

NQF News

National Quality Framework Newsletter

AUTUMN 2011

issue #01



SERVICES GET TO HAVE THEIR SAY ABOUT THE NQF

EDUCATORS AND operators from education and care services across Australia have been flocking to a series of consultation forums being run by DEEWR, Early Childhood Australia and State and Territory Regulators around the draft Children's Services Regulations.

The forums have been exceptionally well attended as family day care schemes, out of school hours care services, preschools and long day care services seek to give feedback on the Regulations, and have their questions answered.

From the questions that are being asked at the forums it is clear that services are embracing the NQF but are keen to find out exactly what changes they will have to make at their service to be NQF ready.

Common themes that came out in the questions up to date have been centred around recruitment issues, especially recruitment of qualified educators, potential costs of implementation, timing of changes and issues around the process for assessment and rating.

Many services have discussed areas of the draft Regulations that they believe will be problematic for their services – the 'no swimming pool' requirement for new family day care educators seemed to be an issue of concern for many of those attending.

Services also had much to say about areas where they felt the new Regulations would make their operations easier.

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There is clearly a lot of information for services to get their heads around in the draft Regulations. The new roles of Certified and Nominated supervisors seem to be queried by many forum attendees! ■

A BOX OF GOODIES

EARLY YEARS services across Australia were recently sent a box of NQF related resources from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).

The resources were:

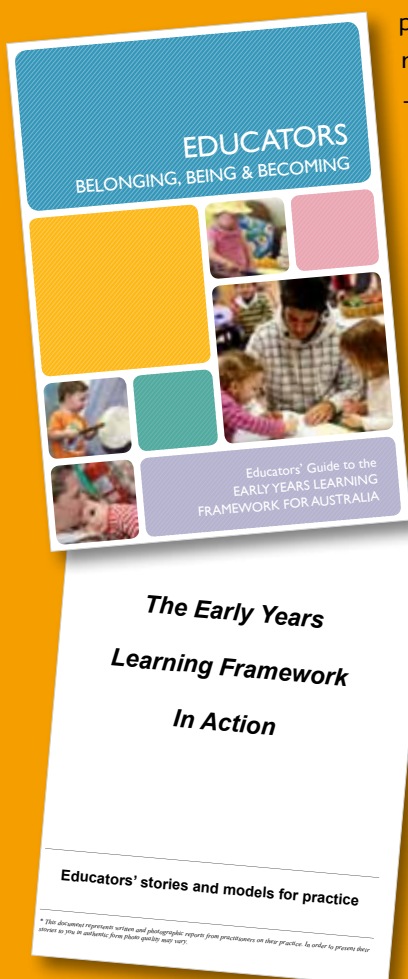
1. **The Educators' Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.** (As part of the rating of services against the National Quality Standard, assessors may look for evidence that you have used this resource.)
2. **The Early Years Learning Framework in Action.** This is an additional resource which is a companion to the Educator's Guide – The Early Years Learning Framework in Action. It contains educators' stories and models of their plans for, and outcomes of, children's learning. It also contains questions to provoke thinking and to generate discussion in relation to the principles, practices and learning outcomes of the Framework.
3. The resource package **Respect, Reflect, Relate** from South Australia is an assessment tool that some services have found useful for critiquing and informing

practice through self-reflection and inquiry.

The first two resources were published by DEEWR to assist educators in implementing the EYLF, the third, Reflect, Respect and Relate is an assessment resource that services may find helpful.

Services which have not yet received their copies of these resources should get them very soon. Any service which did not receive theirs should contact **DEEWR** at EYLF@deewr.gov.au

Additional copies of the *Educator's Guide* and the *Framework in Action* can be downloaded from the PSCA website at www.pscalliance.org.au ■



READ THE STANDARD

PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT Co-ordinators are often asked about the best way to prepare for the NQF.

The National Quality Framework has generated a lot of documents to contribute to educator understanding. Without doubt, the most important document for services to read is the actual National Quality Standard, The National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care.

Think of the Standard as your road map to the National Quality Framework. It is the Standard that your service will be assessed against. The Standard outlines the seven Quality Areas and their Standards and Elements. The Standard provides the base information your service needs to know about the National Quality Framework. As the Standard is only 36 pages, it is a document you can download and copy for all educators.

If the Standard is the roadmap to the NQF, the Draft Guide to the National Quality Standard Education and Care Services – Centre-based and family day care can be likened to the 'Lonely Planet Guide' to the NQF.

This guide is only a draft guide, prepared for the testing phase of the NQS. In DEEWR's words 'it is not intended to be, and does not represent, a finalised statement of the policy of the Commonwealth of Australia, and does not constitute professional advice for any particular purpose'. This said, however, it has lots and lots of really useful information for services that want to ensure they understand the Quality Areas in the Standard.

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In the Draft Guide, each Standard is examined in detail, with an outline of how it contributes to quality education and care. The requirements that approved providers must meet are also examined, as well as general and age-specific questions for services to consider under each Standard. The essential part of the Draft Guide is that it provides guidance for the Standard in everyday practice and what the services rating should be for each quality area.

Both the National Quality Standard and the Draft Guide to the National Quality Standard can be downloaded from the National Professional Support Co-ordinator's Alliance at www.pscalliance.org.au ■



NQF: ACTIVELY PREPARING

DANIELLE LAYTON, director of Moverly Children's Centre, says her team of educators at the 39-place long day care centre, is actively working through the National Quality Framework.

