

SCHEDULE B / ANNEXURE 1 – NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS

This annexure sets out the detail of the National Quality Standards.

The NQS will be subject to field testing and targeted consultation prior to finalisation. This process will focus on technical issues in the application of the NQS and will not be a vehicle for considering changes to the key structural components of quality included in the standards, particularly in relation to staff-to child ratios and staff qualifications. The Ministerial Council will consider any refinements to the standards in line with the processes set out in the National Partnership.

The Ministerial Council will further develop the guidelines that underpin the National Quality Standard to ensure that the final agreed guidelines meet the objectives of the scheme, including incorporating best practice principles that minimise paperwork and the regulatory burden on services.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD

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Background

In December 2009, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to a partnership between the Commonwealth and state and territory governments to establish a rigorous National Quality Agenda for early childhood education and care. The National Quality Agenda forms part of a broader COAG agenda to pursue substantial reform in the areas of education, skills and early childhood development, to deliver significant improvements in human capital outcomes for all Australians.

The Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments recognised the importance of increasing their focus on the early years to ensure the wellbeing of children throughout their lives and to lift the productivity of our nation as a whole. The drive for change in the early childhood sphere is based on clear evidence that the early years of a child's life are very important for their present and future health, development and wellbeing.

In July 2009, COAG endorsed Australia's first ever overarching national strategy for early childhood development. *Investing in the Early Years: A National Early Childhood Development Strategy* provides a blueprint for the future. It outlines a shared vision for the development of young children in Australia - that by 2020 'all children have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves and for the nation'.

Focusing on all aspects of children's development from before birth to age eight, the Strategy will guide governments and encourage greater engagement between governments, with the non-government sector, and with families around the needs of young children.

Over time the Strategy will strengthen early childhood and family services and supports, and join service delivery across sectors. It will also deliver improved outcomes for parents, including improved parenting skills and confidence, and greater capacity to participate in the community and the workforce.

The National Quality Agenda is a key mechanism for achieving the Strategy's vision for young children in Australia. It aims to raise the quality and drive continuous improvement in early childhood education and care, and school age care services through three key components:

- A strong National Quality Standard including the Early Years Learning Framework
- Streamlined regulatory arrangements
- A quality rating system.

The first phase of implementation of the National Quality Agenda occurred in July 2009 with COAG's endorsement of the Early Years Learning Framework.

Introduction

The *National Quality Standard* (the *Standard*) communicates a national view about the quality of early childhood education and care and school age care all families should expect to find in the diverse types of education and care settings available across Australia.

The way quality is defined and reflected in the *Standard* is a key aspect of the National Quality Agenda. It supports a better integration of education and care, incorporating broader outcomes for children attending early childhood education and care and school age care services.

The *Standard* brings together structural components of quality such as educator to child ratios, educator qualifications and health and safety matters currently addressed by regulation with the process aspects of quality such as interactions with children, partnerships with families, stimulating environments and programs and service management addressed through accreditation. This new integrated approach will mean that services are working within a single unified national system. The *Standard* will apply to centre based long day care, family day care, outside school hours care and preschool¹ in the first instance.

The development of the *Standard* was informed by recent research about best practice and the way in which high quality early childhood education and care contributes to positive outcomes for children. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)² identifies aspects of quality critical to the provision of early childhood education and care services. These aspects include educational concept and practice, structural quality, interaction between educators and children and targeting services to meet the needs of families and local communities. These aspects of quality are reflected in the *Standard*.

The *Early Years Learning Framework* guides early childhood educators in developing quality early childhood programs. It describes the early childhood pedagogy (principles and practice) and the outcomes required to support and enhance young children's learning from birth to five years of age, including their transition to school. The *Early Years Learning Framework* underpins the implementation of more specific curriculum relevant to each local community and early childhood setting. As it is focussed on children from birth to five years of age, other frameworks will be applicable to school age children.

For the first time Australia has a *Standard* that is linked to a national learning framework which recognises that children learn from birth. The *Standard* will support the implementation of the EYLF and frameworks supporting the care of school aged children by ensuring that the necessary environments, facilities, staffing arrangements, resources and management structures are in place.

Combined, these frameworks outline fundamental components to inform and guide service providers, early childhood educators, co-ordinators and staff in the delivery of nationally consistent and high quality experiences, programs and care across Australia.

¹ In some jurisdictions within Australia preschool is referred to as kindergarten. The Standard will apply to Kindergarten.

² Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2006). *Starting Strong II Early Childhood Education and Care*, OECD.

Guiding principles that apply across the National Quality Standard's quality areas

Six principles apply across the National Quality Standard and all seven quality areas of the National Quality Standard. These principles inform the delivery of quality early childhood education and care and school age care. Services should consider these principles when working to achieve the Standard and improve quality at the service. These principles are:

The rights of the child are paramount

Each child has the right to be an active member of the community in which they live; to have their individual and cultural identity recognised and respected; to express their opinions and have their views considered in any decisions that may affect them.

The Standard reflects Australia's commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the obligation of all those who work with children to protect children from harm, respect their dignity and privacy and safeguard and promote every child's wellbeing.

Children are successful, competent and capable learners

Children are active learners from birth, constructing their knowledge, meanings and understanding through their interactions, relationships and experiences.

They are able to form opinions, express their ideas, collaborate with others, plan and persist in learning.

The starting point for all learning is what children already know. Rich, engaging environments and meaningful interactions, where children's voices are listened to and acted upon, build on this foundation for successful life long learning.

Equity, inclusion and diversity

In a fair and just society the intrinsic worth of all children and their families, their strengths and their right to equitable access and participation in the community is clearly visible in all aspects of service delivery.

Programs for the care, education and recreation of children have a unique opportunity to include children from all family circumstances, cultural backgrounds and levels of ability. In particular, a commitment to the full participation of children with additional needs and their families involves enabling their initial access as well as supporting their day-to-day participation in the program. It requires capturing and maximising resources to support each child's participation in and engagement with the program. By providing nurturing environments and supportive relationships they ensure that each child is valued for who they are and has opportunities to reach their full potential.

One of Australia's greatest strengths lies in its unique history and diverse heritage. The many different cultures, contexts and values of families and communities contribute to the richness of contemporary Australian society and inform plans for meaningful learning experiences for children.

Valuing Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures

An approach that recognises and respects the strengths and contribution each individual and group makes to the Australian community and challenges bias, builds positive relationships and responds sensitively to the particular needs of each child and their family. Such an approach values Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as a core part of the nation's history, present and future. This is relevant for all services, not only services with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children and families enrolled in the service.

The role of parents and families is respected and supported

Parents and families are recognised as the child's primary nurturers and teachers. They have both a right and a responsibility to be involved in decision making affecting their child. Respectful, collaborative relationships strengthen the capacity and efforts of parents and families and of early childhood education and school age care services to support their children and promote each child's learning and wellbeing.

