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*This guide has been developed with reference to National Quality Framework resources published by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, and the Guide to the National Quality Standard for Western Australian Public Schools.*

# Introduction

## National Quality Framework

All governments in Australia recognise the importance of experiences that children have throughout childhood, and the impact those experiences have on their present and future health, development and wellbeing. In December 2009, they agreed through the Council of Australian Governments to a partnership to establish a [National Quality Framework](#) for early childhood and outside school hours education and care service provision.

The National Quality Framework (NQF) comprises legislation, regulations, nationally approved learning frameworks and procedures, by which long day care, family day care, outside school hours care and preschool/kindergarten services across Australia are regulated.

Central to this Framework is the **National Quality Standard**, which specifies benchmarks for quality in education and care services provided for Australian children.

## National Quality Standard

The National Quality Standard includes seven quality areas informed by evidence based research. In each quality area, there are two or three standards. These standards are high level outcome statements. Under each standard are elements that describe the outcomes that contribute to the standard being achieved. The seven **quality areas** are listed below:

Quality Area	Subject
Quality Area 1	Educational program and practice
Quality Area 2	Children's health and safety
Quality Area 3	Physical environment
Quality Area 4	Staffing arrangements
Quality Area 5	Relationships with children
Quality Area 6	Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
Quality Area 7	Governance and leadership

The National Quality Standard was introduced in 2012. A national review conducted in 2014-15 saw a revised National Quality Standard come into effect from February 2018.

The National Quality Standard is comprehensive and sets a high benchmark for children's education and care. To be considered as 'meeting' the National Quality Standard, it is necessary to meet every element that makes up every standard within *all* seven quality areas.

The following table includes the 15 standards and 40 elements that make up each quality area of the National Quality Standard. Each standard and element is represented by concepts that support education and care services to understand and reflect on the National Quality Standard.

## Summary table of NQS quality areas, standards and elements

### Quality Area I – Educational program and practice

<b>Standard 1.1</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>The educational program enhances each child's learning and development</b>
Element 1.1.1	Approved learning framework	Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
Element 1.1.2	Child-centred	Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.
Element 1.1.3	Program learning opportunities	All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.

<b>Standard 1.2</b>	<b>Practice</b>	<b>Educators facilitate and extend each child's learning and development.</b>
Element 1.2.1	Intentional teaching	Educators are deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions.
Element 1.2.2	Responsive teaching and scaffolding	Educators respond to children's ideas and play and extend children's learning through open-ended questions, interactions and feedback.
Element 1.2.3	Child directed learning	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world.

<b>Standard 1.3</b>	<b>Assessment and planning</b>	<b>School leaders and educators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the program for each child.</b>
Element 1.3.1	Assessment and planning cycle	Each child's learning and development is assessed or evaluated as part of an ongoing cycle of observation, analysing learning, documentation, planning, implementation and reflection.
Element 1.3.2	Critical reflection	Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, drives program planning and implementation.
Element 1.3.3	Information for families	Families are informed about the program and their child's progress.

## Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety

<b>Standard 2.1</b>	<b>Health</b>	<b>Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.</b>
Element 2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for rest and relaxation.
Element 2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
Element 2.1.3	Healthy lifestyle	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.

<b>Standard 2.2</b>	<b>Safety</b>	<b>Each child is protected.</b>
Element 2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
Element 2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
Element 2.2.3	Child protection	School leaders, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.

### Quality Area 3 – Physical environment

<b>Standard 3.1</b>	<b>Design</b>	<b>The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a school.</b>
Element 3.1.1	Fit for purpose	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.
Element 3.1.2	Upkeep	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.

<b>Standard 3.2</b>	<b>Use</b>	<b>The school environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.</b>
Element 3.2.1	Inclusive environment	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.

Element 3.2.2	Resources support play- based learning	Resources, materials and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based learning.
Element 3.2.3	Environmentally responsible	The school cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

## Quality Area 4 - Staffing arrangements

<b>Standard 4.1</b>	<b>Staffing arrangements</b>	<b>Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development.</b>
Element 4.1.1	Organisation of educators	The organisation of educators across the school supports children's learning and development.
Element 4.1.2	Continuity of staff	Every effort is made for children to experience continuity of educators at the school.

<b>Standard 4.2</b>	<b>Professionalism</b>	<b>School leaders, educators and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical.</b>
Element 4.2.1	Professional collaboration	School leaders, educators and staff work with mutual respect and collaboratively, and challenge and learn from each other, recognising each other's strengths and skills.
Element 4.2.2	Professional standards	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.

## Quality Area 5 – Relationships with children

<b>Standard 5.1</b>	<b>Relationships between educators and children</b>	<b>Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child</b>
Element 5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
Element 5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.

<b>Standard 5.2</b>	<b>Relationships between children</b>	<b>Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.</b>
Element 5.2.1	Collaborative learning	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.
Element 5.2.2	Self-regulation	Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.

## Quality Area 6 – Collaborative Partnerships with families and communities

<b>Standard 6.1</b>	<b>Supportive relationships with families</b>	<b>Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.</b>
Element 6.1.1	Engagement with the school	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the school and contribute to school decisions.
Element 6.1.2	Parent views are respected	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
Element 6.1.3	Families are supported	Current information is available to families about the school and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.

<b>Standard 6.2</b>	<b>Collaborative partnerships</b>	<b>Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.</b>
Element 6.2.1	Transitions	Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing information and clarifying responsibilities.
Element 6.2.2	Access and participation	Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.
Element 6.2.3	Community engagement	The school builds relationships and engages with its community.

## Quality Area 7 - Governance and Leadership

<b>Standard 7.1</b>	<b>Governance</b>	<b>Governance supports the operation of a quality school.</b>
Element 7.1.1	School philosophy and purpose	A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the school's operations.
Element 7.1.2	Management systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality school.
Element 7.1.3	Roles and responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision - making and operation of the school.

<b>Standard 7.2</b>	<b>Leadership</b>	<b>Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community.</b>
Element 7.2.1	Continuous improvement	There is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place.
Element 7.2.2	Educational leadership	The Kindergarten program leader is supported and leads the development and implementation of the educational program and assessment and planning cycle.
Element 7.2.3	Development of professionals	Educators and staff members' performance is regularly evaluated and individual plans are in place to support learning and development.

# The National Quality Standard in Tasmania

## Government Schools

Due to the school-based context of Kindergarten provision, legislation and quality assurance in Tasmania, an alternative approach applies to the National Quality Standard (NQS) for government schools in this state.

The approach builds on whole school quality assurance procedures in Tasmanian government schools, while also ensuring that the content and intent of the NQS applies to our Kindergartens as it does to other children's education and care settings across Australia.

Key features of the NQS in all government schools in Tasmania are as follows:

- Schools continue to operate under the [Education Act, 2016](#), and are not subject to the *Education and Care Services National Law (Application) Act 2011*. Instead, they
- The NQS informs quality early years practice.
- Early years educators and school leaders determine whether their school is 'meeting' or 'working towards' each quality area. Schools keep a record of the determinations. This information may be incorporated into school improvement planning processes.
- To be considered as 'meeting' a quality area, it is necessary to meet every element that makes up each standard. This is consistent with the quality rating application of the NQS across Australia and is more stringent than an 'on balance' judgement. It follows that 'working towards' means that one or more elements have not yet been met in one or more classrooms. These elements are potential priorities for improvement. Determinations also take into consideration the typical day-to-day practices across all Kindergarten classes in the school.

## Tasmanian Government Schools

The provision of high-quality early years education benefits all children's learning and development. A culture of professional learning and growth deepens teaching and learning expertise by increasing school's capacity to reflect, develop skills and knowledge, collaborate and in turn improve student wellbeing and learning.

The NQS supports educators in strengthening quality practices and processes across the early years. Applying the NQS in Tasmanian Government Schools supports ongoing quality improvement and reflective practice, based on cycles of inquiry as outlined in the Tasmanian Department of Education's Strategic Plan commitment '*Together we inspire and support all learners to succeed as connected, resilient, creative and curious thinkers*'.

Tasmanian Government Schools are encouraged to work towards meeting the NQS and continue to improve their practice across the early years, with assessment against the NQS applicable only to Kindergartens.

The application of the NQS in Tasmanian Government Kindergartens will commence in 2020 and will feature Kindergartens following layers of quality assurance in relation to the NQS. The steps that Tasmanian Government Schools will undertake as part of the NQS, are as follows:

## Reflect and review

As part of their current improvement planning, early years educators (i.e. teachers, including relevant specialist teachers, and teacher assistants working with Kindergarten classes) will use the NQS to critically reflect on and review their practice and processes against the seven quality areas.

This NQS self-assessment will be undertaken by early years educators throughout the year as part of their improvement planning.

While there is no prescribed process for this self-reflection layer, the National Quality Standard School Self Reflection and Assessment Tool is available to support educators to complete a review of their practice. Examples of reflective practice could be:



Observe - educators observe what children, families and other staff are doing



Sight - educators gather and review documentation as evidence to support practice



Discuss - educators engage in discussions about why and how practices occur at the school.

## Audit

Observations and insights about existing early childhood practices gleaned through regular audits identify priorities for ongoing quality improvement.

Following the reflection and review by the early years educators of their classrooms, a discussion will take place between them and school leaders about the findings of the self-assessment.

These discussions will inform the audit for the school and will see the school leaders and early years educators collaborate to record findings of the strengths and areas for improvement.

The *NQS School Internal Audit Tool* is available to assist with recording this process.

Prior to the end of Term 3 the Principal or responsible school leader will submit the school's findings online.

The school's audit will then be validated by a NQS Review Officer during Term 3. The Officer will work collaboratively with the early years educators and school leaders to validate the assessments, which will then inform improvement priorities.

The validation process will involve the NQS Review Officer observing practice against the NQS, as well as conversations with the early years educators and school leaders.

## Reporting

A mutually agreed record of the validation will be prepared by the NQS Review Officer and a copy will be provided to the Principal.

It is the responsibility of schools to maintain a record of the NQS internal audit and validation findings, so they are available as required to incorporate into improvement planning.

## Using this guide

This guide is a point of reference for school leaders and early years educators in Tasmanian schools to support a clear and consistent understanding of the standards and elements that make up each quality area of the NQS. You are encouraged to use this guide to reflect on practices, identify strengths, select priorities for improvement, and monitor progress.

The content of this guide has been tailored for Tasmanian government schools. While the wording and intent of all quality areas, standards and elements are exactly as they apply to all other education and care providers across Australia (other than replacing 'service' with 'school'), the examples provided for each standard and element have been adapted to reflect quality practice in the early years of schooling, with a key focus on Kindergartens.

For an explanation of the key terms and icons used in this guide, please refer to *Appendix 1 - NQS Tasmanian School's Glossary* and *Appendix 2 - NQS Tasmanian School Guide Icons legend*.

## Working with quality areas and standards

The NQS quality areas and standards are more than the sum of their parts, so before referring to the detail of their component elements, it is important to carefully read the introductory statement for each quality area and standard to understand their intent and context. These introductions describe the importance of each standard in determining quality.

Reflective questions are included for each standard to assist school leaders and educators working in the early years to consider current practice and processes in their school in relation to the NQS

## Working with elements

The NQS elements specify the requirements of each standard. This guide provides tangible examples of what the element may look like in everyday practice via a list of features you may observe, discuss and sight as indicators of individual elements being met. The examples are indicative only and are not exhaustive.

Any given element is likely to look different from one Kindergarten class to another, as each class and school reflects and is responsive to the needs of its community. So it is important to maintain a clear view of the intent of each element, standard and quality area when reading these examples, and not to treat them as a checklist.

Each school and class is unique and how the standards and elements are met will reflect that particular school's context, including its local environment; the needs, interests and abilities of its students; and the aspirations of its families and wider community.

# Quality Area I: Educational Program and Practice

## Overview

Quality Area I focuses on ensuring that educational program and practice of educators are child-centred, stimulating and maximise opportunities for enhancing and extending each child's learning and development. It recognises that a quality program that builds on children's individual knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests is likely to have long term benefits for children and for broader society.

Schools provide programs for all children that are informed by the approved learning framework and delivered in accordance with it. The approved learning framework for the early years of schooling in Tasmanian Kindergartens is *Belonging, Being and Becoming - The [Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](#) (EYLF)*<sup>1</sup>.

A quality educational program views children as capable and competent learners who have agency and learn best through an inquiry-based program that necessarily includes play and is manifest in different forms according to children's ages and abilities.

Play based learning provides a context for learning as children actively engage with people, objects and symbols and the environment. While the nature of play-based and inquiry-based learning changes as children progress through the early years and beyond, in all of its manifestations, it:

- provides opportunities for children to learn as they discover, create, improvise and test theories
- enables expressions of personality, cultural identity and uniqueness
- promotes positive learning dispositions, such as curiosity, creativity, problem-solving and innovation
- assists children to develop relationships, concepts, skills and confidence in their capacity as a learner and a thinker
- provides opportunities for children to demonstrate their understandings in a range of ways.

Educators draw on their knowledge of individual children, approved learning frameworks, the NQS and the Department of Education's (DoE) policies and guidelines when designing learning programs and considering practices they will use. With their knowledge of the children, families, and the community in which they are located, educators make informed decisions about how to optimise children's learning.

Educators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the educational program by using an assessment and planning cycle and critically reflecting to improve programs and practice. They provide uninterrupted and prolonged periods of time to pursue lines of inquiry within scaffolds of planned provocations and support. Educators share the program with families and ensure they are informed of their child's learning and developmental progress.

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<sup>1</sup> The EYLF also supports and enhances the delivery of the Australian Curriculum Prep – Year 2.

## Standards and elements

Quality Area 1 has three standards that focus on the educational program, educational practice, and assessment and planning for each child's learning and development. These standards are crucial to delivering quality outcomes for children because:

- an educational program based on an approved learning framework is child centred and contributes to children's development as competent and engaged learners
- intentional teaching is a recognised approach to facilitate each child's learning and development
- responsive teaching values, scaffolds and extends each child's skills, knowledge, interests and ideas, and promotes children's agency
- critical reflection informs the assessment and planning cycle and drives improvement in program and practice, resulting in continuous enhancements to children's learning
- families who are informed about the program and their child's progress are better equipped to engage with the school and collaboratively make decisions that strengthen their child's learning, development and wellbeing.

Standard 1.1	Program	The educational program enhances each child's learning and development
Element 1.1.1	Approved learning framework	Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
Element 1.1.2	Child-centred	Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.
Element 1.1.3	Program learning opportunities	All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.

<b>Standard 1.2</b>	<b>Practice</b>	<b>Educators facilitate and extend each child's learning and development.</b>
Element 1.2.1	Intentional teaching	Educators are deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions.
Element 1.2.2	Responsive teaching and scaffolding	Educators respond to children's ideas and play and extend children's learning through open-ended questions, interactions and feedback.
Element 1.2.3	Child directed learning	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world.

<b>Standard 1.3</b>	<b>Assessment and planning</b>	<b>School leaders and educators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the program for each child.</b>
Element 1.3.1	Assessment and planning cycle	Each child's learning and development is assessed or evaluated as part of an ongoing cycle of observation, analysing learning, documentation, planning, implementation and reflection.
Element 1.3.2	Critical reflection	Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, drives program planning and implementation.
Element 1.3.3	Information for families	Families are informed about the program and their child's progress.

## Standard 1.1 Program

The educational program enhances each child's learning and development.

### How standard 1.1 contributes to quality teaching and learning

Educators providing quality educational programs use an approved learning framework to guide curriculum decision-making and facilitate a shared understanding of children's learning and development. Their perspectives, understanding of, and support for quality education practices ensure program continuity and cohesion as each child progresses from Kindergarten and beyond. As children transition through the early years the Principles, Practices and Learning Outcomes of the EYLF support and enhance the delivery of the Australian Curriculum and [Education Act, 2016](#).

### Questions to guide reflection on practice for standard 1.1

#### Educational program

- How do we support all children to progress towards the learning outcomes?
- How do we learn about each child's knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests?
- How do we ensure that experiences and routines are child-centred rather than overly adult-directed or clock-driven?
- How do we ensure children have opportunities to work independently as well as collaboratively?
- How do we provide problem-solving, inquiry and challenge-based learning experiences to build upon children's prior learning while also extending them to develop new skills and concepts?
- How do we provide a differentiated curriculum that supports children's varying capabilities, learning styles and interests?

### Element 1.1.1 Approved Learning Framework

Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.

#### What element 1.1.1 aims to achieve

An approved learning framework guides program planning and delivery as an ongoing cycle of observation, documentation, analysis, planning, implementation and reflection. Curriculum decision-making is guided by the principles, practices and learning outcomes of the approved learning framework. Educators draw on their pedagogy, in-depth knowledge and understanding of each child.

#### Approved learning framework

The approved learning framework in Tasmanian Kindergartens is *Belonging, Being and Becoming, The [Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](#)* (EYLF)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The EYLF also supports and enhances the delivery of the Australian Curriculum Prep – Year 2.

