



NCAC

National Childcare
Accreditation Council Inc.

NCAC Annual Report 2005/2006



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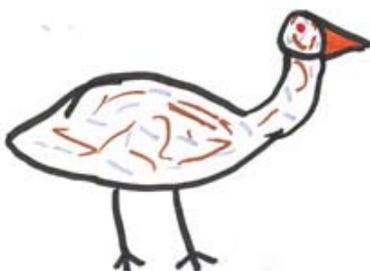
About the National Childcare Accreditation Council

The National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) supports Australian children's services to provide quality child care and assist families to make informed decisions when choosing quality child care.

NCAC is responsible for the administration of the following Child Care Quality Assurance (CCQA) systems for children's services throughout Australia:

- Family Day Care Quality Assurance (FDCQA) for family day care schemes;
- Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance (OSHCQA) for outside school hours care services; and
- Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) for long day care centres.

The broad objective of the CCQA systems is to ensure that children in child care in Australia have stimulating, positive experiences and interactions that nurture all aspects of their development.



Our Vision

Quality child care experiences for all children enrolled in child care services in Australia.

Our Mission

To work in partnership with families, services, government and other key stakeholders to facilitate and support continuous improvement to the quality of child care provided for children in Australia.

Our Values

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Integrity: | we conduct ourselves and our business honestly and consistently |
| Probity: | we employ high ethical standards |
| Accountability: | we employ transparent decision making processes and manage public funds responsibly |
| Respect: | we demonstrate respect for customers, stakeholders and colleagues |
| Professionalism: | we demonstrate commitment to working respectfully, collaboratively and responsibly with a customer service focus |
| Commitment: | we are committed to our vision and mission |



Report of the Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer

NCAC has many significant achievements to report for 2005/2006. This period has seen progress in the administration of the three CCQA systems, and the continuing commitment of all stakeholders to the provision of quality care in Australian children's services.

The reclassified QIAS *Quality Practices Guide* (1st edition, 2005) was received by all long day care centres in June 2005. All centres due to submit a *Self-study Report* from 1 January 2006 completed self-study based on the reclassified standards and the first Accreditation Decisions under the reclassified standards were available from July 2006.

The first family day care schemes received Accreditation Decisions under the reclassified FDCQA *Quality Practices Guide* (2nd edition, 2004) from July 2005. Outside school hours care services continue to make significant achievements, with 65% of services achieving High Quality in all 8 Quality Areas.

NCAC is engaged in continuing evaluation of the CCQA systems. As part of this process NCAC requested and reviewed feedback from services participating in the CCQA systems who received an Accreditation Decision during the period 1 July 2004 – 30 June 2005, through the *Continuing Improvement Guide Survey*. Almost 600 child care services returned a completed *Survey* to NCAC during the consultation period.

NCAC also received feedback from 1965 stakeholders on *Putting Children First*, NCAC resources and publications and the NCAC website, to contribute to future improvement and development of these resources.

Information available to key stakeholders has been enhanced. During 2006, NCAC developed the first QIAS and OSHCQA *Factsheets* to support long day care centres and outside school hours services participating in the CCQA systems. February 2006 marked the launch of NCAC's new website (www.ncac.gov.au) containing comprehensive information about the CCQA systems in a clear, concise format.

The NCAC Board approved the introduction of the ISO 9001:2000 Certification for Quality Management System in October 2005. NCAC's Management demonstrated its commitment by allocating adequate resources and planning a schedule for the development and implementation of a Quality Management System.

NCAC is currently planning the implementation of changes to the CCQA systems. These changes are designed to deliver a more reliable Quality Assurance process and enhance the validity of Accreditation Decisions for all services. NCAC is currently working to determine how we may best support services participating in the CCQA systems to understand and prepare for these changes. NCAC looks forward to working with child care services across Australia to implement these changes.

The *NCAC Annual Report 2005/2006* is a summary of the challenges and achievements that NCAC has met during the past twelve months. We thank all stakeholders who have supported and continue to support NCAC and CCQA systems.



June McLoughlin

Chairperson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'June McLoughlin'.



Denise Taylor

Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Denise Taylor'.

NCAC Board Members

In 2005/2006, NCAC farewelled former Chairperson John Tainton and Board Members Judy Atkinson, Helen Hobson and Jenny Mobbs, all of whom contributed greatly to NCAC and the development of the CCQA systems. NCAC extends its appreciation to John, Judy, Helen and Jenny for their service to NCAC and commitment to ensuring quality child care experiences for all children enrolled in child care services in Australia. NCAC welcomed Geraldine Atkinson, Andrew Clarke, Pam Jackson, and Marie Lewis to the Board in July 2005. June McLoughlin commenced her role as Chairperson of NCAC in December 2005. The new NCAC board members bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to their role on the NCAC Board.

June McLoughlin – Chairperson



June McLoughlin (Dip ECE, B.Ed, M.Ed), Director Policy and Service Development at the Centre for Community Child Health, has extensive experience, both at service delivery and policy development levels, within early childhood,

parenting and family support fields. Prior to taking up the Director's position, June held a senior executive position for a number of years within the Department of Human Services in Victoria with state wide policy and budget responsibility for a broad range of child and family services. In her work at the Centre for Community Child Health, June has managed a wide range of national and state projects designed to refocus services and provide support to practitioners to deliver more evidence based services for families of young children. June is a foundation member of NIFTeY and ARACY, and Board Chair of the Victorian Parenting Centre. She is a member of the Australian Government Stronger Families and Communities Partnership.

Marie Lewis



Marie Lewis holds qualifications in early childhood, special education and education and business administration. She has been a practitioner in a range of children's services, worked as an educational adviser and administrator with KU

Children's Services, a lecturer at the Institute of Early Childhood, Macquarie University and worked in the Office of Childcare within the NSW Department of Community Services. Most recently, she held the position of Chief Executive Officer of The Infant's Home Ashfield, a multi-purpose child and family service. Marie has served on numerous committees and worked with many groups to advocate for children. Marie has been a Moderator and a member of the Accreditation Decisions Review Committee (ADRC).

Geraldine Atkinson



Geraldine Atkinson has been involved in education for 30 years. Geraldine assisted in the establishment of the first Aboriginal child care service in 1981 in Melbourne, Victoria and then established the first country Aboriginal child care centre in 1983. She has

worked extensively in the Victorian Aboriginal community in all sectors of education, from early childhood, schooling, TAFE and tertiary institutions, as well as being involved in Aboriginal community controlled organisations and services. Geraldine assisted in the establishment of an Aboriginal school within a school, Manega, which caters for primary school age Aboriginal children, and the establishment of Badlga pre-school.

