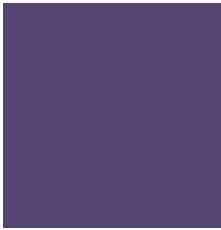


This newsletter includes information for children's services operating under the National Quality Framework and services operating under the *Children's Services Act 1996*.

Issue 15 | August 2015



## Latest news

Welcome to the fifth edition of our newsletter for 2015.

As you are aware, a review of the National Quality Framework (NQF) is underway. It is expected that the Decision Regulatory Impact Statement will be published later this year and will outline the changes, which are aimed at streamlining the NQF while upholding the importance of quality service provision.

I anticipate that any changes will be implemented from mid-2016. Information about the changes will be provided to services in the next few months.

Qualified early childhood teachers who are employed or engaged as an early childhood teacher in a Victorian education and care service or a Children's Services Act service need to be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) by 30 September 2015. This issue provides information about VIT registration and the ECT employer briefings that are being held across Victoria commencing on 18 August 2015.

This issue also gives information on projects underway in the Department of Education and Training and the Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (VCAA) to strengthen links between early childhood services and schools.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition.

Madeleine Smith

**Executive Director**

Quality Assessment and Regulation Division  
Department of Education and Training

## Clarendon Children's Centre Cooperative - Excellent



Congratulations to Clarendon Children's Centre Cooperative (Clarendon CCC) for their recent Excellent rating, the sixth service in Victoria to receive the highest rating from the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

ACECQA found that Clarendon CCC provided exceptional education and care through its practice and sustained commitment to the professional development and support of educators. This support has created a positive workplace and a strong culture where educators demonstrate a high level of collaboration to improve outcomes for children and families.

Clarendon CCC is committed to building inclusive partnerships with children and families to create a community that promotes and enhances learning and development. The service identifies that working together with families, long term learning projects and intentional practices enhance children's learning and growth.

Approved providers with a service that has received an overall rating of 'Exceeding National Quality Standard' are eligible to apply to ACECQA for the Excellent rating. Further information is available at: [www.acecqa.gov.au/excellent-rating](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/excellent-rating)

## Applications for early childhood teacher registration are open

Qualified early childhood teachers who are employed or engaged as an early childhood teacher in a Victorian education and care service or a Children's Services Act service need to be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) by 30 September 2015.

### Apply for registration now

You can access the early childhood teacher application from the Victorian Institute of Teaching website: [www.vit.vic.edu.au](http://www.vit.vic.edu.au)

Applying for registration is a simple two-step process:

- completion of the online form and payment
- submission of all required certified photocopied documents

All parts of the application must be completed before registration can be granted. Registration applications can take some time to process so it's important that you apply now to ensure your name appears on the teacher register by 30 September 2015.

If you receive notification you have successfully applied for early childhood registration, you will receive your registration card approximately 10 working days after 30 September 2015.

## VIT registration - ECT employer briefings

All early childhood teacher employers and managers are invited to attend a Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) briefing session to help you fully understand the requirements of early childhood teacher registration from an employer perspective.

These two-hour briefings will be held in 9 metropolitan and 4 regional locations during August and September, commencing Tuesday 18 August 2015.

To select a briefing and reserve your place go to: [www.vit.vic.edu.au/professional-responsibilities/for-employers/ect-providers](http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/professional-responsibilities/for-employers/ect-providers)



Further information about accessing Early Start Kindergarten is available at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/learningdev/Pages/earlystartkinder.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/learningdev/Pages/earlystartkinder.aspx)

## Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children

### Interactions with children

The interactions between educators and children that build on developing respectful and equitable relationships are vitally important for children's learning and wellbeing.

Holding babies when they are bottle feeding provides an optimum opportunity to engage in one to one, responsive, warm and nurturing interactions with the baby. Educators can use this time to build strong and secure attachments and trusting relationships that promote the baby's sense of security and belonging.

Services may consider how the organisation of educators and seating can support educators feeding babies, for example considering providing a comfortable chair.



Young babies must never be left alone in sitting positions or left with the feeding bottle propped up. Accidents can occur when babies are left unattended in bean bags, bouncinettes, prams and pushers. Babies have not yet fully developed strength in their necks and are unable to hold their head. When a baby's head falls forward it can lead to the airway being blocked and this carries a high risk of breathing difficulty and choking especially if feeding.