The approved learning framework includes principles, practices and learning outcomes that guide school leaders, and educators in their curriculum decision making; and assist them in planning, delivering and evaluating quality programs across the early years of schooling.

### Curriculum decision-making

As children participate in planned, stimulating and age-appropriate learning programs, they develop new knowledge, skills and interests and construct their own identities and understandings of the world. Educators have high expectations for all children and make curriculum decisions that uphold all children's rights to learn and reach their potential; including the right to have their ideas, culture, knowledge, abilities and interests acknowledged and valued in the context of their families and communities.

### Considerations for meeting element 1.1.1

#### Approved learning framework inform curriculum decision-making



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- educators:
  - providing experiences for children that reflect outcomes, development needs and learning opportunities set out in the approved learning framework and are appropriate to children's strengths, abilities and interests
  - talking explicitly about phonological concepts, such as rhyme, letters and sounds when sharing texts with children
  - implementing the educational program based on documented planning.
- children:
  - displaying behaviours and engaging in activities consistent with the evidence for outcomes described in the approved learning framework, for example:
    - expressing a range of thoughts and views constructively and displaying a sense of belonging
    - being empowered to make choices and solve problems to meet their needs
    - interacting with materials and moving around and through their indoor and outdoor environments confidently and safely
    - being curious and enthusiastic participants in their learning
    - using digital technologies effectively to access, create and communicate information and ideas, solve problems and work collaboratively.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how the EYLF informs teaching, learning and assessing in the early years

- how the Tasmanian DoE Strategic Plan commitment ‘*Together we inspire and support all learners to succeed as connected, resilient, creative and curious thinkers*’ guides pedagogy and teaching decisions
- the plans and strategies used to promote learning across all aspects of the program and how the curriculum is integrated for example, a science activity that also supports literacy skills and the development of working collaboratively.



#### Examples of what you may **sight**:

- the documented learning program (planning) including the setup of environments and resources to support ongoing learning
- observations and reflections on children’s play and inquiry and how these inform individual and group planning
- documented evidence of children’s learning
- documented individual education plans where necessary, developed in collaboration with families and if required, other professionals and support agencies.

### Element 1.1.2 Child-Centered

Each child’s current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.

#### What element 1.1.2 aims to achieve

Educators communicate with families and previous educators, and use a variety of methods to gather information about each child’s knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests as the foundation of a child-centred and differentiated educational program. The diversity of family experiences means children experience ‘*Belonging, Being and Becoming*’ in many different ways.

As children participate in planned learning programs, they develop interests, build their identities, understanding of the world and new skills. Learning about each child and identifying their strengths and capabilities assists educators to make informed decisions about how to further support children’s learning and what they have yet to learn across the full breadth of the curriculum. Educators plan and engage with children in a range of experiences where children are active participants and decision makers.

#### Considerations for meeting element 1.1.2

##### Child-centred program



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- clear evidence that educators deeply know each child and plan accordingly
- educators:
  - observing, listening and talking with children for sustained periods of time and paying close attention to what they are saying, thinking and doing
  - incorporating children’s abilities, ideas, culture, existing understandings and interests in the program to ensure experiences are relevant, challenging and engaging

- planning for and delivering differentiated programs that cater to each child’s learning style, temperament, current level of understanding, skills and interests
- paying attention to how children are learning (persevering, collaborating, willing to try new approaches) as well as what they are learning
- incorporating children’s diverse experiences, perspectives, expectations, knowledge and skills in the program
- implementing a cross-curricula approach to develop children’s critical thinking and collaborative skills.
- children:
  - initiating and contributing to learning experiences that emerge from their own ideas and interests
  - repeating, revisiting and adding to projects or experiences that they have initiated
  - developing strong foundations in the culture and language of their family and in that of the broader community, without compromising their cultural identities
  - indicating their deep involvement in experiences that are rich and meaningful to them through verbal and non-verbal responses, and sustained concentration
  - exploring ideas and theories through inquiry and play and being encouraged to use innovation, imagination and creativity during long periods of uninterrupted time.



Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- educators’ current understanding of individual children’s knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests, and how they have developed this understanding of each child
- assessments and observations of children’s learning progress and how this informs planning
- how educators support children to actively participate in experiences and guide their own learning
- how educators encourage families to share information about their child to support program planning strategies:
  - used by the school to ensure that all children have a sense of belonging in the school and classroom
  - used to ensure that the requirements and interests of children are reflected in program planning and delivery.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- documented programs that are responsive to children’s knowledge, strengths, needs, ideas, culture, abilities and interests (including Individual Education Plans)
- documented information about each child’s developmental needs, interests, experiences, participation and progress.

## Element 1.1.3 Program Learning Opportunities

All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.

### What element 1.1.3 aims to achieve

All aspects of the educational program, including interactions, experiences, routines and events (both planned and unplanned) provide opportunities for children's learning and development. Educators interact with children in meaningful ways that empower children's choices and decision-making and extend their understandings and capabilities.

Educators are alert to opportunities to extend children's learning during planned and unplanned experiences, creating, identifying and capitalising on 'teachable moments'. They support children to follow their interests and to engage in uninterrupted play as well as scaffolded inquiry.

Effective routines and transitions are designed to support children and are regarded as equally important as planned, or spontaneous play experiences, or group activities. Effective transitions reduce stress and support children's sense of belonging.

### Considerations for meeting element 1.1.3

#### Program learning opportunities



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- educators:
  - providing learning environments that are stimulating and inviting
  - using all aspects of the program to undertake intentional teaching and support child-directed learning
  - using a range of instructional techniques including goal setting, cooperative learning, integrated technology and graphic organisers
  - observing and responding to children's engagement in both planned and unplanned learning experiences to progress and extend their understandings and capabilities
  - minimising the time children are expected to do the same thing at the same time, or to wait for long periods without engaging in play, interactions and turn-taking
  - using a variety of assessment techniques to allow all children to show their knowledge, skills and understandings of what has been learnt
  - collaborating with children about the learning program, routines and everyday classroom procedures
  - providing a literacy-enriched environment, a wide range of books and other reading and writing opportunities and (where applicable) displaying print<sup>3</sup> in home languages and in English.

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<sup>3</sup> This could include Braille and Auslan Signbank

- supporting children to understand numeracy and scientific concepts during everyday learning experiences and routines.
- children:
  - participating collaboratively in events and experiences and having opportunities to contribute to decisions
  - being given choices during routines and transition times
  - engaged in a range of play experiences throughout the day
  - having opportunities to extend their interests, experiences and activities, such as being able to continue working on a construction or artwork.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how the school:
  - organises its programs and routines to optimise opportunities for children's learning
  - maximises continuity of learning as children progress across the early years of schooling
- how children are involved in making decisions, contributing to the learning environment and assisting in everyday routines and transitions
- how programs have been planned to promote inclusion, participation and success.



#### Examples of what you may **sight**:

- documentation that reflects on all aspects of the program, for example:
  - incidental and planned teaching and learning (including transition and routine times)
  - experiences and learning outcomes that maximise opportunities for learning
- review of curriculum content and pedagogy documented programs that include planned experiences and/or strategies to support individual children's goals.

## Standard 1.2 Practice

Educators facilitate and extend each child's learning and development.

### How standard 1.2 contributes to quality teaching and learning

Educators are deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and actions. They value and respond to children's ideas, and extend their learning through open-ended questions, meaningful interactions and encouraging feedback. They promote each child's agency to help them make choices and decisions that influence their world.

Educators' professional judgements and curriculum decisions are central to their active role in facilitating children's learning, development and wellbeing. In making professional judgements, educators use their:

- professional knowledge, skills and experience, including deep and broad knowledge of approved learning framework and pedagogical practices
- knowledge of the children and their families, and the broader community
- awareness of how their own beliefs, cultural perspectives, worldview and values impact on their preferences and practices, and (ultimately) on children's wellbeing and learning.

Educators also draw on their creativity, imagination and insight to help them improvise and adjust their practice to suit the time, place and context in order to optimise children's learning.

Intentional and responsive educators actively engage in children's learning and share decision-making with them. They use everyday interactions with children during planned experiences including play, routines and ongoing projects to stimulate children's thinking and to enrich their learning.

### Questions to guide reflection on practice for standard 1.2

#### Educational practice

- How do we demonstrate that we value children's ideas, thinking and interests?
- What intentional strategies do we use to support children's development and learning?
- How do we extend the program and experiences being offered to each child and/or groups of children?
- Do we provide children with the opportunity to make choices in circumstances where we promote their agency?
- How can we improve the ways in which we engage children in making decisions about their own learning?

## Element 1.2.1 Intentional Teaching

Educators are deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions.

### What element 1.2.1 aims to achieve

Intentional teaching is being deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in decisions and actions. Intentionality includes actively promoting children's learning through challenging experiences and interactions that foster high-level critical thinking skills.

Intentional teaching utilises professional knowledge and strategies that reflect contemporary theories and research about children's play, inquiry and learning. Intentional educators are able to explain what they are doing and why they are doing it.

Intentional educators:

- recognise that learning occurs in social contexts and that interactions and communication are vitally important for learning
- use strategies (such as modelling, demonstrating, open-ended questioning, speculating, explaining and engaging in sustained shared conversations) to extend children's thinking and learning
- move flexibly in and out of different roles and draw on different instructional strategies as the context of children's inquiry, insights and needs change
- use their professional knowledge of curriculum in relation to their knowledge of what children already know or can do to plan programs that maximise learning.

### Considerations for meeting element 1.2.1

#### Intentional teaching practice



Examples of what you may **observe**:

- educators:
  - extending critical thinking skills through provocations and open-ended questioning
  - using a range of pedagogies (for example, hands-on activities, explicit instruction, provocations, supported reflections) to maximise children's learning
  - engaging with children by listening, showing interest and asking open-ended questions to encourage thinking and conversation
  - using teaching strategies and flexible, deliberate group compositions that complement the goals they have for children's learning at any given time
  - reflecting at a point of time and need by changing or altering experiences which are not engaging children
  - who are mindful of opportunities to provide children time and space to 'be'.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- plans and strategies used to promote learning across all aspects of the program and how the curriculum is integrated (for example, a science activity that also supports literacy skills and teamwork capabilities)
- adjustments implemented to support a child requiring additional assistance, and how those changes have been adapted and sustained over time to benefit the learning of other children and build respect for diversity
- how educators use intentional teaching strategies, including the grouping of children, the positioning of resources and the structuring of the learning environment.



#### Examples of what you may **sight**:

- documentation of reflections on intentional teaching strategies
- planning documentation, including notations of the strategies and resources to be used
- documented adaptations to written plans in response to what has worked, and what can be improved
- documentation and monitoring of children's learning, development, wellbeing and engagement.

## Element 1.2.2 Responsive Teaching and Scaffolding

Educators respond to children's ideas and play and extend children's learning through open-ended questions, interactions and feedback.

### What element 1.2.2 aims to achieve

Children's learning is extended when educators make decisions and implement actions that respond to children's ideas, current understandings and skills. Responsive teaching and scaffolding involve:

- building on children's ideas and interests with open-ended questions and positive feedback
- considering how children are grouped for learning experiences and play
- implementing experiences that support peer-scaffolding or extending children's learning through engagement with other children
- using spontaneous 'teachable moments' and incidental opportunities to enhance children's play and scaffold their learning.

Responsive teaching is achieved by valuing and building on children's current and evolving strengths, skills and knowledge to ensure their wellbeing, motivation and engagement in learning. Children learn best when the experiences they have are meaningful to them and are focused on the 'here and now'. As children constantly learn new skills and gain new insights into their world, educators continuously assess, evaluate and implement responsive teaching strategies.

Educators reflect on the inclusiveness of their practice, and whether they are responsive to individual children and acknowledge all children's contributions to the group. Their knowledge of individual children assists them to differentiate learning experiences, and plan new and follow-up experiences that are relevant to each child. All of these experiences are implemented within a social context where peer interactions are encouraged and supported, building a sense of belonging for all.

### Considerations for meeting element 1.2.2

#### Responsive teaching and scaffolding



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- educators:
  - intentionally scaffolding children's understanding and learning, including opportunities for peer scaffolding and sustained shared conversations
  - responding to children's learning dispositions by providing encouragement and additional ideas or provocations
  - making use of spontaneous 'teachable moments' to extend children's thinking and learning
  - responding to children's ideas and using their interests as a basis for further learning and exploration
  - noticing when children apply their learning in new ways or in different contexts and talking about this with them to build their understanding (for example, 'notice, narrate and nudge' the development of new insights)

- actively promoting children’s investigation of ideas, complex concepts and thinking, reasoning and hypothesising by, for example, engaging children in discussions about symbol systems, such as letters, numbers, time, money and musical notation
  - talking about and explicitly teaching concepts such as rhyme, letters, sounds and words when sharing texts with children, and using or building metalinguistic terminology
  - supporting children to contribute constructively to mathematical and scientific discussions and arguments
  - engaging children in the exploration of creative arts, the environment and scientific phenomena
  - planning and delivering meaningful teaching and learning programs for children who require additional adjustments including English as an Additional Language (EAL).
- children:
    - being curious and enthusiastic participants in their learning
    - using their own ideas to develop and test solutions to problems, taking risks and exploring ideas through play-based learning and inquiry.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- How educators scaffold children’s learning through the use of problem solving, open-ended questioning and hands-on learning
- use of open-ended resources and materials that allow children to express themselves (rather than using templates, stencils or resources that limit children’s capacity to create, interpret, experiment and explore)
- how educators provide learning environments that are flexible and open-ended with appropriate levels of challenge where children are encouraged to explore, experiment and take acceptable risks in their learning
- educators’ expectations of each child’s capabilities and how they maintain high expectations for every child.



#### Examples of what you may **sight**:

- documented programs, including examples of documentation or planning showing a mix of open-ended, scaffolded, and intentional learning opportunities
- project or inquiry work that provides opportunities for children to collaborate with peers, teachers, family or community members.

## Element 1.2.3 Child Directed Learning

Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world.

### What element 1.2.3 aims to achieve

When educators promote child-directed learning, they foster children's agency, build on the key concepts of belonging, being and becoming, and support children to develop a strong sense of identity. Promoting children's agency recognises that they have a right to make choices and decisions, and are capable of initiating their own learning.

Children should be actively encouraged to make decisions, solve problems, work in teams and take shared responsibility for their learning. Educators provide opportunities for them to develop skills in assessing risk. Children who are confident and capable recognise their influence and significance in the world.

Educators listen to and respect children's ideas, recognise their capabilities and help them develop the sense that their ideas and opinions matter. They support children to explore their world, to ask questions, to express ideas and to learn from their mistakes. Educators support children to develop decision-making skills to make appropriate choices for their own wellbeing and to realise that the choices they make may impact on others. When children are given choices and control, they begin to understand the connection between actions and consequences, and learn to assess what risks are appropriate and how they may be managed.

Educators promote child-directed learning by encouraging children to make decisions about, plan for and help set up their own play experiences or projects.

### Considerations for meeting element 1.2.3

#### Child-directed learning



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- educators:
  - arranging learning activities, routines and physical environments so that children have a range of opportunities to make choices about what they will do and how they will do it
  - acknowledging children as capable and confident, and encouraging them to act autonomously and make choices and decisions
  - providing children with strategies to make informed choices about their behaviours
  - incorporating children's ideas and suggestions in planning and implementing experiences
  - encouraging and displaying enthusiasm for children's attempts to gain new skills and knowledge
  - noticing and listening carefully to children's concerns and discussing diverse perspectives regarding learning opportunities, issues of inclusion, aspirations for the future, and local knowledge.

- children:
  - initiating play
  - participating collaboratively in events and experiences and having opportunities to contribute to decisions
  - regardless of background, age, additional supports, gender or ability, being supported to fully participate and engage in the learning program as valued members of the group
  - having opportunities to extend their interests, experiences and activities, such as being able to continue working on an investigation, construction or artwork
  - developing autonomy by taking increasing responsibility for self-help and basic health routines
  - having opportunities to develop the skills of questioning, negotiating, sharing and problem-solving
  - making choices and decisions about matters that affect them (for example, whether they want to play with other children or play independently)
  - beginning to display understanding and willingness to negotiate and share with others
  - showing leadership, making decisions and following directions given by other children
  - leading their learning, designing experiences and having opportunities to make choices about their participation in experiences
  - being supported to assess and manage risk
  - artefacts of project or inquiry work where children are given the opportunity to take the lead in an investigation or collaborate with peers, educators, family members and other members of the community.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how educators:
  - support opportunities for children's decision-making that are appropriate to the child's age, skills and learning disposition
  - provide opportunities for children to influence what happens to them and to exercise choice
  - support children to explore different identities and points of view through play and everyday experiences
  - reflect on what decisions children can make and the extent of those decisions
- what responsibilities children have and how this contributes to their sense of agency
- whether educators have high expectations for all children (across ages, genders, abilities, and cultural, linguistic or family backgrounds)
- what strategies are used to include the voices of children in planning and seeking their feedback.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- the school's philosophy statement (or similar) that recognises children's rights and evidence of how these are enacted in the classroom
- samples of work developed by children (alone or with others) with minimal educator input
- documented reflections that demonstrate changes in practice to support children's agency.

