The Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) provides guidance, resources and services to support the children’s education and care sector to improve quality outcomes for children. This resource is one of a range of supporting materials that aim to assist providers and educators to better understand and align their practice with the National Quality Framework (NQF). Access free resources at: acecqa.gov.au.

Process quality includes:

- Relationships and interactions between children and staff and staff and families
- Children’s interactions with each other
- Effective teaching, pedagogy and practice; and
- Play based learning.

Structural components include:

- Group sizes
- Physical environment, equipment and resources
- Curriculum and learning frameworks
- Health and safety measures
- Staff qualifications and ratios
- Working conditions and wages
- Support for families
- Professional development and support
- Service and educational leadership.

Within the National Legislation structural quality components are most evident. The Education and Care Services National Regulations support the National Law by providing detail on a range of operational requirements for a service, such as staffing qualifications and the process for the assessment and rating of services.

Everyone has their own perspective on what 'quality' looks like in children’s education and care. Individually, or in small groups, develop a list of key words that reflect your perspective on quality children’s education and care. Once complete identify which key words are indicators of structural and process quality.
Components of Quality
Activity

Everyone has their own perspective on what ‘quality’ looks like in children’s education and care.
Provide a range of drawing and art equipment. Ask everyone to create or draw what quality means to them.
Display and discuss these with your children, families and community.

Discussion Point

At a staff meeting, discuss how a clear and shared understanding of quality, including both structural and process components, informs and supports your:
- Everyday practice and decision making
- Articulation of the ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ of your practice
- Professional learning and development strategies
- Continuous quality improvement processes.

Activity

In small groups, or as a service team, research, design and develop a poster that reflects your collective understanding of process and structural components of quality. Share this poster with the children and families to engage them in conversations about the importance of quality children’s education and care and how it is evident at your service.

Multiple choice

Intentional teaching is an active process and embraces and builds on children’s strengths, interests, ideas and capabilities. Intentional teaching is an important component of process quality.
Which NQS element focuses on ‘intentional teaching’?
- a. Element 5.1.1
- b. Element 1.2.1
- c. Element 1.3.2
- d. Element 7.2.2.

Multiple choice

Which of the following are components of process quality:
- a. Educators facilitating children’s achievement or progress towards identified outcomes
- b. Play based learning
- c. Relationships and interactions between children and educators
- d. All of the above.

Multiple choice

Which of these is not a component of process quality:
- a. The approved learning frameworks
- b. Children’s interactions with each other
- c. Effective teaching, pedagogy and practice
- d. Children’s interactions with space and materials.

Multiple choice

Identify two of the following which are components of structural quality:
- a. Group size of children
- b. Relationships developed with local schools
- c. Educator to child ratios
- d. Relationships and interactions between educators and families.

Multiple choice

Which of the following are structural components of quality related to Quality Area 1 - Educational program and practice:
- a. Curriculum decision making
- b. The ‘Current programs’ section of the family newsletter
- c. Program documents
- d. Educators demonstrating a range of intentional teaching strategies.
Components of Quality
Multiple choice

Which of the following are process components of quality related to Quality Area 1 - Educational program and practice:

a. Curriculum decision making
b. The 'Current programs' section of the family newsletter
c. Program documents
d. Educators demonstrating a range of intentional teaching strategies.

Multiple choice

Which of the following are process components of quality related to Quality Area 2 - Children’s health and safety:

a. Completed illness and accident records
b. Spontaneous discussions between educators and children about healthy eating
c. Educators using individualised strategies to help children settle during rest time
d. Statements of attainment for educator child protection training.

Multiple choice

Which of the following are structural components of quality related to Quality Area 2 - Children’s health and safety:

a. Completed illness and accident records
b. Spontaneous discussions between educators and children about healthy eating
c. Educators using individualised strategies to help children settle during rest time
d. Statements of attainment for educator child protection training.

Multiple choice

Which of the following are process components of quality related to Quality Area 3 - Physical environment:

a. Educators introducing a free flow indoor and outdoor program to promote children's agency
b. Indoor and outdoor space requirements are met
c. Educators engaging in discussion with children about the natural environment
d. Children’s play equipment is maintained and in good repair.

Multiple choice

Which of the following are structural components of quality related to Quality Area 3 - Physical environment:

a. Educators introducing a free flow indoor and outdoor program to promote children's agency
b. Indoor and outdoor space requirements are met
c. Educators engaging in discussion with children about the natural environment
d. Children’s play equipment is maintained and in good repair.

Multiple choice

Which of the following are process components of quality related to Quality Area 4 - Staffing arrangements:

a. Educator to child ratios are met
b. Educators hold approved qualifications
c. Children forming secure attachments to primary educators
d. Educators actively valuing each other’s perspectives.

Multiple choice

Which of the following are structural components of quality related to Quality Area 4 - Staffing arrangements:

a. Educator to child ratios are met
b. Educators hold approved qualifications
c. Children forming secure attachments to primary educators
d. Educators actively valuing each other’s perspectives.

