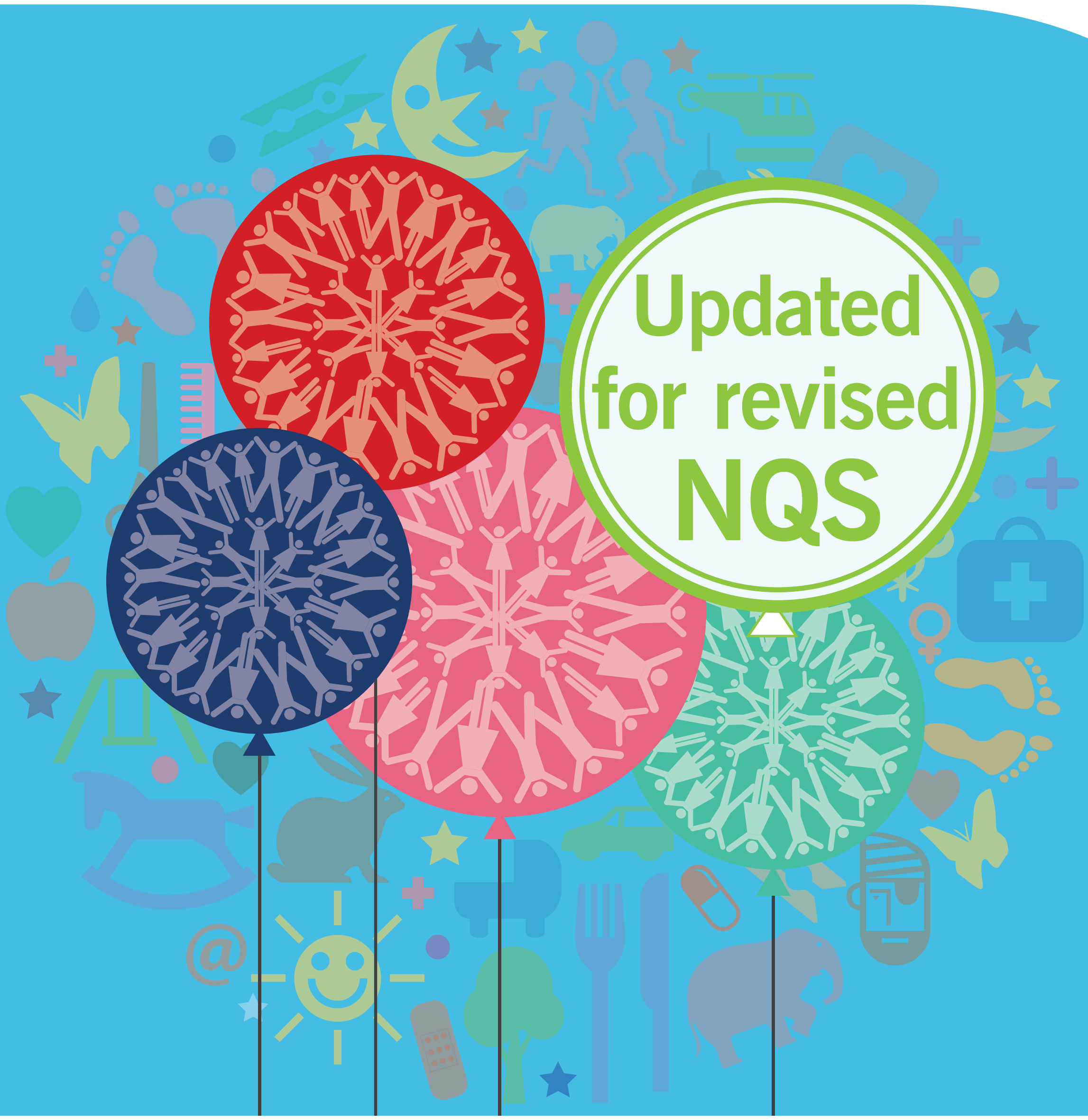
CHCINM002
Meet community information needs



Learner guide

One World for Children Pty Ltd

aspire learning resources

CHCINM002

Meet community information needs

Release 1

Learner guide

Aspire Version 2.1

aspire learning resources

CHCINM002 Meet community information needs, Release 1

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Contents

Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCINM002 Meet community information needs,* Release 1. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au

How to work through this learner guide

This learner guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the learner guide you need to read, and which practice tasks and learning checkpoints you need to complete.

Feature of the learner guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	▶ Read each topic in this learner guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples	▶ These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice tasks	▶ Practice tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into practice. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Video clips	▶ Where QR codes appear, you can use smartphones and other devices to access video clips relating to the content. For information about how to download a QR reader app or accessing video on your device, please visit our website: www.aspirelr.com.au/help
Summaries	▶ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning checkpoints	▶ There are learning checkpoints at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which learning checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

Topic 1

In this topic you will learn about:

Identifying information requirements

You manage information and communicate it to a range of people every day. The methods you use to provide information should be informed by the needs of your service's stakeholders. Once these requirements are identified, you need to collect and maintain current and accurate information on the prioritised issues and services.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and *Belonging, being & becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia*.

	National Quality Standard
	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
✓	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
	Early Years Learning Framework
	Principles
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
	High expectations and equity
	Respect for diversity
	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
	Practice
	Holistic approaches
	Responsiveness to children
	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching
	Learning environments
	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions
	Assessment for learning
	Outcomes
	Children have a strong sense of identity
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

1A Identifying information requirements of groups

The people who need information from you the most are your stakeholders. These are people who are linked in any way to your service.

Your stakeholders are a diverse group of people and organisations. Typically, the stakeholders of a child-related service include:

- staff
- families who use the service
- professionals who support your service and its clients
- specialists who are part of your support network
- government bodies that monitor compliance or provide support.

Stakeholders

To ensure you are meeting the expectations of stakeholders, you have to clearly understand their needs, interests and backgrounds, including the communities they live in. You will find that some characteristics of these stakeholders link to your own service context through:

- the age of children you cater for
- the community you are situated in
- the needs your service caters for
- your management structure
- your reliance on government services.

Identifying stakeholder characteristics

There are many ways that you can identify the characteristics of your service's stakeholders.

Ways to identify the characteristics of stakeholders include:

- talking to people – during orientation visits, interviews, spontaneous discussion, meetings
- collecting documents – including enrolment or registration forms, questionnaires, a suggestions or comments box, surveys
- contacting organisations
- reading handbooks and manuals
- accessing community information documents that reflect local research
- researching online.

Stakeholder needs

The users of a service will have a range of needs, and there are many factors that may influence these needs.

