



Quality Area

5

Introduction

Quality Area 5 - Relationships with children

All children need supportive and secure relationships as a basis for learning. You and your educators have a wonderful opportunity – and responsibility – when it comes to the wellbeing of the children. You are all significant people in their lives who have the ability to influence how they feel about themselves and the environment around them.

Think back to your childhood for a moment and consider whether there was someone who was significant in your life that had a positive impact on you? How did this contribute to your sense of security and ongoing relationships?

The Approved Learning Frameworks recognise that belonging is the foundation of children's wellbeing. They also recognise the importance of relationships and their impact on defining children's identities and engagement with learning. The Early Years Learning Framework explains that, 'in early childhood and throughout life, relationships are crucial to a sense of belonging. Belonging is central to being and becoming in that it shapes who children are and who they can become' (EYLF, p.7). This view is echoed in the Framework for School Age Care (p.5).

When children feel comfortable to **be** themselves, when they connect with the significant people in their lives and feel like they **belong** in the places they spend most of their time, they have the potential to **become** successful, competent and capable learners with a strong sense of identity.

Walk around your service, or visit your FDC educator's homes. Take a moment to notice how your team are interacting with children. Can you see smiles or a child being comforted, hear laughter or conversations between children and educators? Can you see educators responding positively to children's efforts to communicate their feelings? Do you see your team taking every possible moment, including routine times such as nappy change and meal times, to create trusting relationships and to make every child feel special?

Perhaps you notice a child arrive at the service for the day. As she enters she is clinging to her father with one hand and holding a special item with the other. You observe that the child and her father are greeted warmly by the educator/s into a relaxed and happy environment. You know how important this first exchange is and you're pleased to see that the child responds with a smile. The tone for the day is set. With this first quick exchange, you can tell that your team are mindful of building positive, warm, respectful and trusting relationships with children.

Consider other ways you and your educators ensure all children experience a sense of belonging.

How do you encourage them to build nurturing, secure, respectful relationships with every child?

In FDC, how do your team of educators respond in a fair and consistent way with the children in their service and their own children?



Quality Area 5 of the NQS invites you and your team to reflect on how you can promote children’s wellbeing, self-esteem, sense of security and belonging through the **relationships** you build and interactions you have **with children**. It also focuses on **relationships between children** and their peers and how you and your team can build children’s capacity to form and maintain these relationships.

National Quality Standard

Concept		Descriptor
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.

Here’s a snapshot of how services’ ratings in Quality Area 5 compare across Australia:

www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/national-quality-framework-snapshots



What does meeting the NQS look like in QA5?

Building quality relationships with children and providing them with a secure base, frees them to confidently explore their environment and engage in play and learning.

Warm, responsive, trusting and respectful relationships enable children to:

- develop their confidence and a strong sense of identity
- develop effective communication skills and the ability to express themselves effectively
- participate in collaborative learning and build meaningful relationships with others
- regulate their own behaviour and learn to negotiate complex social situations and relationships (Guide to the NQF, p.224).

The relationships you build with children and how you communicate with them directly influences how they feel about themselves. Children construct an image of who they are (sense of identity) from the messages they receive from other people, both verbally and non-verbally.



Consider all the ways you and your team make each child feel special. (Elements 5.1.1, 5.1.2)



Engaging in positive, responsive and meaningful interactions consistently with children builds secure, trusting relationships and a sense of belonging. Children feel safe, secure, supported and included when you and your team delight in being in their company, genuinely listen to and acknowledge

their ideas, interests and feelings, and are available for comfort and support. (Elements 5.1.1, 5.2.2)



John Bowlby's theory of attachment recognises the affectionate tie that children have with the special people in their lives. This allows children (especially infants) to experience pleasure and joy, and be comforted by their nearness in times of stress.

Do young children in your service demonstrate signs of secure attachment with their educator/s? (Quest for Quality game card, QA5). (Element 5.1.1)

Encourage your team to revisit the Principles, Practices and Learning Outcomes of the Approved Learning Frameworks, Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to guide relationship building with, and promote the dignity and rights of, children.

Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity (EYLF, pp 20-24; FSAC, pp 19-23) and Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing, can be particularly useful (EYLF, pp 30-32; FSAC, pp 29-31). Look at the examples of practices that promote positive relationships with children in these outcomes, as well as the examples of evidence that you may observe in children as these relationships develop.

Also think about how your service's practices and policies support positive relationships between children and between educators and children. (Quality Area 5)

United Nations Convention on the rights of the child

CHILDREN'S WEEK

Foundation for Children from the Department of Education and Communities
 The Australian Government Department of Education and Communities
 Children's Week is a national event for celebrating children and their families.
 The Department of Education and Communities is proud to support children's week.

'Rights' are things that every child should have or be able to do. All children have the same rights. These rights are listed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Almost every country has agreed to these rights. All the rights are connected to each other, and all are equally important.

Sometimes, we have to think about the rights in terms of what is the best for children in a situation, and what is critical to life and protection from harm.

As you grow, you have more responsibility to make choices and exercise your rights.

Article 1 Everyone under 18 has these rights.

Article 2 All children have these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated differently on any basis.

Article 3 Adults should do what is best for you. All adults make decisions. They should think about how their decisions will affect children.

Article 4 The government has a responsibility to make sure your rights are protected. They must help your family to protect your rights and make an arrangement when you are grown up to reach your potential.

