CHCECE044
Facilitate compliance in a children's education and care service

Learner Guide

Updated to include National Quality Framework changes

One World for Children Pty Ltd

Aspire Learning Resources

CHCECE044

Facilitate compliance in a children's education and care service

Release 1

Learner Guide

Aspire Version 2.1

One World for Children Pty Ltd

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Before you begin

This Learner Guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCECE044 Facilitate compliance in a children's education and care service*, Release 1.

Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. Information regarding how this Learner Guide relates to this unit of competency is detailed in our mapping guide.

How to work through this Learner Guide

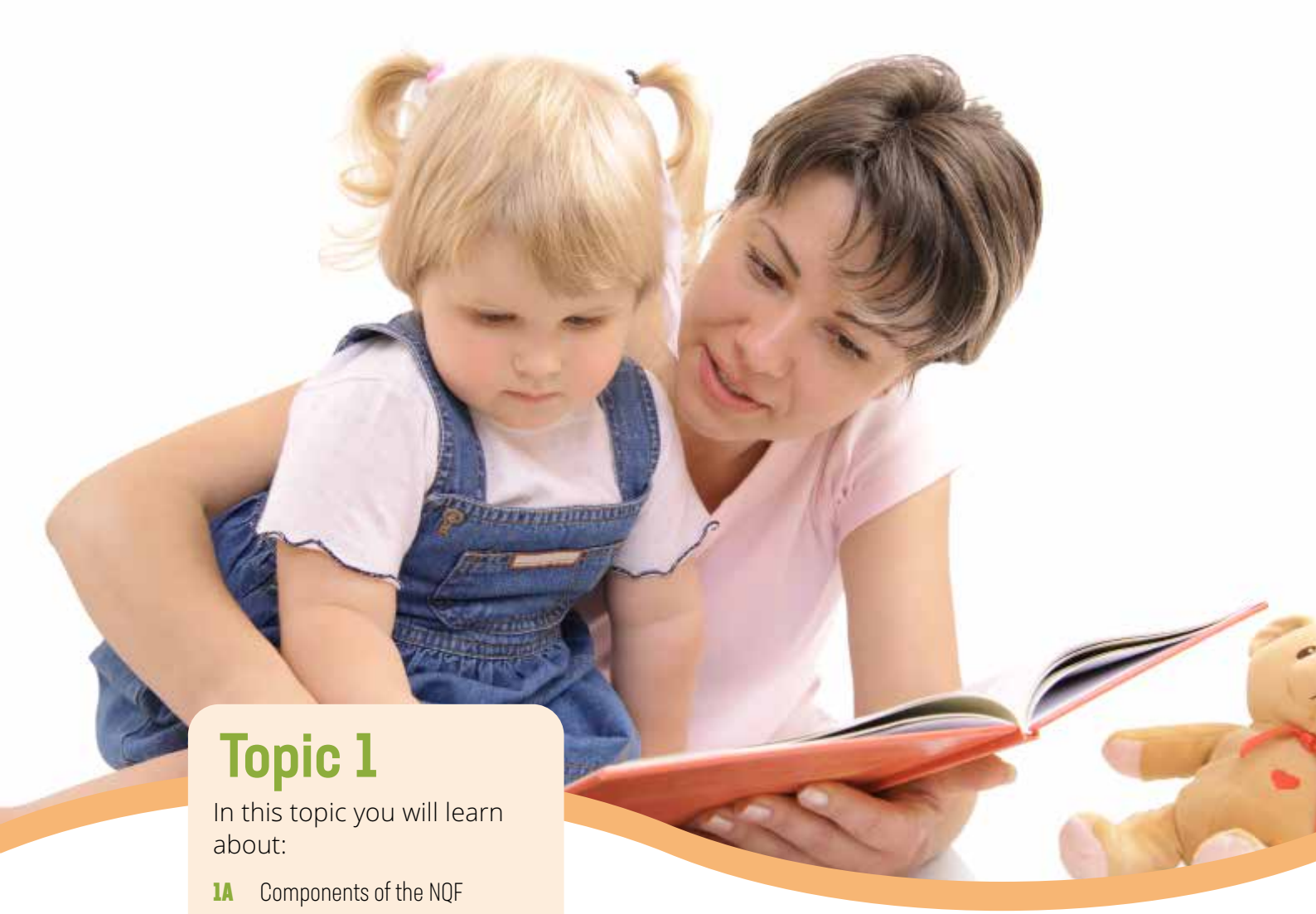
This Learner Guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the Learner Guide you need to read, and which Practice Tasks and Learning Checkpoints you need to complete.

Feature of the Learner Guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	➢ Read each topic in this Learner Guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples	➢ These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice Tasks	➢ Practice Tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which Practice Tasks to complete.
Summaries	➢ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning Checkpoints	➢ There are Learning Checkpoints at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which activities to complete. These activities give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

This table maps each topic in this Learner Guide to the National Quality Standard and national learning framework: Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).

T = Topic

Topics	National Quality Standard (NQS)
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
T4	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
T1–T4	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
	Early Years Learning Framework
	Principles
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
	Partnerships
	Respect for diversity
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives
	Equity, inclusion and high expectations
	Sustainability
T1–T4	Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning
	Collaborative leadership and teamwork
	Practice
	Holistic, integrated and interconnected approaches
	Responsiveness to children
	Play-based learning and intentionality
	Learning environments
	Cultural responsiveness
	Continuity of learning and transitions
	Assessment and evaluation for learning, development and wellbeing
	Learning Outcomes
	1. Children have a strong sense of identity
	2. Children are connected to 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



Topic 1

In this topic you will learn about:

- **1A** Components of the NQF
- **1B** Other legislation, standards and policies
- **1C** Communicating about the NQF
- **1D** Gaining advice and assistance

Interpreting the National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework (NQF) underpins education and care practices within Australian regulated services.

As an educator, you must be aware of the framework's components that are relevant to your service, and be able to navigate and interpret the appropriate standards and overall framework. In particular, you need to understand the assessment and rating process, which measures a service's ability to provide quality education and care to children.

1A Components of the NQF

The component of the National Quality Framework (NQF) provide the foundation for education and care practices within Australian regulated services.

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) is the independent national body that guides the implementation of the NQF. ACECQA educates and informs the community, the education and care industry, and government about current research and best practice across Australia.

You need to be able to interpret and understand all components of the NQF.

The NQF aims to improve education and care quality in:

- long day care
- occasional care
- family day care
- preschool/kindergarten
- outside school hours' care.

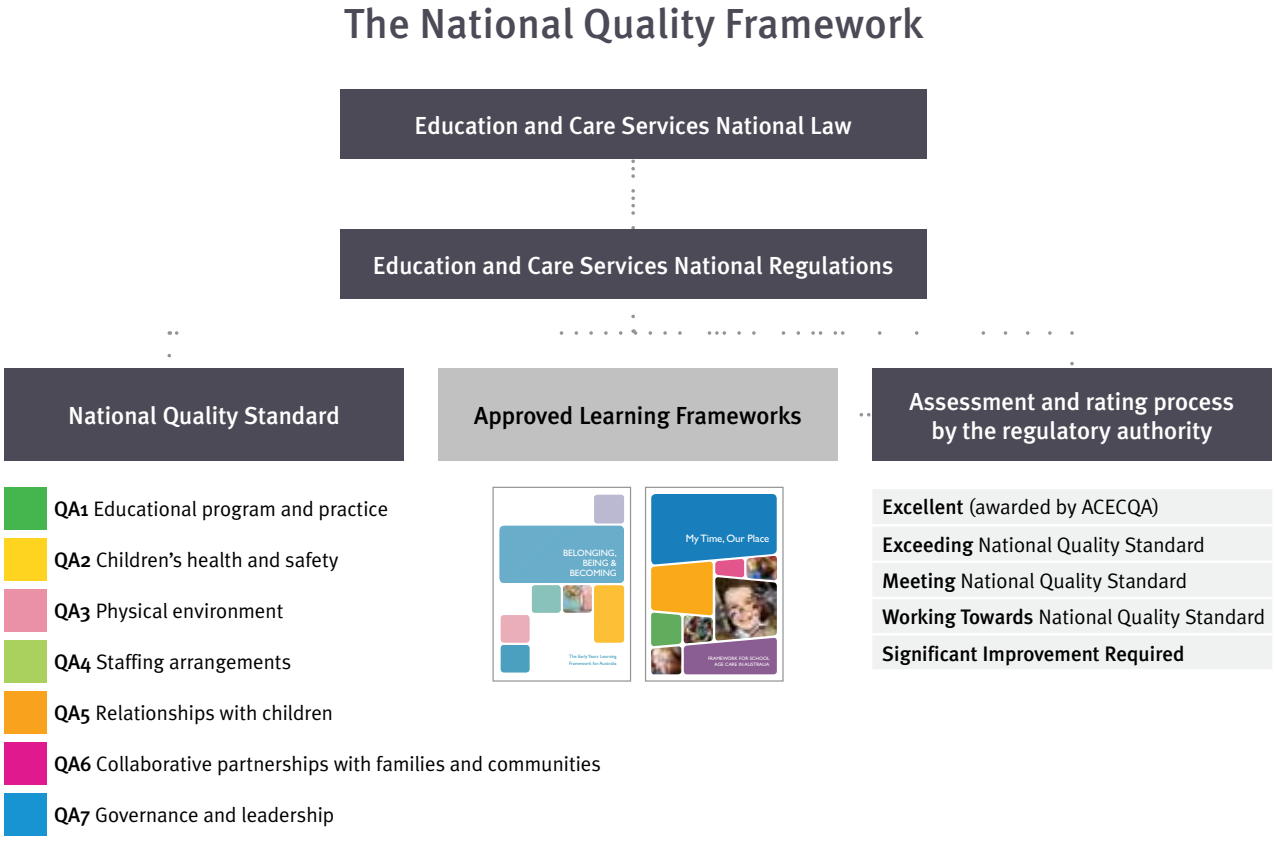
The NQF brings these services together under a national approach to improve recognition and support and to motivate them to provide high-quality education and care. Each service is registered through a rating and assessment process.

Every education and care service must have relevant NQF documents and supporting materials on-site at all times. They can also be accessed online at the ACECQA website: aspirelr.link/acecqa.

The NQF consists of a number of components, as outlined in the following table.

Component	Intent
Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations	➤ Provides a legislative framework. ➤ Outlines the assessment and rating system.
The National Quality Standard (NQS)	➤ Provides details of standards expected in best practice.
Belonging, being & becoming: *The early years learning framework for Australia* (EYLF)	➤ Outlines the goals, principles, practices and outcomes applied during early childhood (0–5 years).
My time, our place: *Framework for school age care in Australia* (MTOP)	➤ Outlines the goals, principles, practices and outcomes applied during middle childhood (6–12 years).

The following diagram provides an outline of the system:



Source: ACECQA, The Guide to the National Quality Framework

National law and regulations

The Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations form the foundation of the NQF.

A key purpose of the national law and regulations is to have consistency in quality expectations Australia-wide.

A major part of this is the assessment and rating process, which is used to monitor the regulation compliance of all registered education and care services.

ACECQA provides a quality improvement plan (QIP) template that includes a list of relevant regulations. You can access the template at: aspirelr.link/acecqa-qip-template

National Quality Standard

The National Quality Standard (NQS) contains seven quality areas relating to expected best practice in all aspects of the education and care services environment.

These quality areas are broken down into standards, and then further broken down into elements, which are specific descriptions.

For more information, access the *Guide to the National Quality Framework* (found at aspirelr.link/nqf-guide-pdf), which details the quality areas, standards and associated elements, including references, links and an assessment guide.

The NQS quality areas, standards and concepts (an overview of their requirements) are listed in the following table.

Quality area and descriptor	Standard and descriptor	Element concept
1. Educational program and practice	1.1 The educational program enhances each child's learning and development.	**Program** 1.1.1 Approved learning framework 1.1.2 Child-centred approaches 1.1.3 Program learning opportunities
	1.2 Educators facilitate and extend each child's learning and development.	**Practice** 1.2.1 Intentional teaching 1.2.2 Responsive teaching and scaffolding 1.2.3 Child-directed learning
	1.3 Educators and coordinators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the program for each child.	**Assessment and planning** 1.3.1 Assessment and planning cycle 1.3.2 Critical reflection 1.3.3 Information for families
2. Children's health and safety	2.1 Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.	**Health** 2.1.1 Wellbeing and comfort 2.1.2 Health practices and procedures 2.1.3 Healthy lifestyles
	2.2 Each child is protected.	**Safety** 2.2.1 Supervision 2.2.2 Incident and emergency management 2.2.3 Child protection
3. Physical environment	3.1 The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service.	**Design** 3.1.1 Fit for purpose 3.1.2 Upkeep
	3.2 The environment is inclusive, promotes competence, independent exploration and learning through play.	**Use** 3.2.1 Inclusive environment 3.2.2 Resources support play-based learning 3.2.3 Environmentally responsible

Quality area and descriptor	Standard and descriptor	Element concept
4. Staffing arrangements	4.1 Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development.	**Staffing arrangements** 4.1.1 Organisation of educators 4.1.2 Continuity of staff
	4.2 Management, educators and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical.	**Professionalism** 4.2.1 Professional collaboration 4.2.2 Professional standards
5. Relationships with children	5.1 Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.	**Relationships between educators and children** 5.1.1 Positive educator to child interactions 5.1.2 Dignity and rights of the child
	5.2 Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.	**Relationships between children** 5.2.1 Collaborative learning 5.2.2 Self-regulation
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities	6.1 Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained, and families are supported in their parenting role.	**Supportive relationships with families** 6.1.1 Engagement with the service 6.1.2 Parent views are respected 6.1.3 Families are supported
	6.2 Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.	**Collaborative partnerships** 6.2.1 Transitions 6.2.2 Access to participation 6.2.3 Community engagement
7. Governance and leadership	7.1 Governance supports the operation of a quality service.	**Governance** 7.1.1 Service philosophy and purpose 7.1.2 Management systems 7.1.3 Roles and responsibilities
	7.2 Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community.	**Leadership** 7.2.1 Continuous improvement 7.2.2 Educational leadership 7.2.3 Development of professionals

Approved learning frameworks

National approved learning frameworks encourage educators to design the service's curriculum around children's interests, needs, personal experiences, abilities and understanding.

