

Health and Development Checks in ECEC: using the results to inform practice

Participating in the health and development checks (HDC) in early childhood education and care (ECEC) program is a useful way to gather information about children's learning, development and wellbeing. The results of the checks, along with educators' critical reflection and consideration of the effectiveness of their planning and curriculum, can be used to formulate short-and long-term goals for your service as well as learning goals and teaching strategies for individual children in collaboration with the child, family and other professionals.

How will our service be informed of the results?

Local Health District (District) staff may provide your service with a [service summary](#) following their visit. This summary outlines the areas where children at your service may require additional support at a cohort-level. District staff may also speak with your service directly. Services are also encouraged to work in partnership with families to support their child's individual development needs.

Where a child may have been absent on the day of the visit, your service is encouraged to refer families that have not had the HDC completed to their child and family health clinic or their local general practice.

How does the HDC program link with Quality Improvement Plans and the National Quality Standard?

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2017* (the National Regulations) require approved providers to prepare a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) ([Regulation 55](#)) for each service. A QIP documents your service's self-assessment process, highlights strengths and identifies your service's goals for quality improvement and strategies to achieve those goals. It links directly to National Quality Standard **7.2 Leadership**.

Gathering assessment information through the health and development checks may be useful to support critical reflection on what is happening at your service and how practice might be improved to support children's learning and development. Examples of how health and development checks might inform quality improvement planning include:

- Standard 1.3 Assessment and Planning: The results of the checks can contribute to assessing each child's learning and development as an ongoing cycle of observation, analysing learning, documentation, planning, implementation and reflection. The HDC program also provides an opportunity for families to be informed of their child's progress.
- Standard 3.2 Use: The results of the checks may provide insights into the individual needs of children in your service which could assist in reflecting on how your service provides an inclusive environment and the adaptations that may be required to support every child's participation.
- Standard 5.2 Relationships Between Children: The results of the checks may highlight children at your service who are needing additional support in self-regulation and assist in reflecting on ways your service can support each child to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.
- Standard 6.1 Supportive Relationships with Families: The results of the checks may provide an opportunity for your service to support families in their parenting role, ensuring current information about relevant community services and resources are provided.
- Standard 6.2 Collaborative Partnerships: Participating in the HDC program may provide an opportunity for your service to build partnerships with relevant community services to support children's access, inclusion and participation in the curriculum. Information gained through participating in the HDC program and working in partnership with each child's family may support the completion of the Transition to School Statement and enhance continuity across the ECEC service and school environments.

How does the HDC program link with the Strategic Inclusion Plan?

A Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP) is the Inclusion Support Programs (ISP) inclusion assessment and planning tool that supports educators in ECEC services to engage in reflective practice and planning to improve and embed inclusive practice, in line with the National Quality Standard (NQS).

Developing a SIP, with the support of an Inclusion Professional from the NSW/ACT Inclusion Agency, is the first step to accessing ongoing support from the ISP and is required when accessing Specialist Equipment through the Inclusion Agency and funding options through the Inclusion Development Fund Manager (IDFM). Information on the ISP can be found on our [website](#).

Participation in the HDC program may be useful in informing the development of your service's SIP, providing insights into children's additional needs and assisting in the identification of inclusion barriers for children. With the support of an Inclusion Professional, your service will be able to

utilise this information to identify and plan practical strategies to addressing these inclusion barriers and the actions your service will take to implement the strategy in the care environment. Further information on developing a SIP for your service can be found on the [IDFM website](#).

How does the HDC program link with Individual Learning Plans?

An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) should be developed and used for any child attending your service with a disability or developmental delay. It is a written document that details what the service will do for the child. An ILP is always developed in consultation with the child's family and forms part of the assessment and planning cycle. This working document should be updated regularly and reviewed at least every 6 months. It does not need to be lengthy or complex and will help you record the child's developmental progress, linking directly to the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and to National Quality Standards **1.3 Assessment and Planning** and **6.2 Collaborative Partnerships**.

Following participation in the HDC program, your service is encouraged to work in partnership with families to develop an ILP where required, identifying short- and long-term learning goals and relevant teaching strategies to support individual children.

The NSW Department of Education has developed a webinar on developing and implementing ILPs along with a guide and a sample template for your use which can be accessed on our [website](#).

Who can my service contact for further information or support?

For information on the HDC program, please contact your District. Contact details can be found on the NSW Health [website](#).

Further information about developing a QIP and the self-assessment process can be found on our [self-assessment webpage](#). To schedule a free support session to discuss your own improvement journey or guidance on using the portal, reach out to the team by:

- calling 1800 619 113
- emailing ecequalitysupport@det.nsw.edu.au

The following programs are available to provide further information on how your service can support the inclusion of children with additional needs:

- community preschools – [Disability and Inclusion Program](#)
- long day care services – [Inclusion Support Program](#)

For any other enquiries, please contact EarlyChildhoodDevelopment@det.nsw.edu.au