

## Using the *Continuing Improvement Guide*

*Rebecca Gewandt and Angela Owens spoke to child care services about how they use the Continuing Improvement Guide to support self-study and planning to improve practice.*

### Denistone East Before and After School Care Association (NSW)

Rita Baira found the resource references provided in the *Continuing Improvement Guide* to be very useful. She believes that services often know 'what to do to improve but it's where to get the information or help' that can prove difficult. She found the website references to be particularly useful.

When implementing suggestions from the *Continuing Improvement Guide*, Rita prioritised tasks, focussing on 'suggestions that could be implemented pretty much straight away' for any unsatisfactory indicators. Less urgent suggestions were then implemented within a realistic timeframe for the service.

To share the *Continuing Improvement Guide* with stakeholders Rita summarised the information for

families and children, and provided more detailed information to staff and the service's committee. Rita also 'prepared a report outlining the *Continuing Improvement Guide* and plan of action for the Committee (after discussing with staff) and did a brief overview in the school newsletter'. Another important step in sharing the *Continuing Improvement Guide* information involved the service in developing 'a visual action plan poster'. Rita suggests that when services receive the *Continuing Improvement Guide* they use it in practical ways to communicate with stakeholders and to directly inform their ongoing improvement plans. Prioritising tasks, setting plans and ticking off progress as you go is a simple way of keeping track of achievements.

### Lady Forrest Family Day Care Scheme (WA)

Janet Wright found the resource references to be easily accessible. For example, she used one of the website references from the *Continuing Improvement Guide* to assist the scheme's development of a policy and procedures for managing anaphylaxis. Janet was also pleased to find that many of the guidance points confirmed the improvement plans the scheme already had underway.

Janet used the *Continuing Improvement Guide* to support the development of other policies and procedures in the scheme, including the introduction of email to facilitate family participation and communication with families. She also found the *Guide* to be useful for informing

training opportunities, staff/carer meetings and the development of action plans for staff and carers. Janet has found the way the *Continuing Improvement Guide* promotes 'opportunities for debate with peers and carers about best practice' to be valuable in supporting professional networking opportunities with other schemes. Janet suggests that services make sure they take time to 'celebrate the wonderful work they do' when they receive their Accreditation Decision, and to view the *Continuing Improvement Guide* not as a criticism, but rather as resource to clarify current plans and to assist planning for the future.

### Casuarina Childcare Centre Inc. (NT)

Alice Branco uses the *Continuing Improvement Guide* as an 'essential tool' to assist the service to reflect upon 'current practices and plan future strategies for continuing improvement'.

Alice placed a copy of the *Continuing Improvement Guide* on the service's family noticeboard and she uses information from the *Guide* to communicate with families about the areas of improvement the service is currently working on. This has also been supported through the use of the NCAC *Quality Assurance Communication Poster*.

The *Continuing Improvement Guide* is also used to prepare 'a record of *Continuing Improvement Guide* discussion paper' which is an important feature of the service's ongoing meetings with committee members and staff about quality assurance.

Alice believes that services should take the time to read the *Continuing Improvement Guide* and that it is important that they clearly identify the Quality Areas and Principles to which the guidance points relate. This will assist services to begin the process of incorporating the *Continuing Improvement Guide* suggestions into the improvement plans ■