

**CHCPRP003**  
**Reflect on and improve  
own professional practice**

**Learner Guide**



Updated to include  
National Quality  
Framework changes



CHCPRP003

# Reflect on and improve own professional practice

Release 1

Learner Guide

Aspire Version 3.1



## CHCPRP003 Reflect on and improve own professional practice, Release 1

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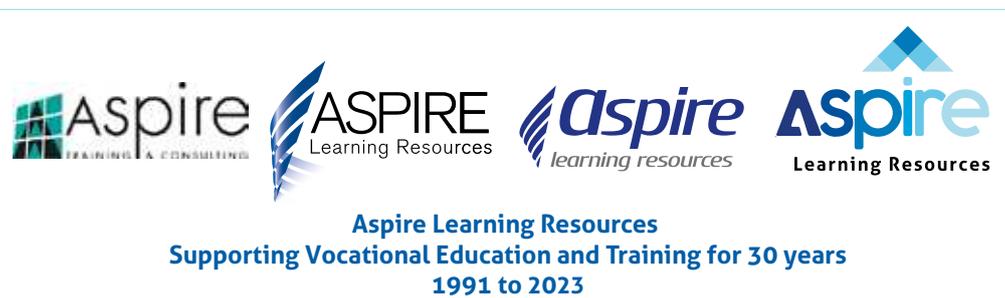
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## Before you begin

This Learner Guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCPRP003 Reflect on and improve own professional practice*, 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 is content only, however additional resources may be purchased that will assist you in your learning. Additional resources include case studies, Practice Tasks and Learning Checkpoints. Your trainer will advise which parts of the Learner Guide you need to read, and which assessment activities you need to complete.

Feature of the Learner Guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 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.</li> </ul>
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.</li> </ul>
Practice Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Practice Tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which Practice Tasks to complete.</li> </ul>
Summaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.</li> </ul>
Learning Checkpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There are Learning Checkpoints for the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which Learning Checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.</li> </ul>

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
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
T1-T3	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-T3	Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning
T1-T3	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
T1-T3	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** Undertaking self-evaluation
- 1B** Reflecting on values, beliefs and behaviours
- 1C** Sharing feedback
- 1D** Seeking feedback

# Reflecting on your practice

*Part of professional skill maintenance is reflective practice, which allows you to look at what you do and think about how you can improve.*

Every educator requires training or professional development to improve their skills, knowledge and practice. When you identify both your strengths and weaknesses, you will be able to develop goals and objectives, set time frames and use evaluation processes to document and analyse improvements.

# 1A Undertaking self-evaluation

*Self-evaluation is a process that involves looking at yourself and rating the quality of your own work.*

It involves looking at what you are doing, analysing its effectiveness, and changing to create a more suitable outcome or practice. Self-evaluation helps you to identify your strengths and weaknesses, and where you may be able to improve or extend your knowledge, skills and experience, helping you to develop stronger skills in working with others and performing your professional role.

Self-evaluation is an expected process of quality practice and is supported by a range of different tools and guidelines. It can occur in a number of ways, some of which are outlined here.



Self-evaluation can identify your strengths and weaknesses.

## Informally

Self-evaluation is part of everyday practice as you communicate with others, make decisions and gain an increasing understanding of theory, research, principles, practices and pedagogy.

## Formally

Self-evaluation occurs as part of your performance review. This review looks at your personal abilities and skills. It highlights your strengths and identifies your weaknesses, allowing you to plan strategies for support and improvement.

## Meetings and discussions

Self-evaluation can occur at staff meetings or through educator discussion, and in any situation that challenges you to take in new information and think about its relevance.

## Self-evaluation

*Self-evaluation often includes the process of critical reflection.*

Critical reflection occurs when you analyse and challenge your ideas, or the common-sense beliefs that underlie your thoughts and actions. It allows you to assess the appropriateness of your thinking according to real experiences, and to use this to inform your future actions and practices.

Critical reflection is an ongoing process of reflection and change.

**When a situation challenges your beliefs, ask yourself the following questions:**

- > What happened?

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- > How and why did it happen?

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- > How do you feel about it?

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- > What have you learnt from this?

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- > What is the significance of this?

---

- > What will you do next?

---

- > How will this alter your future actions and values?

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## Professional reflection

*There are several models used for professional self-evaluation.*

Some of these models will be required as part of your work practice. You may discover other models that are useful for your own personal reflection.

Some models for self-evaluation, and information about how you may implement them, are outlined in the following table.

<p><b>Journal documentation, diaries or reflection logs</b></p>	<p>Journals and logs can be used to record your thoughts and feelings. They allow you to look back and evaluate your ideas and actions. They also demonstrate your progress.</p> <p>You can use critical reflection questions or write about your thoughts on the techniques you use, the materials you need, the context of your work, or the ideas you have.</p> <p>A journal can include research, personal comments, notes from professional development seminars, conferences or workshops, quotes, photos or sketches. The content needs to be meaningful to you.</p>
<p><b>Structured discussion</b></p>	<p>Structured discussions occur in meetings and during professional development activities. A performance review is a structured discussion that occurs as part of the quality process in your service.</p>
<p><b>Unstructured discussion</b></p>	<p>Unstructured discussions occur every day at work – whether you are talking to other educators, parents or community members – and all provide opportunities for self-evaluation.</p>
<p><b>Checklists</b></p>	<p>A checklist may be part of your service’s practice or something you develop yourself. The checklist can include various actions you can undertake to review your skills and abilities, or it might be a list of skills you want to achieve that you can check off when completed.</p>

<b>SWOT analysis</b>	<p>A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning system. It encourages you to look at your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.</p> <p>Here are some points you may reflect on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Strengths or weaknesses: may include capabilities, resources, management, processes, innovation, location and reliability.</li> <li>➤ Opportunities or threats: may include industry developments/trends, other educators' practice/ pedagogy, contacts/partners, demand, new technology, new staff, lifestyle trends, finance and legislation.</li> </ul>
<b>Questioning</b>	<p>Before and after questions are useful for self-evaluation.</p> <p>Think about what you feel and think before you start something, implement an idea or make a decision for change. Be clear about your plans and intentions.</p> <p>You should then reflect after the implementation. Think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ how you feel and think now</li> <li>➤ what you understand after this experience</li> <li>➤ how this affects your future practice</li> <li>➤ what you need in order to move forward; for instance, research, skills, support or cooperation</li> <li>➤ what you want to achieve next.</li> </ul>

## Supervisor evaluation

*Self-evaluation may be prompted by your supervisor.*

Your supervisor may encourage you to reflect on your practices in different ways.

### **Supervisors offer the following kinds of support and guidance:**

- Educational supervision – stretching your skills so you can reach your full potential while carrying out your normal role
- Administrative supervision – promoting best practice and quality work through face-to-face discussion or information sharing
- Supportive supervision – encouraging you to develop strong professional relationships where communication and joint problem-solving help you learn and develop

Find opportunities to ask questions and gain feedback from your supervisor about your performance. Ask them to support any personal development plans, either by helping you create one or by helping you to achieve your goals.

You can also ask your supervisor (this might be an educational leader) to help you evaluate your progress towards set goals, areas for improvement or tasks that you can commence. Their feedback can enable suitable changes or extensions on your current skills and knowledge. This also helps to develop and form positive working relationships with others.

## Peer evaluation

### *Ask your peers for their opinions.*

Sometimes, self-reflection can be limited, and another person's ideas can help you start a new train of thought, or think about an area of practice that you hadn't considered before.

Peers are able to provide feedback on aspects of your work based on the time they spend working directly with you. They have the unique opportunity to understand you from a close working viewpoint.

#### **Peers can provide feedback relating to your:**

- personal characteristics
- relationships with others in the workplace
- ability to take responsibility and share tasks
- overall professional attitude.

## Personal development

### *Evaluation leads to personal development.*

When you have received evaluation from others, and are able to self-reflect, you will be able to improve your personal or professional attitudes or actions.

Here are some of the areas you may evaluate in order to improve your self-reflection.

#### **Self-management**

Ability to:

- apply knowledge, skills and ethics relevant to current industry and professional standards, codes of ethics and codes of practice
- understand and implement relevant organisational policies, plans and procedures
- set personal goals
- measure own performance
- manage time effectively
- identify work methods and practices that can improve personal performance
- monitor trends related to roles and responsibilities
- establish a personal development and/or work plan
- ask for, analyse and interpret feedback
- research personal development opportunities
- use information systems to help establish professional development and/or work plans
- develop and maintain professional networks
- interpret written and oral information about workplace requirements
- communicate effectively, including receiving and analysing feedback and reporting.

<b>Self-awareness</b>	Awareness of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ personal behaviour</li> <li>➤ personality traits</li> <li>➤ different learning styles</li> <li>➤ professional standards.</li> </ul>
<b>Social awareness</b>	Ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ work with an awareness and sensitivity to conflict, culture and context</li> <li>➤ work to increase social justice issues and respond to inequality and discrimination</li> <li>➤ analyse culturally different viewpoints and take them into account in personal development and professional practice.</li> </ul>
<b>Relationship management</b>	Ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ relate to people from a range of social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and physical and mental abilities</li> <li>➤ manage or seek support to manage complex ethical issues or dilemmas</li> <li>➤ apply skills of negotiation, communication and decision-making.</li> </ul>

## Self-awareness

***Self-awareness is a conscious knowledge of your own character, feelings, motives and desires, and how these influence your actions.***

On a daily basis, self-awareness allows you to:

- objectively question your work practice, curriculum, pedagogy and relationships
- consider your opinions and perceptions, and how realistic they are
- analyse your views in relation to the views of others.

In addition, self-awareness helps you to measure and improve your behaviour, personality, learning style, standards, motivations and emotions. Every individual has limitations in some areas. Some examples are presented in the following table.

<b>Personal behaviour</b>	You may find it difficult to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ wait</li> <li>➤ remain calm in a conflict or difficult situation.</li> </ul>
<b>Personality traits</b>	You may find it difficult to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ adapt to change</li> <li>➤ understand the ideas of others</li> <li>➤ develop lasting relationships</li> <li>➤ trust others</li> <li>➤ understand the views of others.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Learning styles</b></p>	<p>You may prefer one learning style over another. One of the many common categorisations of learning styles identifies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ visual learners – people who learn from seeing or reading</li> <li>➤ auditory learners – people who learn from hearing</li> <li>➤ kinaesthetic learners or tactile learners – people who learn from doing or trying.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Professional standards</b></p>	<p>You may find it difficult to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ actively seek professional development opportunities</li> <li>➤ seek, analyse and reflect on feedback</li> <li>➤ seek opportunities for supervision and mentoring</li> <li>➤ identify and participate in personal development</li> <li>➤ integrate learning into improved practice.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Motivations</b></p>	<p>You may need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ extrinsic motivation – motivation from others</li> <li>➤ praise</li> <li>➤ an incentive or reward</li> <li>➤ constant recognition.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Emotions</b></p>	<p>You may find it difficult to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ remain impartial, fair or unbiased</li> <li>➤ maintain professional boundaries</li> <li>➤ understand all of your feelings.</li> </ul>

## Recognising limitations

*Understanding your limitations can highlight areas for improvement.*

We all have strengths and weaknesses. Understanding your limitations is not about admitting defeat; it is about highlighting the areas you can improve on and, as a result, becoming more successful.

Effective self-evaluation takes some practice. For most people it is not an automatic or simple skill. The following information outlines what you could do to organise yourself to effectively self-evaluate.



### **Allow enough time**

To think clearly, you need to allow yourself enough time so you are not rushed or pressured.

**Seek somewhere quiet**

Find a quiet place to reflect; this will help you think clearly. Constant interruptions will stop the flow of your thoughts.

**Relax and reflect**

Take some deep breaths and relax. Make the most of the opportunity. At first you may feel like you have a million other things to do. However, as you get better at self-reflection, you will find that it helps to solve problems and improves the way you do things. Be in a state where you can reflect on issues without being consumed by negativity.

**Highlight your achievements**

Be proud of your achievements. Particularly, think about the successes you have had since last practising self-reflection. Reflection is not just about your weaknesses; it is a time to celebrate your strengths too.

**Write down your thoughts**

Document your thoughts about what you do well and what you need to work on so that you can analyse your progress. This allows you to note your current thoughts and reconsider certain areas as you develop greater skills and knowledge.

## Example

### Critical reflection

In the following example, Gaye, an educator, uses the process of critical reflection to think about communication with her colleagues. She writes the following:



#### What happened?

In the sandpit today, Betty (a child) was directing other children as she built a sandcastle with a moat. She was telling the other children what to do: some to help dig and others to help carry water from the water container to the moat. As the children were all younger than Betty, they were unable to turn on the tap for the water container. I started to talk to Betty and asked her how she might solve this problem. During the discussion, Monica (another educator) came and turned the tap on for the children. My goal for Betty to plan and organise the group of children failed.

#### How and why did it happen?

I did not communicate my goal to Monica and just expected that we all had the same ideas. Monica did not ask me what was happening in the sandpit.

#### How do I feel about it?

I was annoyed with Monica at first, then I realised I did not communicate with her.

#### What have I learnt?

I need to communicate with Monica when spontaneous goals arise. Maybe I need to talk with her now and tell her that sometimes we have different goals for the children and we need to talk about these if we plan them spontaneously. We might also need to ask each other about our goals prior to going ahead and implementing something, as this might interfere with the plans of others. We could just say something like, 'What is happening in the sandpit?' and then the other person can clarify any goals; for example, 'We are digging and putting water in the moat' or 'Betty is the project manager and she is directing the other children'.

#### What will I do next?

I will speak to Monica and tell her my ideas, and ask for her opinion.

#### How will this alter my future actions and values?

When I have specific goals, I will make them clear to Monica, particularly when the goals change. I will make time to provide feedback to all staff and ask them about how they can also share their spontaneous goals. I want the team to feel that their contributions are important, and that we work in an environment where we can grow and learn from one another.

# Practice Task 1

1. Which of the following statements describe the ways supervisors and/or peers could support self-evaluation? Select all that apply.

- Peers could provide feedback about professional relationships.
- Supervisors can answer questions about performance.
- Peers can write journals for you.
- Supervisors can tell you what to do.

2. What are three methods you could use for self-reflection?

.....

.....

.....

3. List four areas of your own personal development that you could reflect on.

.....

.....

.....

.....

# 1B Reflecting on values, beliefs and behaviours

*When you are being objective, you see things honestly and clearly.*

Objective opinions are based on facts and reality, not on ideals or biases. By viewing your skills and knowledge objectively, you will be able to identify where your weaknesses and strengths are, and clarify what is important to you. You will be able to think of specific ways you can implement self-improvement, change a process, the way you do things, or work towards a higher quality outcome.



View your skills objectively to identify your strengths and weaknesses.

## Self-management

*How you conduct your work will be based on values and beliefs.*

These need to fit with appropriate practice, comply with legislation and respond to your individual requirements.

Self-management refers to your ability to take responsibility for your own behaviour. It involves decision-making, planning, scheduling, managing your time and completing tasks. When you take responsibility for your behaviour, you are reviewing your values and beliefs. You are also reviewing your values, beliefs and behaviour when you identify your strengths and weaknesses.

The following table outlines some personal areas that you might be able to reflect on.

### Personal goals

Do you have:

- a career path?
- consistent expectations of yourself?

