



The Australian, state and territory Education Ministers have agreed to changes to the National Quality Framework (NQF).

This information sheet explains the key changes for centre-based services and providers.

KEY NQF CHANGES FOR CENTRE-BASED SERVICES FROM 2023



(Requirements commencing 1 July 2023 and 1 October 2023)

WHEN DO THE CHANGES START?

Some requirements related to persons with management or control, program documentation and short-term relief of early childhood educators will commence on **1 July 2023**. Other changes related to staffing and safety will commence on **1 October 2023**.

WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER INFORMATION?

Visit nqfreview.com.au
Contact your [regulatory authority](#)

FROM 1 JULY 2023

CHANGES TO DEFINITION OF PERSONS WITH MANAGEMENT OR CONTROL

The definition of persons with management or control (PMC) is being expanded to ensure that regulatory authorities can assess the suitability of all persons that have influence, control or authority over the delivery of the approved provider's services.

It is important for every provider to consider who meets the new definition of a PMC in their unique operating context and if the regulatory authority needs to be notified of any new PMCs. See the information sheets: [Identifying persons with management or control from 1 July 2023 – Existing Providers](#) and [New Providers](#) to identify who meets the new definition, and the steps approved providers must take to notify of any changes to PMCs.

RESTRICTIONS ON SHORT-TERM RELIEF FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

Approved providers will have more flexibility to meet ratio and qualification requirements when a certificate III or diploma level educator is absent for a short period of time in a centre-based service with children preschool age or under.

An educator who holds (or is actively working towards) an approved certificate III or diploma level qualification may be replaced by a person who holds a qualification in primary teaching, when the educator

is absent because of short-term illness, leave, resignation, or because they are attending supervised professional experience placements for an approved qualification. Certificate III or diploma level roles may each be replaced for up to 30 days in 12 month period, while still satisfying the ratio and qualification requirements.

Flexibility to cover short-term absences of an early childhood teacher (ECT), second ECT or suitably qualified person will also be extended enabling their role to be replaced by a person who holds an approved diploma level qualification or a qualification in primary teaching when they are absent due to short-term illness, leave, resignation or because they are attending supervised professional experience placements for approved qualifications. ECT or suitably qualified person roles may each be replaced for up to 60 days in any 12 month period. Requirements in NSW differ slightly. These changes will not apply if the service employs or engages ECTs or suitably qualified persons on a full-time or full-time equivalent basis.

New record keeping requirements apply when staff are absent and replaced.

See the [Short-term relief of educators at centre-based services](#) fact sheet for more information, including requirements for NSW services.

EDUCATORS WHO ARE 'ACTIVELY WORKING TOWARDS' A QUALIFICATION

There are no changes to the definition of 'actively working towards' a qualification. New guidance has been developed to support providers to ensure staff are making satisfactory progress in their studies.

See the [Educators who are 'actively working towards' a qualification](#) fact sheet for more information.

PROGRAM-LEVEL DOCUMENTATION FOR CHILDREN OVER PRESCHOOL AGE

Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia, Victoria

Services that educate and care for children over preschool age in Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia and Victoria will no longer be required to keep documentation about individual children's wellbeing, development and learning. Instead, these services will keep documentation about the development of the program. These changes will take effect on 1 July 2023 for Tasmania, South Australia and Victoria. Changes will come into effect in Western Australia at a later date.

These changes align with existing requirements for services in New South Wales, Queensland and the Northern Territory. The Australian Capital Territory has decided to maintain the current position, to ensure the program reflects the individual needs of the specific community of children attending the service, proportionate to each child's attendance, and any disability or behavioural challenges they are experiencing.

See the [Documenting programs for school age services](#) fact sheet for more information.

FROM 1 OCTOBER 2023

SAFETY OF CHILDREN DURING TRANSITIONS

Services must have a policy and procedure and risk assessment process in place for the safe arrival of children who travel between the service and a school, another education and care service, or a children's service. Offence penalties apply.

See the [Safety of children during daily transitions between services including OSHC](#) and school fact sheet for more information.

SLEEP AND REST REQUIREMENTS

While services are already required to have policies and procedures in place relating to sleep and rest, the National Regulations will now set out matters that must be included in these policies and procedures and will require approved providers to conduct a risk assessment every 12 months. Offence penalties apply.

MULTI-STOREY BUILDINGS

New requirements apply to services located in a multi-storey building with other occupants and on a storey that does not have direct egress to an assembly area. These services must ensure emergency and evacuation procedures include arrangements with other occupants of the building in relation to evacuation and information prescribed in the regulations (regulation 97) such as the evacuation routes proposed to be used in an evacuation, identification of the person-in-charge of an evacuation, and staff roles and responsibilities during an evacuation.

