

Additional Evidence to Support Quality Practices

The goal of the Quality Improve Plan (QIP) is to assist you to evaluate your service and benchmark against best practice. In essence it is a continuous improvement strategy that should become part of your organisation's culture.

Continuous improvement is as much an attitude as it is concrete practice. All stakeholders must understand and be committed to continuous improvement in order to deliver quality services. Initially your QIP will cover all aspects of the organisation. This initial assessment will allow you to identify strengths and areas for improvement, allowing you to determine priorities based on the unique needs of your service.

For continuous improvement to be effective and manageable it must be an ongoing process. You may find that you will have short, medium and long-term goals for improvement. Not every issue can or should be addressed immediately. You must consider priorities in terms of compliance and safety and wellbeing of children and staff. You must also take into account when prioritising the resources required to address each goal and how these resources will be accessed. In some instance funds may need to be put aside for several months or a few years.

Much of the evidence that your service will provide for your QIP will be sourced from existing documents such as policies and procedures, forms, records related to children, families and staff, OHS documentation, written procedures such as administering medications to children or daily cleaning tasks.

Each document generated by the organisation may provide evidence of one or more elements of the National Quality Standards. The challenge is to present your evidence in a logical and succinct manner.

A good starting point is to use the *Quality areas, standards and elements and suggest QIP evidence* form included in this pack. Begin by brainstorming and recording your suggestions on the form. You will quickly compile quite an extensive list! It is helpful to have several people complete the form – others may have a different understanding or perspective that can be helpful in creating a comprehensive list of evidence.

Once you have undertaken an initial brainstorm you can identify areas that are perhaps a little scarce on evidence and investigate these in more depth.

Remember, in the first instance your goal is to begin the process of evaluating your service.

- Firstly identify *what you do* and *how it gets done*.
- Your next step is to evaluate *how it gets done*.
- At this point you can begin to map what you do and how it gets done to the NQS (*remember your evidence may cover one or more areas of the NQS*)
- Identify any aspects of service delivery that are subject to *regulatory requirements*.
- Now look at *what is prescribed* and compare this to what you do – *are there any gaps?*
- If there is a gap then you have identified an area for continuous improvement. You must document the issue or problem and complete a quality improvement plan. This is simply a statement of intent or goal and will include practical strategies that you will put in place to achieve your goal.
- If there is no gap simply record the evidence you can provide to demonstrate compliance
- Once you have addressed regulatory compliance to back and begin the process of comparing what you do and how it gets done with the NQS elements. Now you begin to make a judgment about your service – do you believe that the evidence you can provide is sufficient, valid and authentic?

- You may find you need to measure or evaluate some aspects of your service in order to provide **evidence** of quality practices. For example, you may be able to provide a supervision policy but can you provide evidence that staff understand and comply with this policy? You may be able to provide a policy which describes your commitment to inclusion but can you provide evidence of inclusive practices?

Keep in mind that the QIP process is an opportunity to reflect on what you do and how you do it. It is an opportunity to question procedures and processes and consider alternatives as needed. It is also important to identify those things you do well and think about the processes that led to best practice. Sometimes reflecting on where you have come from you can help you to address areas of concern. For example, a simple exercise in reflection is to review complaints, or accidents or key problems that have arisen and explore how these were addressed. Are there past strategies that can be applied to new issues/problems?

It's also important to think about the knowledge, skills and experience of your team (management and educators and interested parents). This group will be invaluable in contributing to the self-assessment process and in devising goals and strategies for improvement.

Lastly, be kind to yourself. Look at the cup as half full rather than half empty – always keep in mind what you do well!

Possible Sources of Evidence

The following table list possible sources of evidence that you might consider as you are undertaking your QIP. These suggestions are in addition to the more obvious documents such as policies and written procedures, forms and records.

QA1 Educational program and practice

Evidence of quality educational program and practice is perhaps the easiest to gather. Your service will have a wide range of documentation relating to daily programs, observations & reflections, suggestion for follow-up etc.

You must also consider how you will demonstrate that your documentation reflects quality practices. To do this you will need to look at how you can demonstrate that factors such as the service philosophy, policies, and the child's family and culture have influenced planning decisions.

This may be as simple as referring to the evidence collected about the child & family at the time of enrolment, or how parents and children contribute in an ongoing way to program planning.

Documented evidence may include:

- Curriculum planning and curriculum goals
 - How are curriculum decision made?
 - Who is involved?
 - How does the curriculum relate to the service philosophy?
 - How is EYLF (or other approved framework) translated into programs for children?

Possible Evidence

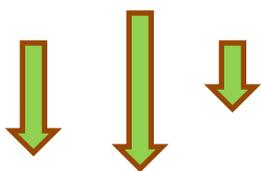
- Planning meetings, minutes of meetings, memos to team, feedback from parents, evidence collected from children's enrolments, observation of children and children's comments.
- Written evaluations of children's programs – both for individuals and for groups
- Documentation of intention teaching
- Children's record of development, portfolios, photographs with comments/reflections

Providing evidence of how the service philosophy is reflected in children's programs.

Your philosophy will typically be a written document setting out beliefs around inclusion, relationships, respect, partnerships, etc. and how these relate to children, families, staff and the broader community.

