

What happens after the Validation Visit?

Preparing for, and engaging in, a Validation Visit is usually a busy time for child care services, and child care professionals generally feel quite relieved when the Visit is over. However, it is important to remember that the Validation Visit is only one part of the continuous, five step CCQA process. While child care professionals should take time to reflect upon and celebrate their achievements during self-study and Validation, it is important that they maintain momentum as they progress through CCQA and continue to provide quality care for children.

Interpreting the completed Validation Report

Even though a service representative has the opportunity to discuss the completed *Validation Report* with the Validator toward the end of the Visit, child care professionals may find that they have further questions or concerns regarding the Report when they examine it more thoroughly following the Visit. It is important to remember that:

- The *Validation Report* is only one element of the data that is used to make an Accreditation Decision. Ratings from the *Self-study Report*, the *Validation Surveys* and Moderation also contribute to the Decision. It is therefore important not to make assumptions regarding the Accreditation Decision outcome based solely on information from the *Validation Report*
- Once the Validation Visit has been completed the *Validation Report* cannot be altered. Any additional comments that services wish to provide must be attached to the *Validation Evaluation Form*
- When considering the ratings recorded in the *Validation Report*, it is important to focus on the Satisfactory indicators as a priority. A Satisfactory indicator that has been observed as 'not occurring' is regarded as being Unsatisfactory. Focussing on these indicators first will help services to write relevant comments on the *Validation Evaluation Form* and/or to prioritise their continuing improvement plans
- It may be helpful to seek advice or clarification regarding the intent of indicators in the

Validation Report that child care professionals have concerns about. This can be done by re-reading the related preamble and indicator information in the relevant *Quality Practices Guide* or discussing the indicator with others. Child care professionals can also contact a NCAC Child Care Adviser for clarification of any aspect of the CCQA standards

Completing the Validation Evaluation Form

Where possible, the service representative should provide clear, relevant comments in the *Validation Report* when they have the opportunity to do so during the Visit. Services are also encouraged to include comments about the Validation Visit and the Validator's conduct on the *Validation Evaluation Form*. This Form is given to the service representative during the Visit. It needs to be returned to NCAC within seven working days of the Visit or of the date on the letter included with NCAC's photocopy of the *Validation Report*. Services may attach up to two double sided A4 pages to the *Validation Evaluation Form* for additional comments.

The information that is provided on the *Validation Evaluation Form* assists Moderators to evaluate the overall quality of a service's practice and to identify patterns of quality care. Services that provide clear and detailed comments describing or supporting their practice assist the Moderator to develop a comprehensive understanding of service practice.

The Moderation process

Following the Validation Visit, the service proceeds to Moderation. During this step the Moderator analyses the information about the service's practices, using information from the *Self-study Report*, Survey ratings, *Validation Evaluation Form* and the *Validation Report*. The Moderator uses this analysis to:

- provide a rating of the service's practices for each Principle; and
- produce a written report, called the *Continuing Improvement Guide*, to assist services to plan for future quality improvements.

Maintaining momentum while awaiting the Accreditation Decision

It is understandable that child care professionals will experience a sense of relief when the Validation Visit has been achieved, as well as a sense of anticipation regarding the impending Accreditation Decision. However, services need to ensure that children continue to experience quality care during this period, and to avoid the temptation to move into a 'lull' period while they await their Decision. Some strategies that services may use to boost their momentum at this time include:

- Taking time as a team to celebrate what has been achieved so far and to 'debrief' about the Validation Visit - this might be done through service meetings or social occasions

- Electing a time soon after the Visit to discuss where the service plans to go next in terms of maintaining or improving practice. Discussing the completed *Validation Report* may assist this process;
- Delegating achievable, short term tasks to individuals or small teams as part of the service's improvement plans; and
- Organising an inspiring or motivational professional development session to occur soon after the Visit has occurred

It is important that child care professionals use the time between their Validation Visit and receiving an Accreditation Decision to continue to reflect upon their strengths while planning and implementing improvement processes ■