Factors that may influence the needs of users include:

the age and gender of children attending	any special needs of children attending
family income level	family education levels
cultural background and expectations	languages spoken
industries and key employers in the region	availability of social service agencies
availability of volunteer agencies	employment status of family members
availability of seasonal work	availability of support and assistance for low-income families.
availability of established support networks	

Gathering information to meet needs

Gathering information and advice is essential if you are to meet an infant's or toddler's needs and develop a nurturing relationship.

You can use informal and formal methods to collect information about the child. Informal methods may be conversations at drop-off and pick-up times. Formal methods may include:

- Enrolment forms and interviews – where families can ask and answer questions, and are shown around the service.
- Referral agents – sharing information with other services the family uses, given with the family's consent.
- Meetings – uninterrupted time where information can be exchanged, discussed and negotiated.

Watch this video to learn more about gathering information to meet needs of target groups.

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Target groups in the community

By employing strategies for finding out information about your stakeholders, you can identify the different groups within the community that will require information from you.

Community groups may include:

- current users of your service
- prospective users referred by other organisations, such as maternal child health centres or community services
- new target groups; for example, people you are marketing to for the first time
- people in your geographic region
- special interest groups such as parent groups or exercise groups
- students and researchers
- workers in other organisations such as support services or local government agencies.

Needs of the community

When identifying the information needs of community members, you might look at their overall needs, or the needs of particular target groups.

Once you have identified the target groups in the service community you are addressing, you need to consider the following points through a series of questions.

Values and needs

- What is the demographic of the group (age, income, family, languages, employment status, etc.)?

Existing facilities, resources and programs available

- How and when are they offered?
- How successful have other programs been?
- Is there competition or an opportunity for collaboration?
- Are there any agencies and organisations that may support your programs?
- Are there any gaps in the service?

Needs of current and potential service recipients

- Who attends and why?
- Who does not attend and why not?
- What broad interests are they likely to have?
- What do they need from you?

Sharing information

Documentation of both a confidential and non-confidential status requires accuracy, purpose and clear, user-friendly information. It must be presented in a professional and aesthetically pleasing manner, be up to date, and must reference any legislation or links associated with frameworks or standards. When information reflects these things, people reading the documentation have a better understanding of the purpose behind the material.

There are countless ways you can provide information to stakeholders. Remember that each stakeholder will have a different level of interest in topics, as well as different backgrounds and abilities – this will also influence the effectiveness of sharing information.

Ways to share information with stakeholders include:	
▶ conversations – verbal discussions face to face or over the phone	▶ individual meetings – formally in a private setting or non-formally
▶ group meetings	▶ family events or occasions (Christmas party, grandparents' day, etc.)
▶ in-service training	▶ professional development sessions or seminars
▶ webinars	▶ emails
▶ forum postings	▶ social media
▶ text messaging	▶ learning stories or observations
▶ confidential records or forms	▶ newsletters, banners, posters, pamphlets and leaflets.

Digital media

Digital media is currently the most popular method for sharing information. Through digital media, staff, families and other stakeholders can keep up to date. When the technology supports an option for people to provide their own thoughts and ideas, a community forms and people become involved and active.

Stakeholders may have busy work and personal lives and sometimes a text message, email or Facebook update is all that is required to enable more individuals to read and respond promptly to information.

The internet, iPads, tablets, mobile phones and iPods can be used for a wide range of purposes. Here are some examples of how these devices and technology allow you to share information.

Ways in which devices allow the sharing of information:
▶ Posting on social media
▶ Engaging in forums and discussion boards
▶ Emailing photos or anecdotes of the children at play
▶ Forwarding service promotions, policies and procedures
▶ Sending reports or other information to specialists
▶ Displaying and sharing materials through programs such as Storypark, LIFT, ChildCarers or QK Technologies
▶ Organising appointments
▶ Managing fees, budgets and invoices

Example

Target group needs

Delilah wants to identify the following information needs of three target groups:

- She wants to find out what the infant and child health nurse needs to know about the service so it can be promoted to new parents. The target stakeholder is the infant and child health nurse.
- She wants to find out what the parents need to know about the newly developed format for displaying children's activities. The target stakeholders are the parents.
- She wants to know how the service is viewed in the community – does it have a positive reputation? The target stakeholders are all those linked to the service.

Practice task 1

1. What are **two** characteristics of stakeholders that might link to a service context?

2. What **three** topics could you ask people in target groups about to identify their needs?

1B Collecting and maintaining information

The stakeholders you are targeting, and the information you want from them, should determine the way you approach collecting information. Knowing the types of target stakeholders will help you to determine the best way to communicate and gather information. For example, if the target group is a community organisation, then a letter, email or phone call may be useful. If the target group is parents, then face-to-face questioning may be more suitable.

Collecting information

Respect the time that stakeholders have available and plan your methods of gathering information around this, making them simple and effective.

Common methods for collecting information on issues and services include:

- interviewing community members and specific groups
- observing and listening
- conducting face-to-face meetings
- contacting by phone
- emailing
- using social media such as Facebook
- conducting surveys verbally, through a paper form or through online survey software such as SurveyMonkey
- asking people to complete templates or pro formas.

Reputable information sources

You might also be collecting information on topics where you are seen as an expert. When this occurs, you must ensure you use current and clear information, and that you use reputable sources. Textbooks and study materials are useful, as are factsheets from specialists you have contact with. If you use information from the internet, you should use a site that is government-based or linked to a reputable source.

Always consider whether the source of information is authoritative or likely to be biased – particularly information you find on the internet.

Collecting accurate and unbiased information

You should ensure that information collected through observation and secondary sources is discussed with the relevant people. Follow your service's procedures to record the information accurately.

When you discuss or record information about children, remember to avoid biased comments and negative labelling.

Watch the video to learn more about collecting clear and unbiased information.

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Relevant issues and services

At times you will need to use open questions to find out the information needs of the stakeholder, and at other times you will need to provide choices in order to gain specific responses. You can alternate the method by which you communicate with target group members or use several methods at the same time. Here are some examples of various types of questions.

Open

Example: 'What parenting information would you find useful?'

Advantages
Allows you to gain as much information as possible, including each individual person's thoughts.

Disadvantages
If the target group members are not sure about the possibilities, or don't have the appropriate experience or knowledge, they may not be able to give useful answers.

Closed

Example: 'Would you be interested in a behaviour guidance workshop?'

Advantages
You can be clear about what specific information you are seeking and limit the stakeholder to giving a concise response, such as yes or no.

Disadvantages
There may be other more important information that you are not collecting due to the closed response.

Multiple choice

Example: 'Which of the following topics would you like to learn more about?

