

Assessment and rating for centre-based 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.

To complete the 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 – will visit your service to observe and discuss daily practices.

Services will be contacted by an authorised officer to advise of an assessment and rating 5 days prior to the assessment visit.

What should I expect when an authorised officer visits my service?

When the authorised officer arrives, they will:

- introduce themselves and show you their ID
- sign your service visitor record
- talk about how the visit will be conducted
- ask for a brief tour of the service
- observe 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 that have been identified for improvement.

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

Observations that the officer may make include:

- interactions between staff, children and families
- hygiene practices
- routine times, including meals, sleep and rest periods and transitions
- how staff are implementing policies and procedures
- the physical environment of the service, including play spaces, sleep/rest areas, furniture, resources, any 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
- service policies and procedures
- documents required under [regulation 177](#) of the Education and Care Services National Regulations
- staffing records, including Working with Children Checks (WWCC) and qualifications

Having these documents easily accessible (paper or electronic) is recommended so that your experience is a smooth process.

The officer may talk to you about:

- service routines and the educational program
- how your program and the environment is adjusted to meet the differing ages and interests of children
- connections with family and communities
- staffing arrangements
- child safe practices, including your understanding of child protection requirements
- 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 your self-assessment information refers to attending excursions, you may be asked questions about this such as your transport practices, risk assessments, authorisations and benefits to the children.

The Guide to the National Quality Framework has further information about what an officer might: observe, sight or discuss during the visit.



Sight



Observe



Discuss

Will the officer look at the entire service?

During the visit, the officer will ask to be shown all areas of your service used to provide education and care. This often starts with a tour of the service and introduction to staff on the authorised officer's arrival. This will include areas such as staffrooms, office spaces and storage areas to ensure there are no risks of harm and hazard to children.

How long does the visit take?

There is no set time, and this will vary dependent on a range of factors, including whether the visit is a full or partial assessment and the size of your service. Your approved provider or their delegated person will have discussed this with the authorised officer prior to the visit, and they can also talk to you about the plan when they arrive.

Will the officer talk to all educators? What if I have something specific to share?

The officer won't necessarily talk with all educators. When the officer introduces themselves on arrival, it's a great opportunity to let them know if you have something in particular happening that day that you'd like them to observe. You can also approach the officer at any point during the visit.

If you have specific educators that you would like the authorised officer to speak with you should advise them of this during the planning stage or when they arrive at your service.

What if I do not understand a question or I get nervous when talking to the officer?

This is an opportunity to demonstrate your practice and have a constructive discussion about how your service is 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 get a clear understanding of 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 the service.

What happens if we have a planned event booked during the scheduled visit?

Services should consider how planned events may provide an opportunity to capture what everyday practice looks like. This can support you to show the officer quality practice that they may otherwise not see. Events such as a community visitor, family orientation or an excursion can be an opportunity for your service to engage and discuss with an officer how your service embeds practice in these events, how planning occurs or how it links to supporting outcomes for children.

Prior to the assessment and rating visit, your service will have an opportunity to let the officer know about any planned events or key absences during the planned visit. Consideration may be given to postpone a visit in exceptional circumstances, such as the absence of the person with legal responsibility or where an event may significantly impact the whole service operations. Refer to the [Assessment and Rating scheduling policy](#) for more information.

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](#)