## Standard 1.3.1 Assessment and Planning

Each child's learning and development is assessed or evaluated as part of an ongoing cycle of observation, analysing learning, documentation, planning, implementation and reflection.

What element 1.3.1 aims to achieve

### Planning and implementation

The assessment and planning cycle is the ongoing process used to design programs that enhance and extend each child's learning and development. This process includes observation, analysis of development and learning, planning, documentation, implementation and reflection.

Educators:

- understand the context of the school and how the school's statement of philosophy (or similar) and operational plan guide their decision-making
- collect information in a variety of ways about each child's knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests that demonstrate the individuality of the child
- plan the program including:
  - strategies and experiences for individual children, which may include their goals
  - experiences to support the achievement of group goals
  - experiences to extend emerging strengths, abilities and interests
  - experiences related to relevant community events
  - experiences drawn from the cultures and interests of the families.
- implement planned experiences, and at the same time, identify and utilise 'teachable moments' to respond to and support children's newly emerging strengths, abilities and interests
- reflect on individual children's learning and participation, and the program as a whole, to support further planning for learning.

### Observation, analysis, reflection

Reflection occurs at every stage of the assessment and planning cycle as educators think about their practice and decisions, and children's engagement and progress.

Educators reflect to:

- ensure that sufficient information has been collected to provide an accurate record of each child's progress, and what they know, can do and understand
- determine the extent to which each child is making progress towards learning outcomes and identifying what may be impeding their progress
- identify children who may benefit from additional support, how that support can be provided and how families are assisted to access specialist assistance

- review the effectiveness of learning experiences, environments and approaches used to support children's learning
- ensure their pedagogical practices are developmentally appropriate for the children with whom they are working.

## Documentation

Documentation of children's experiences makes learning visible to children, educators and families and promotes shared learning and collaboration. It promotes relationships between children, educators and families and demonstrates professionalism. It also enables the assessment and planning cycle to be visible to school leaders, educators and families, and where appropriate, children.

## Considerations for meeting element 1.3.1

### Assessment and planning cycle



Examples of what you may **observe**:

- educators:
  - observing children and recording information about what they know, can do and understand
  - implementing the teaching and learning program based on planning documentation
  - differentiating the levels of difficulty or content to reflect the abilities and developmental stages of each child.



Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how educators gather and analyse information about each child to make assessments of their strengths, interests, needs and progress towards specific learning outcomes and plan programs accordingly
- how educators gather the children's voice in relation to the planned learning experiences, and gain information from other stakeholders including families about the planned program.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- progress information that reflects the breadth of the EYLF Learning Outcomes, documented evidence of each child's developmental needs, interests, experiences and participation in the program
- documentation that has been gathered in a variety of ways about children's progress towards the learning outcomes
- the information collected is:
  - systematic, accurate, well organised and regularly updated
  - appropriate to the age of the child
  - shared with children and their families in a collaborative way that encourages comments and feedback about the program.

## Element I.3.2 Critical Reflection

Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, drives program planning and implementation.

### What element I.3.2 aims to achieve

Reflective practice is an ongoing dynamic process that involves educators thinking about all aspects of the program, the principles that guide them, the practices they use and the learning outcomes for children. School leaders and Kindergarten program leaders support educators to analyse their actions objectively and motivate them to reflect and explore new ideas and approaches as part of daily practice.

Critical reflection helps educators to build on their knowledge and skills, identifying practice that can be continued as well as what might need to be improved or changed. Educators identify ways to improve opportunities for children's participation, learning and development to ensure all children and families are included.

School leaders support educators to consider questions such as:

- How do we currently examine our practices and decision-making, and identify improvements as well as successes?
- Have we considered which children may be advantaged and whether any child is disadvantaged?
- How are we creating opportunities for conversations, debates, and collaborative inquiries as a team, ensuring all voices are heard and responded to with respect?
- What questions do I have about my work? What am I challenged by? What am I curious about?

### Considerations for meeting element I.3.2

#### Critical reflection



Examples of what you may **observe**:

- educators:
  - using a variety of methods, such as jottings, children's comments and conversations, photographs and examples of children's work to assist their reflection on children's experiences, thinking and learning
  - focusing on adapting the program to include all children
  - reflecting-in-action by changing or altering activities that are not engaging children
  - observing each other's practice and providing feedback.



### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how educators:
  - use critical reflection to improve their program and practice
  - use the approved learning framework as a reference for reflection
  - evaluate the inclusivity of programs and indoor and outdoor environments with a view to identify and address potential barriers to participation.
- strategies that demonstrate diversity is valued
- opportunities for children to provide feedback regarding their learning and the program, and how this is considered in the reflection process
- the effectiveness of the methods used to document information about children’s knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities, interests, relationships, learning and participation.



### Examples of what you may **sight**:

- documentation that shows evidence of critical reflection, such as adjustments to daily work plans
- documentation that reflects on all aspects of the program and may include notes about:
  - transitions and routines
  - the environment and experiences provided
  - the effectiveness of resources and equipment
  - review of curriculum content and pedagogy
- differentiated teaching and learning programs, including Individual Education Plans
- plans for the teaching and learning program and/or environment that reduce barriers to participation.

## Element 1.3.3 Information for Families

Families are informed about the program and their child's progress.

### What element 1.3.3 aims to achieve

Quality schools engage with families to provide information about the educational program and their child's learning, development and wellbeing. Learning outcomes are best achieved when educators work in partnership with families, for example encouraging families to actively contribute to program planning. School leaders support educators to share information sensitively, taking into account the child and family's right to confidentiality.

Educators inform families of their child's participation and progress and share documentation about their children's learning and development in meaningful ways. This enables families to understand their child's strengths, abilities and knowledge.

Educators encourage families to share in decision-making about their child's further learning, development and wellbeing.

### Considerations for meeting element 1.3.3

#### Information for families about their child's progress



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- educators sharing information (including documentation) with families about their child's learning and development
- information provided to families in accordance with the DoE reporting guidelines.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- the school's range of strategies to share information with families in meaningful, useful and accessible ways
- how the school communicates learning outcomes for children with their families
- how documentation about their child will be made available to families and whether it is informative, understandable and meaningful to them
- how arrangements are made to exchange information with families at mutually convenient times.



#### Examples of what you may **sight**:

- the educational program made available to families in ways that are accessible, understandable and meaningful
- documented information about each child's developmental needs, interests, experiences, participation and progress that is shared with families
- examples of children's representation of their learning and other work is displayed in sensitive and respectful ways.

# Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety

## Overview

Quality Area 2 reinforces children’s right to experience quality teaching and learning in an environment that provides for their health and safety. Educators support this when they promote each child’s wellbeing and healthy lifestyle, and encourage each child’s growing competence, confidence and independence.

Administration and educators have responsibility for supporting the health, protection, safety and wellbeing of all children. In exercising their responsibilities, they must take reasonable care to protect children from foreseeable risk of harm, injury and infection.

Learning about healthy lifestyles, including nutrition, personal hygiene (such as hand washing, dental hygiene and ear care), physical fitness, emotions and social relationships, is integral to children’s wellbeing and self-confidence. When children develop resilience, their ability to take increasing responsibility for their self-help and basic health routines promotes a sense of independence and confidence. As children become more independent, they take greater responsibility for their own health, hygiene and personal care and become increasingly aware of their own and others’ safety and wellbeing.

## Standards and elements

Quality Area 2 has two standards that focus on children’s health and safety. These standards are crucial to delivering quality outcomes for children because:

- children’s health, comfort and wellbeing strongly impact on their learning, confidence and self-esteem
- all children have a right to safety and protection from harm
- adequate supervision and effective management of incidents and emergencies are paramount at all times to support children’s safety and engagement in the educational program.

<b>Standard 2.1</b>	<b>Health</b>	<b>Each child’s health and physical activity is supported and promoted.</b>
Element 2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child’s wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child’s need for rest and relaxation.
Element 2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
Element 2.1.3	Healthy lifestyle	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.

<b>Standard 2.2</b>	<b>Safety</b>	<b>Each child is protected.</b>
Element 2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
Element 2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
Element 2.2.3	Child protection	School leaders, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.

## Standard 2.1 Health

### Element 2.1.1

Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for rest and relaxation.

#### What element 2.1.1 aims to achieve

Wellbeing and comfort incorporate both physical and psychological aspects and are central to children's learning and development. Without a strong sense of wellbeing, it is difficult for children to develop a sense of belonging, to trust others and feel confident in being themselves and to participate in experiences that support learning and personal growth.

'Child wellbeing refers to a state where learners feel loved and safe; have access to material basics; have their physical, mental and emotional needs met; are learning and participating; and have a positive sense of identity.<sup>4</sup>

#### Considerations for meeting element 2.1.1

##### Ensuring children's wellbeing and comfort



##### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- children being supplied with clean, appropriate spare clothes when they need them and knowing where they can access them independently
- children's needs for privacy during toileting or dressing times being respected and facilitated
- children being supported sensitively and positively when they are learning to use the toilet or require assistance with toileting
- physical spaces being made available for children to engage in rest and quiet experiences
- educators supporting children to manage their emotions and regulation needs
- educators showing awareness of children's comfort and canvassing children's preferences.



##### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how educators negotiate arrangements for relaxation and 'downtime' with children
- privacy arrangements for children's toileting and personal hygiene requirements
- how the experience of family members and other stakeholders are used to inform the supports used with a particular child.

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<sup>4</sup> 2018-2021 Child and Student Wellbeing Strategy, page 6.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- planning that reflects the input of children into rules and routines of the school that relate to the wellbeing of individuals and the group.

## Element 2.1.2 Health Practices and Procedures

Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.

### What element 2.1.2 aims to achieve

#### Illness management and hygiene practices

Effective illness management practices and maintaining high standards of hygiene significantly reduce the likelihood of children becoming ill. This involves reducing children's exposure to materials, surfaces and body fluids that may cause infection or illness. For more information, refer to the Department's student health and safety policies and procedures.

#### Injury management

The Department's student health and safety policies and procedures provides advice for school leaders and educators to ensure the safety and welfare of children in their care. School leaders are responsible for ensuring the provision of first aid in the school, conducting a risk assessment, developing a first aid plan and making sure a suitable number of staff are trained.

### Considerations for meeting element 2.1.2

#### Hygiene practices



Examples of what you may **observe**:

- safe and hygienic storage, handling, preparation and serving of all food and drinks consumed by children, including food brought from home
- all educators and staff:
  - implementing the school's health and hygiene policy and procedures
  - actively supporting children to learn hygiene practices (including hand washing, coughing, dental hygiene and ear care)
  - maintaining a hygienic environment for children.



Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how the school complies with Department policies about health, hygiene and safety and how this information is used to inform policies, procedures and practices
- how often dress-up clothes, cushion covers and other washable materials are laundered and how often hands-on equipment/resources are cleaned
- how cleanliness of the school is consistently maintained.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- policies and procedures relating to safety, health and hygiene
- information about correct hand-washing procedures displayed in relevant areas of the school.

### ***Illness and injury management***



Examples of what you may **observe**:

- groupings of children arranged to minimise the risk of illness and injuries
- educators:
  - promptly responding to signs of illness and injury in children
  - involving children in developing guidelines to keep the school environment healthy and safe for all
  - communicating with families about children's health requirements in culturally sensitive ways
  - implementing appropriate practices when administering medication in keeping with the Department's student health and safety policies and procedures.



Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- the school's guidelines for the exclusion of ill children and educators
- how families are advised of cases of infectious illnesses in the school, including information about the nature of the illness, incubation and infectious periods and the school's exclusion requirements for the illness
- how the school responds to a serious accident or health-related emergency involving a child
- how the school communicates information about a child's individual health requirements to relevant staff members
- how information about a child's individual health is kept confidential
- availability of staff trained in first aid at any given time.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- policies and procedures relating to incident, injury, trauma, illness and medical conditions
- the school's policy and procedures for dealing with infectious disease, including notifying families of cases of infectious illnesses and exclusion of ill children, that is consistent with current Department policy
- up-to-date first aid kits readily available (including in the school and on excursions)
- enrolment records containing health information, including immunisation status and Student Health Care Summary

- individual health care management plans for children with a specific health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition, at risk of seizure, anaphylaxis or asthma
- a written process for, and records of, the administration of medication for children records of staff members' first aid qualifications.

## Element 2.1.3 Healthy Lifestyle

Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.

### What element 2.1.3 aims to achieve

Healthy eating and physical activity contribute to children's ability to socialise, concentrate, cooperate and learn. Learning about healthy lifestyles, including nutrition and physical fitness, is integral to wellbeing and self-confidence.

### Considerations for meeting element 2.1.3

#### Healthy eating



Examples of what you may **observe**:

- educators:
  - engaging children in experiences, conversations and routines that support relaxed and enjoyable meal breaks and promote healthy, balanced lifestyles
  - never using food to reward or punish children.
- children:
  - showing an awareness of healthy lifestyles and good nutrition
  - participating in 'Move Well Eat Well' or being able to independently access food and water throughout the day.



Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how the school consults with families and children to learn about individual requirements for food and any culturally appropriate food requirements
- how the school respectfully encourages families to provide lunches and snacks that are consistent with the school's Healthy Food and Drink Policy
- how the school works with canteen organisers for example via the School Canteen Accreditation Program and other organisations to provide healthy food and drink options.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- the school's relevant policies, including canteen, nutrition, food, drink and dietary requirements
- canteen menus on display, detailing the food provided for children that are consistent with the school's Healthy Food and Drink Policy.

## Physical activity



### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- educators:
  - implementing physical games and activities as part of the program, including fundamental movement skills and encouraging each child's participation
  - encouraging and supporting children to participate in new or unfamiliar physical activities according to each child's abilities and level of comfort
  - encouraging children to identify and manage risks in their play, including providing opportunities for children to problem-solve.
- children:
  - having frequent opportunities to engage in physical activity
  - being encouraged and supported to use increasingly complex sensory motor skills and movement patterns that:
    - combine gross and fine motor movement and balance
    - increase their spatial awareness
    - use their problem-solving skills
  - helping to plan and set up physical play activities and equipment
- indoor and outdoor areas that are organised in ways to promote safe physical play and activity.



### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how the school:
  - manages risk while providing a stimulating learning and play environment for children
  - considers children's voices in planning physical activities, including opportunities for physical play that support the abilities, diversity and backgrounds of each child.



### Examples of what you may **sight**:

- how the planned program incorporates physical activity that meets each child's capabilities and extends their development, including how it balances quiet or passive play times with more energetic outdoor play
- evidence that information about the importance of physical activity to children's health and development is communicated to families.

## Standard 2.2 Safety

Each child is protected.

### How standard 2.2 contributes to quality teaching and learning

Children have a fundamental right to be protected and kept safe when at school. Unsafe settings and situations can negatively impact on children's physical health and wellbeing, which in turn can negatively affect their experiences, learning and wellbeing in the present and throughout their lives. This includes raising awareness of bullying and its impact on individuals, and ensuring any Departmental or school resources are known and implemented.

### Questions to guide reflection on practice for standard 2.2

#### Protecting each child

- How do we plan to ensure that all areas used by children are effectively supervised, including when children are participating in high-risk activities or undertaking new challenges?
- How do we ensure children are alerted to safety issues and encouraged to develop the skills to assess and manage risks to themselves and peers?
- How do we ensure children develop knowledge and skills to use technology safely and responsibly?
- How do we identify, assess, manage and record hazards and potential risks for children, such as potentially dangerous products, plants, objects and animals at the school, and how often do we do this?
- How do we ensure that all equipment and materials used in the school meet relevant safety standards, including sun protection resources and equipment?
- How do we conduct risk assessments for potential excursions and plan for children's safety during excursions?
- How do we identify which emergency procedures and specific action plans are required for our school and how often do we practice these?
- How do we maintain an awareness of the people who have contact with children at the school and where required, ensure clearances are current?
- How do we keep up to date with current legislation in relation to child protection, and ensure that all staff understand how to report their concerns about child protection issues?
- How do we keep up to date with current information on travelling safely, such as bus travel and bike safety?

## Element 2.2.1 Supervision

At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.

### What element 2.2.1 aims to achieve

Supervision is a key aspect of ensuring that children's safety is maintained at all times in the school environment and while on excursions.

### Considerations for meeting element 2.2.1

#### Adequate supervision



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- children being supervised in all areas of the school, by being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times, including during toileting, rest and transition routines
- educators:
  - supervising children closely when they are in a situation that presents a higher risk of injury (for example, during water play or woodwork experiences or on an excursion)
  - adjusting their levels of supervision depending on the area of the school and the skills, age mix, dynamics and size of the group of children they are supervising
  - talking with children about safety issues and correct use of equipment and the environment and, where appropriate, involving children in setting safety rules
  - following the school's procedures for releasing children and ensuring they are released only to parents or authorised guardian
- equipment, furniture and activities arranged to ensure effective supervision while also allowing children to access private and quiet spaces.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how school leaders:
  - inform both new and relief educators of the school's supervision arrangements and their responsibilities in relation to implementing the Department's student health and safety policies and procedures
  - ensure supervision arrangements are flexible to allow supervision of individuals or small groups, such as when indoor and outdoor experiences are offered concurrently
  - balance supervision requirements with children's needs for privacy and independence.

