



National Quality Standard Inclusion in Practice Forum



Australian Children's
Education & Care
Quality Authority

Participant Handbook

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Inclusion agencies



Personal reflection

What is inclusion?

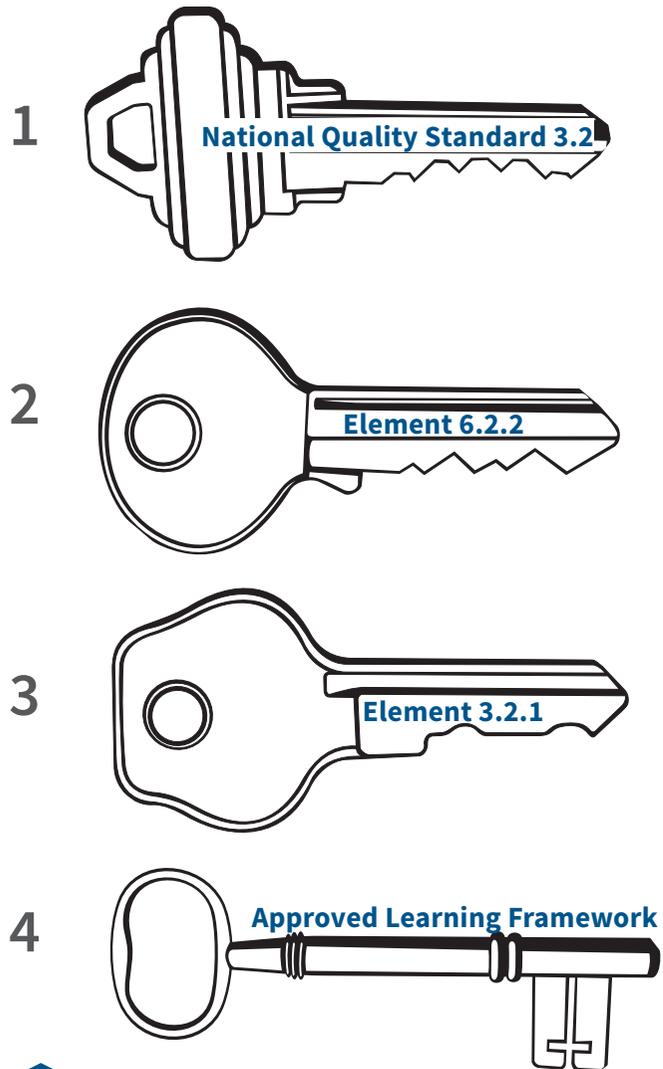
Have you ever
been excluded?

How do you know if
inclusion is working
well?



Activity: Unlocking inclusion potential

Match the key requirements of the National Quality Framework relating to inclusive practice.



Children develop a sense of belonging when they feel accepted.



Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environment.



The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.



Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.

The National Quality Standard

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD		
Concept	Descriptor	
QA1	Educational program and practice	
1.1	Program	The educational program enhances each child's learning and development.
1.1.1	Approved learning framework	Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
1.1.2	Child-centred	Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.
1.1.3	Program learning opportunities	All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.
1.2	Practice	Educators facilitate and extend each child's learning and development.
1.2.1	Intentional teaching	Educators are deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions.
1.2.2	Responsive teaching and scaffolding	Educators respond to children's ideas and play and extend children's learning through open-ended questions, interactions and feedback.
1.2.3	Child directed learning	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world.
1.3	Assessment and planning	Educators and co-ordinators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the program for each child.
1.3.1	Assessment and planning cycle	Each child's learning and development is assessed or evaluated as part of an ongoing cycle of observation, analysing learning, documentation, planning, implementation and reflection.
1.3.2	Critical reflection	Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, drives program planning and implementation.
1.3.3	Information for families	Families are informed about the program and their child's progress.
QA2	Children's health and safety	
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.1.3	Healthy lifestyle	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
2.2.3	Child protection	Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.
QA3	Physical environment	
3.1	Design	The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service.
3.1.1	Fit for purpose	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.
3.1.2	Upkeep	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.
3.2	Use	The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.
3.2.1	Inclusive environment	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
3.2.2	Resources support play-based learning	Resources, materials and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based learning.
3.2.3	Environmentally responsible	The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

