

Information for Children's Services considering moving to the National Quality Framework

This fact sheet contains information for providers of children's services currently regulated under the *Children's Services Act* (CS Act) who may be considering moving their service to the National Quality Framework (NQF).

Which early childhood services are regulated under which regime?

Services that provide education and care on a **regular basis** to children under the age of 13 years are regulated under the **NQF**. These services are called 'education and care services' and include standalone kindergartens (preschools), long day care services, out of school hours care services and family day care services.

Services that offer education and care to children on a **non-regular basis** are regulated under the *Children's Services Act* (**CS Act**) and are called 'children's services'. These services usually operate for a small number of hours, or provide care to children on an occasional or casual basis.

Some children's services that currently deliver a three-year-old kindergarten, activity group or occasional care service are eligible to apply to the Victorian Government for Three-Year-Old Kindergarten funding. From 2022, all services approved to receive Three-Year-Old Kindergarten funding will be required, as a condition of this funding, to be regulated under the NQF.

What do I need to consider if I move my children's service to the NQF?

From 1 January 2022, the regulatory requirements for most children's services operating under the CS Act will be very similar to those under the NQF in the areas of staffing qualifications, educator to child ratios, and the educational program. However, the NQF has the following additional requirements:

Staffing requirements

- Each service must have an Educational Leader
- An early childhood teacher must be in attendance

Assessment and rating against the National Quality Standard

- The National Quality Standard (NQS) applies
- Services are assessed and rated for quality against the NQS
- Services must have a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) in place

Outdoor space

- Services must provide 7 square metres of unencumbered outdoor space per child

Application for provider and service approval under the NQF

- Providers under the CS Act will need apply for both provider and service approval under the NQF
- Applicants will need to register an account on the NQA IT System to lodge applications
- Visit the ACECQA website for more information on **opening a new service** under the NQF: www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/opening-a-new-service

How do I register my interest for Three-Year-Old Kindergarten funding?

Children's services providers who are interested in applying to become a funded kindergarten provider to deliver Three-Year-Old Kindergarten should contact their local Department of Education and Training (Department) office. Contact details are available at: www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/regions.aspx

New applications for kindergarten funding approval for children's services will only be considered by the Department for the **2022** year. If successful, all Children's services providers will be required to move to the NQF in order to continue to provide funded kindergarten beyond 2022 (either three-year-old or four-year-old programs).

More information on Kindergarten funding is available on the Department's website at: www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderdatacollection.aspx.

Commonwealth Government childcare funding

If you are approved to receive Three-Year-Old Kindergarten funding from the Victorian Government, this may affect your service's eligibility for funding for the Commonwealth Government Child Care Subsidy (CCS). More information on CCS is available at: www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy.

Useful links

- *New regulatory requirements for children's services* - fact sheet available at: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/vcs.aspx>
- *ACECQA Guide to the National Quality Framework* is available at: www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-09/Guide-to-the-NQF-September-2020.pdf

Contact us

The Department of Education and Training is the Regulatory Authority in Victoria.

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Web: www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation