Family News

What is the National Quality Standard?
The National Quality Standard (NQS) sets a new benchmark for the quality of children’s education and care services in Australia.
The NQS covers most long day care, family day care, preschool/kindergarten and outside school hours care services.
Services are assessed and rated against seven quality areas, 18 standards and 58 elements that make up the NQS. You can find a link to a table of the standards and elements on the ‘Families’ page on the ACECQA website.
The standards place a greater emphasis on children’s development and education as well as relationships with families, improved educator qualifications, and better service environments.

How is my service assessed?
Every state and territory has a Regulatory Authority that assesses the quality of your child’s service and also investigates complaints and compliance with safety requirements.
Regulatory Authorities have officers who are trained to observe and make consistent judgements about the quality of each service.
When your service is quality rated, it is most likely to be rated as Working Towards, Meeting or Exceeding the NQS.
Ratings are awarded for a maximum of three years. A Working Towards rating may lead to reassessment within 12 months, depending on the service.

What do the ratings mean?
If your service receives an overall rating of Working Towards it means the service has not met at least one of the 58 elements in the NQS. It may have a mix of higher and lower ratings across the seven quality areas.
Working Towards does not mean that the service has failed to meet any of the requirements that pose a risk to the safety, health or wellbeing of children.
An overall rating of Meeting means that your service has met all of the elements in the NQS. The service may have exceeded the standards in some quality areas.
A service that receives an overall rating of Exceeding will have exceeded the standard in at least four or more of the seven quality areas, including two of the ‘key’ areas.
It may take time for services to meet each element in these new, higher standards, which is why the rating of Working Towards is important during this transition phase.

DID YOU KNOW?
About 1 million children from 700,000 families use approved children’s education and care services in Australia.
Source: Australian Child Care Update September 2011

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ACECQA has a wide range of information available for families on our website.

1300 4 ACECQA = 1300 422 327
National Quality Standard Ratings

Most services will receive one of these middle three ratings. A service's overall rating is calculated from its results in the seven quality areas.

**Working Towards National Quality Standard**

The overall rating will be Working Towards if one or more quality areas is rated Working Towards.

**Meeting National Quality Standard**

The overall rating will be Meeting if all quality areas are rated Meeting or higher.

**Exceeding National Quality Standard**

The overall rating will be Exceeding if four or more quality areas are rated Exceeding, including two of the key quality areas, QA1, QA5, QA6, QA7.

**HOW IT COULD LOOK**

- Mix of quality areas rated Meeting and Exceeding, and at least one quality area rated Working Towards.
- All seven quality areas rated Meeting.

**HOW IT COULD LOOK**

- Four or more quality areas rated Exceeding, including two of the key areas.
- All seven quality areas rated Working Towards.

**Significant Improvement Required**

Is given when a service fails to meet requirements in a way that poses an unacceptable risk to the health, wellbeing or safety of children.

National Quality Standard quality areas:

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