High expectations for children, educators and service providers

The best interests of children and their right to learn and develop in a safe and nurturing environment is the primary consideration in all decision making at the service and is visible in the actions, interactions and daily work with children.

Programs that reflect best practice in the care, education and recreation of children set high standards and expectations for all those responsible for the delivery of the service. They have an open and accountable organisational culture that is flexible and responsive to the local community. They continually reflect on their practice to find ways to improve outcomes for children in their service.

Structure

The *Standard* is organised into the following quality areas:

1. Educational program and practice
2. Children's health and safety
3. Physical environment
4. Staffing arrangements
5. Relationships with children
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
7. Leadership and service management.

The standard outlined in each area is supported by elements which describe the outcomes that contribute to the standard being achieved. The standard outlined in each area must be met to ensure quality outcomes are achieved for children and their families. The presentation order should not be considered an indicator of importance or priority.

National Quality Standard

1. Educational program and practice

(green highlighting denotes assessment on opening as well as 3 to 6 months after opening)

The educational program and practice is stimulating, engaging and enhances children's learning and development. In school age care services the program nurtures the development of life skills and complements children's experiences, opportunities and relationships at school, at home and in the community.

Standard

1.1 The Early Years Learning Framework (or other approved learning frameworks) informs the development of a program for each child that enhances their learning and development.

1.1.1. The Early Years Learning Framework (or other approved learning framework) guides curriculum decision making and enables each child's learning in the five outcomes:

- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Children are confident and involved learners
- Children are effective communicators.

1.1.2. Curriculum decision making is informed by the context, setting and cultural diversity of the families and the community.

1.2 The program for each child takes into account their strengths, capabilities, culture, interests and experiences.

1.2.1 Each child's current knowledge, ideas, culture and interests provide the foundation for the program.

1.2.2 Every child is supported to participate in the program.

1.2.3 Each child's learning and development is assessed as part of an ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluating children's learning

1.2.4 Critical reflection and evaluation of children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, is used as a primary source of information for planning and to improve the effectiveness of the program and teaching strategies.

Educational program and practice

Regulations and Schedules will include the additional requirement that:

- The program is planned, documented and evaluated.
- Relevant information about the program and their child's participation in the program is shared with parents.
- Process to approve learning frameworks and ability to develop a schedule of approved frameworks.

Examples of the type of content to be covered in Guidelines

- The *Early Years Learning Framework Educator's Guide* will assist educators and service providers to understand and implement the legislative requirements (including the *Early Years Learning Framework*). The Educator's Guide would include information about working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.
- A learning framework for Outside School Hours Care and resources to support programs in outside school hours care services
- Similar resource material will be developed for school age care services
- Information about self-assessment tools and how each child's learning and development should be observed and systematically documented.
- Information regarding recent research and theories on child development, learning and teaching and programs for school age children.

2. Children's health and safety

(green highlighting denotes assessment on opening as well as 3 to 6 months after opening)

Every child's health and wellbeing is safeguarded and promoted.

Standard

2.1 Each child's health is promoted.

- 2.1.1 *Each child's health needs are supported.*
- 2.1.2 *Each child's comfort is provided for and there are appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.*
- 2.1.3 *Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.*
- 2.1.4 *Steps are taken to control the spread of infectious diseases and to manage injuries and illness, in accordance with recognised guidelines.*

2.2 Healthy eating and physical activity are embedded in the program for children.

- 2.2.1 *Healthy eating is promoted and food and drinks provided by the service are nutritious and appropriate to the age of the child.*
- 2.2.2 *Physical activity is promoted through planned and spontaneous experiences and is appropriate to the age of the child.*

2.3 Each child is protected.

- 2.3.1 *Children are adequately supervised at all times.*
- 2.3.2 *Reasonable steps are taken to identify and manage risks, and every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and hazards.*
- 2.3.3 *Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.*
- 2.3.4 *Action is taken to respond to every child at risk of abuse and/or neglect.*

Children's health and safety

Regulations and Schedules will include the additional requirement that:

- The service will provide a comfortable and safe environment for children.
- Current health and hygiene practices are used within the service.
- Children with infectious diseases are removed from the service when it is necessary to protect health and safety of other children.
- Parents of children enrolled at the service are notified of any case of infections illness at the service.
- A suitably equipped first aid kit is readily available at the service.
- Authorisation to administer medication (including prescription, over-the-counter and homeopathic medications) is obtained and documented. (In an emergency, authorisation may be given verbally by a parent or medical practitioner).
- Medication must be within its use-by date and in its original packaging. The dosage to be administered must be checked by a second adult (unless this is not possible). Prescription medication must bear the child's name.
- Procedures are in place to manage children with medical conditions and children who have been diagnosed as being at risk of anaphylaxis.
- Cleaning materials, disinfectants, flammable, poisonous and other dangerous substances, tools and toiletries are inaccessible to children.
- Food and beverages are nutritious, varied and adequate in quantity..
- Heating and cooling equipment provided to maintain a comfortable temperature for children.
- Emergency procedures are developed and practised regularly.
- Educators have ready access to an operating telephone or other similar means of communication.
- Collection of children must be by parent or authorised person and a record of children's arrival and departure is kept at the service, with the signature of the person responsible for verifying the accuracy of the record or the person collecting the child.
- Children may only be taken outside the premises by an educator.
- Written authorisation is required for a child to be taken outside the premises (except in an emergency situation).
- Parents are provided with information regarding excursions (designation, mode of transport, educator to child ratios, number of adults in attendance) and their written approval is obtained and documented.
- All excursions must be subject to a risk assessment by providers prior to being undertaken and information to parents.
- Every adult working with children understands and meets their obligations under the relevant State or Territory Child Protection legislation.

Examples of the type of content to be covered in Guidelines:

- Up-to-date information about Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), safe sleeping and appropriate bedding.
- Recommended contents of first aid kit for specific setting and purpose, including excursions.