The approved learning framework you will work with in early childhood is *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia* (EYLF).

The approved learning framework encourages you to see children as individuals, and to challenge yourself and those you work with to meet children's various needs through planned and spontaneous activities. The framework is based on a system of goals and objectives, with core principles and practices.

The principles of the learning framework aims to foster:

- Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
- Partnerships
- Respect for diversity
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives
- Equity, inclusion and high expectations
- Sustainability
- Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning
- Collaborative leadership and teamwork.

The EYLF practices focus pedagogy on:

- Holistic, integrated and interconnected approaches
- Responsiveness to children
- Play-based learning and intentionality
- Learning environments
- Cultural responsiveness
- Continuity of learning and transitions
- Assessment and evaluation for learning, development and wellbeing

The framework separates goals into two categories: overall goals and broad and long-term goals, known as learning outcomes. These are outlined in the following table.

Overall goals
Belonging is about how children connect to people and places. Children need to know where and with whom they belong.
Being is the art of childhood. It is about children exploring and building in the present moment, and how these activities contribute to their learning and the way they experience the world.
Becoming is about the changes that occur in a child's life and the processes that occur to allow them to move from now (being) to this new self that participates fully. Becoming can be identified through the emotions that are expressed or actions that you notice, such as pride, cooperation, application of skills, happiness, high self-esteem, wellbeing, achievement and mastery.

Learning outcomes

Broad and long-term goals are known as the five learning outcomes, and provide for all learning that a child is likely to encounter.

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

Under each of these five outcomes, there are more specific sub-outcomes that provide clarification of meaning.

Assessment and rating process

The assessment and rating process is mandatory for registered services that are approved to provide education and care to children under the NQF.

There is a strict procedural format to the process, which is undertaken by the regulatory authority in each state or territory. Sufficient notice is given to the service so that it can gather the required documentation and prepare for the assessment visit.

The process for an assessment visit:

1	Staff in the service, as well as other appropriate stakeholders, such as the board of management, should be informed about details of the assessment and rating process so they can participate fully.
2	Self-assessment and quality improvement occur continually throughout the service.
3	The service is contacted and informed of an impending visit.
4	The service is required to submit a quality improvement plan to the regulatory authority prior to the visit.
5	The regulatory authority nominates a date for the visit.
6	During the visit, the regulatory authority representative observes activities at the service, discusses the service practices with personnel and sights relevant documentation. The seven quality areas of the quality improvement plan are rated, and the standards and elements, which underpin the seven quality areas, are assessed. Regulations are also assessed.

7	A draft report is provided to the service.
8	The service provides feedback on the draft.
9	A final report is developed and notice of final rating issued.
10	The service provides feedback regarding the final report and can apply for a review of the final rating within a set period.
11	A rating is provided to the service and published on the national register at: aspirelr.link/acecqa-national-registers.

Be aware of this process and what happens on a visit so that you are fully prepared. If you are unclear about the assessment and rating process, speak to your director or your educational leader, who is responsible for supporting all educators in implementing high-quality programs. These people understand the NQF and will have experience in an assessment and rating process.

To find out more about the process, visit ACECQA's website at: aspirelr.link/acecqa-assessments.

A regulatory authority in each state and territory takes on the role of assessment and, from this assessment, rates the service within the following six levels:

1. Excellent rating (the criteria for this rating level is determined by ACECQA)
2. Exceeding NQS
3. Meeting NQS
4. Working towards NQS
5. Significant improvement required
6. Provisional – not yet assessed (services that have not yet been assessed and rated)

To achieve required levels, NQS services must be 'Meeting' all elements within a standard and all standards within each quality area.

The following shows how each rating is identified.

Rating	Assessment outcomes	Overall rating determination
Excellent	Service promotes exceptional education and care, demonstrates sector leadership and is committed to continually improving. Awarded by ACECQA. Services rated exceeding National Quality Standard in all quality areas may choose to apply for this rating.	

Rating	Assessment outcomes	Overall rating determination
Exceeding NQS	To achieve this rating, the service goes beyond the requirements of the NQS in at least 4 of the 7 quality areas, with at least two of these being quality areas 1, 5, 6 or 7.	
Meeting NQS	The service provides quality education and care in all seven quality areas.	If a service is recognised as meeting all quality areas and regulations.
Working towards NQS	The service provides a safe education and care program. There are one or more areas identified for improvement.	If a service is recognised as having a Working Towards NQS for any quality area, unless they have a Significant Improvement Required rating for any quality area, it would result in the service being rated as Significant Improvement Required.
Significant improvement required	The service does not meet a quality area or a section of the legislation, and there is a significant risk to the safety, health and wellbeing of children.	If a service is recognised as having a Significant Improvement Required rating for any quality area.
Provisional – not yet assessed under the NQF	Services not yet assessed are given this rating and must display this rating at the service.	

To find out more about the rating, visit ACECQA's website at: aspirelr.link/acecqa-assessments

You can subscribe to the ACECQA newsletter through the website, and this provides up-to-date information on how services are working towards the assessment and rating process, along with other information of current interest, including changes made to the NQF.

Quality improvement plans

The NQF assessment and rating process requires that all registered education and care services develop a QIP, and to have it available at the service at all times.

It is a requirement that the QIP be a working document. This means that it should be reviewed and updated regularly as part of a continuous improvement process.

The QIP follows this process of development:

1. Self-assessment occurs.
2. Consultation and review occurs.
3. The QIP is developed.
4. The service follows the plan to put improvements in place.

The QIP is requested by the state or territory authority when an assessment and rating process is commenced. The assessment and rating process is as follows:

1. The service is advised that the assessment and rating process has begun.
2. The updated QIP must be submitted within six weeks.
3. The service receives a receipt advising that the QIP has been received.
4. The assessment and rating process is undertaken.
5. The rating is finalised.

For more information, access the ACECQA website at: aspirelr.link/acecqa-quality-improvement-plan.

Analysing the NQF requirements

Once you have a firm understanding of how the NQF and other legislation influences your service and your work, and how the assessment and rating system operates, you can then consider how it impacts your daily curriculum.

A variety of impacts are described in the following table.

Component	Related area	Example of impact
Regulations and legislation	Child protection	Educators must follow their duty of care to ensure children are cared for in a safe environment.
	Privacy and confidentiality	Information relating to children must only be accessible to authorised personnel.
	Health and safety and first aid	Safety audits should be conducted regularly to ensure a safe and healthy environment.
	Emergencies	All staff, children, families and visitors should understand the service's emergency procedures.
	Staffing ratios	Always make sure each activity and/or space has the correct staff-to-child ratio.
	Qualifications for educational leader and early childhood teaching roles	Regulations require all staff to be qualified or to be working towards an early childhood education qualification.
	Excursions	Risk assessments must be conducted prior to excursions taking place.
	Medical conditions and medication	Recording medication administration is a requirement. Staff must be trained to manage allergy and anaphylaxis.
	Space requirements	Services must provide appropriate space per child in the indoor and outdoor environment.

Component	Related area	Example of impact
Standards	Quality improvement plan (QIP)	All stakeholders must participate in self-assessment to advise the QIP.
	Timing and preparation for scheduled visits and prepared materials	All stakeholders should be prepared and aware of the necessary procedures to undertake during visits.
	Assessment arrangements and applications	Directors and supervisors may be responsible for applications. All staff must demonstrate knowledge of the NQF and how it applies in the service.
	Partnerships with parents and the community	Educators work with families to understand an infant's daily routine to ensure their needs are met.
	Leadership	Leaders and mentors must be in place within the service. An educational leader informs and supports curriculum development.
Frameworks	Frameworks cover the following areas: - Philosophy, mission, vision - Educational program - Relationships with children - Relationships with families - Curriculum	The development of a holistic curriculum. Programs and curriculum must all reflect the service and stakeholder philosophy, goals and vision.

Practice Task 1

1. Draw a line to match the NQS quality area with the requirement.

* Children's health and safety practice	* Quality area 1
* Relationships with children	* Quality area 2
* Collaborative partnerships with families and communities	* Quality area 3
* Educational program and	* Quality area 4
* Governance and leadership	* Quality area 5
* Staffing arrangements	* Quality area 6
* Physical environment	* Quality area 7

2. Draw a line to match the component of the NQF on the left to the information about its purpose on the right.

* NQS	* Information about the legal requirement to participate in the assessment and rating system.
* EYLF	* Explains best practice using seven quality areas, which are broken into standards and elements.
* Education and Care Services National Regulations	* Guides educators towards quality education and learning through practices, principles and learning outcomes for 0–5-year-olds.

3. Number each step from 1 to 5 in the order that an assessment and rating process should occur.

☐	The service is contacted and informed of an impending visit. The service must submit a QIP to the regulatory authority. The regulatory authority nominates a date for the visit.
☐	The visit occurs and a representative observes activities, discusses service practices and overlooks relevant documentation. The seven quality areas are rated and the elements and regulations are assessed.
☐	A draft report is provided to the service. The service provides feedback on the draft.
☐	A final report is developed and notice of final rating is issued. The service provides feedback about the final report and can apply for a review of the final rating within a set period.
☐	Staff in the service should be informed about details of the assessment and rating process so they can participate fully. Self-assessment is completed and a quality improvement plan is developed.

4. Select true or false for the following statement.

If services meet an excellent rating they will pass their assessment and rating process. If not, they will need to start the process again and write an explanation to ACECQA.

* True * False

1B Other legislation, standards and policies

All educators need to understand a range of guidelines that impact on the service and underpin best practice.

This information includes:

- relevant legislation (including privacy and health and safety legislation)
- state and territory frameworks
- codes of ethics
- service policies, procedures and position descriptions.

Ensure you are aware of all laws, standards and policies that apply to your service.

Relevant legislation

There are many important statutory and regulatory requirements at both federal (Commonwealth) or state/territory levels.

Being familiar with the regulations of your state or territory will enable you to put them into practice as part of your daily work. Familiarity allows you to:

- ensure your own legal safety
- understand your obligations
- contribute to policy and procedure development
- support others in understanding their work roles
- confidently accept responsibility for your own actions
- provide correct and clear information to family members.

The following table outlines the most relevant legislation that impacts your work as an educator.

Legislation area	Explanation	Linked NQS Quality Area
Child protection and guardianship legislation	State and territory governments are responsible for child protection services. You can find the relevant Act and other legislative details at: aspirelr.link/child-protection The key principles of child protection legislation are to: › act in the best interests of the child › intervene early › support permanent and stable care for children. You may need to refer to this legislation if you deal with custody orders or if you need to report suspected child abuse.	Quality area 2: Children's health and safety Standard 2.2: Each child is protected. Element 2.2.3: Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse and neglect.
Discrimination and harassment	The following are federal Acts relating to discrimination and harassment: › *Age Discrimination Act 2004* › *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* › *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* › *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* › *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* These Acts guide you in maintaining a non-biased service and in supporting others to ensure equality.	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements Standard 4.2: Management, educators and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical. Element 4.2.1: Management, educators and staff work with mutual respect and collaboratively, and challenge and learn from each other's strengths and skills. Element 4.2.2: Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.

Legislation area	Explanation	Linked NQS Quality Area
Health and safety	Health and safety legislation, such as the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth), is designed to protect the health and safety of all persons in the workplace, and sets out the health and safety rights and duties of everyone in the workplace. Each state and territory has its own health and safety legislation. Under health and safety legislation, you must: › take reasonable care for your own health and safety › not adversely affect the health and safety of others › comply with any reasonable instruction given by your manager › cooperate with any reasonable policy or procedure relating to health and safety in the workplace.	Quality area 2: Children's health and safety Standard 2.2: Each child is protected. Element 2.2.1: At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard. Quality area 3: Physical environment Standard 3.1: The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service. Element 3.1.2: Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.
Privacy	The *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) aims to regulate and protect the handling of personal information about individuals. The key to effective compliance is in developing a service culture that respects privacy. Your service must ensure that management and staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities in protecting personal information from misuse, loss, corruption or disclosure.	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership Standard 7.1: Governance supports the operation of a quality service. Element 7.1.2: Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.
Freedom of information	The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth) provides a legally enforceable right for any person to access information about themselves held by the government. Service records held by ACECQA are government records, which means you have a right to access most of them under the Act. You can find out more about the Act and ACECQA at: aspirelr.link/freedom-of-information	Quality area 1: Educational program and practice Standard 1.3: Educators and coordinators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the program for each child. Element 1.3.3: Families are informed about the program and their child's progress.

State and territory frameworks

Each state and territory provides its own legislation, which forms an important part of how you meet children's needs.

The following table shows two examples of state and territory frameworks.

State and territory frameworks	Website
The Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline, which is for all children in Kindergarten to year 10.	aspirelr.link/wa-k10-framework
The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, which is for all children from birth to eight years.	aspirelr.link/veyldf-pdf

Codes of ethics

A code of ethics is a written set of guidelines.

Educators use codes of ethics to:

- maintain standards of practice for educators; for example, using positive guidance techniques rather than practices such as smacking, force-feeding or humiliating children, which do not comply with the National Quality Standard (NQS)
- help to protect children who are powerless and vulnerable
- help to make the right decisions in difficult situations (ethical dilemmas) that have no clear right or wrong response.

The Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics has been developed for people in Australia who work with young children. You may find a copy of this at your workplace, in either a published booklet or illustrated poster, or you can access it online at: aspirelr.link/eca-code-of-ethics.

Service policies and procedures

Each education and care service develops its own philosophy, policies and procedures.

These will be unique to the individual service, but are based on legislation, child-centred practice, duty of care and quality assurance.

