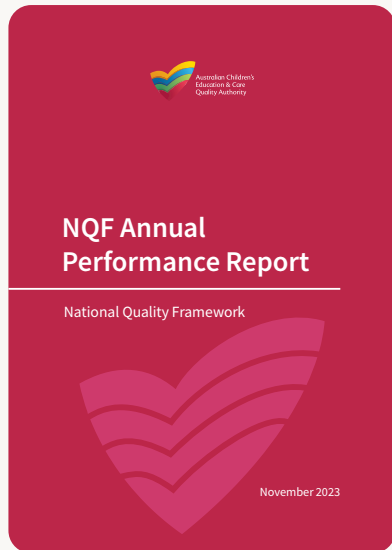


NQF Annual Performance Report Summary 2023



More details available at acecqa.gov.au/apr

The National Quality Framework

The NQF is Australia's commitment to high quality children's education and care. It aims to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children attending NQF approved services, as well as promote their educational and developmental outcomes.

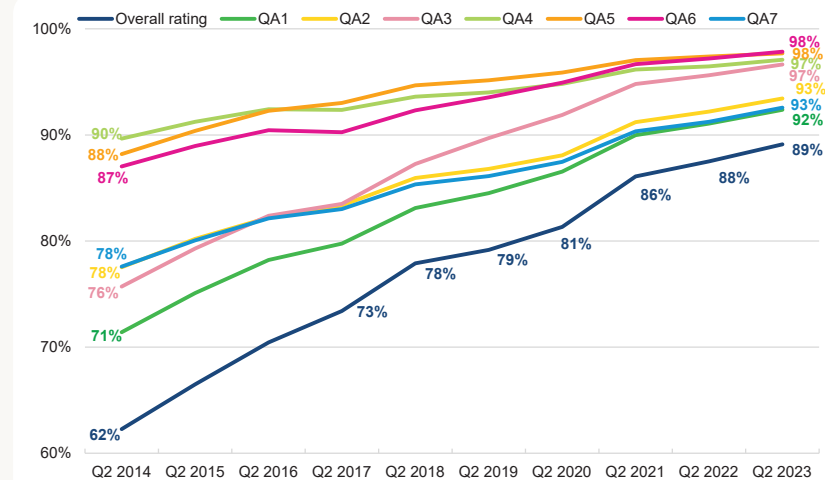
Overview of the sector

As at 30 June 2023:

- More than 17,000 children's education and care services approved to operate under the NQF, including:
 - » 8855 long day care services
 - » 4954 outside school hours care services
 - » 3062 preschools/kindergartens
 - » 448 family day care services.

Quality improvement

The proportion of services rated **Meeting NQS** or above has increased every year, at the overall quality rating and for each of the seven quality areas that comprise the National Quality Standard.



* QA1 - Educational program and practice; QA2 - Children's health and safety; QA3 - Physical environment; QA4 - Staffing arrangements; QA5 - Relationships with children; QA6 - Collaborative partnerships with families and communities; QA7 - Governance and leadership



Chapter 1 Children's health and safety

The NQF aims to ensure the health and safety of all children attending approved education and care services



Chapter 2 Educational program and practice

More than 90% of services are rated Meeting NQS or above for educational program and practice



Chapter 3 Children from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds

More services than ever in the most disadvantaged areas of Australia are rated Meeting NQS or above



Chapter 4 Workforce

Quality outcomes for children depend upon a highly skilled, well supported and professionally recognised workforce



Chapter 5 Families' understanding of quality

The NQF aims to improve knowledge and access to information about the quality of children's education and care services



01

Children's health and safety

- 93% of services are rated Meeting NQS or above for children's health and safety – the highest proportion since the introduction of the NQF in 2012.
- The most frequently breached parts of the National Law and Regulations continue to relate to:
 - » protection of children from harm and hazards (Section 167)
 - » supervision of children (Section 165)
 - » upkeep of premises, furniture and equipment (Regulation 103)
 - » emergency and evacuation procedures (Regulation 97).



02

Educational program and practice

- 92% of services are rated Meeting NQS or above for educational program and practice – the highest proportion since the introduction of the NQF in 2012.
- Of all 15 standards of the NQS, assessment and planning (Standard 1.3) remains the most challenging, with the two most challenging elements of quality within it:
 - » Assessment and planning cycle (Element 1.3.1)
 - » Critical reflection (Element 1.3.2).



03

Children from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds

- Children from more disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to be developmentally vulnerable. They also receive the greatest benefits from attending high quality education and care.
- In the most disadvantaged areas, the proportion of services rated Meeting NQS or above and Exceeding NQS or above still trails the proportions in the most advantaged areas.
- Differences between socioeconomic areas persist across all service types, with the most pronounced differences being for preschools/kindergartens rated Exceeding NQS or above.



04

Workforce

- 97% of services are rated Meeting NQS or above for staffing arrangements – the highest proportion since the introduction of the NQF in 2012.
- Almost 10% of services hold a staffing waiver, with the proportion rising to 17% for long day care services. These waivers mostly relate to temporary issues in meeting early childhood teacher staffing requirements.
- *Shaping Our Future* (2022-2031) is a ten-year national workforce strategy for the children's education and care sector, which aims to ensure a sustainable, high-quality workforce.



05

Families' understanding of quality

- The fourth wave of ACECQA's biennial families' survey found:
 - » while a marked increase on the level seen in 2019 and 2017, there has been little change in the level of awareness of the quality rating system between 2023 and 2021
 - » there has been a marked decrease in knowledge of individual service quality ratings between 2023 and 2021, with the 2023 level back to the level seen in 2019 and 2017
 - » skilled educators, cost and location are the most important decision-making factor for families
 - » the quality rating of the service continues to be ranked the least important relative to other decision-making factors.