

Latest News

Welcome to the third edition of the Regulation and Quality Assessment Update for 2016.

I am delighted to publish the second annual report for the Quality Assessment and Regulation Division (QARD) covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2015. The annual report details the functions of QARD, key highlights for 2015, new initiatives, and for the first time includes case studies. The full report has been published on the Division's section of the Department of Education and Training (the Department) website: www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/newsletters.aspx

For 2015, QARD continued to proactively engage stakeholders through targeted education and training programs, with a critical focus on the safety and supervision of children, particularly when on excursions.

This edition also features information about the revised Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF), developed by the Department in partnership with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. In reviewing this resource, consultation was held with key researchers, stakeholders, policy makers, early childhood professionals, schools, and cultural organisations. The VEYLDF is designed to guide practice for all professionals, and in doing so promoting continuity of pedagogy and practice.

The Department is continuing to support early years' services to deliver high quality education and care for children by providing timely and relevant information and resources to the early childhood sector. This edition includes details about a new nutrition resource developed by QARD in collaboration with Nutrition Australia and the Department of Health and Human Services. The guide will assist education and care services to provide appropriate nutrition to children, promote healthy eating to families, and meet the requirements of the National Quality Framework.

In June, the Department partnered with ACECQA to deliver a number of interactive workshops focusing on the agency of the child. The workshops reinforced our work implementing the child safe standards. I hope you enjoy this update and find the content useful and informative.

Karen Weston
A/Executive Director
Quality Assessment and Regulation Division
Department of Education and Training

The revised Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) lays the foundation for the Education State Early Childhood Development Reform.

The revised VEYLDF reflects cutting edge research and practice, policy directions, and aspirational outcomes for young children. The revised document builds on the previous version and retains but strengthens the three elements:

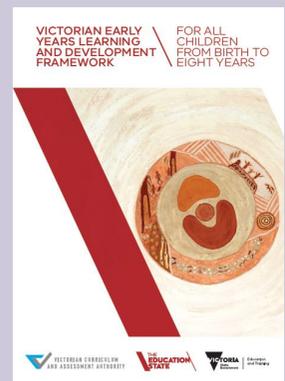
- the 8 Practice Principles - to guide all professional practice
 - 5 Learning and Development Outcomes - that link to the Victorian Curriculum, and
 - an emphasis on Transitions - reinforcing the importance of ensuring continuity of learning for all children and their families,
- and foregrounds important areas of professional practice:
- the birth to three period as central to mental health, wellbeing and long term success
 - acknowledgement and respect for Aboriginal culture for all Victorian children
 - responding to children and families experiencing vulnerability including the importance of equity, diversity and respectful relationships.

The revised VEYLDF also has a new look and feel. The cover depicts the three elements of the VEYLDF by artist Annette Sax, and the associated story by Sue Lopez Atkinson describes the essential three elements of the VEYLDF: Practice Principles, Outcomes and Transition. The revised VEYLDF has been published on the Department website: www.education.vic.gov.au/veyldf

All services and primary schools will be receiving a hard copy of VEYLDF, but additional copies can be ordered for professionals available at:

www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/edcare/Pages/veyladf.aspx

The early years alert developed by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) provides updates about implementation of the VEYLDF. To subscribe to the Early Years alert register at www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/earlyyears/subscribe.aspx



Focus on Quality Area 2 – Children’s Health and Safety

For all service types in Victoria elements related to Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety are amongst the ten top elements not met. These elements are about the health, protection, safety and wellbeing of all children. The frequency in elements related to Quality Area 2 not being met are highlighted in orange in the table below.

| ELEMENTS NOT MET - Quality Area 2 | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Top 10 Elements Not Met | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Family Day Care | 1.2.1 | 7.2.2 | 2.3.2 | 3.3.2 | 1.2.3 | 7.3.1 | 3.3.1 | 7.3.5 | 3.2.2 | 4.1.1 |
| Long Day Care | 1.1.2 | 5.2.2 | 1.2.1 | 4.1.1 | 5.2.3 | 2.3.2 | 2.1.3 | 7.3.5 | 2.3.1 | 7.2.2 |
| Kindergarten | 7.2.2 | 1.2.1 | 5.2.2 | 7.3.5 | 7.1.4 | 2.3.2 | 1.1.1 | 4.1.1 | 1.2.2 | 2.1.1 |
| Outside School Hours Care | 1.2.1 | 7.2.2 | 7.3.5 | 1.2.3 | 7.3.1 | 2.3.2 | 4.1.1 | 7.1.4 | 1.1.4 | 3.3.2 |

A central objective of the National Quality Framework (NQF) is ensuring the safety, health, and wellbeing of children in education and care services. It is a requirement under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* (National Law) for approved providers, nominated supervisors and family day care educators to ensure children are adequately supervised and that precautions are taken to protect children from harm or hazard (section 165 and 167).

