

National Quality Framework Information Forum



This forum

- Provide information about the COAG reforms.
- Update on implementation activities.
- An opportunity to hear your views.

Overview of the COAG decision



The National Quality Framework

New Framework agreed by the Council of Australian Governments on 7 December 2009. It comprises:

- a National Quality Standard (seven quality areas)
- a new ratings system to complement the NQS
- streamlined regulatory system
- a new national body.

Implemented progressively from 1 July 2010, as a fully operational system to commence on 1 January 2012.

Reviews – National Quality Framework

- Review in early 2013: including progress towards meeting new qualification requirements for early childhood teachers
- Review of NQF in 2014: content of Standard (including scope for additional gains), implementation, workforce availability, governance and regulatory agencies.
- Another review is expected in 2019

Services

The new national framework will apply to:

- Long Day Care (LDC)
- Family Day Care (FDC)
- Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) and
- Preschool

Budget based, MACS, mobile services and occasional care services not included at this stage

Arrangements for preschools within schools

- National Quality Standard will apply
- National Quality Framework will support comparability between in-school and LDC/FDC preschool programs
- Regulatory arrangement will take account of existing school quality assurance procedures
- Details to be advised when finalised

National Quality Standard

Seven quality areas

- Educational program and practice
- Children's health and safety
- Physical environment
- Staffing arrangements
- Relationships with children
- Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- Leadership and service management

New Staffing Arrangements

| | Age group | Educator-to-child ratio | Timeframe for compliance |
|--|---|--|--------------------------|
| Long Day Care and Preschool | Birth to 24 months | 1:4 | 1 January 2012 |
| | 25 to 35 months | 1:5 | 1 January 2016 |
| | 36 months to school age | 1:11 | 1 January 2016 |
| Family Day Care | Mixed age groups of children | 1:7 with a maximum of four children not yet attending school | 1 January 2014 |
| OSHC | The National Quality Standard and ratings system will also apply to OSHC but at this stage no national standards for educator-to-child ratios or staff qualifications are proposed. | | |

New Qualification Requirements (LDC and preschool)

By 1 January 2014:

- At least 50 per cent of educators in LDC and preschool services to have (or be actively engaged in working towards) a Diploma level early childhood education and care qualification or above
- Other educators to have (or be actively engaged in working towards) a Certificate III level early childhood education and care qualification or equivalent

New Qualification Requirements (FDC)

By 1 January 2014:

- Family Day Care coordinators will need to have a Diploma-level early childhood education and care qualification or above.
- All family day care educators will need to have (or be actively working towards), a minimum of a Certificate III level early childhood education and care qualification or equivalent.

Qualifications of educators ⁽¹⁾

Nationally, by 1 January 2014:

- an early childhood teacher in attendance some of the time for LDC and preschool services with less than 25 children
- an early childhood teacher in attendance whenever the LDC and preschool service is provided to 25 children or more

No national standards for educator to child ratios or educator qualifications have been set in OSHC at this stage.

Qualifications of educators ⁽²⁾

Nationally, by 1 January 2020, a second early childhood teacher or another suitably qualified leader in attendance at the service:

- for at least half the time the service is provided to 60 children or more, and
- whenever the service is provided to more than 80 children.

Early Years Learning Framework

- Australia's first national early childhood learning framework
 - a key component of the new National Quality Agenda
 - required for use in the new National Quality Standard (Educational Program and Practice)

OSHC Learning Framework

- Work has commenced on developing a National Outside School Hours Care Learning Framework
 - Will be modelled on the EYLF for consistency
 - Will ensure children of school age have opportunities to engage in leisure/play-based learning experiences, which are responsive to the needs, interests and choices of the children attending outside school hours care what ever the type of service.