Concept	Descriptor	
QA4	Staffing arrangements	
4.1	Staffing arrangements	Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development.
4.1.1	Organisation of educators	The organisation of educators across the service supports children's learning and development.
4.1.2	Continuity of staff	Every effort is made for children to experience continuity of educators at the service.
4.2	Professionalism	Management, educators and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical.
4.2.1	Professional collaboration	Management, educators and staff work with mutual respect and collaboratively, and challenge and learn from each other, recognising each other's strengths and skills.
4.2.2	Professional standards	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
QA5	Relationships with children	
5.1	Relationships between educators and children	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.
5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.
5.2	Relationships between children	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.
5.2.1	Collaborative learning	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.
5.2.2	Self-regulation	Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.
QA6	Collaborative partnerships with families and communities	
6.1	Supportive relationships with families	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.
6.1.1	Engagement with the service	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.
6.1.2	Parent views are respected	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
6.1.3	Families are supported	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.
6.2	Collaborative partnerships	Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.
6.2.1	Transitions	Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing information and clarifying responsibilities.
6.2.2	Access and participation	Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.
6.2.3	Community engagement	The service builds relationships and engages with its community.
QA7	Governance and Leadership	
7.1	Governance	Governance supports the operation of a quality service.
7.1.1	Service philosophy and purpose	A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations.
7.1.2	Management systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.
7.1.3	Roles and responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision-making and operation of the service.
7.2	Leadership	Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community.
7.2.1	Continuous improvement	There is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place.
7.2.2	Educational leadership	The educational leader is supported and leads the development and implementation of the educational program and assessment and planning cycle.
7.2.3	Development of professionals	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members' performance is regularly evaluated and individual plans are in place to support learning and development.

Activity: Quest for Quality - Inclusion extension pack examples

 **Discussion Point**

What are the benefits of mainstream services for children with additional needs and all children?

How do you communicate this to families?

Is this part of your orientation process for ALL families?

 **Consider**

Is there a risk that educators working 1:1 with a child with additional needs can have the effect of excluding the child from the group which may not represent true inclusion for the child?

What message does this approach give to the child, other children, educators and families?

 **Consider**

What is inclusion?

Have educators participated in professional learning opportunities about inclusion?

When was your inclusion policy last updated?

Does your inclusion policy reflect current research?

 **Discussion Point**

Share your thoughts on what is an inclusive practice?

Activity: Quest for Quality - Inclusion extension pack examples

 <h3>Activity</h3> <p>If funding for an additional educator was not available, what changes could you make to support all children to participate?</p> <p>Brainstorm a list of strategies which your service could implement to improve your inclusive capacity with the resources you already have.</p> <p>Hint: A strategy could be to implement changes to programs, physical resources or utilising existing educators in a different way.</p>		 <h3>Discussion Point</h3> <p>What is the difference between a strengths-based approach and a deficit-based approach? Discuss.</p>	
 <h3>Discussion Point</h3> <p>Have you ever thought about asking a child not to come on the day of your assessment and rating visit?</p> <p>Why/why not?</p>		<h2>Inclusion</h2> 	 

Quest for Quality: Further examples of cards exploring inclusion

Quality Area 5



Relationships with children

5 Discussion Point

How would you ensure that the dignity and rights of the child are maintained when:

- Changing a child's nappy while other children are using toilets in the same bathroom
- A child has had a toileting accident during a group experience
- A child with a physical disability is being excluded from a racing game by their peers

Quality Area 6



Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

6 Discussion Point

Who are the traditional owners of the land upon which your service is located?

If not known, how could you find out and learn about the local culture?

How could you involve children, families and the community in embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture into your service?