- how educators:
  - raise children's and families' awareness of the risks associated with online activities
  - provide appropriate supervision for students using online services on school sites.



#### Examples of what you may **sight**:

- evidence of planning for the supervision of children in outdoor and indoor areas
- a written record for monitoring who enters and leaves the school premises.

#### Reasonable precautions



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- educators and/or other staff:
  - implementing regular safety checks and monitoring the maintenance of buildings, equipment and the environment
  - implementing Department policy regarding use and storage of dangerous products
  - removing identified hazards immediately or securing the area to prevent children from accessing the hazard
- children being unable to access potentially hazardous items, such as medications, cleaning products and garden chemicals, and that such items are clearly labelled at all times
- clear warning signs where potentially dangerous products are stored
- poisonous or hazardous plants identified, explained to children and in some instances removed or not made accessible to children, or children are adequately supervised
- educators supervising children consuming hot food and drink
- a tobacco, drug and alcohol free environment
- climbing equipment, swings and other large equipment having stable bases and/or securely anchored, and located over soft fall surfaces that meet the Australian Standards for Playgrounds.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- the processes in place to ensure children have suitable levels of access to online sites that are appropriate to their age and development
- how regular safety checks of buildings, equipment and the general environment are conducted and what action is taken as a result of the checks
- the school's approach to sun protection
- how safety and hygiene are maintained when animals are included in the teaching and learning program

- where the school transports children:
  - how the school complies with Department policy on transporting children and using child restraints in vehicles.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- written procedures for conducting regular safety checks and identifying and undertaking the maintenance of buildings and equipment
- in relation to excursions:
  - the school's policy and procedures for excursions
  - documented evidence of detailed information provided to families regarding excursions that comply with Department policy
- the school's policy on dealing with water safety, including safety during water-based activities
- the school's policy and procedures on sun protection and evidence that information about the school's approach to sun protection is shared with families.

## Element 2.2.2 Incident and Emergency Management

Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.

### What element 2.2.2 aims to achieve

Planning to manage incidents and emergencies assist schools to protect children, adults and staff, maintain children's wellbeing and a safe environment; and meet the requirements of relevant Department workplace health and safety policies. Having a clear plan for the management and communication of incidents and emergencies assists educators to handle these calmly and effectively, reducing the risk of further harm or damage.

### Considerations for meeting element 2.2.2

#### Incident and emergency management



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- emergency procedures displayed prominently throughout the premises
- nominated educators having ready access to an operating telephone or other similar means of communication
- emergency telephone numbers displayed near telephones
- school staff having ready access to emergency equipment, such as fire extinguishers and fire blankets.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how the school complies with the Department's Critical Incident and Emergency Procedures
- how the school communicates information to children and families about the school's emergency procedures and plans to manage incidents
- how the school ensures that staff are informed about and understand the emergency procedures and plans
- the frequency of emergency drill practice
- the provision of training for nominated staff in the use of emergency equipment.



#### Examples of what you may **sight**:

- procedures for managing incidents and emergencies and providing a child-safe environment (for example, Bushfire Management Plan in bushfire prone areas)
- records of emergency drills, and evaluations of these
- written emergency and evacuation procedures that include instructions for what must be done in the event of an emergency; and an emergency evacuation floor plan

- a current, portable record of children's emergency contacts that can be carried by educators in case of emergencies and/or evacuations
- written plans to manage an emergency that may be likely to affect individuals at the school (for example, the management of an asthma flare-up, anaphylactic reaction or epileptic seizure)
- written communication with families about the school's emergency procedures and plans to manage incidents
- evidence that emergency equipment is tested as recommended by recognised authorities.

## Element 2.2.3 Child Protection

School leaders, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.

### What element 2.2.3 aims to achieve

Educators and other staff must be aware of current child protection policy and procedures, including their legal responsibilities, and act when required to protect any child who is at risk of abuse or neglect.

### Considerations for meeting element 2.2.3

#### Awareness of role and responsibility to protect children



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- educators:
  - listening and responding to families' comments about their day-to-day observations of their child and the events occurring in their lives
  - remaining vigilant about observing and responding to signs or indicators of child abuse and/or neglect.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how educators and staff members are kept up to date with child protection law and their obligations
- how new or relieving educators and other staff are made aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection and the particular protection needs of individual children in the school
- documented plans are in place for children in relation to any court orders, parenting orders or parenting plans including Out of Home Care arrangements or Care and Protection Orders.
- support mechanisms in place for staff members who identify children at risk.



#### Examples of what you may **sight**:

- evidence that:
  - all staff are provided with current information about child protection requirements and procedures
  - staff have completed training or professional development on child protection
  - educators work collaboratively with other authorities and/or professionals to support children who have specific protection needs
- a current list of local community resources that can provide information and support for children, families and staff in relation to children at risk of abuse and/or neglect.

# Quality Area 3: Physical Environment

## Overview

Quality Area 3 focuses on the physical environment. The physical environment is critical to:

- contributing to children’s wellbeing, creativity and developing independence
- providing a diverse range of experiences that promote children’s learning and development
- keeping children safe
- creating or organising spaces to reduce the risk of injury.

## Standards and elements

Quality Area 3 has two standards that focus on the design of school facilities and the use of the school’s physical environment to support children’s experiences. These standards are crucial to delivering quality learning outcomes for children because:

- inclusive built and natural environments in indoor and outdoor spaces, when appropriately resourced, promote intentional play-based learning
- well maintained, fit-for-purpose facilities keep children safe and support each child’s access to facilities and participation in experiences and activities
- the physical environment significantly impacts on the quality of children’s experiences and encourages children to become environmentally responsible.

<b>Standard 3.1</b>	<b>Design</b>	<b>The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a school.</b>
Element 3.1.1	Fit for purpose	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.
Element 3.1.2	Upkeep	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.

<b>Standard 3.2</b>	<b>Use</b>	<b>The school environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.</b>
Element 3.2.1	Inclusive environment	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
Element 3.2.2	Resources support play- based learning	Resources, materials and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based learning.
Element 3.2.3	Environmentally responsible	The school cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

## Standard 3.1 Design

The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a school.

### How standard 3.1 contributes to quality teaching and learning

The way in which the school environment is designed, equipped and arranged determines how children use space and resources. The school environment should reflect the unique geographical, cultural and community context of the school. The environment also impacts on the behaviours and interactions of children and adults.

**Indoor environments** are characterised by open spaces that provide children with opportunities to be involved in allocated, self-chosen or negotiated experiences. These may be quiet or active learning situations including solitary play, inquiry experiences or routines with small and large groups.

Quality indoor spaces:

- recognise children as active learners and competent decision makers
- support the emerging interests of every child and enable them to demonstrate their innate creativity and curiosity

- reflect the cultures, interests, abilities and learning styles of every child.

**Outdoor environments** are characterised by both active and quiet zones that comprise a balance of fixed and moveable equipment, open space to engage in physical activities, and spaces that promote learning, investigation and respect for the natural environment.

Outdoor spaces that are dynamic and flexible:

- provide opportunities for unique play and learning
- complement and extend indoor learning experiences
- offer children opportunities to be active, make mess and noise, and be wholly engaged in play.

To maximise children's engagement in positive experiences and support the access of every child, schools should consider:

- access between indoor and outdoor environments
- the availability of furniture, equipment and resources, and arrangement of classrooms
- how the placement of buildings, fixtures and fittings supports the access of all children and families
- visibility and set-up of the environment to support effective supervision
- impact of internal and external noise levels on children's learning, participation and behaviour
- being aware of the air quality
- ventilation and access to natural light.

## Questions to guide reflection on practice for standard 3.1

### Appropriate design and upkeep

- How do the indoor and outdoor environments promote and foster children's learning, development and wellbeing?
- How does the environment support the access of all children and families enrolled at the school?
- How do we ensure the environment is organised to meet supervision requirements, and also provide appropriate spaces and activities for children's need for privacy and autonomy?

### Element 3.1.1 Fit for Purpose

Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.

#### What element 3.1.1 aims to achieve

To support each child's access to indoor and outdoor environments, schools should have sufficient space, equipment and facilities that are fit for purpose and promote children's learning and development. Well-designed indoor and outdoor spaces:

- support children's learning, growing independence, confidence and self-esteem
- are flexible, welcoming and accessible
- reflect the diversity within the local and broader communities
- support the health and safety of children, staff and families
- facilitate convenient and integrated access between indoor and outdoor areas, as well as convenient access to toilet and hand-washing facilities
- are environmentally sustainable
- promote an understanding of and respect for the natural environment
- support the grouping of children in ways that minimise the risk of injury or conflict and promotes their learning and development
- have age-appropriate furniture and equipment that is age and developmentally appropriate.

#### Considerations for meeting element 3.1.1

##### A fit for purpose school environment



##### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- a physical environment that is safe and includes adequate space for solitary play; and for children to work, play and talk together in small and large groups
- outdoor spaces with shaded areas

- environments designed to support each child's access and assist educators to:
  - adequately supervise children
  - group children in ways that minimise the risk of injury and conflict, reduce prolonged exposure to excess noise, and promote children's learning and development
- fencing (as appropriate) that provides safety
- facilities that enable interaction and convenient access between indoor and outdoor spaces
- appropriate areas for food preparation and storage
- access to spaces for administrative functions, educator and staff breaks, private conversations and consultation with families
- appropriate areas and resources for children to rest and relax.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- appropriate spaces available to consult and discuss confidential matters with families
- where relevant, how the school has considered the impact of any building modifications and/or the installation of new furniture, storage areas and fixed equipment on the unencumbered space available
- how educators plan adjustments to the environment to accommodate the needs of all children.



#### Examples of what you may **sight**:

- the school's approach to organising classes where consideration is shown for the most appropriate learning space in relation to the age of the children
- plans for the setup of the indoor and outdoor learning environment.

## Element 3.1.2 Upkeep

Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.

### What element 3.1.2 aims to achieve

The upkeep of buildings, furniture and equipment impacts directly on the safety of children and staff. Every child has the right to be safe.

Upkeep refers to the responsibility of schools to implement effective maintenance, cleaning and appropriate safety precautions, which also helps prevent injuries and the spread of infectious diseases.

### Considerations for meeting element 3.1.2

#### Effective upkeep



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- premises, furniture and equipment that are safe, clean and well maintained
- educators and other staff members regularly conducting safety checks and monitoring the maintenance of buildings and equipment
- educators following safety advice from recognised authorities and manufacturers when arranging equipment, furniture and experiences
- areas used by children are regularly cleaned.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- the processes in place to monitor the cleanliness and safety of the premises, furniture and equipment
- arrangements the school has for appropriate handling and laundering of soiled items.



#### Examples of what you may **sight**:

- documented procedures and correspondence relating to:
  - maintenance and safety checks
  - the cleaning of buildings, premises, furniture and equipment
- risk assessments of the physical environment that reflect the school
- where relevant, a management plan that is in place to protect the safety of children, families and staff while major work is occurring at the school.

## Standard 3.2 Use

The school environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.

### How standard 3.2 contributes to quality teaching and learning

A school environment that is inclusive, promotes competence in children and supports intentional play-based learning, creates the context for children to learn and build relationships with others. Welcoming, inclusive, vibrant and flexible environments support children's learning, creativity and exploration and are responsive to the individual requirements of each child. A quality physical environment caters for different learning capacities and learning styles, and encourages children and families to contribute ideas, interests and questions.

Exploration of the natural environment helps to build children's competence and provides opportunities for play-based learning. It also encourages children to develop an appreciation of the natural world, an awareness of the impact of human activity on the environment, and ways in which they can contribute to a sustainable future.

Resources should reflect the breadth of age groups and interests and capabilities of children that are sharing the environment. Resources need to be accessible to children so they can choose and be responsible for their actions.

### Questions to guide reflection on practice for standard 3.2

#### Inclusive environment

- Is the environment welcoming for all children and families?
- What opportunities do we provide for children to be involved in planning, setting up and modifying the environment?
- How is the environment equipped and organised to cater for all capabilities?
- How are the backgrounds and cultures of families and the broader community reflected in the environment?
- How can the physical environment be adapted to include all children and provide for their needs and interests?

#### Promoting competence, supporting exploration and play-based learning

- How can we organise environments and spaces to provide children with opportunities to:
  - engage in self-directed and supported inquiry?
  - participate in small and large group interactions?
- How does the organisation of the indoor and outdoor environments allow for a variety of uses by children and educators?

- What adaptations can be made to the environment or additional resources introduced to provoke interest, creativity, curiosity, sustained shared conversations and collaborative learning?
- What equipment do we provide that allows for multiple uses?
- What features in the physical environment encourage open-ended interactions, spontaneity, risk taking, exploration, discovery and connection with nature?
- How do we regularly evaluate the effectiveness of learning environments and draw links to intended learning outcomes?
- What strategies can we implement to support educators to model environmentally responsible practices, and foster children's capacity to value and respect the broader environment?
- How do we foster children's capacity to understand, care for and respect the natural environment and the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land?

## Element 3.2.1 Inclusive Environment

Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.

### What element 3.2.1 aims to achieve

Schools provide an inclusive environment when indoor and outdoor spaces are designed to support the diverse interests, preferences and learning styles of all children. Educators enhance inclusion by identifying aspects of the environment that can be adapted to support each child's participation.

Flexible arrangements of furniture and equipment, together with materials that allow for multiple uses, encourage children to become flexible thinkers and investigators. A secure and predictable environment with adequate space and appropriate facilities and resources enables children to participate in experiences and activities of their choice, and take increasing responsibility for their own health, hygiene and personal care. This supports children to increase their self-confidence and competence, and provides them with a strong sense of self-identify.

Schools provide many opportunities for children to develop relationships and should make spaces available for small and large groups to gather. Indoor and outdoor environments should be organised and adapted to support all aspects of children's learning and invite conversations between children, educators, families and the broader community.

### Considerations for meeting element 3.2.1

#### Environments that support participation and quality experiences



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- clear pathways that direct children and adults around, rather than through, areas being used by others
- safe shelving and storage areas from which children can access equipment and resources that are age and capability appropriate
- educators:
  - setting up and adapting the indoor and outdoor environments to:
    - facilitate the inclusion and participation of every child in all daily experiences
    - promote small and large group interactions, inquiry and purposeful play
    - provoke, stimulate and reflect children's interests and learning
    - assist children to function autonomously in distinct learning or interest areas
    - enable small groups of children to work together on their own projects
  - planning, implementing, modifying or changing learning resources to encourage each child's participation and experience success

- encouraging the use of natural materials in all learning environments
- re-organising and re-setting the environment with assistance from children to provide order and predictability, attract their interest to the area and stimulate learning.
- children:
  - actively engaged in a variety of rich, meaningful, and intentional inquiry-based experiences in both outdoor and indoor environments
  - contributing to decisions made about the arrangement of, and resources in, the environment
  - accessing areas with natural features such as plants, trees, edible gardens, sand, rocks, mud and water
  - exploring relationships with living things and observing and responding to change.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how educators involve children in discussions about the use of space and resources, materials and equipment
- how the indoor and outdoor spaces have been designed to invite open-ended interactions, spontaneity, risk-taking, exploration, discovery and connection to nature.



#### Examples of what you may **sight**:

- documented learning programs that outline opportunities for children to engage in outdoor and indoor experiences, such as dramatic play, construction, music and exploration
- documented plans for the organisation of the indoor and outdoor environments including adjustments in place to ensure inclusion of all children
- the statement of philosophy (or similar) that describes the school's approach to inclusion
- documented evidence that indicates school leaders and educators work collaboratively with family members, specialists and/or agencies to plan for the inclusion of children with additional needs and access adaptive equipment to support children's requirements.

## Element 3.2.2 Resources Support Play-Based Learning

Resources, materials and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based learning.

### What element 3.2.2 aims to achieve

Learning environments should be sufficiently resourced to support intentional and spontaneous play-based learning and encourage children to explore, solve problems, create and construct. Educators can provide additional interest, variety and challenge for children by choosing equipment and materials that can be used in multiple ways. Resources and materials should be sufficient in number, accessible to children, and reflect the breadth of ages, interests and capabilities of children who are sharing the environment.

Educators should consider how they offer appropriate levels of challenge to encourage children to explore, experiment and take appropriate risks, as they learn to regulate themselves and contribute to the social environment.

