

Improvements to assessment and rating

Embedding quality improvement as part of your everyday practice

There are improvements occurring nationally to make assessment and rating (A&R) more effective. This will ensure A&R provides families with confidence in the accuracy and currency of quality ratings. These [changes](#) were announced by ACECQA in late 2022 and include the increased use of partial reassessments and reduced notice periods.

The NSW Department of Education as the Regulatory Authority (NSW Regulatory Authority) for early childhood education and care in NSW will implement these changes in a phased approach. This will start with the increased use of partial reassessment from late-2023 and reduced notice periods beginning in early 2024.

Partial assessment and rating

The implementation of **partial reassessments** will begin with a small number of services who are early adopters. When services are scheduled for a partial reassessment this will include an assessment of **2 to 4 quality areas**, rather than all 7.

The services involved will receive a phone call and support from our Continuous Improvement Team and the NSW Regulatory Authority will work with them to gain feedback and support them through the A&R process.

What this looks like

- The existing rating for the areas not assessed during the partial reassessment will carry over and be combined with assessed areas. This will form the service's overall rating.
- Services must continue to maintain their self-assessment information or Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) including all 7 quality areas. This ensures high-quality practice is maintained across all areas.
- Service providers can nominate one quality area to be included in the partial reassessment.
- The other quality areas selected for assessment will be determined by the Authorised Officer, based on information the NSW Regulatory Authority holds about that service.
- In exceptional circumstances, additional quality areas for assessment may be added at the discretion of the NSW Regulatory Authority. If this occurs, it will be clearly communicated with the service provider during the visit.
- Full assessments will still be conducted where necessary, for example where a service has not yet been rated or the service has transferred to a new provider.
- Partial reassessments will continue to provide an opportunity for services to achieve and maintain an Exceeding rating. Quality uplift will be a consideration when quality areas are selected for reassessment.
- All services including state-regulated services must undergo a full A&R before they will be considered for partial reassessment.



Reduced notice periods

In 2024, the **notice period for A&R** visits will be **reduced to 5 business days**. This change will begin with providers who are early adopters. Services now have access to a new online Self-Assessment and Quality Improvement Planning Portal. The portal is available for services to use at any time, not just before A&R.

The NSW Regulatory Authority will work with participating services to understand their feedback and experience before notice periods are reduced for all A&R visits.

How will this look

- The NSW Regulatory Authority will give 5 business day's notice for A&R visits.
- An Authorised Officer will notify the service provider 5 business days prior to their scheduled A&R of the visit date and for partial reassessments the number of quality areas that will be reassessed.
- Service providers will need to submit their self-assessment information or QIP within 2 days.
- Service providers will need to ensure their self-assessment information or QIP is current and up to date to support ongoing quality improvement that is part of everyday practice, and meets the requirements of the National Regulations.
- For partial reassessments, the Authorised Officer will contact the service to inform them which quality areas will be assessed the day before the visit.

Driving improvement across the sector

These changes are expected to have several benefits, including:

- the ability to conduct more A&R visits, which will improve the currency and accuracy of ratings
- shifting A&R from being something that services prepare for to the NSW Regulatory Authority observing typical daily practice.

Support available

The Continuous Improvement Team is available Monday to Friday to support services with A&R. Early engagement, well before your notification of A&R, will help you feel supported and ready. The team can be contacted via email at ecequalitysupport@det.nsw.edu.au or phone on 1800 619 113.

The Department of Education webpage has further information on [assessment and rating](#).