- Resources that promote children’s health and safety including:
 - Australian Government Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guidelines for Early Childhood settings - this one covers off healthy eating and physical activity for birth to five year olds. (this is the new one)
 - Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia - this one covers off healthy eating for school age kids
 - Australia's Physical Activity Recommendations for 5-12 year olds - this one covers off physical activity for school age kids.
- Up-to-date information on childhood illnesses, immunisation and infection control, including *Staying healthy in child care – Preventing infectious diseases in child care* (National Health and Medical Research Council). New and emerging practices in children’s health and safety.
- Physical activity is promoted consistent with current guidelines and recommendations for the age of the children within the service.
- Guidelines on health and hygiene in relation to keeping of animals on the premises.
- Guidelines on management of pets in home-based settings.
- Food and beverages to be handled and stored in accordance with relevant legislation and / or guidelines e.g. food safety requirements
- Guidelines on groupings of children so they are configured to provide for each child’s comfort and well being and to minimise the risk of: overcrowding; injury; conflict between children and illness due to infection.
- Requirement to supervise children when sleeping.
- Information about poisonous plants.
- Information about emergency service contacts available to assist with the development of emergency procedures.
- Key elements of emergency procedures (including access to a telephone).
- Information on relevant jurisdictional child protection obligations for educators, coordinators and staff
- Guidelines on:
 - clean and well maintained bed-linen
 - personal hygiene items needing to be attended to as soon as practicable
 - facilities provide safe and hygienic nappy changing
 - procedures to prevent making common use of items intended for children’s personal care
 - access to animals is only under supervision
 - procedures in place to manage asthmas, diabetes, anaphylaxis
- Sun protection / advice from Cancer Council.
- Need for laundry facilities or facilities to hygienic storage of soiled clothes, linen and nappies
- Management of excursions.
- Safe play equipment, including soft-fall.
- Information regarding recent research and practices on child well-being, health and safety and identification of relevant community and government agencies such as child health and local government.

3. Physical environment

(green highlighting denotes assessment on opening as well as 3 to 6 months after opening)

The physical environment is safe, suitable and provides a rich and diverse range of experiences which promote children's learning and development.

Standard

3.1 The design and location of the premises is appropriate for the operation of a service.

- 3.1.1 Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, furniture, equipment, facilities and resources are suitable for their purpose*
- 3.1.2 Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.*
- 3.1.3 Outdoor spaces include natural elements and materials which allow for multiple uses.*
- 3.1.4 Facilities are designed or adapted to ensure access and participation by every child in the service and to allow flexible use, and interaction between indoor and outdoor space.*

3.2 The environment is inclusive, promotes competence, independent exploration and learning through play.

- 3.2.1 Outdoor and indoor spaces are designed and organised to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.*
- 3.2.2 Resources, materials and equipment are sufficient in number and organised in ways that ensure appropriate and effective implementation of the program.*

Physical environment

Regulations and Schedules will include the additional requirement that:

In centre based services

- Link to relevant standards of the Building Code of Australia.
- A minimum of 3.25 sq m of unencumbered floor space to be provided for each child. This may include:
 - verandas in some services (approval of regulator required).
- A minimum of 7 sq m of useable outdoor play space to be provided for each child. This may include:
 - verandas in some services (approval of regulator required);
 - access to outside space required for outside school hours care services/
 - additional indoor space (such as a gymnasium) in school aged care services (approval of regulator required).
- Outdoor space to be enclosed by a fence or barrier that prevents a child (from birth to school age) from going through, over or under
- Specified shaded outdoor play space to be provided
- Toilet and washing facilities available to children must be accessible from both indoor and outdoor
- Rooms to be well ventilated.
- Indoor spaces allow exposure to natural light.
- Space to be allocated for administrative functions, private conversations and parent consultation.
- Separate indoor space to be provided for children under the age of two years.
- Outdoor space designed to afford children opportunities to explore and experience the natural environment.
- Space is organised to encourage choice and to facilitate active engagement with the environment.
- Each child to have access to furniture, materials and equipment suitable for the educational program.
- Services that are unable to comply with particular facilities requirements apply to the regulator to be considered to 'deem to comply' with those requirements.

In home based services

- Risk assessments of the family day carer's home are regularly conducted to ensure the health and safety of children.
- The Carer's own home has appropriate kitchen and bathroom facilities and fencing

Examples of the type of content to be covered in Guidelines:

- Venue Management Plan for Out of School Hours Care services using shared premises
- Description of unencumbered floor space, that is exclusive of any passageway, thoroughfare, storage areas (including areas required for bedding), children's lockers, built in furniture, cots,

separate sleeping areas, toilets, bathrooms, washrooms, kitchens, offices, laundries, entrances and staff rooms

- Criteria for approving services to count verandas as indoor or outdoor space, and school aged care services to count additional indoor space (such as a gymnasium) as its outdoor space. For example to be included as indoor space the veranda/s must be a solid roof and floor, be protected from sun and rain and be attached to the indoor play area. Verandah may only be included as indoor space if it is appropriate, having regard to local climatic conditions. The veranda cannot make up more than half the required indoor space and must be a useable space
- Description of useable outdoor play space
- Guidelines on how services can manage common safety issues, such as the safety of electrical outlets and the use of hot water.
- Guidelines for ventilation.
- Recommendations about the design of premises and facilities (e.g. a design guide):
 - to ensure environmental sustainability;
 - to facilitate groupings of children to minimise the risk of injury, conflict between children, reduce prolonged exposure to excess noise and promote children’s learning and development;
 - to enable the flexible use of space;
 - to enable the accommodation of a range of services and activities to support children and families; and
 - to recognise and reflect the diversity of families within the local community.
- Recommendations about the design of outdoor play space (eg. a design guide), including:
 - suitable plants and gardens for young children
 - the removal of water and other hazards
 - giving children opportunities to explore and experience the natural environment.
- In quality centre based services group sizes do not exceed three times the ratio that pertains to the relevant age group or can demonstrate that the grouping is achieving the outcomes sought through limiting the size of the group.
- Information related to appropriate centre size.
- Indoor spaces allow exposure to natural light.
- Space is allocated for administrative functions and consultation with parents.
- Separate indoor space is provided for children under the age of two years.
- Spaces are organised to encourage choice and to facilitate active engagement with the environment.
- Each child has access to furniture, materials and equipment suitable for their educational program.
- Services that are unable to comply with particular facilities requirements apply to the regulator to be considered to ‘deem to comply’ with those requirements.
- Clarification about the adequacy and appropriateness of facilities, furniture, equipment and resources for centre based services.

In home based services

- Information about how a risk assessment of the family day carer's home should be conducted, documented and reviewed.
- Recommendations about how often this assessment should be undertaken.
- Information about what actions should be taken if risks to children are discovered at a family day carer's home.

4. Staffing arrangements

(green highlighting denotes assessment on opening as well as 3 to 6 months after opening)

Staffing arrangements create a safe and predictable environment for children and support warm, respectful relationships. Qualified and experienced educators and coordinators encourage children's active engagement in the learning program. Positive relationships among educators, coordinators and staff contribute to an environment where children feel emotionally safe, secure and happy.

Standard

4.1 Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development and ensure their safety and wellbeing.

4.1.1 Educators, coordinators and staff to child ratios (including qualified and/or trained ratios) are maintained at all times

4.2 Educators, coordinators and staff have the skills and knowledge to support children's learning, health, safety and wellbeing.

4.2.1 Educators, coordinators and staff demonstrate the awareness, attitudes, knowledge and skills required to provide an environment where diversity and difference are acknowledged, valued and respected.

4.2.2 Educators and coordinators are focused, active and reflective in planning and delivering the program to each child.

4.2.3 The performance of educators, coordinators and staff is evaluated and individual development plans are in place to support performance improvement.