Andrew Clarke



Dr Andrew Clarke (LLM, SJD, MBA, MPET) is the Deputy Head of School at the University of New England law school. He holds postgraduate qualifications in law, business and education. Andrew has pursued research interests in corporate

governance and risk management. He was awarded a National Prize for *Excellence in Higher Education Publishing for Negligence: A Practical Learning Approach* (Butterworths, 2003).

Pam Jackson



Pam Jackson has been involved in the family day care community for many years, as both a home based carer and as a member of Darwin Family Day Care where she has worked since 1981. Pam has worked as a family day care Validator

and was involved in the working parties that developed the National Standards for family day care. Pam has worked with numerous committees to advocate for children. She is currently on the Northern Territory State and Advisory Committee (NTSTAC) and a member of the National Family Day Care Council of Australia. Pam holds qualifications in both early childhood and workplace training.

Corporate Governance

The National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) is responsible for the administration of the following Child Care Quality Assurance (CCQA) systems for children's services throughout Australia that are eligible to receive funding from the Australian Government (currently Child Care Benefit):

- Family Day Care Quality Assurance (FDCQA) for family day care schemes
- Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance (OSHCQA) outside school hours care services
- Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) long day care centres

NCAC is funded by the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA).

NCAC is accountable to the Australian Government Minister responsible for children's services in relation to the administration of the CCQA systems in accordance with Ministerial guidelines, and regularly reports to the Minister and FaCSIA on quality issues. The commitment of the Australian Government to quality child care is vital to the continued success of the CCQA systems.

NCAC is an incorporated association under NSW legislation (*NSW Companies Act*). ABN 82 270 247 664.

The Role of the NCAC Board

In general, the NCAC Board is responsible for, and has the authority to determine, all matters relating to the policies, practices, management and operations of NCAC. The Board has final responsibility for the successful operations of NCAC, which include:

- Setting the objectives and providing the overall direction of NCAC in accordance with the NCAC Rules approved by the Minister responsible for child care;
- Determining all policies governing the operations of NCAC;
- Approving the annual budget and long-term budgets for presentation to the Minister for approval;
- Reviewing the annual performance of NCAC in meeting its objectives;
- Reporting to the Minister responsible for child care on progress with the CCQA systems.

Composition of the NCAC Board

In 2005/2006 the NCAC Board consisted of a Chairperson and five members appointed by the Australian Government Minister responsible for children's services. The Board meets seven times a year for scheduled meetings which take place every six to eight weeks. Additional meetings, including teleconference meetings, are held as required.

Remuneration

Remuneration for the Chairperson and Board Members is set by the Australian Government Remuneration Tribunal.

Conflict of Interest

NCAC has a policy and procedure for the disclosure and resolution of any matter which may give rise to actual or perceived conflicts between the interests of a Board member and those of NCAC.

External Auditor Independence

The NCAC Board closely monitors the independence of the external auditors. A policy is in place to restrict the type of non-audit services which can be provided by the external auditors.

Accounting Standards

The Chief Executive Officer and the Chief Financial Officer have certified the accuracy and completeness of financial information prepared, in accordance with relevant accounting standards, as provided to the Board.

ISO Certification Project

The NCAC Board approved the introduction of the ISO 9001:2000 Certification for Quality Management System in October 2005. The current goal is to obtain Certification by December 2006.

NCAC Management demonstrated its commitment to ISO by allocating resources and planning a schedule for the development and implementation of a Quality Management System. SAI Global will be the auditor to certify NCAC's achievement of ISO 9001:2000 standards.

The Quality Management System was put into practice in three phases – documentation of the system comprising of strategies, policies, procedures and process flow maps; implementation of the system by operating it and testing the system with management and executive reviews and internal audits. All phases were completed on schedule in the 2005/2006 period.

SAI Global conducted a Pre-audit to assess NCAC's Quality Management System in accordance with the ISO 9001:2000 standards. The assessment was a positive experience for NCAC. The final audit for Certification will be conducted in November 2006.

NCAC Human Resources

Human Resources

During 2005/2006, NCAC established a new Human Resources (HR) team consisting of a Manager, Payroll Officer and Administration Officer. The expansion of the HR Team was undertaken in preparation for the recruitment and support of staff validators. The HR team provides sound and effective human resources services to all NCAC staff. Initiatives undertaken by the HR Team during this period included the recruitment, selection and induction of 21 new staff, 12 OSHCQA Contract Validators and the delivery of 10 sessions of compulsory in-house training.

Occupational Health and Safety

NCAC's Occupational Health and Safety Committee has consolidated policies and procedures related to this area during the last year, such as developing and implementing a manual handling policy and a working off-site policy. The Committee has also contributed to ISO 9001 by assessing two identified risk areas. A new Occupational Health and Safety Committee Chairperson was appointed in July 2006 and the seven volunteer members of the Committee continue to meet bi-monthly.



NCAC Community Involvement

NCAC staff maintain a commitment to social responsibility and support of the community through fund raising for charitable organisations.

During 2005/2006, NCAC staff supported:

- Jeans for Genes
- UNICEF Cup for Kids 2006
- World Aids Day
- Cystic Fibrosis Australia
- Child Flight
- Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind
- Red Cross Blood Bank
- Daffodil Day
- Pink Ribbon Day
- The Salvation Army Christmas Appeal
- Fred Hollows Foundation Indigenous Health Program

Staff Awards

The commitment of NCAC staff to the organisation and to Australian children's services was recognised during 2005/2006 with the presentation of several awards acknowledging their achievements.

The dedication of Jyoti Shankar, Susan Chacksfield, Alison Therkildsen and Melissa Perkins was acknowledged with the presentation of Rotary Pride of Workmanship Awards by the Rotary Club of Strathfield.

Nina Kyte, Jan Faulkner and Lorna Hughes were also recognised for their commitment to NCAC, children's services and their dedication to the provision of quality care for all children in Australia. They were each presented with an Australia Day Medallion for outstanding service to children in January 2006.

NCAC congratulates each of the recipients of these awards and thanks them for their continued hard work and dedication.

Child Care Quality Assurance Systems

Family Day Care Quality Assurance

Significant achievements were made by family day care schemes participating in Family Day Care Quality Assurance (FDCQA) during 2005/2006. As at 30 June 2006, 318 family day care schemes were registered to participate in FDCQA.