Quality Area 6



Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

6 Discussion Point

In an education and care service, educators must make curriculum decisions that promote inclusion and participation by all children (EYLF, page 12; FSAC, page 11).

What policies, practices and strategies are in place to support the inclusion of children:

- With additional needs?
- From cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds?
- Who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

Where might you access additional assistance to ensure that your service is 'inclusion ready'?

Quality Area 6



Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

6 Scenario

The family of Lucas, a three year old boy who has been attending your service since infancy requests a meeting with his educator. They sadly inform you that their son has recently been diagnosed with Muscular Dystrophy and ask your advice about local support services and assistance.

How will you respond to these parents? What services can you refer them to?

Quest for Quality: Further examples of cards exploring inclusion

Quality Area 6



**Collaborative partnerships
with families and
communities**

6 Discussion Point

How does your service facilitate communication with families who have specific or diverse communication needs?

Quality Area 3



Physical environment

3 Multiple Choice

Beth is four years old, and requires the use of a mobility aid to walk. The doorframe between the indoor and outdoor environment at your service is raised, making it hard for Beth to move between the two. What action should you take to ensure the environment is inclusive of Beth's needs?

- a) Tell Beth that she must stay inside when she is at the service
- b) Get a smooth ramp to go over the door frame and consider other adjustments that can make the outdoor environment more inclusive**
- c) Restrict all children from going outside when Beth is present
- d) Tell Beth's parents that the service cannot accept her, as it would be too difficult to accommodate her needs.

Quality Area 1



**Educational program and
practice**

1 Scenario

Mia (four years old) has recently moved to your service from China. English is Mia's second language. She knows basic English greetings, but engages minimally with her peers, participating mostly in solitary play and sitting apart from the other children during group times. Mia spends a lot of time alone in the reading corner, looking through picture books. So far, the educator's attempts to involve Mia in group experiences and activities have been unsuccessful. The other children seem indifferent to Mia and do not seek her out to join in their play.

How will you, as Mia's educator, ensure that she is supported to participate in the program?



Take home activity: Being 'Inclusion ready'

Quality Area	Questions about our service	How does our service address these questions?
<p>Quality Area 1</p> <p>Educational program and practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are physical and human resources adapted and used flexibly, and in culturally competent ways, to support every child (regardless of abilities, needs and interests) to achieve full participation in all routines, transitions and learning opportunities? • Do educators engage with plans from other professionals when facilitating and extending learning? • Is inclusive language used throughout the educational program, including in documentation? Is the reader able to identify children's voices? • Are there opportunities for family input into children's planning and goals and are educators able to articulate these? 	
<p>Quality Area 2</p> <p>Children's health and safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are children's needs for health and safety, healthy eating and physical activity balanced with any management plans for a child with a disability or disabilities? 	

Take home activity: Being ‘Inclusion ready’

Quality Area	Questions about our service	How does our service address these questions?
<p>Quality Area 3</p> <p>Physical environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all environments within the service physically accessibility for all children? • Are indoor and outdoor spaces appropriate to the group dynamic and used in flexible ways to include progressive, relaxed routines? • Are environments universally designed with consideration to sensory aspects and experiences? 	
<p>Quality Area 4</p> <p>Staffing arrangements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are your service’s inclusive practices shared with all staff? • Are educators committed to inclusion, valuing high expectations and equity for all children as capable, competent people? • Are all educators aware of Strategic Inclusion Plans and is there a process of sharing information to support children’s transition to their next education and care environment? 	

Take home activity: Being 'Inclusion ready'

Quality Area	Questions about our service	How does our service address these questions?
<p>Quality Area 5</p> <p>Relationships with children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In what ways do educators support children, respond and engage in meaningful conversations and quality interactions that are child led / focused? How are educators supporting children's social and functioning skills with a particular focus on supporting transitions? 	
<p>Quality Area 6</p> <p>Collaborative partnerships with families and communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there adequate time to meet with families to seek their expertise about their child and support positive transitions? 	
<p>Quality Area 7</p> <p>Governance and Leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does the service philosophy state regarding inclusion? How equitable is orientation? Is it the same process for all children and do all educators understand the process? How does the orientation process support parents as well as children? Are there open, respectful and professional discussions between educators and leaders? 	

