Assessment and Rating: What happens during the assessment and rating visit?

All services under the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (National Law) are rated against the National Quality Standard (NQS).

The rating assessment is undertaken by a trained authorised officer (AO) and is in accordance with section 133(1) of the National Law and regulations 63 and 64 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

AOs use the National Quality Standard Assessment and Rating Instrument (the instrument) to record evidence when assessing a service.

The instrument is available on the ACECQA website - Assessment and Rating Instrument.

The service visit will vary in length, according to the type and size of the service.

Throughout the assessment and rating process, the AO evaluates and reviews a range of evidence to assess the quality of education and care practices demonstrated by the service. A visit to the service is a significant part of this process.

Preparation for the visit

Prior to the assessment and rating visit, the AO undertakes a ‘desk top review’. This review involves gathering information from various sources about the service before the visit commences.

The service’s Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) is considered during the review.

The assessment and rating visit

During the visit, the service may demonstrate how they achieve quality education and care outcomes for children.

An AO does not expect to see the same practices in each service or within service types. An AO will look for evidence of best practice education and care, as described in the NQS. Further information is provided in the Guide to the National Quality Framework (Part 3), available on the ACECQA website.

The AO conducts the visit in a manner that ensures their actions minimise disruption as much as possible. However, a significant risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of a child/children may require immediate action by the AO, as explained in the Guide to the NQF.

Gathering evidence

The AO gathers evidence through observations, discussions and looking at documents, such as forms, policies and procedures.

1. Observations

The AO observes what children, families, educators, co-ordinators and staff members are doing to support the provision of quality education and care (for example, engaging in caring, friendly and respectful interactions).

The AO also observes the learning environment to identify how the physical environment supports education and care outcomes and how it provides for the health and safety of the children.

Observation will take place in all rooms at various times of the day, so that a variety of practices and routines can be observed.

2. Documentation

It is a requirement under the National Law for some documents and information to be displayed and/or to be readily available to educators and parents.

The AO will look at displays, resource material and service records to determine whether the requirements are met.
For example, the AO will look at children’s profiles and will review information posted on communication boards, such as daily menus and evacuation procedures.

A list of prescribed information to be displayed by a service (in accordance with section 172 of the National Law and regulation 173) can be found in the Guide to the NQF (Part 4).

3. Discussion

The AO will engage/meet as appropriate with the approved provider and/or their key contact persons, educators, co-ordinators, family day care educator assistants or staff members, to learn about the practices within the service.

Some of the discussions may occur briefly, as opportunities arise, or after the AO has observed activities, routines or practices.

**Note taking and recording devices**

An AO will make written notes and may take photographs in keeping with guidelines in the Guide to the NQF (Part 3).

An AO may also use voice recording devices after notifying relevant education and care personnel that they wish to do so, in accordance National Law s197(b).

**Rating the service**

The AO is not able to rate the service until they have had the opportunity to thoroughly consider all the evidence gathered through the assessment process. Therefore, they are not in a position to give any indication of what the rating may be during the service visit.

**The draft Assessment and Rating Report**

Following the assessment and rating visit, the AO will prepare the report. Once developed, this report will be moderated and then sent to the approved provider.

The approved provider and service may then provide feedback on this report. A template for this feedback is available on the ACECQA website.

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**Reading list for further information:**

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations

In addition, the [ACECQA website](https://www.acecqa.gov.au) provides guidance on the:

- assessment and rating process
- quality improvement plan
- promotion of your rating
- excellent rating
- review of ratings

**Please note:** individual words underlined in the text of the information sheet provide hyperlinks to the ACECQA website.

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