4.3 Educators, coordinators and staff are respectful and ethical.

4.3.1 Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.

4.3.2 Actions are aligned with the statement of principles under which the service operates.

4.3.3 Educators, coordinators and staff work collaboratively and affirm, challenge, support and learn from each other to further develop their skills, to improve practice and relationships.

4.3.4 Interactions convey mutual respect, equity and recognition of each other's strengths and skills.

Staffing arrangements

Until the following staffing arrangements come into place according to the timeframes below, State and Territory educator to child ratios and qualifications requirements that are in force prior to the commencement of the NQS on 1 January 2012 will continue to apply.

Regulations and Schedules will include the additional requirement that:

Schedule Educator to child ratios

Preschool and long day care

Age group	Educator to child ratio	Timeframes for compliance
Birth to 24 months	1:4	1 January 2012
25 to 35 months	1:5	1 January 2016
36 months to school age	1:11	1 January 2016
Mixed age groups	Proportional formula based on the above ratios	1 January 2012

Number of children (at any one time)	Qualification Requirements	Timeframe
Less than 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% of educators have a Diploma (or are actively working towards) level ECEC qualification or above (the teacher may be included) * Other educators have (or are actively working towards) a Certificate III level ECEC qualification (or equivalent) An early childhood teacher is in attendance for some of the time that the service is being provided to children. 	1 January 2014
25 to 59 children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% of educators have a Diploma (or are actively working towards) level ECEC qualification or above (the teacher may be included) * Other educators have (or are actively working towards) a Certificate III level ECEC qualification (or equivalent) An early childhood teacher is in attendance at the service whenever the service is being provided to 26 children or more. 	1 January 2014

60 to 80 children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% of educators have a Diploma (or are actively working towards) level ECEC qualification or above (the teacher may be included) * 	1 January 2014
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other educators have a certificate III (or are actively working towards) level ECEC qualification (or equivalent) 	1 January 2014
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An early childhood teacher is in attendance at the service whenever the service is being provided to 26 children or more. 	1 January 2014
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A second early childhood teacher or another suitably qualified leader is in attendance at the service for at least half the time the service is being provided to 60 children or more. 	1 January 2020
over 80 children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% of educators have a Diploma (or are actively working towards) level ECEC qualification or above (the teacher may be included) * 	1 January 2014
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other educators have a certificate III (or are actively working towards) level ECEC qualification (or equivalent) 	1 January 2014
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An early childhood teacher is in attendance at the service whenever the service is being provided to 26 children or more. 	1 January 2014
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A second early childhood teacher or another suitably qualified leader is in attendance at the service for at least half the time the service is being provided to 60 to 80 children, and once there are more than 80 children, the teacher needs to be there whenever the service is being provided. 	1 January 2020

- For the purposes of clarity, in relation to 50% of Educators have a Diploma, for every 2 educators (or part there of) at least one must have (or be enrolled in and studying) a Diploma level ECEC qualification, that is if there are 15 carers in the service 8 must hold a Diploma level ECEC qualification.
- For the purposes of clarity, an early childhood teacher is in attendance at the service whenever the service is being provided to 26 children or more, would require the teacher to be at the service at least 6 hours per day.
- Victoria would retain its ratio 1:4 for children under 3 years of age.
- NSW, WA and Tasmania would retain a ratio of 1:10 for children 36 months and over.
- NSW would retain its requirements for teachers:
 - 2, for 40-59 children under school age
 - 3, for 60-79 children under school age
 - 4, for 80 plus children under school age.
- Services licensed in Queensland by 1 January 2011 that can justify a need to use a staff to child ratio of 1:5 for a group of children aged 15-36 months will be deemed to comply with the NQS staffing ratios. This arrangement will expire on 31 December 2017. All Queensland services will be expected to be compliant with the NQS staffing ratios from 1 January 2018.

Jurisdictional requirements for teacher to child ratios in preschool programs (additional to staffing and other requirements of the NQS)

- New South Wales: as described above.
- South Australia: The requirements for SA Government pre-schools are 1:11 for the majority of services, with a 1:10 ratio for category 1 preschools in low SES communities. Qualified staff ratios will also be maintained with the first and second staff members required to hold an early childhood teaching qualification in stand-alone preschools, and the first and third staff member holding an early childhood teaching qualification in school-based preschools.
- Western Australia: The requirement is a staff to child ratio of 1:10.
- Tasmania: The requirement is 1 to 25 children to 2 educators, one of whom is a four-year university qualified teacher.
- Northern Territory: The requirements are for a staff to child ratio of 1:11 and a qualified staff to child ratio of 1:22.
- ACT: The requirements are a staff to child ratio of 1:11 for children 3 years and above in licensed children's services (LDC and OSHC) and a staff to child ratio of 2:25 for children attending ACT Government operated preschools.

Family Day Care

Age group	Educator to child ratio	Timeframes for compliance
Mixed age groups of children	1:7 with a maximum of four children not yet attending school	1 January 2014
[For the purposes of clarify, these ratios include the carer's own children.]		

Qualification Requirements

- All carers have a minimum Certificate III level qualification (or actively working towards)
 - All coordinators have a Diploma qualification
- 1 January 2014

Outside School Hours Care

Age group	Educator to child ratio	Timeframes for compliance
School age care	The National Quality Standard and Ratings Framework will also apply to OSHC but at this stage no changes to educator-to-child ratios or educator qualifications are proposed.	

State/Territory	Ratio	Timeframes for compliance
ACT	1:11	Immediately
NSW	None prescribed	Immediately
NT	1:15	31 Dec 2013
QLD	1:15	Immediately
SA	1:15	Immediately
TAS	1:15	Immediately
VIC	1:15	Immediately
WA	As prescribed in WA Child Care Outside School Hours Care Regulations 2006 Schedule 1 – contact staff requirements and Division 1 – Prescribed maters 8. Prescribed Qualifications: section 12(2)9c)	Immediately
State/Territory	Qualification Requirements	Timeframe
ACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1/3 of educators must hold a Diploma level qualification or above; or have completed a Certificate III component of a Diploma qualification or half a Degree qualification and demonstrate continuing progress toward completion of that qualification No formal entry-level requirements for other educators 	Immediately
NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No prescribed qualification requirements 	Immediately
NT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% of carers must hold a post-secondary sports and recreation or teaching qualification or equivalent No formal entry-level requirements for other educators 	31 Dec 2013
QLD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% of educators must hold at least a Diploma level qualification in community services or a two-year qualification in a relevant area of study Other educators must hold at least a Certificate III or IV in Community Services or a one-year qualification in a relevant area of study 50% of educators must hold at least an Associate Diploma level qualification in child care and/or youth or recreation 	Immediately
SA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No formal entry-level requirements for other educators 	Immediately
TAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No prescribed qualification requirements 	Immediately

VIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% of educators must hold at least a 2 year post-secondary early childhood qualification or a 2 year post-secondary childcare or youth recreation qualification 	31 Dec 2010
WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other educators must hold at least a Certificate III in Children's Services or equivalent or commence obtaining a qualification within 6 months of commencing to care for children • 1/4 of educators must hold at least a Certificate IV in children's studies covering ages four to fourteen or a Certificate IV in outside school hours care • No formal entry-level requirements for other educators 	Immediately

- SA does not currently regulate OSHC. However, services provided on Department of Education and Children's Services' property are required to meet National Standards. Some other OSHC services are also required, by policy, to meet the National Standards.
- TAS indicated in the RIS that they were waiting on National Standards to implement their quality standards. VIC qualification requirements for OSHC do not apply until full licensing (which may not be until close to December 2010 for some services).