A) Behaviour guidance

B) Nutrition

C) Toilet learning'

Advantages
You can be clear about what the options are. You have some control over the responses and can offer options that are within the boundaries and capabilities of the service.

Disadvantages
There may be other more important information that you are not collecting due to the limited options.

Maintaining relevant information

All services require basic information to be maintained and made available to stakeholders. This enables the service to run legally and efficiently. Here are some examples of information that should be kept current.

Organisation details

Details of the organisation, including the services provided and organisational operations and policies.

Guidelines and legislation

Guidelines and legislation relating to government agencies and funding sources, including policies and statutory requirements.

Family details

Family details and other specific data provided by family members (confidentiality requirements must be observed).

Networks

Network information, including the support services the organisation uses.

Professional development resources

Professional development resources, including training and development materials and documents.

Communicating with family members to gather information

It is important that you interact and communicate effectively with each child's family members. They can provide you with a lot of information about the child's abilities, preferences, behaviours, home environment and cultural background.

Watch this video to learn more about communicating with family members to gather information.

v0007

Collecting timely information

It is helpful to develop a collection of resources before needs arise. This will allow for a greater range of resources when needed.

Think about what stakeholders know about and what they need to know to keep their skills and practice current. Find out about the networks and information strategies that keep them motivated.

You can find out about stakeholder needs through:

- discussions at meetings
- conducting or accessing performance appraisals
- asking individuals what they believe they would benefit from
- sharing calendars and asking stakeholders to nominate courses and topics
- discussing skill gaps
- researching new practices that educators need to be trained in.

Example

Gathering information through questions

You might find that the best results occur when you combine questioning methods, as shown in the following example.

Dear parents,

We are hoping to improve our parent resources and wish to ask a few questions to find out how best we can support your information needs.

1. How would you like to receive information and resources? (You may choose more than one.)

☐ Email

☐ Display

☐ Books

☐ Links to online information

☐ Other: ____

2. Would you be happy for us to present a new topic each month? Y / N (please circle)
3. What topics would you like to see covered? Please give details:

We thank you for taking the time to provide us with this information. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

The team at XYZ Services

Practice task 2

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

Case study

Cassidy wants to deliver a short and helpful session to families regarding toilet training. Many of the children in her toddler group are showing signs of readiness, and numerous parents have approached her with a range of questions and ideas asking her what she would recommend. She decides to offer a one-hour information session the following week. Families can come along and ask questions, receive handouts and get other useful information relating to the milestone. She feels this would benefit all families.

1. Where could Cassidy find accurate and updated information to deliver to the families for her session?

2. How could Cassidy inform all stakeholders about the session?

1C Identifying gaps or inadequacies

The resources you provide for others are only useful if they are maintained. This requires a review process to be in place to identify gaps and inadequacies, and to update information content to ensure materials represent appropriate practice and service beliefs.

Identifying gaps in information

Gather and collate information on the extensive range of services, resources and support available in your community. It is equally important to keep this information current. There is little point directing someone to a service that no longer exists, giving them an incorrect telephone number or sending them to an incorrect address.

Generally speaking, it is best to use resources that are less than 10 years old, unless you feel they are particularly valuable.

To ensure the information base is relevant and current, remember to:

- add new items regularly and let stakeholders know they are available
- create a system of use that includes rules for borrowing and care of resources
- focus resources on popular issues
- vary the resources to include a range of stakeholders
- ensure brochures and other take-away resources are kept neat and tidy – they should be easy to find and topped up before they run out
- check issue dates to ensure your materials are current.

Audits

The information that you collect and provide needs to be current, accurate, sufficient, reliable and appropriate for the purpose. Audits are an effective means of checking whether this is the case. They can identify gaps or inadequacies in the information base.

Audits may be external, such as when a representative from a legislative body comes to your service and requests documents that demonstrate compliance. Audits may also be internal, such as when a staff member checks on compliance and resolves information gaps. You may audit resources prior to providing them to a stakeholder, or at regular intervals so that you are aware of what is available and will have this ready if needed.

Superseded information

To address gaps or inadequacies in information, you can conduct further research, develop additional material and seek input from specific groups. One of the easiest ways to check currency is to look online for information.

As it isn't possible to be immediately aware of all changes made to information, you can use the following strategies when auditing information for stakeholders.

Check the details of the organisation

Make sure the organisation is still operating and can provide the right type of service to the person you are referring. Check their address and opening hours, and whether an appointment is required.

Review any information that is more than 12 months old

If funding for an organisation is budget-reliant, it may only exist for a short period or change its focus. Organisations and government bodies may change their names or be amalgamated with a change of government.

Dispose of old information

It is confusing to have multiple versions of information available. For example, if you receive a new brochure from an organisation, discard the previous version. With in-house information, you may want to archive a copy for future reference.

Read materials prior to recommending them

Materials should be positive, easy to read and should impart appropriate information. Check the credentials of the author or issuing body if needed.

Request permission to make the first contact yourself

This strategy will reduce the concerns of those in need of information and ensure that any links or suggestions are followed up. In addition, when you explain the information you need, the organisation you contact initially may refer you to somewhere more suitable.

Redundant information

When information becomes old or irrelevant, you may need to archive it. When you archive materials you are storing them away safely in case you need them in the future.

Some information must be archived due to its legal relevance and the possibility that it may be reviewed in the future. Information such as fee records, injury and incident records, and child files fall into this category. Be sure to label the archived information well so that you can find it easily should you need to, and keep a log in your filing system – note what is stored, and which archive box or area it is stored in.

If you are readily able to locate information, you will be able to provide relevant and timely information to others.

Example

Updating information

A new family is enrolling who has recently arrived from China. You think they would appreciate the support of a community group within the region to assist with their move and to settle into the community.

You check the information available and find it was last updated 18 months ago. You decide to do a quick internet search on the two specific Chinese groups listed, and find that one has changed address and contact details since the information was last updated.

Before giving the information to the family, you update this information in the file. Date when the change has occurred so that others viewing the information will be aware of when information was last updated.

You decide to do this for all community groups listed.

Practice task 3

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

Case study

Brittany finds she has two posters about healthy eating. The first is the Healthy Eating Pyramid poster (2015), and the second is The NEW Healthy Food Pyramid (2008).

1. Which of the posters should Brittany keep as the most current information?

2. What strategy could Brittany use to check on current information about healthy eating?

Summary

- The people who need information from you are your stakeholders. They include the general community linked to your service and specific groups.
- The information needs of the community and specific groups you are targeting will help determine the best way to communicate with them.
- Update your community information regularly so that you are able to respond to trends.
- Each type of information may require a different system of storage. Confidential information needs to be kept secure.
- The resources you provide for others are only useful if they are maintained.
- One method for keeping information up to date is to conduct an audit. This can be used to identify gaps or inadequacies in the information base.

