

Policy Preamble



Introduction

Janelle Street Centre is operating under the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care ('National Quality Framework') and has already met National Quality Standards. We will continue striving to achieve excellence in all areas. To this end all our current policies will come under annual review as per policy and will be altered to comply with the National Quality Standard outlined below.

The National Quality Framework

In December 2009, all Australian governments, through the Council of Australian Governments, agreed to a partnership to establish a National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care ('National Quality Framework').

The National Quality Framework aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement in education and care services through:

- The National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care ('National Quality Standard')
- A national quality rating and assessment process
- Streamlined regulatory arrangements
- A new national body jointly governed by the Australian Government and state and territory governments—the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)—to oversee the new system.

The National Quality Framework took effect on 1 January 2012, with key requirements being phased in over time. Requirements such as qualifications, educator-to-child ratios, and other key staffing arrangements will be phased in between 2012 and 2020.

The National Legislative Framework

The National Quality Framework is underpinned by the *Education and Care Services National Law* ('National Law') and *Education and Care Services National Regulations* ('National Regulations'). Together they set the National Quality Standard and the regulatory framework for most long day care, preschool/kindergarten, family day care and outside school hours care services in all states and territories.

The *National Law* provides objectives and guiding principles for the National Quality Framework.

In making decisions about operating education and care services and working to achieve the *National Quality Standard* to improve quality at services, the guiding principles of the National Quality Framework apply.

These principles are:

- The rights and best interests of the child are paramount.
- Children are successful, competent and capable learners.
- Equity, inclusion and diversity underpin the framework.
- Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are valued.
- The role of parents and families is respected and supported
- Best practice is expected in the provision of education and care services.

The National Quality Standard

The *National Quality Standard* sets a new national benchmark for the quality of education and care services. It will also give services and families a better understanding of a quality service. This will enable families to make informed decisions about the services providing education and care to their child. The *National Quality Standard* is a key aspect of the National Quality Framework. It brings together the seven key quality areas that are important to outcomes for children.

The key quality areas are:

- Educational program and practice
- Children's health and safety
- Physical environment
- Staffing arrangements
- Relationships with children
- Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- Governance and Leadership

Approved Learning Frameworks

For the first time Australia has a *National Quality Standard* linked to national learning frameworks that recognise children learn from birth. These are:

- *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* ('Early Years Learning Framework') V.20 2022

These frameworks outline practices to support and promote children's learning.

Early Years Learning Framework

The *Early Years Learning Framework* guides educators in developing quality programs for children. 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 Rating System

The *National Quality Standard* is accompanied by a national quality rating and assessment process that reflects a national approach to the assessment and reporting of the quality of education and care services across the variety of service settings.

The availability of this information promotes transparency and accountability and will help parents make informed choices regarding the quality of education and care at a service. Each service will receive a rating for each quality area and an overall rating. These ratings must be displayed by the service and will be published on the website of the new national body, ACECQA, and the MyChild website.

There are five rating levels within the national quality rating and assessment process.

- **Excellent** - indicates that a service promotes exceptional education and care, demonstrates sector leadership and is committed to continually improving
- **Exceeds National Quality Standard** - indicates that a service goes beyond the requirements of the *National Quality Standards* in at least four of the seven quality areas
- **Meets National Quality Standard** - indicates that a service is meeting the *National Quality Standard*.
- **Working towards National Quality Standard** - indicates that a service provides a safe education and care program.

- **Significant improvement required**—indicates that a service is not meeting the *National Quality Standard* and that the regulator is working closely with the service to immediately improve its quality (otherwise the service’s approval to operate will be withdrawn).

Our latest assessment was that “we are working towards” the National Quality Standard. Assessment and rating date was July 2023.

Sources

- www.acecqa.gov.au (accessed January 18, 2024)

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