These procedures should be developed with reference to the emergency and evacuation procedures for the whole building. It is recommended that, for services located in multi-storey buildings with other occupants, Australian Standard AS3745:2020 is followed in developing these procedures.

The approved provider must review the risk assessment required under regulation 97(2) at least once every 12 months, or as soon as practicable after becoming aware of any circumstance that may affect the safe evacuation of children attending the service. The approved provider must make any necessary updates to the emergency and evacuation policies and procedures. Offence penalties apply.

When assessing applications for service approval and applications to amend service approvals, regulatory authorities must have regard to whether the proposed education and care service premises is located in a multi-storey building shared with other occupants and if so, whether there is direct egress to an assembly area to allow the safe evacuation of children attending the service, including non-ambulatory children.

See the [Service application & emergency evacuation changes for multi-storey buildings](#) fact sheet for more information.

CHILD SAFE PRINCIPLES

The 2019 NQF Review identified a small number of gaps between the National Child Safe Principles and the NQF. Approved providers and services must review and update existing policies to comply with new requirements under regulations 84, 149 and 168.

From 1 October 2023, approved providers must ensure:

- volunteers and students (in addition to nominated supervisors and staff members who work with children) are aware of child protection laws and how they apply, and any obligations held under them
- working with vulnerable people/children check details are included on volunteer staff records
- services' child safe environment policies and procedures cover the creation of a child safe culture and the safe use of online environments
- services' complaint handling policies include policies and procedures for managing complaints about children exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours, and are child focused, in accordance with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

See the [Embedding the National Child Safe Principles](#) and [New record keeping requirements to support child protection](#) fact sheets for information about the new requirements.

RECORD KEEPING REQUIREMENTS

There are new record keeping requirements under the National Law and National Regulations in response to recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

See the [New record keeping requirements to support child protection](#) fact sheet for information about the new requirements.

ARRANGEMENTS TO TRANSFER A SERVICE TO ANOTHER APPROVED PROVIDER AND NOTIFICATION TO FAMILIES

An approved provider (the transferring approved provider) may transfer a service approval to another approved provider (the receiving approved provider).

The transferring and receiving approved providers must jointly notify the regulatory authority of the transfer 60 calendar days before it is intended to take effect (increased from 42 days) and specify the transfer date. Both providers must also notify the regulatory authority of any change or delay to the intended date of transfer.

The notice period to families has increased from two to seven days.

See the [Guide to the NQF](#) for more information about these notification requirements.



MAINTAINING CURRENT INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICE DELIVERY

Approved providers will be required to notify the regulatory authority of changes to the ages of children being educated and cared for and the nature of care provided within 7 days. New offences will apply for failing to notify.

See the [Maintaining current information about service delivery](#) fact sheet for more information.

WAIVERS FOR NQS ELEMENTS

Approved providers will continue to be able to apply for waivers from specified regulations but can no longer apply for waivers from NQS elements.

FIRST AID CURRENCY REQUIREMENTS

Persons required to maintain first aid qualifications should attend training on a regular basis to refresh their first aid knowledge and skills, and to confirm their competence to provide first aid.

Changes to the National Regulations make clear the following qualifications must be completed within the previous three years to be considered current:

- Approved first aid qualifications (except for a qualification that relates to emergency life support and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, which must be completed within the previous year)
- Approved anaphylaxis management training
- Approved emergency asthma management training

The certificate should state the date when the person completed the course, as well as the expiry date or validity period of the qualification from the date of completion. The certificate may include multiple qualifications, however currency periods are relevant for each individual qualification.

Approved providers have until 1 April 2024 to undertake any necessary training to ensure first aid qualifications and anaphylaxis and asthma management training are current, as per the above timeframes.

Educators can contact their training provider to check any information about their training.



OTHER CHANGES INTRODUCED FROM MARCH 2023

TRANSPORTATION OF CHILDREN

Changes were introduced for providers that offer, or arrange, regular transportation of children as part of a centre-based education and care service.

Changes relate to approved provider, nominated supervisor, staff and driver responsibilities. A staff member or nominated supervisor (other than the driver) must be present at the service to account for all children as they embark or disembark at the service premises and keep a record of how each child was accounted for.

A staff member or nominated supervisor (other than the driver) must complete a check of the interior of the vehicle at the service premises to ensure no children are left behind. The regulatory authority must be notified when regular transportation starts being provided or arranged by the service, or ceases.

See the information sheets: [Minimising the risk of children left in vehicles](#) and [Guidance for adequate supervision during transportation](#).

Download the [Safe Transportation of Children Safety Checklist and regular transportation record form](#).

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

- ACECQA [The Guide to the NQF](#)
- [National Law and National Regulations](#)
- [NQF Review website](#)

Acknowledgment: The information in this publication is accurate pending the Australian, state and territory Education Ministers' agreement to amended regulations.