A New Ratings System

A five point ratings scale

- Excellent
- High Quality
- National Quality Standard
- Operating Level
- Unsatisfactory

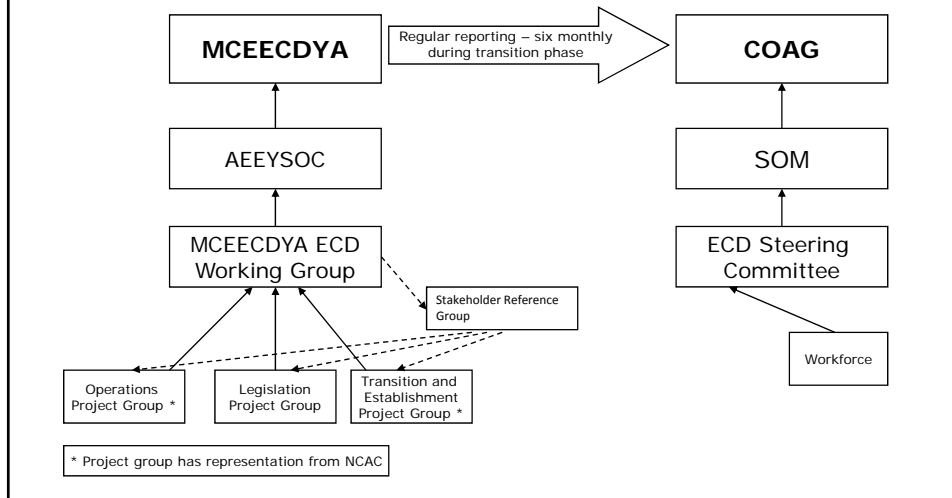
National Applied Laws Legislation

- New system established through a national applied laws.
- Involves a host jurisdiction (Victoria) passing the national applied laws legislation (Act and regulations), with other States and Territories passing the legislation by reference.
 - WA will pass its own corresponding legislation
- The legislation will bring together all the necessary provisions to govern the operations of the new system, and replace existing state and territory Acts and Regulations.

Implementation of COAG decision



Governance Arrangements



Stakeholder Reference Group

- SRG has been established, and first met in March 2010
- Comprises representatives from key early childhood sector organisations (service providers, early childhood professionals, school principals, educators and unions)
- Will meet regularly during implementation
- States and territories will consult through their usual Advisory Groups
- Will provide feedback on issues referred by ECD WG.
- We are also happy to get feedback directly from anyone involved in the sector – details are provided later .

Key design features of new system from January 2012

- A simpler, streamlined system
- Services will maintain their relationship with State and Territory authorities
- Will reduce regulatory burden on services
- Maximises national consistency, without losing the best of existing arrangements
- Focus on both quality improvement and mandatory minimum standards
- Consistent across settings, while recognising diversity (eg, preschools in schools)

The underlying principles

- Key principles behind the new system include:
 - focus on quality outcomes and ongoing quality improvement
 - minimum standards will apply and be enforceable
 - clarity
 - transparency of assessment and ratings
 - participatory approach
 - evidence based
 - reduces administrative burden on services
 - applicability across locations and settings
 - alignment with the EYLF

Key milestones for Transition

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| COAG Announcement | 7 December 2009 |
| Develop joint strategies with NCAC, States and Territories for quality assurance and licensing during the transition period. | February/May 2010 |
| Testing of assessment process with ~ 20 services | June 2010 |
| Commence provisional assessment (rolling program) | From July 2010 |
| All legislation passed | Mid 2011 |
| Preparation for NCAC hand-over to new body | From mid 2011 |
| New system formally commences, new body fully operational | 1 January 2012 |

Transition period provides opportunity to:

- Test and refine the assessment process
- Communicate NQS to the sector, identify any gaps in current practice to be addressed prior to implementation
- Involve the sector in design and development of the system prior to January 2012

Establishing the infrastructure

Key infrastructure activities include:

- national body fully operational by 1 January 2012
 - directed by a 13 member Board, with 1 member nominated by each State and Territory; 4 members nominated by Commonwealth; 1 independent Chair
- set up a national information technology system by 1 January 2012
- manage the transition of responsibility from the current accreditation arrangements to the new regulatory framework (including ceasing the operations of the National Childcare Accreditation Council and the Accreditation Decisions Review Committee)