Minimum age of educators

Educators under the age of 18:

- may be counted in the educator to child ratios
- are not permitted to work alone in a service
- must be supervised by an adult with a Diploma qualification or above (or actively engaged and working towards the qualification).
- Family day carers must be 18 years of age or above.

For purposes of clarity educators under the age of 18 holding a Diploma qualification would still need to be supervised as above.

All educator to child ratios

- If a service is unable to employ an educator, carer or co-ordinator with the required qualification or above, the service would be considered to be at the operating level.
- A schedule of approved qualifications will be developed which includes currently approved qualifications within each state and territory. The list will include Certificate III, Diploma of Children's Services; early childhood teacher and first aid competencies required of staff.
- A national process for approving new qualifications and determining equivalence of overseas and other relevant courses would need to be developed by January 2012.

Other matters for Regulations

- Definition of working directly with children ie. maintaining educator to child ratios
- Staffing arrangements support children undertaking activities as part of a group that is of appropriate age and composition and promotes relationships with peers and educators.
- At least one educator with a prescribed first aid competency/qualification is present while children are at the service
- All family day carers have a prescribed first aid qualification.
- Professional development plans are documented and implemented.

Examples of the type of content to be covered in Guidelines:

- How prescribed staffing arrangements can be implemented across each service type.
- Guidelines which promote higher educator to child ratios than the minimum required under legislation
- The criteria for assessing fit and proper (for educators, coordinators, staff, holders of approval to operate, and management entities)
- Guidelines for applying the educator to child ratios, including (for example):
 - Older children can be included in groupings of young children if the educator to child ratios are maintained
 - Ready Reckoner for calculating the ratios for mixed age groups

Ready Reckoner			
Age of child	Ratio under National Standard (proposed)	Number of children in the group	Proportion of educator required (based on ratio)
Birth-24 months	1 to 4	1 child	25%
		2	50%
		3	75%
		4	100%
25-35 months	1 to 5	1 child	20%
		2	40%
		3	60%
		4	80%
		5	100%
36 months-school age	1 to 11	1 child	9%
		2	18%
		3	27%
		4	36%
		5	45%
		6	55%
		7	64%
		8	73%
		9	82%
		10	91%
		11	100%

- Clarification of activities that would not be considered to be working with children, for example:
 - Undertaking general cleaning that is unrelated to the direct care of children
 - Having a telephone conversation that is unrelated to the direct provision of care to the children
 - Having responsibility for task such as staffing the reception area
- Provision of non-contact time, to undertake tasks such as:
 - Programming

- Meeting with parents
- Networking with other agencies such as schools
- Expectations regarding the training and skills of staff involved in the preparation of food
- Requirements for educators for excursions
- Expectations regarding professional development records and plans (including expectations for cooks and ancillary staff)
- Promoting that Educators, Coordinators and staff are continually updating their knowledge of children's learning development, health, safety and wellbeing
- Effective communication across the staff team and for single educator services
- Expectations regarding participation in professional development programs and opportunities
- Key elements included in:
 - ECA Code of Ethics
 - Professional Standards
- Information regarding recent research regarding quality indicators such as educator to child ratios, group sizes, qualifications, first aid qualifications, etc
- That in quality services:
 - educators, coordinators and staff hold or are supported to work towards qualifications that are higher than the minimum
 - educators and coordinators regularly participate in and implement learnings from relevant professional development opportunities
- In high quality services groups of children do not exceed three times the ratio that pertains to the relevant age group or can demonstrate that the grouping is achieving the outcomes sought through limiting the size of the group.
- Practice guidelines to assist in developing and maintaining positive relationships including:
 - supporting Educators, Coordinators and Staff to:
 - build teams
 - communicate positively and openly and
 - affirm, challenge, support and learn from each other to further develop their skills and to improve practice.

5. Relationships with children

(green highlighting denotes assessment on opening as well as 3 to 6 months after opening)

Relationships that are responsive, respectful and promote children's sense of security and belonging free them to explore the environment and engage in learning.

Standard

5.1 Respectful and equitable relationships are developed and maintained with each child.

- 5.1.1 Interactions with each child are warm, responsive and build trusting relationships.*
- 5.1.2 Every child is able to engage with educators in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning.*

5.2 Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with other children and adults.

- 5.2.1 Every child is supported to work with, learn from and help others through collaborative learning opportunities.*
- 5.2.2 Each child is supported to understand how their own actions affect others.*

5.3 Each child's behaviour, interactions and relationships are guided effectively.

- 5.3.1 Behaviour guidance strategies preserve the dignity and rights of the child at all times.*
- 5.3.2 Each child is supported to manage their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others, and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.*

Relationships with children

Regulations and Schedules will include the additional requirement that:

- The service has a written policy on positive guidance of child behaviour that reflects current practice.
- The use of physical force and restraint; physical, verbal or emotional punishment and practices that demean, humiliate, frighten or threaten a child are prohibited.

Examples of the type of content to be covered in Guidelines:

- Effective practices across service types.
- Examples of what the elements would look like in practice and the types of evidence that would demonstrate compliance.

For example, in assessing *Standard 11 Respectful and equitable relationships are developed and maintained with each child* there would be observable evidence that children:

- develop secure attachments with familiar educators
- demonstrate a sense of belonging and trust in the environment
- initiate conversations with familiar educators
- express their need for comfort or assistance
- are confident to explore their environment
- are able to work on their own or in groups

Educators:

- give priority to nurturing their relationships with children
- assist children to make positive transitions between home and the service and other services
- convey genuine warmth and interest in each child
- are calm, gentle and reassuring
- recognise children's feelings and respond sensitively to their cues
- spend time in one-to-one interactions with children
- adopt staffing practices that maximise continuity for children and families
- plan ahead and support individual children to transition between groups within the service

- The benefits of children belonging to a group, so that they may:
 - undertake activities as part of a group that is of an appropriate size and composition
 - develop relationships and receive direct care from educators
 - develop friendships with other children.
- Practice guidelines to assist in developing and maintaining positive relationships including:
 - promoting quality interactions with children and fair and consistent responses to children
 - supporting children to:
 - build and maintain trusting relationships with each other (cultural competence), build self esteem and confidence, and respect diversity and equity
 - engage in preferences for solitary or parallel play and collaborative learning
 - recognise and manage their emotions
 - respond appropriately to the behaviour of others (including bullying and teasing)
 - cooperate, negotiate and solve problems together
 - develop friendships.
- Information regarding recent research in this developing and maintaining relationships.
- Importance of children being involved in sustained shared thinking and open ended questions.