### Considerations for meeting element 3.2.2

#### Sufficient resources to support play-based learning



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- resources, materials and equipment in the indoor and outdoor environment which are of sufficient variety and number to:
  - meet the range of interests, ages and abilities of the children
  - avoid overcrowding and ensure that children do not have to wait for long periods to participate or access resources or facilities
  - offer a range of challenges and experiences that reflect the breadth of ages, interests and capabilities of the children
  - stimulate children's curiosity and provide a range of experiences
  - encourage children to explore, discover and experiment.
- educators:
  - choosing resources, materials and equipment with children and using them in a way that supports children's sense of belonging, relationships, creativity and learning
  - providing sufficient time and resources for children to initiate and become actively involved in experiences
  - introducing appropriate tools, technologies and media to enhance children's learning
  - demonstrating the potential of resources to children and suggesting new and different ways to use them
  - structuring the environment so that it is flexible to allow children to move resources and equipment to extend learning opportunities

- using outdoor environments not only as places for children to release energy and engage in physical activity but also for exploration, problem solving and creative expression
- collaborating with children to select samples of work (individual and group) for display such as photographs of children using materials and equipment in a variety of ways.
- children:
  - being supported to take on challenges and try new activities and experiences
  - using a variety of technologies such as tablets, interactive whiteboards and digital cameras to support their learning
  - exploring, solving problems, creating, constructing and engaging in critical thinking
  - being supported to handle equipment and manage tools with increasing competence and skill.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- the strategies used to engage with families and children to ensure their views are considered and incorporated in the selection and organisation of materials, equipment and resources at the school
- how resources and materials reflect children's abilities and support their engagement in the educational program.



#### Examples of what you may **sight**:

- documentation and learning programs that demonstrate links between the arrangement and choice of resources, materials and equipment and learning outcomes for children
- plans for the arrangement of indoor and outdoor spaces to create inviting learning environments and documentation of how children's ideas have influenced these plans
- school plans that identify the allocation of funds and resources to support the teaching and learning program.

### Element 3.2.3 Environmentally Responsible

The school cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

#### What element 3.2.3 aims to achieve

Schools are places where children learn about themselves, others and the world, including environmental responsibility. Educators play a role in helping children develop an understanding of, and respect for, the natural environment and the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land. This element aligns sustainable operations within the school and children's learning about environmental responsibility. Environments and resources can emphasise accountability and advocacy for a sustainable future and promote children's understanding of their responsibility to care for the environment on a day to day and long-term basis.

#### Considerations for meeting element 3.2.3

##### Supporting environmental responsibility



##### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- educators:
  - integrating environmental awareness in teaching and learning programs
  - fostering children's capacity to understand and respect the natural environment and interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land
- spaces that promote the development of life skills, such as growing and preparing food, waste reduction and recycling, and children being actively engaged in these experiences
- children:
  - being supported to appreciate and care for natural and constructed environments
  - participating in environmentally sustainable practices that:
    - increase their awareness of the impact of human activity
    - build a sense of responsibility for caring for the environment
    - are meaningful, relevant to the school context and community, and connect with the educational program and practice.



##### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- the development and implementation of strategies to support children to be environmentally responsible and to show respect for the environment
- strategies used to support every child to engage in quality experiences in the natural environment.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- evidence of children’s learning about environmental and sustainability practice
- policies that promote children’s understanding about their responsibility to care for the environment and the development of life skills (such as growing and preparing food, waste reduction and recycling)
- photographs and displays highlighting children’s understanding and learning of the natural environment, including their investigations.

# Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements

## Overview

Quality Area 4 focuses on the professionalism of qualified educators who build warm, respectful relationships with children, create predictable environments and promote children’s active engagement in the learning program. A collaborative and ethical culture where professional standards guide all aspects of practice is critical in high performing schools. School leaders and educators play a vital role in establishing effective and ethical practices.

Deployment of suitably qualified educators promotes best practice in the early years and provides cohesion and continuity of learning for children.

## Standards and elements

Quality Area 4 has two standards that focus on the organisation and professionalism of school leaders, educators and other staff. These standards are crucial to delivering quality outcomes for children because:

- professional and collaborative relationships between school leaders, educators and other staff support continuous improvement, leading to improved learning experiences and outcomes for children
- considered deployment and staffing arrangements contribute to continuity of support for each child’s learning and development
- professional standards set quality benchmarks for educators’ practice and relationships.

<b>Standard 4.1</b>	<b>Staffing arrangements</b>	<b>Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development.</b>
Element 4.1.1	Organisation of educators	The organisation of educators across the school supports children's learning and development.
Element 4.1.2	Continuity of staff	Every effort is made for children to experience continuity of educators at the school.

<b>Standard 4.2</b>	<b>Professionalism</b>	<b>School leaders, educators and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical.</b>
Element 4.2.1	Professional collaboration	School leaders, educators and staff work with mutual respect and collaboratively, and challenge and learn from each other, recognising each other's strengths and skills.
Element 4.2.2	Professional standards	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.

Note: Aspects of the National Quality Standard which specify staff qualifications and age-specific child-to-staff ratios apply **only** to non-compulsory years (for example, Kindergarten). Ultimately, schools should aim to ensure all age eligible children have a place in Kindergarten. If this requires schools to go above the ratio, the reason for doing so should be noted against determinations for Quality Area 4.

## Standard 4.1 Staffing Arrangements

Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development.

### How standard 4.1 contributes to quality teaching and learning

Having sufficient educators available at all times when children are present enables the school to deliver quality teaching and learning programs. Responsive relationships are strengthened as educators and children engage and learn together. The school is encouraged to deploy staff in ways that support positive experiences for all children at all times.

### Questions to guide reflection on practice for standard 4.1

#### Staffing arrangements

- How do we engage in reflective practice to support and encourage each other, support ongoing learning and focus on quality improvement?
- How do our staffing arrangements support each child's learning and development?
- How do our staffing arrangements support educators to develop positive and respectful relationships with families?
- How do we support relief staff to learn about and understand the school's policies and processes?
- How do we inform children and families of relief arrangements when an educator is away for a period of time?
- How do the staffing arrangements provide for continuity and predictability for children and families?

## Element 4.1.1 Organisation of Educators

The organisation of educators across the school supports children's learning and development.

### What element 4.1.1 aims to achieve

The organisation of educators across the school is a key factor in supporting all children to have opportunities to engage in meaningful learning and interactions with educators with whom they are familiar and comfortable. Meeting educator-to-child ratios ensures the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children while at school and during excursions. The presence of adequate numbers of qualified and experienced educators has been consistently linked with quality interactions and positive learning experiences for children.

### Considerations for meeting element 4.1.1

#### Organisation of educators



Examples of what you may **observe**:

- how the organisation of educators throughout the day supports children's learning and development and ensures that educator-to-child ratios are maintained
- the facilitation of effective communication with families
- adequate supervision of children at all times.



Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- if educators in Kindergarten have the necessary qualifications and a 2:25 ratio is maintained at all times
- how staffing arrangements are managed to promote the participation of all children
- how the school provides non-contact time to enable educators to undertake tasks such as:
  - programming
  - meeting with families
  - meeting with inclusion support professionals for example Support Teacher, Speech Pathologist, Autism Consultant.
  - networking with relevant organisations, such as local long day care providers, outside school hours care coordinators and school networks
- the school's approach to allocating educators to support familiarity and continuity for children and families
- the number of staff with first aid and anaphylaxis training in accordance with Departmental guidelines.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- for educators in Kindergarten, the school has a record of approved qualifications
- recess and lunch duty rosters for educators
- program plans that include individual educator's responsibilities.

## Element 4.1.2 Continuity of Staff

Every effort is made for children to experience continuity of educators at the school.

### What element 4.1.2 aims to achieve

Continuity of educators on a day-to-day basis and over time assists them to build secure relationships with children and plays a significant role in promoting learning and wellbeing. Educators who work closely with children understand each child's interests, strengths and areas where support may be required. They are able to provide continuity of experiences to extend and enrich children's learning.

### Considerations for meeting element 4.1.2

#### Continuity of educators



Examples of what you may **observe**:

- children demonstrating their trust and comfort with educators by happily responding to them, having conversations and initiating interactions with them, and seeking their company
- all staff addressing children and families by name and demonstrating in these interactions that they are familiar with the day-to-day operations of the school.



Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how the school helps to build staff cohesion and pride in the school
- school leaders' and educators' understanding of the importance of educator continuity for children's learning and wellbeing
- how performance development processes provide educators with targeted feedback that supports continuity
- strategies the school uses to ensure a regular pool of relief educators are available to provide continuity of the teaching and learning program.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- induction information for new and relief educators and staff
- the school's Workforce Plan.

## Standard 4.2 Professionalism

School leaders, educators and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical.

### How standard 4.2 contributes to quality education and care

Professionalism is demonstrated when school leaders, educators and other staff develop and maintain relationships with each other that are based on the principles of mutual respect, equity and fairness. Team collaboration, based on understanding the expectations and attitudes of team members, builds on the strength of each other's knowledge and helps nurture constructive professional relationships. These relationships reduce the likelihood of misunderstanding and conflict. For more information see the Department's Conduct and Behaviour Standards that provides a set of general principles to guide Department staff in their conduct as employees.

When adults communicate effectively and respectfully with each other, they promote a positive and calm atmosphere at the school, supporting children to feel safe and secure and contributing to the development of positive relationships between children and educators. Unresolved and poorly managed conflict affects morale and impacts on the provision of quality teaching and learning for children.

### Questions to guide reflection on practice for standard 4.2

- What makes our school a positive place to work?
- How do we acknowledge the individual strengths, professional experiences and diversity that our colleagues bring to our work?
- How do we promote professionalism, confidentiality and ethical conduct?
- What opportunities do we provide for educators and other staff to have professional conversations and discussions to further develop their skills, or to improve practice and relationships? How do we ensure that everyone's voice is heard and considered?
- How do we use critical reflection to challenge our beliefs?
- How regularly do we refer to the Department's Conduct and Behaviour Standards and our own school's code of conduct and philosophy to ensure that our practices and policies align with currently recognised approaches?

## Element 4.2.1 Professional Collaboration

School leaders, educators and staff work with mutual respect and collaboratively, and challenge and learn from each other, recognising each other's strengths and skills.

### What element 4.2.1 aims to achieve

In a collaborative environment, all staff are encouraged to respect and value the diverse contributions and viewpoints of their colleagues. Staff also share resources, provide constructive feedback, and work together respectfully and professionally to solve problems. Interactions between school leaders, educators and other staff are guided by the Department's Conduct and Behaviour Standards and the school's philosophy. By collaborating effectively, staff model successful working relationships for children.

A lively culture of professional inquiry is established when school leaders and educators all contribute to continuous improvement at the school. Staff members can raise and debate issues including program quality, environment design, inclusion and equity, children's wellbeing and working with families. Professional discussions enhance the team and provide opportunities for educators to revise their practice and implement strategies for improvement.

Updating and maintaining educators' knowledge is the responsibility of both school leaders and educators. This can be achieved through providing a range of professional development strategies that challenge and extend current thinking.

### Considerations for meeting element 4.2.1

Developing a culture of professional collaboration, recognition and continuous improvement



Examples of what you may **observe**:

- positive working relationships within the school and an atmosphere of openness
- new educators and staff members being supported by other team members
- educators sharing their knowledge and discussing and reflecting constructively on the needs of particular children and families
- educators and other staff members:
  - responding promptly to support other team members in difficult situations
  - discussing and adopting inclusive practices and strategies that best support each child
  - demonstrating a commitment to learn more, regardless of their experience and current knowledge and skills.



Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- the school's approach to using particular strengths, talents and interests of individual educators
- how educators acknowledge each other's strengths and diverse knowledge and skills
- opportunities such as phase of learning team meetings for educators to engage in a cycle of inquiry that collaboratively affirms, challenges, supports and provides opportunities to learn from each other, share new information and further develop the team's skills
- how educators and staff members are encouraged to support and mentor each other
- how the school ensures that all interactions, including grievance procedures, convey mutual respect, equity and recognition of each other's strengths and skills.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- evidence recorded in staff and team meeting minutes that demonstrate educators collaborate and reflect on practice, explore new possibilities and evaluate their effectiveness
- documented examples of projects or teamwork.

## Element 4.2.2 Professional Standards

Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.

### What element 4.2.2 aims to achieve

School leaders and educators use professional standards and ethical principles to guide professional conduct in decision-making and practice. School leaders provide clear guidance to all staff about their responsibilities in relation to one another and to the families and children attending the school.

All staff should know and understand the requirements of the NQS, the approved learning framework, the Department's Conduct and Behaviour Standards as well as the school's philosophy, policies and procedures. Educators and other staff are aware that their attitudes, values and beliefs impact their work. Educators benefit from working together to identify where biases may have influenced their values, and minimise the impact of bias in their practice and relationships with children, families, colleagues and the local community.

### Considerations for meeting element 4.2.2

#### Professional conduct



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- all school staff demonstrating:
  - professional conduct in interactions with children, colleagues, families and members of the community
  - care, empathy and respect for children, colleagues and families in their everyday practice
  - interactions and practices that positively reflect the *Tasmania's Aboriginal Education Framework*
- school leaders and educators taking responsibility for:
  - implementing the approved learning framework
  - working in ways that meet the requirements of the NQS.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- the ways school staff access and use:
  - the NQS
  - the EYLF and associated guides
  - the *Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Standards*
  - the school's statement of philosophy (or similar)
  - the school's policies, procedures and operational plans
  - the school's staff handbook and code of conduct
  - the [\*Tasmania's Aboriginal Education Framework\*](#)

- how up-to-date information is communicated to educators (for example, school/Department information and changes or updates that impact on practice)
- how educators recognise and minimise the impact of personal biases on their practice and relationships with children, families, colleagues and the local community
- inclusion and what it means to educators, children and families
- where information can be found to assist staff to resolve differences.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- the school's statement of philosophy and/or Department's Conduct and Behaviour Standards are accessible to all staff.

# Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children

## Overview

Quality Area 5 focuses on school leaders and educators developing responsive, warm, trusting and respectful relationships with children that promote their wellbeing, self-esteem, sense of security and belonging. Respectful relationships of this kind encourage children to explore environments and engage in play and learning.

All children need a sense of connection with others to support the development of their identity and social and emotional competence. Exploring and learning to work and socialise appropriately with others, to manage feelings, behaviours and responsibilities is a complex process. When school leaders and educators take a positive approach to guiding children's behaviour, they empower children to self-regulate and develop the skills required to interact and negotiate effectively with others.

Relationships with peers take on increasing importance as children develop. Supportive relationships with educators enable children to grow in confidence, including the ability to express themselves, work through differences, engage in new experiences and take calculated risks.

## Standards and elements

Quality Area 5 has two standards that focus on relationships between educators and children, and between children and their peers. These standards are crucial to delivering quality outcomes for children because supportive and respectful relationships enable children to:

- develop their confidence and a strong sense of identity
- develop communication skills and the ability to express themselves effectively
- participate in collaborative learning and build meaningful relationships with others
- regulate their own behaviour and learn to negotiate complex social situations and relationships.

<b>Standard 5.1</b>	<b>Relationships between educators and children</b>	<b>Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.</b>
Element 5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
Element 5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.

<b>Standard 5.2</b>	<b>Relationships between children</b>	<b>Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.</b>
Element 5.2.1	Collaborative learning	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.
Element 5.2.2	Self-regulation	Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.

## Standard 5.1 Relationships between Educators and Children

Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.

### How standard 5.1 contributes to quality teaching and learning

When children experience nurturing and respectful relationships with educators, they develop an understanding of themselves as competent, capable and respected. Consistent emotional support contributes to children developing a strong sense of wellbeing and belonging. Relationships are the foundation for the construction of identity, and help shape children's thinking about who they are, how they belong and what influences them.

Educators who are actively engaged in children's learning also share decision-making with them. They use their everyday interactions, including routines, play and ongoing projects, to stimulate children's thinking, support their development and enrich their learning. These relationships provide a solid foundation from which to guide and support children as they develop the self-confidence and skills to manage their own behaviour, make decisions and relate positively and effectively to others.

### Questions to guide reflection on practice for standard 5.1

#### Positive relationships

- How do we build close, secure relationships with children of diverse, abilities, gender and backgrounds?
- What strategies and techniques do we use to extend and build on children's learning, comments and conversations?
- How do we ensure all children feel that they belong and are included in the school, can participate in all learning experiences, and that their contributions are appreciated and recognised?
- How do we promote children's social and emotional competence?
- How do we identify and overcome potential barriers to inclusion at the school so that each child's participation is supported?

- How do we respond to the distress some children experience when they have to adapt to new routines, people or places?

#### Dignity and rights of every child

- How do our school's policies and procedures promote the dignity and rights of each child?
- How do we assist children to understand their rights and the rights of others?
- How do we identify and minimise the impact of our own biases on our practices and relationships with children and families?

## Element 5.1.1 Positive Educator to Child Interactions

Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.

### What element 5.1.1 aims to achieve

Positive interactions between educators and children involve educators viewing each child as capable and competent, with a right to a voice and able to contribute to decisions that affect them. Warm and supportive one-on-one interactions are important to children's wellbeing and development. Respectful and reciprocal relationships enable children to develop their independence, leadership and social skills, and a strong sense of identity and agency.