New National Body ⁽¹⁾

The new National Body will:

- guide the implementation of the integrated national regulatory system
- advise the Ministerial Council on the National Quality system, including any amendments for consideration
- ensure uniformity in the application and enforcement of the standards and rating levels
- undertake broad research and evaluation activities

New National Body ⁽²⁾

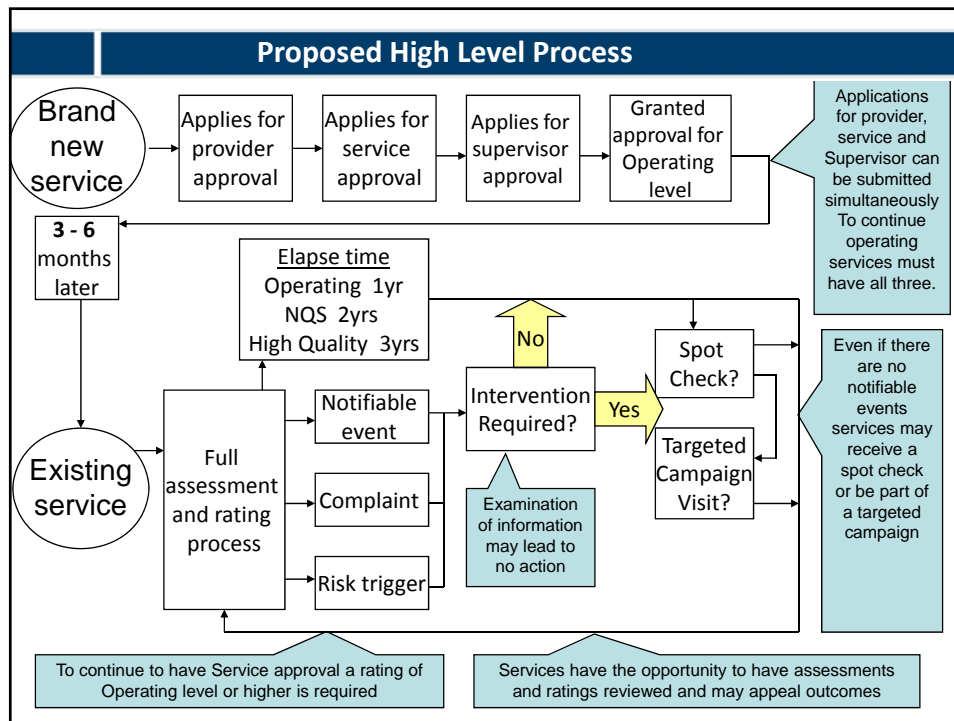
- undertake education and awareness raising
- reduce unnecessary regulatory burden on services as much as possible;
- maintain a national register of approved providers, services and supervisors/key contacts as well as national data on assessment and regulation of services;
- drive continuous quality improvement;
- determine the approval, rating assessment, audit, compliance and sanction regimes.

Moving to a new system



Moving to the new system – first steps

- Governments committed to begin assessment and rating against the National Quality Standard from 1 July 2010
- Meeting this commitment requires:
 - developing an assessment and ratings process across the seven quality areas in the National Quality Standard
 - developing a strategy for bringing services into that assessment and ratings process from 1 July 2010