Family day care schemes received the reclassified FDCQA *Quality Practices Guide* in April 2004 and the first Validation Visits against the reclassified standards commenced in April 2005. The first Accreditation Decisions under the reclassified FDCQA *Quality Practices Guide* (2nd edition, 2004) were made from July 2005.

Of the 129 family day care schemes that received an Accreditation Decision between 1 July 2005 – 30 June 2006, 74% were Accredited and of these, 34% achieved a High Quality level in all 6 Quality Areas. This is a significant achievement for family day care schemes progressing through the reclassified standards for the first time.

The first FDCQA *Quality Trends Reports* were developed in December 2005 and June 2006, identifying key areas within FDCQA that family day care schemes are performing well in and those which contribute to schemes receiving a Not Accredited status.

The *Quality Trends Reports* demonstrated the achievements of family day care schemes in providing a positive care environment and warm, friendly and respectful interactions with children.

The challenges faced by family day care schemes were also identified, particularly in relation to the failure to date and source written policies and procedures which contributed significantly to the relatively high proportion of schemes receiving Unsatisfactory ratings across Quality Area 4: Health, Hygiene, Nutrition, Safety and Wellbeing.

NCAC has also invited family day care carers to be included on the NCAC mailing list to receive NCAC *Factsheets*, *Putting Children First* and other resources.

Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance

As at 30 June 2006, 3,025 outside school hours care services were registered to participate in Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance (OSHCQA) and 1,062 had completed the 5

Steps of Quality Assurance and received an Accreditation Decision.

More than 86% of outside school hours care services that have completed the 5 Steps of CCQA up to 30 June 2006 are Accredited. Of these, 65% have achieved High Quality in all 8 Quality Areas. This is a significant achievement which indicates that outside school hours care services continue to perform at a high standard as they progress through OSHCQA for the first time.

NCAC aims to work in partnership with outside school hours care services to support continuous improvement to the quality of care provided. During 2006, NCAC developed the first OSHCQA *Factsheets* to support outside school hours care services. These *Factsheets* were forwarded to all Outside School Hours Care services in December 2005 and May 2006.

Quality Improvement and Accreditation System

As at 30 June 2006, 5,043 long day care centres were registered to participate in the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS).

More than 97% of long day care centres that have completed the 5 Steps of CCQA up to 30 June 2006 are Accredited. Of these, 75% have achieved High Quality in all 10 Quality Areas. This is a significant achievement which indicates that long day care centres continue to perform at a high standard.

The standards in the QIAS *Source Book* (2001) were reclassified during 2004/2005. The reclassified QIAS *Quality Practices Guide* (1st edition, 2005) was reduced from 10 Quality Areas to 7 Quality Areas. The QIAS *Quality Practices Guide* now describes three levels of quality: Satisfactory, Good and High.

All long day care centres received the reclassified QIAS *Quality Practices Guide* (1st edition, 2005) in June 2005. All centres due to submit a *Self-study Report* from 1 January 2006 completed self-study based on the reclassified standards. The first Accreditation Decisions for long day care centres under the reclassified standards were made available from July 2006.

During 2006, NCAC developed the first QIAS *Factsheets* to support long day care centres participating in the QIAS. These *Factsheets* were distributed in May 2006.

The Five Steps of Child Care Quality Assurance

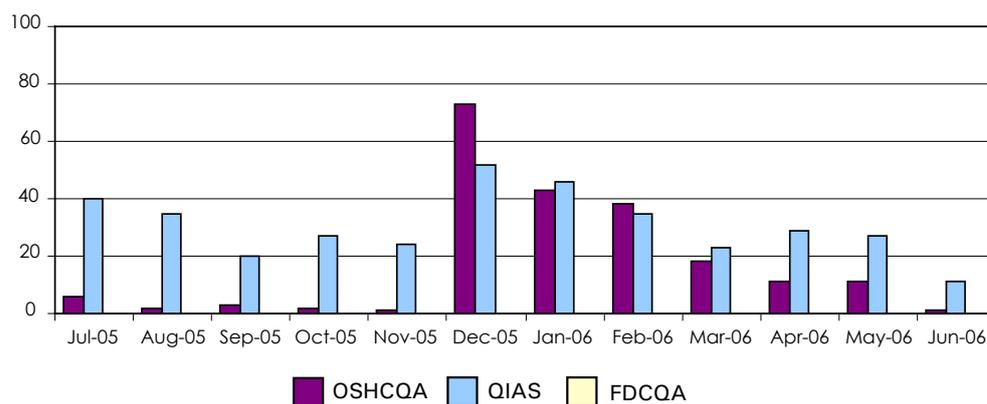
Step One: Registration

Family day care schemes, outside school hours care services and long day care centres must register with the NCAC to participate in the Child Care Quality Assurance (CCQA) systems. An annual registration fee is payable for continued participation in the CCQA systems. Upon registration, the service receives a *Certificate of Registration* and a registrations kit which includes an initial supply of the publications required for participation in the relevant CCQA system.

FDCQA	318
OSHCQA	3,025
QIAS	5,043
Total	8,386

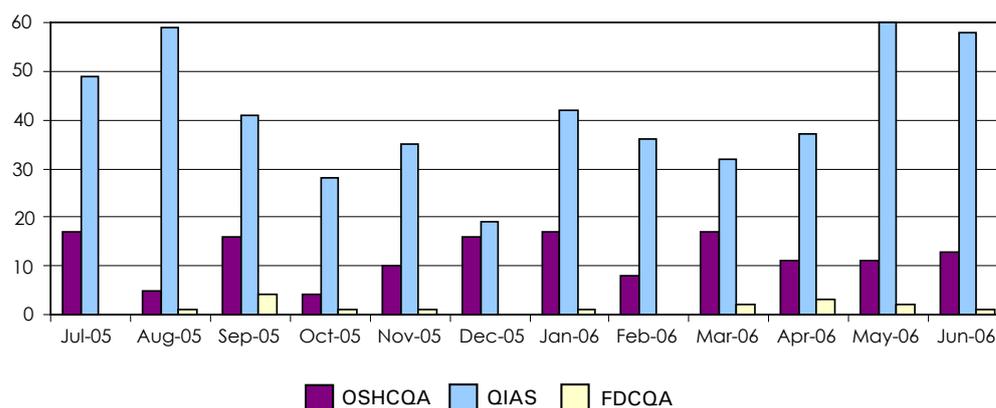
Between 1 July 2005 and 30 June 2006, 578 new children's services registered with NCAC, comprising of 209 outside school hours care services and 369 long day care centres. There were no new family day care scheme registrations and the number of registered schemes remained consistent at 318 throughout the year.