The National Law contains minimum requirements to support children’s health, safety, and wellbeing. Key factors to consider when planning learning environments, routines, and experiences include:

- How to ensure children are adequately supervised at all times
- How to identify and minimise hazards and risks
- How to effectively prevent and manage illness and injury and encourage childhood immunisation
- How to promote healthy food choices and physical activity
- How to promote children’s healthy development
- How children are protected from the risk of abuse.

Insight from the Sector

Olivia Moller - Approved Service Provider; Let’s Go Family Day Care

Let’s Go Family Day Care achieved an exceeding rating last year. Since our assessment and rating process, our service has self-assessed our performance and set new goals and areas of focus that we continuously strive to reach. It has encouraged us to push forward, and continue to provide a quality education and care service for our families and the community. We are a small privately run service; delivering a quality program based on passion, commitment and team work. We have a strong local community presence that is strengthened by our collaborative approach with families and close working relationships with community services.



Photo of Olivia, educators and children at FDCA picnic 2016.

Quality improvement for me stems from stakeholder feedback. This is achieved by creating opportunities for others, such as educators, families and the wider community to share their thoughts and experiences. This also creates the opportunity to share learnings, provide a stronger service and celebrate our achievements together. I also take an active role in continuously looking at how I can best equip educators with resources, knowledge and support that helps to ensure they have the necessary skills and practice to provide a high quality service and experiences for each child.

We have developed a basic structure for planning for the children, which gives the educators a guide for their programming requirements. The educators assist each other via a network of knowledge sharing, resources and ideas to provide the best possible outcome for children’s learning and development. Support is also available for individual coaching sessions for planning on a regular basis, that also maintains a culture of ongoing reflection, offers appropriate levels of challenge and assists in high morale and satisfaction for all educators.

It has been an enjoyable journey thus far, and I look forward to seeing how far it takes me.

Excursions and Maximum Approved Places

Excursions and regular outings are an important way of ensuring that children are able to explore and experience environments away from their education and care service. Each excursion must be carefully planned and a risk assessment must be undertaken which identifies and assesses risks that the excursion may pose to the safety, health and wellbeing of any children taken on the excursion; including transportation, the number of adults involved and the types of activities undertaken. Authorisations must also be obtained from each parent or other appropriate person before a child is taken on an excursion. For regular outings authorisations must be given at least annually (more often is preferable) (regulations 100-102).



There has been some confusion about the maximum number of children who are allowed to be educated and cared for by a service while some of the children are away from the premises at excursions or regular outings - including bush kinders. The maximum number of approved places for children who can be educated and cared for by the service at any one time must not be exceeded (section 52(g)). This means that the service will need to consider all children being educated and cared for by the service at any one time, including the children at the education and care premises and those at the excursion or regular outing. This is also the case when calculating the ratio requirements and in meeting the educator qualification requirements.

Further information on requirements when conducting excursions, regular outings or running bush kindergartens is available at: www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqfactsheets.aspx

Healthy Eating in the National Quality Standard

The Department, in collaboration with Nutrition Australia and the Department of Health and Human Services have produced a guide to assist education and care services to provide appropriate nutrition to children, promote healthy eating to families, and meet the requirements of element 2.1.1 of the National Quality Standard (NQS), the National Law and associated regulations. This resource is also valuable for those services operating under the Children's Services Act 1996.

The guide provides information on topics such as food groups and discretionary foods, and is organised by service type. Links to the Healthy Eating Advisory Service, resources, and training are also included. This publication is intended to provide guidance to anyone involved in promoting healthy eating or providing food and beverages to children within an early childhood setting, and does not replace obligations outlined in the NQS and National Law.