When young babies fall asleep the best place for them to sleep is in a cot, on a firm and flat surface on their backs, with their head and face uncovered.

More information about the dangers of prop feeding babies and safe bottle feeding and sleeping for babies is available on the Sids and Kids website at: [www.sidsandkids.org/safe-sleeping/about-sids-and-kids-safe-sleeping/](http://www.sidsandkids.org/safe-sleeping/about-sids-and-kids-safe-sleeping/)

More information about the importance of building strong and secure attachments can be found at: [raisingchildren.net.au/articles/attachment.html](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/attachment.html)

## Medical conditions and communication plans

A communications plan prepared by the service as part of the medical conditions policy (regulation 168) ensures that staff members and volunteers are aware of how the service will manage any diagnosed health care needs, allergies or medical conditions of children in the service.

The communication plan will enable parents to communicate any changes to the medical management plan and risk assessment plan for their children. This document provides an overarching communication plan for managing all diagnosed health care needs, allergies or relevant medical conditions for all children in the service. A separate communication plan is not required for each individual child.

For further information refer to the fact sheet *Children with medical conditions attending education and care services* available at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqfactsheets.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqfactsheets.aspx)

## Approved first aid qualifications

For centre-based education and care services, the first aid requirements are: 'at least one educator who holds the following qualifications must be in attendance at any place where children are being educated and cared for by the service, and must be immediately available in an emergency, at all times that children are being educated and cared for by the service -

- at least one educator who holds a current approved first aid qualification
- at least one educator who has undertaken current approved anaphylaxis management training
- at least one educator who has undertaken approved emergency asthma management training' (regulation 136(1)).

A person may hold one or more of the above qualifications. Where children are being educated and cared for on a school site this requirement may be met if the educator(s) or at least one staff member of the school are in attendance at the school site and are immediately available in an emergency.

A family day care educator must hold all the above qualifications.

Please note the free asthma first aid training provided by Asthma Australia and recommended for school staff in the School Policy & Advisory Guide is not an approved first aid qualification for the purposes of regulation 136 in the National Regulations. The training for school staff is a free one-hour 'information session' that gives a general guide to asthma related conditions, devices, medication and how to use a 'spacer'.

Approved first aid, emergency asthma and anaphylaxis management qualifications are available at: [www.acecqa.gov.au/Qualifications.aspx](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/Qualifications.aspx)



## New offence - Failure to protect a child from a sexual offence

The new criminal offence of failing to protect a child under the age of 16 from the risk of sexual abuse commenced on 1 July 2015. This offence recognises the shared community responsibility to protect children from abuse and to provide a safe environment, and is part of the Victorian Government's response to the Betrayal of Trust report.

This offence applies to education and care services, licensed children's services and many other organisations. Early childhood services are strongly encouraged to read the detailed information included on the Department of Justice website at: [www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence)





### Scholarships for Early Childhood Educators

Early childhood educators from centre-based services who are considering upgrading a qualification are invited to apply for scholarship support.

Round 2, 2015 Early Childhood Qualifications Fund scholarships will open on Monday 3 August 2015 and close on Friday 28 August 2015.

