

National Quality Agenda

UPDATE

1. National Quality Standards (NQS) for early childhood education and care
2. An integrated national regulation (licensing) and accreditation (quality assurance) system
3. A quality rating system
4. The National Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

1. National Quality Standards

A single set of improved national standards that encompass and integrate education and care,.....that initially apply to LDC, FDC, pre-school services and OHSC services regardless of location or setting.

2. Integrated national regulation and accreditation

An integrated national system for administering the National Quality Standards and Ratings Framework, and a new body assuring national consistency

A unified national system to replace current licensing and quality assurance processes

Aims to prevent duplication of regulation across levels of government or sectors, with individual services needing to deal with only one organisation for regulation against the standards

The new National body will be known as the:

**Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority
(ACECQA)**

3. Quality rating system

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

4. Early Years Learning Framework

- Australia's first national early childhood curriculum framework. Endorsed on 2nd July 2009
- Documentation being prepared for professionals on how to implement the Framework
- It will enhance children's learning from birth to five years of age, including in early childhood education programs in the year before formal schooling...
- The framework will underpin the National Quality Standards and the COAG commitment to universal access to quality early learning in the year before formal schooling

Universal Access

A Commonwealth Government commitment to ensure that by 2013 all children will have access to 15 hours of a quality early childhood education or “pre-school” program per week, for 40 weeks of the year, in the year before formal schooling.

The program is to be planned and delivered by four year degree qualified early childhood teachers and accessible through a range of settings, government and non-government, including day care centres and stand-alone pre-school services.

NQS - Staffing arrangements

21

	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 changes to educator-to-child ratios or staff qualifications are proposed.		

Qualifications of Educators

By 1st 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.

Qualifications of Educators

By 1st January 2014:

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

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 assessment (rolling program)	From July 2010
Legislation for host jurisdiction	Winter/ Spring 2010
All legislation passed	Mid 2011
Preparation for NCAC hand-over to new body	From late 2011
New system formally commences, new body fully operational	1 January 2012

Aims of the Transition Period

- Develop, test and refine the assessment process, including rating methodology
- Build a rigorous process that is clearly defined, understood and can be consistently applied across all settings and locations
- Provide the sector with an opportunity to understand the NQS and identify any gaps in their current practice that need to be addressed prior to implementation
- Provide the sector with an opportunity to be involved in the design and development of the system prior to January 2012

Current legislation is in place until January 2012 and services should therefore proceed with current legislation, regulation and accreditation processes in the interim period.

The New National Body

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)

ACECQA will be directed by a 13 member Board:

- 1 member nominated by each State and Territory;
- 4 members nominated by Commonwealth;
- 1 independent Chair

ACECQA will have a range of critical functions:

- advising the Ministerial Council on the National Quality system, including any amendments for consideration;
- ensuring uniformity in the application and enforcement of the standards and rating levels;
- undertaking broad research and evaluation activities;
- undertaking education and awareness raising among the sector and broader community;
- ensuring that regulatory burden on services is minimised to the extent possible;
- maintaining a national register of approved providers, services and supervisors/key contacts as well as national data on assessment and regulation of services;
- driving continuous quality improvement;
- determining the approval, rating assessment, audit, compliance and sanction regimes.

Assessment and Ratings

The Assessment Process Team has commenced development of an assessment and ratings process with:

- An initial focus on development of assessment guidelines for the seven quality areas
- Development of a template and guidelines for the Quality Improvement Plan – essentially a self assessment tool for services with the focus on quality improvement strategies
- Expert advice in assessment and measurement to be engaged from early April 2011
- 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

Proposed Assessment and rating process development

Monthly update on progress to services



FAQ website updated



Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) forums

Support materials available for review via website to those not involved in direct consultation

SRG
▲

SRG
▲

SRG
▲

SRG
▲

Further consultation with SRG

X

X

X

X

Dec 2009

March 2010

April 2010

May 2010

June 2010

July 2010

Nov 2010

March 2011

July 2011

Jan 2012

COAG Decision

Development of draft process with expert consultants

Field test

Begin assessment of services starting with LDC and gradually including FDC, OSHC and Preschool – 200 to 300 services

Review Refine Finalise

Training and support material developed

Training and development of assessors and services provided with information and support to ensure fully aware of obligations and assistance available

New System in place

New National Body gradually in place ready for commencement of system

From July 2010 to 1st January 2012

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

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

Overview of proposed assessment process

Step 1:

Letter to participating service, requesting they complete a self-assessment/Quality Improvement Plan

Step 2:

Services complete and return the completed self-assessment/Quality Improvement Plan, including identifying strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement against the National Quality Standard

Step 3:

Assessors review self-assessment/Quality Improvement Plan and review licensing and accreditation history in preparation for an assessment visit

Step 4:

Assessment visit occurs and initial findings discussed

Step 5:

Assessors prepare post assessment report and determine provisional rating.

Step 6:

Services review their report and Quality Improvement Plan in light of feedback if necessary. Provisional Rating published alongside current accreditation outcome.

Example of what the final process might be



Letter sent to service highlighting process and requesting development of Quality Improvement Plan

At the same time the assessor will commence populating assessment against 7 quality areas as much as possible.

QIP received and analysed

Visit occurs finishing with an exit interview

Service provided with opportunity to respond to report, seek further clarification and if not satisfied can request a formal review

Assessment report finalised and provided to the service.

Service accepts report and process finalised

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

www.mychild.com.au

www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood

Challenges for Montessori ELC's and LDC centres

- Compliance and accountability costs
- Evidence of meeting NQS assessments
- Funding for families (CCB, CTR)
- Recognition of Montessori program and Montessori qualifications
- Universal access implementation
- Rating system
- Workforce availability