### Performance

Do you have:

- adequate self-evaluation skills?
- clear perceptions?
- limited or no bias?
- strengths?
- weaknesses?

### Time management

Do you:

- set priorities, tasks and goals?
- organise your daily schedule?
- complete tasks and projects on time?

### Personal development and/or work plan

Do you:

- assess the effectiveness of your own skills development?
- research information to develop a personal development and work plan?
- use information systems to help establish work plans?

## Social awareness

*Social awareness refers to your ability to understand the needs and feelings of others.*

When you are socially aware, you gain many benefits. For example, you:

- appreciate that people are different and that these differences provide learning and enjoyment
- see that each person contributes to the service and community in diverse ways
- understand how relationships work and how you can support and develop relationships with your colleagues, families and those within the service community.

The following information identifies some questions to consider that impact several areas of a person's behaviour.

### Questions to consider

Are you:

- culturally aware?
- confident?
- feeling understood?
- interested in other people's perceptions?
- able to involve yourself in a support group or reference group?

### Areas of impact

Do you:

- have an awareness and sensitivity to conflict, culture and context?
- have the ability to respond to social justice issues; for example, inequality and discrimination?
- have an interest in taking on an advocacy role?
- have an awareness of culturally diverse viewpoints and take them into account?

# Work role boundaries

*Educators should continually reflect on their work.*

Reflective practice is embedded in the National Quality Framework (NQF). It forms the basis for many of the outcomes you are required to achieve while working to provide high-quality education and care.

When it comes to reflection on your work role, consider the following.

<b>Applying knowledge</b>	<p>Apply knowledge, skills and ethics relevant to current industry and professional standards, codes of ethics and codes of practice.</p> <p>Do you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ knowledge of relevant legislation?</li> <li>➤ skills in implementing frameworks?</li> <li>➤ an understanding of the assessment and rating system?</li> </ul>
<b>Implementing procedures</b>	<p>Understand and implement relevant policies, plans and procedures.</p> <p>Do you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ understand and follow organisational policies, plans and procedures?</li> <li>➤ understand what the service philosophy means to you?</li> <li>➤ agree with all the procedures in place?</li> </ul>
<b>Work methods</b>	<p>Identify work methods and practices that can improve personal performance.</p> <p>Do you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ have knowledge of best practice?</li> <li>➤ have good professional models?</li> <li>➤ act as a good professional role model?</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring trends</b>	<p>Monitor trends related to roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Do you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ experience in work settings other than your own?</li> <li>➤ the ability to adapt to change?</li> </ul>
<b>Professional networks</b>	<p>Develop and maintain professional networks.</p> <p>Do you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ time available?</li> <li>➤ funding to participate?</li> <li>➤ ready access to networks?</li> </ul>

<b>Information gathering</b>	<p>Interpret written and oral information about workplace requirements.</p> <p>Do you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ understand the quality improvement plan?</li> <li>➤ know how to report health and safety issues?</li> </ul>
<b>Communicating</b>	<p>Communicate effectively, including receiving and analysing feedback and reporting.</p> <p>Do you feel confident asking for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ support when others are busy with their own issues?</li> <li>➤ training to deal with a particular area of weakness?</li> </ul>

## Professional communication

*Communication plays a big role in how you are perceived in the workplace, how you perceive others and your ability to provide the best care and education possible for the children and families you interact with.*

To maintain professional work role boundaries, you need to be aware of how you speak to others and what is and is not appropriate to say in particular situations with the groups in which you have relationships.

### Boundaries are about:

- being professional
- being friendly, but not overly friendly
- maintaining confidentiality
- respecting differences of opinion
- ensuring parents also understand where the boundaries are.

## Working with diversity

*Workplaces employ people from diverse backgrounds with diverse needs.*

Some workers or clients may have specific needs or requirements that should be taken into account.

Some types of culturally diverse needs are explained here.



### Dress

Appearance and dress varies between individuals. Some people wear traditional clothing, some cover their hair or face, and others wear symbols in relation to religious beliefs. Some clothing or appearances relate to socioeconomic backgrounds and financial circumstances, while others are expressions of personality.



### Religious practices

Religion is often an important aspect of a person's life and has a strong influence on someone's norms, beliefs, values and customs. Many people frame their desires and beliefs in religious or spiritual terms.



### Customs

Many customs relate to food and are influenced by different beliefs about lifestyle, religion, traditions and health. Some people do not allow certain types of foods. For example:

- Muslims and Orthodox Jews do not eat pork.
- Hindus do not eat beef.
- Seventh-day Adventists do not eat meat.
- People with certain health issues or food preferences might not eat gluten, sugar, eggs, dairy, nuts or other foods.

Never assume that people of a particular racial or religious background share the same food preferences. Many people follow dietary practices that are not related to religious beliefs or cultural practice.



### Social values and priorities

Every person has their own values and priorities based on their beliefs, lifestyle and experiences. Among other things, people might prioritise:

- leisure time
- sport
- work schedules
- healthy home cooking
- takeaway foods
- museums and art galleries
- money, wealth and material possessions.



### Family obligations

Some people have high levels of responsibility towards their family, while others have minimal responsibilities. A colleague who cares for others after work, will have greater difficulty coming to meetings or social events than a worker who has fewer responsibilities.



### Non-verbal behaviour

If you are aware of the communication style and the languages spoken by others, you will be able to respond appropriately.

Some people may not speak fluent English, while others may speak clearly but have difficulty reading. You may need to interpret eye contact, physical movements, facial expressions and personal space as part of your communication.

## Managing relationships

***To be able to manage relationships, you must consider your views, attitudes and beliefs.***

Educators manage relationships from the moment a service opens until the time they leave the service to go home. When you manage relationships you are:

- facilitating great partnerships
- providing clear communication
- seeking to gain understanding
- having a professional attitude.

The following information outlines aspects that assist your ability to understand diverse viewpoints and help build relationships.

### Relating to people

You must be able to relate to people from a range of social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, all with different physical and mental abilities.

You must:

- be unbiased
- make sure others feel understood
- have appropriate expectations
- be confident that you will do or say the right thing.

When you practise these things you will open yourself up to the needs of others.

### Managing issues

You must be able to manage complex ethical issues and dilemmas.

You may need to:

- improve your decision-making skills
- show confidence in your leadership skills.

When you practise these things you may make appropriate decisions.

## Being sensitive

***Eliminating bias in your own values and attitudes will assist you to make decisions as situations arise.***

Always ask yourself what the best outcome is for the people involved and how you can reach this outcome. Don't apply your personal values and attitudes when dealing with a situation; you must remain impartial and respond to issues or events according to your service policies and procedures.

The following information outlines some strategies to help you deal with these types of situations, and to help people in the workplace act with more awareness and sensitivity.

<p><b>Educate employees</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Share differences and create a team culture that is respectful of differences and supports each person’s strengths and weaknesses.</li> <li>➤ Provide training or information to help team members understand complex issues.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Encourage open discussion about assumptions, biases and preconceptions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop and support an environment where people can share information.</li> <li>➤ Prepare new staff and give them the opportunity to talk about their needs and concerns.</li> <li>➤ Encourage team members to ask questions in non-judgmental ways. For example, instead of saying, ‘Why do you do that?’ or ‘Why don’t you eat meat?’ ask, ‘Can you tell me why that is important to you?’</li> </ul>
<p><b>Treat people as individuals</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Research issues and choices to help you gain a better understanding of the people you interact with.</li> <li>➤ Ask people about themselves – this is the only way to understand each person as an individual. Basing your knowledge on assumptions demonstrates ignorance and disrespect.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Show interest in cultural traditions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Become a visitor to another person’s culture by asking them about it. Some traditions will be similar to your own, while others will be specific to the person or their background.</li> <li>➤ When traditions are shared, find out about how each person celebrates.</li> <li>➤ When the tradition is special to one person, ask if they can share it in some way.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Address issues openly</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Address any obvious issues before they become a real problem.</li> <li>➤ Make sure that each team member knows they are important.</li> <li>➤ Use honest and open discussion, along with ongoing feedback and trialling of ideas, to cater for everybody’s needs.</li> </ul>

## Resolving conflict

*In many workplaces, social and cultural differences between colleagues or clients can create tension and misunderstanding.*

If you recognise a potential conflict, always turn to your supervisor, manager or senior educator for support. Be guided by their advice and the appropriate documentation, such as your service’s grievance procedure, as these will describe the actions you should take.

If you avoid conflict or difficult situations, think about why you do this and build the skills you need to become better at managing this.

## Example

### Personal values, beliefs and behaviours

Erin reviewed her own values, beliefs and behaviours, and came up with a number of outcomes, summarised below.

#### Personal goals

Erin has a career path and goals she will use to follow this path. In the short term she wants to take the role of educational leader when the current leader goes on maternity leave.



#### Performance

Erin has spoken to her director and explained her goals. She asked for feedback on her career path and on the areas she should develop.

Erin respects the educational leader and has worked with her conscientiously to ensure she learns as much as possible from her. Erin wants to understand the current educational leader's perspective so that, if she does take on the maternity leave role, she can understand why all the educators in the service work in the way they do.

#### Time management

Erin has set aside some of her own time to speak to her director and gain more feedback and support.

Erin takes on any additional work and completes it promptly.

#### Personal development and/or work plan

Erin has two areas she wants to develop most:

- her understanding of programming theories
- her competence on the iPad.



## Practice Task 2

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

### Case study

Sezen is a diploma-qualified educator who has just commenced in her first working position since coming to Australia from Turkey. She speaks English well, but this is not her first language. Sezen's values, beliefs and behaviours include the following:

- She watches people closely and stares at their face when they are communicating.
- She does not require a large personal space and sometimes stands close to others she is communicating with.
- When she enters a room, she greets the eldest person first, prior to greeting others.
- During break times, Sezen makes a point of asking other staff members lots of personal questions. She believes that by developing a personal relationship, she will also be fostering a professional relationship.

#### 1. Select true or false for the following statement.

Ling, a parent, requires a large personal space. She does not like to gain eye contact and does not like to share personal information. Sezen needs to adjust her actions when interacting with Ling.

\* True      \* False

#### 2. Which of the following strategies could help increase the awareness of the educators to become more aware of their values, beliefs and behaviours? Select all that apply.

- Encouraging open discussion about assumptions and preconceived ideas.
- Introducing people to the cultural traditions of others.
- Telling Sezen she needs to make some changes and think about what other people want.
- Addressing obvious issues openly.
- Advising all educators to avoid Sezen in the staff room if they are not comfortable being asked personal questions.

# 1C Sharing feedback

*When you are part of a well-functioning team, feedback happens naturally, and this allows you to develop and learn each day.*

Open conversations help you to identify the qualities others see in you. They give you the opportunity to connect with your colleagues, ask questions, learn and grow.

Think about and plan open discussions so that you:

- think about the person you are addressing and the type of communication and learning they will receive best
- prepare your thoughts and ensure you are clear about what you want to talk about
- ensure you are empowering the person to move forward in areas that are realistic; for example, it is no use giving feedback to an educator on how they might better implement a procedure if a policy does not support this action
- know what you want to achieve by providing feedback.

## Communication skills

*Communication skills are vital to successfully give, receive and implement feedback.*

Here are some communication skills and questions to ask yourself when implementing them.

### Listening and speaking skills

Do you:

- listen carefully and actively to try to see other people's perspectives?
- get your point across, but still consider the points of others?
- have knowledge of professional jargon?
- have language skills?

### Negotiation skills

Do you:

- face conflict?
- always try to gain feedback or follow up?
- take on responsibility?
- have diverse cultural expectations?

### Decision-making skills

Do you:

- voice your decisions?
- commit to a particular point of view?
- have the ability to develop a strategy?
- consider the views of others?
- make mistakes, then learn from them?

# Learning styles

*People have different learning styles that influence the way they process and make sense of information and communication.*

If you wish to gain the most from shared feedback, it is important to understand these learning styles.

The three main learning styles you will encounter are presented in the following table.

## Visual

- A person who prefers a visual learning style learns more effectively with pictures, images, reading, demonstrations, seeing and looking.
- A visual person likes to take notes rather than get involved in discussion, and will sit at the front so they can see easily.
- Types of feedback most suited to visual learners includes:
  - face to face
  - online
  - demonstrations
  - video.

## Auditory

- A person who prefers an auditory learning style learns more effectively by listening to verbal instructions and through discussions, role-play and talking about problems.
- An auditory person may also like to use recorded material and read out loud.
- Types of feedback most suited to auditory learners includes:
  - face to face
  - webinars
  - podcasts
  - learning circles.

## Kinaesthetic

- A person who prefers a kinaesthetic learning style learns more effectively by hands-on experiences, touch, gestures and observing actions.
- A kinaesthetic person may need regular breaks.
- Types of feedback most suited to kinaesthetic learners includes:
  - demonstrations
  - simulated experiences
  - face to face
  - video.

# Feedback principles

*Feedback relates to information given after an event.*

Feedback helps people to develop their understanding and improve their performance.

Whether formal or informal feedback is given, there are a number of basic principles to keep in mind, as outlined here.

## Principles to keep in mind for sharing feedback

- 1** **Make it a positive process and experience**

Be positive. If you are giving feedback, deliver it in a pleasant way that enables others to learn. If you are receiving feedback, accept it as a positive way for you to learn.

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- 2** **Be timely**

Feedback works best if it is shared soon after an event. Make sure the feedback discussion occurs when it is convenient.

---

- 3** **Make it regular**

Set periods of time for revisiting feedback and any goals. Goals can get lost in the day-to-day work you do, so make specific times to discuss and review them.

---

- 4** **Prepare your comments**

Think about what you want to say or talk about. Be reflective and clear. Make notes, if needed, so that you remember the important points.

---

- 5** **Consider the location**

Use a space that is comfortable and private, especially if the feedback is personal and important.

Always make sure you have the other person's full attention and avoid interruptions.

---

- 6** **Be specific**

Longwinded discussion can lose value. Be concise and let the other person know exactly what you want to say.

---

- 7** **Criticise in private**

If feedback is critical, acknowledge the need for privacy to show respect.

---

- 8** **Avoid blaming and shaming**

'You' statements take the form of finger-pointing, so feedback should include 'I' statements. For example, instead of saying, 'You don't seem to see the importance of greeting all parents,' try saying, 'I think it is important to greet all parents'.

---

- 9** **Limit your focus**

Too much feedback can be confusing. Work on one thing at a time, and when this is achieved move on to the next thing.

10

**Allow input**

Encourage the other person to give their comments and ideas or explain their understanding.

11

**Include the positives**

Include praise and encouragement. Mention positives, not just negatives. Look at feedback as something that identifies where things can be improved, rather than where things are wrong or incorrect. Everyone can improve in some way.

12

**Provide suggestions and follow up**

Everyone needs support and suggestions. Suggestions may range from ideas on what to do next to professional development ideas.

Set clear times and dates for follow-up. If goals are set and then forgotten, the process is of little value.

## Feedback strategies

*Constructive feedback is focused and non-judgmental, and its aim is to help others improve.*

There are a number of strategies for giving constructive feedback. You can experiment and find which are best suited to your style of communication. You might also consider using a different technique for different people or situations.

The following information outlines some simple techniques to help you clearly deliver your feedback.

### Reframing

Step back from the situation and consider it from a different angle.