'I remind educators that we've still got until January next year – there's plenty of time to prepare.'

The trick, she says, is to 'take a step-by-step approach' to the Framework, and not to overwhelm educators by bombarding them with too much information.

'I try to simplify information by putting it in dot points.'

During a recent monthly educator meeting the team looked specifically at the Draft Regulations.

'I put documents together with tabs pointing out the most relevant sections to read. Rather than pass on a whole copy of the Regulation, I gave them a comparison table which compares the old Regs with the new Regs.'

The team is also 'unpacking' the Seven Quality Areas of the National Quality Standard together. They began this process early, when the NQS was announced last year, and plan to explore each Area in more detail in the coming months.

'We started with Quality Area 1 (Educational Programs and Practice), which to us is all about the Early Years Learning Framework. We were already well versed in the language of the EYLF and had done a lot of reflective practice and programming, so exploring this quality area was a natural choice.'

Ms Layton encourages her team to do lots of reading and to attend as much training on the NQF as possible.

'I encourage educators to keep up to date. They all read many sector publications and attend training sessions through our Professional Support Co-ordinator's Calendar. It can't be the sole responsibility of the director to prepare for the NQF. I get educators to return to the table with ideas. It's about a collaborative approach with educators and families. And I like to delegate – everyone gets a job.'

'No matter what your role, experience, skills or training, everyone needs to understand the NQF and engage with it as a community. It affects all of us.'

This collaborative approach to understanding change extends to the wider family community. Ms Layton often distributes information to families electronically.

'I don't send out anything on paper. Recently, I sent a link about EYLF out to all our families. ■

Images top and below: 'Everyone gets a job,' says Danielle Layton, Director at Moverly Children's Centre, which is actively preparing for the roll out of the National Quality Framework. Children pictured at work and at play.



SCHOOL AGE CARE FRAMEWORK

THE DRAFT framework for school age care My Time, Our Place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia is a key component of the National Quality Framework.

Like the Early Years Learning Framework, it will be incorporated in the National Quality Standard. The Framework for School Age Care, according to DEEWR is 'designed to ensure children in school age care have opportunities to engage in leisure and play-based experiences which are responsive to the needs, interests, and choices of the children'.

Educators working with school age children in outside school hours care, long day care, and family day care services will need to have a thorough understanding of 'My Time, Our Place'.

The Framework for School Age Care builds on the principles, practice and outcomes of the EYLF to accommodate the needs, contexts and age range of children attending school age care services.

A copy of My Time, Our Place can be downloaded from www.pscalliance.org.au ■

MORE NQF QUESTIONS?

DO YOU have questions about the NQF that you are finding hard to get answered? There are now four easy ways to get your NQF related questions answered.

1. The FAQs on the DEEWR website. DEEWR are in the process of updating the existing FAQs on their website with many of the questions coming from the recent round of consultation forums. These can be accessed at: www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy_Agenda
2. Email DEEWR directly at ECECQuality@deewr.gov.au
3. Call the DEEWR National Quality Framework Hotline on 1800 181 088.
4. Call your state or territory **Professional Support Co-ordinator** (see below for phone numbers). ■

DRAFT RELEASED FOR COMMENT

THE DEPARTMENT of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) has now released the draft National Regulations to the Education and Care Services National Law.

Services are being requested to examine the draft Regulations and give feedback to DEEWR about the content of the Regulations. These National Regulations will replace the existing children's services regulations of each state and territory. All children's services that are covered by the National Quality Framework will need to operate under the new National Regulations.

To read and download the draft Regulations go to www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy_Agenda ■

NEED TO TELL FAMILIES ABOUT NQF?

LOOKING FOR information you can share with families at your service about the NQF? DEEWR produced a clear fact sheet early on in the NQF process in early childhood services, just for families. This sheet has been translated into over 20 different languages. These, including the English version, can be downloaded from the DEEWR website from: www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy_Agenda

Please note that these sheets are not suitable to use for families of children in outside school hours care services. ■

CONTACTING PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT CO-ORDINATORS

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. ■

<p>ACT ACT Professional Support Co-ordinator www.actpsc.com.au actpsc@commsatwork.org 1800 228 772</p>	<p>NT Professional Support Co-ordinator Northern Territory www.pscnt.org.au pscnt@childaustralia.org.au 1800 138 662</p>	<p>SA Professional Support Co-ordinator South Australia www.pscsa.org.au enquiries@pscsa.org.au 1800 129 606</p>	<p>VIC Community Child Care Association Resource and Development Unit www.pscvic.org.au receipt@cccinc.org.au 1800 177 017</p>
<p>NSW Children's Services Central www.cscentral.org.au info@cscentral.org.au 1800 157 818</p>	<p>QLD Professional Support Co-ordinator Queensland www.pscq.org.au pscq@workforce.org.au 1800 112 585</p>	<p>TAS Professional Support Co-ordinator Tasmania www.pstas.org.au pscstas@gowrie-tas.com.au 1800 647 718</p>	<p>WA Professional Support Co-ordinator WA www.pscwa.org.au pscwa@childaustralia.org.au 1800 783 768</p>