Article 5 Your adults have the responsibility to help you learn to exercise your rights, and to ensure that your rights are protected.

Article 6 You have the right to be alive.

Article 7 You have the right to a name, and this should be officially recognised by the government. You have the right to a nationality (belonging to a country).

Article 8 You have the right to an identity – an official record of who you are. No one should take this away from you.

Article 9 You have the right to live with your parents. You have the right to see your family who care for you.

Article 10 If you live in a different country than your parents do, you have the right to be together in the same place.

Article 11 You have the right to be protected from kidnapping.

Article 12 You have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.

Article 13 You have the right to be able to talk about what you think with other people, talking, drawing, writing or by any other means, unless it harms or offends other people.

Article 14 You have the right to choose your own religion and what you believe, and what is best for you.

Article 15 You have the right to choose your own friends and to join or set up groups, as long as it is not harmful to others.

Article 16 You have the right to privacy.

Article 17 You have the right to get information that is important to your well-being, from education, health, culture, and other sources. Adults should make sure that the information you are getting is not harmful, and that you find and understand the information you need.

Article 18 You have the right to be raised by your parents if possible.

Article 19 You have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated in body or mind.

Article 20 You have the right to special care and help if you cannot live with your parents.

Article 21 You have the right to care and protection if you are orphaned or have no care.

Article 22 You have the right to special protection and help if you are an refugee if you have been forced to leave your home and live in another country, as well as all the rights in this Convention.

Article 23 You have the right to special education and care if you have a disability, as well as all the rights in this Convention, so that you can live a full life.

Article 24 You have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay well.

Article 25 If you live in care or in other situations away from home, you have the right to have those things that most people would expect to see if they are your family.

Article 26 You have the right to help from the government if you are poor or in need.

Article 27 You have the right to food, clothing, a safe place to live and to have your basic needs met. You should not be disadvantaged so that you can't do many of the things other kids can do.

Article 28 You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

Article 29 Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.

Article 30 You have the right to practice your own culture, language and religion – or any you choose – and to belong to religious groups, meet special groups of your faith.

Article 31 You have the right to play and rest.

Article 32 You have the right to protection from work that harms you, and a limit for your hours and conditions. If you work, you have the right to be safe and paid fairly.

Article 33 You have the right to protection from harmful drugs and from the abuse of alcohol.

Article 34 You have the right to be free from sexual abuse.

Article 35 No one is allowed to kidnap or sell you.

Article 36 You have the right to protection from any kind of exploitation being taken advantage of.

Article 37 No one is allowed to punish you in a cruel and harmful way.

Article 38 You have the right to protection from being used in wars or armed conflicts. Children under 15 cannot be forced to go into the army or take part in war.

Article 39 You have the right to help if you have been harmed, mistreated or badly treated.

Article 40 You have the right to legal help and fair treatment in the justice system that respects your rights.

Article 41 If the laws of your country provide better protection of your rights than the articles in this Convention, those laws should apply.

Article 42 You have the right to know your rights. Adults should know about these rights and help you learn about them too.

Article 43 to 54 These articles explain how governments and international organisations like UNICEF can work to ensure children are protected with their rights.

www.childrensweek.org.au/all-posters.php

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 partners, people, progress

Building secure relationships encourages all children to thrive, and provides them with a secure base for exploration, relationship building and learning. You might like to refer to the **Circle of Security** program to guide your team on how best to support your children to feel secure in their attachments, and to regulate their emotions. (Quality Area 5)

The program links the strong attachment the child has with the educators (also parent or significant adult) as the foundation to a child's success in learning and life. It uses the educator as the **secure base** for the child to venture out from and the **safe haven** for them to return to. It looks at the underlying message the child's behaviour has and what they are communicating. It is through your response to and support for this important message that your relationship develops, allowing the child to explore securely and deepen their learning. The program reinforces the importance of the educator and their responses of **protection, comfort, delight and assistance with the developing regulation of emotions.**



Find out more about the circle of security here
<https://www.circleofsecurityinternational.com/>

Children learn to interact sensitively and empathetically with others when they are provided with opportunities to engage in shared play experiences that support their listening to and collaborating with peers.

How do you plan adequate time for children to engage in uninterrupted play experiences with a variety of peers?



In FDC, do all children have opportunities to be part of large grouping experiences, for example, playgroups, park visits or attending libraries? (Elements 5.2.1, 5.2.2)



Children engage in shared play experiences and show awareness and interest in others from a very young age. Through these early relationships they learn to express their feelings, desires and intentions, both verbally and non-verbally.

How do you support children of all ages to develop peer learning groups and support their progress through different stages of play? (Elements 5.2.1, 5.2.2)



Being able to regulate or self-regulate feelings and behaviours is an important skill to develop as it impacts on children's ability to learn, form and maintain relationships, and build resilience.

Encourage your educators to support children to express their feelings and responses to others' behaviours confidently and constructively.

Another way to assist children to learn to regulate their feelings and behaviours is by modelling this skill to them through positive, socially acceptable interactions.

Consider the ways you include discussions about emotions and issues of inclusion and exclusion, fair and unfair behaviour, bias and prejudice, as part of both the planned program and spontaneous situations.

You might also like to revisit your service philosophy and policy on behaviour guidance when considering how you can support children's self-regulation. This can also support your team to understand the importance of positively guiding children's behaviour, rather than managing their behaviour. (Element 5.2.2)