Inclusion statement

- Inclusion recognises the right of **every person** to participate meaningfully in all aspects of community life
- Active and meaningful participation is not the same as just being present
- Inclusion happens when **everyone** is viewed as a capable and valued contributor as opposed to having deficits that need to be fixed
- Inclusion is about human diversity, where **each person** is viewed as being unique. True inclusive practice values diversity as a resource that informs all policy and practice.

The Inclusion Support Program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training.



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Dispelling Myths and Misunderstandings

- Inclusion is not about disability
- Typically developing children do not "miss out" when inclusion happens
- Funding can be a useful resource to implement inclusive practice but sometimes it can stop inclusion from happening
- Inclusion and Early intervention are not the same thing
- Inclusion is a right, not a nice or charitable thing to do for children
- Inclusion is not about everyone being treated the same.

The Inclusion Support Program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training.

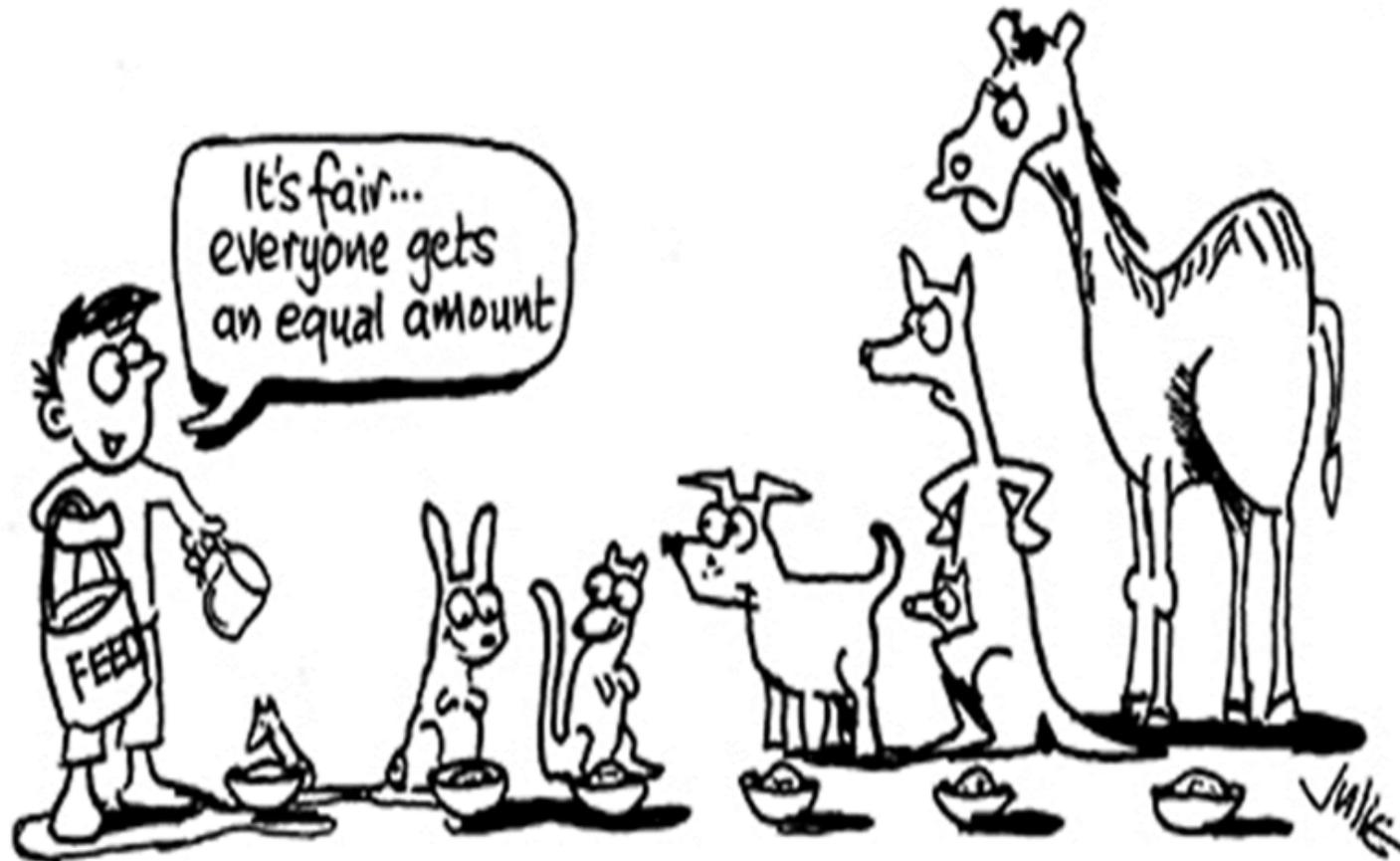


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What is fair?



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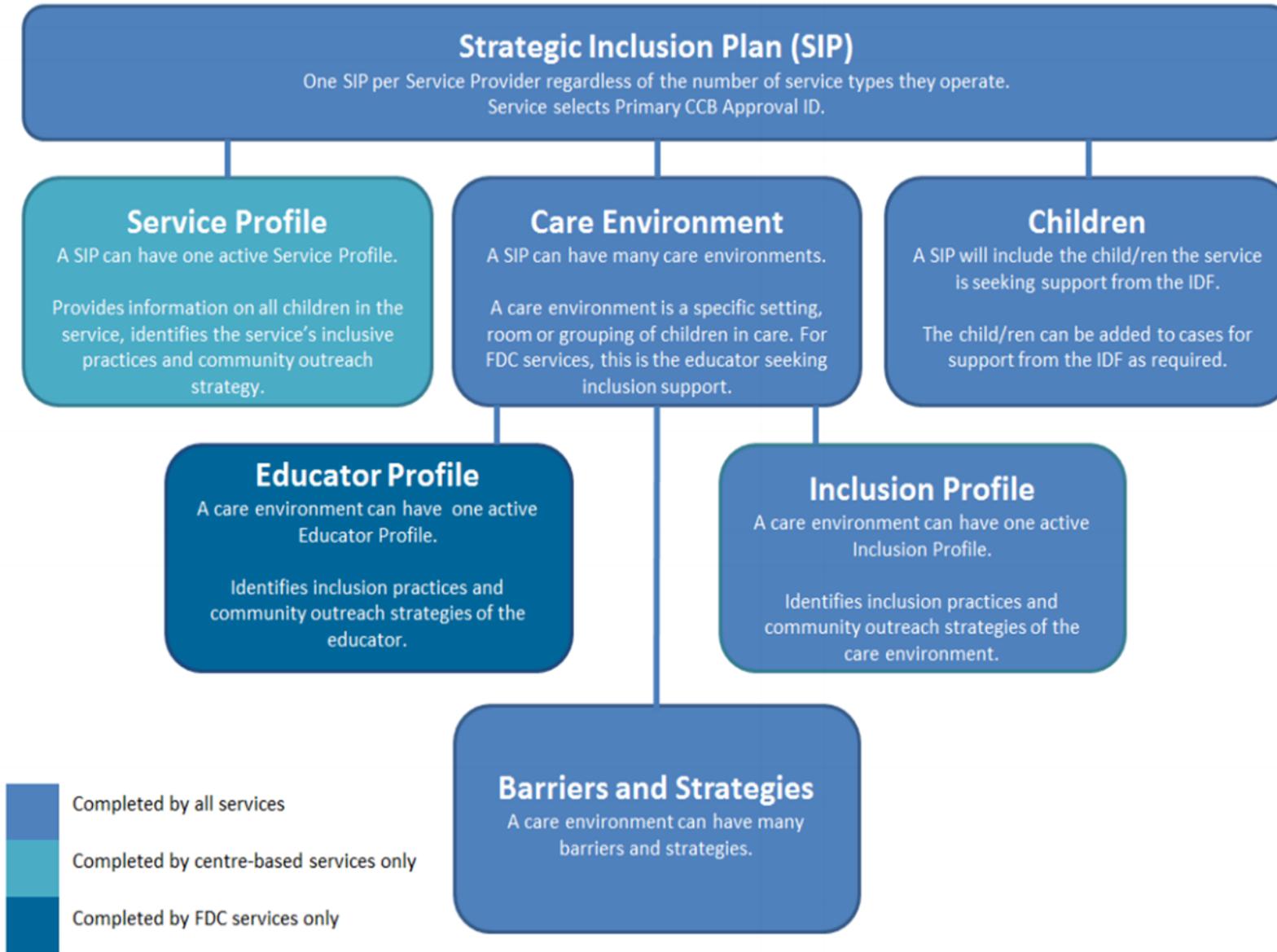