6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

(green highlighting denotes assessment on opening as well as 3 to 6 months after opening)

Collaborative relationships with families are fundamental to achieve quality outcomes for children. Community partnerships that focus on active communication, consultation and collaboration also contribute to children's learning and wellbeing.

Standard

6.1 Respectful supportive relationships with families are developed and maintained.

- 6.1.1 There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families.*
- 6.1.2 Families have opportunities and support to be involved in the program and in service activities.*
- 6.1.3 Families have opportunities to influence and shape the service, to review service policies and contribute to service decisions.*

6.2 Families are supported in their parenting role and their values and beliefs about child rearing are respected.

- 6.2.1 The expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child's learning and wellbeing.*
- 6.2.2 Information is available to families about community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.*

6.3 The service collaborates with other organisations and service providers to enhance children's learning and wellbeing.

- 6.3.1 Links with relevant community and support agencies are established and maintained.*
- 6.3.2 Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing relevant information and clarifying responsibilities.*
- 6.3.3 Access to inclusion and support assistance is facilitated.*

6.4 The service participates in the community.

- 6.4.1 The service participates in the community and demonstrates respect for families and communities.*
- 6.4.2 The service is involved in appropriate community projects and events.*
- 6.4.3 The service takes an active role in caring for its environment and contributes to a sustainable future.*

Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

Regulations and Schedules will include the additional requirement that:

- Families have access to the service during operating hours and are able to speak with educators and coordinators about issues affecting their child.
- The service has a policy about:
 - families' participation in the service; and
 - inclusion and procedures for reducing discrimination.
- The service has documented enrolment and orientation procedures.
- The service plans and implements a variety of opportunities for families to participate.
- The service establishes links with other services to support children and their families.
- Educators and coordinators have access to space for private and confidential discussions with families and access to the service for families during the hours of operation.

Guidelines will detail (for example):

- Examples of collaborative partnerships in each service type, including evidence that could demonstrate compliance.
- Guidelines regarding communication pathways with indigenous communities, ideas of cultural competence, and needing to reflect cultural diversity of community
- For example, in assessing *Standard 6.1: Respectful supportive relationships with families are developed and maintained*, there would be observable evidence that

Families:

- are welcome to visit the service at any time;
- have opportunities to discuss their child's experiences with the child's primary educator(s);
- can raise issues and work with educators to reach a mutually agreeable solution.

Educators:

- implement an 'open door' policy;
- have made preparation to communicate with families for whom literacy is an issue or for whom English is not a first language, even if this is not currently required;
- respond to all families respectfully.
- Guidance about what should be included in enrolment and orientation processes.
- Guidance about what opportunities could be provided to families to enable them to participate in decision making and activities at the service.
- Guidance to assist services to develop and maintain respectful supportive relationships with families, including:
 - supporting parents in their parenting role;
 - facilitating access for inclusion and support agencies;
 - supporting children's transitions;
 - how to share information with families

- linking with relevant community and support agencies, including referrals to specialist services and family support agencies;
 - linking with, participating in and contributing to the wider community;
 - networking in the community;
 - caring for the environment and contributing to a sustainable future
 - sharing information about the child between the service and other children's services or schools (with the consent of families).
- Information regarding recent research and theories on developing collaborative partnerships.

7. Leadership and service management

(Green highlighting denotes assessment on opening as well as 3 to 6 months after opening)

Effective leadership contributes to sustained quality relationships and environments that facilitate children's learning and development. Well documented policies and practices that are developed and regularly evaluated in partnership with educators, coordinators, staff and families contribute to the ethical management of the service. There is a focus on continuous improvement.

Standard

7.1 Effective leadership promotes a positive organisational culture and builds a professional learning community.

- 7.1.1 *A suitably qualified and experienced educator or coordinator leads the development of the curriculum and ensures the establishment of clear goals and expectations for teaching and learning.*
- 7.1.2 *There is continuity of educators and coordinators at the service.*

7.2 There is a commitment to continuous improvement.

- 7.2.1 *A statement of principles is developed which guides all aspects of the service's operations.*
- 7.2.2 *An effective planning and evaluation process is in place that guides service operation and programs and enables the identification and delivery of ongoing improvement initiatives.*
- 7.2.3 *The induction of educators, coordinators and staff is comprehensive.*

7.3 Management and administrative systems enable the effective provision of a quality service.

- 7.3.1 *Administrative systems and communication channels are established and maintained to ensure the effective operation of the service.*
- 7.3.2 *Service practices are based on effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and reviewed regularly.*
- 7.3.3 *Records and information are stored to ensure confidentiality, are available from the service and maintained in accordance with legislative requirements.*
- 7.3.4 *Appropriate governance arrangements are in place to manage the service.*
- 7.3.5 *The authority/ies responsible for administering the Standard is/are notified about any relevant changes.*

7.4 Adults working with children and those engaged in management of the service or residing on the premises are fit and proper.

- 7.4.1 *The provider, including managing bodies, any authorised supervisor/nominee engaged to be a manager (on and off-site) demonstrates their fitness and propriety.*
- 7.4.2 *The provider takes reasonable steps to ensure the fitness and propriety of educators, coordinators and staff.*
- 7.4.3 *The provider takes reasonable steps to ensure the fitness and propriety of any adults who reside in or are frequent visitors to a home based service while children are in care.*

7.5 Grievances and complaints are managed effectively.

- 7.5.1 Processes are in place to ensure that all grievances and complaints are addressed, investigated fairly and documented in a timely manner.*
- 7.5.2 The authority/ies responsible for administering the Standard is/are notified of complaints which allege a breach of legislation or a serious incident.*

7.6 Information is exchanged with families on a regular basis.

- 7.6.1 Current information about the service is available to families.*
- 7.6.2 Information is available to families about their child which includes documentation of the child's learning, development and participation in the program.*
- 7.6.3 Information provided by families is documented as appropriate.*

Leadership and Service Management

The Regulations and Schedules will include the requirement that:

- The holder of an approval to operate identifies an educator or coordinator as the 'pedagogical leader' to lead the development of programs and ensure the establishment of clear goals and expectations for teaching and learning within the service.
- The licence and rating is displayed at the centre.
- Service practices are documented in policies and procedures and information is available at the service and to families, reviewed regularly and includes but is not limited to those areas prescribed in **Schedule A** (see below).
- The holder of an approval to operate ensures that recording and management of relevant information related to children and families is administered effectively including updating, storage, maintenance of confidentiality, access for families and the authority/ies responsible for the Standard. Records to include but not be limited to those prescribed in **Schedule B** (see below).
- The holder of an approval to operate including managing bodies, any authorised supervisor/nominee engaged to be a manager (on and off-site) is fit and proper. This assessment includes whether:
 - Guilty of an indictable offence;
 - Guilty of an offence under this Act or previous;
 - Person is not of sound financial reputation and stable financial background;
 - Person is not of good repute having regard to character, honesty and integrity.