Learning checkpoint 1
Identifying information requirements

Part A

1. List some methods that can be used to identify information needs of the community and other stakeholders.

2. Identify methods that you could use to share information with others.

3. Outline how information can be checked for any gaps in its content.

Part B

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

Case study

Mya takes photos of the children digging, planting and watering the vegetable patch. Together, the educators and children have planned, constructed and now finalised the patch by putting the seeds in the ground ready for growth.

1. How could Mya share the photos she has taken with the families?

2. How could Mya seek feedback, thoughts and additional information in regard to the vegetable garden from other stakeholders?

Topic 2

In this topic you will learn about:

2A **Accessing information sources**

2B **Implementing strategies to address information requirement gaps**

2C **Exploring and discussing options for developing new information**

2D **Identifying requirements for new information**

2E **Identifying appropriate formats**

2F **Developing information resources**

Addressing information requirements

Information needs to be readily accessible if it is to meet the needs of the individual and the community. You need to regularly evaluate whether or not the information you are providing is continuing to meet these needs. This can be done by consulting relevant stakeholders.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and *Belonging, being & becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia*.

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	Practice
	Holistic approaches
	Responsiveness to children
	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching
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	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions
	Assessment for learning
	Outcomes
	Children have a strong sense of identity
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

2A Accessing information sources

There may be times when the information you need is not easy to find, or the materials you can access are too difficult to understand. In addition, they may not be suitable for the needs of the stakeholder you are targeting. In these situations, you may be able to create your own information materials.

Information sources

You need to regularly access and review existing information sources to ensure they continue to meet individual and community needs. As a result of this review, you may identify new information material that needs to be developed.

You can gather information on relevant issues and services from:	
▶ journal articles	▶ books
▶ pamphlets	▶ internet sites
▶ professional bodies	▶ government departments
▶ colleagues	▶ television programs
▶ special interest groups	▶ networks
▶ service websites	▶ non-government agencies.

Information management systems

To ensure that you can find and provide the information you collect and share, you must develop and maintain an efficient information management system. An information management system helps you to effectively organise the day-to-day materials of a business successfully. It might include filing, archiving, displaying and providing the documents.

Systems for recording information

Your service will have a range of systems in place for recording information. These will include a variety of paper-based forms and summaries of computerised statistics, reports, costings and legal requirements. The way in which a service collects and stores the required information will vary; however, each service will collate the same types of information as a basic requirement to enable continuous operation, and to provide an audit trail for compliance requirements.

Different types of information may also require different types of recording and storage systems. Your role is to understand these systems and follow appropriate service guidelines in maintaining information accuracy, completion and storage requirements.

Information storage systems

The main purpose of storing information is so that it can be retrieved when required. Information can be stored as hard copies (on paper) or as soft copies (electronically). Here are some examples of paper-based and electronic storage systems.

Forms of paper-based storage include:	**Forms of electronic storage include:**
▶ filing cabinets ▶ folders ▶ hanging files ▶ shelves ▶ parent pockets ▶ archive folders or boxes.	▶ databases ▶ computer files; for example, Microsoft Word or Excel files ▶ email ▶ memory sticks ▶ portable hard drives.

Information storage requirements

Different types of information may require a different system for storage. In education and care services, confidentiality is critical. A service's privacy and confidentiality policy should clearly set out the storage, use and disposal requirements for personal information. Personal information needs to be kept in secure filing cabinets in an area that is locked outside of business hours. Likewise, computer records should require password access by authorised personnel.

How your service chooses to store information will depend on a range of factors, as outlined in the following table.

Information storage factors

Quantity of information

Large amounts of information are best stored as computer-based files as this not only saves space but also enables ease of access.

Space available

Paper-based storage requires more space than electronic storage. Information that is out of date or no longer required should be disposed of, transferred to electronic files or sent to offsite storage.

Confidentiality

Confidential information needs to be stored securely in locked cabinets or in password-protected electronic files. In either case, access is limited to authorised personnel who have a copy of the key or know the password. When it comes to disposal, you may need to use a secure recycling method such as shredding, or contact a company that specialises in this process.

Access requirements

Information that needs to be accessed frequently should be in a central print-based filing system or available as electronic files.

Cost

Electronic storage requires regular investment in, and maintenance of, computer equipment. Hard-copy storage also requires maintenance and additional space if the service grows. Costs of offsite storage of paper or electronic information may also need to be considered.

Protection

Files, both paper and electronic, need to be protected from damage by fire, water and theft. Important files need to be backed up by creating another copy that is stored at a different location.

Ready access to information

Many services provide a resource library, a noticeboard and a newsletter. Popular information sources also include brochure displays and resource folders.

These forms of information are designed to enable ready access and do not usually need to be secure. However, if you have items that are available for borrowing, such as DVDs, textbooks or children's toys and books, you may need a secure space and a borrowing system.

It is a good idea to compile a support resources folder with a comprehensive list of items so that you, your colleagues, families and the wider services community can find resources to best suit their needs. In your folder you may like to include:

- business cards
- pamphlets
- information on your own organisation
- FAQs or fact sheets.

If you prefer to go paperless, you can keep an electronic file of resources, or put them on the service's intranet or website. You can also create a list of bookmarked online resources for easy access. These computer-based approaches allow quick access to your comprehensive information database.

Example

Information management

Billie has begun her new role as centre director. She has had no handover from the previous coordinator and needs to gain a basic understanding of the service's information systems, policies and procedures so that she can continue running the centre effectively.

Billie accesses the computer and takes some time opening each file, searching for titles, databases and areas where these can be accessed. Billie writes down each pathway and creates a clear index. She then looks through all paper-based files, a locked filing cabinet, drawers and folders within the office, before heading out to the working environment.

Once she has located all the records and documents, she feels she has developed a clear information management system and she can now follow on with her duties and job role.

Practice task 4

1. Where would confidential information need to be stored?

2. What factors need to be considered when storing any form of information or documentation?

2B Implementing strategies to address information requirement gaps

Due to the enormous amount of documents, records and support materials you will access and provide, it is natural that you will, at times, find gaps in the information. These might occur due to changes in industry standards, legislative requirements, roles and responsibilities, or due to new trends. At times this might occur when you are asked questions that you have not considered before, or when you wish to respond in a unique or individual way to a question, need or request from a stakeholder.

Addressing gaps in information resources

It is essential that you keep up to date with changes or requirements, identifying any gaps that you notice and adding to your resources when you find appropriate materials. Just as important is ensuring your record-keeping and information systems are kept updated.