If you follow your service's policies and procedures, you can be confident that you will be meeting the requirements of legislation and standards. As an example, if a service includes the *Australian 24-hour movement guidelines for the early years (birth to 5 years) and Australia's physical activity and sedentary behaviour guidelines for children (5–12 years)* in their policies, the service's timetables and routines will easily take into consideration the physical activity needs of children.

Position descriptions

A position description is a document given to staff when they are employed. It describes the boundaries of a person's job and the skills required to perform that job. Based on the policies, procedures and philosophy of the service, a position description includes the purpose of the position, key responsibilities, specific tasks, key performance indicators (KPIs), accountability structure and reporting arrangements, and the terms and conditions of employment relating to the position.

Position descriptions vary because they reflect each centre's philosophy, structure and objectives. Make sure you understand your role and responsibilities, and how they relate to the NQF and relevant legislation. Seek clarification and advice from your supervisor if necessary.

Example

Staying up to date with legislation

While reviewing Element 2.2.3: Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect, Wallace checks that the current policy on reporting child abuse covers all Victorian legislative and ethical components. He reads over the guidelines to ensure they are all represented. He finds the following points that he thinks need to be included and makes the adjustments.

Victorian Child Protection Legislation	➤ Some professionals, including medical practitioners, nurses, police officers, school teachers, principals, out-of-home care workers, early childhood workers, youth justice workers, registered psychologists, school counsellors, and people in religious ministry, are legally obliged to report suspected child abuse.
Code of Ethics	In relation to children I will: ➤ act in the best interests of all children. In relation to community and society I will: ➤ advocate for the development and implementation of laws and policies that promote the rights and best interests of children and families.

He then adds the adjusted policy to the agenda for discussion at the next board of management's policy sub-committee meeting.

Practice Task 2

Which of the following statements about legislation, standards and regulations are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

a. There are both federal and state/territory laws that need to be complied with. * Yes * No

b. Management, rather than educators, need to be responsible for the health and safety of others. * Yes * No

c. Personal information must be protected from misuse, loss, corruption or disclosure. * Yes * No

d. The ECA Code of Ethics is a set of guidelines that are used worldwide to provide educators with a set of standards of practice. * Yes * No

e. Every education and care service has the same philosophy, policies and procedures that meet legislation, child-centred practice, duty of care and quality assurance. * Yes * No

1C Communicating about the NQF

When you understand the NQF and other relevant legislation and regulations, you are better able to identify their relevance to your service..

To implement these frameworks, and participate in an assessment and rating process, you need to be able to clearly explain practices and demonstrate your knowledge.

Make sure you are comfortable discussing the NQF with others in your service.

It may be your responsibility to confirm that others understand the standards, regulations and legislation, including the assessment and rating process. Sharing information in a collaborative manner fosters growth, support and professionalism among the work team. Contributing to discussions and listening to colleagues can provide support and encouragement for one another and stimulate learning and development.

There are many ways to share information and support your colleagues to increase their awareness of the service in relation to the NQF, and the assessment and rating process. Some of these are outlined in the following table.

Communication method	How/why the method is used
Meetings	➢ To provide an overview of the NQF obligations ➢ To share information with a wide range of people ➢ To gain opinions and share ideas ➢ To reflect on ideas and questions the group has been thinking about
Electronic presentations	➢ To provide accessible information when required ➢ To provide clear and focused information ➢ To provide support during a meeting
Brainstorming sessions	➢ To gain a range of ideas ➢ To look at a topic or issue from different perspectives
Emails	➢ To ask specific questions ➢ To send particular information ➢ To send links to others about various sections of the NQF on ACECQA's website ➢ To invite people to participate ➢ To prepare people for a meeting or other event
Forums including social media	➢ To ask specific open questions ➢ To gain focused responses ➢ To gain a variety of perspectives ➢ To debate appropriate practice

Communication method	How/why the method is used
Information kits	➤ To provide information with supporting documentation or resources ➤ To put together a range of linked information and resources; for example: – *Guide to the National Quality Framework*, which includes a range of information to better understand the NQS, as well as a full guide to the evidence that would be expected for each element – *Educators' guide to the early years learning framework for Australia* or *Educators' guide to the framework for school age care in Australia*, which include extended information about the goals, principles, practices and outcomes, while also providing educator stories and models for practice
Posters	➤ To display particular information for view or comment
Noticeboards	➤ To display ideas ➤ To display specific messages
Newsletters	➤ To share details, outcomes or information with a large group of people ➤ To advertise offers of further information-sharing ideas
Professional development and training	➤ To meet regulation criteria ➤ To gain specialist or professional guidance
Circles of change	➤ To provide the opportunity for open discussion with peers
Professional learning program videos	➤ To access outside views ➤ To access information, video and discussion plans
One-to-one discussion	➤ To work together on plans or particular topics of importance ➤ To focus on a topic specifically to meet one person's needs ➤ To answer specific questions
Graffiti sheets	➤ To gain the opinions or feedback of a range of people

Communication method	How/why the method is used
Quizzes or questionnaires	➤ To stimulate thought and encourage interest, discussion and learning ➤ Strategies that could be used include: – multiple-choice questions – finish the sentence – matching pairs – true or false – pick the right response – timed completion tasks – sequence activities – word hunts – crosswords – Google challenges – circle the right answer – circle the best option – cryptograms

Confirming understanding

While sharing information is important, the measure of effectiveness comes from how well information is understood and applied.

You might notice that staff understand the information you share by watching and talking about their practice. You might also gain insight into their understanding by asking them to contribute their ideas, share research, participate in processes, or support and share information with others. At times, it might be appropriate to question staff to gain an insight into their knowledge.

Some open questions you could ask are:

- What approach has been the most successful for you?
- How do you incorporate a particular practice?
- Which learning outcomes are you focused on for a particular child?
- Are there any aspects of the NQF you are unsure about?

Example

Ensuring staff understand the NQF

Edith, an educator, prepares to present information at a staff meeting. She wants to talk to the other educators about the assessment and ratings process.

At the meeting, Edith plays a video and uses supporting documentation to create discussion that includes:

- focus points
- key EYLF concepts
- key NQS links
- a viewing guide with questions to ask to start discussion, and ways to look more deeply at the learning and teaching.

Edith asks questions to make sure everyone understands how the activity links and complies with both the NQF and the assessment and rating process, and how each person's role contributes to the service's overall obligations. This is essential knowledge that will help the educators respond appropriately to questions during an assessment and rating visit.

Practice Task 3

Which of the following methods might be used to share clear and consistent information and confirm educator knowledge of the NQF? Select all that apply.

- [ ] Emails/surveys/questionnaires
- [ ] Meetings/discussions/professional development
- [ ] Gossip
- [ ] Holidays
- [ ] Posters/noticeboards/PowerPoint presentations
- [ ] TV shows
- [ ] Information kits
- [ ] Professional development

1D Gaining advice and assistance

As you develop as an educator, you will build a list of resources and support systems to support your work practices and assist the service to meet their compliance requirements.

The information you gain from these sources can:

- stimulate discussion
- clarify questions
- challenge ideas
- highlight opportunities.

Don't be afraid to ask others for help and advice.

NQF support

There are a variety of guides that can help you identify outcomes and performance levels.

The following table lists some of these, and where to access further evidence to support your service's competence in relation to the NQF.

Component of the NQF	Guide	Purpose	Links
Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations	*Guide to the National Quality Framework*	This guide helps education and care service providers understand the regulations, and provides examples of how providers, services and supervisors may meet their obligations.	aspirelr.link/nqf-guide-pdf
National Quality Standard (NQS)	*Guide to the National Quality Standard*	This guide breaks down the quality areas, standards and elements, and provides links to other resources such as the regulations and frameworks. It also provides a guide to the evidence against which authorised officers will be measuring your service.	aspirelr.link/nqf-guide-pdf

Component of the NQF	Guide	Purpose	Links
Assessment and rating process	*National Quality Standard assessment and rating instrument*	This is one of a range of resources related to assessment and rating.	aspirelr.link/acecqa-assessment-ratings-resources
Quality improvement plan (QIP)	*Guide to developing a quality improvement plan*	QIP template and support to develop a QIP.	aspirelr.link/acecqa-improvement-plans

ACECQA initiatives

ACECQA has implemented two initiatives that provide advice for education and care services.

ACECQA newsletter

The ACECQA newsletter provides best-practice principles and details emerging trends. It links to components of the NQF and other relevant information sources. Industry statistics relating to NQS achievements are updated.

The ACECQA newsletter is available through subscription by email or at the ACECQA website: aspirelr.link/acecqa-newsletter.

An ACECQA National Education Leader (NEL)

ACECQA has created the role of National Education Leader (NEL) to support all education and care services. The role includes sharing topics of interest and putting forward best-practice examples and ideas that support educators to develop high-quality skills.

The NEL adds topics of interest to the ACECQA newsletter. All NEL contributions can be found here: aspirelr.link/acecqa-national-education-leader

Industry support

If you require support to learn more about the NQF, or have questions or concerns, there are a range of methods for finding out information.

These methods are outlined in the following table.

Type of information	Who can help	Where you can find support
The NQF	Educational leader	➤ In your service
	Professional development or training	➤ Child Family Community Australia (CFCA): aspirelr.link/cfca ➤ Membership support, e.g. Community Connections Solutions Australia (CCSA): aspirelr.link/ccsa ➤ ACECQA website at: aspirelr.link/acecqa-contact ➤ Conferences ➤ Registered training organisations (RTOs), e.g. One World for Children

Type of information	Who can help	Where you can find support
Assessment and rating system	State/territory regulator	➤ Contact details can be found on the ACECQA website at: aspirelr.link/acecqa-contact
Qualification requirements or approvals	ACECQA	➤ ACECQA: aspirelr.link/acecqa
Complaints and concerns	ACECQA State/territory regulator	➤ Contact details can be found on the ACECQA website at: aspirelr.link/acecqa-contact

Example

Clarifying an issue

Dora holds a Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care, but isn't sure if her qualifications allow her to work with school-age children. She goes online to the ACECQA website and looks up the qualification guidelines. Dora finds that, in her state of Western Australia, she is recognised as qualified to work in a school-age service.

Critical reflection and the NQS

The NQS provides a range of areas that encourage services to participate in ongoing critical reflection.

Critical reflection for an educator means exploring your own thoughts, feelings and experiences, and how these fit in with the theories and trends you are learning about through frameworks such as the NQS.

Critical reflection is required because new trends across the Australian education and care industry occur frequently. These trends can help you improve, change or re-examine current practices when you critically reflect on them. Most of these trends are aimed at building a stronger and more professional industry and helping educators gain a higher professional standing within the community.

A good example of a recent industry change was the update to the NQF that took place in 2017 and 2018. This involved alterations to laws, regulations and standards.

Part of an assessment and rating process might be to identify how your service will adapt to changes such as these.

Some information about areas for reflection are outlined in the following table. This includes some resources that encourage information-gathering for self-assessment.

Quality area and related areas for reflection	How these affect you	Where to find more information
1. Educational program and practice: - Pedagogy - Recording methods - Theories and approaches - Educational leader roles	- How you plan experiences for children - How you view children and their educational needs - How you record and assess children's activities - Career paths	- Education and Care Services National Regulations - Ailwood, Boyd & Theobald (2020), *Understanding early childhood education and care in Australia*, Allen & Unwin - Arthur, Beecher, Death, Dockett & Farmer (2020), *Programming and planning in early childhood settings* (8th edition), Cengage Learning Australia
2. Children's health and safety: - Varied, seasonal and culturally rich menus - Routines that allow flexibility to meet children's individual sleep, rest and hunger needs - Awareness of asthma, allergy and anaphylaxis - Availability of risk-taking activities - Greater awareness of abuse and neglect	- Implementing healthy and varied cooking experiences for children - Participating in adequate training and completing updates to ensure you can manage asthma, allergy, anaphylaxis, abuse and neglect - Understanding risk-taking and your responsibility - Responsiveness to children	- *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*: aspirelr.link/staying-healthy-pdf - Australian Dietary Guidelines: aspirelr.link/efh-dietary-guidelines
3. Physical environment: - Simultaneous indoor/outdoor play - Environmentally sustainable practices - Natural materials and learning in the environment	- How you plan experiences for children - How you incorporate sustainability into experiences and activities - How you expose children to a variety of indoor and outdoor activities	- Ollie's World: aspirelr.link/ollies-world - Ollie Recycles Australia: aspirelr.link/ollies-world-recycle - Natural environment photographs: aspirelr.link/dept-education-and-training-natural-environments - Callaghan, White & McHugh (2016), *A walk in the park: Creating rich, irresistible environments for young children*, WriteLight

Quality area and related areas for reflection	How these affect you	Where to find more information
4. Staffing arrangements: ➤ Direct contact requirements/ ratios ➤ Additional qualification requirements ➤ Greater respect for all roles ➤ Educational leader roles – registration in some states ➤ Inclusion of early childhood teachers in centre-based care services	➤ The educator role becomes more sought after ➤ Increase in respect for all service roles ➤ Educational leader will change the dynamic of the service as the responsibilities become clearer ➤ Additional qualifications or training may be necessary	➤ Education and Care Services National Regulations ➤ National Quality Standard
5. Relationships with children: ➤ Responsiveness to lifelong learning ➤ View of children as capable ➤ Belonging, being and becoming goals ➤ Development of agency ➤ Recognition of the importance of children's mental health	➤ How you connect with the children ➤ How you establish goals for children and encourage the children to work towards the goals on their own ➤ How you treat each child individually	➤ KidsMatter: Helping children experiencing mental health difficulties, video series: aspirelr.link/kidsmatter-video-series ➤ Relevant frameworks at: aspirelr.link/ nationalqualityframework ➤ Dent (2018), *Real kids in an unreal world: How to build resilience and self-esteem in today's children*. Pennington Publications.

