

# National Quality Framework - how can it help me?

**Fact:** Research shows quality early education and care leads to better health, education and employment outcomes later in life.

## National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework aims to improve the quality of early childhood education and care services in Australia.

Providing children with quality experiences early in life can lead to better health, education and employment outcomes, building a productive and fair Australia.

The National Quality Framework includes legal requirements that all services must comply with. These include requirements for:

- the number of staff and their qualifications
- ensuring children's health and safety
- the amount of space at the service and how it is set up
- the quality of developmental and learning experiences for children.

## What services are included?

- Long day care
- Family day care
- Preschool/kindergarten (apart from Tasmania and WA)
- Outside school hours care.



## National Quality Standard

The National Quality Framework sets a higher National Quality Standard to encourage services to continue to improve their programs and practices.

Services are assessed and rated against seven quality areas of the National Quality Standard:

- 1 Educational program and practice**  
Your child is supported to participate in play and learning
- 2 Children's health and safety**  
Your child is protected from illness and hazards
- 3 Physical environment**  
Your child plays in a safe and well maintained environment
- 4 Staffing arrangements**  
There are enough qualified staff to give your child the attention they need
- 5 Relationships with children**  
Your child is made to feel supported and welcomed
- 6 Partnerships with families and communities**  
Local community involvement and respect and inclusion of all beliefs and values
- 7 Leadership and service management**  
Your child is cared for in a positive environment.

## How do services get a quality rating?

Assessors will visit each service to rate it against the seven quality areas of the National Quality Standard.

The quality areas are made up of standards and elements that describe what research shows are the most important parts of a quality early education and care service.

Services receive a rating for each of the quality areas and an overall rating based on these results.

Services must display their ratings.

## How are most services rated?

Most services will receive one of the following ratings:

- Working towards
- Meeting
- Exceeding

Services that receive an overall rating of Exceeding may apply to be rated Excellent. If a service is assessed and there are serious compliance issues, it is rated Significant Improvement Required. In this situation, the regulator uses penalties to make sure the service improves, or otherwise will stop the service from operating.

## What do the ratings mean?

Ratings can help you choose a service for your child. It is important to look at the rating for each of the seven quality areas as well as the overall rating.

You can also discuss ratings with the service provider to learn how they are working to meet the National Quality Standard, even if your service has not yet been rated.

For service ratings visit:

[www.startingblocks.gov.au/findchildcare](http://www.startingblocks.gov.au/findchildcare)