For example, 'Yes, we do only have a week to finish the display. On the other hand, we have finished the program early, so we should have time.'

Reframing can turn a problem into an opportunity, a weakness into a strength, a possibility into a certainty and an unkindness into an understanding.

### Facilitative questioning

These open questions are designed to help the other person understand and think more widely about the topic. Here are some questions you may ask:

- What does that mean for us?
- Could you give me an example?
- What have you learnt from this?

### Sandwich method

Using the sandwich method means starting and ending with positive information, and including your constructive feedback in the middle. You may:

- comment on what is going well
- comment on areas that need improvement
- set goals based on positives.

### Shared method

Using the shared method, you may:

- ask the other person what went well
- list the things you thought went well
- ask the other person what could be improved
- add any other things you think could be improved
- end on a positive – set goals, congratulate the person on their progress or thank them for the contribution they make to the team.

### Stop, start, continue

Discuss:

- what they feel they should stop doing
- what they feel they should start doing
- what they wish to continue doing.

## Eight-step feedback model

*A more structured feedback technique is the eight-step model.*

This provides steps that prepare everyone for the discussion to help them communicate as clearly and positively as possible.

### Eight-step feedback model

#### Set the scene

To provide positive or constructive feedback, set the scene by:

- 1
  - ensuring you have set aside enough time
  - having clear goals and objectives
  - ensuring you have observed or investigated the issue adequately
  - taking the situation seriously
  - approaching the discussion in a positive and respectful manner
  - share feedback in a private place if the discussion is confidential or could be embarrassing.

2

#### State the purpose of your feedback

Explain why you wish to talk to them and why it is important. Remember to be clear and get straight to the point.

3

#### Consider whether the person or group is aware of the issue

If so, make the most of their knowledge and collaborate in a feedback-sharing exercise.

If not, describe specifically what you have observed. Be clear about the details. State what happened, who was involved and the end result. Stick to what you have seen firsthand – don't try to speak for others. Remember you are giving feedback rather than a warning.

4

#### Describe your reaction

Give examples of how you and others are affected or feel about the behaviour or issue being addressed.

5

**Give the other person an opportunity to respond**

Don't forget to listen to what the other person has to say. If a person hesitates to respond, ask an open-ended question. Also consider that sometimes people need to think about information before responding.

6

**Offer specific suggestions**

Wherever possible, make helpful suggestions. Include practical, feasible examples to show the person how to improve the situation. Don't forget to listen to their thoughts and ideas.

7

**Summarise and express your support**

Review the major points that have been discussed. Always end on a positive note to express confidence in the person's ability to improve the situation.

8

**Document the resolution**

Document the resolution so that the details are clear to everyone involved.

## Introducing change

*Sometimes your feedback will be about introducing change.*

Change is necessary for improvement. When preparing for change, you need to do the following:

- Encourage a can-do attitude. Start with small changes and increase your ideas as people see that change is possible.
- Provide detailed information so that everyone is aware of what is going on. Discuss the effects and benefits of the change for both the service and the staff.
- Be prepared for resistance, fear and misunderstanding. Do not disregard other people's feelings.
- Be enthusiastic about change. Show your enthusiasm and others will be enthusiastic too.

Circles of change is a strategy for educators to critically reflect and share feedback. People at the same or a similar level of development are usually grouped in the same circle of change. This gives them the opportunity to have conversations and give each other feedback in a safe environment, thus developing their self-awareness and self-confidence.

## Practice Task 3

1. Number each step from 1 to 8 in the order you would follow to implement an eight-step feedback method.

Consider whether the person or group is aware of the issue

Summarise and express your support

State the purpose of your feedback

Set the scene

Offer specific suggestions

Give the other person an opportunity to respond

Document the resolution

Describe your reaction

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

## Case study

Rainelle, an educator, has been supervising Igor, a trainee educator, for two weeks. She has noticed that he lacks skills in completing written documentation, particularly illness records and incident reports. She decides to provide feedback to help Igor work towards completing records effectively.

Rainelle: 'Hi Igor. Your interactions with the infants is lovely. You must enjoy working with them.'

Igor: 'Yes, I think the infant age group is so interesting. They're learning so much so quickly.'

Rainelle: 'Fantastic, I agree. I have noticed that you have been writing some of the incident records too. I think maybe some could be a little clearer, particularly when you are describing what happened. Do you find these challenging?'

Igor: 'Yes, I do find them hard to write. Sometimes I don't know how to describe all the details.'

Rainelle: 'Well, why don't we work together on improving those skills over the next week? I think working together helps, don't you? We could come together at the end of the week and see how you have progressed.'

'By the way, good job on completing the assignment yesterday.'

Igor: 'Thank you. Yes, that would be great.'

2. Which of the following feedback methods did Rainelle use with Igor in the example? Select all that apply.

- Eight-step model
- Circle of change
- Shared method
- Stop, start, continue
- Sandwich method

# 1D Seeking feedback

***Feedback lets you know that what you are doing is correct, and provides opportunities for you to gain other people's opinions.***

Feedback may be positive and it may also provide ideas about how you can develop in the future.

Feedback helps you to see if what you are doing is meaningful. It helps you to move forward, set goals and see that you are developing to achieve these.

To benefit from feedback, you need to:

- have the right mindset
- ask for feedback regularly
- use feedback appropriately.



Feedback is part of the communication process.

## Levels of feedback

***There are three levels of feedback that you can request.***

When you ask for feedback, it helps if you know what you really want to find out. When you are certain about what you want to know, you are more likely to receive useful information from the other person. If needed, give them time to think about their response or to observe your practice before replying.

Each of the three feedback levels places you under more intense reflection and allows the discussion to be deeper and more meaningful.

<b>Feedback about processes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ When you ask for feedback about a process, you are asking for factual information.</li> <li>➤ This feedback will be impersonal.</li> <li>➤ For example, you would receive this type of feedback if you asked about how the infectious disease policy worked with children who were not immunised.</li> </ul>
<b>Feedback about your interaction with processes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ When you ask about your interaction regarding a process, you are requesting personal information.</li> <li>➤ For example, you would receive this type of feedback if you asked how well you follow the sun-smart procedure, or if you wanted someone to comment on your personal philosophy.</li> </ul>
<b>Feedback about relationships, leadership, communication and sensitive issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ When you ask for this type of feedback, you are requesting personal feedback that is constructive and useful to your development.</li> <li>➤ You are gaining someone's personal opinion and perception, so you increase your ability and set goals.</li> <li>➤ For example, you would receive this type of feedback if you asked your supervisor to comment on how well you develop rapport with parents.</li> </ul>

## Sources of feedback

**Feedback can come from clients, organisations or other sources.**

Clients, including parents, can provide useful feedback about your skills and knowledge, and on how you implement both of these. By giving clients opportunities to express their ideas, opinions, requests or perceptions, you are meeting both their needs and your own.

You might gather feedback for learning from clients using informal methods, such as general conversations and discussions, or formal methods, such as surveys, meetings, questionnaires or forms.



There are many different sources of feedback including social media such as Facebook.

### Ways to gain feedback from clients include:

- talking to people during orientation visits, interviews or spontaneous discussion
- collecting documents, including enrolment or registration forms
- gathering feedback through suggestions boxes, communication books or apps
- meetings – uninterrupted time when information can be exchanged and discussed
- observing and listening
- contacting by phone
- emailing
- using social media such as Facebook, or service-specific programs and apps
- conducting surveys verbally, through a publication or through online survey software such as SurveyMonkey
- asking people to complete templates or forms.

## Feedback from organisations and other sources

**Organisations can provide a more industry-based level of feedback and support.**

You will interact with some organisations on a regular basis, such as those that support children and families or provide additional programs. You may also work with other professional organisations (although less frequently), such as those that provide support and knowledge.

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)

Other sources of feedback come from face-to-face and online networking.

Face-to-face opportunities include visits to and from other services where practices, ideas and opinions are shared professionally.

Online support and networking groups are growing in popularity. Most people find these easy to participate in as they are easy to access and provide an immediate response. You can also hear ideas from people who are geographically distant from you. For example, there is a variety of useful Facebook pages for educators where the focus is on reflection, questioning and gaining opinions.

## Receiving difficult feedback

*At times you may receive feedback that is negative or leaves you feeling hurt.*

For example, a discussion might upset you, or you may identify that a practice you thought was of high quality must be improved.

Sometimes, feedback may be given by another person who is inexperienced or who has poor skills at providing feedback. When this occurs:

- turn the situation around and think about what the person is really trying to say
- think about the message and what you can gain from the information
- identify the most important parts of the discussion and pick out what you can take from it
- listen carefully at all times
- ask questions
- respond in a way that demonstrates you understand the feedback and are taking it in a positive way.

## Feeling defensive

*If feedback has upset you, have some time away from the situation and think about it before taking things further.*

Consider whether you were listening to what the other person had to say, or if you were anxious or focused on how you felt and whether they were right or wrong. If you believe the feedback was meant to be hurtful, or is continually negative or inappropriate, follow service grievance policies.

It is understandable that at times you might feel defensive or aggressive; however, it is unacceptable for you to express aggression. Doing so will alienate you, and you may miss out on an opportunity for personal and professional growth. Reacting in this way may also make others fearful of giving you feedback in the future, or it may lead to grievance proceedings against you.

Sometimes you might not realise you are being defensive until later.

### **Defensive behaviour involves:**

- tuning out and not listening
- interrupting
- being sarcastic
- criticising the other person on a personal level
- arguing over the facts.

If you feel defensive, you may need to let the other person know you need to step back from the discussion. You might say:

- 'I need to think about this before I respond.'
- 'I'm a little bit surprised, do you mind if I take a minute to think?'
- 'I feel pretty upset, but I will think about what you are saying.'
- 'Maybe we can talk about it again tomorrow, when I have had time to think.'

## Strong relationships

*Feedback is more effective when there is a good working relationship between you and your co-workers.*

Good relationships are built on collaboration, trust and mutual respect.

As you gather information about your actions, you are accepting ideas from others who are usually more experienced than you, have different needs to you or have an alternative understanding.

### Practise the following principles daily:

- Get to know others in your team individually.
- Be reliable; do what you say you will do.
- Be consistent in what you say and what you do – actions speak louder than words.
- Allow other educators to speak without fear. Listen, acknowledge and explore different points of view.
- Communicate clearly, regularly and in different ways about your vision, the direction for the work area and the performance expectations.

### Example

#### Seeking feedback

Lillian has recently started running small group times. She wants to know how she is progressing, so asks her supervisor, Ivan, about her performance.

Ivan provides some constructive advice and identifies an area he feels that Lillian could improve on.

Lillian feels disappointed at first. She thought she was doing really well. She thinks about the feedback for a while, then realises the following:

- Ivan raised a really good point and something that was really useful.
- Ivan had been honest and caring in his feedback and she appreciated this.
- If you want to improve you need to learn, and this can be challenging.

Lillian makes some notes and writes down some questions she could ask Ivan to get some clear direction.





## Practice Task 4

1. Which of the following statements relate to seeking feedback? Select all that apply.

- Feedback can come from a number of sources, including clients, management and organisations.
- Feedback is used to help you identify your strengths and weaknesses. It gives you an opportunity to progress and make goals for improvement.
- Receiving negative feedback requires you to think carefully about what is being said and identify what you can gain from the information.
- Negative feedback can be upsetting and make you feel defensive, so it is okay to tune out, interrupt and argue the facts.
- There are three levels of feedback you can request: feedback based on a process; your interaction with processes; and feedback about relationships, leadership, communication and sensitive issues.

2. Draw a line to match each feedback method on the left to the type of feedback on the right.

- |                          |            |
|--------------------------|------------|
| * Observations           | * Informal |
| * Surveys/questionnaires | * Informal |
| * Conversations          | * Formal   |
| * Meetings               | * Formal   |

## Summary

- Supervisors, team leaders and other co-workers or peers can provide feedback on your performance, quality of work and interactions with others.
- If you self-reflect, you will be able to understand the opinions of others and improve your personal or professional attitudes and actions.
- By viewing your skills and knowledge objectively, you will be able to identify where your strengths and weaknesses are, and clarify what is important to you.
- Reflective practice is embedded in the NQF. It forms the basis for many of the outcomes that you are required to achieve while working to provide high-quality education and care.
- When you are part of a well-functioning team, feedback is a normal occurrence; it allows you to develop and learn each day.
- You will achieve good results if you know how to give and receive constructive feedback.

# Learning Checkpoint 1

## Reflecting on your practice

Read the case study then answer the questions that follow.

### Case study

Yara is an educational leader, and has noticed that Lidia, an educator she is responsible for, is approaching parents when they arrive to pick up their children. Lidia often tells parents about difficult behaviour that has occurred throughout the day, using descriptions that are quite exaggerated. On many occasions the children can hear the discussion. Yara can see that some of the parents are becoming concerned about their children.

Yesterday, a parent spoke to Yara when they arrived and asked immediately if her child had been 'bad'. Today, a parent was upset with Lidia and suggested that Lidia did not like her child.

1. Number each step from 1 to 4 in the order that Yara should follow to give feedback to Lidia using a sandwich feedback method.

'I can't wait to see how you go when you speak to Alex's dad; he will be really pleased to hear about the writing.'

'Hi Lidia, just wondering if you have a moment to chat with me. We are all working on a new goal and I wanted to share this with you.'

'It's great that you are really stepping up and talking to parents and families about their child's day!'

'When you communicate with parents about their children, remember to share some positive stories about their learning, like when Alex wrote his name with you today. Parents really enjoy finding out about these developments.'

2. Yara suggests that Lidia undertake some professional reflection, with her support.

Match each professional reflection suggestion to its model.

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| * Questioning             | * 'Lidia, maybe you could write down some thoughts about what has happened throughout the day prior to the parents arriving. This might help you think of positive stories when you are talking to them.'                                       |
| * SWOT analysis           | * 'Lidia, let's have a chat about your parent discussions at the end of each day. This might help you reflect on getting some feedback.'  |
| * Journal documentation   | * 'Lidia, listing your strengths and weaknesses helps you to reflect on your performance. From this, you can think about the opportunities you have for development, and the things that are holding you back, which might be seen as threats.' |
| * Unstructured discussion | * 'Lidia, do you have some positive stories ready for when parents arrive?'   |

3. Lidia told Yara that she did not find a journal useful, that she wasn't sure what she needed to do following their discussion, and that she learnt best from watching others do things. Which of the following suggestions would meet Lidia's learning style best and help her to improve her performance? Select the correct answer.

- She should talk to others in the team and find out how they communicate with families.
- She should work closely with Yara and see how she communicates with parents.
- She should read some information about communicating with parents.

4. Which of the following statements demonstrate that Lidia is reflecting on and recognising the effect of values, beliefs and behaviour in practice? Select all that apply.

- I have always worked this way and no one has ever told me to do it differently before, so I'll keep working this way.
- Yara is very demanding. I will avoid talking to parents altogether and hopefully then she will be happy.
- I have always worked this way, but I appreciate getting feedback from Yara because she has given me some ideas for improvement.
- Parents need to know about their child's negative behaviour. If Yara isn't brave enough to tell them, that's her problem.
- While I disagree with Yara, I am willing to think about her ideas and try them out.