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Strategic Inclusion Plan



Take home activity: Reflective questions from SIP

Reflective questions from SIP	Our community	Our community	Inclusion ready strategies
1. How does your service promote learning experiences, interactions and participation to build on children's strengths and encourage involvement?			
2. How will your service engage with families in the community who do not currently access your service?			



NEW GUIDANCE ON DETERMINING EXCEEDING NQS FOR STANDARDS FROM 1 FEB 2018

This information sheet explains new guidance on determining the Exceeding National Quality Standard (NQS) rating level for standards. The guidance clarifies the difference between the Meeting NQS and Exceeding NQS rating levels to ensure quality expectations are clear for providers, educators and assessors.

WHEN DOES THIS CHANGE START?

This change will take effect with the revised NQS from 1 February 2018 in all states and territories.

WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER INFORMATION?

Visit acecqa.gov.au/nqf-changes

Visit your regulatory authority website acecqa.gov.au/contact-your-regulatory-authority

Governments, ACECQA, and education and care experts have collaborated to develop new guidance that clarifies the difference between the Meeting NQS and Exceeding NQS rating levels for each standard.

There are three Exceeding themes that services will need to demonstrate for a standard to be rated Exceeding NQS.

This new guidance will be published in the new Guide to the NQF and will be used in quality rating assessments from 1 February 2018.

DETERMINING EXCEEDING NQS FOR STANDARDS

A rating of Exceeding NQS means going **above and beyond** what is expected at the Meeting NQS level for a standard.

Other changes to Exceeding calculations

From 1 February 2018, there is a change in the way quality area ratings are assessed.

To be rated Exceeding NQS in a quality area, all standards in that quality area must be rated Exceeding NQS.

Feedback from the sector suggested that more information was needed to clarify what **above and beyond** means and ensure transparent expectations of quality at the Exceeding NQS rating level.

The following three themes must be demonstrated in service practice for a standard to be rated as Exceeding NQS:

Theme 1: Practice is embedded in service operations

Theme 2: Practice is informed by critical reflection

Theme 3: Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community

There are no changes to the way the overall rating for Exceeding NQS is calculated.

To be rated Exceeding NQS overall, all quality areas must be at least Meeting NQS, and four or more Quality Areas must be Exceeding NQS, with at least two of these being quality areas 1, 5, 6, or 7.

National Quality Agenda Review

EXCEEDING NQS THEMES

Theme 1: Practice is embedded in service operations

This theme means that high quality practice for the standard is demonstrated consistently and frequently across the service. This ensures a sense of continuity and predictability for children.

For example:

- high quality practice is usual practice across the service
- quality practice is consistent across all educators
- each educator's practice reflects a clear understanding of the requirements of the standard
- practice for the standard reflects the service philosophy and the principles and practices of the approved learning frameworks.