Educators who are responsive to children's thoughts and feelings are supporting them to develop a strong sense of wellbeing. By interacting positively and meaningfully with children, educators help children to feel accepted and to develop a sense of attachment and trust.

### Considerations for meeting element 5.1.1

#### Building trusting relationships



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- educators:
  - assisting new children to settle into the program by talking with them or their families about their interests
  - responding openly, positively and respectfully to children's comments, questions and requests for assistance
  - engaging in sustained conversations with each child about their individual interests, questions and curiosities
  - acknowledging children's efforts and achievements, and supporting children to experience success
  - modelling reasoning, predicting, reflective processes and appropriate language
  - collaborating with children about routines and experiences, and providing opportunities for them to make decisions and choices
  - comforting children who cry or show other signs of distress.
- children:
  - demonstrating a sense of belonging, security and comfort in the environment
  - communicating their need for comfort and assistance
  - initiating conversations with educators about their experiences inside and outside the classroom
  - confidently expressing ideas and feelings and sharing humour
  - having the confidence to ask educators for assistance when they engage in new experiences, take on challenges and attempt to complete tasks independently

- a learning environment that is relaxed and happy and reflects the lives of the children, their families and local community
- staffing arrangements and interactions that support the establishment of secure relationships between educators and children.



Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- ways in which educators learn more about the histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child-rearing practices and lifestyle choices of families in the school community
- how plans for the inclusion of children requiring additional support are shared and communicated with educators and other staff members
- the ways in which educators use information gained from their observations and interactions with children to extend children's thinking and learning
- how educators use their interactions with children to support the maintenance of home languages while learning English as an additional language.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- Examples of information gathered from:
  - families to support their child during the settling-in process
  - other professionals or support agencies that work with children, including children who require additional support and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- the school's approach to equity and inclusion, documented in the statement of philosophy (or similar)
- plans for the inclusion of children who require additional support.

## Element 5.1.2 Dignity and Rights of the Child

The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.

### What element 5.1.2 aims to achieve

The United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* is a universally agreed set of obligations founded on respect for the dignity and worth of each child, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, opinions, origins, wealth, birth status or ability. By agreeing to this, Australia has committed to protecting children from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally.

### Considerations for meeting element 5.1.2

#### Dignity and rights of children



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- spaces, resources and routines are arranged to minimise times when children are likely to experience stress or frustration or made to wait unnecessarily
- educators:
  - talking to children about the importance of empathy, treating others equally and celebrating similarities and differences
  - guiding children's behaviour using developmentally appropriate strategies
  - pre-empting potential conflicts or challenging behaviours by monitoring children's experiences and play, and supporting interactions
  - responding promptly to bullying or disruptive behaviour
  - reassuring children when they are upset
  - modelling and encouraging children to identify and challenge discrimination when they observe inappropriate behaviour or hear inappropriate comments.
- children:
  - are supported to make choices and to experience the consequences of these where there is no risk of harm to themselves or others
  - being acknowledged when they make positive choices in regulating their own behaviour
  - working collaboratively with others.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how the school:
  - uses a consistent approach to guiding children's behaviour
  - celebrates diversity, including supporting each child's sense of identity and guiding children's understanding of diversity in its various forms

- maintains an environment of cultural inclusion and supports educators' cultural competence, including completing the Department's Aboriginal cultural awareness training
- how the culture of the school empowers children to feel secure to raise concerns when they or others are experiencing or witnessing bullying
- how educators reflect on, identify and minimise the impact of their own biases on their practices and relationships with children and families.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- classroom guidelines developed with children's input
- individual behaviour support plans for children experiencing behavioural difficulties developed in consultation with families, and if required, other professionals and support agencies.

## Standard 5.2 Relationships between Children

Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.

### How standard 5.2 contributes to quality teaching and learning

Positive relationships provide children with the confidence and agency to explore and learn about their world. Developing respectful relationships with others is a key part of children's social development and these relationships also provide a strong foundation for children's learning.

An important aspect of children's 'belonging, being and becoming' involves them learning how their behaviours and actions affect themselves and others. By learning to make appropriate choices about their behaviour, children develop the skills to regulate their actions independently and understand the benefits of positive behaviour. When children have opportunities to contribute to decisions and participate collaboratively with others in everyday settings, they learn to live interdependently and make informed choices.

Educators assist by developing positive and respectful strategies for guiding children's behaviour.

### Questions to guide reflection on practice for standard 5.2

#### Supporting sensitive and responsive relationships

- How do we promote a sense of community within the school?
- How do we model positive and respectful relationships for children?
- How do we support children to form and maintain positive relationships with others?
- How is a culture of respect, equity and fairness encouraged at the school? How is this communicated and modelled to educators, children and families?

#### Collaborative learning

- How do we plan the program and routines to ensure adequate time for children to engage in uninterrupted play experiences and projects of their own choosing, with a variety of peers and adults?
- What opportunities exist for collaborative learning that enable children to experience different roles, tasks and contributing to the group?

#### Guiding children's behaviour

- How do we reflect on our own experiences, beliefs and attitudes that may influence the way in which we guide children's behaviour?
- What opportunities do children have to make decisions about rules, expectations and outcomes in relation to their own and others' behaviour?
- How do we manage situations where we experience challenges in guiding the behaviour of a child or a group of children?

- How do we work with families, other professionals and support agencies to ensure that behaviour guidance strategies maintain the rights of each child to be included in the environment and program at all times? How are different expectations managed?
- How do we meet children's need for growing independence?

## Element 5.2.1 Collaborative Learning

Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.

### What element 5.2.1 aims to achieve

Schools provide a range of opportunities for children to learn how to work with others collaboratively and effectively, including through intentional play based experiences. Educators support children to learn about and experience cooperation by modelling cooperative behaviours themselves and acknowledging cooperation when it occurs. By nurturing respectful and reciprocal relationships among children, educators support children to value collaboration and teamwork.

### Considerations for meeting element 5.2.1

#### Supporting cooperation and collaboration



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- educators:
  - incorporating small group inquiry-based activities into the learning program
  - supporting children's progress through different stages of play, to help them gain confidence in interacting with their peers
  - modelling collaborative behaviour through their interactions with colleagues and children
  - supporting children to understand and communicate with each other
  - planning experiences that encourage children to work together to achieve shared as well as individual success
  - allocating time for relaxed, unhurried experiences that enable children to collaborate and direct their own learning together
  - asking follow-up questions to extend children's learning in group situations
  - acknowledging children's complex relationships and sensitively intervening in ways that promote social inclusion.
- providing opportunities and resources for children to:
  - direct their play experiences with peers
  - assume leadership roles.
- children:
  - engaged in ongoing collaborative projects that involve research, planning, problem-solving and shared decision-making
  - encouraging each other, responding positively to peers' questions and suggestions, and offering constructive suggestions and support
  - being sensitive to the feelings and needs of others, including inviting others to join in their play
  - negotiating roles and relationships in play and class experiences.



Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how grouping (and re-grouping) arrangements support positive relationships between children
- how educators support the inclusion of children from diverse backgrounds and capabilities in collaborative play, projects and experiences with others
- how educators differentiate the curriculum to engage children with varying levels of knowledge and skills in collaborative learning experiences
- how educators learn about children's shared interests and use this information for further or alternative learning experiences
- opportunities provided for children to take on leadership roles.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- presentation of children's work that is thoughtfully selected to demonstrate stages in the collaborative learning process or a completed group project.

## Element 5.2.2 Self-Regulation

Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.

### What element 5.2.2 aims to achieve

Self-regulation becomes increasingly important as children develop. They become more mindful of the way others interact with them, and at the same time, develop understandings of how their actions affect the way others feel and behave. Educators work with young children to model and promote positive ways to relate to others.

### Considerations for meeting element 5.2.2

#### Relating positively with others



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- educators:
  - implementing planned and spontaneous discussions about emotions, feelings and issues of inclusion and exclusion, fair and unfair behaviour, bias and prejudice
  - modelling respectful behaviour and providing supportive language approaches to enable children to communicate their concerns
  - encouraging children to listen to other children's ideas, consider alternative behaviours and solve problems together
  - mediating conflict resolution when required and assisting children to negotiate.
- children:
  - being patient and empathetic with each other
  - challenging other children's behaviour when it is disrespectful or unfair
  - expressing their feelings and responses constructively.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how educators work with each child's family and, where applicable, their outside school hours care or long day care service to ensure an inclusive and consistent approach is used to support all children to regulate their behaviour and communicate effectively
- how educators manage situations in which:
  - families have different views and expectations compared to those of the school about guiding children's behaviour
- a child may benefit from more support in managing their behaviour how the school positively influences educators' views and beliefs around children's behaviour, with a focus on all children being supported, including when distressed

- how children are supported to develop skills to identify and report inappropriate behaviours such as bullying (including cyberbullying) and social exclusion.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- the school's policies and procedures on interactions with children and guiding behaviour
- individual behaviour support plans for children, including evidence of consultation with their families and if appropriate, input and suggestions from other professionals and support agencies.

# Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities

## Overview

Quality Area 6 focuses on supportive and respectful relationships with families which are fundamental to achieving quality outcomes for all children. Community partnerships that are based on active communication, consultation and collaboration contribute to children’s inclusion, learning and wellbeing.

Families are the primary influence in their child’s life and may have strong beliefs and values regarding their education. When families and schools collaborate and build respectful relationships, children have the opportunity to develop a positive sense of self and experience respectful relationships.

The child, the family and the school do not exist in isolation; they are part of a much wider community. Children benefit from schools engaging with local communities as these partnerships strengthen children’s interest and skills in being active contributors to their community. Collaborative partnerships are achieved when the school’s philosophy has a strong commitment to valuing diversity, inclusive practice and connecting with the community.

## Standards and elements

Quality Area 6 has two standards that support building collaborative partnerships with families and communities to enhance children’s inclusion, learning and wellbeing as they transition into through the early years of school. These standards are crucial to delivering quality outcomes for children because:

- authentic family engagement promotes active participation of children and their families
- inclusive practice helps the school to identify and remove potential barriers and support the wellbeing of all children and families
- community engagement helps the school to build relationships between children, their families and the community in which they reside, and encourages each child to develop their identity within the context of their local community
- collaborative partnerships enrich programs, practices and policies, and provide an opportunity to support children to respect and value diversity.

<b>Standard 6.1</b>	<b>Supportive relationships with families</b>	<b>Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.</b>
Element 6.1.1	Engagement with the school	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the school and contribute to school decisions.

Element 6.1.2	Parent views are respected	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
Element 6.1.3	Families are supported	Current information is available to families about the school and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.

<b>Standard 6.2</b>	<b>Collaborative partnerships</b>	<b>Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.</b>
Element 6.2.1	Transitions	Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing information and clarifying responsibilities.
Element 6.2.2	Access and participation	Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.
Element 6.2.3	Community engagement	The school builds relationships and engages with its community.

## Standard 6.1 Supportive Relationships with Families

Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.

### How standard 6.1 contributes to quality teaching and learning

Standard 6.1 acknowledges that the family is the most powerful influence on each child's life and that learning outcomes are most likely achieved when educators work in partnership with families. This standard also recognises that each family's wellbeing and capacity to nurture and support their child is influenced by the community in which they live and the material resources and social support available to them.

In Australia, there is a diversity of family types and all families are different (including, for example, blended and extended families, LGBTIQA parents and care givers). Children have diverse understandings of 'family' and unique relationships with those who feature prominently in their lives. Schools that reflect on what the concept of family means to each child can nurture the important relationships that exist between children and their families, including the importance of extended families, kinship ties, carers and guardians in children's lives.

Educators create a welcoming environment when the diversity of families, and the families' practices and aspirations they hold for their children, are respected. Sometimes these aspirations and expectations may be in conflict with the school's philosophy and practice. Open, respectful and non-judgmental communication between all school staff and families builds a shared understanding of children's learning and participation.

Collaborative partnerships with families contribute to building a strong, inclusive school community. Respectful, honest and open two-way communication assists families to feel connected with their child's school experience and helps them develop trust and confidence in the school.

Schools support families in their parenting role by being a source of practical information regarding resources and services within the local community. In addition, they assist families to understand what constitutes quality practice in the early years.

### Questions to guide reflection on practice for standard 6.1

#### Respectful and inclusive relationships with families

- How do we ensure all families feel comfortable, welcome and valued at our school?
- Does our concept of family reflect the diversity of family structures in the school and wider community?
- What role do families play in the school? How do we acknowledge their contributions?
- How do we involve families in decision-making?
- How and where have the views and input of families prompted us to change the way we do things?
- How do we communicate our school philosophy and strategic direction with families?
- What strategies are in place for information-sharing with families during orientation, transitions, settling in and beyond?
- What techniques or strategies do we use to communicate with families who have specific or diverse communication preferences?

- How can we measure if our communication strategies are reaching all families and if they would prefer other methods?

### Supporting families in their parenting role

- How do we encourage families to contribute to their child's experiences in ways that are meaningful for them?
- How do we learn about children's families and others who are important in their lives?
- How do we respond when families make requests or express concerns?
- How do we support families to access community services and resources?
- How do we support and reassure families whose children are attending the school for the first time?
- What information do we provide to assist children and families to experience anxiety-free separation from primary caregiver/s?

## Element 6.1.1 Engagement with the School

Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the school and contribute to school decisions.

### What element 6.1.1 aims to achieve

The enrolment process presents an opportunity for families to share information about their child and for schools to share information about its operations, philosophy and governance. Families may become involved with the school in ways that suit their current commitments, availability and skills. This could include membership of the School Association Committees as well as family events and community groups.

### Considerations for meeting element 6.1.1

#### Enrolment process



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- prospective families being:
  - invited and encouraged to visit the school before their child starts school
  - encouraged to talk with educators about their child and their values and expectations
- school leaders, educators and school officers sharing information about the school.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how the school identifies the individual teaching and learning requirements of each child
- the provisions made to support families during the enrolment and orientation process including flexible times to complete enrolment processes
- the use of interpreters or other support services to assist with the enrolment process.



#### Examples of what you may **sight**:

- the school's enrolment and orientation procedures and documentation
- easy-to-read information about the school
- school information translated into languages prevalent in the school's community.

## Family involvement and contribution to school decisions



### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- a culture of open, respectful communication between families, school leaders, educators and other staff
- the school:
  - recognising and valuing diversity
  - responding to families' questions, concerns and requests in a timely and respectful way
  - implementing a range of strategies to share information and engage families in decision-making processes.



### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- opportunities provided for families to talk with school leaders and educators about their participation in the school, or any issues or concerns
- how families, including extended family members, are able to contribute to school activities and decision making.



### Examples of what you may **sight**:

- strategies for communicating with families with varying literacy skills, or where English is not a first language
- the school provides resources that are available to families in a range of languages
- families have access to the school's policies and procedures.

## Element 6.1.2 Parent views are respected

The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.

### What element 6.1.2 aims to achieve

Educators recognise that families are children's first and most influential teachers, and that the views of parents should be respected. Children are born belonging to a culture, which is not only influenced by traditional practices, heritage and ancestral knowledge, but also by the composition, experiences, values and beliefs of individual families and communities. Genuine partnership relationships that include shared decision-making with families support consistency between children's experiences at home and at school, which positively enhances children's learning, wellbeing and inclusion.

### Considerations for meeting element 6.1.2

#### Respecting families and sharing decision-making



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- educators and families
  - discussing children's individual requirements sensitively, respectfully and confidentially
  - sharing knowledge, skills, expertise and relevant information related to family life and culture
  - sharing children's successes and achievements
- educators demonstrating a non-judgmental understanding of each child, and each child's family and community context
- families being informed promptly and sensitively of any incidents affecting their child.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- the strategies used by the school to facilitate shared decision-making with families and to respect families' requests
- how the school supports consistency between the home and school, maintaining best practice and upholding the rights of each child
- opportunities provided for families to have private discussions with school leaders and educators.



#### Examples of what you may **sight**:

- families are given opportunities to provide feedback to the school
- the culture/s of families and the wider community are visible in the school environment.

## Element 6.1.3 Families are Supported

Current information is available to families about the school and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.

### What element 6.1.3 aims to achieve

Schools use a variety of methods to support families and keep them informed of their child's learning, development and wellbeing, as well as the operational aspects of the school. Educators support families in their parenting role by being readily available for informal discussions with them at mutually convenient times. Further support is offered by referring families to current information on parenting and family issues displayed in the school, as well as referring them to recognised parenting websites and programs such as the [Raising Children Network](#) and [Starting Blocks](#).

### Considerations for meeting element 6.1.3

Providing information about the school and other community services



Examples of what you may **observe**:

- educators and families sharing information about the school's operations, and community services to support their parenting role
- schools assisting families to identify, locate, contact and/or access local community services (for example, [Child and Family Centres](#), [Launching into Learning](#), local [libraries](#) and playgroups).



Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how information is available to families about the school's operations
- how families are sensitively supported and encouraged to access local community services and resources.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- newsletters, communication books or other methods of communication with families
- information about the school's philosophy, operation, policies and procedures being available in places regularly accessed by families
- easy-to-read information about the school in the languages prevalent at the school and in the local community
- evidence that policy changes are explained in detail and communicated to families prior to implementation.

