



# Resource

# Guide



## National Quality Standard **Quality Area 1:** **Educational program and practice**

Strengthening your self-assessment processes to ensure compliance and promote quality improvement.

### **This resource guide explores:**

- the objectives of Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
- the legal requirements of Quality Area 1
- reflective questions and tips for Approved Providers and Nominated Supervisors to strengthen self-assessment for compliance and quality improvement in Quality Area 1
- where to get further information and resources.



Education

This Resource Guide has been provided by the Department of Education as part of the Early Childhood Education and Care Sector Development Program.

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This Resource Guide builds on training delivered through workshops and webinars from February to June 2016 to support compliance and quality improvement under the National Quality Framework and the National Quality Standard. This training focused on Quality Areas 1, 2, 4 and 7. You can access copies of these presentations and related resource guides from [CCSA's website](#). You can also download a copy of the NSW Department of Education Quality Improvement Plan template from their [website](#).

This Guide should be read in association with the companion guide: *Strengthening compliance and quality improvement under the National Quality Framework: A guide to developing your Quality Improvement Plan*.

When you are using this resource, you should also refer directly to the National Law, National Regulations and the National Quality Standard.

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## 1. What is Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice?

One of the six objectives of the National Quality Framework (NQF) is “to improve the educational and developmental outcomes for children attending education and care services”<sup>1</sup>

Under the National Quality Standard (NQS), the purpose of Quality Area 1 is to ensure that the educational program and practice:

- is stimulating and engaging
- enhances children’s learning and development
- meets children’s individual learning and development needs.

### Quality Area 1 comprises:

- **Legal requirements** set out in:
  - the Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW)
  - the Education and Care Services National Regulation (NSW)

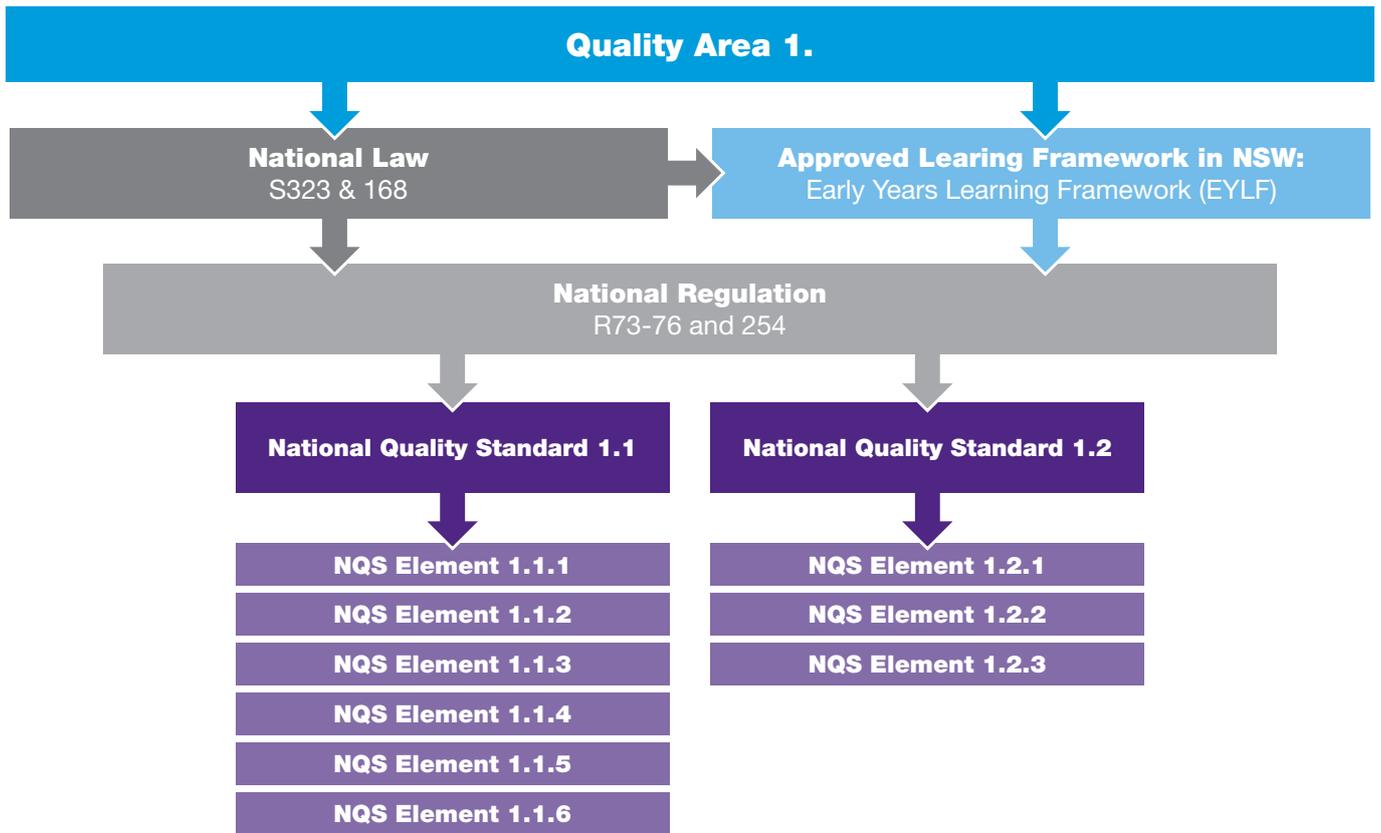
These requirements include the legal obligation to use an Approved Learning Framework, which in NSW for community preschools and long day care services is the **Early Years Learning Framework**.

