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Issue 3

A commitment to continuous improvement

FRIDAY 24 JUNE

In the National Quality Standard, Standard 7.2 is: There is a commitment to continuous improvement.

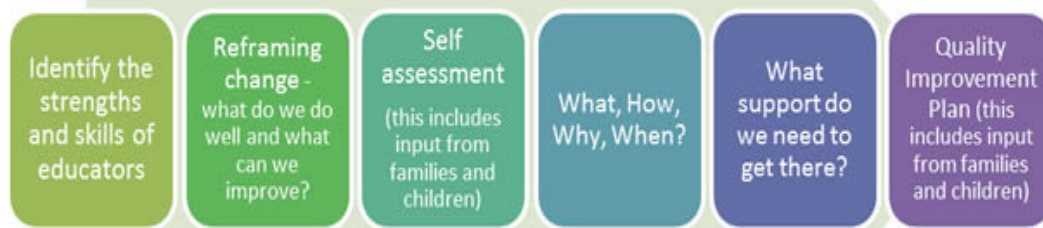
The Standard prompts us to consider how we motivate and support continuous improvements within our services.

From January 2012, services will demonstrate continuous improvement by completing a self assessment and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) as part of their assessment against the National Quality Standard (NQS). To demonstrate commitment to continuous improvement, the QIP must be a living document that instigates, and promotes, quality education and care for children.

So where do we begin?

What might the continuous improvement process look like?

This process will look different in every service, but may look something like this:



Identifying strengths and skills

Team dynamics are an important part of driving continuous improvement. Each educator is unique in what strengths they bring to a service. To build a strengths based approach to change, we must firstly identify and value the strengths of each individual educator.

Our every day practices as educators see us identifying children's strengths, interests and needs, however, sometimes we may forget to do this for ourselves and our teams.

Remember - our biggest asset is the strengths and skills of our educators.

Prioritise identifying strengths a part of your team and staff meetings. Encouraging educators to showcase their strengths builds empowerment and motivation as well as supports continuous improvement within the service. This should assist with finding out who can lead aspects of change within the service – change is not a process that can be led by one individual!

Reframing change

Reframing the change process is about redefining change and looking at it in a different way - in a way that makes it manageable, do-able and proactive. Change and continuous improvement often go unnoticed. By highlighting changes we have already made, we open new pathways for continuing improvement. Focusing on what has been achieved builds positive energy towards future planning.

Empowering educators to be a part of the continuous improvement process supports their sense of 'Belonging' within the service. To start this journey, it is important that we understand that continuous improvement is achievable when every educator is committed to a culture of pursuing quality. Without this commitment, continuous improvement will be an ongoing struggle.

The next step

Completing a self assessment process with the support and involvement of management, educators, families and children is an important step in working out what improvements need to be made. Consider:

- What would you like to improve?
- Who will oversee this process?
- Who will oversee specific tasks?
- Have realistic timeframes for improvements and change been established?
- What support do we need to get there?
- How do we monitor our progress?

This process will support the development of a reflective and inclusive Quality Improvement Plan that enhances professional development and continuous improvement.

For a copy of the Draft Self Assessment and Quality Improvement Planning Process document, go to www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy_Agenda/Documents/SelfAssessmentQIPPlanningProcess.pdf

Are you looking for professional development opportunities on the National Quality Framework?

Visit the Professional Support Co-ordinator's website for your State or Territory to see what opportunities are available. www.pscalliance.org.au

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.