New Registrations 2005-2006



For the period 1 July 2005 and 30 June 2006, NCAC recorded a total of 657 changes of registration, representing a change of ownership/sponsorship or change of business structure/legal entity. During this time changes of registration were completed for 496 long day care centres, 145 outside school hours care services and 16 family day care schemes.

Change of Registrations 2005-2006



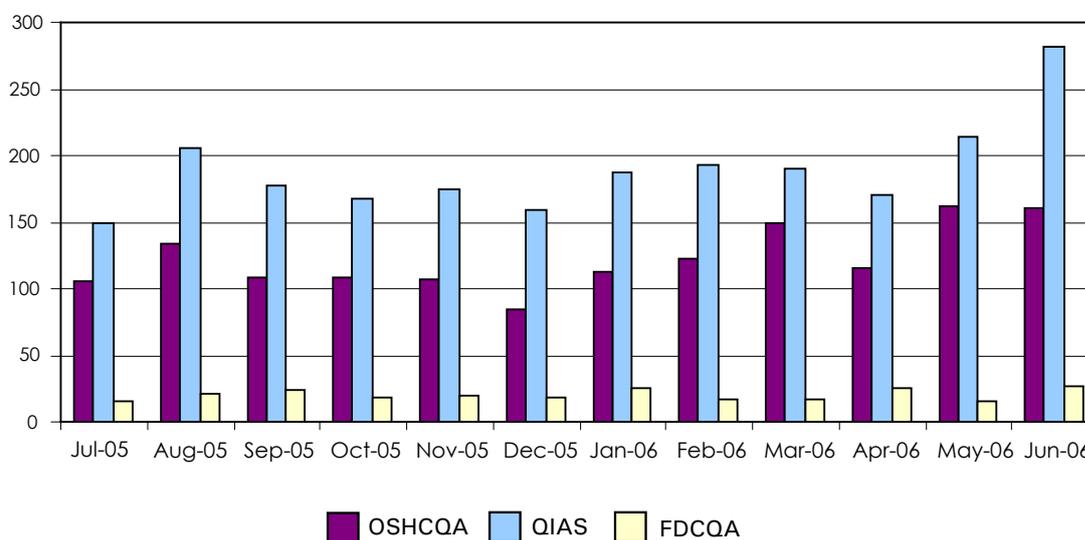
The Five Steps of Child Care Quality Assurance

Step Two: Self-study and Continuing Improvement

The provision of quality child care requires continuous self-study and improvement. Services participating in the CCQA systems are required to undertake a self-assessment of the quality of care that they provide by consulting with all staff and families of children in the service. From this self-assessment, the service develops and implements a continuing cycle of quality improvement plans.

Every two and a half years, the results of the service's self-assessment are summarised in a *Self-study Report* and submitted to NCAC. The *Self-study Report* documents the service's ratings of its own practices against each of the Quality Areas and Principles in the *Quality Practices Guide*. This provides the opportunity for services to illustrate the quality of their practices.

Self-study Reports Received 2005-2006



With the introduction of the *QIAS Quality Practices Guide* (1st edition, 2005), the first *QIAS Self-study Reports* under the revised standards were due for submission to NCAC from January 2006. Between July and June 2006, NCAC received 2,269 *QIAS Self-study Reports*.

For the period 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006, NCAC received 246 *Self-study Reports* from family day care schemes participating in the FDCQA and 1,470 *Self-study Reports* from outside school hours care services participating in the OSHCQA.

A total of 3,985 *Self-study Reports* were received by NCAC during 2005/2006.



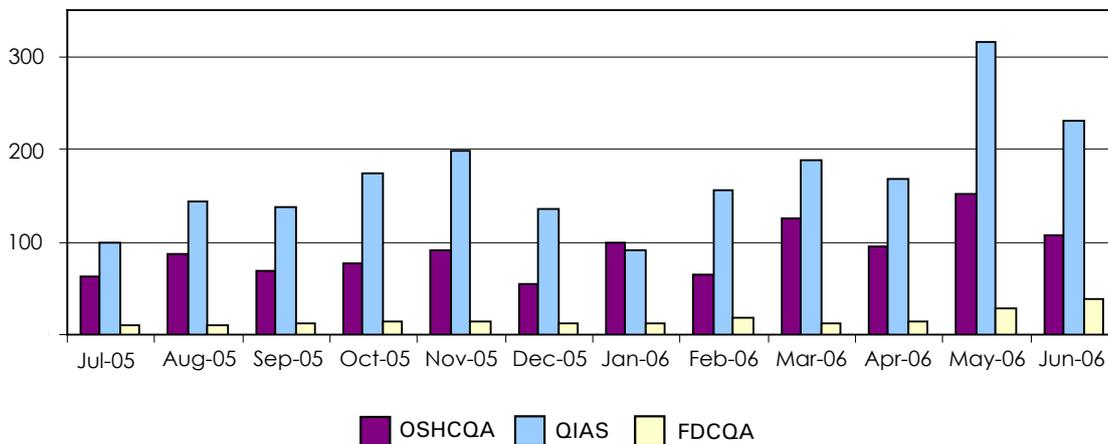
The Five Steps of Child Care Quality Assurance

Step Three: Validation

Once a *Self-study Report* has been submitted to NCAC, arrangements are made for a Validator to visit the service. Validator's are trained by NCAC to validate the quality practices of the service, based on the indicators of quality specified in the *Quality Practices Guide*. This will include observation and discussion with staff and carers.

When a Validator is selected, *Validation Surveys* are sent to the service for completion by the service director, staff and families and collection by the Validator. FDCQA and OSHCQA *Validation Surveys for Children* are also distributed to encourage the participation of school aged children in the CCQA process.

Validation Visits Completed 2005-2006



A total of 3,318 Validation Visits were completed during 2005/2006: 198 for family day care schemes, 1,085 for outside school hours care services and 2,035 for long day care centres.



