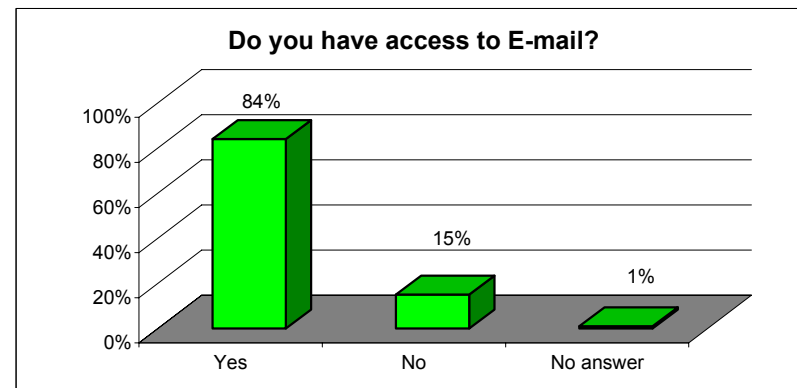
**If YES, where do you access the internet?**

At the service 51%  
At my home 37%  
No answer 10%  
Other 1%



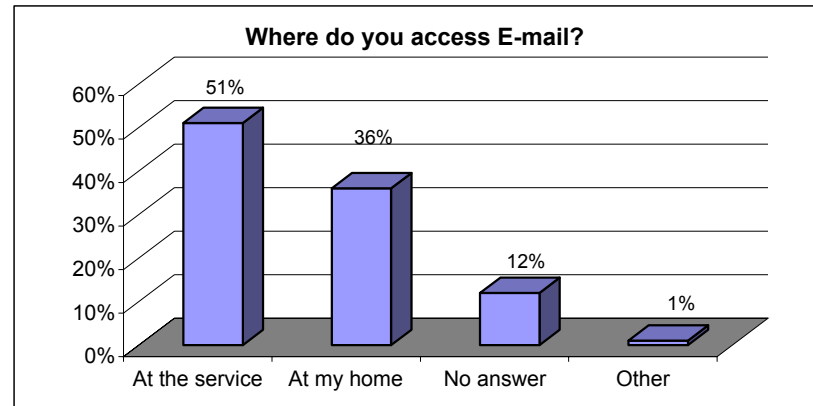
**13. Do you have access to E-mail?**

Yes 84%  
No 15%  
No answer 1%



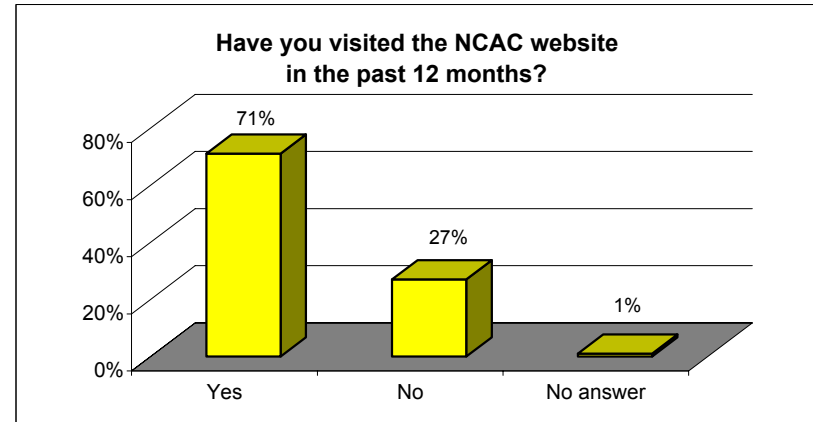
**If YES, where do you access E-mail?**

At the service	51%
At my home	36%
No answer	12%
Other	1%



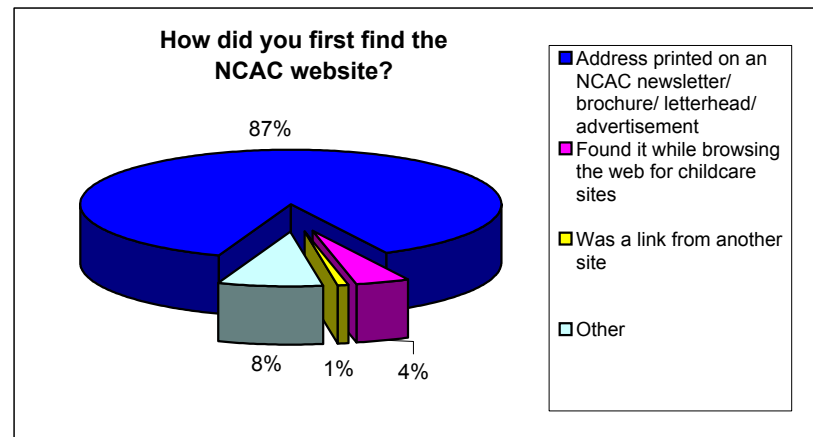
**14. Have you visited the NCAC website in the past 12 months?**

Yes	71%