Earned autonomy and the risk based approach

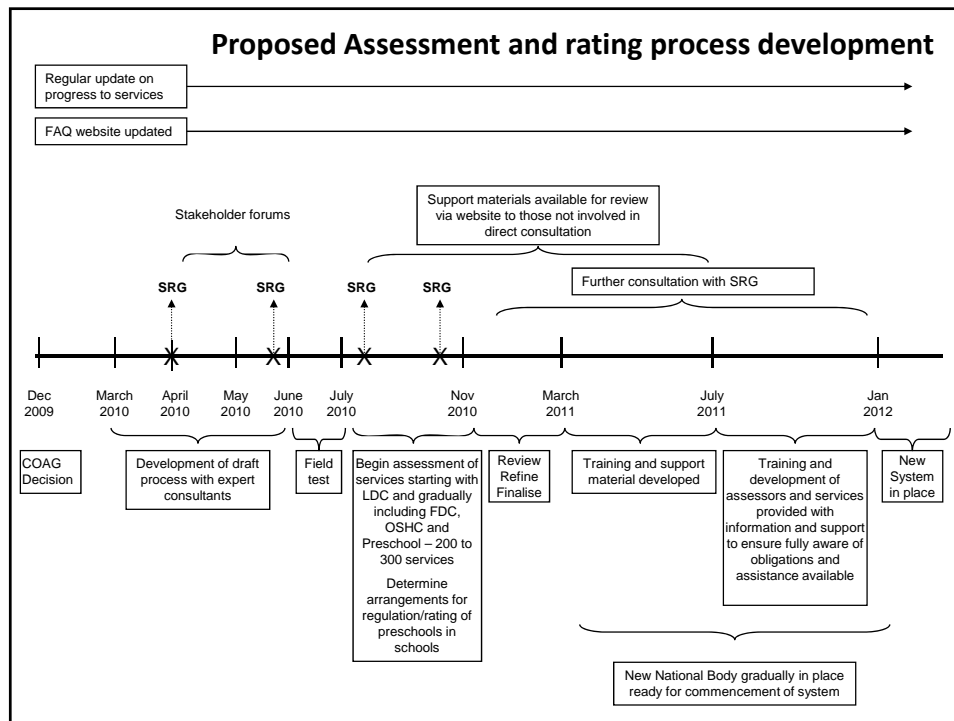
- 'High quality' services will be assessed on a three yearly cycle
- 'National Quality Standard' services will be assessed on a two year cycle
- 'Operating Level' services will be assessed annually
- The new system will retain spot checks and targeted campaign visits across all quality levels.

Arrangements for preschools within schools

- NQS may be administered through existing government quality assurance procedures
- Comparable to broader NQS assessment
- Consideration to be given by individual jurisdictions where there may be multiple regulators

Assessment and ratings process

- Initial focus on development of assessment guidelines for the seven quality areas
- Template and guidelines for the Quality Improvement Plan – following self assessment services will briefly document quality improvement strategies
- Expert advice in assessment and measurement is being provided by the Australian Council for Education Research
- Initial focus on Long Day Care services with full process to be adapted to Family Day Care, Outside School Hours Care and preschool settings in parallel with commencement of assessment of Long Day Care settings from 1 July 2010



Field testing the new System ⁽¹⁾

- A draft assessment process, including a self-assessment and Quality Improvement Plan, supported by clear guidelines, will be trialled by a group of 20 volunteer LDC services in June 2010
- Minimising administration burden a focus of process development and implementation

Field testing the new System ⁽²⁾

- Services will experience the whole process and receive an assessment report which will provide feedback on how they compare with the National Quality Standard, description of strengths and areas to focus on for improvement.
- They will be provided with a provisional indicative rating.
- They will be asked to provide feedback on the process (including clarity of guidance, rigour of the process and quality of feedback provided) and an opportunity to discuss the rating process.
- This will inform the process to begin in July 2010.

Provisional assessment begins from July 2010

- From July 2010, starting with a small number of volunteer LDC services, assessment and rating against the new National Quality Standard begins;
- Services will need to continue to meet state and territory licensing requirements as the new standard will not be enforceable until 1 January 2012;
- Family Day Care, Outside School Hours Care and preschools to come on board during this period, as assessment and rating process progressively developed.

From January 2011 to June 2011

- Analysis of assessments from July to November 2010 used to further refine process
- The objective is to finalise the process by March 2011
- Training and support material developed for assessors and services

From July 2011 to 1 January 2012

- Training and development of assessment and regulation staff undertaken
- Services provided information and support materials to ensure they have the opportunity to be fully aware of obligations and the assistance available

More information

More information on the National Quality Framework can be found at:

www.mychild.com.au
www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood

You can provide comments and ask further questions via our Enquiries email at ececquality@deewr.gov.au

Questions, comments

