

Centipede at Glebe School prepares for the transition to the National Quality Framework

In the December 2010 issue of *Putting Children First*, Lyndsay Mundy spoke with Centipede at Glebe School's coordinator Kim Payne about preparing for the service's first-time participation in Child Care Quality Assurance (CCQA). In this follow up article, Kim shares his plans for positively managing the transition from CCQA to the National Quality Framework (NQF) in 2012.

Centipede at Glebe School is an Outside School Hours Care service in the grounds of Glebe Public School in Sydney, NSW. Glebe Public School has approximately 120 children enrolled and Centipede is licensed for 50 children per session.

Kim Payne was brought in as the coordinator of Centipede in July 2010 largely due to his previous experience of having been through CCQA and to help Centipede to become Accredited. Kim was just beginning to implement changes to prepare Centipede for CCQA when he found out about the NQF that is to be implemented from January 2012.

Kim is looking positively towards the introduction of the NQF and is about to start working through the National Quality Standard to see how Centipede fits into the Quality Areas of the Standard.

Initial reactions

When he first heard about the NQF, Kim was unsure about how it would apply to Centipede. He knew that NCAC was closing in the future, but not what that meant for his service. "The first time I realised it was going to apply to us I was sitting in a café opposite the school and opening our letters", Kim says. "I opened one from NCAC saying our *Self-study Report* was no longer due and I thought, 'Ah!' I had no idea what to do".

Kim remembers, "Centipede's management committee was really surprised too. They had been told over and over that Centipede needed Accreditation, and suddenly it wasn't needed anymore". The school encouraged Kim to continue with the positive changes he had already made at the service and to continue to implement his plans for improvement.

Introducing the NQF to the educators at Centipede

Kim was planning to introduce the NQF to the educators at Centipede in the week before the new school year in 2011. "We are lucky to have a week without the children when we will be setting up the centre and getting things ready. That's when I'm going to start information sessions about the NQF".

Kim has started to look at the NQF and believes that he needs to become familiar with it first before he can ask the other educators to begin to look at it. "I'm going to ask them to read it during the week and then we'll all talk about it. If they have questions that I can't answer, I'll make sure I find out".

Currently the main focus at Centipede is education. Kim is educating himself about the NQF so that he can then guide and support his colleagues at Centipede. He will start with the core educators, and then move on to the casual educators, school staff and families. Since he has started to think about working with the NQF Kim has been reading a lot more to see how his plans



can fit in with the new Framework. "Centipede applies for a lot of funding and to get funding you need to be specific about where it is going to go. So we have our active after school care, an art program and a homework club at Glebe library that are all very specific. How to fit them into NQF is yet to be seen. This month I will be very busy figuring that out".

Networking with educators in other services

Kim already networks with services in the area and is planning to get the other educators at Centipede involved as well. He is also looking at setting up a new network that covers the two areas which Centipede borders. "Because we're on the border of two suburbs I want to get both involved in a network. There are also big plans to get all of the Glebe children together and for the older kids (9-12) to do some specific things".

Kim finds networking very helpful because there is always someone to answer questions and share ideas with. "We're all in this together. It's new to all of us. No one's done this before. There's no point in stressing and thinking 'Oh no, how are we going to do this?' Talk to people", he says.

Becoming familiar with the draft *My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care*

Kim has read the draft *My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care* and thinks that the basic concepts and principles are positive ones for outside school hours care services. He looks forward to the final version of the Framework so that he can begin to incorporate it into Centipede's ongoing plans for improvement.

The future: Spot Checks and NQF

Kim recently got another letter from NCAC telling him that Centipede may still receive a Spot Check. "My staff don't know about CCQA, through no fault of their own, as they've never had to. So having a Spot Check will be interesting but as long as we keep doing what we're doing there's no reason to stress", he says.

Kim believes that his previous knowledge of CCQA will help him and the other educators at Centipede to succeed when the NQF begins in 2012. "Although this is a new Framework, it's not an entirely new concept. It's all about quality child care. I've been through visits with CCQA -



I can't imagine it's going to be all that different. I'm used to someone coming in, looking around and sussing things out".

Communicating with families and children about the future

Kim will be keeping families and children informed about the NQF, starting in term one with a newsletter which the children will also be involved in producing. "I want them to feel like they've got a big part in running the centre. We're here to guide them and support them but they are the ones who hold the centre in their hands".

The service has a large display board from the community centre beside them, which will also be used to provide families with information about what is happening at Centipede. Kim says that his rapport with the families at Centipede has continued to grow since he last spoke with NCAC, and he believes that the transition to the NQF is also about educating and working with families.

Keeping positive

Kim believes that meeting the requirements of the National Quality Standard will come naturally if you look after the children: "We run the centre for the kids and if I feel satisfied that we are looking after them then the rest will fall into place". He advises other services not to panic when thinking about the NQF. "When you freak out you start thinking about what you're not doing instead of what you are doing, which is being there for the kids. Feed them, guide them, love them and care for them. Just do it – just do what you do and look at the book and you'll tick the boxes" ■