By maintaining current knowledge and skills, you will identify gaps in information.

Some ways you can maintain knowledge and skills include:

- participating in professional workshops, discussions and seminars
- talking with others in the industry
- seeking feedback from stakeholders
- evaluating the effectiveness of current policies and procedures annually
- using social media to stay up to date with others in the industry
- joining children's services-related forums or community groups
- working with specialists and other outside support services
- having regular staff and room meetings
- using the internet for research or accessing the ACECQA website at http://aspirelr.link/acecqa to research and cross-check information
- subscribing to newsletters, journals and other professional materials (digital or print).

Example

Addressing information requirements

Melinda is updating the inclusion policies as she recently referred a family to a support service and realised that the policies omitted a range of new practices. The policy was outdated, made an incorrect reference to a support body and contained some negative wording.

As part of the consultation procedure she asks staff and parents for their thoughts, ideas and understanding of the current policies. The feedback she obtains confirms her beliefs that a review is needed.

Melinda decides she will also do some internet research, then send emails to all stakeholders asking for their opinions on what they deem important for the service in regards to current or future staff practices. Once she has collated enough data and feedback regarding the expectation of current practices and standards, she works on redeveloping the policy, ensuring there are no gaps in the information.

Practice task 5

1. Outline some possible causes of gaps in information.

2. List **three** ways a service can determine if there are gaps in information.

2C Exploring and discussing options for developing new information

Before developing new materials it is necessary to consult the relevant stakeholders to find out their needs and what they want to know.

Once this information has been determined it is necessary that you identify a suitable presentation format. For example, tri-fold pamphlets are useful for handing out at an information session, while PDF documents are useful for distribution via email.

Think about what information you currently have to offer and consider how other people might be able to contribute as well. Sometimes there are other people with a greater level of knowledge or skills in an area who may be able to contribute.

Options for developing new materials

Accessing information to develop new materials may involve research and/or networking. You might participate in some of the actions shown here.

Information	Description	Examples
Government resources	Most government agencies or legislative bodies automatically send out information about changes in legislation or guidelines. They may also have updating services that you subscribe to.	▶ Comcare ▶ *Child Care Service Handbook*, Department of Education
Subscriptions to publications	Publications, including journals and newsletters, provide up-to-date information on specific issues and areas of interest. Subscriptions may be free or purchased by your service. Publications may be sent in hard copy, emailed or accessed online.	▶ ACECQA newsletter ▶ Everyday Learning Series, Early Childhood Australia
Materials produced, provided by and about other organisations and services	Materials include brochures, posters, flyers, handbooks and websites. These provide details of service eligibility, service offerings and other specialised information.	▶ *Get up & grow*, Department of Health ▶ Noah's Ark, specialist services for children with disabilities and additional needs

Information	Description	Examples
Media publications and services	Media includes newspapers, magazines, television, radio and websites. These provide information about current public issues.	▶ *Herald Sun* (9/12/17), 'Childcare centres given a hand to overhaul menus as research finds many are failing nutrition standards' ▶ *The Conversation* (7/12/17), 'Why digital apps can be good gifts for young family members'
Electronic networking	Participating in forums, on discussion boards and in online professional development training. Networks are useful for obtaining up-to-date information and accessing materials for stakeholders. They can also be a support if you need to understand a new requirement or need advice based on experience.	▶ Educators engaging with educators: http://aspirelr.link/educators-engage-facebook ▶ ECE Facilitated Learning: http://aspirelr.link/ece-facilitated-learning-facebook

Requirements for new materials

When developing new materials, always consider content, structure and relevance. This relates to what the material is about, what you need to include or leave out, and how it is organised and presented.

Also think about how you can put approaches to environmental sustainability into practice. This can be as simple as using the strategies listed in the following table.

Reduce

- Minimise the number of documents you print or copy.
- Print or copy on both sides of the paper.
- Buy paper made from recycled products.

Reuse

- Use the same paper again.
- Use the blank side of an information sheet for notes.
- Circulate one copy of the information rather than making multiple copies.

Recycle

- Collect documents you have finished with for recycling.
- Shred confidential documents before recycling.

Example

Adopting a digital approach

Zeta has been looking closely at sustainability within her service as she feels not enough is being done in relation to the amount of paper wastage. She feels the review process for policies and procedures is particularly wasteful. She decides to bring this up at the next staff meeting and places this item on the agenda.

Zeta decides she will need some notes and suggestions to present to the team at the meeting to enable any potential change. She uses her iPad to list points for discussion and takes this with her to the meeting. During the meeting, Zeta refers to her list on her iPad and makes notes of comments from others. She suggests that rather than using paper-based methods of information delivery, they trial a computer-based system. This suggestion creates excitement and many staff add their own ideas.

The team decides to use the current staff intranet, already in place, as a base for all policy and procedure updates and reviews. Here they can also add links to readings or other information resources that may be needed. Ultimately this will create a library for all staff.

Zeta is extremely happy with the outcome. She notes that the team's decision to go digital will establish changes in their sustainable practices.

Practice task 6

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

Case study

Trisha is developing new materials for her service. Once they are complete, all stakeholders will require a copy. She realises that paper-based distribution will result in a substantial amount of wastage.

1. What could Trisha do to reduce the amount of paper used while distributing new materials?

2. Trisha is interested in employing sustainable practices. What **three** elements should she consider?

2D Identifying requirements for new information

Prior to going ahead with the development of new information, check to see whether any copyright permissions are required. This might include checking copyright guidelines to ensure you are using materials according to the law.

Permission may also need to be granted in relation to the use of materials, tools and resources. In some cases you may need to access funds.

For further information, access the information sheet, *An introduction to copyright in Australia* at: http://aspirelr.link/introduction-to-copyright-aus

If you are planning to create information materials in a range of formats, you may need to develop some new skills. This could include learning to use new software for word processing, desktop publishing, web page development and PDF creation.

Aspects of implementation

The tools you need to plan and develop your materials will vary depending on the materials you are developing. To gain ideas on the best method, do some research online or look at the information others have used. Also think about the purpose of the materials and how the message needs to be relayed.

Consider the following implementation aspects of creating new materials:

- What materials and resources can your service afford (don't forget printing costs for hard-copy materials)?
- Is suitable software available for developing the information resource, and are people skilled to use it?
- Are sustainability objectives being addressed?
- How long is the information expected to remain current?

Digital technology

Digital technology has many capabilities, and software applications are available for preparing a wide range of materials and resources.

The most commonly used software applications are programs such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Publisher, and Apple products such as Pages and Keynote. There are also many open-source software applications, such as OpenOffice, which are low cost and have many of the same features as proprietary software.