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

- a. Lidia has a legal and ethical responsibility to improve her practice. This is part of her work role boundaries. \* Yes      \* No
- b. When it comes to reflecting on her work role, Lidia should consider how she applies knowledge, skills and ethics relevant to current industry professional standards, including codes of ethics and codes of practice. \* Yes      \* No
- c. Informal learning and development will occur when Lidia is relaxed about feedback. Formal learning and development will occur when Lidia is stressed about feedback. \* Yes      \* No
- d. Lidia should measure her progress and performance by asking Yara for feedback regularly. \* Yes      \* No
- e. When a parent suggested that Lidia did not like their child, this was feedback that Lidia could reflect on. \* Yes      \* No





## Topic 2

In this topic you will learn about:

- 2A Determining improvements
- 2B Identifying support networks
- 2C Seeking support and training
- 2D Practising self-care
- 2E Planning personal development

# Enhancing your practice

***When you evaluate your professional practice, you identify gaps in your skills and knowledge, seek new information and improve your understanding and skills.***

To do this effectively you should keep abreast of current industry developments and trends, and do what you can to maintain a good understanding of children's development, theories and pedagogy. This is the only way to effectively address your current and future professional needs.

## 2A Determining improvements

*Reflecting on your own practice will help you determine what needs to be improved.*

Programs, materials and activities are only effective if they change and adapt to the needs of their users. Your own practice is the same. It will need to evolve to meet changes in:

- industry practices and trends
- compliance requirements
- research findings
- best practice methods and expectations
- people – their learning and changing needs.

The ability to assess your own practice relies on the skill of self-reflection. It also involves:

- identifying objectives
- measuring your own performance
- using valid evidence.



Your own practice will continually evolve with self-reflection.

### Improving from self-evaluation

*Self-evaluation helps you become skilled at finding ways to achieve your goals.*

If you reflect on your practice regularly, you will be able to recognise your current skills and knowledge as well as the skills and knowledge you wish to gain.

Each time you ask yourself the following questions, you may identify a new goal to work on.

#### Questions you could ask yourself include:

- Do I know what the regulations and standards are for my role?
- Do I respond ethically and deal with difficult situations appropriately?
- Am I implementing best practice?
- Do I have the skills and knowledge required to carry out my role to the highest level?
- Do I advocate for children and their families?
- Am I knowledgeable enough to cater for all child and family needs, and to deliver a vibrant program that is responsive to children?

## Improving from feedback

***Feedback motivates and guides you to review and assess your actions and relationships.***

When you identify people you respect, and who provide useful, constructive feedback, you start to develop a mentoring-type relationship. This might be one where you regularly check in with them and then set goals. The most effective situation occurs when you give and receive feedback to support each other as a reciprocal professional development strategy.

You will be confronted with a wide variety of problems in your work, including problems that arise from the feedback you receive. Once you are able to evaluate the key elements of a problem, you will be able to move forward and attempt to resolve it.

As you develop skills and knowledge, and learn better ways to do things, you will make mistakes, learn and change direction. To deal with these problems positively, you should think about:

- what the problem is
- who the problem relates to
- how the problem affects you
- whether you can fix the problem yourself
- who else needs to be involved.

Remember, you cannot fix all problems or issues you are confronted with. Often may need assistance from others.



Feedback should be used to implement change.

### Example

#### Skill evaluation

Irina and Samira work together and both feel they have a good knowledge of curriculum development. Irina has been working in the industry for 10 years and continually updates her professional knowledge. Samira is new to the industry. She is qualified at the diploma level but is in her first year of practice.



As part of a team-building exercise, each educator was asked to self-assess by producing a range of evidence of their skills and knowledge. They were then able to discuss this together and share feedback to determine skills they might improve.

Irina's evidence included:

- real-life examples of programs and curriculum documents that she has developed
- a verbal explanation of how current practices and workplace procedures have been applied
- certificates of attendance showing participation in industry training or personal development.

Samira's evidence included:

- her diploma-level qualification, which shows that she has completed the required competencies
- real-life examples of programs she has been involved in or helped to develop
- a verbal explanation of how current practices might be applied
- a portfolio of work and samples she has produced to provide evidence of her capabilities.

## Practice Task 5

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

### Case study

Dalia is an educator who is new to the service, and has been having some difficulties adjusting. Lee has been working with her throughout her first week, giving her extensive amounts of information about service policies and procedures, practices, routines and transitions. Dalia is overwhelmed with all the new information. At times she forgets what she is doing, and during her afternoon break she bursts into tears.

1. What is the problem and how does it affect Dalia’s job role?

.....

.....

.....

2. Can Dalia fix the problem herself? If so, how?

.....

.....

.....

3. Who else could be involved in helping Dalia resolve the issue?

.....

.....

4. Which of the following questions could Dalia ask herself and reflect on to help her make improvements in her work? Select all that apply.

- Do I know what is expected of me and am I able to implement best practice?
- Should I try to improve or just stay how I am?
- Have I responded professionally to Lee, and how could Lee support my development in the future?
- Do I know the regulations and standards, and am I following codes of practice, duty of care and work role responsibilities?
- If Lee continues to tell me what to do, should I leave the job?

## 2B Identifying support networks

*Many careers are nurtured through the use of professional networks, both within and outside of the workplace.*

The more people you come into contact with, the greater your access to knowledge, opinions and experiences that can complement your own. As you grow and develop, your networks will expand with you, or link you to further networking possibilities.

The education and care industry has many different support networks and professional services. Since the implementation of the NQF, various programs have been funded to help services and their staff understand and put into place the regulations, frameworks and standards that apply. There are many ways to access information and support, and many different ideas on how to apply the NQF and make it meaningful to your values.



There are many different networks available to you.

Due to the professional nature of this industry, and the number of different methods that can be used to interact; networks are easy to find and should be part of a regular process of communication and development.

### Developing your networks

*To develop your own support network, you must identify the areas where you need support or that you wish to develop.*

Some of these needs will be met by the people within your organisation, while others will be met externally.

Many external networks are found by talking to others. You might hear about a network from a colleague, at a meeting in a professional development session or during a conference. You can find out about local networks by talking to the local government or community services in your area. You will often find director networks, outside school hours care (OSHC) networks, educator networks and student networks.

Other networks might be found through internet searches or social media links.

At times, your involvement with one network will link you to another.

#### **Networks can be established by:**

- joining a professional organisation or association
- attending conventions and conferences
- participating in blog and social media groups
- joining professional networking sites, such as LinkedIn.

## Internal networks

*Each organisation will have its own networking culture.*

An organisation's networking culture will depend on the type of service, the size of the organisation, its structure and priorities. The networks may not be obvious, or they may be a clearly adopted strategy for staff development. In either case, they should provide a positive way for workers to learn, grow and be supported.

Informally, you might network by asking and answering questions, and through observing and discussing what happens each day. Formally, you may be involved in meetings, shared planning times, professional development and training.

### Within the organisation, you may have access to:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| > colleagues                             | > supervisors   |
| > educational leaders                    | > directors   |
| > owners or management committee members | > support staff, such as casual workers and specialists |
| > community members                      | > families.   |

## Online networks

*Online networks are a good way to hear the ideas of others and to share experiences.*

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 online networks you may like to become involved in are outlined in the following table.

Network	Focus	Eligibility	Access	Website
LinkedIn	Developing a professional status and networking	Open to all	Membership (free or paid subscription)	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/linkedin">aspirelr.link/linkedin</a>
Educators engaging with Educators	Support and networking for all educators	Educators	Closed Facebook group (must ask and be approved to join)	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/educators-engage-facebook">aspirelr.link/educators-engage-facebook</a>
ECE Facilitated Learning	Trainers support learners with assessment tasks (learners can be from any training organisation)	Open to all	Closed Facebook group (must ask and be approved to join)	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/ece-facilitated-learning-facebook">aspirelr.link/ece-facilitated-learning-facebook</a>

## Professional networks

***Professional networks provide you with new information to consider and implement.***

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

Professional development sessions, conferences and seminars are some of the places you will connect with enthusiastic and encouraging people. Support services may also connect you with like-minded or interest-based networks.

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) lists numerous professional support and networking services at: [aspirelr.link/educators-providers-links](https://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	Eligibility	Access	Website
Queensland Early Childhood Sustainability Network (QECSN)	Sustainability	Queensland practitioners	Membership	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/qecsn">aspirelr.link/qecsn</a> Facebook: <a href="https://aspirelr.link/qecsn-facebook">aspirelr.link/qecsn-facebook</a>
Family Day Care Australia	Family day care (FDC) issues	FDC educators and schemes	Open, membership available	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/family-day-care">aspirelr.link/family-day-care</a> Facebook: <a href="https://aspirelr.link/family-day-care-facebook">aspirelr.link/family-day-care-facebook</a>
Community Child Care	Advocacy Community and not-for-profit support provider	Community owned/ not-for-profit providers or those who support the publicly funded children's services in Victoria	Membership	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/ccc-inc">aspirelr.link/ccc-inc</a>
Nutrition Australia – Nutrition Services for Early Learning Centres	Nutrition in Early Childhood	Open but focused on service-wide support	Membership	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/nutrition-australia">aspirelr.link/nutrition-australia</a>

Network	Focus	Eligibility	Access	Website
Inclusion Support Programme (ISP)	Monitoring childhood development, including additional needs and developmental delays	An approved and registered childcare service, such as long day care and outside school hours care	Online application	<a href="http://aspirelr.link/inclusion-support-programme">aspirelr.link/inclusion-support-programme</a>

## Cultural groups

*The children in your service are all individuals and come from different backgrounds, cultures and family units.*

Their families are usually able to assist you to understand these cultures. As you incorporate their specific needs and traditions into the curriculum, you are demonstrating that you are willing to join in with both formal and informal groups from diverse backgrounds. Understanding and working with these groups will help you gain insightful knowledge, and assist both the child and their families to integrate into your service.



Understand the diverse cultures in your service.

Networking might come from a cultural group of interest. These groups may help you to increase your knowledge and understanding of the children and families in your service. Through research, you will be able to find many different cultural groups that may meet regularly or share information online about their background and planned activities.

## Maintaining networks

*Regardless of how or why you have formed networks, you must maintain them if you are to gain the most from them.*

Maintaining networks requires time and effort, but the results are ultimately worthwhile.

### When you network, you can gain:

- > a source of fresh and creative ideas
- > a sense of comradeship
- > partners to help you troubleshoot or brainstorm
- > colleagues to collaborate with on big and small projects
- > a huge supply of wisdom, expertise, experience and resources
- > a shared mission (something bigger than just yourself)
- > a feeling of pride and positivity about your profession.

Maintained networks also help you to develop your reputation and gain respect; therefore, they provide benefits for future career development and employment.

Maintaining a network may be as simple as participating in a short conversation, sending an email, posting on a forum, or acknowledging others when you cross paths. Group membership may require you to attend meetings or sessions. Other relationships may only require that contact is made on a regular basis.

Regardless of the network you are currently involved in, there are always more opportunities to widen and add to your networks; so maintaining one network may lead to the growth of another.

The following table outlines tips for maintaining networks.

<b>Acknowledge meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Meetings allow you to maintain relationships and provide you with opportunities to contribute to the group.</li> <li>➤ Add to agendas, if appropriate, and, if you cannot attend send your apology. Without an apology, your networking colleagues may think you find them or the meeting unimportant.</li> <li>➤ After a meeting, request the minutes. This can be another opportunity to converse with a group member, and it shows you are interested in what is happening.</li> </ul>
<b>Engage in social media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Facebook, LinkedIn and other online forums all require your regular participation. The more you are involved, the more you will gain.</li> <li>➤ You don't have to be an expert or answer other people's questions. You may have your own questions or opinions, or you might reflect on or add new posts. Liking or acknowledging the posts of others shows that you are interested and keeps the network going.</li> <li>➤ Think about your posts prior to adding them. Write professionally and positively with respect for confidentiality. Check that your content states what you mean.</li> </ul>
<b>Attend professional development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Make your presence known and acknowledge people you know. Take the opportunity to make new acquaintances and catch up where possible. If you aren't confident adding or contributing ideas and opinions, at least let others know you appreciate and welcome their thoughts.</li> </ul>
<b>Answer promptly</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If people in your network make contact with you, respond to them promptly. If you cannot complete a task or provide the information they want, let them know. Send an email or call to tell them when you can follow through.</li> </ul>
<b>Ask for help</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Contact people in your network for assistance, ideas or support. Be professional about how you request information and respect confidentiality.</li> <li>➤ Avoid speaking negatively about people or organisations. Others will avoid you if you complain without acting. Ask about a problem or decision you need to make, rather than placing blame. For example, 'I want to develop my conflict-resolution skills', rather than, 'The boss at work is nasty and picks on me all the time.'</li> </ul>
<b>Thank people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ When you receive good advice or help from others, thank them. Contact those responsible and let them know how much they have contributed to your professional development. This will strengthen the connection.</li> </ul>

<b>Share information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ When you find interesting information, share it with others. Sometimes you will remember that a person in your network has asked about this information, or you may just think something would be useful to a particular group or person. Adding your own value and providing expert advice, opinions and support helps you to become invaluable to others.</li> </ul>
<b>Introduce someone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Connect your networks. Introduce someone to a network you have established. This might be someone who will benefit from or provide value to the network. While you are introducing the person, it allows you to interact with others and create discussion.</li> <li>➤ It can be a great opportunity for you to introduce each person currently in your network and demonstrate how you value them; for example, you could say, 'Gina, this is Ben. Ben works with me and he is interested in our network activities. Gina has been a strong force in helping us achieve our goals. She is passionate about sustainability and if you ever need ideas for environmentally safe cleaning, she has endless knowledge.'</li> </ul>
<b>Get a business card</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Get business cards professionally made or make some yourself. It is an easy way for people to remember you and contact you if they are nurturing their own networks.</li> </ul>
<b>Announce changes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If you change your job, name, role or goals, or have experienced a personal milestone (such as completing a qualification), you can use the event to make a contact. Send a letter, card or email as a catch-up.</li> </ul>

### Example

#### Professional networks

Elsa has been working as a diploma-level educator for seven years. In that time she has been successful in achieving goals, developing a stimulating curriculum and forming responsive relationships with parents and the community. Elsa likes to maintain her professional knowledge, and she plans to increase her job role responsibilities.



#### Professional membership

Elsa joins Early Childhood Australia, reads their newsletters and attends meetings to gain up-to-date and best-practice information.

#### Conference attendance

She attends a conference organised ACECQA that highlights the NQF. She meets and has discussions with other educators working in the role of educational leader and second-in-charge.

#### Online forum

She begins reading and posting on the Educators engaging with Educators online forum, particularly discussing the goals she is working towards.

#### Online network

She creates a LinkedIn account, hoping to improve her professional standing and develop professional relationships with people who could support her or offer her future employment.

## Practice Task 6

Draw a line to match the support network on the left with its network type on the right.

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| * Educators engaging with Educators (Facebook group) | * Internal network              |
| * Inclusion Support Programme (ISP)                  | * Online network                |
| * Educational leader and colleagues                  | * External professional network |

## 2C Seeking support and training

*At times you will need the support of a specialist or further training.*

It is unrealistic to expect to know about, and implement, all current best practice strategies relating to child and family needs, program implementation, care and education. Acknowledging this and taking prompt action to fill the information gaps is a demonstration of your professional attitude, respect for people's needs and responsive practice.