Quality area and related areas for reflection	How these affect you	Where to find more information
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities: ➤ Recognition and implementation of programs that are responsive to Indigenous Australians ➤ Greater involvement of families in decision-making ➤ Increased relationships with community and support services	➤ How you interact with other educators and volunteers within the service ➤ How you include families as often as possible in the education of their children ➤ How you employ services within the community to provide information to the children (for example, a sustainability organisation) ➤ How you acknowledge Indigenous Australians in your planning and curriculum	➤ *Belonging, being and becoming: Remote Indigenous professional development package for the early years learning framework for Australia*: aspirelr.link/bbb-indigenous-version ➤ Keyser (2017), *From parents to partners: Building a family-centered early childhood program* (2nd ed.), Redleaf Press ➤ Gonzalez-Mena (2016), *Child, family, and community: Family-centered early care and education*, Pearson ➤ Early Childhood Australia. Exploring Indigenous ways of knowing and being: aspirelr.link/eca-indigenous-knowing
7. Governance and leadership: ➤ Continuous improvement requirements within services and in relation to educators and other staff ➤ Efforts towards maintaining continuity of staff	➤ How you continue to implement change within your service ➤ How you make staff feel welcome and respected ➤ How you continue to encourage staff to improve their practices ➤ How to mentor and support workers	➤ Rodd (2013), *Leadership in early childhood: The pathway to professionalism* (4th ed.), Allen & Unwin ➤ Quality improvement plans: aspirelr.link/acecqa-improvement-plans ➤ Waniganayake, Cheeseman, Fenech, Hadley & Shepherd (2017), *Leadership: context and complexities in early childhood education (2nd Ed)*, Oxford University Press

Professional associations

Professional associations maintain up-to-date information on best-practice principles, industry trends and issues.

As peak bodies, these associations often hear about, publicise and begin to respond to changes within the sector early, and support their members and others in relation to how these trends will affect the workplace, children and families.

Many peak organisations put together position statements to convey what they feel is the industry response to a particular trend.

The following are some peak body organisations.

Early Childhood Australia	aspirelr.link/early-childhood-australia
National Outside School Hours Services Alliance (NOSHSA)	aspirelr.link/noshsa
Gowrie Victoria	aspirelr.link/gowrie-vic
Gowrie NSW	aspirelr.link/gowrie-nsw
Gowrie QLD	aspirelr.link/gowrie-qld
Gowrie WA	aspirelr.link/gowrie-wa
Gowrie SA	aspirelr.link/gowrie-sa
Gowrie Tasmania	aspirelr.link/gowrie-tas

Organisations

You will interact with some organisations on a regular basis as they support children and families or provide additional programs.

You may also work less frequently with organisations that provide support and knowledge. These organisations can provide a more industry-based level of feedback and support.

Support provided by organisations	Examples of professional organisations
➤ Providing opportunities for people to meet and discuss issues	➤ Australian Community Children's Services (ACCS)
➤ Providing up-to-date information and findings	➤ Community Child Care Association (CCC)
➤ Providing advice and guidance	➤ Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA)
➤ Acting as a lobby group or public voice for children, families and the industry	➤ Gowrie Child Centres
➤ Promoting standards of acceptable practice	➤ Early Childhood Australia (ECA)

Emerging trends

When a service improves their practice based on research, theory or new information, they are responding to emerging trends.

Research about new theories or emerging trends can be used in the service's assessment and rating process – such as identifying a strength or weakness in a program or work practice, or to support a change in planning and direction.

Trends can impact on your future career opportunities; for example, changes to the qualification requirements for educators, the introduction of new roles, and updates to the required number of early childhood educator qualified positions.

Professional development is one way educators can keep up to date with new trends and explore new ideas. You should reflect on current practices by investigating new contemporary principles and practices. New ideas can stimulate discussion with colleagues and peers and provides the opportunity to ask questions about existing ideas and ways of doing things.

The information gained from investigation into contemporary principles and emerging trends can affect the way:

- services encourage critical reflection
- educators work with children and their families
- staff perform their roles and carry out responsibilities
- you think about your career path and ideas for further training and developing new skills
- educators methods and practice to children (pedagogy).

Online research

Through online research you may find out about developments in the industry or in particular areas of interest.

You can search the term 'education and care industry developments' to see whether there is any new information, or search using the topic you are seeking. You might also use your online networks to discover resources that others have found useful and informative.

Remember that you must not trust everything you read on the internet, so use your networks to find out more about trends, gain opinions and clarify currency. The most reliable sources are government or reputable organisations set up to provide information. Here are some organisations you might use.

Organisation	Website
Australian Childcare Alliance (also has state branches)	aspirelr.link/australian-child-care-alliance
Care for Kids	aspirelr.link/care-for-kids-news
Community Child Care (CCC)	aspirelr.link/ccc-inc

Your online networks are a good way to hear about others' ideas and to share knowledge. Given that there are no geographical boundaries for participants online, you will find information and examples from professionals in other states, territories and countries, and so be provided with diverse ideas.

Some of the free online networks you may find stimulating to your self-assessment include the following.

Network	Focus	Eligibility	Access	Website
LinkedIn	Developing a professional status and networking	Anyone	Membership	aspirelr.link/linkedin
Educators engaging with educators	Support and networking for all educators	Educators	Closed Facebook group (ask to join)	aspirelr.link/educators-engage-facebook
ECE Facilitated Learning	Trainers answer study questions (learners can be from any training organisation)	Anyone	Closed Facebook group (ask to join)	aspirelr.link/ece-facilitated-learning-facebook

Ongoing education

Regulations and standards state the qualifications required by staff working with children, and the ratios and responsibilities that each qualification level is responsible for.

Relevant qualifications in education and care include nationally accredited vocational education and training (VET) courses and higher education (tertiary or university) courses. Bachelor of Teaching, Sport & Fitness and other relevant degrees are delivered at universities. For more information about these, contact your local university or search online.

Nationally accredited courses are linked to the requirements of the NQF.

You may gain further information through studying a specialist area. Some relevant qualifications are outlined in the following table.

Health and safety

- Certificate in Work Health and Safety
- Diploma of Work Health and Safety

Nutrition

- Certificate in Food Handling

Business management

- Certificate in Leadership and Management
- Diploma of Community Sector Management
- Advanced Diploma of Community Sector Management

Additional needs/culture

- Certificate in Education Support

Training

- Certificate in Training and Assessment

In addition to formal study, there are a range of professional development opportunities available. Each opportunity has its own strengths and weaknesses; however, the range of options allows you to try different methods and discover details that may inform your self-assessment.

Some professional development opportunities include the following.

Opportunity	Description	How to find out more
One World for Children	Offers funded and unfunded workshops and webinars. They can provide: - on-request training - customised training - group training - online training - consultancy - guest speakers - webinars - special events - face-to-face training.	aspirelr.link/owfc
Early childhood Australia	- Offer free and fee-based online modules, webcasts and packages.	aspirelr.link/eca-online-learning
Community Child Care Co-operative Ltd (NSW)	Provides professional development and support. They offer: - on-request training - customised training for committees - articles - fact sheets	aspirelr.link/cccc-nsw
FKA Children's Services Inc.	Offers professional development focused on culturally responsive.	aspirelr.link/fka-childrens-services

Professional networks

Networks provide you with new information to consider and implement.

Professional networks allow you to gain ideas from others who may have completely different views based on vastly different experiences.

Conferences, seminars and professional development sessions are some of the places you will connect with enthusiastic and encouraging people from the childcare industry. Support services could also connect you with like-minded or interest-based networks.

ACECQA lists numerous professional support and networking services at: aspirelr.link/educators-providers-links

Some of the external networks you may like to become involved in are outlined in the following table. Particular states/territories are represented here, but with research you will find similar networks in your location.

Network	Focus	Website
Queensland Early Childhood Sustainability Network (QECSN)	➢ Sustainability	Website: aspirelr.link/qecsn Facebook: aspirelr.link/qecsn-facebook
Family Day Care Australia	➢ FDC issues	Website: aspirelr.link/family-day-care Facebook: aspirelr.link/family-day-care-facebook
Community Child Care	➢ Advocacy ➢ Community and not-for-profit provider support	aspirelr.link/ccc-inc
Nutrition Australia – Nutrition Services for Early Learning Centres	➢ Nutrition in Early Childhood	aspirelr.link/nutrition-australia

Practice Task 4

1. Which of the following topics would ACECQA or the state/territory regulator provide advice about? Select all that apply.

- ☐ The NQF
- ☐ Assessment and rating system
- ☐ Qualification requirements and approvals
- ☐ The quality of educator training organisations
- ☐ Complaints or concerns

- [ ] Checking a menu to make sure it meets the allergy needs of children

2. Select true or false for the following statement:

The Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations guides education and care service providers to meet their obligations.	* True	* False

3. Which of the following statements about self-assessment feedback collection are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

a. As long as you have the background knowledge of industry standards, you will be keeping up to date with current trends.	* Yes	* No
b. Research and resources will assist with self-assessment.	* Yes	* No
c. There are many professional associations, including government and non-government consultants, that maintain current information about best-practice principles, industry trends and issues.	* Yes	* No

Summary

- The NQF is made up of the Education and Care Services National Law, the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the National Quality Standard and the national learning framework EYLF.
- Other relevant legislation, regulations and standards that educators must be aware of include privacy, health and safety legislation, frameworks developed by the relevant state or territory, codes of ethics, and service policies, procedures and position descriptions.
- Always confirm your understanding with a higher authority if necessary, such as an educational leader, state/or territory regulator or ACECQA.
- The assessment and rating process is mandatory for registered services that are approved to provide education and care to children under the NQF.
- Once you have a firm understanding of how the NQF influences your work, and how the assessment and rating system operates, you need to be aware of how it impacts your daily curriculum.
- All educators must be aware of the components and application of the NQF because it provides the foundation for education and care practice within Australian regulated services.
- Provide a range of strategies to inform staff of the NQF and clarify their understanding, such as through meetings, questions and brainstorming sessions, noticeboards and DVDs.

Learning Checkpoint 1
Interpreting the National Quality Framework

Read the case study and then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Athena has been researching physical environments for children and has read the *Australian 24-hour movement guidelines for the early years (birth to 5 years)* and *Australia's physical activity and sedentary behaviour guidelines for children (5 to 12 years)*.

These guidelines both present contemporary principles and reflect an emerging trend towards increased physical activity. She is aware that children in her service could be given additional opportunities to meet the suggested activity levels.

1. Which of the following statements about the NQF components and other legislation, standards and regulations are true in relation to Athena's investigation? Select yes or no for each one.

a.	The National Quality Standard (NQS) will help Athena to learn more about the standards for physical activity and physical experiences for children.	* Yes	* No
b.	Athena could investigate the EYLF to see how it supports physical activity and physical experiences for children.	* Yes	* No
c.	Commonwealth legislation relating to health and safety is about health and safety rights and duties of everyone in the workplace, rather than the physical requirements for children's activity.	* Yes	* No
d.	Athena should read and follow the guidelines for child protection. The service should be reported for neglecting the physical needs of the children.	* Yes	* No
e.	The Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations will state exactly how many hours of physical activity a child should receive every day; this is its key purpose.	* Yes	* No

2. Which of the following NQS Standards relate to Athena's interest in physical activity requirements for children and help her to identify compliance recommendations?

- [ ] Standard 2.1
- [ ] Standard 3.1
- [ ] Standard 1.3
- [ ] Standard 6.2
- [ ] Standard 5.1

3. Draw a line to match each source of advice on the left to the information Athena might gain on the right.

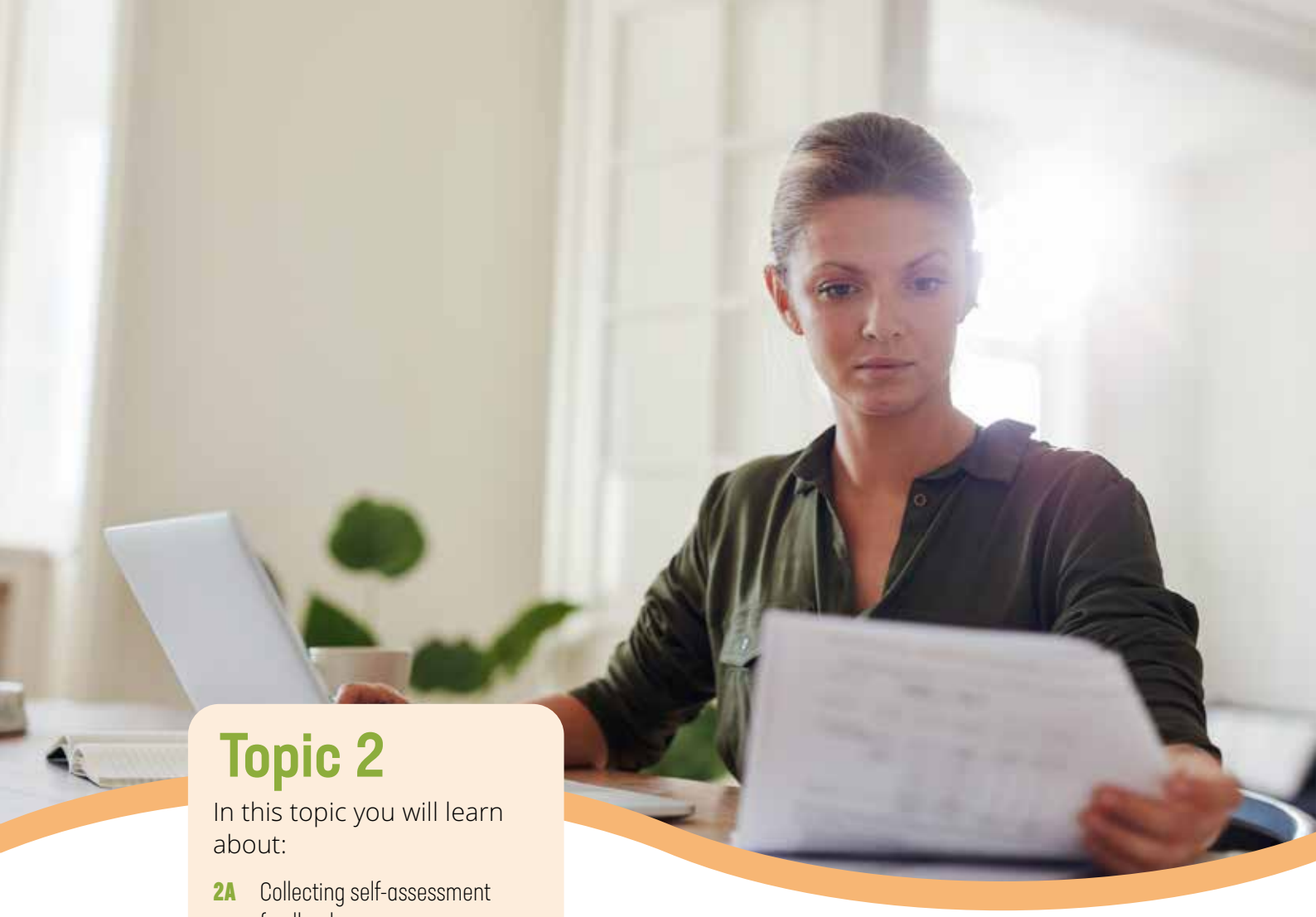
* State or territory regulatory body	* Expectations of the NQS and the national learning frameworks
* Early Childhood Australia	* Dietary guidelines
* ACECQA	* Clarification of requirements within the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations
* Nutrition Australia	* Research within the sector, and how these trends will affect the workplace, children and families

