



Australian Children's
Education & Care
Quality Authority

USING YOUR ASSESSMENT AND RATING REPORT TO SUPPORT QUALITY IMPROVEMENT



The National Quality Framework (NQF) provides a national approach to continuous quality improvement for children's education and care across long day care, family day care, preschool/kindergarten and outside school hours care services.

The assessment and rating process, including the National Quality Standard Assessment and Rating Report, aims to promote continuous quality improvement and improve knowledge about the quality of services to help families make decisions about their child's education and care.

THE ASSESSMENT AND RATING PROCESS

Your service is assessed and rated against the NQS and relevant requirements of the [Education and Care Services National Law](#) (the National Law) and [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#) (the National Regulations) by your state or territory regulatory authority.

After carrying out a quality rating assessment, your state or territory regulatory authority will determine the quality rating level for each quality area of the NQS, as well as the overall rating of your service.

Section 136 (1) of the National Law requires the regulatory authority to give the approved provider written notice of the outcome of the rating assessment and the quality rating for your service.

The National Regulations outline the [assessment and ratings process](#) for children's education and care services, including the prescribed quality ratings levels.

Final assessment and rating report

Following an assessment and rating visit and a draft report, services receive a final assessment and rating report and a notice of quality ratings certificate to display.

This will provide:

- an assessment of your children's education and care service against the NQS and legislative standards
- the outcomes of the quality assessment undertaken by the authorised officer
- suggestions for ongoing quality improvement of your children's education and care service.

Based on the assessment visit, it gives insight into service quality:

- where your service is performing well, and
- further opportunities for continuous quality improvement.

The report will include:

- a table that summarises the NQS elements that were 'met' and 'not met'
- ratings and notes for the standards within each quality area

MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT WITH THE ASSESSMENT AND RATING PROCESS IS A KEY DRIVER FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT, INFORMING ONGOING LEARNING, CRITICAL REFLECTION AND PRACTICE CHANGE.

- quality area ratings and the overall quality rating
- compliance notes for any quality areas where legislative standards have not been met
- an overview summary of service quality
- Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) notes to support your continuous quality improvement.

Notice of final ratings certificate for display

The notice of final ratings certificate records your service:

- rating level for each quality area
- overall quality rating.

You must display the notice of final ratings certificate so that it is visible from the main entrance of your service premises. For family day care services, the certificate should be displayed at each family day care residence and venue. Failure to display this information is an offence under the National Law (section 172(d)) and National Regulations (regulation 173(1)(d) and 173(3)).

In addition to the notice of ratings certificate, your service can use the relevant NQS rating logo to promote your overall quality rating to families. Use or display of the logos is voluntary. The logos do not replace the notice of final ratings certificate that all assessed and rated services must display. Find out how you can request your logo and [promote your rating](#).

SUPPORTING QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The final assessment and rating report provides valuable feedback for your children's education and care service. It can be used to recognise areas of strength and identify further opportunities for continuous quality improvement.

On receiving the assessment and rating report:

- Share the report or feedback in the report with the service team to strengthen communication and teamwork.
- Take time to review the report and take on board feedback, including QIP, compliance and summary notes.
- Address as a priority any areas of identified non-compliance with the National Law or National Regulations.
- Explain the process and ratings for families, identifying and celebrating the strengths of your service and the strategies you have to continually improve the quality of education and care provided to their child.

In supporting continuous quality improvement you may also consider using the assessment and rating report to:

- Reflect on, review and update service policies, processes, practices and [philosophy](#) (NQS Elements 7.1.1, 7.1.2).
- Inform professional development goals and guide individual learning and development plans (NQS Element 7.2.3).

- Assist the [educational leader](#) to identify areas for greater support in leading the development of the educational program and assessment and planning cycle (NQS Element 7.2.2).
- Support effective self-assessment, identify and prioritise areas for [quality improvement](#) and develop specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) goals (NQS Element 7.2.1).
- Promote professional interactions, dialogue and collaboration between educators, teachers, service leaders and the approved provider (NQS Element 4.2.1).
- Engage families in service decision making about their children's learning and wellbeing (NQS Element 6.1.3).
- Establish positive relationships with the regulatory authority to support two-way information sharing.
- Take part in action research, systematically engage in [critical reflection](#) and make changes to practice (NQS Element 1.3.2).
- Utilise the QIP notes recorded in the assessment and rating report to reflect with your team and use as a basis to inform the review of your QIP.
- Raise community awareness of the NQF and the importance of quality education and care (NQS Element 6.2.3).
- Form the base for critical reflection across all quality areas, and Exceeding Theme 1 for all standards.
- If applicable, apply for the [Excellent Rating](#). Services rated Exceeding NQS in all seven quality areas are eligible to apply to ACECQA for the highest quality rating – the Excellent rating.

Actively engage with the feedback

Engaging proactively with the feedback provided in your service's assessment and rating report can help inform your service's journey of continuous quality improvement.

Research from the 2019 [Quality Improvement Research Project](#) identified meaningful engagement with the assessment and rating process as a key driver for quality improvement, informing ongoing learning, critical reflection and practice change. The willingness of educators to accept and take on board feedback provided in assessment and rating reports was recognised as an important factor in enabling real and sustainable quality improvement.

Adopting a growth mindset, the belief that practice can be improved with time, effort and experience, can equip your service team to move towards a culture of professional learning, development and continuous quality improvement.

When engaging with feedback provided in your assessment and rating report:

- **Recognise effort and progress.** Identify where your service is performing well and acknowledge the effort that has led to success, as well as the progress made along the way.
- **Reframe your thinking.** Although feedback can often be mistaken as criticism, it is critical to learning and development. Take ownership over your attitude and consider how feedback can constructively drive expectations for quality within your service.
- **View challenges as learning opportunities.** Acknowledge identified areas of challenge and consider how feedback can be used to inspire and empower change, innovation and growth. Reflect on how growth-orientated language may contribute to the development of a professional learning culture and a commitment to continuous quality improvement.
- **Establish new goals.** Consider how feedback can support new pathways of continuous quality improvement and help identify, establish and prioritise new goals for your education and care service. Incorporate new goals in your strategic planning and quality improvement processes (NQS Element 7.2.1).

Share information with families

An important objective of the assessment and rating process is to improve knowledge and access to information about the quality of services to help families make informed decisions about their child's education and care.

Families should be aware of your service's quality rating in each of the seven quality areas as well as the overall rating. Promoting your service rating and sharing feedback from your assessment and rating report helps families build a greater awareness of the NQF. It can also support families to better understand your service's strengths and goals for improvement and engage with your ongoing quality improvement journey.

You can download and share resources developed for families from the [Starting Blocks website](#).

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Visit the ACECQA website at acecqa.gov.au to download:

- [ACECQA Information sheet – Developing and reviewing your quality improvement plan](#)
- [ACECQA Information sheet – Practical ideas to support continuous quality improvement](#)
- [ACECQA Information sheet – The assessment and rating report](#)
- [The National Quality Standard Assessment and Rating Instrument](#)
- [Quality Improvement Plan template](#)
- [Quality Improvement Research Project](#)
- [The ACECQA Self-assessment Tool.](#)

Information about the assessment and rating process, including assessment and rating reports, is also available through your state and territory regulatory authority. Contact them via the details on the [ACECQA website](#).