Consider **creative** ways of demonstrating how your philosophy is translated into practice.

inclusion



Inclusive language

Antibias practices

Physical environment

Culturally diverse resources

Intentional Teaching

- Exploring similarities and differences in appearance
- Introducing stories/songs/music from different cultures
- Conflict resolution program
- Exploring different types of families

QA2 Children's health and safety

Evidence of quality practices relating to children's health and safety will include a wide range of policies and procedures but must also include evidence of how practices are implemented **and monitored** to ensure compliance.

Possible Evidence

- Use of daily/weekly checklists e.g. safety of fixed equipment/gates/fencing
- Documentation of spot checks of practices e.g. supervision of children, cleaning procedures
- Q & A with individual employees to demonstrate evidence of understanding of how to apply policies/procedures
- Regular review of all documented accidents and near misses to look for underlying causes/patterns
- Documented observation of employees undertaking routine tasks such as hand washing, wearing disposable gloves when serving food etc.
- A documented philosophy and procedure around sleep & rest provisions – particularly focusing on meeting individual needs and providing children who no longer require a sleep with quiet time activities that promote relaxation and quiet play.
- Documentation of goals for children to develop safe behaviours & age-appropriate hygiene practices
- Documentation of goals for children to develop healthy eating and physical activity
- Copies of written communication with parents re children health & safety issues
- Documentation of team meeting discussion of children's health and safety issues
- Documentation of consultation with health and safety agencies/services or acquisition of resources
- Documentation of employee training/review of practices.

QA3 Physical environment

Evidence of quality practices relating to the physical environment will primarily be provided by a visual inspection of the facilities. Additional evidence you could provide may include sustainability strategies linked to the organisations strategic plan.

Possible Evidence

- Indoor/outdoor maintenance schedule, evidence of employment of a cleaner & cleaner's job description – daily, weekly, monthly tasks
- pest inspection treatment report (use of *green* chemicals)
- daily outdoor safety checklist
- sustainability goals and documented strategies

QA4 Staffing arrangements

Evidence of quality practices in relation to staffing arrangements will typically include documentation staff qualifications, daily staff rosters, procedures for employment of relief/causal staff, employment and orientation practices, documented commitment to ECA Code of Ethics, evidence of ongoing professional development. Evidence will also include observation of staff interactions with team members, children & families.

Possible Evidence

- minutes of team meetings where there is a component of professional development (discussion, guest speaker, team tasks etc.) which focus on issues such as: professional conduct, ethical behaviour, respect for others, service philosophy, relationships with families
- evidence of mentoring programs
- evidence of formal feedback to staff on performance issues
- professional library, professional journals, online resources etc.
- evidence of staff participation in professional development, networking, continuing education

QA5 Relationships with children

Evidence of quality practices in relation to relationships with children will primarily be gathered through observation of educators interacting with children – on arrival, during transitions, during routine tasks etc. Evidence of the commitment to respectful and caring relationships with children will also be reflected in curriculum documents.

Possible Evidence

- documentation which demonstrates children's contribution to program decisions – following up on children's interests, suggestions, ideas, investigations
- documentation of goals for children to develop age-appropriate conflict resolution skills
- documentation of behaviour management philosophy and strategies that maintain children's dignity and acknowledge self-regulation as a developmental task
- evidence of an anti-bias program which promotes respect, tolerance and acceptance of differences

QA6 Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

Evidence of quality practices in relation to collaborative partnerships with families can be gathered through observation of parent-educator interactions and also by the policies and procedures in place to engage with and share information with families.

Possible Evidence

- documentation in relation to: how initial enquiries are managed, enrolment and orientation procedures
- documented evidence of communication with families – how policies and procedures are communicated; use of communication/message books, emails, letters, newsletters etc.
- documented strategies to manage complaints, conflict, sensitive issues
- written strategy to update compulsory enrolment information
- documentation of how information about child's participation and development is shared with families e.g. portfolio, parent-educator meetings, individual service-home communication book etc.

- documentation in relation to inclusion, including how this information supports families with additional needs
- evidence of how information about service users is gathered **and** used to inform service provision
- evidence of responding appropriately to concerns, issues, information initiated by families
- evidence to demonstrate inclusion of families in the program e.g. sharing information, hosting social events, providing information about community resources, specialist services, etc.
- evidence to demonstrate the inclusion of families in decision-making e.g. committees, surveys, one-to-one feedback/comments
- minutes of team meetings where strategies to work collaboratively with families is addressed
- documentation of privacy and confidentiality strategies

Evidence of quality practices in relation to collaborative partnerships with communities/agencies may include:

- documentation relating to how the service works with other agencies/services for example, letter confirming collaboration/interaction/involvement (**Note:** where a child/family has been referred to or from another agency it is important to maintain the privacy of the family & child)
- copies of information brochures made available to families/ evidence of online resources shared with families
- provision of value-added services for families involving local businesses

QA7 Leadership and service management

Evidence of quality practices in relation to leadership and service management will be reflected in service policies, administrative procedures, organisational goals and strategic plans. It may also include a range of strategies used to monitor and evaluate service provision, compliance with legislation. employment practices and monitoring staff performance.

Possible Evidence

- minutes of management meetings – board, committee, sponsoring body. Privately owned service may provide evidence of management meetings with service director/co-ordinator
- documentation of continuous improvement practices
- documentation of strategies used to monitor and measure all aspects of service delivery – internal practices, customer (parent) satisfaction, compliance with legislative requirements
- documented procedures for safe storage and retrieval of records (including hard copies and electronic records)
- documentation of strategies to manage electronic records – backup, secure access, recovery etc.
- documentation of grievance procedures - include example of how a grievance was managed
- documentation of all office management systems