

NQF

4 THE QUALITY AREAS

What are the quality areas my service will be assessed against?

Disclaimer: As the national Regulations are still in draft form, the content of this fact sheet is subject to change.

THE NEW NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK (NQF) COMMENCES FROM THE BEGINNING OF 2012.

This fact sheet, the fourth of a series produced for children's services by the Professional Support Co-ordinator's Alliance, summarises the basics that services need to know about the NQF.

Under the NQF all services will be assessed against the National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care.

The National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care consists of 7 quality areas, 23 standards and 65 elements.

QUALITY AREAS

There are seven quality areas in the National Quality Standard.

The seven quality areas are:

1. Educational program and practice
2. Children's health and safety
3. Physical environment
4. Staffing arrangements
5. Relationships with children
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
7. Leadership and service management

The **quality areas** are aspects of service provision which are critical to quality, critical to making early education and care services and outside school hours care services as high a quality as possible.

The **standards** under each quality area outline what services have to do meet the standard. These are the essential requirements your service has to meet.

Each standard has a number of **elements**. These are what the standard looks like in quality practice.

THE STANDARDS ABOUT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PRACTICE:

- ▶ The educational program and practice is stimulating, engaging and enhances children's learning and development. In school age care services, the program nurtures the development of life skills and complements children's experiences, opportunities and relationships at school, at home and in the community.
- 1.1 The Early Years Learning Framework (or other approved learning framework) informs the development of a program for each child that enhances their learning and development.
- 1.2 The program for each child takes into account their strengths, capabilities, culture, interests and experiences.

THE STANDARDS ABOUT CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY:

- ▶ Every child's health and wellbeing is safeguarded and promoted.
- 2.1 Each child's health is promoted.
- 2.2 Healthy eating and physical activity are embedded in the program for children.
- 2.3 Each child is protected.

THE STANDARDS ABOUT PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS:

- ▶ The physical environment is safe, suitable and provides a rich and diverse range of experiences which promote children's learning and development.

3.1 The design and location of the premises is appropriate for the operation of a service.

3.2 The environment is inclusive, promotes competence, independent exploration and learning through play.

THE STANDARDS ABOUT STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS:

- ▶ Staffing arrangements create a safe and predictable environment for children and support warm, respectful relationships. Qualified and experienced educators and co-ordinators encourage children's active engagement in the learning program. Positive relationships among educators, co-ordinators and staff contribute to an environment where children feel emotionally safe, secure and happy.

4.1 Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development and ensure their safety and wellbeing.

4.2 Educators, co-ordinators and staff have the skills and knowledge to support children's learning, health, safety and wellbeing.

4.3 Educators, co-ordinators and staff are respectful and ethical.

THE STANDARDS ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN:

- ▶ Relationships that are responsive, respectful and promote children's sense of security and belonging free them to explore the environment and engage in learning.

5.1 Respectful and equitable relationships are developed and maintained with each child.

5.2 Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with other children and adults.

5.3 Each child's behaviour, interactions and relationships are guided effectively.

THE STANDARDS ABOUT COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES:

- ▶ Collaborative relationships with families are fundamental to achieve quality outcomes for children. Community partnerships that focus on active communication, consultation and collaboration also contribute to children's learning and wellbeing.

6.1 Respectful supportive relationships with families are developed and maintained.

6.2 Families are supported in their parenting role and their values and beliefs about child rearing are respected.

6.3 The service collaborates with other organisations and service providers to enhance children's learning and wellbeing.

6.4 The service participates in the community.

THE STANDARDS ABOUT LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE MANAGEMENT:

- ▶ Effective leadership contributes to sustained quality relationships and environments that facilitate children's learning and development. Well documented policies and practices that are developed and regularly evaluated in partnership with educators, co-ordinators, staff and families contribute to the ethical management of the service. There is a focus on continuous improvement.

7.1 Effective leadership promotes a positive organisational culture and builds a professional learning community.

7.2 There is a commitment to continuous improvement.

7.3 Management and administrative systems enable the effective provision of a quality service.

7.4 Adults working with children and those engaged in management of the service or residing on the premises are fit and proper.

7.5 Grievances and complaints are managed effectively.

7.6 Information is exchanged with families on a regular basis.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE QUALITY AREAS OF THE NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK?

READ THE:

- ▶ *National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care*, Council of Australian Governments, December 2009;

www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy_Agenda

- ▶ *Draft Guide to the National Quality Standard Education and Care Services – Centre-based and family day care – Phase two*

www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy_Agenda/Documents/GuideNationalQualityStandard.pdf

BOTH DOCUMENTS CAN ALSO BE FOUND AT: www.pscalliance.org.au

The PSC Alliance has prepared a series of NQF Fact Sheets as well as newsletters and e-tips which your service can receive

by email. To find out more or to get copies please contact your state or territory Professional Support Co-ordinator.

Professional Support Co-ordinators are funded by the Australian Government under the Inclusion and Professional Support Program (IPSP) to provide professional development and support to child care services to enhance the provision of high quality services to children and families.



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