Multiple choice

Determine which of the following are process components of quality related to Quality Area 5 - Relationships with children:

a. Behaviour guidance policy and plans
b. Educators seeking and taking into account children’s opinions
c. The inclusion of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in the staff handbook
d. Educators taking time to get to know and build trusting relationships with newly enrolled children.
Multiple choice

Determine which of the following are structural components of quality related to Quality Area 5 - Relationships with children:
- a. Behaviour guidance policy and plans
- b. Educators seeking and taking into account children’s opinions
- c. The inclusion of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in the staff handbook
- d. Educators taking time to get to know and build trusting relationships with newly enrolled children

Multiple choice

Which of the following are process components of quality related to Quality Area 6 - Collaborative partnerships with families and communities:
- a. Educators working with other professionals such as speech therapists to support individual children
- b. Policies and procedures provided to families
- c. Brochures about relevant community services made available to families

Multiple choice

Which of the following are structural components of quality related to Quality Area 6 - Collaborative partnerships with families and communities:
- a. Educators working with other professionals such as speech therapists
- b. Policies and procedures provided to families
- c. Brochures about relevant community services made available to families

Multiple choice

Which of the following are structural components of quality related to Quality Area 7 - Governance and leadership:
- a. The service philosophy
- b. Professional development plans for educators
- c. All educators contributing to quality improvement planning priorities
- d. Mentoring relationships between the educational leader and individual educators

Multiple choice

Which of the following are process components of quality related to Quality Area 7 - Governance and leadership:
- a. The service philosophy
- b. Professional development plans for educators
- c. All educators contributing to quality improvement planning priorities
- d. Mentoring relationships between the educational leader and individual educators

Multiple choice

Relationships and interactions between children and educators are a key component of process quality. Which standard of the NQS focuses on ‘relationships between educators and children’?
- a. Standard 1.2
- b. Standard 3.2
- c. Standard 6.2
- d. Standard 5.1

Multiple choice

Staffing arrangements (including educator to child ratios, educator qualifications and group size) are structural components of quality. Which NQS element focuses on the ‘organisation of educators’?
- a. Element 5.1.1
- b. Element 7.2.3
- c. Element 4.1.1
- d. Element 1.2.2

Multiple choice

The Education and Care Services National Regulations support the National Law by providing detail on a range of operational requirements. Regulation 168 requires that children’s education and care services have what component of structural quality in place?
- a. Emergency and evacuation procedures
- b. First aid qualifications
- c. Strategic inclusion plans
- d. Policies and procedures.
**Multiple choice**

The Guide to the National Quality Framework and the Early Years Learning Framework define which pedagogical practice (and process quality component) as: ‘educators being deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and actions’.

a. Scaffolding
b. Holistic approaches
c. Intentional teaching
d. Assessment of learning

Note: My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia refers to ‘intentionality’.

**Activity**

Process and structural quality are interrelated and evident across each quality areas of the NQS.

Structural components of quality are most evident across Quality Areas 2, 3 and 4. A large number of regulatory requirements are the foundation of the standards that make up these quality areas.

As a team, brainstorm and document different examples of your practice that are a structural component of quality for QA 2, 3 and 4.

**Activity**

Process and structural quality are interrelated and evident across each quality areas of the NQS.

Process components of quality are most evident in Quality Areas 1 and 5. The focus of these quality areas is that children’s learning and development can be positively enhanced with high quality programs and meaningful relationships.

In 5 minutes how many different examples of practice can you identify for QA 1 and QA 5?

**True or False**

Peer-to-peer modelling and peer-to-child modelling, engaging in shared thinking and problem solving are examples of intentional teaching strategies and components of process quality.

Answer: True. Demonstrating, open questioning, speculating and explaining are all examples of intentional teaching strategies, and components of process quality, recognised in both the Early Years Learning Framework and the Framework For School Age Care.

**True or False**

Authorised officers are trained to recognise and assess both process and structural components of quality during an assessment and rating visit.

Answer: True. Authorised officers are trained to assess and rate services under the NQS, which brings together process and structural components of quality. Authorised officers can observe, sight and discuss ways that services use both components as part of their service operations.

**True or False**

The National Quality Standard (NQS) incorporates both process and structural components of quality.

Answer: True. The development of the NQS was informed by research on the way in which high quality children’s education and care contributes to positive outcomes for children. These aspects of quality, incorporating both process and structural components, are reflected in the seven quality areas of the NQS.

You can read more about this research here: gecd.org/education/school/startingstrong/earlychildhood/educationandcare.html.

**True or False**

Process and structural components of quality influence each other in dynamic and interrelated ways.

Answer: True. When structural quality is well regulated, process quality has been found to improve.

**True or False**

Process quality can be measured by observing children’s interactions with educators and other children, as well as their engagement with the environment and educational program provided?

Answer: True. Process quality is the direct interactional experience of children and their participation in learning activities.
Components of Quality

Components of Quality

Components of Quality

Components of Quality
Scenario

During an assessment and rating visit the authorised officer asks you to provide examples of your service’s process and structural quality components.
- What would you discuss with them for process quality?
- What would you show them for structural quality?

Discussion Point

Ask the group ‘If your service was to only meet the minimum benchmark of structural quality components such as educator to child ratios or qualifications for educators, without paying attention to process quality components, what would happen?’
Brainstorm and document how this could affect children’s learning and development outcomes.

Activity

Provide each staff member with the approved framework that your service uses.
Ask each staff member to:
- Identify the five outcomes for children
- Decide if the outcomes relate to primarily process or structural quality components?
As a group share and discuss your answers.

Activity

At a team meeting, share and review your most recent assessment and rating report.
- Identify and highlight structural and process quality components in the evidence collected during your visit
- Write these down in two columns – Process and Structural
- Reflect as a team on how these practices can be, or have been, improved at your service.

Discussion

Brainstorm and document with your service and leadership team:
- How your service documentation provides evidence of process quality.

Discuss together:
- What are some of the ways you can highlight process quality within your service’s documentation practices?
- How can you communicate process quality to families?

Discussion Point

Before your next team meeting, give each staff member the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics to read. Ask them to highlight anything that they would like to discuss.
During the staff meeting, break into pairs and discuss how the Code leads or impacts on the relationships and practice at your service.
Return to the whole group and share your thoughts and ideas.