

Assessment and rating for family day care educators



What is assessment and rating?

Assessment and rating is an opportunity for you to demonstrate what you do every day to support, educate and care for the children at your service.

As a part of assessment and rating, an authorised officer from the NSW Department of Education –as the regulatory authority for early childhood education and care (ECEC) in NSW –may visit you to observe and discuss your daily practice.

The approved provider you are registered with will be contacted by an authorised officer to advise of assessment and rating 5 days prior to the scheduled visit.

Your approved provider is responsible for telling you the dates the assessment and rating visit will be taking place. An opportunity for an online pre-visit meeting can also be arranged with the authorised officer to talk about the visit. Approved providers are encouraged to involve relevant staff in these online meetings.

What should I expect when an authorised officer arrives?

The authorised officer will:

- introduce themselves and show you their ID
- sign your visitor record
- talk to you about how the visit will be conducted
- ask you what areas in your residence are used for caring for the children – they may ask for a brief tour
- observe your interactions with the children, ask to see documents and talk with you about your practices.

Further information is available on our Approach to visits in our [Visiting Early Childhood Education and Care Services Policy](#).

What should I be prepared for?

The officer will be collecting evidence to show how the practice at your service reflects the National Quality Standard. To help you prepare, think about your service strengths or key practices and any areas you have identified for improvement.

The authorised officer will want to talk with you, observe practice on the day and will also need to sight some documents.

Observations that the officer may make include:

- interactions with children and families
- hygiene practices
- routine times, including meals, safe sleep practices or transitions
- how you're implementing service policies and procedures
- vehicles used for transporting children
- approved areas for education and care including play spaces, sleep/rest areas, furniture, resources, and other areas accessible to children and first aid kits (including expiry dates of items).

Some documents an officer may want to sight during the visit include:

- the educational program and records of your cycle of planning and assessment for children
- examples of communication and engagement with families
- records relating to any children with health and medical conditions
- policy and procedure documents provided by your service provider
- documents required under regulation 178 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations
- visitor records.

Having these records easily accessible (paper or electronic) is recommended so you can refer to them when necessary.

Your service provider will be asked to provide any additional information during a pre-visit phone call and/or email. Your service provider is responsible for passing this request on to you.

The officer may also talk to you about:

- the age of children you provide care for
- how your program and the environment is adjusted to meet the differing ages and interests of children
- your approaches to excursions or the transportation of children
- how you manage visitors at your residence
- child safe practices, including your understanding of child protection requirements
- information that has been shared with you by the approved provider in relation to the service strengths and any areas for improvement
- your knowledge and understanding of the service's policies and procedures.

Your service's self-assessment and quality improvement information may also inform discussion points and questions. For example, if the service self-assessment mentions attending weekly play sessions, you may be asked questions about this such as transportation, risk assessments, permissions, what you do at the play session and how this benefits the children.

The [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#) has further information about what an officer might observe, sight or discuss during the visit, including specific examples relevant to a family day care context which may be helpful.



Sight



Observe



Discuss

Will they look at the entire residence?

During the visit, the officer will ask to be shown areas of your residence that are approved for you to provide education and care. If there are shared spaces for the operation of the service, such as cupboards or a fridge, then the officer may ask to look at these to ensure there are no risks of harm and hazard to children.

How long will they stay?

This may vary and can be up to 3 hours. Your service provider will have discussed this with the authorised officer, who can also let you know when they arrive for the visit. Occasionally the service visit may be longer than expected.

Will I receive support or help during the visit from my service provider?

Your service provider may send a coordinator or staff member to support you during the visit. This is encouraged as it helps with supervision when you're talking with the authorised officer. However, it is not a legal requirement to have support during the visit and authorised officers can still enter your residence for assessment and rating.

What if I have no children in care on the day of my assessment and rating visit?

In this case, the authorised officer may still attend or reschedule the visit. If the visit continues, the officer will want to see the education and care environment, documentation and will talk with you about your practices. Officers will also ask your service provider for information about the attendance patterns of children in your care.

What happens if my visit is scheduled during school drop off or collection?

The authorised officer may attend the drop-off and collection with you.

What if there is an emergency and I can't work the assessment and rating day?

If this happens, you should follow your usual service process, which may be to notify your approved provider or the principal office. Your service should then notify the authorised officer and a replacement educator will be selected from a list of reserves.

What if I do not understand a question or English is my second language?

This is an opportunity to demonstrate your practice and have a constructive discussion about how you're implementing the National Quality Framework. The authorised officer will aim to help educators feel at ease during the assessment and rating visit. Let them know if you do not understand and ask them to repeat or re-phrase the question.

Questions are designed to help the officer understand what you do and how you do it. You know your practice best. If it helps, try to approach a discussion with the officer in a similar way you might talk with a new family who are keen to understand what happens at your service.

If you require an interpreter service, let the officer know in advance so they can provide this support. Your coordinator may also support you by guiding you or using keywords you are familiar with, but they should not answer questions for you.

Further resources

NSW Department of Education

- [Assessment and rating process page](#)
- [Planning for quality improvement](#)
ECE Connect session, November 2023
- [Spotlight on Assessment & Rating](#)
ECE Connect session, March 2024

ACECQA

- [Meeting the National Quality Standard](#)