## Standard 6.2 Collaborative Partnerships

Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.

### How standard 6.2 contributes to quality teaching and learning

Standard 6.2 recognises the connections between children, families, the school and communities and the importance of collaborative relationships and partnerships in enhancing all children's inclusion, learning, development and wellbeing.

Schools understand the importance of seeing families in the context of their participation in the local community and wider society. Schools can establish and maintain an active presence in the community, seek to strengthen links and use community resources to support families. This supports the inclusion of children in their local community and broadens children's understanding of the world in which they live.

Open communication and collaboration between the school, families and other professionals and services within the community can be mutually beneficial. These partnerships:

- build relationships between children, their families and the school so that each child's capacity to fully participate in the school's learning program is supported
- lead to shared understandings and collaborative problem-solving
- build the capacity of organisations involved in supporting children and families in the local community
- assist children to become aware of the similarities, differences and connections between people within their community
- assist in building an environment that supports inclusion and celebrates diversity.

### Questions to guide reflection on practice for standard 6.2

#### Building collaborative partnerships

- How is information and data (for example, the [Australian Early Development Census](#)) used to build an understanding of the local community?
- How are we supporting children to see themselves as active contributors to their community?
- How do we share our knowledge and expertise about children's learning and their inclusion with other professionals who are working with them and their families?
- How do we support children and families in their transitions to and from school and other settings?
- In what ways do we work with other services and community organisations to support children and families? How effective are these strategies and how can they be improved?
- How do we access support for children's specific individual requirements and rights?
- What current resources and networks exist that might connect children and families with the local community?

## Element 6.2.1 Transitions

Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing information and clarifying responsibilities.

### What element 6.2.1 aims to achieve

Transitions occur:

- from home and/or care settings to school
- between year levels and groups within the school
- when there are staff changes
- between routines and experiences.

Transitions offer opportunities and challenges for children as different places and settings provide different ways of operating. Working collaboratively with families, staff, and other professional services, educators support children to actively prepare for transitions between settings and experiences by:

- helping children and families understand the expectations, routines and practices of different settings and people, and building resilience to feel comfortable with the change process
- building on children's prior and current experiences to help them to feel secure, confident and connected in their new setting or group
- sharing information about each child's learning, strengths and interests to support educators in a new setting or group to build on these foundations.

### Considerations for meeting element 6.2.1

#### Supporting smooth transitions



Examples of what you may **observe**:

- children:
  - experiencing positive transitions within the school, between home and school and other settings (for example, before and after school hours care)
  - being supported and appropriately supervised when being transported to or from the school by bus.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- the strategies in place to ensure:
  - children are supported when:
    - moving between settings such as before and after school hours care
    - returning to the school after an absence
    - transitioning between routines and experiences
    - end of year transitions
  - excursions are positive and safe learning experiences for children
- the strategies and processes used to support children's positive transition to school and induction of new children who transfer from another school
- how information about children's progress, likes and interests are shared with educators to assist continuity of learning when transitioning year levels or classes.



#### Examples of what you may **sight**:

- examples of information provided to assist children in making positive transitions from home to school
- written procedures for releasing children from the school and ensuring that they are released only to authorised guardian.

## Element 6.2.2 Access and Participation

Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.

### What element 6.2.2 aims to achieve

Educators' attitudes, beliefs and values about inclusion are key factors for successful inclusion. Schools can support each child's access, inclusion and participation in the program by learning about their individual context (family circumstances, geographic location, cultural and linguistic experiences) as well as their interests, learning styles, strengths and abilities. School leaders and educators use this knowledge when making decisions about the physical environment, the curriculum and day-to-day routines and transitions. They ensure that there are no barriers to children's participation in any aspect of the teaching and learning program.

### Considerations for meeting element 6.2.2

#### Supporting children's access, inclusion and participation



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- educators have adapted aspects of the environment, routines, transitions and staffing arrangements to facilitate the inclusion of all children.
- children:
  - demonstrating a sense of belonging and wellbeing
  - demonstrating trust and confidence in school leaders, educators and staff members
  - participating and engaging in learning experiences.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how the school:
  - seeks to build their capacity to respond to each child's specific requirements
  - demonstrates its commitment to the full participation of all children
  - ensures that school leaders and educators access support and/or participate in professional learning to build the skills and expertise necessary to support the inclusion of children with specific health, cultural or developmental requirements
- how other professionals are involved in devising programs for individual children, and how shared goals for learning are identified and implemented
- how plans are developed to support the inclusion of children who require specific health, cultural or developmental support
- how the school implements strategies to ensure environments are welcoming to all children and families in the community, and enrolment information and procedures are accessible and clear.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- the school's philosophy, policies and procedures demonstrating a commitment to access, inclusion and participation for every child and family
- documented plans and/or communication between the school, families, and other agencies or specialists working with individual children (for example, Individual Education Plans)
- processes for making and accepting referrals from other services or agencies such as:
  - child protection agencies
  - professional support staff
  - allied health professionals
  - health professionals
- images, books and resources that reflect children and adults, from a range of backgrounds, cultures and abilities, as active contributors to and participants in the community.

## Element 6.2.3 Community Engagement

The school builds relationships and engages with its community.

### What element 6.2.3 aims to achieve

Schools can further support children's sense of belonging by helping them to experience connections and be engaged with their local community. When schools develop respectful and responsive connections with their immediate or wider community, they are likely to further enrich the educational program for children. Inviting members of diverse groups within the community to share their interests and expertise helps to extend children's knowledge, and assists the school to reflect on the inclusiveness of its practices.

Building connections and relationships with people in the community help children to learn more about various cultures that exist within Australia. This includes knowledge about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, identity, histories, cultures and places of significance in their local community.

### Considerations for meeting element 6.2.3

#### Community engagement



Examples of what you may **observe**:

- an environment that reflects the lives of the children and families at the school and the cultural diversity of the broader community, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- images, books and resources that provide a balanced view of contemporary Australia
- school leaders and educators planning and implementing experiences in the program to support children's understanding of the community in which they live.



Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how the school:
  - builds connections between the school and the local community
  - strengthens children's connection with and understanding of their community
  - uses community resources to improve the educational program and provide quality learning experiences for each child
  - shares information about community events relevant to children and families
- how school leaders and educators:
  - demonstrate a commitment to developing their own cultural competence in a two-way process with families and communities
  - raise awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and/or other local communities, and implement Tasmania's [Aboriginal Educational Framework](#)
- how educators incorporate educational excursions or incursions to develop children's understanding of their local community.



### Examples of what you may **sight**:

- evidence:
  - the school liaises with children's services, local businesses, health and family support services and other organisations
  - members of the local community are invited into the school to contribute to the teaching and learning program
- displays or artefacts that reflect children's experiences and engagement in their local community.

# Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership

## Overview

Quality Area 7 focuses on effective leadership and governance of the school to establish and maintain conditions required for high quality teaching and learning in the early years. Effective leaders establish shared values for the school that reflect its context and professional standing in the community and set clear directions for continuous improvement. Governance refers to the systems in place to support effective management and operation of the school consistent with Department policies and the school's statement of philosophy (or similar) which sets out the school's core values.

To achieve the best outcomes for children, schools require a skilled and engaged workforce, sound administrative and risk management systems, well-documented policies and procedures, and a safe and healthy working and learning environment. Government schools may access key administrative and policy information relevant to the early years through the DoE Intranet.

Authentic evaluation and self-review enable the school to continuously improve their practice, policies and procedures. An ongoing cycle of self-assessment, planning and review, together with engagement with all stakeholders including families, creates a culture of continuous improvement.

## Standards and elements

Quality Area 7 has two standards that focus on governance and leadership at the school. These standards are crucial to delivering quality outcomes for children because:

- effective governance requires an articulation of core values (such as a statement of philosophy or similar), efficient management systems and clearly delineated roles and responsibilities to support the effective operation of a quality school
- effective leadership establishes a culture of reflective practice to promote continuous improvement across all aspects of the school.

<b>Standard 7.1</b>	<b>Governance</b>	<b>Governance supports the operation of a quality school.</b>
Element 7.1.1	School philosophy and purpose	A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the school's operations.
Element 7.1.2	Management systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality school.
Element 7.1.3	Roles and responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision - making and operation of the school.

<b>Standard 7.2</b>	<b>Leadership</b>	<b>Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community.</b>
Element 7.2.1	Continuous improvement	There is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place.
Element 7.2.2	Educational leadership	The Kindergarten program leader is supported and leads the development and implementation of the educational program and assessment and planning cycle.
Element 7.2.3	Development of professionals	Educators and staff members' performance is regularly evaluated and individual plans are in place to support learning and development.

## Standard 7.1 Governance

Governance supports the operation of a quality school.

### How standard 7.1 contributes to quality teaching and learning

Governance provides leadership and direction to the school community. Well-coordinated systems and procedures ensure schools operate effectively, equitably and ethically. This promotes the confidence of families and the local community in the school.

An effective governance framework includes:

- a statement of philosophy (or similar) based on the school's beliefs, values and educational aims
- an effective and efficient management system to:
  - enable the operation of a quality school
  - ensure that all aspects of the school's operations including policies and procedures are consistent with the Department's strategic plan, policies and applicable legislation
- mechanisms to manage foreseeable risks to the school's operations and to children and staff
- ethical codes and practices that guide decision-making

- clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- an effective complaints management process
- a culture of continuous improvement incorporating a systematic approach that benefits all aspects of the school and the educational programs.

By having effective administrative and records management systems in place, including documented policies and procedures, educators can focus on delivering quality teaching and learning for children.

### Questions to guide reflection on practice for standard 7.1

- What is the process for making decisions within the school, who has a say and is this process fair and equitable?
- Does the management of confidential information meet Department requirements?
- To what extent does our statement of philosophy (or similar) reflect our unique context, purpose and values, guide our practice and show a commitment to continuous improvement?
- To what extent is our vision statement (or similar) shared and understood by all stakeholders: our staff, children, families, community and School Association Committees?
- Is there an established procedure for effective and regular review of school policies and related documents?
- Is the process for addressing complaints known by all stakeholders?
- Is the complaints management process used to identify strategies for quality improvement?
- What systems are in place to regularly check the currency and validity of *Working with Vulnerable People Registration*, teacher registration, first aid qualifications, and anaphylaxis and asthma management training?

## Element 7.1.1 School Philosophy and Purpose

A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the school's operations.

### What element 7.1.1 aims to achieve

A written statement of philosophy (or similar) articulates the core values and guiding principles underpinning the school's operations and reflects contemporary research about the factors that support optimal learning and outcomes for young children. This statement:

- informs the decisions, policies and daily practices of the school
- reflects a shared understanding of the unique context of the school and its community
- guides educators' use of age-appropriate pedagogies, planning and practice in delivering the educational program.

### Considerations for meeting element 7.1.1

#### School philosophy



Examples of what you may **observe**:

- the daily practices of school staff consistently reflect the school's philosophy for the early years
- the values stated in the school philosophy are evident in the school's environment, policies and procedures.



Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how the statement of philosophy is used to set directions, build commitment and align actions with the school's goals and desired outcomes
- the school's approach to reviewing their statement of philosophy to ensure it reflects the current status of the school and its community.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- the school's:
  - statement of philosophy (or similar)
  - Business Plan and/or Operational Plan that includes reference to the early years
- evidence that the school's statement of philosophy (or similar) is included in the induction process for all staff and in the enrolment and orientation process for families.

## Element 7.1.2 Management Systems

Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality school.

### What element 7.1.2 aims to achieve

When effective management systems are in place, school leaders and educators are able to focus on delivering high quality and holistic learning programs for children.

### Administrative systems

The school administrative systems and operations comply with Department policies and relevant legislation.

### Records management systems

Schools are required to safely store and maintain the confidentiality and currency of information provided by families, school staff and other stakeholders in line with the Department's Records management policy and procedures.

### Documented policies and procedures

The school ensures policies and procedures are well-documented, maintained and easily accessible to staff and families.

### Risk management and employing fit and proper staff

Efficient and effective risk management systems enable the school to identify and manage risks in a timely manner. This includes compliance with Department Human Resources management policies, including recruitment, selection and deployment of staff.

### Complaints and misconduct

An effective and equitable complaints and grievance management system confirms to staff, families and the community that disputes are taken seriously and investigated promptly, fairly and thoroughly in accordance with the Department's complaints and grievance resolution policies or procedures.

## Considerations for meeting element 7.1.2

### Administrative systems



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- systematic and aligned processes throughout the school, including in the front office, administration area, classrooms and school grounds

- calm and coordinated environments.



Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- procedures for educators when requesting specific resources to support program delivery
- opportunities in place for all staff to comment on and improve the effectiveness of systems within the school.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- examples of internal communications such as meeting minutes, distribution of notices and staff bulletins.

[Records management systems](#)



Examples of what you may **observe**:

- well-maintained and secure facilities for storage of confidential records
- safe and systematic storage of access keys.



Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- processes in place for reviewing and updating records and information on a regular basis
- who has access to records and arrangements to ensure information is appropriately shared or withheld.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- records available and kept for the required length of time (for example, school plans, student assessments, incident reports, enrolment records, record of volunteers and visitors to the school)
- health and safety information is sensitively displayed including:
  - if a child is at risk of anaphylaxis, or other medical condition requiring specific attention
  - procedures for management of an occurrence of an infectious disease at the school.

[Documented policies and procedures](#)



Examples of what you may **observe**:

- the school displays information regarding its philosophy, operations, achievements, procedures and upcoming events in various ways.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how staff and families are:
  - encouraged to contribute to the development and review of school-specific priorities and procedures
  - informed about changes to policies and procedures.



#### Examples of what you may **sight**:

- documented policies and procedures in relation to:
  - enrolment and orientation
  - health and safety
  - staffing
  - relationships with children, including whole school approaches to guiding behaviour.

#### Risk management and employing fit and proper staff



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- appropriate supervision and prompt attention to potential risk.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- staff knowledge of duty of care for children responsibilities, including any applicable Departmental policies
- how staff are kept updated in relation to their responsibilities under child protection legislation and other risk management policies
- staff's understanding of their legal obligations under mandatory reporting legislation
- responsibilities, practice and effectiveness of evacuation and lockdown procedures
- human resource management procedures including recruitment, selection and deployment of staff, access to training and development and leave management arrangements.



#### Examples of what you may **sight**:

- the Department's security and emergency management procedures and any relevant site specific plans for example the school's Fire and Emergency Evacuation Plan.
- evidence that accurate records are maintained, for example, teacher registration, *Working with Vulnerable People registration*, National Police History Check and first aid qualifications.

## Complaints and misconduct



### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how stakeholders (staff, families and community members) are informed of the full range of options available to them if they wish to raise a concern.



### Examples of what you may **sight**:

- a documented grievance and complaints management procedure, including evidence that disputes and complaints are investigated and documented in a timely manner
- information for families on how complaints and grievances are made and how they are managed by the school.

## Element 7.1.3 Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision-making and operation of the school.

### What element 7.1.3 aims to achieve

Individuals working in schools should have a clear understanding of their role, responsibilities and the expectations for their performance. A comprehensive induction process plays a critical role in creating and maintaining a positive, cohesive and professional school culture.

### Considerations for meeting element 7.1.3



Examples of what you may **observe**:

- all staff:
  - are confident in their role and make a positive contribution to the school community
  - applying the school ethos in their day-to-day work and interactions
  - offer support and assistance to colleagues, children and families.



Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how responsibilities and expectations are communicated to all staff at induction and throughout the year, including relief educators
- school leaders and educators' understandings of:
  - the [Early Years Learning Framework](#), early years' pedagogy and curriculum
  - the school's statement of philosophy and associated Business Plan and Operational Plan, and their role in implementing these
  - the National Quality Standard
- how the school's code of conduct or the Department's conduct and behaviour standards are used to inform performance management practices
- with new staff members: their level of understanding of the philosophy and vision of the school and the context in which it operates.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- the school's documented induction process
- information provided to all staff (including relief educators) about the school and their role and responsibilities.

## Standard 7.2 Leadership

Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community.

### How standard 7.2 contributes to quality teaching and learning

Effective leadership builds and maintains a professional workplace in which all staff contribute to each other's ongoing professional learning; communicate and raise issues openly and participate in respectful debate.

School and Kindergarten program leaders require knowledge and understanding of early years' pedagogy and curriculum. This ensures cohesion and continuity of learning appropriate to the age and development of each child. Research demonstrates a strong link between leadership and improved learning outcomes for children. Effective leaders are clear about the school's core values, vision and unique context and have the skills to effectively communicate shared goals and Department expectations for high performance and high care. They ensure all children access and participate in quality learning, and demonstrate an ongoing commitment to inclusion, equity and respect for diversity in all aspects of the school.