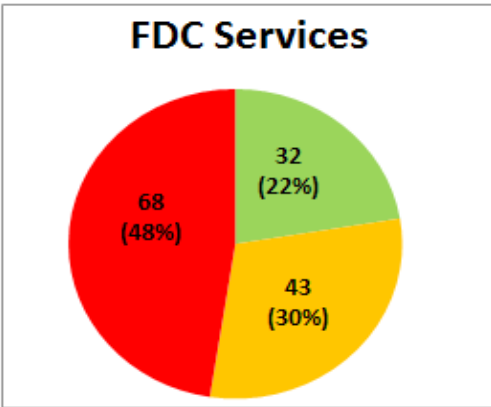
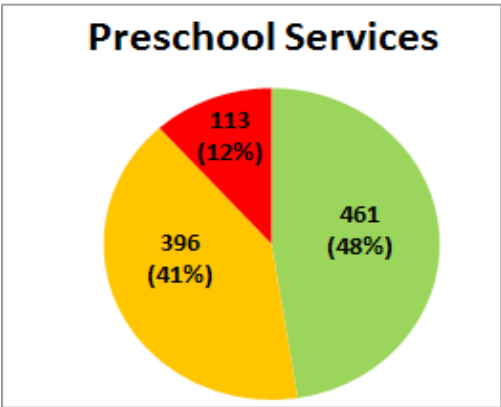
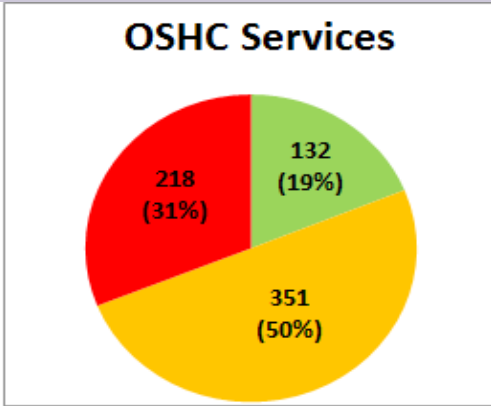
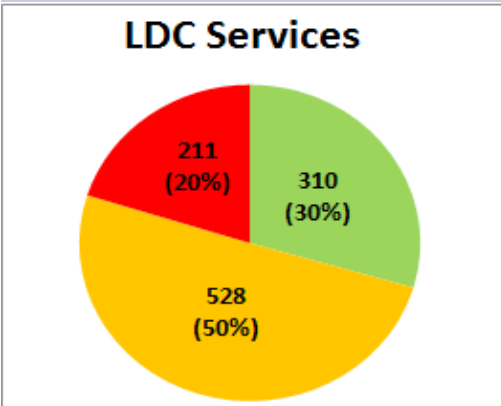
Information about how to apply is available on the Department website at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/about/careers/Pages/fund.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/careers/Pages/fund.aspx)

Applications for Early Childhood Scholarships for Aboriginal People will be considered at any time, and information about this scheme is also on the Department website at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/about/careers/Pages/aboriginal.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/careers/Pages/aboriginal.aspx)



## Focus on the National Quality Standard

At 30 June 2015, 72 per cent of approved education and care services in Victoria have received a quality rating, compared to 63 per cent nationally. The pie charts below reflect the rating of Victorian education and care services by service type. The data is drawn from published assessment and ratings as at 30 June 2015.



■ Exceeding NQS ■ Meeting NQS ■ Working Towards NQS ■ Significant Improvement Required

Note: Due to rounding, individual values may not add to 100 per cent in all cases

### ACECQA NQF Snapshot Q2 – August 2015

ACECQA produces a quarterly *NQF Snapshot* that provides analysis and information on the state of the sector, progress of assessment and rating, quality rating of services and waivers held by the services. The latest NQF Snapshot includes data drawn from the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQAITS) as at 30 June 2015 and is available at: [www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework-snapshots](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework-snapshots)

### Family Day Care Co-ordinators

The family day care (FDC) co-ordinator plays an important role in the provision of quality family day care. The approved provider must appoint sufficient persons to monitor and support FDC educators engaged by the service. FDC co-ordinators must hold an approved diploma level qualification. They assist with the operation of the service and support, monitor and train FDC educators through regular visits, phone contact and other networking opportunities.

A key role of the FDC co-ordinator is to monitor the FDC educators to ensure that they are operating in compliance with the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* and ensure that the safety, health and wellbeing of children is addressed at all times.

A FDC co-ordinator should possess the relevant professional knowledge, skills, understanding and experience, including an understanding of child development, the requirements of the National Quality Framework and the approved learning frameworks. This will ensure that the FDC co-ordinator can assist educators in supporting children's learning and development, and in devising an educational program that accords with the approved learning frameworks.

The FDC co-ordinator should have a sound knowledge of the service's policies and procedures to ensure the FDC educators understand and follow them. Also the FDC co-ordinator's role is to provide service information and assist the FDC educator to provide resources to families to support parenting and family wellbeing.

More information is available at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqfactsheets.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqfactsheets.aspx)

# Assessment for Learning Professional Learning Program 2015

This professional learning program, delivered in **nine multidisciplinary networks** across the state, aims to build and strengthen professional partnerships within these networks for professionals working with children birth to eight years.

Networks made up of early childhood professionals (15-20) from a range of early years services, settings and schools attend five full day professional learning sessions from May to November. One hundred and fifty three early childhood professionals are participating in the program.