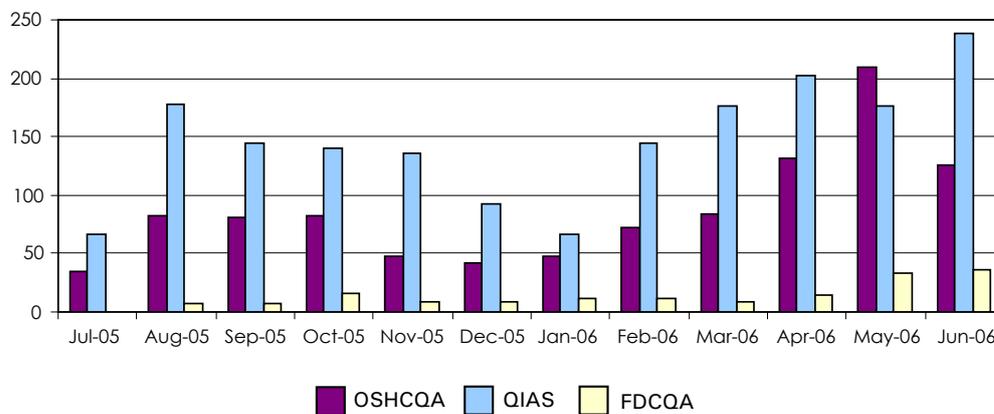
The Five Steps of Child Care Quality Assurance

Step Four: Moderation

To ensure that all services participating in the CCQA systems are treated fairly and consistently on a national basis, Moderators assess the quality of the service's practice guided by information in the service's *Self-study Report*, the *Validation Surveys*, the *Validation Report* and *Validation Evaluation Form*. Moderators look at each service as a whole, identifying patterns of quality care within the service.

A composite *Quality Profile* is compiled by NCAC from information in the *Self-study Report*, the *Validation Surveys*, the *Validation Reports* and the Moderation ratings. Moderators write a report to the service, which focuses on quality improvement and is based on trends in the Quality Areas, evident in the composite *Quality Profile*.

Moderated Reports 2005-2006



The first 40 FDCQA reports for the FDCQA *Quality Practices Guide* (2nd edition, 2004) were completed Moderation during June 2005.

Moderation of 162 FDCQA, 1,042 OSHCQA and 1,763 QIAS Validation Visits was completed between July 2005 and June 2006.

A total of 2,967 reports completed Moderation during 2005/2006.



The Five Steps of Child Care Quality Assurance

Step Five: Accreditation Decision

NCAC makes Accreditation Decisions for services based on a composite of ratings from the service's *Self-study Report*, the *Validation Report*, *Validation Surveys* and *Moderation*. Accredited services will receive a *Certificate of Accreditation*, which must be displayed at the service. Services that are Not Accredited for the first time, must submit another *Self-study Report* six months from the date of their decision. Services Not Accredited more than once must submit another *Self-study Report* three months from the date of their decision.

The Accreditation Decisions made during 2005/2006 demonstrate a high level of Accreditation in each CCQA system. This is a significant achievement which demonstrates the commitment of Australian children's services to the provision of quality child care.

During 2005/2006, 284 schemes participating in FDCQA were Accredited. The progress of family day care schemes through the CCQA process as at 30 June 2006 is as follows:

Family Day Care Quality Assurance		
Progress of Services as at 30 June 2006		
Accredited	284	89.6%
Not Accredited	33	10.4%
Total Through 5 Steps	317	
New Services	1	
Total Registered Services	318	

During 2005/2006, 917 services participating in OSHCQA were Accredited. The progress of outside school hours care services through the CCQA process as at 30 June 2006 is as follows:

Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance		
Progress of Services as at 30 June 2006		
Accredited	917	86.3%
Not Accredited	145	13.7%
Total Through 5 Steps	1,062	
New Services	1,963	
Total Registered Services	3,025	

During 2005/2006, 4,187 services participating in QIAS were Accredited. The progress of long day care centres through the CCQA process as at 30 June 2006 is as follows:

Quality Improvement and Accreditation System		
Progress of Services as at 30 June 2006		
Accredited	4,187	97.2%
Not Accredited	121	2.8%
Total Through 5 Steps	4,308	
New Services	735	
Total Registered Services	5,043	

Accreditation Decision Reviews

A service can apply to the Accreditation Decisions Review Committee (ADRC) for a review of its Accreditation Decision. The ADRC is comprised of members appointed by the Australian Government Minister responsible for child care and acts independently from and makes recommendations to NCAC. Between 1 July 2005 and 30 June 2006, NCAC received 16 FDCQA, 8 OSHCQA and 17 QIAS recommendations from the ADRC following review of Accreditation Decisions.

Training and Support

Validator Training and Support

Validators are qualified and experienced child care professionals with recent child care experience. As at 30 June 2006, a total of 419 Validators work with NCAC, comprising of 99 FDCQA Validators, 131 OSHCQA Validators and 640 QIAS Validators. During 2006 NCAC will commence recruitment of staff Validators

To become a Validator, applicants must meet NCAC selection criteria and complete the application process.

Applicants must undertake an intensive, five-day competency based training course conducted by NCAC and must successfully demonstrate the required standard of competency at the conclusion of the training program. NCAC Validator training included:

- An overview of the 5 steps of the CCQA systems
- Preparing for and conducting the Validation Visit
- Communication during the Validation Visit
- The *Code of Ethics* and the *Validator Code of Conduct*
- A competency based assessment

Validator training provides child care professionals with an opportunity for professional development, particularly in the areas of observation and communication, and the development of an understanding of quality improvement and quality practices.

Seven QIAS, four FDCQA and eleven OSHCQA Validator Training Sessions took place during 2005/2006. A total of 76 QIAS, 39 FDCQA and 62 OSHCQA Validators were trained and demonstrated

competency during this period. Five QIAS, ten FDCQA and seven OSHCQA update training sessions were held in this period.

Validator Support and Feedback

Validators are able to access support from NCAC's Validation Team during and outside office hours. Extensive feedback is provided to Validators upon completion of their first Validation Visit. Validators also receive performance feedback on an annual basis and as needed or requested. This feedback is provided by telephone and includes feedback from *Validation Evaluation Forms*, Moderator feedback, and direct feedback on comments and ratings provided in recent *Validation Reports*.



Moderator Training and Support

Moderators are qualified professionals with considerable experience in child care service delivery and/or in delivery of pre and post service training or in research.

To become a Moderator, applicants must meet NCAC selection criteria and complete the application process. Applicants must undertake a three-day training program and must successfully attain the required competency standards.

Moderator Refresher Training took place in November 2005 for OSHCQA and in June 2006 for FDCQA and QIAS. There was no initial Moderator training in the 2005/2006 period. Moderator training conducted by NCAC covers:

- An overview of the 5 steps of the CCQA systems
- The role of the Moderator under the CCQA systems
- Steps in the Moderation process
- Administrative procedures and responsibilities
- A multiple choice test and related exercises

Provision of Support

NCAC's Moderation and Accreditation Team can be contacted by Moderators for support and advice. This may be in relation to rating Principles, licensing issues, the creation of the *Continuing Improvement Guide* for services or a number of other issues. Moderators are encouraged to seek assistance and clarification as it is needed.