### Questions to guide reflection on practice for standard 7.2

- How does the leadership within our school contribute to the development of a positive organisational culture?
- To what extent does our school's leadership contribute to children's learning and wellbeing?
- How do we raise awareness of inclusion and cultural competence among school staff, and support educators to promote and reduce the barriers to inclusion for all children and families?
- How are aspirant leaders supported in the school?
- How are we creating opportunities for professional conversations?
- How do our performance management processes promote continuous improvement?
- How are resources allocated and targeted to support our quality improvement plan?

## Element 7.2.1 Continuous Improvement

There is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place.

### What element 7.2.1 aims to achieve

Quality schools have an ongoing commitment to high performance and high care for all children and staff. They use a range of information, observations, reflections and data to monitor and review their performance to guide planning and improve school performance. Schools balance their consideration of test scores and other quantitative measures alongside less tangible but equally important capabilities relating to perseverance, creativity, agency, critical thinking empathy and intercultural understandings. A culture of ongoing reflection and review offers challenge, inspires motivation, and promotes staff satisfaction. This provides opportunities for all staff to improve their practice, which contributes directly to improved learning outcomes for children.

### Considerations for meeting element 7.2.1

#### Regular self-assessment



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- timetabled opportunities for early years teams to meet and jointly reflect on practices and plan for improvement
- all early years educators (including relevant specialist teachers) jointly contributing to discussions about children's learning and opportunities for improvement
- evidence that operational plans are working documents that are subject to constant review and modification according to evolving needs and achievements.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how the school:
  - aligns program delivery with quality improvement planning
  - collects and uses information from a range of sources (for example, Australian Early Development Census, Parent and Student Satisfaction Surveys, NQS determinations, classroom observations) as part of the process of self-assessment and planning for quality improvement
  - how does the evidence/data collected inform self-assessment and quality improvement processes? Are additional or different forms of data required?
- the approach taken to ensure all educators and other relevant staff have jointly engaged in the analysis of school practices and performance, including the NQS review process
- the processes in place for review and planning for improvement using the NQS.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- evidence that the vision statement and Business Plan are reviewed in consultation with staff and families
- information collected from families, children and staff about their perceptions of the school
- documentation relating to NQS staff reflections, internal audits and an associated plan for continuous improvement and the maintenance of element and standard achievement.

## Element 7.2.2 Educational Leadership

The Kindergarten program leader is supported and leads the development and implementation of the educational program and assessment and planning cycle.

### What element 7.2.2 aims to achieve

An ongoing cycle of assessment and planning is critical to the delivery of high quality teaching and learning programs. The Kindergarten program leader guides and develops educators' and families' understandings about age-appropriate pedagogies and research endorsed intentional play-based approaches in the early years of schooling. They lead critical reflection discussions and processes to examine program practice and curriculum quality, explore research, and identify and plan for continuous improvements to ensure the learning, wellbeing, equity and inclusion of each child.

### Considerations for meeting element 7.2.2

#### Educational leadership



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- school leaders and Kindergarten program leaders:
  - working with educators to build capacity and understanding of their early years pedagogy and practice, including ways (and what) they assess, reflect on and plan for children's learning
  - supporting educators to implement strategies that provide differentiation within all programs
- program cohesion, order and evidence of planned progression in the teaching and learning program provided across the early years of schooling.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how Kindergarten program leaders guide reflective practice by creating opportunities for mentoring and professional dialogue with educators
- opportunities to examine, plan for and implement intentional play-based teaching and learning
- how the school engages families in conversations about high quality practices in the early years and intentional play-based teaching and learning
- how shared understandings are developed and considered to ensure curriculum development and delivery across the school is based on children's current skills, knowledge and understandings and do not imply a 'one size fits all' approach
- how Kindergarten program leaders support and build educators' understandings of how to assess, plan, and deliver content across all aspects of the curriculum
- opportunities exist for educators to assume leadership roles that reflect their interests and strengths, and support their growth
- how school leader and Kindergarten program leaders support educators through periods of change.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- documentation of school and Kindergarten program leaders providing feedback and guidance to educators about the assessment and planning cycle.

## Element 7.2.3 Development of Professionals

Educators and staff members' performance is regularly evaluated and individual plans are in place to support learning and development.

### What element 7.2.3 aims to achieve

A system of regular performance review alongside individual learning and development plans are essential to the development of skills and professional knowledge of educators. Performance planning and review ensures that the knowledge, skills and practices of educators and other staff members are current, and that areas requiring further development are addressed through professional learning plans that:

- develop educators' professional knowledge, skills and practice for the early years
- support creativity, imagination, innovation and continuous quality improvement
- build an understanding of current research about how children develop and learn; and the practices that optimise their attainment of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills
- support educators to keep up-to-date with current policies, practice and thinking.

### Considerations for meeting element 7.2.3

#### Supporting staff learning and development



#### Examples of what you may **observe**:

- Kindergarten program leaders and educators using the professional standards of the [Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership](#) to identify their:
  - current and developing capabilities
  - professional aspirations
  - achievements and areas for improvement
- contemporary resources being shared and reviewed by Kindergarten program leaders and educators.



#### Examples of what you may **discuss**:

- how the effort, contribution and achievement of staff, educators and Kindergarten program leaders are acknowledged and celebrated
- how performance processes identify strengths and priorities for improvement, and how these are addressed and monitored
- how educators set individual and collective performance and learning goals
- how school leaders, Kindergarten program leaders and educators build on and strengthen their understanding of the NQS
- how school resources are strategically directed towards improvements in areas of identified priority.



Examples of what you may **sight**:

- evidence that performance reviews for all staff are conducted regularly and include plans for professional development based on strengths, needs, interests and goals
- evidence of participation by school leaders, Kindergarten program leaders and educators in professional learning to update their knowledge and skills relating to early childhood education.

# Appendix I – NQS Tasmanian School Guide Glossary

## GLOSSARY

This glossary explains key terms used in the *National Quality Standard (NQS) Guide for Tasmanian Government Schools*

### **Additional needs:**

The term used for children who require or will benefit from specific considerations or adaptations and who:

- are Aboriginals or Torres Strait Islanders
- are recent arrivals in Australia
- have a culturally and linguistically diverse background
- live in isolated geographic locations
- are experiencing difficult family circumstances or stress
- are at risk of abuse or neglect
- are experiencing language and communication difficulties
- have a diagnosed disability—physical, sensory, intellectual or autism spectrum disorder
- have a medical or health condition
- demonstrate challenging behaviours and behavioural or psychological disorders
- have developmental delays
- have learning difficulties
- are gifted or have special talents
- have other extra support needs.

It is important to note that:

- additional needs arise from different causes, and that causes require different responses
- any child may have additional needs from time to time.

**Agency:** Being able to make choices and decisions, to influence events and to have an impact on one's world (*Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)*, p.45).

**Analysing learning:** Observing, evaluating and examining children's learning in relation to the learning outcomes of the approved learning framework.

**Approved learning framework:** A learning framework approved by the Council of Australian Government's Education Council (*Education Act s 4(2)*).

**Assessment and planning cycle:** The assessment and planning cycle process includes: observation, analysing learning, documentation, planning, implementation and reflection. This ongoing process is used by educators, with support from the Kindergarten program leader and in partnership with families and other professionals, to design programs that enhance and extend each child's learning and development.

**Assessment, rating and validation:** The process by which Kindergartens are assessed, rated by schools against the NQS, with the ratings independently validated.

**Authorised guardian:** In relation to a child, means a person who has been given permission by a parent or family member of the child to collect the child from the school.

**Belonging, Being and Becoming - The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF):** is Australia's first national framework for early childhood educators. The EYLF is linked to and embedded in the NQS. It guides educators to develop quality programs for young children. It also describes the early childhood pedagogy (principles and practice) and the outcomes that provide goals for young children's learning.

**Child-centred:** Consideration of each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests as the foundation for the development of the educational program in a school or educational setting.

**Child directed:** Child directed play and learning occurs in an educational program when children lead their learning through exploring, experimenting, investigating and being creative in ways that they initiate and control. Child directed learning promotes children's agency by enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world.

**Children:** Refers to Kindergarten children / children who attend Kindergarten.

**Collaboration:** Working together cooperatively towards common goals. Collaboration is achieved through the sharing of information, joint planning and the development of common understandings and objectives.

**Collaborative learning:** Children engaging with other children and educators to collaboratively work with, learn from and help.

**Collaborative partnership:** A partnership between the educators, families, children and community/ies and school that is based on active communication, consultation and collaboration and aims to build respectful relationships, support families and promote children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.

**Community:** The local or wider social, cultural or geographical context shared with the school.

**Community engagement:** Developing respectful and responsive connections with the immediate or wider community to build connections and relationships.

**Continuity of staff:** Staffing arrangements that promote continuity of staff to, enhance children's wellbeing, learning and development. Continuity refers to achieving as much consistency as possible with the allocation of dedicated staff to a Kindergarten class/(es). Wherever possible, children have regular interactions with core staff continually throughout the school year.

**Continuous improvement:** Ongoing improvement in the provision of quality education. The NQS aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement through the, assessment, rating and independent validation process.

Assessment and rating encourages continuous improvement by engaging the principal and educators in a process of self-assessment, as well as providing a mutually agreed record of their performance against the NQS. Quality schools regularly monitor and review their performance to guide planning and improve quality and outcomes for children. This creates a shared understanding of the principles that guide continuous improvement in practice, policies and procedures. Schools regularly review and update the areas identified for improvement through the reflection and assessment process.

**Critical reflection:** Describes reflective practices that focus on implications for equity and social justice (EYLF, p.45). Closely considering all aspects of events and experiences from different perspectives.

**Curriculum:** In the early childhood setting, curriculum means ‘all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children’s learning and development’ (EYLF, p.45; adapted from *Te Whariki*).

**Curriculum decision-making:** Refers to program decision-making that includes input from children and families to develop a meaningful program. Curriculum decision-making involves educators using their pedagogical knowledge and the learning framework’s principles, practices and outcomes to plan for each child’s learning and development. The approved learning framework supports a model of curriculum/program decision-making as an ongoing cycle (EYLF, p.9).

**Documentation:** Intentionally collected artefacts which make learning or the outcomes of learning visible. These can include artefacts such as video, audio recording, written notes and samples of work.

**Education Act 2016 (the Act):** The Act is a legislative framework that supports high quality teaching and learning in Tasmanian schools. Tasmanian government schools are not subject to the *Education and Care Services National Law (Application) Act 2011*. Instead they continue to operate under the Act.

**Each child:** Referred to in the NQS when an individualised approach is warranted and educators are required to modify their response to meet the needs of an individual child. An example is ‘each child’s current knowledge, ideas, culture and interests provide the foundation for the program’.

**Early childhood teacher:** A registered teacher who holds an ACECQA approved early childhood teaching qualification.

**Education and care service:** Any service providing or intended to provide education and care on a regular basis to children under 13 years of age (*National Law*). Note: Schools are not subject to the *Education and Care Services National Law (Application) Act 2011*. Instead, they continue to operate under the Act.

**Kindergarten program leader:** The person who oversees and supports those delivering the program. The leader collaborates with educators to ensure children’s learning and development are guided by the learning outcomes of the EYLF.

**Educational program:** A program that:

- is based on an approved learning framework; and
- is delivered in a manner that accords with the approved learning framework; and
- is based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child; and
- is designed to take into account the individual differences of each child.

**Educator:** An individual who promotes children’s learning and development and provides a caring and safe learning environment. (Educators in a teaching role are required to have an approved early childhood teaching qualification, or be actively working towards an Early Childhood Teacher (ECT) qualification. Educators in a supportive role are required to have a minimum requirement of an approved Certificate III qualification, or be actively working towards a Certificate III).

**Elements:** Describe the outcomes that contribute to the Standard being achieved.

**Every child:** Used in the NQS when it is intended to suggest an inclusive approach. It implies that all children have the same opportunity regardless of their age, gender, background or abilities. An example is ‘every child is supported to participate in the program’.

**Evaluation:** Refers to scanning, monitoring, gathering and analysing information about children’s progress towards the learning outcomes.

**Inclusion:** Involves taking into account all children’s social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic location) in curriculum decision-making processes. The intent is to ensure that all children’s experiences are recognised and valued. The intent is also to ensure that all children have equitable access to resources and participation, and opportunities to demonstrate their learning and to value difference (EYLF, p.45).

**Inclusive environment:** An indoor or outdoor education and care environment that supports every child’s inclusion.

**Intentional teaching:** In the setting this involves educators being deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and actions. Intentional teaching is the opposite of teaching by rote or continuing with traditions simply because things have ‘always been done that way’ (EYLF, p.45).

**Intentionality:** Refers to educators being deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and actions.

**Interactions:** Social engagement between children, educators, families and communities and play engagement between children, educators, families and communities and their environment. Interactions are an important part of the educational curriculum/program.

**Learning:** A natural process of exploration that children engage in from birth as they expand their intellectual, physical, social, emotional and creative capacities. Early learning is closely linked to early development (EYLF, p. 46). Life-long learning is acknowledged as self-motivated process that extends intellectual, vocational and personal horizons which begins in pre- school times, and is continued throughout life.

**Learning framework:** See *Approved learning framework*

**Learning outcome:** A skill, knowledge or disposition that educators can actively promote in collaboration with children and families (EYLF, p.46).

**Literacy:** In the early years context, a range of modes of communication including music, movement, dance, story-telling, visual arts, media and drama, as well as talking, reading and writing (EYLF, p.46).

**“Meeting”:** Schools meet the NQS. Schools provide quality education and care in all seven quality areas.

**National Quality Standard (NQS):** Sets a national benchmark for the quality of education and care in education and care services and Kindergartens. The NQS includes seven quality areas that are important to outcomes for children.

**Outcome:** See *Learning outcome*.

**Parent:** In relation to a child, includes:

- a guardian of the child
- a person who has parental responsibility for the child under a decision or order of a court.

**Parenting plan:** A parenting plan within the meaning of *section 63C(1) of the Family Law Act 1975 (Commonwealth)* and includes a registered parenting plan within the meaning of *section 63C(6) of that Act*.

**Pedagogy:** Educators’ professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, curriculum/program decision-making, teaching and learning (EYLF, p.46).

**Philosophy:** See *Statement of philosophy*.

**Planning cycle:** See *Assessment and planning cycle*.

**Play based learning:** A context for learning through which children organise and make sense of their social worlds, as they engage actively with people, objects and representations (EYLF, p.46).

**Quality Areas:** There are seven quality areas that are important to outcomes for children. In each Quality Area, there are two or three Standards and under each Standard there are two to three Elements.

**Partnerships:** Relationships developed and sustained between young children, their families, communities, educators and health providers to support teaching and learning.

**Program:** See *Educational program*.

**Reflective practice:** A form of ongoing learning that involves engaging with questions of philosophy, ethics and practice. Its intention is to gather information and gain insights that support, inform and enrich decision-making about children's learning. As professionals, early childhood educators examine what happens in their settings and reflect on what they might change (*EYLF, p.13*).

**Responsive teaching:** The educational practice of attending and responding to children's strengths, abilities, interests, ideas and play and a key pedagogical practice of the approved learning framework.

**Rights of the child:** Human rights belonging to all children, as specified in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)*.

**Routines:** Regular, everyday events in school settings, such as groups times, hygiene, arriving and departing. Routines are a key component of the curriculum/program. Effective routines provide children with a sense of predictability and consistency that help children to feel safe, secure and supported.

**Scaffold:** The educators' decisions and actions that build on children's existing knowledge and skills to enhance their learning (*EYLF p.46*).

**School Leader:** Refers to the Principal or Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) in the Early Years.

**Standards:** Each Standard has a high level outcomes statement.

**Statement of philosophy:** See *Philosophy or vision statement*.

**Philosophy or vision statement:** A statement that outlines the purpose and principles under which the school operates. The philosophy or vision statement guide educators' pedagogy, planning and practice. This may be drawn from the *Department of Education's Strategic Plan, 2018-2021*, *The Tasmanian Strategy for Children – Pregnancy to eight Years 2018-2021*, or a school based vision statement.

**Wellbeing:** Wellbeing means that children and students feel loved and safe, they are healthy, they have access to material basics, they are learning and participating, and they have a positive sense of culture and identity. This holistic approach acknowledges the many factors that contribute to the wellbeing of our children and students. (*2018-2021 Department of Education Child and Student Wellbeing Strategy: Safe, Well and Positive Learners, p.3*).

**“Working Towards”:** Schools provide a safe education and care program, but there are one or more areas identified for improvement in order to meet the Standard.

**Working with Vulnerable People registration (RWVP):** DoE requires all employees, volunteers, contractors and external providers, or persons otherwise engaged in or associated with a child regulated activity, to maintain current Tasmanian RWVP (*Department of Education - RWVP Policy, p.3*).

## Appendix 2. – NQS Tasmanian School Guide Icons Legends



### **Observe**

What children, families, and other staff members are doing (for example, engaging in caring, friendly and respectful interactions).



### **Discuss**

Why and how particular practices occur at the school with other educators and staff members.



### **Sight**

Documentation that supports particular practices at the school (for example, meeting minutes, and collections of children's work and documentation of children's assessments or evaluations).