This program has a focus on assessment practice and is using relational agency to support collaborative efforts. **Relational agency** as a concept supports the conditions that strengthen collective contributions and actions in the early years. It builds on previous practitioner research offered since 2010 and is a partnership between the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) and the Department.

## Participant reflections from previous programs

*The inquiry question has been a great way for me to measure progress; it allows me to refer back to my initial assessment goal and identify the changes I have been making as well as the ones I am still working towards.*

*I have refined my assessment practices and I now use interviews with the prep students to inform me of their understandings of the curriculum. This cumulative anecdotal information has given us valuable information about our teaching and learning practices. (Primary School)*

*The program has opened my eyes to the VEYLD, as I was not familiar with it before starting this project. It has challenged me to assess and document children's development within the playgroup I facilitate. (Playgroup).*

## Program delivery

Two models of program delivery are available: **Model 1:** uses two experienced Facilitators and **Model 2:** uses a Facilitator drawn from the local network to work in partnership with an experienced facilitator. This is a new model in 2015.

There are 13 Program Facilitators delivering the program. This comprises eight experienced Facilitators and four Local Network Facilitators with all Facilitators having participated in accreditation training.

Both options are effective in providing shared expertise in a co-delivery model. The Local Facilitator model brings a range of skills and expertise to this program and this year include professionals from across early childhood intervention services, assistant principal in a primary school, Best Start facilitator and a Linking Learning Coordinator.

The model with Local Facilitators is highly valued and provides a new depth in knowledge about local demographics, context and issues. It offers a valuable learning opportunity and experience for local facilitators and is contributing to leadership and influencing strategic directions for networks.

An external evaluation has commenced with all participants completing an online survey to gather early thoughts and reflections and to capture baseline data on assessment practice and relational agency.

For more information on relational agency go to the *Review and Evaluation of the Inquiry to Implementation Project Final Report 2014* at: [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/earlyyears/research.aspx](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/earlyyears/research.aspx)

For further information contact Carmel Phillips, Manager, VCAA Early Years Unit, (03) 9651 4375, [phillips.carmel.j@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:phillips.carmel.j@edumail.vic.gov.au).

## Services regulated under the Children's Services Act 1996



As you may be aware, the Department has transitioned your service data to a new database. As a result all licensed children's services regulated under the Act have been assigned a new licence ID. This new ID will be reflected on any new certificates issued by the Department. The format of the new licence ID will be SE-000XXXXX

You can view your new licence ID on the register of Victorian Children's Services on our website at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/vcsregister.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/vcsregister.aspx)

We encourage you to use the new licence ID for any contact you may have with the Department. During this transition period the old licence ID will also be recorded on the register and in the database.

The Department will be in contact shortly to ensure the accuracy of the contact information recorded on your service record.



## Strengthening reciprocal visits between early childhood educators and school teachers

Between October 2014 and May 2015 the Department commissioned a series of reciprocal visits to strengthen transition to school processes for children and families. The aim was to build on and enhance existing relationships between early childhood educators (educators) and school teachers.

Monash University conducted reciprocal visits in Puckapunyal and Banyan Fields while Semann & Slattery, in collaboration with Institute of Early Childhood at Macquarie University, conducted reciprocal visits at Tarneit and Bendigo.

The project created valuable working relationships between educators and school teachers, while also co-developing strategies to enhance the transition to school for young children and their families.

One participant noted that the project had "cemented the relationship" between educators and school teachers, and that there was now "a shared understanding of curriculum and pedagogy".

The project has resulted in a series of video and text resources for educators and school teachers that explain the theory of reciprocal visits, provide practical ways to implement reciprocal visiting in your setting, and demonstrate the value of the professional development.

These resources will be publically available from mid-September 2015, through the Department's 'Transition to School' website: [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/transition.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/transition.aspx)

## Transition: A Positive Start to School - 2015 Consultation

Across the first half of 2015 Semann & Slattery, on behalf of the Department, conducted a series of consultation sessions across Victoria on the *Transition: A Positive Start to School* kit.

These consultations sought to obtain qualitative feedback from key stakeholders to further strengthen the Department's understanding of current transition approaches, including the use of Transition Statements and supporting resources, to consider what is working well and where improvements can be made. Thank you to all those who contributed their valuable ideas and feedback at the face to face consultations as well as the online survey.