4. Athena wants to interpret the details and requirements of the NQF and other legislation in regard to health and safety, and then support staff to understand this through clear and consistent provision of information. Which of the following are correct? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Athena provides a newsletter to the staff members providing information about the NQF. This information includes details of education and care service emerging trends and contemporary practices in relation to leadership.
- ☐ Athena uses the service's social media page to provide details of legislation and other regulations that are important to service health and safety legislation. Educators are encouraged to contribute knowledge.
- ☐ Athena puts together a digital presentation. She presents the NQS Quality Area 6 which is supplemented by details of the national learning framework principle 'Partnerships'.
- ☐ Athena includes an item on the staff meeting agenda where she explains that the key purpose of the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations.
- ☐ Athena organises a BBQ where all staff can talk freely about the NQF and associated components and decide whether they want to participate in the assessment and rating process.

5. If Athena interpreted details and requirements of the assessment and ratings process to share with staff, which of the following information would she include? Select yes or no for each.

a.	The assessment and rating process identifies the quality of education and care of the entire industry. It rates Australian services as a whole and ranks it against world standards.	* Yes	* No
b.	Assessment and ratings occurs following a strict procedural format. Sufficient notice is given to the service so that it can gather the required documentation and prepare for the assessment visit.	* Yes	* No
c.	If a service is provided a provisional rating it means it has such a poor quality that a rating does not apply.	* Yes	* No
d.	An excellent rating is the highest rating a service can achieve. It demonstrates exceptional quality.	* Yes	* No
e.	Self-assessment should occur prior to the assessment and rating visit. Following the visit, a draft report of findings will be provided to the service.	* Yes	* No



Topic 2

In this topic you will learn about:

2A Collecting self-assessment feedback

2B Recording and sharing feedback

Facilitating a self-assessment

Regular self-assessment of performance in relation to the NQF is part of an education and care service's business practice.

This ensures its transparency and accountability, maintains the quality of the service it provides, and collects evidence for the assessment and ratings process.

To be effective, self-assessment must be open and honest so that it provides reliable information that encourages and supports the service towards continuous improvement.

2A Collecting self-assessment feedback

The self-assessment process is about gathering information from stakeholders.

Ask others for feedback on how you can improve.

Stakeholders include your service's management, staff, families, children and members of the community. Gathering this information assists with:

- identifying how the service meets stakeholder needs
- ensuring the service follows appropriate standards and regulations
- preparing the service for external review
- improving the quality of care provided to children and families
- identifying areas of education and care that can be improved
- identifying the skills and knowledge needed to further develop
- assessing the service's readiness to develop additional skills and knowledge.

A range of information must be collected in order to determine how well a service is operating, such as the following.

Operating information

- Documents relating to the NQF that identify levels of performance
- Feedback from families and children
- Information from staff performance appraisals that shows how educators comply with the NQF
- Service data, including evidence of your rating from a previous assessment and ratings process
- Comments from community members

Data and observation

Information and feedback collection should occur on a regular, ongoing basis and should involve others as much as possible.

You might collect information yourself through data and observation, or collect feedback through stakeholders using a range of engagement methods. Your colleagues may provide ideas and be involved in the process of information collection.

The following table outlines useful types of service data and methods of observation.

Service data	Observation methods
Documents and records provide evidence of your service's compliance with quality assurance, regulations and other legislation. You might use safety and performance audits and match the results with NQF standards, or read the quality improvement plan and identify whether improvements are being made as required. Other service data you may find useful include: • business plans • policies and procedures • procedural forms • checklists • audit reports • assessment and ratings process documents. Check that service data is easy to understand, and is being completed correctly and when required.	Observe things that are happening within the service and record what you see so that you can reflect and use the information in your self-assessment. Checklists are useful recording tools. Some things you can pay attention to include the following: • Watch children as they go about their activities to identify enjoyment, that activities are appropriate and challenging, and that they encourage development in all areas. • Note whether NQS elements are being met, such as whether the children are exploring their interests and using their own ideas for their play (Element 1.1.2). • Consider whether all learning framework outcomes are evident within the curriculum. • Check that there is a balance of natural and artificial lighting, good ventilation and fresh air; appropriate areas for food preparation and storage; quiet areas for resting or sleeping; and adequate and accessible toilet and hand-washing facilities (Element 3.1.1).

Feedback methods

To gain feedback that is useful and regular, check that stakeholders know the process for providing feedback, including who they can go to with either a positive or negative comment.

Invite people to let you know if they feel changes are required. Share ideas and information through newsletters and notices so that everyone feels acknowledged and part of the decision-making process and operation of the service.

Inform people why the information is being collected and highlight the benefits of these details within the self-assessment process. When you include stakeholders in the collection process it gives them the opportunity to be involved and to share ideas with you. It provides learning opportunities and helps to develop skills and knowledge.

The following are some ways to collect information from others for self-assessment. These methods might be managed by a supervisor, yourself, other educators or stakeholders.

Feedback method	Explanation	Examples	Ways to involve others
Discussions	➤ Take notice of what is said to you during conversations and other informal situations. This type of feedback is generally honest and can be a valuable source of information.	➤ Listen to families, or chat to children about an activity or routine. ➤ Arrange formal discussions to identify strengths of the service and where improvements can be made. ➤ Brainstorming sessions can be useful. These might be completed while a group of stakeholders are together, or might be contributed to over time.	➤ Use information provided by others about their own discussions. ➤ Ask others to participate or lead a discussion. ➤ Involve a range of different people over different periods of time.
Interviews	➤ You may investigate a specific area of complaint or a particular strength.	➤ A formal interview with prepared questions can help you to gather specific information. ➤ An informal interview can be similar to a discussion.	➤ Ask for others' opinions on what is important. ➤ Let others decide on the direction of the interview. ➤ Offer the opportunity for others to take responsibility for the interview.
Focus groups	➤ A facilitator provides questions to stimulate discussion. Participants should feel they can be honest and candid in their responses.	➤ A focus group can target a particular issue and provide valuable feedback and insight.	➤ Ensure that everyone participates. ➤ Encourage debate and discussion. ➤ Ask others to take on responsibilities or complete tasks. ➤ At the end of the session, summarise any decisions made.

Feedback method	Explanation	Examples	Ways to involve others
Questionnaires, surveys, feedback forms	➤ Questionnaires, surveys and feedback forms might be paper based or digital, may be sent through the mail, through emails or through digital apps or programs. ➤ Use a range of ways to gather information about the service's performance. ➤ Ensure there is an end date for receiving the feedback and that responses are collated, analysed and results provided to everyone.	➤ A feedback sheet that asks families to respond on a regular basis concerning their satisfaction (or otherwise) with the service. ➤ A survey following the introduction of a new practice or procedure. ➤ A questionnaire asking a variety of questions about the service.	➤ Ask staff members to collect information verbally using a form or list of questions as a guide. ➤ Dispersal and explanation can be given by other staff members.
Performance appraisals	➤ Use the information from performance appraisals to identify how well staff are complying with the NQF, and where skills and knowledge require improvement. A performance appraisal also provides the opportunity for staff to discuss issues relating to service procedures, where they believe improvements can be made and to identify professional development needs. Also consider the results of your own performance appraisal in terms of how you can improve your practice.	➤ Formal appraisals occur annually or every six months. They are a documented way to reflect on skills and knowledge. ➤ Informal performance appraisals occur throughout the year, and educators gain professional development based on discussion of skills or knowledge needed. This might also occur during discussion where educators ask questions or are given constructive criticism.	➤ Allow the staff member to have input, to be prepared and to give their own opinion of their performance.

Feedback method	Explanation	Examples	Ways to involve others
Meetings	➤ Meetings offer the opportunity for everyone involved to participate in decision-making, goal setting, clarifying information and sharing ideas. ➤ Be prepared with questions and encourage people to share information about their needs, changes and solutions.	➤ Team meetings provide opportunities to raise and resolve issues in relation to a particular topic or concern. Team meetings can also be used for acknowledgment and praise for best practice, an idea or a solution.	➤ Ensure that everyone participates. ➤ Encourage debate and discussion. ➤ Ask others to take on responsibilities or complete tasks. ➤ At the end of the meeting, summarise any decisions made.
Comments from community members	➤ Evidence of community contribution shows that your service is willing and open to involve the community. ➤ You may receive positive and/or negative feedback about the service from people in the community, such as public bodies, government agencies, local council members or members of the public. Community members are important to the success of your service and can contribute in many ways.	➤ Take photos. ➤ Record minutes of meetings. ➤ Diarise discussions. ➤ Provide thank-you certificates that you keep copies of.	➤ Ask staff members who are involved in community groups or organisations to gather information or feedback. ➤ Use staff members' contacts as an opportunity for networking.

Discussing feedback

Provide opportunities for discussing the results to take place, either formally or informally, using similar methods to those used for collecting the feedback.

The results of the feedback are used to develop a quality improvement plan (see Topic 3) and to inform the assessment and ratings process (see Topic 4), so all stakeholders should be given the opportunity to reflect on and discuss the results.

Take note of any further ideas or suggestions that arise from these discussions, and include these as further self-assessment feedback.

Examples

Collecting information on service performance

The following are three examples of how information has been collected about a service's performance.

Example 1

Hillary would like to talk to Georgina, a parent, about specific aspects of the service. Hillary thinks a one-on-one meeting is the best method to gather this information, so she arranges a time and organises the materials she needs to document Georgina's responses.

At the meeting, Hillary asks Georgina how well she feels the service has incorporated her cultural background, and about how the service has included her child's interests in the program. Georgina provides positive feedback, which Hillary documents and then reports back to her colleagues.

Example 2

Donna checks the performance appraisal records of her team and observes the team as they go about their daily work. She makes notes on how well they are complying with the service's policies and procedures, which are based on NQF requirements.

At the weekly team meetings, she raises issues to discuss so that colleagues feel they have a part in shaping the service. She also gives positive feedback about the team's strengths.

Example 3

During regular team meetings, Jill leads the agenda item 'Self-assessment'. The agenda allows 15 minutes to discuss NQF aspects.

At a recent meeting, Jill organised a display relating to sustainability in the environment to learn how much the staff know about caring for a vegetable garden (Standard 3.2 of the NQS).

Practice Task 5

1. Draw a line to match each method of collecting feedback on the left to its definition on the right.

* Interviews	* Documents such as business plans, policies and procedures, procedural forms, checklists, audit reports, and assessment and ratings process documents
* Questionnaires, surveys, feedback forms	* Conversations and other informal talks
* Observations	* An opportunity to exchange ideas, set goals, clarify information, and participate in group decision-making
* Discussions	* A formal opportunity to present prepared questions for stakeholders to investigate a specific topic
* Performance appraisals	* Allow you to check whether the NQS elements, learning framework outcomes, and children's interests and developmental areas and requirements are being met
* Service data	* A way to gather responses to set questions from others about performance
* Meetings	* A way to identify how well staff are complying with the NQF and to share and make plans about skills and knowledge that may require improvement

2. Which of the following statements about self-assessment feedback collection are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

a. Self-assessment should be arranged by the manager of the service. The input of colleagues is distracting. * Yes * No

b. A self-assessment process is informed through feedback received from a range of people, including educators, children, families and the local community. * Yes * No

2B Recording and sharing feedback

The feedback you obtain as part of the self-assessment process must be recorded and shared.

Ensure you keep a record of the feedback you receive.

This forms supporting evidence of the service's strengths and weaknesses against the NQF.

Record-keeping should include:

- details of the feedback information
- who provided feedback
- why the feedback was provided
- the date it was provided
- follow-up action taken.

Include the records used to gather feedback information, such as survey forms, the interview questions, meeting minutes or performance appraisal notes. You may wish to include photographs.

Feedback records

The service may have a pro forma or template into which you can catalogue feedback information.

If you are developing this pro forma or template yourself, it is most useful if you organise the details to correlate with the standards and elements of the NQS. This can help you find records of evidence when needed. Be aware that although all elements of the NQS are important, not all of them will require information collection. However, each quality area should be addressed.

Check that your cataloguing method is clear, accurate and complete. Have other staff who access the information check they understand your methods and can find required information. All content should be non-biased and current.

Outcome records

The results of your self-assessment process must be made available to all stakeholders and shared so they know their input has been acknowledged.

The results are used in discussions to develop a quality improvement plan for an assessment and ratings process.

Self-assessment results may be provided in a range of ways, depending on the audience. For example:

- Reports may document the process; the results against NQS standards and elements; implications for continuous improvement; and follow-up strategies.
- Presentations may be used to inform a meeting or information session. These may be verbal or digital presentations, using programs such as PowerPoint. Presentations may be used to share details on noticeboards or in newsletters.
- Digital media may be useful for sharing information on a website, service app or Facebook page. iPads or recordings might also be useful.