These software applications fall into broad categories of word processing, slide presentation, desktop publishing and web page development.

You can find help for using these software applications online or through video tutorials on YouTube.

Many internet sites provide hints on how to develop specific presentations. Here are a few ideas.

Useful internet sites for information creation

Make a brochure

Online PC Learning: http://aspirelr.link/make-a-brochure

Create fact sheets and action alerts

The Health Advocacy ToolBox: http://aspirelr.link/create-a-factsheet

Produce your own marketing leaflets

The Marketing Donut: http://aspirelr.link/produce-marketing-leaflets

Poster basics

NYU Libraries: http://aspirelr.link/create-research-posters

Managing the project

When you develop information materials yourself, there are specific steps that can be followed. By systematically working through the following stages you will be able to effectively manage the material development process. This includes setting time lines for each stage of the process, allocating tasks to other people who may also be involved, and having a process in place to resolve issues that you may encounter.

The typical stages involved in an information development project include:

- preparing drafts
- proofreading
- gaining approval
- developing a final draft
- formatting
- publishing.

Example

Using online tutorials

Matt wants to develop a marketing brochure using his computer. He first gains approval for the project, then goes to a website that explains how to use PowerPoint to develop brochures.

Matt follows the ideas on the website, and by using some of the templates available in the software he creates a professional-looking document.

Practice task 7

1. List the **six** steps of the material development process.

2. List **two** software application programs that could be used to develop information materials.

2E Identifying appropriate formats

Once you ascertain the need for, or have found gaps in, information sources, and identify implementation requirements, you will be required to identify the most suitable presentation formats.

Options will depend on how, why and for whom you are implementing the materials. Whether you are addressing an issue, asking for feedback, updating a policy or procedure, or simply providing information of interest or need to stakeholders, each will require you to decide on the most appropriate presentation format.

Audience requirements

Each service, agency or organisation will provide information resources in different presentation formats. When you look at developing your own resources, remember that people will want to access information that takes their preferences into account. For example, they may prefer information to be written, spoken, illustrated or demonstrated.

People are more likely to retain information that is presented in a combination of complementary methods. For example, a talk and demonstration on correct hand-washing technique can be supported by a pamphlet and a simple graphic poster in the bathroom.

Presentation options

The way you present any type of information needs to cater to the specific needs of the individuals, groups and audiences that you are targeting. Every person will have a preferred way of processing and understanding the information presented to them. When presenting materials, it is vital to ensure that you consider these preferences and cater as closely as possible to those specific needs.

Here are some presentation options to consider.

Presentation options based on individual needs

For people who prefer to take in information through listening, use

- recordings
- DVDs
- discussions
- face-to-face training sessions
- online webinars
- meetings
- conversations
- audio books.

For people who prefer to take in information through reading, use:

- books
- factsheets
- brochures
- pamphlets
- noticeboards
- posters
- reports or documents
- emails
- websites
- maps
- charts
- colour-coding
- key words
- checklists
- pictures/cartoons.

For people who prefer to take in information through doing, use:

- face-to-face training sessions
- demonstrations
- checklists
- diagrams
- role-plays
- materials that are simple, clear, colourful and textured
- case studies and scenarios
- movement.

Format options

Once you have a presentation method in place, you need to consider the best type of format for your materials. Whether they are paper-based, online, displays, face to face, group meetings or handouts, take into consideration the number of people you will be targeting.

Formatting considerations:

- What is the purpose of your resource?
- Where will stakeholders need to find the resource?
- What tone is appropriate to the resource (practical, professional, fun etc.)?
- What mix of text and visuals will work best?
- What information is most important?
- How can you make your message easy to understand?
- What is a reasonable deadline (is the resource needed as soon as possible, in the short term or in the long term)?

Example

Evaluation procedure

Donna wants to create a new evaluation procedure. To ensure that all staff understand the new procedure, Donna creates information resources, including:

- a poster and written policy
- a video presentation to deliver at a staff meeting.

These resources will enable all staff to understand clearly what their roles are in the procedure.

Practice task 8

1. What are **three** types of presentation options that might suit a staff member who prefers to read about how things are done?

2. What are **three** types of presentation options that might suit a staff member who prefers to talk about how things are done?

3. What are **three** types of presentation options that might suit a staff member who prefers to do things to find out how they are done?

2F Developing information resources

Technology plays a big role in the development of information resources. The internet, computer programs, systems and search engines can all provide useful assistance.

For example, the Plain English Campaign has a useful selection of free guides about clear writing available on its website at: http://aspirelr.link/plain-english-uk

You can also find poster-making tips at: http://aspirelr.link/poster-making-tips

Some tips for developing clear and relevant information include:

- finding current and accurate information when researching the topic
- focusing on providing information that the target audience needs
- structuring the content logically using headings to group content
- using language that the target audience will understand
- being concise and avoiding lengthy sentences and irrelevant details
- using pictures or diagrams to clarify your meaning
- using adequate white space in your design and layout
- avoiding fancy fonts and reversed text (light text on a dark background).

Preparing drafts

When preparing a draft, use the following guidelines:

- Stick to the topic; a project brief stating the aims, scope, budget and deadline will help you to stay focused.
- Establish the content first before worrying about how it looks.
- When the content is decided on, use pictures and spacing of ideas to make the information attractive and easy to read.
- Ensure your information can be backed up by other resources; list these if they could be useful to the reader.

Proofreading

Proofreading is a vital component of your presentation. Often, people slip into relying on the computer spellchecker, and this can lead to errors.

Proofreading can also extend to content analysis, identifying whether it contains up-to-date literature, is referenced appropriately, meets confidentiality and copyright laws, is informative and uses relevant wording.

To pick up spelling errors, difficult wording and inadequate grammar, you need someone who has skills in this area. At times you may need to ask a range of colleagues for feedback so that you make the most of their range of proofreading skills.

Stakeholders (in particular parents and prospective users of your service) may pick up on spelling and grammar issues. This can be detrimental to the image and professional presentation of your service.

Information approval

The information outlined in your draft may need approval and validation from others before being published. This means you may need to source additional information from other avenues to ensure the content is valid, purposeful and outlines your service's philosophy. Your supervisor, director or management committee may require evidence of where information has been sought from, clarification regarding its usefulness, and evidence of how it relates to frameworks and standards.

Other stakeholders may wish to add their own elements or information they have sourced. Regardless of how and from whom information is obtained and referenced, before moving forward and presenting or publishing any information to stakeholders or target groups, you must ensure you have appropriate approval from the necessary personnel.