Performance Feedback

The NCAC Moderation and Accreditation Team provides regular support to Moderators with performance feedback telephone calls. Performance feedback is provided to Moderators regarding the analysis of Moderation documents, rating rationales and the completion of the *Continuing Improvement Guides* for services.

Training and Support

NCAC Endorsed QA Trainers

NCAC has developed a training program that aims to support and assist child care services, operators and selected professionals to have a greater understanding of the CCQA process and the ability to deliver training in CCQA systems.

The NCAC Endorsed QA Trainer Training is a two day intensive course in either the QIAS, FDCQA or OSHCQA system.

On completion of the course, Endorsed QA Trainers will be able to purchase the relevant *NCAC Endorsed QA Training Kit* and deliver training sessions on the Five Step CCQA process.

NCAC's endorsement allows a Trainer to:

- Purchase a *NCAC Endorsed QA Training Kit* for the relevant CCQA system;
- Deliver training on the relevant CCQA system using a *NCAC Endorsed QA Training Kit*;
- Use the NCAC Endorsed Trainer logo for advertising purposes; and
- Be listed on NCAC's website and referred to for CCQA training.

NCAC's mission is to work in partnership with families, services and children to facilitate continuous improvement to quality child care. Through the endorsement of QA Trainers, NCAC aims to provide greater consistency and accuracy of information about CCQA. During 2005/2006 NCAC endorsed 44 OSHQA, 57 QIAS and 12 FDCQA trainers.

To attend Endorsed Trainer Training, applicants must meet the selection criteria, complete a written application and participate in a telephone interview.

Endorsed QA Trainer Training enables large service operators who need to induct and train new staff in the CCQA process or prepare for Step 2: Self-study and Continuing Improvement and Step 3: Validation.

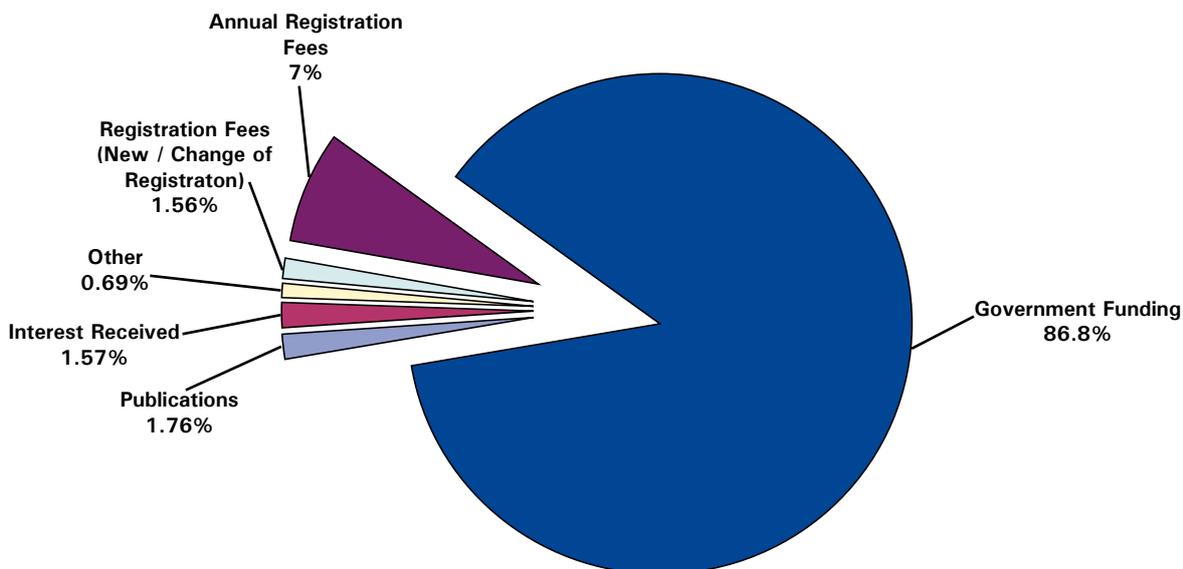
For TAFE lecturers and tutors interested in becoming NCAC Endorsed QA Trainers, the Training Kits will be a valuable resource in assisting to facilitate discussion with students about CCQA.

Financial Overview

Budget of 2005/2006

During 2005/2006, 86.8% of NCAC's total income came from funding provided by the Australian Government. The majority of the remaining 13.2% was derived from annual registration fees. The following chart shows a breakdown of NCAC income sources for 2005/2006.