No	27%
No answer	1%



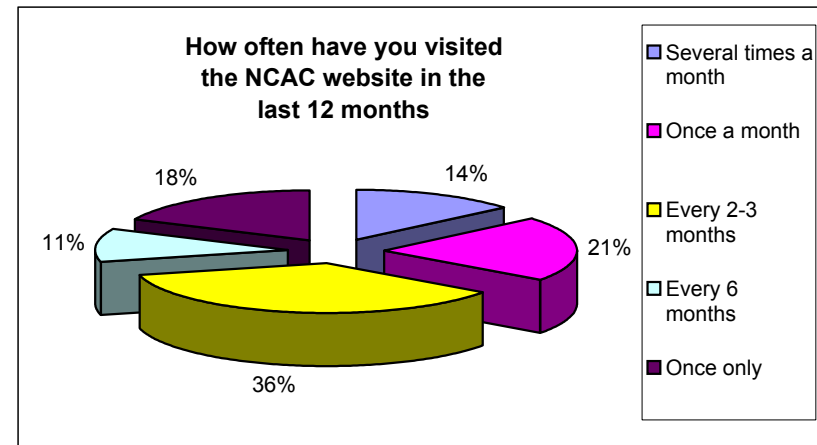
**15. How did you first find the NCAC website?**

Address printed on an NCAC newsletter/ brochure/ letterhead/ advertisement	87%
Found it while browsing the web for childcare sites	4%
Was a link from another site	1%
Other	8%



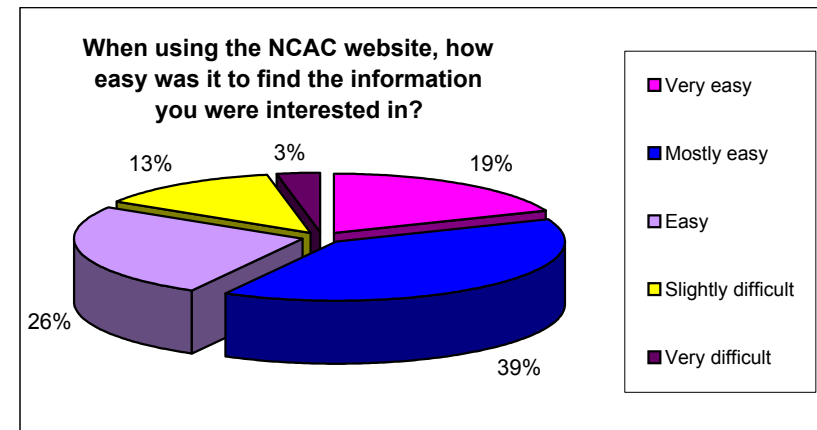
**16. How often have you visited the NCAC website in the last 12 months?**

Several times a month	14%
Once a month	21%
Every 2-3 months	36%
Every 6 months	11%
Once only	18%