Here are some common reasons why specialist advice or further training may be required:

- A child or family demonstrates needs, such as health issues, developmental delays, behaviour problems, or housing or financial concerns.
- The service has a need for knowledge and skills in a particular area to meet a quality improvement plan (QIP), National Quality Standard (NQS) or regulation expectation.
- Industry trends arise that necessitate the use and understanding of new information.



Seek support to further your knowledge.

### Seeking support

*When issues arise, use the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills, and to take away as much learning and experience as you can.*

Whenever you are faced with an issue above your level of experience, outside your area of understanding or that is linked to needs that demand concentrated skills, you must seek additional support.

It is natural to try to meet all needs within the service, but this is not always possible. There may be:

- time constraints
- lack of suitable knowledge and skills
- experience gaps
- lack of required qualifications
- lack of funding.

However, the people in your service may be able to provide support. Some ways this can happen are outlined in the following table.



### Mentors

- An educational leader or early childhood teacher is likely to be a good mentor. Each service may have slightly different expectations, but national regulations require that people in these roles carry out mentoring, coaching or supporting actions, so make the most of this.
- A colleague can also be an informal source of mentoring. They may have skills, knowledge and experience that you admire and respect. On-the-job mentoring should be a positive experience with the aim of supporting you to develop greater knowledge and skills.



### Supervisors

- Your educational leader, early childhood teacher or senior educator will provide professional supervision. A service director, coordinator or owner may also provide this supervision.
- Professional supervision works best if your relationship with the supervisor is trusting, genuine, ethical, confidential and respectful.
- Professional supervisors should be people who provide you with constructive feedback and opportunities to further your current skills and knowledge. They should have your best interests in mind and be focused on how you can help the service to provide the best quality education and care possible.



### Peers

- Peers are your colleagues. Depending on their experience, skills and knowledge, they can be useful support people. A peer who is passionate about a particular area of their work, including day-to-day education and care, can have a lot to offer. A peer may have similar interests and be able to share and link you to information or services that they have found useful.
- Working with children demands a high degree of personal investment. It is no easy task to master the numerous and complex skills required of you; however, it is not possible to learn all of these skills in an academic setting. As a result, many educators must acquire additional skills by working directly with children and by observing fellow educators and other professionals in the field. With this in mind, mistakes are often made by those new to the industry. Not even the most experienced educator can avoid making the occasional mistake – this is where teamwork and peer support is vital.

You will be able to obtain additional support and advice in a variety of ways, depending on your service type. Asking for help shows that you:

- need assistance
- are taking ownership of your responsibilities
- are willing to move forward to help yourself and others around you.

## Nationally accredited training

*Relevant qualifications in education and care include nationally accredited training and higher education courses.*

Qualifications higher than an advanced diploma are delivered at university. For more information about this, contact your local university or search online.

Nationally accredited courses are linked to the requirements of the National Quality Framework (NQF). Regulations and standards state the qualifications required for staff working with children, and the ratios and responsibilities that each qualification level is responsible for.



Accredited training is offered in a variety of ways.

Presently, training is offered in a variety of different ways, as shown in the following table.

### **Traineeships**

Working while you study – your workplace supports your training.

### **Funded/self-funded training**

Studying independently and completing practical placement in a service during your study.

### **Class-based learning**

Attending face-to-face classes. This complements your work or practical placement.

### **Online learning**

Learning through online materials. This includes webinars (online classes where you interact as you would in a face-to-face class).

### **Off-campus learning**

Receiving resources for learning in the mail, or through a trainer who comes to visit you.

### **Flexible or blended learning**

Using a range of the methods previously mentioned.

For more information about these courses, go to: [aspirelr.link/training-gov](https://aspirelr.link/training-gov) or the ACECQA website: [aspirelr.link/acecqa](https://aspirelr.link/acecqa).

## Specialist training

*You will need further training if you wish to move in a new direction or specialist area.*

Some specialist areas and their relevant qualifications are outlined in the following table.

<b>Health and safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Certificate in Work Health and Safety</li> <li>➤ Diploma of Work Health and Safety</li> </ul>
<b>Nutrition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Food-handling certificate</li> </ul>
<b>Business management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Certificate in Leadership and Management</li> <li>➤ Advanced Diploma of Community Sector Management</li> </ul>
<b>Additional needs/culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Certificate in Education Support</li> </ul>
<b>Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Certificate in Training and Assessment</li> </ul>

## Professional development

*When you attend professional development sessions, you are demonstrating a commitment to lifelong learning and modelling this to others.*

The education and care industry requires you to continually improve your knowledge and skills by attending training and professional development sessions.

There is a range of professional development opportunities that can help you meet your development needs, attain professional goals or learn about topics that are important to your current and future success.

Each opportunity has its own strengths and weaknesses; however, the range of options allows you to try different methods and discover which one suits you best.

Some examples of professional development opportunities are outlined below.

Opportunity	Description	How to find out more
One World for Children	<p>Offers funded and unfunded workshops and webinars.</p> <p>They can provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ on-request training</li> <li>➤ customised training</li> <li>➤ group training</li> <li>➤ online training</li> <li>➤ consultancy</li> <li>➤ guest speakers</li> <li>➤ webinars</li> <li>➤ special events</li> <li>➤ face-to-face training.</li> </ul>	<p><a href="https://aspirelr.link/owfc">aspirelr.link/owfc</a></p>

Opportunity	Description	How to find out more
Community Child Care Co-operative Ltd (NSW)	Provides professional development and support. They offer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ on-request training</li> <li>➤ customised training</li> <li>➤ group training</li> <li>➤ webinar training</li> <li>➤ consultancy</li> <li>➤ guest speakers</li> <li>➤ podcasts</li> <li>➤ videos.</li> </ul>	<a href="http://aspirelr.link/cccc-nsw">aspirelr.link/cccc-nsw</a>
FKA Children’s Services Inc.	Offers professional development focused on culturally competent practices.	<a href="http://aspirelr.link/fka-childrens-services">aspirelr.link/fka-childrens-services</a>
Early Childhood Australia	Provides advocacy, and support from educators and the industry as a whole. They offer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ professional development</li> <li>➤ e-safety modules</li> <li>➤ leadership programs</li> <li>➤ events and conferences</li> </ul>	<a href="http://aspirelr.link/eca-learning-hub">aspirelr.link/eca-learning-hub</a>

**Example**  
**Specialist help**

Mei asks her director for some support and advice when she notices a child may possibly have a developmental delay. Her director sends her links to specialist educational services. Mei accesses the professional support coordinator (PSC) with the parents’ permission. She ensures that she reads all information that comes from the PSC, then asks the PSC for relevant materials to help her provide more for the child and family.



Her director enrolls her into a program that they decide will be helpful for her professional development. The director suggests that she could share some of the information with the other staff when she has completed the program.

Mei participates in a professional development training program relevant to the child’s individual needs. She runs a session with her colleagues where she explains some of the key information, and they discuss how she can implement this in her interactions with the child and family.

## Practice Task 7

Draw a line to match each topic of advice on the left to the most appropriate source on the right.

- \* Professional development
- \* Curriculum advice
- \* Policies and procedures
- \* Recognised training
- \* Inclusion support
- \* Supervisors and peers
- \* Early Childhood Australia
- \* Educational leader
- \* Professional support coordinator (PSC)
- \* Online course

## 2D Practising self-care

*Self-care is about recognising your needs and ensuring these needs are met.*

For many people, the balance between different needs is difficult to maintain, and at times they may need additional help to stay healthy.

Ask for help when any aspect of your personal care is being negatively affected. From time to time, everyone will experience difficulty coping with the demands of a job role. Personal life also influences someone's ability to manage their daily work practices.

A combination of factors can cause stress and uncertainty, and this may impact on the children, families and educators, as well as your own personal network and family members.



It is important to recognise your needs.

### Self-care balance

*Self-care is balanced when your work and personal life are well coordinated.*

Anything that contributes to your emotional, spiritual, physical or social wellbeing is related to your self-care.

Taking responsibility for your self-care means maintaining your health and wellbeing. This includes taking actions to stay fit and healthy, meet your social and mental needs, prevent illness or accidents, and to look after yourself by doing things like brushing your teeth, exercising, taking medicine when you are unwell, or taking time out to pray or meditate.

Self-care also means doing things that are important to you, such as gardening, shopping, exercising, playing sport, attending social functions, seeing friends and family, going on holiday or going to work. It involves looking at what you can do and want to do, rather than what you can't do or have to do.

Living a healthy lifestyle is part of self-care for everyone.

#### Self-care relates to the balance you have between:

- |                |                           |
|----------------|---------------------------|
| > sleep        | > nutrition               |
| > exercise     | > social life             |
| > interests    | > mental health           |
| > spirituality | > work life and/or study. |

## Self-care support

*Part of self-care is getting support when you need it.*

You should always ask for help if you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed, or if personal problems are affecting your ability to do your work. By discussing, reflecting on and communicating with others you may:

- gain support
- learn how others have managed similar issues
- develop networks
- improve your practices
- increase your resilience.

### Example

#### Self-care strategies

Nina works part-time as a team leader and is experiencing difficulties at home. She is caring for her sick father, has two preschool-aged children, and her husband works interstate. Nina is getting headaches, becoming easily upset and is unable to provide her full attention to the children when she is working.

When Nina is at home she worries about work and thinks about how she is going to get all of the children's portfolios together. She wants to organise a vegetable patch and attend the staff meeting next week. She is unable to sleep and has abandoned her regular exercise and the parent group that she attends with her own children on the weekends.

She decides to speak to her supervisor to discuss her situation, as she thinks that she should take some time off.





## Practice Task 8

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

### Case study

Kim has been having difficulties at work. She hasn't been getting along with the two other educators in the room. She feels the other educators are ganging up on her and speaking to her inappropriately. She has tried on several occasions to speak to them both to find out why they are treating her this way. On these occasions, both educators have ignored her, then sniggered and whispered behind her back.

1. Which of the following statements are signs that Kim's self-care needs are being neglected? Select all that apply.

- Kim cries every morning on her way to work.
- Kim drinks three coffees per day instead of one.
- Kim is grumpy at her family members.
- Kim makes silly mistakes and gets teary easily.
- Kim books a range of appointments for beauty procedures.

2. Select true or false for the following statement.

When Kim speaks to her supervisor to explain her situation, she is revealing her weaknesses and showing that she is not capable of performing her job.

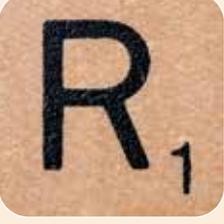
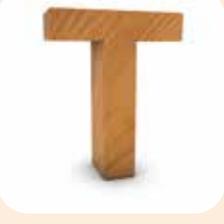
\* True      \* False

## 2E Planning personal development

*Goals help people to achieve outcomes, maintain consistent expectations and participate in ways that are appropriate and realistic.*

To make sure that goals are achievable, they should be realistic. If goals seem too large, break them down into smaller tasks or objectives.

A simple and popular way to write realistic goals is to use the SMART method. By including each of the points shown in the following table, you can develop goals and objectives that are both measurable and meaningful.

	<p><b>Specific:</b> Target and clearly define a specific area that you want to improve.</p>
	<p><b>Measurable:</b> Determine how you will know the goal has been achieved. Suggest an indicator of progress (quantify if possible).</p>
	<p><b>Attainable:</b> Agree on goals and keep them achievable.</p>
	<p><b>Realistic:</b> Identify results that are realistic given the available resources, knowledge and time.</p>
	<p><b>Time-framed:</b> Specify when the goal can be achieved; make sure there is enough time to achieve the goal.</p>

## Setting goals

*Goals provide direction and focus, and mean you will be able to take advantage of any professional development opportunities by targeting areas of highest priority.*

To set goals you need to work out what you do well and what you want to do better. This includes the way you operate at work, or an area you want to learn more about. Other goals may link to your future career plans or personal needs.

### You can gain ideas for goals from:

- the NQF, including the NQS, *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia (EYLF)* and *My time, our place: Framework for school age care in Australia (MTOF)*
- the ECA Code of Ethics
- other educators' skills and knowledge
- your performance review
- specialist areas you are interested in
- ideas you gather from others.

Taking small steps towards larger goals makes you more likely to achieve the bigger picture you are working towards. Evaluating your achievements at each stage and documenting your progress will show you the steps you have already undertaken to reach your current stage of progress. It also provides a feeling of satisfaction that can encourage you to keep working hard. You can then identify what else needs to be done or practised to enable you to achieve your goals.

## Clear goals

Clear outcomes or goals allow you, and all those participating, 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 table includes some examples.

Broad outcome or goal	Defined outcome or goal
To build stronger relationships with families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To collect information from all families using a range of collection methods.</li> <li>➤ To use information collected from all families to start discussions and develop individual understanding of needs.</li> </ul>

Broad outcome or goal	Defined outcome or goal
To create a better outdoor environment for children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To add a range of natural elements to the outdoor area until 80% are natural.</li> <li>➤ To alter outdoor spaces so educators are able to supervise all areas easily.</li> <li>➤ To provide accessible pathways for children with physical challenges so they can participate in all areas of the outdoor space.</li> <li>➤ To build a vegetable garden.</li> <li>➤ To plant an orchard.</li> </ul>

## Success measures

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

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

Measurement can be expressed by documenting what will happen to show you the goal is achieved. For example:

- Something might be implemented by the team or another person, such as a learning story, a new format for planning or a timetable.
- A final product might be contributed or completed, such as a poster, a newsletter item or a display.
- You can manage independently, such as cleaning the bathroom, setting up for rest time, linking outcomes, discussing information with families, or running a small or large group experience.

Without success measures, it may be difficult to identify whether your goal is achieved.

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

## Realistic time frames

***When setting personal goals, whether short or long term, ensure they are attainable and realistic.***

Unrealistic or unattainable goals may be impractical, show lack of purpose, be easily forgotten about or pushed aside.

When setting your own goals for self-improvement, be realistic and take small steps. Use documentation to track your progress so that you can see what stage or steps you have achieved. This also helps you to see what else is required to reach your anticipated outcome.

Realistic goals can often be established with the help and feedback of peers or supervisors. Having someone work with you to establish these often gives you

more focus, motivation and perspective. The other person may also be able to help you progress, measure, evaluate and reflect on the steps you need to work through.

Your goals need deadlines so you can make steady progress towards them and feel successful at their completion. Time-management skills are required to do this, so it is a great opportunity to work on developing these as secondary skills.

If you think you are expecting too much, you should adjust the goals or time lines, taking into consideration your other responsibilities.

Achieving your deadlines ahead of time can be exciting, and give you additional time to spend on another goal, or to take a break to recoup.

### Tips for setting realistic time lines

- Put time frames on each goal so that adequate time is available.
- Set milestones so that progress within the time frame is measurable.
- Use time-management skills to make effective use of the time allocated.
- Adjust time lines if deadlines become unachievable.

### Example Setting goals

Helen sets a goal: To get better at participating in curriculum development.

However, she never feels like she can achieve this goal. No matter how much she works toward the goal, there is still more to learn. The goal isn't SMART, and she doesn't have anything particular to work toward.

To remedy this, Helen sets a SMART goal as follows:

- Specific: To contribute at least five learning stories per week to the curriculum.
- Measurable: Each of her learning stories will lead to planned experiences.
- Attainable/Achievable: Observation records need to be completed each week, so this will form part of her normal tasks. Helen knows what a learning story is, but is not consistently able to create stories that are useful to the team.
- Realistic: She has the knowledge and just needs to practice. She has time allocated for developing records and is enthusiastic. There is lots of support in the service.
- Time frame: This could be achieved in one month.