Audience needs

Use language appropriate to the audience.

Always consider confidentiality and only include information relevant to the group you are providing to. For example, while you could include the names of individual families in a report to a service owner, this may be inappropriate if you are addressing a family committee.

Family members may not be familiar with the terminology and processes used in education and care services, such as NQF, elements and the assessment and ratings process. Similarly, some people may speak English as an additional language or have language difficulties, so make sure terminology is explained and that the information is accessible to them in easy-to-understand language using graphics or images to assist understanding.

Example

Summarising information

The following table shows how an educator has summarised the information she recorded about Quality area 2 of the NQS.

Quality area 2: Children's health and safety	
Information	**Results**
Summary of strengths	Families feel their children have developed excellent relationships with educators and that children are well supervised. The hygiene practices used are adequate as there are minimal issues related to the spread of infectious disease.
Key improvements sought	Some family members feel that their cultural dietary requirements are not provided for and would prefer that their children were offered sandwiches each day (Element 2.1.3).

Practice Task 6

Which of the following statements about recording feedback are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

a. Only feedback that recognises strengths needs to be recorded. * Yes * No

b. When cataloguing feedback you should organise the details to correlate with the standards and the elements of the NQS. * Yes * No

c. Although all elements of the NQS are important, not all of them will require information collection; however, each quality area should be addressed in your feedback. * Yes * No

d. Confidentiality is not important when providing feedback because everyone has agreed to fill in the feedback forms. * Yes * No

e. The results of your self-assessment process must be made available to all stakeholders so they know that their input has been acknowledged and so that informed discussion can occur. * Yes * No

Summary

- An important part of the NQF assessment and ratings process is the self-assessment process.
- A self-assessment process is required to gather information from stakeholders (including the service's management, staff, families, children and members of the community) to assist you to identify how well the service follows appropriate standards and regulations and meets stakeholder needs.
- You need to collect a range of information to determine how well your service is operating, including documents relating to the NQF, service records, feedback from family members and children, and comments from community members.
- Use a range of methods to collect information, such as research, informal interactions, discussions, formal meetings, observations, focus groups, interviews, surveys, questionnaires, feedback forms and performance appraisals.
- The information recorded must be clear, accurate, complete, non-biased and current.
- Self-assessment results should be provided in a range of ways, depending on the audience, such as in a formal report, meetings, newsletters or on the service's website, so that all stakeholders are given the opportunity to reflect on and discuss the results.
- Self-assessment results are used to inform the assessment and ratings process.

Learning Checkpoint 2
Facilitating a self-assessment

Read the case study and then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Wolga is responsible for facilitating a self-assessment process. The tasks she must complete include the following:

- Identify ways to collect information from staff, children, families and the community.
- Share ideas with colleagues and involve them in the collection of information.
- Record the information collected against the NQF standards and elements.
- Make self-assessment data available to inform discussion of the process.

1. Draw a line to match each item of information collected by Wolga to the correct NQF element.

* Staff diaries and logs showing critical reflection on the program and on individual children's learning.	* Element 6.2.3
* Children's drawings about how they feel at the service, particularly if they have built a trusting relationship.	* Element 5.1.1
* Social media pages showing planning, implementation and outcomes of a focus group to support parenting.	* Element 1.3.2
* Certificate of appreciation showing the service was involved in a fundraising event.	* Element 6.1.3

2. Wolga shared an idea with her colleagues about a survey to collect information from families about their child's wellbeing and comfort. Which of the following actions could colleagues help with? Select all that apply.

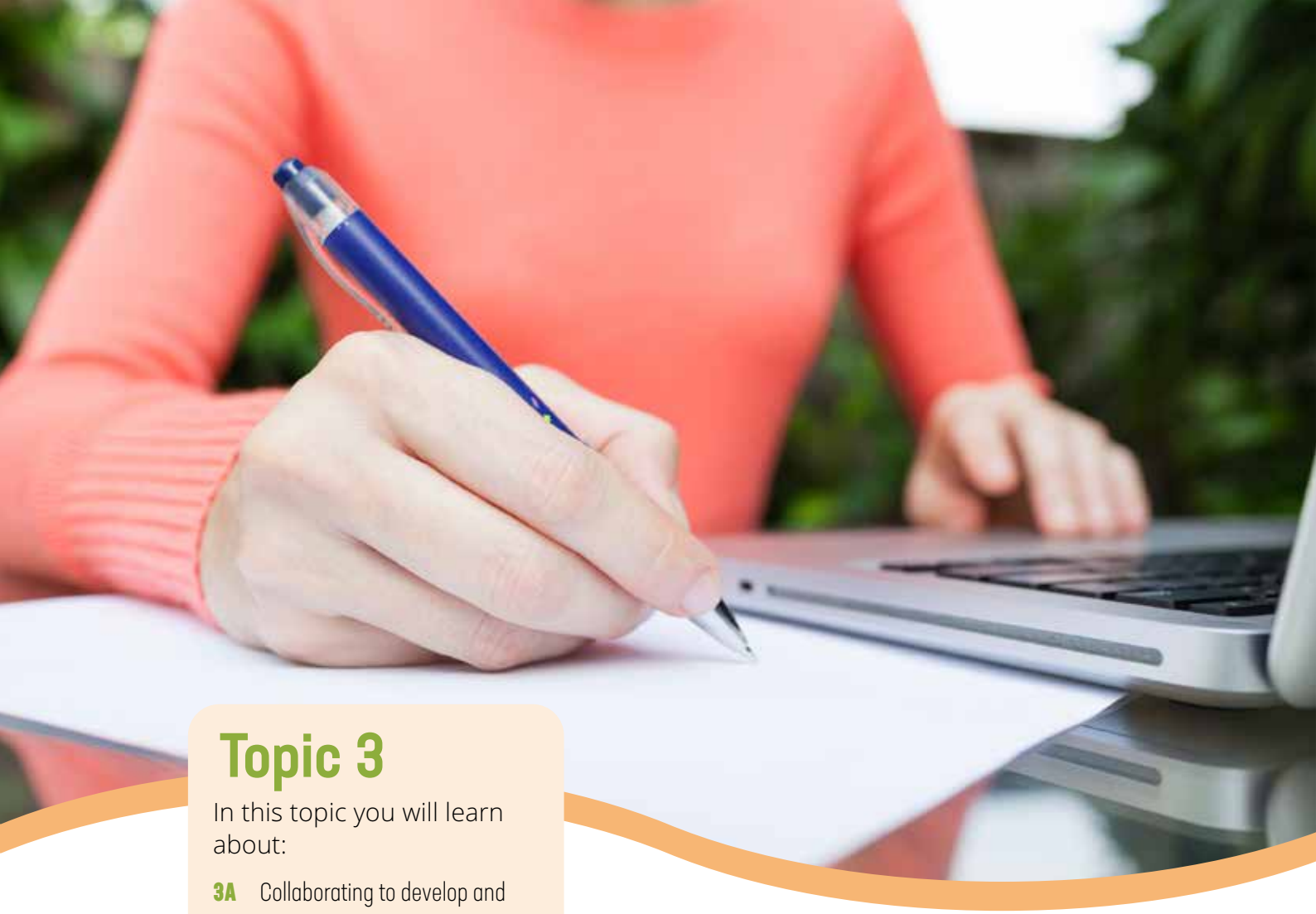
- ☐ Developing the survey
- ☐ Answering the questions themselves
- ☐ Drawing pictures
- ☐ Putting up posters about safe sleeping
- ☐ Asking family members questions
- ☐ Reminding family members to return paper surveys by the due date

3. Following completion of the survey, Wolga wrote the following email:

> **To**: Families
>
> **From**: Wolga
>
> **Subject**: Survey results
>
> Dear families,
>
> We would like to thank you for the amazing response to our recent survey. The information gathered helps us identify that we are providing you with services that you are pleased with. It supports the evidence we are collecting linked to the National Quality Standard 6: Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.
>
> There was an indication that some families would like DVDs available relating to guiding children's behaviour and that maybe a guest speaker could be invited for an information session. This was useful feedback that will help us plan for you in the new year.

Which of the following statements are correct about the email? Answer yes or no for each.

a.	Wolga is making self-assessment data available at the service.	* Yes	* No
b.	Wolga is providing too much information to families. They won't understand anything about the quality standards.	* Yes	* No
c.	Wolga should talk to each person individually. An email is never appropriate.	* Yes	* No
d.	Wolga has linked the incorrect standard to the survey results.	* Yes	* No



Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

3A Collaborating to develop and review a QIP

3B Documenting and reviewing a QIP

The quality improvement plan

From the results of a self-assessment, a service prepares a quality improvement plan (QIP).

A quality assurance process (such as an organisational self-assessment) identifies gaps in your service's performance by highlighting the level of service currently provided, then measuring the results against the level of performance required by the NQF.

The QIP is a framework for future practices and is used to inform authorities of the service's intentions during the assessment and ratings process.

3A Collaborating to develop and review a QIP

The QIP is a living document that requires regular monitoring and review.

This will ensure the service meets its compliance obligations, and that the plan becomes part of the service's continuous improvement cycle. A QIP begins with the self-assessment process, and is then updated regularly following an assessment and ratings process to ensure it reflects areas that were highlighted as issues or requiring improvement.

Collaborate with others to help you develop and review your QIP.

A QIP that is being used effectively responds to growth and development within the service, and reflects:

- new information
- changes to service practices, procedures and priorities
- industry trends.

Collaborating internally

To develop and review a useful QIP, you should collaborate with families, children, educators, staff members and management.

This will identify:

- current strengths
- service issues
- key improvements
- goals
- measures
- time lines
- achievements.

Collaboration should occur to enable group contribution towards QIP plans and to involve as many people as possible in QIP reviews.

Collaboration can take the form of:

- asking stakeholders questions
- visiting other services to see how they operate, especially in areas your service needs to improve on
- developing professional improvement workshops or visits
- attending meetings
- working online
- coming together to celebrate success.

Collaborating externally

To establish plans for improvement, you may find research and resource activities can inform your actions.

In section 1D of Topic 1, a comprehensive list of options is provided under the heading 'Gaining advice and assistance' to help you identify appropriate research and resource links.

Schedule regular consultation and collaboration to ensure you remain on track, and to encourage all stakeholders to be involved and aware of the QIP and its impact on the service.

To keep track of scheduled events, create a calendar showing the dates you expect to implement each type of consultation, including collecting forms and surveys, and holding meetings and/or feedback events.

Example

Feedback collection calendar

Month	Information collection method/event
January/ February	➤ Enrolment forms ➤ Routine update forms ➤ Cultural and lifestyle updates ➤ Staff meeting
March	➤ Stakeholder feedback night (BBQ and informal feedback opportunities) ➤ Staff meeting
April	➤ Staff meeting devoted to self-assessment ➤ Attend professional development – Nutrition in education and care
May	➤ Family and educator meetings ➤ Staff meeting
June/July	➤ Continuous improvement strategies development update based on collected feedback; staff to participate in developing continuous improvement strategies ➤ Families and community invited to participate ➤ Staff meeting
August	➤ Dreams and philosophies event ➤ Staff meeting
September	➤ Goals and objectives – How can you help? ➤ Promotion and feedback collection ➤ Staff meeting
October	➤ Stakeholder information sharing night (BBQ and informal discussions) ➤ Staff meeting
November/ December	➤ New family information sessions ➤ Staff meeting

Practice Task 7

When you plan to collaborate regularly with others to develop a QIP, strengths and weaknesses are more easily identified. This helps you to plan key improvements, identify the support systems required and work towards best-practice principles.

Who should you collaborate with regularly to develop a QIP? Select all that apply.

- [ ] Families
- [ ] Management such as a director, manager or owner
- [ ] Your friends
- [ ] Educators
- [ ] Children
- [ ] Police
- [ ] Staff members
- [ ] Local drama group
- [ ] An inclusion service that provides support to children in the program

3B Documenting and reviewing a QIP

A quality improvement plan is used to record self-assessment and quality improvement information.

It is a part of the assessment and ratings process as it is the evidence that demonstrates your service's progress.

The information obtained from a self-assessment provides details of the service's strengths, and identifies areas to improve. The plans you develop to target improvement areas are contained within a QIP. Your organised self-assessment evidence helps to support these decisions and guides your plans.

A QIP needs to be monitored and reviewed.

Preparing a QIP

The QIP must be concise so that it includes all details, yet clear so it is understandable.

Keep in mind the following questions that ACECQA has provided to education and care services when preparing their QIP:

1. Does our statement of philosophy reflect a commitment to improvement?
2. Are our resources targeted to support our plans?
3. Are we collecting and using the right information to help our planning cycle?
4. How do we handle complaints?
5. How do we review our policies and procedures?

As the QIP is shared and implemented by all stakeholders so everyone can contribute to its successful implementation, make sure you use words, terms and language that everyone understands.

If it is your responsibility to prepare a QIP, ask a colleague to double check any facts and proofread the document to ensure it is correct.

To read more about developing a QIP, go to: aspirelr.link/acecqa-improvement-plans. Here you will find a range of documents to support QIP development including templates and guides.

QIP template

The QIP must reflect the information you receive as part of your self-assessment.

ACECQA provides a QIP template that includes:

- information about the service, its philosophy and its context
- a summary of the quality of practice and strengths identified through self-assessment for each quality area and element, matched against the national regulations and the NQS
- key improvements and how they are linked to the standards and elements of the quality areas
- an improvement plan that includes:
  - the goal or outcome
  - the priority level of the improvement
  - steps to achieve the improvement
  - who is responsible
  - success measures
  - time lines
  - progress notes.

A unique QIP may be developed by your service, as long as it contains this information.

ACECQA provides a template that includes a list of relevant regulations. For more information, access the ACECQA website at: aspirelr.link/acecqa-quality-improvement-plan.

Improvement plans

The improvement plan section of the QIP template is the most detailed and unique section.

The improvement plan is informed by the self-assessment process and reflects not only what you wish to achieve (the key improvements) but how you choose to achieve this. The more detailed your improvement plan, the more able stakeholders will be to follow the plan and put it into place.

