



# **Quality Early Childhood Education and Care – What does it mean and how can it be monitored?**

**Presentation to the Thematic Working Group on Monitoring Quality,  
OECD Network on Early Childhood Education and Care**

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## Purpose

- To stimulate discussion and reflection on what are key elements integral to creating a quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) environment.
  - Explore different approaches across countries
  - Examine common elements
  - Use the Australian National Quality Standard as a case study

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## High quality ECEC

- Quality ECEC is not a universal concept – it means different things to different people.
- Over time there has been a greater focus on integrating of quality child care goals and early childhood education objectives for benefit children, families and economies

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## Drivers of quality ECEC service delivery

Quality ECEC service is driven by inter-related quality indicators:

- the quality of interactions between children and staff
- educational programs to support learning and development
- connections with family and community
- service leadership and management
- staff qualifications and training and staff-to-child ratios
- physical environment requirements
- health and safety requirements.



## Regulating and monitoring quality

- A clear regulatory framework is a key policy lever to promote quality ECEC services.
  - Minimum standards are generally set for structural indicators and often across multiple ECEC settings.
- Effective monitoring is essential to quality ECEC service delivery.
  - There are different approaches to monitoring quality and monitoring practices.
  - A common understanding of quality is needed to monitor quality of ECEC services effectively.



## **Case example: The Australian National Quality Framework (NQF)**

- The NQF, which is underpinned by legislation, commenced on 1 January 2012 and applies to most Long Day Care, Family Day Care, Outside School Hours Care and Preschool services.
- The NQF sets out:
  - approval and operating requirements for services
  - National Quality Standard
  - internal and external assessment and rating process



# The National Quality Standard (NQS)

The NQS comprises seven quality areas:

- 1) Educational program and practice
- 2) Children's health and safety
- 3) Physical environment
- 4) Staffing arrangements
- 5) Relationships with children
- 6) Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- 7) Leadership and service management



## Assessment and rating against the NQS

- The NQS sets a benchmark for ECEC services.
- ECEC services are assessed against the NQS using a nationally consistent assessment and rating process.
- Each service is rating for each quality area.
- The Rating Instrument sets out different gradients of quality for each quality area:
  - Exceeding NQS
  - Meeting NQS
  - Working Towards NQS
  - Significant Improvement Required

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## Next steps

- Small group discussion to explore how different countries view and measure quality in ECEC?
  - Template to be used to facilitate small group discussion
- These discussions will inform the Monitoring Quality Survey



# Questions