Theme 2: Practice is informed by critical reflection

When practice is informed by critical reflection, educators consider, question, analyse and re-evaluate planning and decision-making for that standard. This supports a culture of ongoing self-assessment that helps identify continuous improvement and improved outcomes for children, families and educators.

For example:

- reflection on practice is regular and ongoing

- opportunities for improvements are identified and implemented
- educators are aware of the influences on their practice and are committed to ongoing learning
- decision-making processes draw on diverse perspectives.

Theme 3: Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community

Every education and care service is unique, as are the children, families, and community at the service. This theme recognises that high quality practice is informed by and tailored to the unique strengths and needs of children, families and the community. This theme recognises differences across service types. For example, it is expected that services that educate and care for school-aged children may build strong relationships with the school and broader community and have fewer interactions with families compared to services that educate and care for younger children.

For example:

- practice reflects the voices and strengths of children, families and the community
- practice demonstrates shared decision-making and problem solving with families and/or the community
- practice suits the unique environmental, cultural and community context of the service
- practice fosters a culture of inclusiveness.

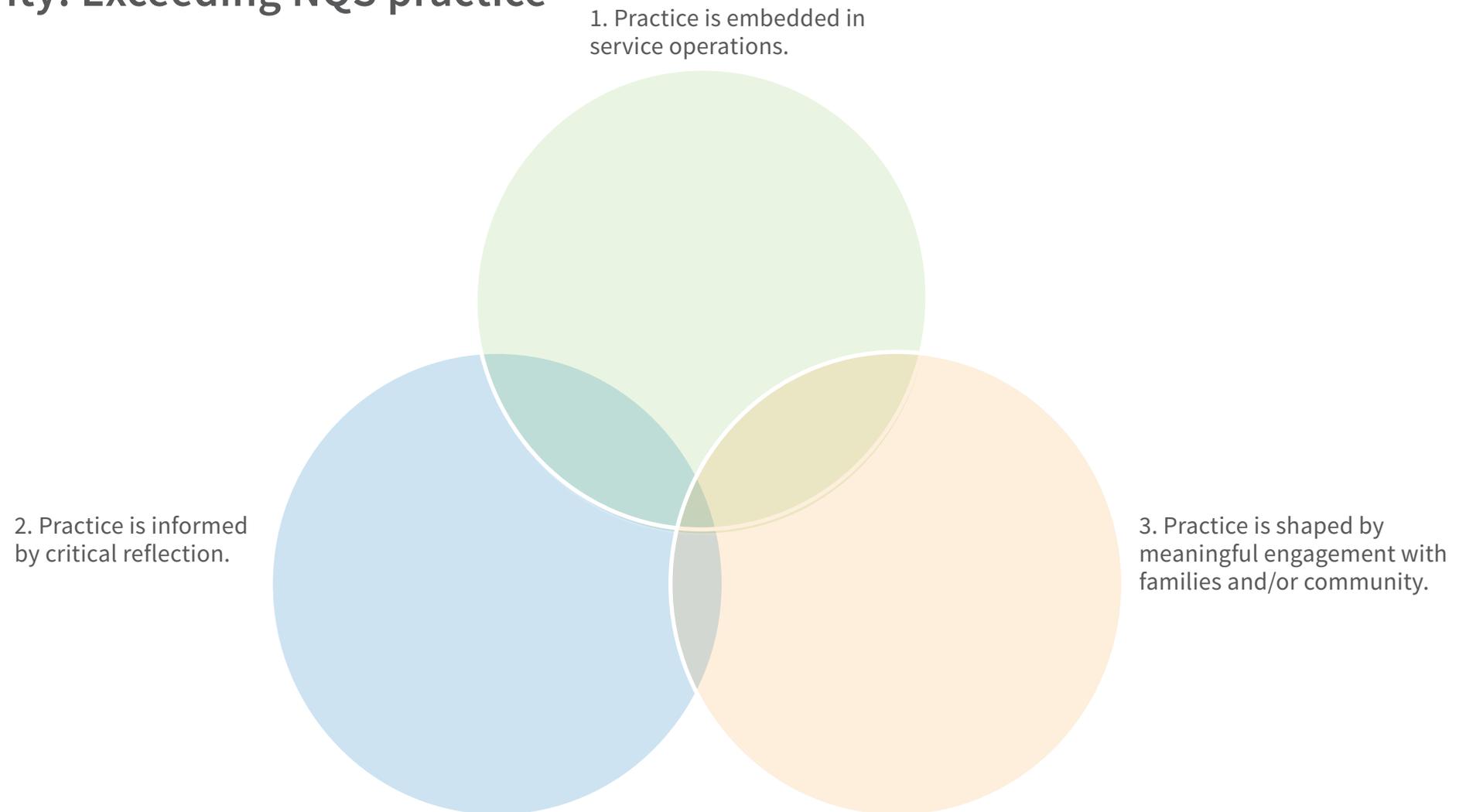
SUMMARY OF APPROACH TO DETERMINING NQS FOR STANDARDS

Assessors are trained to use 'observe', 'discuss' and 'sight' techniques to assess practice.

Working Towards NQS	Meeting NQS	Exceeding NQS
One or more elements of the standard are not met .	All elements of the standard are met . Service practice does not reflect all three Exceeding themes, for example : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Practice is embedded in service operations ✓ Practice is informed by critical reflection ✓ Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or community 	All elements of the standard are met . Service practice reflects all three Exceeding themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Practice is embedded in service operations ✓ Practice is informed by critical reflection ✓ Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or community

2 National Quality Agenda Review | New guidance on determining Exceeding NQS for standards Published 7 September 2017

Activity: Exceeding NQS practice



Instructions

1. Consider 2018 NQS Standard 6.2: Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.