The improvement plan/QIP is evidence that you will then use as part of your assessment and ratings review. The more detail it contains, the greater the evidence you provide. It is important to note that the assessment and ratings process not only measures the outcome of quality you demonstrate, but also the actions you take, and demonstration of ability, to work towards goals and manage continuous improvement.

The improvement plan is made up of the following sections:

- the goal or outcome
- priority levels
- steps to achieve the improvement
- who is responsible
- success measures
- time lines
- progress notes.

The goal or outcome

Clear outcomes or goals allow you, and all those reading the QIP, to clearly understand the key improvements to be achieved.

To make these effective:

- choose outcomes or goals that are simple to achieve
- break big tasks into smaller chunks
- write the outcome or goal in simple, clear language
- be specific – what do you really want to achieve?

If you set goals that are too large, you will not see progress and may become unclear of your purpose. The following are some examples.

Broad outcome or goal	Defined outcome or goal
To build stronger relationships with families.	- To collect information from families using a range of collection methods. - To use information collected from families to start discussions and develop individual understanding of needs.
To create a better outdoor environment for children.	- To add a range of natural elements to the outdoor area. - To alter outdoor areas so educators are able to supervise all areas easily. - To provide accessible pathways for children with physical challenges so they can participate in all areas of the outdoor space. - To build a vegetable garden. - To plant an orchard.

Priority levels

Each key improvement sought within your QIP must be prioritised as low, medium or high.

A service demonstrating high compliance and best practice will alter the priorities depending on the depth of influence they have on quality and operation. While there may be variables influencing these priorities, a guide may be as follows.

Priority	Description	Example
High priority	A key improvement that, if not done, is detrimental to compliance. It must be dealt with and should take precedence over other goals.	Some families of children with allergies have not provided medical management plans. Medical management plans that have been provided are not accessible to all staff. (Quality area 2)
Medium priority	A key improvement that may increase best practice and compliance, but is moderately significant.	Regular staff have access to medical management plans; however, short-term staff need to be reminded of the plans. (Quality area 2)
Low priority	A key improvement that, if not done, is not detrimental to the compliance of the service. It has some influence on best practice, but is not urgent or significant.	All medical management plans are in use and all staff are aware of their location. If the plans were laminated they would be kept in better condition. (Quality area 2)

Steps to achieve the improvement

Whenever a key improvement goal is set, it is most achievable when steps are provided.

Steps are most effective if they are detailed and broken down into simple stages. Detailed, staged steps assist in showing progress; they also help to provide the feeling of success.

Steps might be sequential, meaning that you must do one thing before the next, or they may be a list, where there are a number of different actions that must be taken to achieve the key improvement.

In Section 1A, a comprehensive list of options is provided to help you identify appropriate research and resource links. These can be used to support the development of your steps.

Steps to achieve improvement	
ACECQA initiatives	National Quality Standard
professional associations	organisations
internet links	online networks
national accredited training	specialist training
professional development	professional networks

Each action of the QIP should have a nominated person who is responsible for the completion of that action or to oversee it. This will ensure that the action is undertaken and completed on time. If an action has no responsible person, it is likely to be forgotten or never achieved.

Success measures

Success measures are put in place so that you know when your key improvement outcomes or goals have been achieved.

Your success measures could include the degree to which the outcome/goal is achieved, or the action or expectation of what has been done to achieve the outcome/goal.

Without success measures it may be difficult to identify whether your key improvement is achieved.

The priority of the goal or key improvement will influence the time lines. Alternatively, they may be influenced by the complexity of the key improvement.

By setting time lines, your goal will not be forgotten. You might set a time line for the entire key improvement, or for individual steps of the key improvement. As well as including these time lines in the QIP, it is useful to use a calendar or diary, and to provide time lines to individual stakeholders who are part of the achievement process.

As you achieve each step towards a key improvement goal, record a dated progress note. These notes should reflect the actions taken so far to achieve the goal, and also include any change of direction, alteration or barriers that have been faced.

Example

Completing a QIP

During a self-assessment process, Royce, a supervisor, identifies within Quality area 7: Governance and leadership that there are elements of strength and elements the service could improve on. For example:

- Strength: Element 7.1.2: Manage systems - Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service
- Weakness: Element 7.1.1: Service philosophy and purpose - A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations

He identifies this through conducting a performance appraisal and discussions with a number of educators, as well as through his attendance at a professional development session.

When Royce is preparing the QIP, he uses this information to target the key area of improvement and identify how the improvement will be addressed.

Royce then discusses the situation with educators to identify what they need to do to achieve this goal.

Quality Improvement Plan	
Quality area 7: Governance and leadership	
Strengths	Element 7.1.2: Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service. New educators are initially given a buddy to work with, who helps demonstrate and discuss the service's policies and procedures regarding risks in the workplace. This ensures new educators form strong relationships with staff, while learning how the service operates and how they can help minimise risk.
Element/s of weakness	Element 7.1.1: A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations.
Identified issue	Although our philosophy meets our needs, it was developed by our organisation and does not include aspects specific to the educators involved in the day-to-day operation of the service.
Key improvement sought	To have a service-specific philosophy that works alongside the overall organisational philosophy.
Priority	Medium
Steps	1. Contact head office for approval and support. 2. Include discussion and analysis of methods for completing the philosophy at a staff meeting. 3. Put into place ideas for gathering philosophy information from all stakeholders. 4. Develop a draft philosophy. 5. Gain approval of the new philosophy from stakeholders and the organisation. 6. Promote the resulting philosophy to all stakeholders.
Person responsible	1. Centre manager 2. Royce & staff 3. Royce & manager 4. Royce 5. Manager & management committee 6. Royce
Measures of success	A new philosophy representing service-specific views and beliefs is in place.
Time line	May 2019
Progress notes	3 January 2019: Contacted head office to discuss possibility of developing a service-specific philosophy to work alongside the organisational philosophy.

Finalising the QIP

Once your improvement plan has been created, it will need editing and proofreading as part of the finalising process.

Editing is about making changes and suggestions that will improve the quality of the plan, the language used and the way the information is expressed. Proofreading includes some of these areas; however, editing is a more complex action and can extend to content analysis, identifying whether the plan contains up-to-date information, is comprehensive, meets confidentiality and copyright laws, is informative and uses wording relevant to the stakeholders.

Editing to check information is clear and concise includes:

- rephrasing jargon
- checking accuracy in the use of NQF components
- removing material that is not necessary to your message
- checking the spelling, punctuation and readability
- checking currency
- applying referencing and permission requirements, confidentiality and copyright law
- correcting terminology
- defining content
- ensuring the content is complete and that all required information is in the plan.

Often, people slip into relying on the computer spellchecker, and this can lead to errors. After editing, proofreading is a necessary tool for picking up any remaining spelling errors, difficult wording and inadequate grammar. At times you may need to ask a range of colleagues for feedback so that you make the most of their proofreading abilities.

If the QIP information has spelling and grammar issues, this can lead to misconstrued information. Some common proofreading pointers include checking:

- spelling
- grammar
- punctuation
- typing accuracy
- formatting
- alignment.

Reviewing the QIP

Most QIPs are flexible and are changed and adapted as key improvements are achieved or outcomes are altered.

To ensure a QIP is responsive, include measurement and timing information (part of the template) to ensure that the key improvement areas can be assessed and a new plan can be developed in line with current needs.

To monitor the plan effectively during its implementation, note:

- how often the QIP should be reviewed
- who should review the QIP
- how the QIP will be reviewed
- when and how the review will take place.

When you monitor the progress of a QIP, you will soon notice whether it is achieving its goal or is not progressing. The earlier you recognise this, the more effectively you can adjust the plan and/or redevelop it to meet the service's needs. In addition, you can intercept any negative outcomes that stakeholders have informed you of, such as:

- loss of respect or trust
- fear of or resistance to change
- in-fighting
- loss of direction
- feelings of inadequacy or misunderstanding.

When negative outcomes are experienced, discuss the situation with stakeholders to determine whether you need to:

- stop the QIP in the specific area and reconsider the goal or steps
- adjust the QIP to address any new information
- use discussion, clarification, professional development and training to continue the QIP.

ACECQA suggests that if you need clarification about QIP development, you should contact you state or territory regulatory authority.

Examples

How educators review their QIPs

The following provides two examples of how educators monitor their QIPs.

Example 1

Kiri develops a QIP. She tells the other educators that she will monitor the section relating to policy development, and add review notes on a weekly basis to determine whether the policy is working and whether changes need to be made. She completes the monitoring of the QIP by speaking to each of the participants, and recording their responses in regard to progress, difficulties, delays and successes.

Example 2

Linda develops a QIP relating to staff improving their hazard- and risk-assessment strategies. She indicates that the QIP will be monitored daily to check whether staff are meeting the outcomes/goals. She tells staff she will monitor the QIP by completing a checklist based on staff involvement and implementation of the strategies included in the plan. At the end of the month she will conduct a safety audit and share the results to determine whether further improvements are required.

Practice Task 8

1. Information gathered in a self-assessment process informs your QIP and supports your decision-making. This information must be clear and concise.

   Draw a line to match the term on the left related to QIP development to the correct definition on the right.

* Low priority	* An improvement that, if not done, may lead to issues with compliance. They must be dealt with and should take precedence over other goals.
* Proofreading	* An improvement that may increase best practice and compliance but is not highly significant.
* Medium priority	* An improvement that is not detrimental to compliance. It may have some influence on best practice but it is not urgent or significant.
* Editing	* A process involving working with other colleagues and stakeholders to check for mistakes, such as spelling or grammatical errors.
* High priority	* A process to make changes and suggestions that will improve the quality of the materials, language and information and ensure all information is included in the plan.

2. Select true or false for the following statement.

   To monitor the plan effectively during its implementation, you should note:

   - how often the QIP should be reviewed
   - who should review the QIP
   - how the QIP will be reviewed
   - when and how the review will take place.

   * True * False

Summary

- A quality improvement plan (QIP) is used to record self-assessment and quality improvement information. It is also part of the assessment and ratings process as it is the evidence that demonstrates your service's progress.
- A QIP provides a service with the opportunity to identify its strengths as well as areas for improvement.
- To develop a useful QIP, you should collaborate with families, children, educators, staff members, management and community agencies your service works with to identify:
  - current strengths
  - service issues
  - key improvements
  - goals, measures and time lines to implement improvements.
- Use the QIP template provided by ACECQA or your service's own template to develop a QIP.
- Regularly review the QIP to ensure it is current and is part of the service's continuous improvement cycle.
- Collaborate with all stakeholders to ensure reviews are comprehensive and take everyone's ideas, suggestions and opinions into account.

Learning Checkpoint 3
The quality improvement plan

Read the case study and then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

At Scenic Drive ELC, Roma has collaborated with stakeholders to collect the following feedback through a self-assessment process. She will use this information to inform the QIP.

Stakeholder	Method of collection	Feedback
Educators	Performance appraisal – during performance appraisals, Roma asked educators how the philosophy of the service reflected their practice.	Ten staff felt the philosophy reflected their practice. Two staff felt that they didn't understand the philosophy.
Children	Survey – the children were asked how they felt when they were in the service. They selected a smiley face or a sad face to identify their response. They were encouraged to draw or write any additional information.	Ten children drew pictures of themselves with educators. The drawings showed: ➤ smiling and holding hands ➤ picking vegetables ➤ playing on equipment. One child drew themselves crying and calling out 'mum'. Fifteen children selected the smiley face. Two children chose a sad face.
Families	Meeting – a family meeting was held and information about the service's philosophy was discussed. Families had the opportunity to reflect on the philosophy and give their opinions.	Six families attended. Four families stated that they did not have easy access to the philosophy. The philosophy is available on social media; however, they do not use this. One family didn't understand what the philosophy meant. One family loved the philosophy and wanted it to remain with no changes.
Community	Notes of discussion – those entering the building to provide services were asked if they had feedback relating to how the service could provide a more professional approach.	Two services were questioned. The inclusion service gave feedback that while all children were included positively at the service, inclusion was not mentioned in the philosophy. The delivery person felt that they were always welcomed and felt that it was a happy environment.

1. Which of the following are strengths that Roma was able to identify based on the self-assessment feedback? Select all that apply.