- **Two standards** which specify the high-level outcomes that services should be seeking to achieve in Quality Area 1:
  - **Standard 1.1** - An approved learning framework informs the development of a curriculum that enhances each child’s learning and development
  - **Standard 1.2** – Educators and co-ordinators are focused, active and reflective in designing and delivering the program for each child.



- **Nine elements** which outline the outcomes that will contribute to meeting the standard:
  - **Standard 1.1 contains six elements** that relate to how each child should be supported to participate in the program. Some of the elements also refer to the need to make documentation about each child’s program and progress available to their family.
  - **Standard 1.2 contains three elements** that relate to how educators and co-ordinators engage in early childhood educational practice to support each child’s learning and development. The elements link strongly to principles in the Early Years Learning Framework such as:
    - Educators assessment of each child’s learning and development through an ongoing cycle of planning, documentation and evaluation
    - Educators responding to children’s ideas and play, using intentional teaching to scaffold and extend each child’s learning
    - Educators regularly undertaking critical reflection on children’s learning and development to implement the program.

Reference 1. Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW) No 104a, Clause 3 Objectives and Guiding Principles, page 2.



## 2. What are the legal requirements in Quality Area 1?

To develop a Quality Improvement Plan and participate effectively in the Assessment and Ratings process, it is vital your service understands how it complies with the legal requirements for each Quality Area. Meeting these legal requirements forms the foundation for how your service is assessed against the National Quality Standard.

In **Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice**, the **Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW) No 104a** states that the Approved Provider and the Nominated Supervisor must ensure that the program, being delivered to all children being educated and cared for by the service, is:

- based on an approved learning framework, which for early childhood education and care services in NSW is the **Early Years Learning Framework**
- delivered in a manner that accords with the approved learning framework
- based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child
- designed to take into account the individual difference of each child.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, the service must comply with the requirements set out in **Chapter 4.1 Educational Program and Practice** of the Education and Care Services National Regulation (NSW). These requirements set out obligations relating to:

- the educational program
- documenting of child assessments and evaluations of the delivery of the education program
- how information about the educational program is to be kept available
- how information about the education program is to be given to parents.



### TOP TIP:

Many of the elements for Quality Area 1 relate directly to the legal requirements set out in under the **Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW)** and under the **Education and Care Services National Regulation (NSW)**.

Reference 2: Section 168 Offence relating to required programs of the National Law NSW No 104a.

### 3. Undertaking self-assessment and quality improvement in Quality Area 1.

To develop your Quality Improvement Plan, your service must undertake a ‘self-assessment’ to demonstrate how you are meeting the National Quality Standards in each Quality Area.

This ‘self-assessment’ process involves three key steps:

- **assessing compliance** with the regulatory requirements under the National Law and National Regulation
- **identifying your service’s strengths** – the areas of which the service is most proud and would like to showcase
- **determining areas where your service would like to improve or extend** to improve outcomes for children.