Once she has completed all of this research, Helen redefines her SMART goal: Over the next month, Helen will observe children then write five learning stories per week that lead to planned experiences.

## Creating a personal development plan

***A personal development plan (PDP) is an action plan based on your values, reflections, goal-setting and plans for personal development.***

A PDP can be created within the context of your career, education, relationships or for your own self-improvement. A PDP usually includes critical reflection, evaluative feedback and research. It identifies your limitations and indicates how you plan to improve. It usually includes the following steps:

1. Setting personal goals.
2. Making realistic goals and targets.
3. Forming achievable deadlines.

Your PDP could include techniques for learning, such as:

- events that you plan to attend; for example, seminars, conferences, meetings, workshops, webinars and other professional development sessions
- books, educational materials and resources that link to your goals and provide new information
- mentors and supporters you plan to contact.

Having a PDP demonstrates your commitment to your career and increases your standing as a professional.

Listed below are some of the ways that a PDP can help guide and direct you in growing your knowledge and skills.

### **A personal development plan:**

- clarifies what you are trying to accomplish
- sets outcomes and outlines why you're doing what you're doing
- gives you direction
- includes short- and long-term goals, letting you measure your progress
- reflects your beliefs and values
- helps you focus by setting time lines for achievement
- allows you to celebrate successes.



A personal development plan gives an overall picture of your goals.

## Organisational guidelines

***Whether you are seeking further accredited training or relevant professional development, the support of your service can be important to your success.***

In your service there will be position descriptions, policies and procedures that let you know what is acceptable or expected of you and how the service plans for and commits to the development of staff. Often, timing and funding are limited, so you may need to access training or professional development outside of your workplace.

Goals help people work together to achieve particular outcomes. They help maintain consistent expectations and ensure you participate in ways that are appropriate and realistic. Goals in relation to education and care are strongly influenced by the standards and frameworks shown in the following table.

Influence	Goals	Where to find information
Laws, regulations and standards – as outlined in the NQF	<p>A quality improvement plan (QIP) is required by legislation. It includes the goals that a service identifies as important, or required, for it to operate.</p> <p>Policies and procedures represent regulations and standards; these are developed as goals for the service.</p> <p>Vision, mission and philosophy statements demonstrate the service goals.</p>	<p><a href="http://aspirelr.link/nationalqualityframework">aspirelr.link/nationalqualityframework</a></p>
Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics	Your service will expect you to follow ethical practice based on the Code of Ethics.	<p><a href="http://aspirelr.link/early-childhood-australia">aspirelr.link/early-childhood-australia</a></p>
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child	You have a professional obligation to advocate for children and their families, as well as the education and care industry as a whole.	<p><a href="http://aspirelr.link/unicef-child-rights">aspirelr.link/unicef-child-rights</a></p>
<p>Approved learning frameworks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia (EYLF)</i></li> <li>➤ <i>My time, our place: Framework for school age care in Australia (MTOF)</i></li> </ul>	These frameworks should guide your curriculum and pedagogy.	<p><a href="http://aspirelr.link/eylf">aspirelr.link/eylf</a></p> <p><a href="http://aspirelr.link/mtop">aspirelr.link/mtop</a></p>

## Questions to get you started

*There are certain questions to ask yourself when planning your PDP.*

The following table shows some suggested questions to think about and some example answers.

<b>My personal development plan</b>	
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>What are my strengths?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ I am good at researching.</li> <li>➤ I communicate well with others.</li> </ul>
<b>What are my weaknesses?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ I am not very good at networking; I am shy.</li> <li>➤ I have poor time-management skills.</li> </ul>
<b>What feedback have I recently received?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ I have strong engagement skills with children.</li> <li>➤ My recording skills are not strong and sometimes my learning stories are not meaningful.</li> </ul>
<b>What do I want to work on?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ I want to improve my recording skills.</li> <li>➤ I want to strengthen my understanding of what meaningful recording is.</li> </ul>
<b>Who can help me to achieve this?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ My educational leader.</li> <li>➤ My supervisor.</li> <li>➤ Other educators who have developed this skill already.</li> </ul>
<b>Where can I gain further support?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Online training webinars.</li> <li>➤ Reading the <i>Educators' guide to the EYLF</i>.</li> <li>➤ Online research.</li> </ul>
<b>When will I do this?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ During my week off.</li> <li>➤ In my planning time.</li> </ul>
<b>How will I know when I have achieved this?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ I will show my records to my supervisor, and when she gives me feedback that I am writing records in a meaningful way, I will know I have achieved the goal.</li> </ul>
<b>When will I complete this goal?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Before the end of the year.</li> </ul>



## Practice Task 9

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

### Case study

Mel is new to the industry and hasn't had much experience. She has set herself a goal of being able to confidently implement a 10-minute group time that engages children using a variety of activities. She has set a time frame of two weeks to achieve this goal.

Mel is very shy and hasn't yet undertaken a group time of any form with any age group of children. She sometimes reads stories to one or two children, but apart from this she doesn't have the confidence to spontaneously sing songs, talk in front of the group or lead a group activity.

1. Which of the following goals do you think are most achievable and realistic for Mel? Select all that apply.

- To talk with a small group of children.
- To spontaneously sing songs throughout the day.
- To run a 20-minute group time.
- To work with another educator to support a group activity.
- To run a 10-minute group time even if the children are not engaged.

2. Which of the following people could best support Mel to achieve her professional goals? Select all that apply.

- An educational leader
- A parent
- Another educator
- A professional network
- Her mother

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

- a. Setting milestones or checkpoints helps monitor progress.      \* Yes      \* No
- b. Time-management skills help to meet goals.      \* Yes      \* No
- c. If a time frame for a goal is not achievable, then move to the next goal.      \* Yes      \* No

- d. Goals need deadlines so you can make steady progress and feel successful. \* Yes \* No
- e. Time lines need to remain firm even if deadlines become unachievable. \* Yes \* No

## Summary

- Assessing your own practice will improve your day-to-day performance.
- The ability to assess your own practice relies on the skill of self-reflection.
- The more people you come into contact with, the greater your access to knowledge, opinions and experience.
- Networks are an excellent way to communicate and develop.
- At times you will need the support of a specialist or to participate in further training.
- Self-care is about recognising your needs and ensuring these are met.
- The best way to ensure that you build on your learning is to develop a personal development plan (PDP).
- A simple and popular way to write realistic goals is to use the SMART method.

# Learning Checkpoint 2

## Enhancing your practice

1. Draw a line to match each personal development plan question to the correct response.

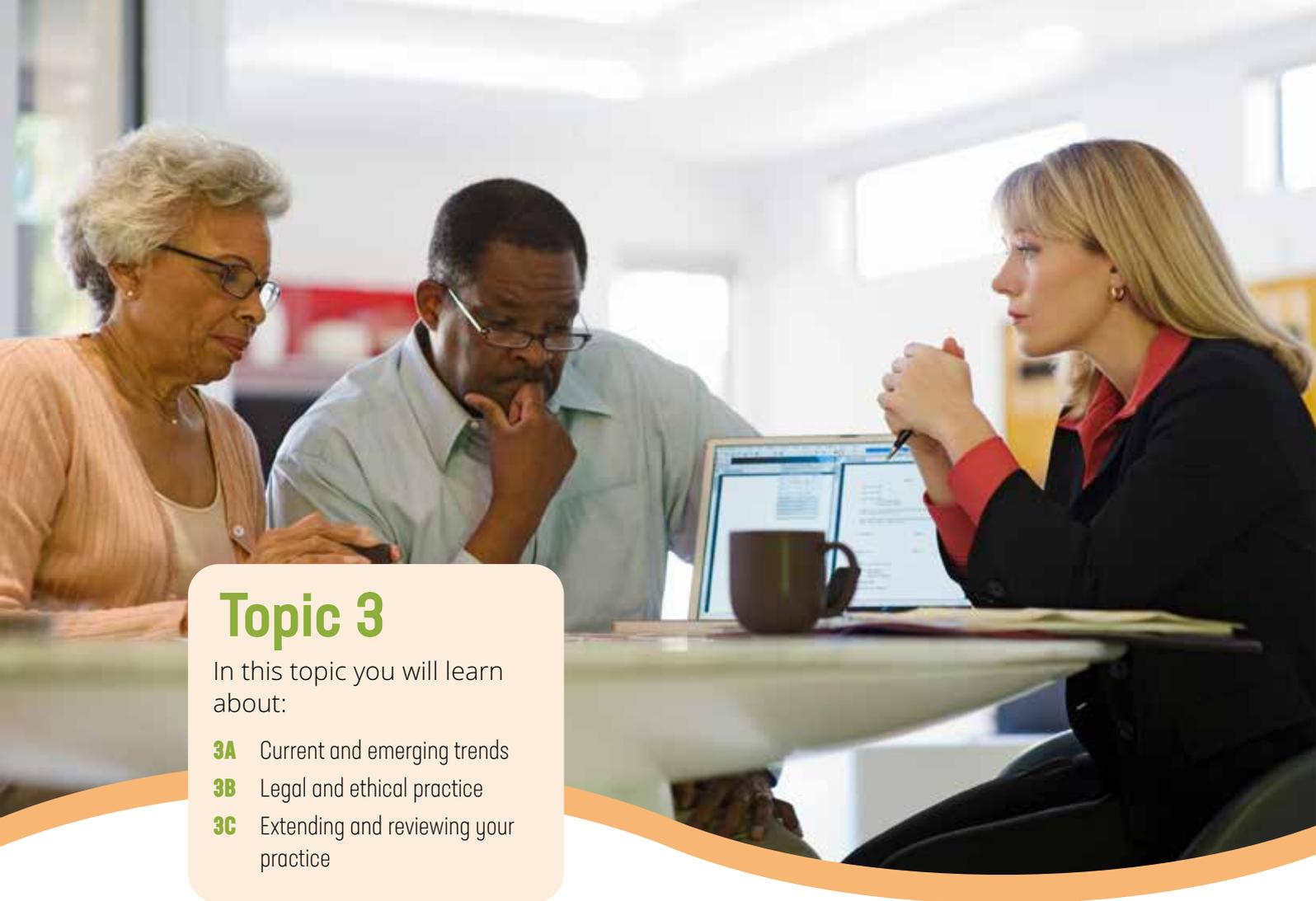
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| * What feedback have I recently received?    | * I am very spontaneous and love interacting flexibly.   |
| * When will I do this?                       | * I get anxious during planned activities.   |
| * What are my strengths?                     | * I have been told that I show enjoyment in working with the children but sometimes my anxiety during planned activities makes the children less interested. |
| * What are my weaknesses?                    | * I would like to increase my confidence when participating in planned activities.   |
| * What do I want to work on?                 | * My room leader.  |
| * Who can help me to achieve this?           | * I will start this immediately and work to achieve my goal within four weeks.   |
| * How will I know when I have achieved this? | * I will be confident during planned activities I lead.  |

2. Which of the following options are ways to gain support, advice and training in order to achieve a personal development plan? Select all that apply.

- The qualified staff in the service.
- A social media page where educators can ask for advice and gain ideas.
- A speech therapist.
- A professional development session on planning group times.
- A parent who plans computer training lessons for adults.
- Joining Early Childhood Australia.
- Enrolling in a personal trainer course.

3. Which of the following options could you use to ensure you performed all your responsibilities and roles to the best of your ability? Select all that apply.

- Identify your self-care requirements and be aware of any extra pressures you feel.
- Put all your energy into achieving your personal development plan goal; your work is the most important thing in your life.
- Speak to your doctor if you feel your anxiety is overwhelming.
- Reflect on the ECA Code of Ethics, and think about your duty of care.
- Stop working on your personal development plan if you feel you won't achieve your goals.



## Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

- 3A** Current and emerging trends
- 3B** Legal and ethical practice
- 3C** Extending and reviewing your practice

# Ongoing professional development

*As your industry evolves, it is useful to develop strategies for keeping up to date and finding out new information.*

Being aware of and understanding changes early gives you time to think about what is happening, plan responses and work confidently with others to communicate best practices.

You can find information as it is released through:

- internal and external networks
- meetings with authorities
- professional development activities
- conferences
- professional discussions
- news reports
- subscriptions to associations and journals.

Each of these methods helps you to gather the information you need to assess your current and future needs.

## 3A Current and emerging trends

*Current and emerging trends are influenced by the industry and its statistics.*

These trends occur around topics that are important to educators, families, the general public, types of care being used, and child needs and development.

The formal education and care industry includes private, not-for-profit and government organisations across Australia.

In 2017, the Australian Bureau of Statistics found that 49 per cent of all Australian children aged 0–12 years attended some type of childcare, and 17 per cent of all children attended formal care. A description of formal and informal care types is outlined in the following information.



Keeping current will help to build on your knowledge.

### Formal care

Formal care is regulated and occurs away from the child's home. It includes all of the registered services; for instance:

- before- and after-school care
- vacation care
- long day care
- family day care
- preschool/kindergarten.

Occasional care is also regulated, but not registered; hence, it is not required to follow the NQF at this point in time.

### Informal care

Informal care is non-regulated and is arranged by the parent or guardian. It may be paid or unpaid. It occurs inside or outside of the child's home and includes care by:

- siblings
- grandparents
- other relatives
- friends
- neighbours
- nannies or babysitters.

Education and care services are linked to the National Quality Framework (NQF) by registration. The components of the NQF include:

- Education and Care Services National Law
- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- National Quality Standards (NQS)
- *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia (EYLF)* and *My time, our place: Framework for school age care in Australia (MTOF)*.

Each of these has been developed to guide services, their educators and organisational representatives to work towards implementing best-practice education and care.

As of 30 June 2020, there were:

- 16,107 regulated education and care services under the NQF
- 15,045 services with a quality rating
- 12,238 services meeting or above standards set by the NQS
- 43 services rated 'Excellent' by The Australian Children's Education and Care Authority (ACECQA).

To access updated statistics and to check the latest ACECQA snapshots, visit: [aspirelr.link/nqf-snapshots](https://aspirelr.link/nqf-snapshots)

## National Quality Framework

***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. These changes affected work and the administration requirements. ACECQA supported education and care services to manage this change through a range of support activities and materials, including:

- information sheets
- summaries
- posters
- comparisons
- meetings
- presentations
- additional guidance.

Service-specific activities also supported this change.

## Quality areas

***The quality areas of the NQS have been thoroughly researched and provide guidelines for implementing a high level of education and care.***

Element 4.2.2 of the NQS states: 'Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships'. This suggests that you are demonstrating professional practice when you provide care, empathy and respect for children, colleagues and families. It also suggests that your professional practice should be guided not only by the NQF, but also by your service's philosophy, policies and procedures. This means that you should take a proactive role in following new trends and keeping up to date with information. By doing so, this will improve your methods and practice of teaching and caring for children.

By meeting the requirements outlined in the NQS, you will remain aware of and follow trends that affect your professional role.

One advantage of the NQS, EYLF and MTOP is that, while they are very detailed, they still allow your personal and professional values and beliefs to guide your practice.