**17. When using the NCAC website, how easy was it to find the information you were interested in?**

Very easy	19%
Mostly easy	39%
Easy	26%
Slightly difficult	13%
Very difficult	3%

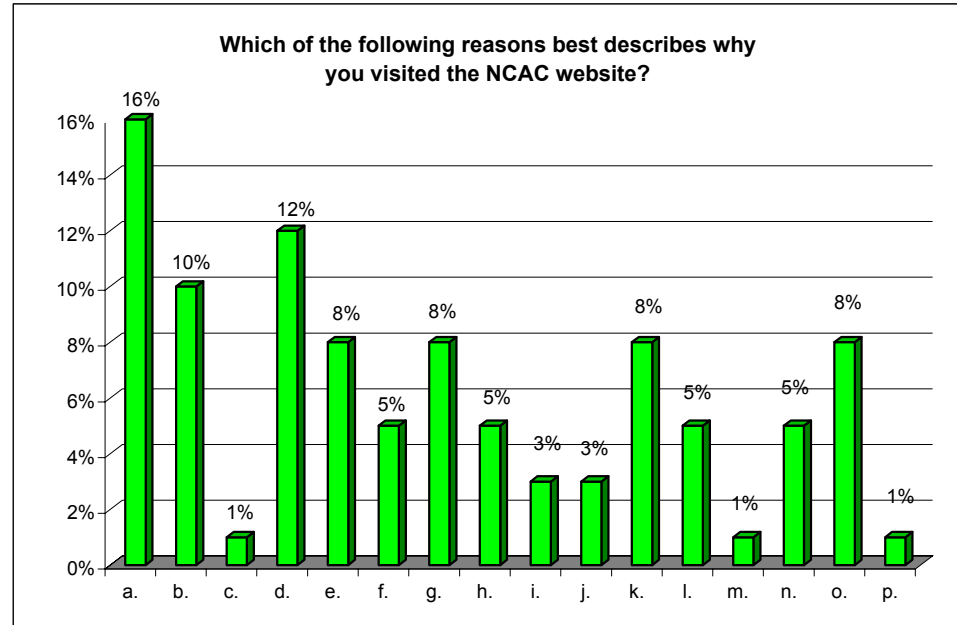




**18. Which of the following reasons best describes why you visited the NCAC website?**

- a. 16%
- b. 10%
- c. 1%
- d. 12%
- e. 8%
- f. 5%
- g. 8%
- h. 5%
- i. 3%
- j. 3%
- k. 8%
- l. 5%
- m. 1%
- n. 5%
- o. 8%
- p. 1%

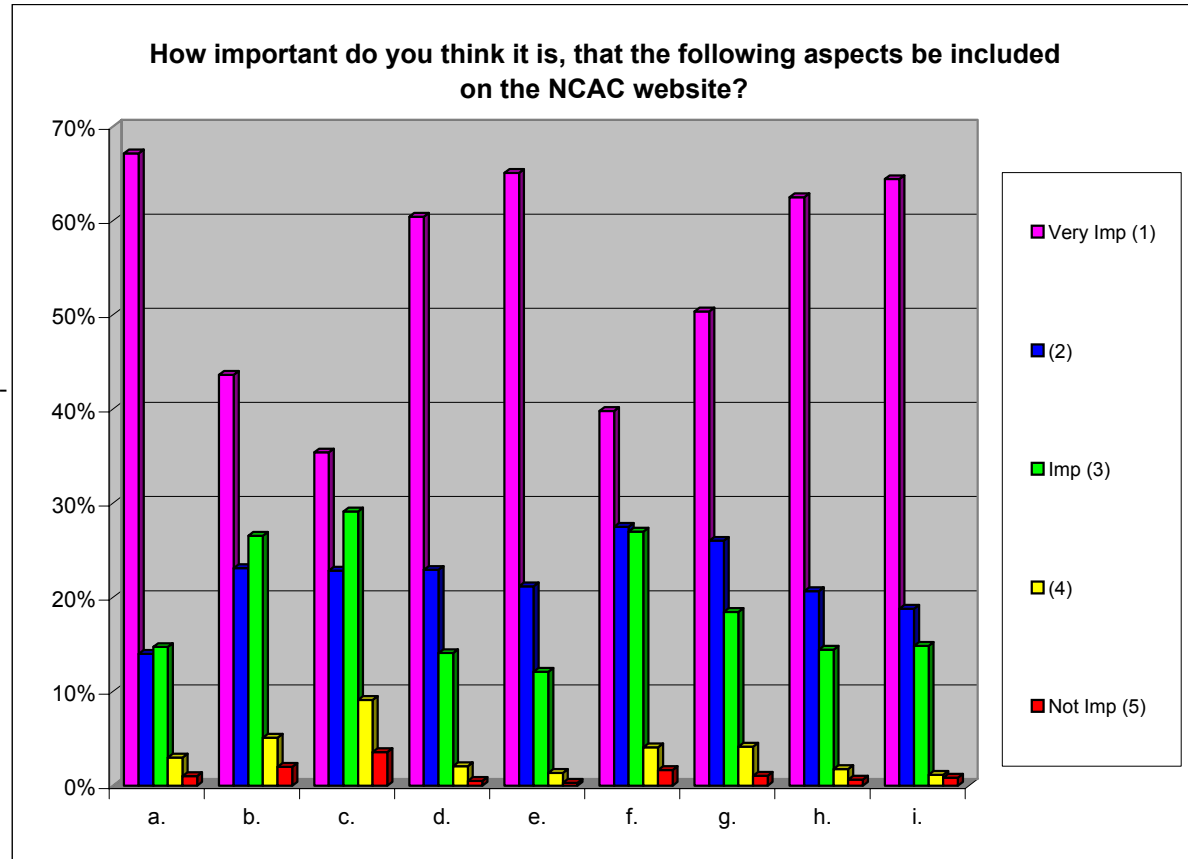
- a. To find general information about the Quality Assurance Systems
- b. For help with completing our Self-study Report
- c. To see a past copy of Putting Children First newsletter
- d. To prepare for the Validation visit
- e. To view any changes to the NCAC website
- f. To print a form - e.g. Registration Form, Order Form etc
- g. To view or print FDCQA/QIAS Support Document or other info sheet
- h. To view or print a copy of an FDCQA/QIAS publication
- i. To become a Validator/Moderator
- j. To use the On-line Training module for FDCQA/QIAS
- k. For information suitable for parents
- l. To search the list of child care services registered with NCAC
- m. To link to another organisations website
- n. No particular reason, just browsing
- o. No answer
- p. Other