These steps are also outlined in Section 2 of the NSW QIP Template. For further information on the NSW QIP template, see our companion guide: *Strengthening compliance and quality improvement under the National Quality Framework: A guide to developing your Quality Improvement Plan*.

When your service is self-assessing how you comply with the legal requirements, it is vital that you identify:

- how you ‘know and show’ or ‘demonstrate’ compliance.

#### TOP TIP:

When seeking to understand and apply the elements, it is vital to review the legal requirements set out in the Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW) and under the Education and Care Services National Regulation (NSW) for Quality Area 1.



## Reflective Questions

Following are some examples of reflective questions that the Approved Provider and the Nominated Supervisor may use to guide your self-assessment process and strengthen how your service demonstrates or “knows and shows” it is complying with the range of legal requirements in Quality Area 1. This is not an exhaustive list of questions but rather these questions are designed to trigger your service’s review of its compliance and quality improvement processes.

These steps are also outlined in Section 2 of the NSW QIP Template. For further information, see the companion guide: *Strengthening compliance and quality improvement under the National Quality Framework: A guide to developing your Quality Improvement Plan.*



## 3.1 Developing your educational program using the Early Years Learning Framework

- How does your service support and resource the use of the Early Years Learning Framework?
- How is the Early Years Learning Framework referred to in educators’ job descriptions, in orientation and induction processes, staff supervision and performance reviews?
- How are educators supported to embed the principles and practice of the Early Years Learning Framework in their program development, assessment and review? How is time allocated across the day, the week or month to support this work? Is this time sufficient to deliver improved outcomes for children?
- How are the principles and practice of the Early Years Learning Framework making a difference for each child’s learning and development?
- What are the policies, systems, practices in your service that demonstrate how the Early Years Learning Framework is used to guide the development of the program?
- How does the Early Years Learning Framework influence wider strategic decisions about the service’s priorities?
- How do educators learn about *each* child’s current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests? How is this information used to influence the program?
- How would a family member, the approved provider or an authorised officer observe, discuss or sight as **evidence** that the educational program is contributing to each child:
  - Having a strong sense of identity
  - Making connection with and contributing to his or her world
  - Having a strong sense of wellbeing
  - Being a confident and involved learner
  - Being an effective communicator?

### 3.2 Documenting child assessments and evaluations of the delivery of educational program

- How does your service plan for children's assessment? How do you communicate this?
- Are all your educators clear about the purpose of documentation? When have you reviewed the effectiveness of your service's documentation? Who did you involve to do this? Did it include children and families?
- Do your educators need specific support, such as training and professional development, to build their skills on how to reflect on, assess and document the progress/the journey of each child's learning? How has this been built into educators' individual learning or staff development plans and/or developed as a service-wide training and professional development goals?
- How does your program documentation demonstrate assessment of each child's learning and evaluation of the effectiveness of the program?
- How does your service support the development of your Educational Leader? How is your Educational Leader supporting improved outcomes for children?

### 3.3 Making information on the program available

- When have you asked for input from parents about the effectiveness and accessibility of information about the program at your service?
- If a parent was asked by the Approved Provider or an Authorised Officer about their understanding of the program for their child, what they would say?
- How is information about each child's program and progress shared with their family?
- Can your service give examples of when a child's program and progress was shared with their family? How did this go? What feedback did you gather? Should any changes be made to improve the process?



## 4. Where can I get more information?

There are a range of resources available through the ACECQA website including:

- [the Guide to the National Law and National Regulations](#)
- [the Guide to the National Quality Standard](#)
- [ACECQA Webcast for Quality Area 1](#)
- [Research paper on results for Quality Area 1 of the NQS](#)

Early Childhood Australia also provides information through its extensive [Professional Learning Program](#)

You can download copies of CCSA's presentation slides from the *Legislation and the National Quality Standard* workshop and webinar series on Quality Areas 1, 2, 4 and 7, which were delivered from February to June 2016, from the [Sector Development Program Resources](#) page of CCSA's website.

CCSA also provides consultancies to support the development of your Quality Improvement Plan, including approaches to self-assessment, compliance and quality improvement, facilitation and stakeholder engagement skills and project planning. For more information, go to the [training pages](#) of CCSA's website or contact CCSA on 1800 991 602 or [office@ccsa.org.au](mailto:office@ccsa.org.au)



National Quality Standard — **Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice**