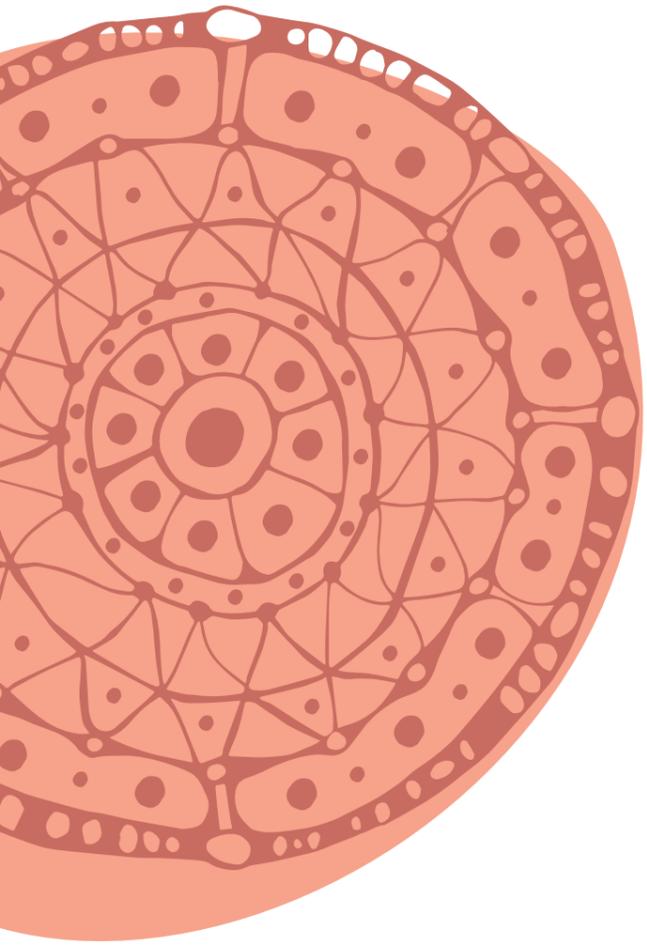


# WHAT DOES THE NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK MEAN FOR OUR CHILDREN?

FACT SHEET FOR FAMILIES





This resource provides some information on the guiding framework for education and care services – the National Quality Framework (NQF). It looks at why it is important, what it means for the service your child attends and what it means for your children.

The National Quality Framework was introduced in 2012 to improve the quality of education and care across long day care, preschool, family day care and outside school hours care. It directs how education and care services operate and how they support children to grow, learn and be ready for school.

## WHY IS THE NQF IMPORTANT?

**We all want the best for our children. We want to see them grow up as strong and healthy as they can be.**

The first years of their life are really important to set them on this path. Their brain is developing so quickly! They are also picking up many social skills and values that will stay with them for life.

### The early years are important:

- to build a strong cultural identity
- to build resilience
- to help children believe in themselves
- to grow up healthy and strong
- to be ready to learn.

While families are children's first teachers, quality education and care services also play a key role. High quality education and care in these first years leads to better health, education and employment outcomes all throughout children's lives.

The National Quality Framework helps to ensure that all education and care services are good quality services that will set children up to achieve their potential.

## WHAT IS THE NQF?

The NQF is a framework that helps to improve service quality by setting minimum standards, and requiring quality assessment and rating of services.

The assessment process also makes information on quality available to help families make informed decisions on which service best meets their needs.

Services are assessed across 7 different quality areas within what is called the National Quality Standard. These areas are:

<b>QA1</b>	<b>Educational program and practice</b> – <i>How learning happens</i>
<b>QA2</b>	<b>Children's health and safety</b> – <i>Supporting children to grow up strong</i>
<b>QA3</b>	<b>Physical environment</b> – <i>Creating a healthy space</i>
<b>QA4</b>	<b>Staffing arrangements</b> – <i>Healthy staff and educators</i>
<b>QA5</b>	<b>Relationships with children</b> – <i>Nurturing relationships</i>
<b>QA6</b>	<b>Collaborative partnerships with families and communities</b> – <i>Working with families and communities</i>
<b>QA7</b>	<b>Governance and leadership</b> – <i>Good decision-making processes</i>

Services are given a rating for each of these 7 areas. Based on this they are then given an overall rating.