**19. How important do you think it is, that the following aspects be included on the NCAC website?**

	Very Imp (1)	(2) Imp (3)	(4) Imp (5)	Not Imp	
a.	67%	14%	15%	3%	1%
b.	44%	23%	27%	5%	2%
c.	35%	23%	29%	9%	4%
d.	60%	23%	14%	2%	1%
e.	65%	21%	12%	1%	0%
f.	40%	28%	27%	4%	2%
g.	50%	26%	18%	4%	1%
h.	63%	21%	14%	2%	1%
i.	64%	19%	15%	1%	1%

- a. Printable copies of FDCQA/QIAS publications (eg the Handbook)
- b. Contact details & website links for other children's services
- c. Search facility for finding child care services in the local area
- d. Information for parents about quality child care
- e. Information for services about the FDCQA/QIAS
- f. Information for students and researchers
- g. On-line training about the FDCQA/QIAS
- h. Printable copies of forms (eg Registration form, Order Form etc)
- i. Printable copies of FDCQA/QIAS Support Documents - Steps 1 to 5

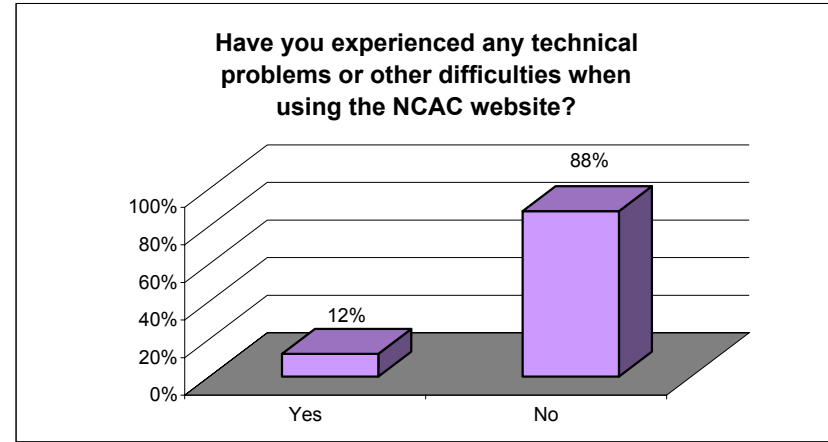


**20. Have you experienced any technical problems or other difficulties when using the NCAC website?**

Yes	12%
No	88%

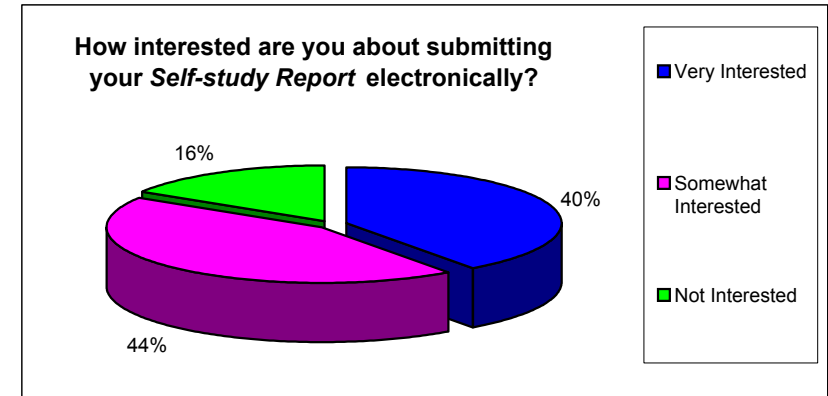