The guide is available at: www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqfactsheets.aspx



New Licensing Fees and Penalties – Children's Services Act

The *Children's Services Act 1996* and the *Children's Services Regulations 2009* identify a range of fees and penalties payable in relation to the licensing of children's services. Licensing fees and penalties are updated annually on 1 July based on an increase to the value of a fee unit and penalty unit announced by the Treasurer. From 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 the value of a fee unit will be \$13.94 and the value of a penalty unit will be \$155.46. Updated licensing fees and penalties are available from 1 July 2016 on the Department of Education and Training website at: www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/feesandpenalties.aspx



National Quality Framework

The National Regulations set fees for education and care services operating under the National Quality Framework which are indexed annually. ACECQA publish information on indexation of fees on their website: www.acecqa.gov.au/indexation-of-fees



Kindergarten Funding

The kindergarten funding guide has been redeveloped for 2016 -2017 to help service providers more easily identify the range of funding available, how to apply for funding and their obligations and accountability in receiving funding. Whilst historically the kindergarten guide has been produced on an annual basis, the Department has produced a two-year guide for 2016 and 2017.

The new kindergarten guide will include information on recent policy and funding updates in the early childhood sector including the introduction of the No Jab No Play legislation, the improved educator to child ratio requirement and the new rural funding model for 2017.

A copy of the 2016 – 2017 kindergarten funding guide will be available in term three. Service providers will be sent an email with a link to the Department's website where an electronic version will be available along with funding rates published online. A hard copy of the guide will also be sent to all funded kindergarten service providers during term three.



Educator to Child Ratios

Improved educator to child ratios are a key factor in delivering quality education and care in Victorian services approved under the National Quality Framework. From 1 January 2016, the educator to child ratio for children 36 months to preschool age is one educator to 11 children, and educators need to meet the appropriate qualification requirements to be included in the educator to child ratios.

Services having difficulty meeting ratio requirements due to extenuating circumstances can apply for a temporary waiver from the educator to child ratios. If you have a ratio waiver in place and you are now able to meet educator to child ratios, please advise the Department to remove the temporary waiver from your service approval.

Facts sheets, about educator to child ratios for centre-based services and funded kindergarten are available at: www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqfactsheets.aspx.

Staff Immunisation

The National Law and Children's Services Act do not require staff working at education and care services to be immunised. However, the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (National Regulations)(regulation 88) does prescribe that services take reasonable precautions to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

Staff working in education and care services are at an increased risk of catching and passing on infectious diseases. Infections are common in early childhood settings and extended contact with large numbers of children provides an opportunity for infectious diseases to spread.

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) provides best practice advice based on *The Australian Immunisation Handbook* regarding immunisation of staff who work with young children. This advice recommends the following vaccinations that services may consider for staff members:

- Whooping cough (pertussis)
- Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)
- Chickenpox (varicella)
- Hepatitis A & Hepatitis B
- Seasonal Influenza

A copy of the immunisation handbook is available at www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/Handbook10-home

Services may wish to consider developing or amending their policies and procedures to reflect how vaccination requirements for educators, staff, students, and volunteers will be managed, including processes for vaccine refusal, medical contraindication, and vaccine failure.

The National Health and Medical Research Council publication *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (2013)* also provides guidelines for the prevention of illness from infectious diseases.

A copy of this publication by the Medical Research Council is available at: www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/Handbook10-home

Online Training for OSHC from Nutrition Australia

The *Healthy Eating in Outside School Hours Care* training module has been created specifically to assist OSHC co-ordinators, educators and management to promote healthy eating for children attending the service.

By completing these modules, staff will learn about the importance of good nutrition and will receive a certificate on completion of the training. The module is available at: <http://heas.health.vic.gov.au/training/training-options>

Perceptions of Parenting

The Parenting Research Centre has released a report mapping the gaps between expert and public understandings of effective parenting in Australia.

The evidence says that parenting has the greatest impact on the long-term health and wellbeing of children. We also know that parenting is a skill learned 'on the job'. But much of the public discourse about parents and parenting features commentary, views and opinions built on the assumption that 'parenting comes naturally'. This report is one example of divergence between what research says about parenting and what the public generally thinks about parenting. The *Perceptions of Parenting* report paints a picture of the shared understandings, assumptions and patterns of reasoning that Australians draw upon to think about parenting. (*Perceptions of Parenting, FrameWorks Institute, 2016*)

The report is available at www.parentingrc.org.au/perceptions

The Inclusion and Professional Support Program - update from Community Child Care

The Inclusion and Professional Support Program (IPSP), funded through the Australian Government ended in June 2016. The conclusion of this program has resulted in subsidised professional development no longer being available for long day care, family day care and outside school hours care services.