Final draft

A final draft will be created once you have undertaken all the necessary actions in relation to drafts, proposals, costs and feedback. When a final draft has been made for any purpose, whether presentation or document-based, it must again be viewed by others for final feedback regarding the content, as well as the presentation and format methods you have decided to use.

If this final step is not implemented prior to printing, emailing or presenting your final draft, then stakeholders may identify errors, inconsistencies or unprofessional content. This may also result in the need to recall or redevelop the material, which can be time-consuming and costly, and presents a poor professional image.

Editing

At final draft stage, your proofreaders and those who must give approval may have further advice or requests. This might be information that arose at the proofreading stage, or it might be the result of changes that needed rethinking. You might also be presenting the material to a different person or group at this stage.

Editing might include:
▶ rephrasing jargon
▶ removing material that is not necessary to your message
▶ checking the spelling, punctuation, grammar and readability.

Formatting

At this stage your layout should be complete. The feedback you receive will be about small details that can make the materials more attractive and refined.

Formatting involves making changes that make the material easier to read or view, including the use of different text sizes and fonts.

Headings or subheadings might be altered and the use of paragraphs, tables or imagery might be adjusted.

Each of these checks enables the resulting information to be clear, precise and appropriate.

Publishing

Be sure to budget carefully for publication costs and print runs. If the item will need to be updated every year, print enough copies for this year allowing a small extra margin. Sometimes you can move up to a larger print run for a similar price.

Consider how the materials will be distributed. This might be a single copy of a poster, or many copies of a brochure to all members of a target group.

Publicise the release of the new or updated material so that your stakeholders know about it.

Example

Developing an information resource

Chase has been given the task of writing a draft for the promotion of an upcoming community event raising awareness of SIDS. His target group is other staff members, families and the community.

He begins preparing his draft by sticking to the topic, establishing the content and ensuring his information is backed up by other resources, which he cites appropriately. He then proofreads the draft with the assistance of his coordinator and educational leader.

After gaining approval as needed for parts of the information he is going to present, Chase works on his final draft using the feedback he has obtained. He focuses on any editing needed and formatting of the draft to capture his target audience. Chase includes clear, readable text boxes, symbols and images.

Once Chase has completed these adjustments, he again shows it to his coordinator and educational leader for approval before publishing and printing his resource.

Practice task 9

1. List **three** tips for developing clear and relevant information resources.

2. What should be done with a final draft prior to editing?

Summary

- It is important to gather and collate information on the extensive range of services, resources and support in your community. It is equally as important to keep this information updated.
- You need to regularly access and review existing information sources to ensure they continue to meet individual and community needs.
- By routinely evaluating information, you may identify that new information materials need to be developed.
- Consultation with service users and stakeholders is a key part of the information materials' development process.
- To develop information materials you need to use your basic project management skills, and follow guidelines for preparing, editing and publishing information.
- Once developed, information materials and systems need continuous improvement to ensure they are current, relevant and accurate.

Learning checkpoint 2
Addressing information requirements

Part A

1. List some sources of information you could use when researching issues.

2. What are some ways you can maintain your knowledge and skills so you can identify gaps in information resources?

3. Outline some methods that could be used to collect information when developing new materials.

4. How do copyright laws apply to newly developed information materials?

Part B

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

Case study

Wilma is developing a new resource for families. It will provide guidance and general information regarding healthy eating and the foods children bring into the service. The policies provided to parents at the beginning of the year have not been successful as children are bringing in inappropriate foods.

1. How could Wilma present her information to ensure that parents receive the correct message?

2. When proofreading the information, explain why Wilma should not rely on a computer spellcheck. Give an example of an issue that could arise.

3. What should Wilma do to store a copy of the completed information for future reference?

4. Explain why Wilma should use an information management system.

5. What are some common types of computer software applications that Wilma could use to develop her information?

6. Do some research and provide one source of information that Wilma could add to her details.

Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

Evaluating and maintaining quality information

In order to maintain an adequate range of quality information materials, it is essential that you evaluate these regularly and include them in your continuous improvement strategies. This activity might be something you add to your quality improvement plan (QIP) under National Quality Standard (NQS) Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and *Belonging, being & becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia*.

	National Quality Standard
	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
✓	Quality Area 7: Leadership and service management
	Early Years Learning Framework
	Principles
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
	High expectations and equity
	Respect for diversity
	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
	Practice
	Holistic approaches
	Responsiveness to children
	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching
	Learning environments
	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions
	Assessment for learning
	Outcomes
	Children have a strong sense of identity
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

3A Evaluating the adequacy of information

To maintain and improve existing information sources and materials in your service, a continuous evaluation process needs to be established. Not only is this a legal requirement, it also helps support staff to undertake their job roles more effectively, and assists families and community members to understand the direction in which the service is heading.

Evaluation process

By regularly evaluating the resources and sources of information in your service, you will be enabling those who use the resources to remain current in their understanding and practice. Information can quickly become outdated or superseded as trends occur and different learning opportunities evolve.

The understanding others have in regards to the service's operation, goals and objectives are linked with information resources, and also with the NQS.

Quality Area 7 of the NQS: Governance and leadership, links the importance of effective administrative systems as these enable the effective management of a quality service. This quality area includes Element 7.1.2: Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.

In the *Guide to the National Quality Framework* (http://aspirelr.link/nqf-guide-pdf), the following aims are identified.

Efficient and effective systems	Effective management systems support the educational leader, nominated supervisor and educators in their planning, delivery and reflection on the educational program, and the development of strategies to continuously improve. When educators have adequate time and administrative support to perform their roles, they can focus on delivering a quality service to children and their families.
Confidentiality and records management	Services are required to safely store and maintain the confidentiality and currency of information provided by families, service staff and other stakeholders. This builds families' confidence in the service's record management practices, and is an indicator of the level of professionalism at the service.
Administrative systems	The approved provider must ensure that there are adequate systems in place to maintain the effective, compliant operation of the service.

Complaints management	An effective complaints and grievance management system confirms to staff, families and the community that complaints and grievances are taken seriously and investigated promptly, fairly and thoroughly. Effective management of complaints may inform quality improvement processes, and is an efficient way of considering and acting on feedback from families.
Documented policies and procedures	The service should ensure that policies and procedures are well-documented, maintained and easily accessible to staff members and families. This supports the service to implement practices that are based on the service's policies and procedures. Regularly reviewing policies and procedures in collaboration with families supports a shared understanding of the service's practices.

Evaluation criteria

Evaluation processes will cover specific criteria, steps or strategies to ensure current information resources are valid, up to date and remain useful.

The criteria or steps involved in this evaluation will be individual to each service or even perhaps to each manager; having a specific system in place is necessary. When you follow set criteria you can ensure all areas will be reviewed and that adequate time and involvement will be invested.