**To meet current industry expectations, you need to know:**

- the priorities and goals of your service
  - current industry developments
  - evolving trends.
- 

## Critical reflection

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

Critical reflection is required because new trends across the Australian education and care industry frequently occur. Most of these trends are aimed at providing the best possible care and education to children and families, building a stronger and more professional industry, and helping educators gain a higher professional standing within the community.

The NQS is created in a way that allows individual pedagogy and developing trends to be implemented. The aim of the NQS is to provide a basis for quality that all services can use and adapt to include their own philosophies. This means that you should not feel bound by your organisation's direction, but be open to investigating new ways of looking at things in the education and care industry. This will lead you to remain open to growth and development as a professional through critical reflection.

Information about areas for reflection are outlined in the following table, which includes some resources that encourage information gathering.

Quality area and related areas for reflection	How these affect you	Where to find more information
<p>1. Educational program and practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Pedagogy</li> <li>➤ Recording methods</li> <li>➤ Theories and approaches</li> <li>➤ Educational leader roles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How you plan experiences for children</li> <li>➤ How you view children and their educational needs</li> <li>➤ How you record and assess children's activities</li> <li>➤ Career paths</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Education and Care Services National Regulations</li> <li>➤ Ailwood, Boyd &amp; Theobald (2016), <i>Understanding early childhood education and care in Australia</i>, Allen &amp; Unwin</li> <li>➤ Arthur, Beecher, Death, Dockett &amp; Farmer (2017), <i>Programming and planning in early childhood settings</i>. (7th ed.), Cengage Learning Australia</li> <li>➤ <i>Educators belonging being &amp; becoming: Educators' guide to the early years learning framework for Australia</i>: <a href="http://aspirelr.link/educators-guide-eylf">aspirelr.link/educators-guide-eylf</a></li> </ul>
<p>2. Children's health and safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Varied, seasonal and culturally rich menus</li> <li>➤ Routines that allow flexibility to meet children's individual sleep, rest and hunger needs</li> <li>➤ Awareness of asthma, allergy and anaphylaxis</li> <li>➤ Availability of risk-taking activities</li> <li>➤ Greater awareness of abuse and neglect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Implementing healthy and varied cooking experiences for children</li> <li>➤ Participating in adequate training and completing updates to ensure you can manage asthma, allergy, anaphylaxis, abuse and neglect</li> <li>➤ Understanding risk-taking and your responsibility</li> <li>➤ Responsiveness to children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services</i>: <a href="http://aspirelr.link/staying-healthy-pdf">aspirelr.link/staying-healthy-pdf</a></li> <li>➤ <i>Get up &amp; grow: Healthy eating and physical activity for early childhood</i>: <a href="http://aspirelr.link/get-up-and-grow-book">aspirelr.link/get-up-and-grow-book</a></li> </ul>

Quality area and related areas for reflection	How these affect you	Where to find more information
<p>3. Physical environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Simultaneous indoor/outdoor play</li> <li>➤ Environmentally sustainable practices</li> <li>➤ Natural materials and learning in the environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How you plan experiences for children</li> <li>➤ How you incorporate sustainability into experiences and activities</li> <li>➤ How you expose children to a variety of indoor and outdoor activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ollie's World: <a href="http://aspirelr.link/ollies-world">aspirelr.link/ollies-world</a></li> <li>➤ Ollie Recycles Australia: <a href="http://aspirelr.link/ollies-world-recycle">aspirelr.link/ollies-world-recycle</a></li> <li>➤ Natural environment photographs: <a href="http://aspirelr.link/dept-education-and-training-natural-environments">aspirelr.link/dept-education-and-training-natural-environments</a></li> <li>➤ Callaghan, White &amp; McHugh (2016), <i>A walk in the park: Creating rich, irresistible environments for young children</i>, WriteLight</li> </ul>
<p>4. Staffing arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Direct contact requirements/ratios</li> <li>➤ Additional qualification requirements</li> <li>➤ Greater respect for all roles</li> <li>➤ Educational leader roles – registration in some states</li> <li>➤ Inclusion of early childhood teachers in centre-based care services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The educator role becomes more sought after</li> <li>➤ Increase in respect for all service roles</li> <li>➤ Educational leader will change the dynamic of the service as the responsibilities become clearer</li> <li>➤ Additional qualifications or training may be necessary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Education and Care Services National Regulations</li> <li>➤ NQS</li> </ul>
<p>5. Relationships with children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Responsiveness to lifelong learning</li> <li>➤ View of children as capable</li> <li>➤ Belonging, being and becoming goals</li> <li>➤ Development of agency</li> <li>➤ Recognition of the importance of children's mental health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How you connect with children</li> <li>➤ How you establish goals for children and encourage them to work towards goals on their own</li> <li>➤ How you treat each child individually</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ KidsMatter: <i>Helping children experiencing mental health difficulties</i> video series: <a href="http://aspirelr.link/kidsmatter-video-series">aspirelr.link/kidsmatter-video-series</a></li> <li>➤ Relevant NQF frameworks: <a href="http://aspirelr.link/nationalqualityframework">aspirelr.link/nationalqualityframework</a></li> </ul>

Quality area and related areas for reflection	How these affect you	Where to find more information
<p>6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Recognition and implementation of programs that are responsive to Indigenous Australians</li> <li>➤ Greater involvement of parents in decision-making</li> <li>➤ Increased relationships with community and support services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How you interact with other educators and volunteers in the service</li> <li>➤ How you include parents as often as possible in the education of their children</li> <li>➤ How you employ services in the community to provide information to the children</li> <li>➤ How you acknowledge Indigenous Australians in your planning and programming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Belonging, being and becoming: Remote Indigenous professional development package for the early years learning framework for Australia:</i> <a href="http://aspirelr.link/bbb-indigenous-version">aspirelr.link/bbb-indigenous-version</a></li> <li>➤ Keyser (2017), <i>From parents to partners: Building a family-centered early childhood program</i> (2nd ed.), Redleaf Press</li> <li>➤ Gonzalez-Mena (2016), <i>Child, family, and community: Family-centered early care and education</i>, Pearson</li> </ul>
<p>7. Governance and leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Continuous improvement requirements within services and in relation to educators and other staff</li> <li>➤ Efforts towards maintaining continuity of staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How you continue to implement change in your service</li> <li>➤ How you make staff feel welcome and respected</li> <li>➤ How you continue to encourage staff to improve their practices</li> <li>➤ How to mentor and support workers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Rodd (2013), <i>Leadership in early childhood: The pathway to professionalism</i> (4th ed.), Allen &amp; Unwin</li> <li>➤ Quality Improvement Plans: <a href="http://aspirelr.link/acecqa-improvement-plans">aspirelr.link/acecqa-improvement-plans</a></li> <li>➤ Waniganayake, Cheeseman, Fenech, Hadley &amp; Shepherd (2017), <i>Leadership: Context and complexities in early childhood education</i> (2nd ed.), Oxford University Press</li> </ul>

## Internet research

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

For example, you can search the term ‘childcare industry developments’ to see if there is any recent information; otherwise, you can search the topic you are seeking information about. You might also use your online networks to discover resources that others have found useful or informative.

You can start a professional development diary to record your ideas and the new information you find. Alternatively, you can store this information on your computer; create a database or set up a favourites folder that contain useful internet sites and links to professional sources of information. This will help you to keep up to date and alert you to new trends.

Remember that you must not trust everything you read online. Use your critical reflection skills to access other opinions, and 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)	<a href="http://aspirelr.link/australian-child-care-alliance">aspirelr.link/australian-child-care-alliance</a>
Care for Kids	<a href="http://aspirelr.link/care-for-kids-news">aspirelr.link/care-for-kids-news</a>
Community Child Care (CCC)	<a href="http://aspirelr.link/ccc-inc">aspirelr.link/ccc-inc</a>

ACECQA has the most reliable and appropriate online information about current trends in the education and care industry.

At [aspirelr.link/acecqa](http://aspirelr.link/acecqa), you will find a 'Latest News' page, along with links, libraries, fact sheets and details for educators, service providers and families.

## Professional associations

*Professional associations maintain up-to-date information on industry trends and issues.*

As peak bodies, professional associations often hear about, publicise and begin to respond to changes in the sector early. They support their members and others in relation to how these trends will affect workplaces, 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. Take some time to investigate each and identify which are useful to you.

### ACT branch of Early Childhood Australia

- Early childhood professional network meetings
- ACT early childhood professionals
- Membership-based organisation
- Email: [ecaact@earlychildhood.org.au](mailto:ecaact@earlychildhood.org.au)
- Website: [aspirelr.link/eca-act](http://aspirelr.link/eca-act)

### National Outside School Hours Services Association (NOSHSA)

- Outside school hours care (OSHC) issues
- For OSHC educators
- Membership-based organisation
- Email: [noshsa@noshsa.org.au](mailto:noshsa@noshsa.org.au)
- Website: [aspirelr.link/noshsa](http://aspirelr.link/noshsa)

### Gowrie Victoria

- Early childhood education specialists
- For educators of all levels
- Email: [gowrie@gowrievictoria.org.au](mailto:gowrie@gowrievictoria.org.au)
- Website: [aspirelr.link/gowrie-vic](http://aspirelr.link/gowrie-vic)

## Adapting to new practices

*Industry trends that affect your work should always be of interest, as these are the foundation of your role.*

While having general knowledge of the industry is useful, it is also important to maintain specific information that relates to your current responsibilities. For instance, if you work with preschoolers, you will likely be interested in the ratios for this age, their transition to school, behaviour and social learning, and use of language, literature and technology. Therefore, it is important to keep up with industry trends in these specific areas.

Trends can impact on future career opportunities; for example, qualification changes, the introduction or adaptation of roles, and the required number of early childhood educator qualified positions.

### Trends can influence your future needs by affecting:

- the way you work with children and their families
- what role/s you play
- your qualifications and responsibilities
- your career aspirations
- your pedagogy (the method and practice of teaching children).

### Example

#### Further studies

Rosie has completed her diploma and is quite experienced in the education and care industry. She plans to work towards a second-in-charge (2IC) role.

In her service, the 2IC role has recently been changed. Now the requirement is that the 2IC must be the educational leader and simultaneously hold a bachelor's qualification in early childhood development or equivalent. For Rosie, this means that, despite her experience, she will need to do further study before she is eligible for promotion.

Rosie has decided that this is what she wants to do, so she has been researching part-time study options as she will need to work and study at the same time. In doing so, she has found that some universities offer online completion and others give credits for the diploma qualification and any other relevant experience.





## Practice Task 10

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

### Case study

Ada loves researching. She often spends hours at home on the internet, reading and researching the latest trends for ideas to use in her role as an educator in a multi-age group environment. She often arrives at work and informs others of something she has read about, telling them that is what they must do.

Ada believes everything she reads and thinks that she, and those in her service, should be doing what she has read about. This is causing lots of arguments and confusion amongst staff, as they were not aware of many trends Ada is telling them about.

**What would you do if you were an educator working with Ada and she informed you about these changes? Select all that apply.**

- Ask Ada where she has sourced her information from.
- Discuss the information as a team and decide how it applies to your service.
- Check Ada's sources yourself.
- Tell Ada that she should only share information that comes from the ACECQA website.
- Ignore Ada; she obviously reads too much and takes things too seriously.

## 3B Legal and ethical practice

*Your role is linked to legal and ethical parameters that guide you to fulfil the expectations of others.*

Your actions influence many people daily. Parents place their trust in you. They expect your full commitment and for you to value their children's care and education. Children listen to you and model what they see. The community relies on your ability to implement high-quality programs that support families and educate children.

Among many other directives, the legal and ethical parameters identify the type of qualification you must hold, and any additional training you must undertake and maintain.

Legal and ethical parameters include rights and responsibilities for both employees and employers. For employees, these include being provided with adequate materials and staff ratios. For employers, these include expecting that workers implement practices appropriately and follow legal and ethical guidelines. Other parameters include custody arrangements, duty of care, health and safety, and organisational policies and procedures.

Many responsibilities are linked to regulatory requirements, as expressed in the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations.

### **Some important responsibilities are set around:**

- the ratios of children to educators
- numbers of qualified educators
- the requirements to be 'fit and proper'
- the ability to implement an approved curriculum
- first aid, anaphylaxis and emergency asthma training
- continuous development planning, e.g. QIPs
- staff development planning.

## Legislative requirements

*Regulations and standards have been developed to establish quality control over the operation of programs and services.*

Some of these are industry-specific, while others apply to specific organisational requirements. Being familiar with the regulations of your state or territory enables you to put them into practice.

You don't have to know about all these areas; however, you should understand the requirements that are relevant to you in your day-to-day practice. You should also make it your priority to act legally and ethically at all times.

### Legislative requirements include those related to:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ➤ registration and practice of health professionals | ➤ child protection and guardianship legislation |
| ➤ criminal acts                                     | ➤ disability standards                          |
| ➤ discrimination and harassment                     | ➤ equal employment opportunities                |
| ➤ freedom of information                            | ➤ health records legislation                    |
| ➤ mental health legislation                         | ➤ pharmaceutical benefits                       |
| ➤ poisons and therapeutics                          | ➤ privacy legislation                           |
| ➤ building standards                                | ➤ work health and safety (WHS).                 |

## Sector-specific guidance

***There are some specific legal and ethical considerations that are central to the education and care industry.***

This legislation can be used to help assess and confirm your practice.

The NQF is based on the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. Each state and territory has adopted the national law and regulations into their own separate acts and regulations, as the education and care sector comes under state jurisdiction.

The following components are represented in the national law and regulations. They are also linked to the service's code of ethics, and these can contribute in some way to your personal and professional development. This is outlined in the following table.

### NQS

The NQS guides you to conduct:

- critical reflection on how you provide for children's learning and development
- ongoing reflection and self-review as a commitment to continuous improvement.

Particularly useful is Element 7.2.3: Educators, coordinators and staff members' performance is regularly evaluated and individual plans are in place to support learning and development. This element encourages organisations to support educators to improve their skills through a performance appraisal system.

### EYLF and MTOP

The EYLF and MTOP include reflective practice as an underlying principle. They consider critical reflection to be a contributing factor to professional knowledge and pedagogy. The *Educator's guide to the early years learning framework for Australia* encourages reflection through asking critical questions.

## Belonging, being and becoming

The EYLF/MTOP goals (belonging, being and becoming) can be reflected on during self-evaluation:

- Belonging occurs when you understand your role and see your identity as being an educator.
- Being is about the role being meaningful, and you can use self-reflection to do this.
- Becoming is the result of your self-evaluation, your achieved and evolving identity, and the change that occurs to you as a professional educator using self-evaluation as a tool for lifelong learning and development.

In addition to this guidance, the NQF is supported by the following initiatives.

### The quality improvement plan (QIP)

The QIP of your service is based on reflection that identifies where you currently are and where you want to be. It provides a step-by-step plan for improvement. The QIP can reflect general goals, or identify growth and development aspects of specific educators.