This information, in conjunction with other projects and data sources, will contribute towards a richer knowledge base on transition to school in Victoria, and enable the Department to better support children, families and teachers in early childhood and school settings.

A review of the *Transition: A Positive Start to School* kit will also be undertaken in the second half of 2015, with new resources being developed in advance of the 2016 transition to school process.

Current *Transition to School* resources can be accessed via the Transition to School website at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/transition.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/transition.aspx).



## Regular outings between kindergarten and school

At this time of the year many early childhood services are planning transition to school visits. Both the National Quality Framework and the *Children's Services Act 1996* give consideration to streamlining requirements where children regularly visit a school site.

When a kindergarten or other education and care service operating under the National Quality Framework is located on a school site the children from the kindergarten may visit any area in the school without requiring any authorisations from parents as long as they are in the company of an educator from the kindergarten and they do not leave the school site.

Where a kindergarten or other education and care service is located near the school the kindergarten would be required to seek authorisation for regular visits to the school from parents once in a 12 month period.

Similar requirements are in place for services operating under the *Children's Services Act 1996*.

An **excursion** is an outing organised by an education and care service or family day care educator, but does not include an outing organised by an education and care service provided on a school site if—

- (a) the child or children leave the education and care service premises in the company of an educator; and
- (b) the child or children do not leave the school site.

A **regular outing**, in relation to an education and care service, means a walk, drive or trip to and from a destination—

- (a) that the service visits regularly as part of its educational program; and
- (b) where the circumstances relevant to the risk assessment are the same on each outing.

A risk assessment is not required for each regular outing to/ from the same destination.

If the excursion is a regular outing, the authorisation is only required to be obtained once in a 12 month period.



## Calculating educator to child ratios from 1 January 2016

Educator to child ratios must be met whenever children are being educated and cared for by an education and care service (section 169). To be counted in the educator to child ratios, educators must be working directly with children (regulation 122). When calculating the minimum number of educators required, the number should be calculated according to the ages of the children and the total number of children being educated and cared for by the service.

From 1 January 2016, the educator to child ratios for children 36 months to preschool age will be 1 educator to 11 children (regulation 123(1)(c)). There are two ways of calculating educator to child ratios:

- using the mixed age group calculator when there are a small number of children attending, for example at the beginning or the end of the day (regulation 123(2)). This allows older children to be considered as part of the ratios for younger children, or
- using the standard educator to child ratio calculator to calculate the ratios across the whole service.

To assist services to determine how many educators they will require to ensure that the educator to child ratios are met at all times the NQF *Educator to child ratio calculator - Mixed ages from 1 January 2016* has been updated to reflect the requirements coming into effect from 1 January 2016.

Additionally, the fact sheet *Mixed age ratios from 1 January 2016 – centre-based services* provides examples of how a service with children across age groups would calculate:

- the number of educators required
- the qualification level that the educators require, including whether the educator is required to hold an approved qualifications for working with under or over preschool age children.

The following resources have been developed to assist services to calculate the educator to child ratios requirements coming into place from 1 January 2016:

### Fact sheets

- Educator to child ratios from 1 January 2016 – centre-based services
- Mixed age ratios from 1 January 2016 – centre-based services

### Calculators

- NQF Educator to child ratio calculator from 1 January 2016
- NQF Educator to child ratio calculator - Mixed ages from 1 January 2016

These resources are available at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqffactsheets.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqffactsheets.aspx)

## Resources

The following new and updated resources are available at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqffactsheets.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqffactsheets.aspx)

- Amendment of service approval - verandah space - NEW
- Education and care service - indoor and outdoor space - NEW
- Mixed age ratios from 1 January 2016 - centre-based services - NEW
- NQF educator to child ratio calculator from 1 January 2016 - NEW
- NQF educator to child ratio calculator - mixed ages from 1 January 2016 - NEW
- Acceptance and refusal of authorisations policy - NEW
- Enrolment records - updated

## Keeping in touch

Department of Education and Training  
GPO Box 4367, MELBOURNE VIC 3001

### You can get in touch with us by:

Visiting our website [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

Phoning us on 1300 307 415

Emailing us on [licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au)