The Authority/Authorities responsible for the Standard may require the person in respect of whom a fit and proper person check is being carried out to submit to:

- Any test or provide any references or reports to determine the suitability of the person; and
- Any medical or psychiatric examination considered appropriate in order to determine the suitability of the person and, if required, provide any results or reports of the examination.

Schedule A

- Statement of principles
- Hours of operation
- Admission and enrolment procedures
- Fees charged and arrangements for payment
- Manager/person responsible on duty
- Staffing (numbers and qualifications)
- Code of conduct
- Participation of students and volunteers
- Arrangements for the delivery and collection of children
- Outline of the program
- Behaviour guidance

- Excursions
- Dealing with illness, emergency care and infectious diseases
- Notification of any occurrence of modifiable/vaccine-preventable infectious disease
- Notice that a child at risk of anaphylaxis attends the service
- Anaphylaxis management policy
- Details of emergency evacuation
- Safety and health
- Menus
- Complaints
- Approval to operate and any 'Interim Approvals'
- Contact details for the authority/ies responsible for the National Quality Standard.

Schedule B

- Enrolment
- Attendance
- Permission for excursions
- Child progress
- Medication
- Incident and illness
- Staffing
- Custody arrangements/court orders.

Guidelines will detail (for example):

- The role of the suitably qualified and experienced educator or coordinator as a leader of program/curriculum development including:
 - Have current knowledge of child development and effective approaches to teaching and learning
 - Have a knowledge of planning, assessing and documenting children learning and the importance of sharing information with families
 - Oversee and lead other educators in implementing the Early Years Learning Framework including pedagogy and curriculum decision making
 - Planning and delivering the preschool program for children in the years prior to school
 - Work with other educators in observing, supporting and extending children's learning and lead discussions on reflective practice
 - Support educators in the process of assessment for learning
 - Lead and share information, knowledge and expertise on practice, policy developments and community changes that may impact on curriculum

- Act as a professional role model, promoting high quality education and care for children
- Build the capacity of all educators by supporting and mentoring others to take on leadership roles in areas of expertise or of potential interest.
- Support materials to assist in developing policies and procedures, professional development records and plans.
- What is expected in complying with the Standard and examples of strategies to demonstrate compliance
 - For example, a sample policy and procedure template along with instructions that policies and procedures are documented, dated and sourced, developed in consultation with educators, coordinators, staff and families, regularly reviewed, available and communicated to families.
 - For example, a list of the types of events or changes that may require notification to families and the authority/authorities responsible for the Standard.
 - For example, a discussion on the reasons why communication with families is important and suggestions for strategies to communicate with families regarding topics such as their child's food and drink consumption, sleeping pattern at the service, nappy changes, accidents and illness, participation in the programs and daily experiences.
 - For example, guidance on how to ensure fitness and propriety in different governance structures.
- Information regarding:
 - recent research and theories on leadership and mentoring in educational settings
 - recent research and practices related to children's learning, health, safety and wellbeing, and
 - recent research and theories on management practices in educational settings.

Glossary

The following glossary explains some key terms as they are used in the *Standard*.

Authorised supervisor/nominee is an adult nominated by the holder of an approval to operate /service provider to help ensure the service is operated in compliance with the *Standard* and assist with communication between the holder of an approval to operate/service provider and authority(ies) responsible for implementing the *Standard*.

Built environments include manufactured, synthetic and commercially produced surfaces, materials, toys and equipment.

Centre based refers to an education and care service providing long day care, preschool, kindergarten and outside school hours care. The service may operate from standalone or shared premises including those on school grounds.

Children is the term used within this document to refer to each baby, toddler, three to five year old and school age child both as an individual and a member of a group in the education and care setting, unless otherwise state.

Collaboration involves working together cooperatively towards common goals. Collaboration is achieved through information sharing, joint planning and the development of common understandings and objectives.

Communication pathways and protocols are lines of communication that respect culturally defined relationships in families and kinship groups. They involve educators considering appropriate ways of speaking and behaving, including appropriate body language, eye contact and touch, to ensure that their interactions with each child, family and community are respectful.

Community refers to a group of people who have common characteristics. In this context the term can be defined according to location, race, ethnicity, age, occupation, interest in particular issue, or other common bonds. In an education and care setting the term community may include children, families, educators, staff, other professionals, school staff and volunteers. It may also include members of the wider community and particular groups or organisations in the local area.

Continuous improvement is the process by which the service evaluates and seeks opportunities to improve its operations and daily practice. The ultimate goal of continuous improvement is to enhance outcomes for children.

Coordinator refers to the professional staff employed by a family day care scheme to support, monitor and provide pre-service and in-service training for educators. The term 'coordinator' includes: coordinator, child development officer, child care services officer, field officer/worker, manager, director, authorised supervisor, team leader, and play session/group leader.

Critical Reflection involves examining and analysing events, experiences and practices from a range of perspectives to inform future planning and decision making.

Culture describes the customs, ideas, values, practices and way of living shared by a group of people.

Curriculum means 'all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children's learning and development' (adapted from Te Whariki).

Deemed to comply when a service may not technically comply with either the Staffing Arrangements or Physical Environment standards of the NQS, but the service is assessed as being fit for purpose on an ongoing basis.

Diversity refers to the differences among all individuals. In an education and care setting, diversity may include, but is not restricted to, differences in background, culture, customs, language, faith, religion, family structure, ability, gender, sexuality, child rearing practices and socio-economic status. Diversity is respected when difference is valued and where inclusive practices are implemented.

Documentation results from a process of recording information, discussions and decisions. Documentation of children's learning may include examples of children's writing, drawing, painting and construction, photographs of projects and works in progress, transcripts of children's comments and conversations about their experiences.

Educator is a person who works directly with children and is included in the 'educator to child' ratio.

Effective means achieving the desired outcome from a particular course of action. A policy is effective when it is consistently put into practice and results in the desired outcome being achieved for children. For example, a sun protection policy is effective when educators consistently implement the strategies outlined in the policy and children and adults are protected from harmful exposure to the sun.

Equity refers to fair and just treatment of all individuals.

Evaluation measures the effectiveness of something by identifying its outcomes, strengths and weaknesses. The results of evaluation are used to inform future planning and decision making.