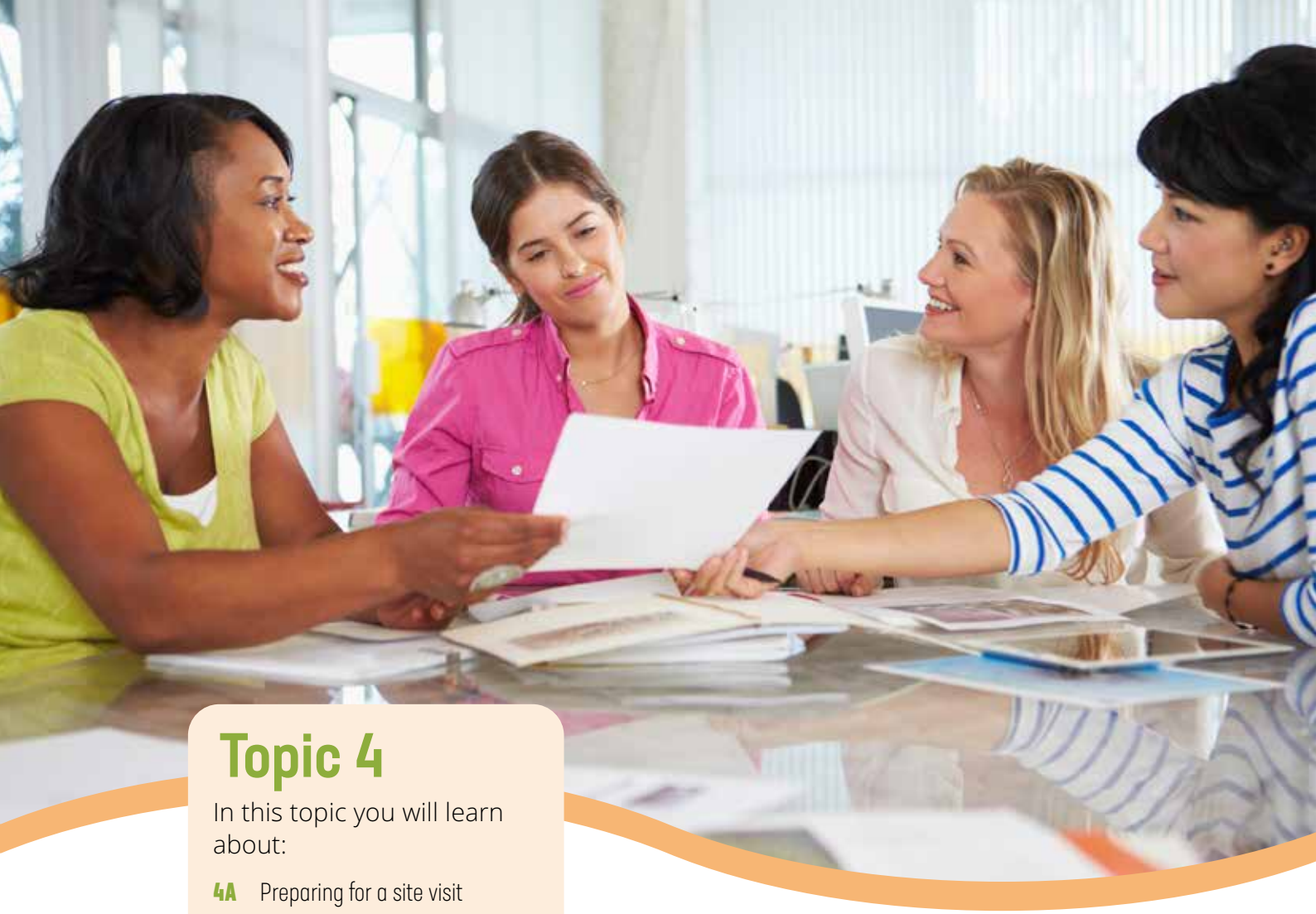
- ☐ Most educators felt that their practice matched the service philosophy.
- ☐ In general, children felt happy about being at the service and had positive relationships with educators.
- ☐ Families weren't interested in the philosophy. They would find a way to read it if they needed to.
- ☐ The philosophy is positive about inclusion and this is a great attitude.
- ☐ Most stakeholders understood and agreed with the philosophy.

2. Draw a line to match the improvement plan heading on the left with the examples of what Roma would use in her QIP on the right.

* Goal	* For all educators and families to be aware of the QIP and then to reflect, discuss and provide feedback so that strengths and key improvements can be identified.
* Time line	* Medium
* Progress notes	* Feedback has been collected.
* Success measures	* Strengths and key improvements have been identified.
* Priority	* Philosophies prepared ready to be provided to stakeholders.

3. Roma records the steps to achieve improvement in the QIP. Place the steps in the correct order from 1 to 4.

- ☐ Hold an open meeting as well as a social media post that discusses the philosophy and asks for questions, poses thoughts and explains the purpose of the philosophy and how it influences and reflects practice.
- ☐ Review feedback and identify strengths and key improvements.
- ☐ Provide the philosophy in a range of ways as needed by each stakeholder. For example, printed, email, online, noticeboard display.
- ☐ Gather feedback from educators and families following the meeting and social media discussions.



Topic 4

In this topic you will learn about:

4A Preparing for a site visit

4B The site visit

Assessment and ratings visits

A key responsibility is to coordinate the service for representatives of the regulating authority during the assessment and ratings process.

This involves arranging meetings to inform everyone that the service is to be assessed, ensuring everyone understands what they are responsible for and checking that all required documentation is complete and accurate.

4A Preparing for the site visit

Make sure that documentation is up to date, current and appropriate, and that any evaluation process is valid.

During self-assessment and completion of the QIP, you have been collecting information and collating details. At a site visit these details will be required as evidence of service practice and continuous improvement.

The specific documents to be provided as evidence of compliance include:

- policies and procedures
- observation records
- continuous improvement plans
- photographs or children's portfolios
- procedural forms, checklists, etc.
- self-assessment records.

Make sure all documentation is accurate and up to date.

Tips for checking documentation:

- Check each document or record is accurate and complete.
- Ensure the most recent documentation is provided; use a version control system, such as date and version number: 2/4/19-1.
- Mark any documentation as 'under review' if you are in the process of updating or reviewing it.
- Keep evidence of improvements and changes, such as work plans, surveys or out-of-date documents.

These documents should be easily accessed from filing cabinets, handbooks, computers, photo albums and record books. Assessment and ratings visits are designed to ensure you are continuously and competently performing at the desired level, so it is crucial to demonstrate the service's efficiency in storing and retrieving this documentation.

Advising stakeholders of a visit

All stakeholders must be informed of an assessment and ratings visit.

Stakeholders include the owners, managers, coordinators, administrators, educators and auxiliary staff. They will need to know the date and time of the visit, what will happen and what is expected of them. Some people may be anxious about the visit, so make sure you clearly explain the purpose and benefits. You may be required to coordinate the following arrangements:

- informing families and children
- informing management
- informing educators and support staff.

Here are some tips for informing the following stakeholders.

Informing families

Families should be made aware of the visit and its purpose through newsletters, emails, meetings, discussions and/or posters (available on the ACECQA website in the 'Families' section). Each state and territory regulatory authority has its own materials.

Informing children

You might prepare the children by simply letting them know a visitor will be coming to see how things work at the service and that they will be watching and talking with educators.

Informing management

The site visit may require the authorised officer to interview specific stakeholders, such as managers, supervisors and directors as part of the feedback process. Ensure these people are available and notify them of the arrangements and the roles they need to take responsibility for.

Informing educators and support staff

Schedule a meeting or discussion with educators, either individually or as a group, to explain the purpose of the assessment and ratings visit. Explain when the visit will take place and that they are to go about their regular duties while the authorised officer visits.

The authorised officer will observe educators and their interactions with children and families. They may ask questions about their work. They will observe whether the children are safe, confident, happy and involved, and whether they communicate well.

To review what an authorised officer may ask or observe, access the Guide to the National Quality Framework and check each Element. Provide educators with examples of the type of observation and questions that may be used. For example:

- When assessing Standard 1.1, 'The educational program enhances each child's learning and development', authorised officers may ask questions such as:
  - How do you use children's ideas, thinking and interests?
  - How do you get to know each child and their strengths, abilities and interests?
  - How do you make sure experiences and routines are child-focused?
- When assessing Element 2.1.2, 'Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented', the authorised officer may check that educators are:
  - actively supporting children to learn hygiene practices
  - encouraging children to wash their hands and cover their mouths when coughing.

Example

Notice of site visit

The following is an example notice of an upcoming site visit.

Upcoming assessment and ratings visit

Purpose of the visit: Assessment and ratings site visit as part of the NQF

Date of the visit: 24 February 2019

Length of the visit: One day

What will happen during the visit: The authorised officer/s will:

- have an opening discussion with the director
- view the whole service
- observe each play space, age group and session
- observe interactions inside and outside
- talk to educators
- review documentation
- have a closing discussion with the director.

Key contact: Kay Wheelan, Director

If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact the director.

Practice Task 9

Which of the following statements about a site visit are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

a. All stakeholders, including owners, managers, coordinators, administrators, educators and auxiliary staff, must be informed of the date and time of the scheduled site visit. * Yes * No

b. The authorised officer will only need to interview the educators as part of the feedback process. * Yes * No

c. There should be a meeting before a site visit to provide clear information to educators and staff about the purpose of the visit and what will take place. * Yes * No

d. During the site visit, the authorised officer will observe educators and their interactions with the children, but will not ask them any questions. They will only speak with the contact person. * Yes * No

e. Family members and community organisations coming into the service do not need to be informed of the visit as it will not involve them. * Yes * No

f. You should check your QIP and all supporting documentation for accuracy and completion ready for the visit. * Yes * No

4B The site visit

The assessment and ratings process takes place according to the state or territory regulatory authority's schedule.

Authorities wish to focus their resources on service improvement, so will schedule highly rated services less often than those with lower or no ratings. Factors such as change of management, reported poor practice or non-compliance can indicate to the authority that an assessment and ratings process should occur early. This risk-based scheduling is sometimes called 'earned autonomy'.

You need to be ready for a site visit by an authorised officer.

Role of the authorised officer

The regulatory authority's authorised officer has three main tasks.

The role involves:

1. The authorised officer observes the children, families, educators, staff members and coordinators within the service undertaking their usual routines. In particular, they are assessing whether educators are engaged in caring, friendly and respectful interactions and the children are safe, happy and involved.
2. The authorised officer discusses activities at the service with the provider, nominated supervisor, educational leader or director, coordinators, educators and other staff members in relation to the quality improvement plan the service has submitted to the authority.
3. The authorised officer sights self-assessment evidence provided by the service. This includes enrolment records, policies and procedures, planning documentation, meeting minutes, safety checklists, staff and family handbooks, newsletters, feedback forms, communications books, photos, collections of children's work and documentation of child assessments or evaluations.

Site visit process

The regulatory authority advises the service of the date of the site visit and what will happen.

A site visit involves an authorised representative of the regulatory authority in your state or territory visiting the service to collect information and evidence of the service's compliance with the NQF.

Before the visit, the service is notified by the regulatory authority that the assessment and ratings process has begun, and is given six weeks to submit a QIP. Once the QIP is received, the service must:

- prepare appropriate documentation for inspection during the visit
- advise and prepare stakeholders for the visit
- appoint a key contact to liaise with the regulatory authority's representative.

Visit the ACECQA website at: aspirelr.link/acecqa-assessment-ratings-process for details about what a service should do before a visit, what happens during a visit and what happens after the visit.

The duration of the assessment and ratings visit depends on the type of service and the number of children, educators and age groups within the service. Similarly, more than one authorised officer may attend a visit if required.

The authorised officer's objective is to:

- determine whether the service meets the NQS elements
- determine whether the service meets regulations
- rate each standard
- rate each quality area and element
- determine the overall rating for the service.

The visit follows a prescribed format where the authorised officer:

- greets the contact person and discusses the overall visit
- views all service areas and activities
- observes each play space, age group and session
- observes interactions inside and outside
- talks to educators
- reviews documentation
- provides general feedback about the visit to the contact person.

During the visit, the service has the opportunity to make minor adjustments. For example, if issues arise, the authorised officer will consider how these issues are managed and dealt with, and these results will form part of the assessment and ratings process.

Visits are not just about how perfectly the service performs on the day. Also taken into consideration is evidence that ongoing attention to detail and continuous improvement is occurring, and that problems are resolved effectively.

After a visit

After the assessment and ratings visit, the service receives a report that provides comprehensive details of the visit and the service rating.

If the service would like to appeal the rating, this must be done within 14 days.

Once a rating is final, the results are published on the MyChild website (aspirelr.link/my-child) and displayed in the service.

Once this process is complete, the service should still strive to improve. A continuous improvement plan forms part of a quality assurance process, and is also required if your service needs to make changes, including a situation where it does not meet regulations, standards or other legislation.

A common continuous improvement cycle involves a plan–do–check–act model.

Plan	Establish the objectives of what needs to be done by collecting and analysing self-assessment information to develop a plan to be achieved in a given time frame.
Do	Undertake the necessary actions defined in a QIP.
Check	Collaborate with stakeholders again on what you have achieved to check your progress or improvement and identify what to do next.
Act	Standardise the changes you have made by adapting policies and procedures and training staff.

Example

Summary of an authorised officer's visit

This summary is in relation to Element 5.1.1. You can find these details in the *Guide to the National Quality Framework*.

Element 5.1.1: Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.	
Observe	An atmosphere that is generally relaxed and happy.
Discuss	Experiences and routines are organised to maximise opportunities for meaningful conversations between children, educators and coordinators.
Sight	The service's statement of philosophy.

Practice Task 10

Number each step from 1 to 7 in the order that would be followed during a site visit.

- ☐ Observe interactions inside and outside.
- ☐ Review documentation.
- ☐ Greet the contact person and discuss the overall visit.
- ☐ Provide general feedback about the visit to the contact person.
- ☐ View all service areas and activities.
- ☐ Talk to educators.
- ☐ Observe each play space, age group and session.

Summary

- The state or territory's regulatory authority conducts an assessment regularly depending on the service's compliance record.
- A site visit involves an authorised representative of the regulatory authority in your state or territory visiting the service to collect information and evidence of the service's compliance with the NQF.
- A QIP must be submitted six weeks before the assessment takes place.
- The service must prepare appropriate documentation for inspection, advise and prepare stakeholders for the visit, and appoint a key contact to liaise with the regulatory authority's representative.
- During a visit, the authorised officer will observe the actions of children, families, educators, coordinators and staff members as they go about their duties; discuss activities at the service with stakeholders; and sight documentation provided as evidence to support practices at the service.

Learning Checkpoint 4
Assessment and ratings visits

Read the case study and then answer the question that follows.

Case study

Lester's service is scheduled for an assessment and ratings visit by an authorised officer in one week. He must prepare all stakeholders for the visit.

1. Which of the following statements are correct about Lester's preparation? Select yes or no for each one.

a.	Lester should advise the educators, children, families and community members the morning of the visit. They will be anxious otherwise.	* Yes	* No
b.	Lester should meet with the educators and talk to them individually about the responsibilities they may need to undertake during the visit.	* Yes	* No
c.	Lester should check all documentation to make sure it is accurate, organised and complete. This week can be used to clarify any information.	* Yes	* No
d.	Lester may schedule a meeting with educators so they can remove any inappropriate foods from the kitchen and pack up the toys by the exit door.	* Yes	* No
e.	Lester can use the *Guide to the National Quality Framework* to show educators what the authorised officer might want to ask and see while in the service.	* Yes	* No
f.	Lester should contact any community stakeholders due to attend on this day and let them know they are not welcome because of the visit.	* Yes	* No