## HOW DOES THE NQF SUPPORT CHILDREN'S LEARNING

**All the quality areas support children's learning. However, Quality Area 1 has a specific focus on children's learning.**

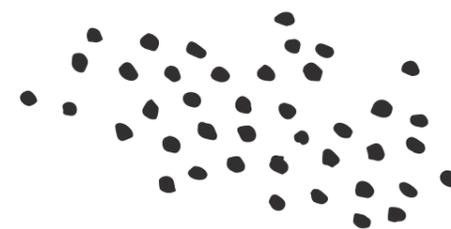
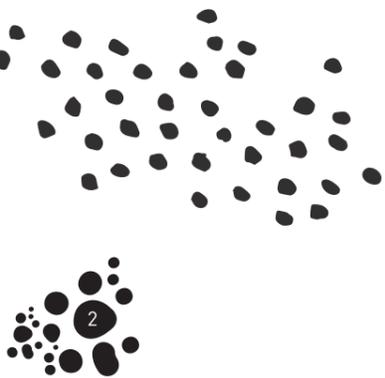
This quality area is supported by another framework called the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). The EYLF is the basis for the education program at the service. It helps educators to support the needs and interests of each child, building on their strengths. It promotes 5 learning outcomes for children:

### 5 learning outcomes for children

1. Children have a strong sense of identity
2. Children are connected with and contribute to their world
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
4. Children are confident and involved learners
5. Children are effective communicators

## WHO ASSESSES THE SERVICES?

In NSW, the regulatory authority, which is the Early Childhood Education within the NSW Department of Education.



## WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT RATINGS GIVEN

<b>Excellent</b>	Service promotes exceptional education and care, demonstrates sector leadership, and is committed to continually improving. This rating can only be awarded by the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).
<b>Exceeding National Quality Standard</b>	Service goes beyond the requirements of the National Quality Standard in at least four of the seven quality areas.
<b>Meeting National Quality Standard</b>	Service meets the National Quality Standard. Service provides quality education and care in all seven quality areas.
<b>Working towards National Quality Standard</b>	Service provides a safe education and care program, but there are one or more areas identified for improvement.
<b>Significant improvement required</b>	Service does not meet one of the seven quality areas or a section of the legislation and there is a significant risk to the safety, health and wellbeing of children.

## HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT THE QUALITY OF THE SERVICE MY CHILD IS ATTENDING?

You can find out how your service is rated on the [ACECQA](#) website and on the [Starting Blocks](#) website. The quality ratings must also be displayed at the service.

You can also ask to see your service's Quality Improvement Plan, which identifies areas for improvement and includes a statement of philosophy for the service.

## HOW DOES THE FRAMEWORK RECOGNISE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE?

The NQF contains 6 principles. One of these is that **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are valued.** This means that this recognition and respect should be applied across all parts of the NQF and the 7 quality areas.

Recognition also comes within Quality Area 1 through the Early Years Learning Framework. This highlights some important things for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families. It says that:

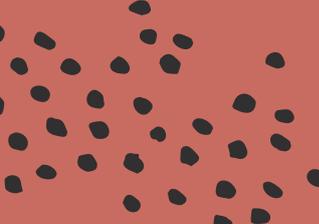
- Working respectfully with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures is different from respecting all cultures.
- Australia is unique because of being home to the oldest living culture in the world, the culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and their values.
- It recognises the commitment to equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in education.
- It identifies that the EYLF is an opportunity to work towards cultural security for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

It also is based on some broad learning outcomes, the first being that children have a strong identity.

But most importantly, the National Quality Framework is applied by your service, which can start from your local cultures and build all of the quality areas into the program and service from there.

## HOW CAN YOU SEE THE IMPACT OF THE NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK?





"THE FRAMEWORK IS CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE FOR OUR CHILDREN - "BELONGING, BEING & BECOMING" REALLY CAPTURES IT.

IT IS ABOUT TIME THAT THEY GET IT AND UNDERSTAND HOW TO INCLUDE ABORIGINAL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

WE BUILD THE CONNECTION BETWEEN HOME LIFE, THE FAMILY AND THE PRESCHOOL.

SUPPORTING THE CONNECTIONS HELPS CHILDREN TO DEVELOP A SENSE OF BELONGING AND SELF-WORTH.

THEY KNOW THAT THE EDUCATORS HAVE A REAL INTEREST IN THEIR WORLD!"

Frayne Barker, Director, Gainmara-Birrilee Preschool,  
Brewarrina