Experiences are defined as the activities and routines provided for children. Experiences may be planned or spontaneous and should reflect children's needs, interests and abilities.

Family describes the network of significant people involved in caring for the child outside of the service.

Family day care is a child care service that provides small group care for children from birth through to school age in the home environment of a registered educator. Educators work in partnership with scheme management and coordination unit staff.

Financial viability relates to the financial resources and stability of the provider and the extent to which a quality service can be sustained financially.

Fit and proper describes a person's suitability and ability to meet the standard required to work with children and families or be involved in the operation of an education and care service.

Harm to a child is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. Harm can be caused by physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect or sexual abuse or exploitation.

Hazards are items which have the potential to cause harm, illness or injury. In an education and care setting hazards may include cleaning products, garden chemicals, medications, pest

control agents, broken or damaged toys, equipment or surfaces, electrical equipment, sharp objects, soiled materials, foreign objects, spiders and vermin and poisonous plants.

Home based services are provided in the home of the educator or the child's family. For example, a home based service is provided by an educator in a family day care scheme or a registered individual who is not part of a family day care scheme.

Hygiene refers to the clean and sanitary practices which maintain good health at the service. The spread of infectious diseases is minimised when educators and staff use accepted hygiene practices during daily routines such as toileting, nappy changing and handwashing.

Inclusion and support assistance aims to develop the capacity of child care services to create an inclusive environment for all children and their families, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those with on-going high support needs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Induction is a planned process of introducing new staff, relief staff, students or volunteers to the service in preparation for their role. An effective induction will assist new members of the service to understand what is expected of them and what they can expect from the service.

Interim approval is where a service is permitted to operate notwithstanding that it does not meet a particular requirement under the NQS. An interim approval is time-limited and only available for requirements under the Staffing Arrangements and Physical Environment standards. A service with an interim approval will be rated as Operating level for the quality area to which the interim approval applies.

Leader refers to the suitably qualified and experienced educator or coordinator who leads the development of the program and is role model for other educators in the service.

Natural environments include natural materials and surfaces that have undergone very little modification, for example grass, trees, rocks, plant materials, soil, sand, water, clay, timber, bark, seeds, shells and stones.

Observation describes information obtained by watching, listening and interacting with children to identify their skills, interests, needs and abilities. This information will assist educators to plan meaningful experiences for children.

Open ended questions are those that invite a thoughtful, rather than a single 'yes' or 'no', response. These may include questions that begin with 'what', 'where', 'when', 'which', 'why' and 'how'.

Orientation is a process designed to familiarise children and families with educators, staff, service operations, and daily practices when they commence care. The primary goal of orientation is to support children to adapt to unfamiliar routines, new people and new places.

Orientation also provides an initial opportunity for sharing of information between families and the service about care expectations, the child's individual needs and how the service will meet them.

Outside school hours care is a service that provides care for school age children before school, after school, on pupil-free days and/or during school holidays (vacation care). Outside school hours care may use standalone facilities, share school buildings and grounds, and/or share facilities such as community halls. Care for school age children outside of school hours, on pupil-free days and during school holidays may also be provided by family day care and long day care services.

Parents of a child include the natural or adoptive parent of the child and their spouse, a person who, under Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander tradition, is regarded as a parent of the child or the carer of the child under relevant legislation.

Partnership is a co-operative and mutually beneficial relationship between those working together and sharing a responsibility to achieve a common goal, such as positive outcomes for children. Effective partnerships require good faith, mutual respect and common understanding from which decisions can be made.

Planning occurs at a number of levels within an education and care service. Planning refers to making decisions about what will happen at the service for children. In daily planning, educators consider relationships and interactions, routines, the environment, experiences provided for children and how the program will be delivered. Planning also occurs at the service level to ensure effective management and administrative practices and systems are in place so that the service is responsive to the needs of children, families and the community.

Policy is a written statement which details service practices and procedures and explains the reasons for them. A policy is informed by current best practice and guides consistent application of service procedures by ensuring that all stakeholders have the same understanding and expectations.

Preschool programs Preschool programs in the year before full-time schooling are play based learning programs, planned and delivered by an early childhood qualified teacher for a minimum of 10 hours a week (15 hours a week from 1 January 2013) for 40 weeks per year. For children other than those in the year before full-time schooling, preschool programs are play based learning programs, planned and delivered by an early childhood qualified teacher.

Professional development is the process of maintaining and continuously improving current knowledge and skills in an area of expertise through both informal and formal learning opportunities.

Professional standards describe the appropriate and expected behaviour of management, educators and staff. They are used to guide ethical decision making and respectful relationships within the service.

Programs include the spontaneous and planned experiences provided for children at the service designed to facilitate learning.

Provider refers to the owner and operator of an education and care service. The term 'provider' also refers to an individual operating a home based service which is not part of a family day care scheme.

Reasonable risk is a challenge provided to children which extends their skills and abilities without exposing them to unacceptable risk of serious injury.

Resources are items such as toys, play equipment, books, writing materials and craft materials for children to use in their play, learning experiences and physical activities. Resources provided by the service must be safe and appropriate to the age and skills of the children using them and should extend their interests and abilities.

Routines are structured, daily events that occur at regular intervals in the education and care environment. They may include children's arrivals and departures, the collection of school age children, transitions, nappy changing and toileting, snack and mealtimes, rest and sleep.

Service describes the management, educators and staff of a family day care scheme, long day care centre, or outside school hours care service. In family day care, the term 'service'

refers to both the coordination unit and the carer's home. The service may also comprise a holder of an approval to operate or sponsor responsible for the operation of the service.

Spontaneous means unplanned, impulsive or 'spur of the moment'. In an education and care setting spontaneous learning opportunities emerge as children, explore, discover, imagine and interact with both educators and their peers.

Staff refers to staff members in a centre based setting who are not included in the educator to child ratios and/or perform another primary function in the service such as cook, administrator, gardener, housekeeper or cleaner.

Statement of principles outlines the values and beliefs that are important to children, families, educators, staff and management which guide everything that happens at the service.

Supervision is the continuous and active observation of children and intervention to promote their wellbeing. Active supervision ensures that children are safe, that risks within the environment are minimised and that they are engaged in positive interactions and activity, without over-protection or over-direction. Supervision requirements will vary according to the age and number of children, the activity taking place, the environment and the needs of individual children.

Sustainability is the result of finding ways to meet current needs that do not impact on the quality of the environment or reduce the capacity of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sustained shared thinking involves two or more individuals (children together or adults and children) working together to solve a problem, explore a new concept or develop a new understanding. Educators support, extend and challenge children's thinking by getting involved in the thinking process with them.

Systematically means in a purposeful, regular and methodical way.

Teacher means an early childhood teacher holding an approved qualification under the NQS or a qualification that has been assessed as equivalent.

Transitions describes the movement of children from one setting or service to another, from one group or room to another or the move from one activity to the next.