**If YES, please describe the nature of the problem or difficulty you have experienced**

Respondents mostly indicated issues with downloading and printing PDF documents.



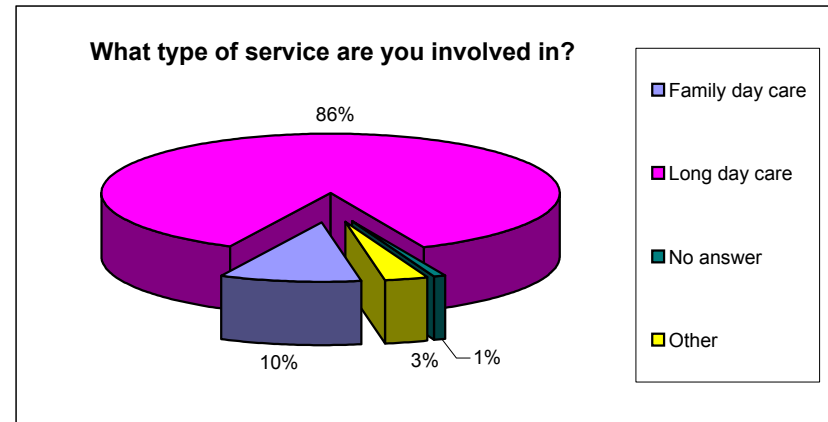
**21. NCAC is looking at technology that will enable services to receive and submit their *Self-study Report* via e-mail or the Internet rather than through the post. How interested are you about submitting your Self-study report electronically?**

Very Interested	40%
Somewhat Interested	44%
Not Interested	16%



**22. What type of service are you involved in?**

Family day care	10%
Long day care	86%
No answer	1%
Other	3%

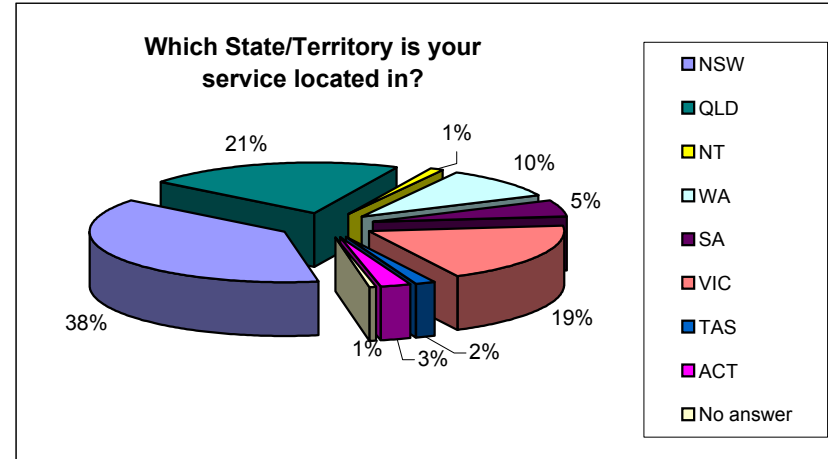


**23. What is your position in the service?**

Vast majority of respondents were the Director, followed by the Coordinator.

**24. Which State/Territory is your service located in?**

NSW	38%
QLD	21%
NT	1%
WA	10%
SA	5%
VIC	19%
TAS	2%
ACT	3%
No answer	1%
	99%



**25. Which of the following best describes the location of your service?**

Capital city centre or suburbs	49%
Regional area centre or suburbs	24%
Large rural town	11%
Small rural town	10%
Remote rural areas and towns	4%
No answer	1%
Other	1%
	100%