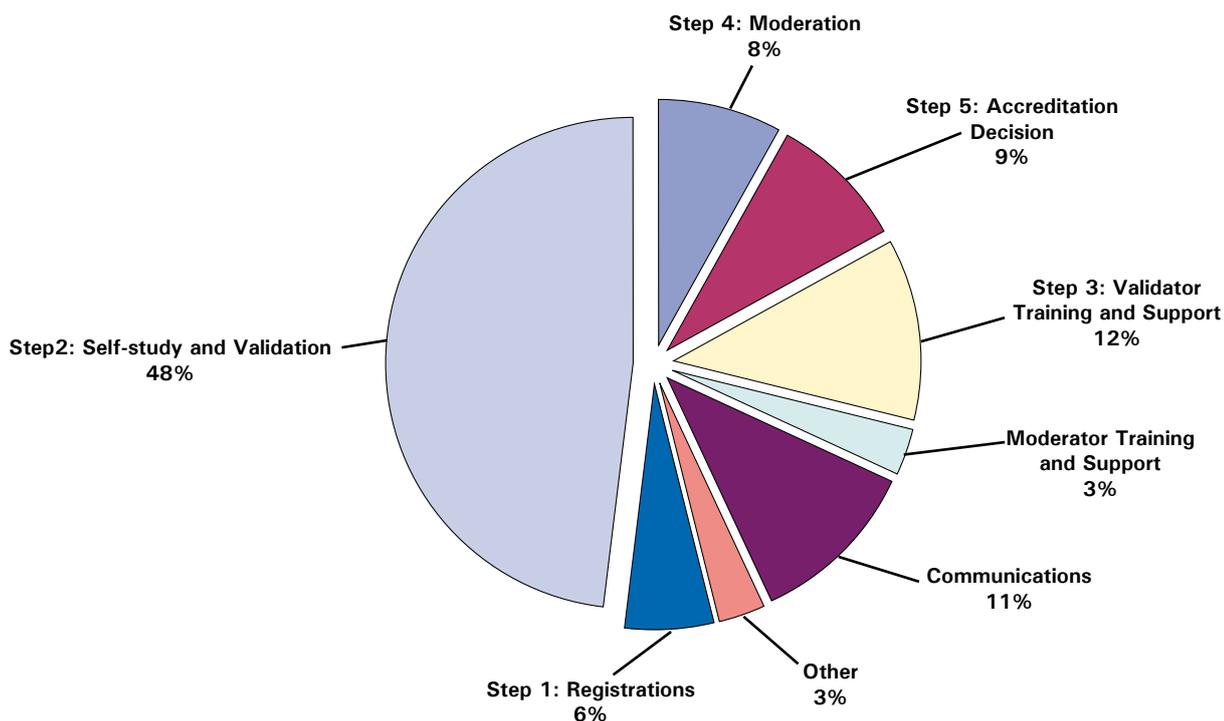
NCAC Income Sources 2005-2006



Distribution of Resources for the QA Processes in 2005/2006

The allocation of these funds goes directly towards the administration of the CCQA systems. These funds were distributed across the 5 steps of the CCQA systems in 2005/2006 as follows:

Distribution of Resources Over QA Processes



Validation Evaluation

Consistent evaluation of the CCQA systems was undertaken by NCAC during 2005/2006. Part of this process included the annual analysis of *Validation Evaluation Forms*.

All services that have had a Validation Visit are encouraged to submit a *Validation Evaluation Form* to indicate their level of satisfaction with the Validation process and their Validator. NCAC aims to have at least 85% of services satisfied with the professional standard of Validators' work. This has been achieved consistently with over 90% of services indicating that they were satisfied with the professional standard of the Validator during this period.

An analysis, was conducted of the *Validation Evaluation Forms* received from services that had a Validation Visit in October and November 2005. Twenty nine family day care schemes, 136 outside school hours care services and 317 long day care centres visited in this period returned their *Validation Evaluation Forms*.

While there was evidence that services were often nervous before a Validation Visit, 43% of services were comfortable and confident throughout their Validation Visit. A further 34% of services, while initially nervous, soon settled or were put at ease on meeting their Validator. It was also clear that the Validation Visit provided child care professionals with an opportunity to be recognised for their work and their capabilities.

Some of the feedback received from services included:

"The Validator's positive attitude of looking for what we do in our scheme, not what we don't do, resulted in the coordination unit feeling relaxed and comfortable throughout the Validation Visit."

"Initially the staff and myself felt anxious and a little nervous about being observed as we weren't really sure what to expect. At the time of Validation Visit we discovered that it wasn't anywhere near as daunting as we thought it would be. "

"The Validator prepared us prior to the visit on her observation techniques, so the staff felt prepared. She observed a variety of experiences during the days, but was never obtrusive or too conspicuous. She was a very objective observer and used effective questioning techniques."

The *Analysis of Validation Evaluation Forms for Validation Visits Conducted October/November 2005* is available at the NCAC website (www.ncac.gov.au).

Continuing Improvement Guide Evaluation

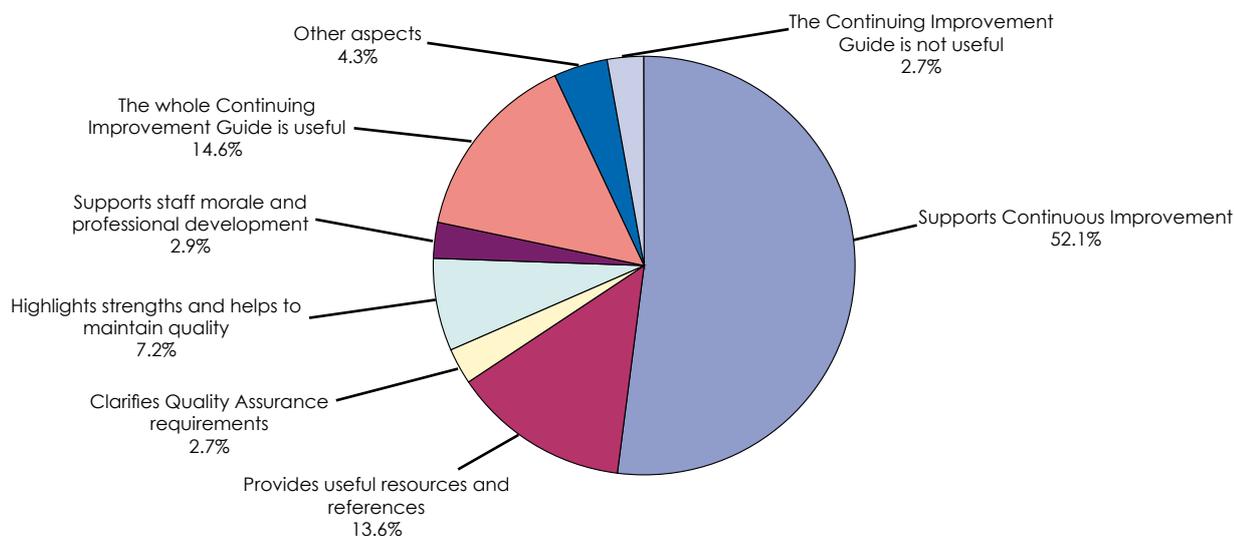
NCAC consistently seeks the views of the child care community on all aspects of Quality Assurance. Feedback about the CCQA systems from key stakeholders informs the revision of the standards of quality care, developments in the administration of the CCQA systems and the provision of resources to services, families and key stakeholders.

During July and August 2005, NCAC conducted a survey seeking feedback from services to gauge the effectiveness of the *Continuing Improvement Guide*. In particular, information was sought regarding:

- The ways in which the *Continuing Improvement Guide* is used to inform quality improvement to service practice;
- Who this information is shared with at the service;
- How this information is shared at the service;
- The value and accessibility of the resources suggested in the *Continuing Improvement Guide*; and
- Whether the format, style and information provided in the *Continuing Improvement Guide* adequately meet service needs.

Child care services participating in the CCQA systems and having received an Accreditation Decision during the period 1 July 2004 – 30 June 2005, were invited to complete a *Continuing Improvement Guide Survey*. 595 child care services returned a completed Survey to NCAC during the consultation period. The results are shown below.

Important Aspects of the *Continuing Improvement Guide*



The majority of respondents felt that the most important aspects of the *Continuing Improvement Guide* related to identifying strengths and possibilities for improvement, and supporting continuous improvement through identifying relevant resources. Less than 3% of services felt that the *Continuing Improvement Guide* was not useful or relevant.