### 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. To access and subscribe to the newsletter, visit: [aspirelr.link/acecqa-newsletter](https://aspirelr.link/acecqa-newsletter)

All NEL contributions can be found here: [aspirelr.link/acecqa-national-education-leader](https://aspirelr.link/acecqa-national-education-leader)

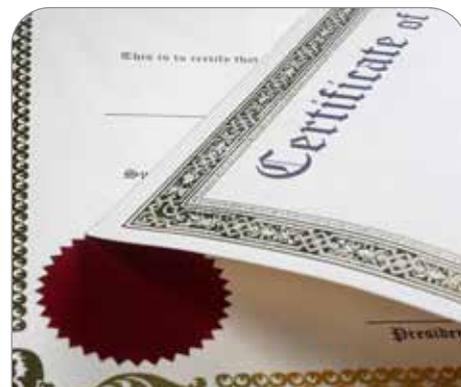
## Qualifications

***The education and care industry requires all educators to hold qualifications; this is reflected in service policies and procedures, as well as position descriptions.***

This requirement influences service operation, the QIP, the way you are employed and the responsibilities you are given.

These expectations can impact your career pathway, your personal thoughts about the industry and your place within it. Sometimes, legislation encourages you to extend your skills in different directions based on the expectations that arise.

If your service is non-compliant with regulations, it can be forced to close, particularly if the non-compliance concerns health and safety. Be aware of all your legal responsibilities and ensure you are meeting these.



Educators are required to hold specific qualifications.

## Code of ethics

### *Early Childhood Australia (ECA) has developed a code of ethics.*

The ECA is an early childhood advocacy organisation that has been in operation since 1938. It has a national presence with state and territory membership.

ECA developed a code of ethics that is relevant to all people working with children and their families. The code lists the responsibilities that are expected of any person working within the education and care industry. Its aim is to support educators to make ethical decisions in their work.

Central to the code are the values of respect, courage, inclusivity, democracy, honesty, social responsiveness, integrity, cultural responsiveness, education and justice.

The ECA Code of Ethics guides you to protect the wellbeing of children. It requests that you speak out and take action when unethical practice occurs.

You can find more information on the ECA Code of Ethics at: [aspirelr.link/eca-code-of-ethics](https://aspirelr.link/eca-code-of-ethics).

#### **The ECA Code of Ethics outlines:**

- core principles
- your responsibilities in relation to children
- your responsibilities in relation to families
- your responsibilities in relation to colleagues
- your responsibilities in relation to the profession
- your responsibilities in relation to community and society.

## Codes of practice

### *These are developed by industry representatives, who consult widely with their members.*

Codes of practice are a set of written rules that outline how people working in a profession should behave. They often reflect industry and legislative standards, and aim to promote best practice for organisations in that industry.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a code of practice that contains 42 articles that deal with broad-ranging issues. Many of the articles are relevant to day-to-day work in education and care. For example, Article 3 states: 'The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all actions concerning children'. This means that you should be expected to advocate for children and their families, as well as the education and care industry as a whole.

You can access a summary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child at: [aspirelr.link/unicef-child-rights](https://aspirelr.link/unicef-child-rights). Take time to read the convention and think about how you could improve your own practice to meet the articles.

## Organisational policies and procedures

*Service policies are usually based on legislation, and are used to guide and determine present and future decisions.*

A procedure describes the actions that need to be executed as a sequence of activities, tasks, steps and processes, which, when undertaken, produce the desired result or outcome.

You will need to apply your reading and writing skills to follow these policies and procedures. Examples of policies and procedures are outlined in the following table.

### Health, hygiene and safety practices

These include policies and procedures for:

- accidents and emergencies
- illness and infectious diseases
- medication
- immunisation
- sun care.

### General practices

These include policies and procedures for:

- acceptable behaviour and guidance
- clothing
- lost property
- excursions.

### Routine practices

These include policies and procedures for:

- meals and snacks
- dental care
- rest times
- toileting.

### Administration

These include policies and procedures for:

- absences
- accounts and receipts
- school holiday care
- fee payments
- outstanding accounts.

### Enrolment and orientation

These include policies and procedures for:

- arrivals and departures
- confidentiality
- lawful authority and contact
- daily communication
- record-keeping
- signing in and out
- safety and security.

## Duty of care

***Duty of care is the term used to describe the obligations employers and employees have to those they are responsible for.***

Duty of care includes making sure you provide appropriate care to meet the children's needs, treat them with respect and maintain their right to privacy.

If a child is in the care of someone other than their parent or legal guardian, that person owes a legal duty of care to the child – they are responsible for the child and their own actions. If the child is injured or harmed during this time, the person or service can even be sued for negligence.



All educators have a duty of care.

To prove negligence, four things need to have occurred:

1. The person being sued owed a duty of care to the child.
2. The person responsible for the child did not take the adequate degree of care needed in the situation.
3. The child was harmed – physically, psychologically, emotionally, socially or financially.
4. There is a link between these three things; that is, the breach of duty of care caused the harm.

In some cases, it is possible to be sued for providing negligent advice. Your service should have public liability insurance and, ideally, professional indemnity insurance to protect workers if they are sued for negligence.

### **To ensure you meet your duty of care, you should:**

- read and follow regulations, legislation, standards and guidelines
- provide adequate and continuous supervision
- maintain a healthy and safe environment
- ensure hazards and risks are minimised
- be aware of your role and participate as directed
- provide advice at the level you are qualified to
- never prescribe or suggest medications
- never diagnose illnesses.

Each time you are faced with a difficult situation, or when you are challenged to think of a different way to do things, it is useful to speak to others in your service. Doing so can enable you to:

- find out what is happening in the industry
- identify new ways of dealing with issues
- ensure you are always improving work practices
- avoid breaches and/or serious issues.

You may also find it beneficial to regularly ask yourself questions, such as:

- Am I demonstrating appropriate practice?
- Is my practice a good example to others?
- Would I continue this practice if I was being observed or assessed?
- Am I doing everything I can to be a successful and compliant educator?

Your answer to these questions should always be 'yes'.

### Example

#### Duty of care

Amaya is an educator and understands her job role as well as her service's policies and procedures. She works to the best of her ability to meet her duty of care by providing a safe and healthy environment for herself and others, and reporting any hazards she notices.

Amaya's actions and general behaviour influence many people in the service. Parents expect that she will demonstrate high-quality practice as she cares for and educates their children. The community also values her ability to implement programs that support families and educate their children. She is well aware that her role is linked to legislation, and she attempts to keep her training up to date, as guided by industry changes. Her workplace encourages her and the other staff to keep up to date. They are often suggesting interesting articles to read and arranging for interesting speakers to come to the workplace to speak to staff and families.



## Practice Task 11

Which of the following will help you to assess and monitor your legal and ethical practice? Select all that apply.

- Asking questions about how well you are performing.
- Reading and checking the NQF.
- A parent praises your work with the children; therefore, you know your work is compliant.
- Checking codes of practice that outline how people working in your profession should behave.
- Knowing duty of care expectations to make sure you get adequate leave for the hours you are owed.

## 3C Extending and reviewing your practice

*There is a range of ways you can extend and review your own expertise.*

Most of these relate to monitoring your self-reflection practices, reviewing and implementing your professional development plans, and the observation and support provided by others.

Your participation and involvement in implementing the service's quality improvement plan (QIP) will assist you to collaborate with other stakeholders. The QIP not only assists you to set goals, but motivates you to meet these goals.

A QIP review consists of the following steps.

Step	What it means	Language used in the QIP	How you can participate
1. Gap analysis	Finding out where your service is now and measuring this against where it needs to be	Identified issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Share knowledge.</li> <li>➤ Provide information.</li> <li>➤ Ask questions.</li> <li>➤ Bring up current trends you are aware of.</li> <li>➤ Share your views, values and beliefs.</li> <li>➤ Gather information or comparisons.</li> <li>➤ Support others to provide their opinions.</li> </ul>
2. Goal setting	Setting an overall goal for achievement	What outcome or goal do you seek?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Check that the goal reflects the intended outcome.</li> <li>➤ Identify whether the goal is realistic or if it needs to be broken into smaller goals.</li> </ul>
3. Prioritising	Identifying the importance of the goal	Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Clarify linked areas that may increase or decrease a priority.</li> <li>➤ Advocate for particular goals you feel are important.</li> </ul>
4. Planning	Developing steps to achieve the goals	How will we achieve this outcome?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop steps.</li> <li>➤ Make suggestions.</li> <li>➤ Take responsibility.</li> </ul>

Step	What it means	Language used in the QIP	How you can participate
5. Measurement or key performance indicators (KPIs)	Measurable outcomes; how do you know your goal is achieved, and when do you want to achieve it by?	Success measures, and by when?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ensure the measurement statements are clear.</li> <li>➤ Support the development of realistic time lines.</li> <li>➤ Encourage the most important aspects to be implemented as soon as possible.</li> </ul>
6. Implementation	Putting the QIP into action	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Work towards the goals.</li> <li>➤ Provide feedback.</li> <li>➤ Support others.</li> <li>➤ Develop materials, if relevant.</li> <li>➤ Access professional development and networking to gain the best outcome.</li> <li>➤ Share information with stakeholders.</li> </ul>
7. Evaluation	Reflection on progress or completion	Progress notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Complete an evaluation of your personal development plan.</li> <li>➤ Provide feedback.</li> <li>➤ Support others to provide their opinions.</li> </ul>

## Evaluating your personal development plan

***The review process can take many forms, but it is important that you reflect and evaluate the effectiveness of your personal development plan.***

You need to make a commitment to upgrading your skills and knowledge. As you develop more expertise and expand your knowledge and skills, your personal development requirements will change to accommodate this.

Here are some questions you can ask as part of the review process of your personal development needs. Use the information gained from your answers to update or modify your personal development plan:

- Did you achieve your personal development plan goal? Why or why not?
- Did you meet the time frames you set?
- Have people supported you to implement your plan, and how effective was this?
- Have you compiled a list of the training, networking, associations or learning you have accessed for support and information during the implementation of your plan? If so, how effective was this?

## Performance reviews

*A performance review should be undertaken regularly in every service.*

The service QIP can give direction to a performance review. Performance reviews are a way for you to identify and plan training, professional development, seminars or networking opportunities that allow you to extend your expertise.

Element 7.2.3 of the NQS states that a system of regular performance reviews alongside individual learning and development plans is essential. While the element suggests that performance reviews should be adapted to meet the needs of each service, it also specifies that performance reviews should:

- develop the educator's professional knowledge, skills and practices
- support creativity, imagination, innovation and continuous quality improvement
- build an understanding of the influence of theories and beliefs
- support educators to stay abreast of current policies, practices and thinking.

The QIP development and implementation process, apart from regulatory time lines and submissions, involves an assessment of needs, during which you identify gaps in service provision (usually based on current trends), then develop a plan to reach a goal. The service cannot reach its goals unless you participate in achieving them.



Your QIP contributes to your performance review.

## Lifelong learning

*Lifelong learning is about the continuous development and improvement in knowledge and skills that you gain throughout your life.*

Whether in your personal or professional life, you develop your capabilities and use these to expand your abilities. A career is built on lifelong learning, which not only helps you to increase your understanding, it also helps you to become stronger both socially and emotionally.

When you improve your knowledge and skills, you are participating in lifelong learning. Sometimes, this may be informally, through daily interactions, modelling, listening and sharing. Other times, this may occur through planned or formal training.

### Examples of ways to improve your knowledge and skills include:

- extending your current qualifications, such as undertaking your Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care when holding a Certificate III
- achieving a food-handling certificate
- training to increase your understanding of pedagogy, nutrition, planning strategies and/or teamwork.

### Example

#### Working towards goals

Rose shows commitment to her work and to helping improve herself through the following actions:

- She reads all the information on the service QIP.
- She attends meetings and takes notes about actions she can implement or investigate.
- She sets herself personal goals that enable her to achieve her professional career goals.
- She asks colleagues for feedback, providing her with another perspective when evaluating herself.
- She continually asks questions about practices and actions, and notices the communication strategies of others.
- She shows a constant commitment to increasing her knowledge.



## Practice Task 12

Read the case study then answer the question that follows.

### Case study

Sammy has been working in a service for five years and hasn't been involved in any formal training during this time. She has attended all compulsory staff meetings, but lacks the motivation and willingness to participate in development opportunities that others are attending.

As part of her performance review, her supervisor has suggested she choose two specific sessions from a professional development calendar. Sammy looks over the sessions available, but chooses not to commit to any.

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

- |  |       |      |
|--|-------|------|
| a. If Sammy does not wish to attend professional development, this should be respected.  | * Yes | * No |
| b. Sammy has a professional responsibility to engage with opportunities that extend and review her own expertise.                        | * Yes | * No |
| c. Sammy is demonstrating a commitment to lifelong learning; she will do it later.   | * Yes | * No |
| d. Sammy is not participating actively in the review process.  | * Yes | * No |
| e. It is important for Sammy to make a commitment towards upgrading her skills and knowledge. This should be a regular part of her role. | * Yes | * No |

## Summary

- Understanding and being aware of industry changes gives you time to think about what is happening, plan responses and work confidently with others to communicate best practices.
- The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) has the most reliable and appropriate online information about current trends in the education and care industry.
- Industry trends that affect your work with children, families, other educators and the service community should always be of interest as these are the foundation of your role.
- Professional associations maintain up-to-date information on industry trends and issues.
- Your role is linked to legislation that guides you to fulfil the expectations of others.
- Along with legislation that guides all workers in Australia, there are some specific legal and ethical considerations that are central to the education and care industry.
- Employees and employers have responsibilities when it comes to a range of issues in the workplace.
- When you observe others in the workplace, you are able to identify and engage with specific opportunities to extend and review your own expertise.
- As a regulation requirement, the most common review mechanisms in education and care services are the quality improvement plan (QIP) and staff performance reviews.
- As an educator you must be committed to your job role and responsibilities. To maintain these, you must be involved in continuous improvement, reflection and in keeping up to date with constant changes and emerging trends in the education and care sector.

# Learning Checkpoint 3

## Ongoing professional development

1. Draw a line to match the following current and emerging industry developments with the relevant information on opportunities to extend and review your expertise, skills and knowledge.

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| * Planning curriculum for children   | * Enrolling in a leadership course  |
| * Educator ratios                    | * Discussing your program informally with the educational leader.   |
| * Service quality and sustainability | * Becoming a member of Nutrition Australia – a professional association that supports education and care services to meet healthy eating standards. |
| * Nutrition for children             | * Reviewing the Education and Care Services National Regulations  |
| * Work health and safety             | * Developing and following quality improvement plans and researching tips online at Ollie Recycles Australia  |
| * Mentoring new graduates            | * Signing up to receive email alerts about updates to health and safety changes in your state or territory  |

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

- a. Performance reviews are required by the NQF. They may be formal events or may occur as part of a QIP process. \* Yes \* No
- b. Lifelong learning is about living your life to the fullest, and learning about other people. The longer you live, the more you learn. \* Yes \* No
- c. Participation in continuous improvement of the service is one way for you to upgrade your knowledge and skills. \* Yes \* No
- d. It is the service owner's responsibility to maintain all legal and ethical requirements of a service. Workers have the right to get on with their job of looking after children, and do not need to worry about legal and ethical issues. \* Yes \* No

3. Which of the following statements relate to ways you could confirm your practice against ethical and legal requirements and opportunities? Select all that apply.

- I could read the ECA Code of Ethics, select a responsibility and gain feedback on how well I implement these points.
- I could ask each of my friends if I am a trustworthy person.
- I could read my workplace roles and responsibilities, and highlight the areas I need to develop.
- I could discuss duty of care in a staff meeting, where we can give each other feedback on how well we provide this and make suggestions for improvement.