2. As a group, discuss and identify Exceeding NQS practice that would be consistent with one of the three Exceeding NQS themes.

Where to go for more advice?



Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)
Website: www.acecqa.gov.au
Email: enquiries@acecqa.gov.au Facebook: www.facebook.com/ACECQA
Phone: 1300 4 ACECQA



NSW/ACT Inclusion Agency
Website: www.inclusionagency.nswact.org.au
Phone: 1800 703 382
Email: inclusionagency@includeme.com.au



NSW Department of Education
Website: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education>
Phone: 1800 619 113
Email: eccd@det.nsw.edu.au



References and further reading:

ACECQA – Article - Reflecting on planning for inclusion

<http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/NEL/Portal%20-%20PDF%20for%20web%20-%20Reflecting%20on%20and%20planning%20for%20inclusion.pdf>

ACECQA – Guide to the National Quality Framework

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide>

ACECQA – National Quality Standard

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard>

ACECQA – NQF Changes

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf-changes>

ACECQA – We Hear You blogs on inclusion

<https://wehearyou.acecqa.gov.au/category/inclusion/>

Early childhood Resource Hub

www.ecrh.edu.au

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) & Early Childhood Intervention Australia (ECIA)

Position statement on the inclusion of children with a disability in early childhood education and care

<http://www.ecia.org.au/documents/item/31>

References and further reading:

Early years national curriculum documents: Revisiting inclusive education – Article by Anne Petriwshyj from Queensland University of Technology

<http://eprints.qut.edu.au/81827/3/81827.pdf>

Educator's Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations/approved-learning-frameworks>

Educator's Guides to My Time, Our Place – Framework for School Age Care

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations/approved-learning-frameworks>

Narragunnawali – Reconciliation in schools and early learning

<https://www.reconciliation.org.au/narragunnawali/>

National Quality Standard – Professional Learning Program – Talking about Practice – Curriculum decision making for inclusive practice.

http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/nqsplp/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/NQS_PLP_E-Newsletter_No38.pdf

Network of Community Activities – Resource - Including children with disability in Outside School Hours Care: A Guide

<http://networkofcommunityactivities.org.au/oosh-info/oosh-resources/>

Reconciliation Action Plans

<https://www.reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation-action-plans/>



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