Criteria to consider during evaluation processes:

- credibility
- accuracy
- reliability
- relevance
- date
- source
- scope and purpose.

Example

Evaluating information

Alexia is determined to ensure all stakeholders are happy and have an understanding of the standards and practices set out by the service. She believes the best possible action is to evaluate all information resources and materials regularly to ensure they meet the needs of service users and staff. To enable this, she undertakes regular reviews of service policies and procedures, and works with the staff to ensure they are following these appropriately.

Evaluation criteria: NQS and regulations

Some guidance can also be gained from the NQS and related regulations. The *Guide to the National Quality Framework* gives advice on items that an assessor from the regulatory authority will be looking for, discussing and sighting as part of an audit.

Questions to ask yourself during evaluation processes related to NQS and regulations
▶ Does the management of confidential information meet requirements?
▶ Do we have processes in place for reviewing and updating records and information on a regular basis?
▶ What is our practice in relation to retention and disposal of records?
▶ Are records accessible and kept for the required length of time?
▶ Is information technology available for administration, planning, evaluation and communication purposes, including for communication with families?
▶ Can we produce examples of internal communications, such as meeting minutes, distribution notices and staff bulletins?
▶ Are policies and procedures available to parents, families and staff?
▶ Are the policies and procedures that are listed as compulsory up to date and available?

Practice task 10

1. List the **seven** criteria you should keep in mind during the evaluation process.

2. Which element of the NQS outlines the importance of evaluating information?

3B Implementing strategies to continuously improve information

Continuous improvement is about having an ongoing and systematic approach toward improvement of products, services and processes. It can be used to motivate the review, evaluation and improvement of the service's information materials and systems. Continuous improvement will help ensure your service's information materials remain current and accurate, and continue to meet the needs of the target group.

Element 7.2.1 of the NQS requires that in all services 'there is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place'. This standard is focused on a commitment to continuous improvement.

The continuous improvement process

Continuous improvement can be applied to information materials and systems through a series of steps, as outlined in the following information.

Application of continuous improvement

Encourage improvement

Encourage the team to look for ways to improve the information material and/or system.

Consider the following:

- How can we provide information more efficiently?
- Is there any waste or redundancy?
- Is the information material or system achieving what we want it to?
- What would we have to do to improve the process of providing the information?
- How can we ensure the change will be successful?

Plan the change

Plan to implement the change to the information material and/or system.

Consider the following:

- What do we need to do to introduce the change?
- What resources do we need?
- How can we ensure everyone views the change positively?
- How will we measure the effect of the change?

Implement the change

Implement changes to improve the information material and/or system.

Consider the following:

- How can we support the team when introducing change?
- How can we support the stakeholders when introducing the change?

Review the change

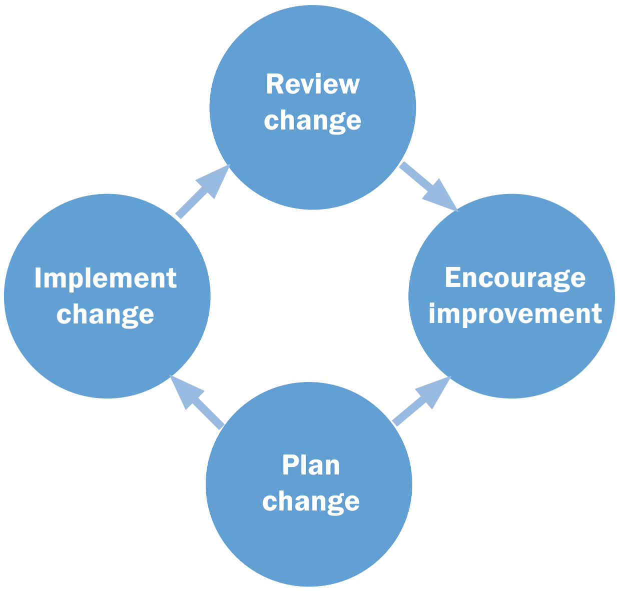
Review and monitor changes.

Consider the following:

- Is the change improving performance? Why or why not?

The continuous improvement process

The following diagram illustrates the four stages of the continuous improvement process and the ongoing relationship they have with each other.



Measure continuous improvement

It is useful to measure continuous improvement because it helps determine the effectiveness of the improvement process, and it poses questions relating to how others understand information. In addition, it gives additional feedback relating to the proposed need for change, reflection or input of others.

The main points to consider when measuring continuous improvement are outlined here.

Assessment tools

- In education and care services, the assessment tool used is a QIP.
- Your QIP should include reference to information materials and resources, and their evaluation and maintenance.

Financial results

- Is the service meeting its budget?
- Are the appropriate and required practices in place?
- Is information being shared within the community to ensure the service is running to capacity?

Stakeholder responses

- Are stakeholders happy?
- Do they have the information they want and are they pleased with this information?
- Does the information ensure that things are happening as they should be?
- Are stakeholders aware of their responsibilities and the responsibilities of the service?

Example

Using continuous improvement processes

Jay wishes to build an information review process for his service's procedures.

He decides to use the four-stage continuous improvement process that highlights the ongoing relationships between the stages. These include reviewing change, encouraging improvement, planning change and implementing change.

Jay adds each stage to his service's QIP and develops a policy around his review.

Practice task 11

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

Case study

Indi decides she needs to change the way she is currently evaluating her information materials as the current method is only effective for direct evaluation of information resources. Also, the materials do not support continuous improvement opportunities.

1. What **four** steps could Indi implement regarding continuous improvement of information materials and systems?

2. Why is it important for Indi to measure the effectiveness of her continuous improvement plans?

Summary

- To maintain and improve existing information sources and materials in your service, a continuous evaluation process needs to be established.
- Evaluation processes will cover specific criteria, steps and strategies to ensure current information resources are valid, up to date and still remain purposeful from the last date of evaluation or publication.
- Continuous improvement is about having an ongoing and systematic approach toward improvement of products, services and/or processes.
- It is useful to measure continuous improvement because it helps determine the effectiveness of the improvement process.

Learning checkpoint 3
Evaluating and maintaining quality information

Part A

1. Routine evaluations of systems are essential. Why else is evaluation important?

2. What are the **three** main ways continuous improvement is measured?

Part B

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

Case study

Eaddie is adding to her QIP. She wants to add details of an information evaluation she wishes to complete. She also wants to demonstrate how this evaluation will contribute to continuous improvement.

1. Which element of the NQS should Eaddie link to the review of policies and procedures?

2. If Eaddie wanted to measure the success of a particular parent-focused information resource, what are some questions she could ask parents?