The new Inclusion Support Program (ISP), commenced on 1 July 2016 and includes an Inclusion Agency in each state and Northern Territory, the Inclusion Development Fund and a National Inclusion Development Fund Manager.

All Child Care Benefit approved education and care services are eligible for support from this program including long day care, family day care, outside school hours care, mobile and occasional care services and Budget Based Funded services.

Community Child Care (CCC) is delighted to be the lead organisation in the Victorian Inclusion Agency (VIA). The VIA is a consortium of Community Child Care, KU Children's Service, and Yooralla.

VIA is confident that with the synergy created by the three organisations' knowledge, experience and values will deliver an innovative, responsive Inclusion Agency across Victoria.

To find out more about how Victorian Inclusion Agency can support you please:

Call us on 1800 177 01 or

Email us at via@ccc.org.au or

Go to www.viac.com.au or

The Australian Government Department of Education website www.education.gov.au/inclusion-support-programme

VICSEG - Cultural Competency Training

Develop understanding of how culture influences perceptions of disability. Run by experienced facilitators from the education, disability, and multicultural fields. Relevant to schools and service providers of organisations preparing for NDIS, the training provides an opportunity to examine experiences, assumptions and personal bias as well as strategies for successful engagement of training from other children.

Bookings can be made through VicSeg's website:

agecs.org.au/vicseg-cultural-competency-training/

Warrawong Professional Learning Grants Open from 25 July 2016

The Foundation of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies, established and endowed by the Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies (AGECS) has grants of up to \$10,000 available to not-for-profit early childhood services or organisations within Victoria. The grants enable staff to undertake training or professional development in the field of early childhood, and projects and initiatives relating to the training and professional development of staff working in the field of early childhood with children up to 8 years of age. Find further information, guidelines, criteria, and a link to the online application form at www.foresthillecf.org.au



Protecting Children: Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations for Early Childhood Services Train the Trainer (TTT) Program

The Department is committed to supporting early childhood services to ensure the safety, health, and wellbeing of children and has funded the TTT training program for licensed and approved early childhood services, to ensure that early childhood staff are able to effectively protect children from the risk of abuse.

The Australian Childhood Foundation (ACF) will deliver the TTT program in 15 locations across Victoria during August 2016. Participants will receive a comprehensive training resource manual to facilitate their delivery of the training and content to other early childhood staff within their organisation, network, or service. As this is a TTT program, it is expected that participants deliver the training content to other early childhood professionals.

Please click on the following link to access the registration and workshop locations www.childhood.org.au/for-professionals/workshops-and-seminars/seminar-listing-page/2016/mandatory-reporting?key=%7bD-B27635E-AD46-4CE8-B216-92AEEB3837B9%7d



Advice on Toilet Training and Handling Soiled Clothes

The National Health and Medical Research Council publication *Staying Healthy in Child Care: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* advises on hygienic nappy changing and toileting practices in section 3.2 (p 45):

Ask parents to supply a clean change of clothing for children who are toilet training. Place soiled clothes in a plastic bag or alternative, and keep these bags in a designated place until parents can take them home.

While the publication does not provide specific advice regarding discarding faeces, it is assumed that early childhood services will dispose of any faecal matter in the toilet before staff place the soiled clothing in a bag. It would be unhygienic for faeces to be kept in a plastic bag for any length of time in your centre.

Circular for Early Years and Kindergarten Newsletter

The City of Whittlesea's Immunisation Team was awarded a \$25,000 Sanofi Pasteur Vaxigrant to increase vaccination coverage in Indigenous Australians within the City of Whittlesea. The grant funded the creation of a children's storybook 'A Yarn about Germs'. The book was written for and inspired by pre-schoolers attending the Bubup Wilam Early Learning Centre and depicts children's thoughts about germs and how vaccines can protect them.

To obtain a copy for your kindergarten or early years centre please contact Tanya Perrin, City of Whittlesea on 9217 2276 or teamimmunisation@whittlesea.vic.gov.au for further information.

Resources

New or updated resources are available at: www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqffactsheets.aspx

- Information to be displayed - new
- Notifications to Regulatory Authority - new
- Policies and procedures - new
- Staffing arrangements - updated
- Serious incidents and complaints - updated
- Enrolment records - updated

Fact sheets for services operating under the *Children's Services Act 1996* are available at: www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/vcsresources.aspx

Keeping in touch

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