Some of the feedback received from services included:

"It provides not only suggestions to focus improvement but also resources to assist in the process"

"Reaffirming the standards and quality practices which already are occurring and further advice to improve"

"It gave us reassurance that our improvement plans were worthwhile and resources to find further information"

Changes to the CCQA Systems

On 18 May 2006 at the National Family Day Care Conference in Alice Springs, the Hon. Senator Mal Brough, Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, announced several important changes to the CCQA systems as follows:

- Unannounced Validation Visits
- Unannounced 'Spot Visits'
- Non-peer Validators
- An integrated CCQA system
- Policy Template Project

Each of these changes aims to enhance CCQA, and will help increase families' confidence in the quality of care that their children are receiving.

The following breakdown provides information about the proposed changes.

Unannounced Validation Visits

All child care services submitting a *Self-study Report* from 1 July 2006 will have an unannounced Validation Visit. Services will be advised of the Validator's name and will be given a six week timeframe in which the Validation Visit will occur. Services will not be informed of the specific date on which the Visit will occur.

It is important to remember that the Validator is required to observe practice and documentation in the service to determine the quality of care experienced by children on an 'average' day. The service does not need to do anything different or extraordinary on the day of the Visit.

Feedback received by NCAC from services participating in the CCQA systems has indicated support for the introduction of unannounced Validation Visits. The following comments have been recorded in recent *Validation Evaluation Forms*:

"A suggestion would be to have the Validation Visit a spontaneous visit to give a true indication of all centres' normal practice."

"To give us a six month period when the Validator is coming and have the visit unannounced. The centre should always be at the correct standard."

Unannounced Spot Check Visits

Unannounced Spot Checks will commence in October 2006. All child care services participating in CCQA can expect to have an unannounced Spot Check as services will be randomly selected.

Spot Checks will be scheduled by NCAC to take place in the period between a service's

receipt of its Accreditation Decision and its next *Self-study Report* due date. During a Spot Check, a Validator will attend the service without notice and will observe service practice and documentation.

Recent feedback received from child care services supporting 'Spot Checks in the CCQA systems include:

"Spot audits of centres in between Validation. I believe some centres within Australia have a standard for the visit and a much lower standard during the rest of the 2 ½ years. Spot checks would pick this up."

"We believe there should be spot checks to ensure centres are being validated on how they truly operate at all times."

Integrated CCQA System

Minister Brough also announced that the CCQA systems for family day care, long day care and outside school hours care will be integrated into one comprehensive system. The aim of this is to simplify CCQA and to help promote consistency and equity across the child care sectors. NCAC has begun developing an initial set of draft standards, based on existing quality standards outlined in the *Quality Practices Guide* for each system.

Staff Validators

From 1 July 2006 NCAC will be directly employing staff Validators on a contract or casual basis to undertake all Validation Visits. Staff Validators will need to meet selection criteria which will include having relevant qualifications and experience.

Staff Validators will be able to conduct a greater number of Validation Visits, as well as 'Spot Checks'. Staff Validators will receive a higher level of feedback and support from NCAC. It is expected that these factors will lead to greater efficiency and a decrease in Validator inconsistency.

Policy Template Project

NCAC will be undertaking the development of service policy templates which will assist services to meet the standards required for Accreditation. The policy templates will be designed to support services to develop and implement policies which will inform and reinforce their daily quality practices. The first of these will be available by the end of October 2006.

NCAC Communications

NCAC aims to provide children's service providers and families with information that is current, accurate and comprehensive in relation to the quality of child care in Australia. NCAC also endeavours to ensure that information on the requirements of the CCQA systems is accessible and easy to understand. A number of communication initiatives were delivered in 2005/2006.

Putting Children First

NCAC's newsletter, *Putting Children First*, is an important source of information for service providers, resource agencies, Validators, Moderators and child care professionals.

Putting Children First focus during 2005/2006 has included:

- Professional development for FDCQA (September 2005)
- Becoming a NCAC Endorsed Quality Assurance Trainer (December 2005)
- Health and safety (December 2005)
- Policy development and review (March 2006)
- Electrical safety in children's services (June 2006)
- Dental health (June 2006)



Putting Children First is a free publication available both electronically and by mail. Past copies of the newsletter are available on the NCAC website (www.ncac.gov.au) and an e-mail subscription service is also available.

About NCAC

The *About NCAC* brochure was produced in 2006 and has been designed in line with NCAC's *Choosing Quality Child Care* brochure. The brochure outlines NCAC's Vision, Mission, Values and key activities. It also details some of the resources NCAC produces to support services and families.



Quality Child Care Poster Sets

A series of new posters for services and carers were produced by NCAC in June 2006. Each set contains 14, A3 size posters that address quality practices in outside school hours care, long day care and family day care services. The posters can be used to assist communication with families about what the service is doing everyday to provide quality outcomes for the children in their care.



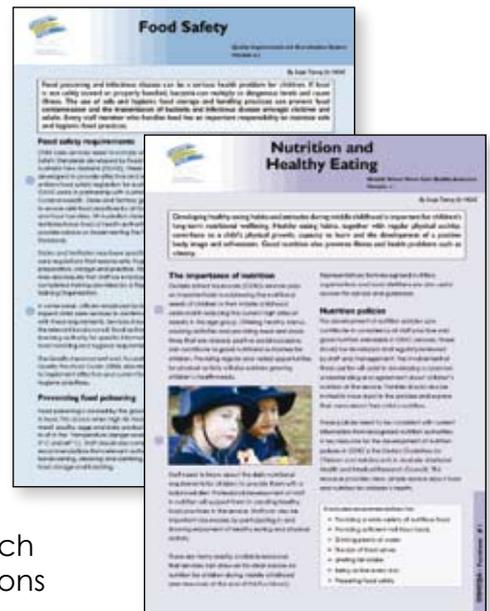
NCAC Communications

Factsheets

In 2005/2006 NCAC developed *Factsheets 1-5* for long day care and *Factsheets 1-10* outside school hours care services, to assist staff to provide quality care. *Factsheets* were sent to services in December 2005 and May 2006. *Factsheets 1-10* for family day care were produced in July 2005 and April 2006. *Factsheets* for each service type include a range of topics, such as:

- Planning for Children
- Involving Children in Decision Making
- Developing a Service Philosophy
- Managing Complaints
- Equity for Children and Families
- Food Safety

The *Factsheets* have been developed to assist services progress through CCQA system relevant to their service type. Each *Factsheet* explores practical examples, issues to consider, questions to ask and further information to assist staff. These *Factsheets* are available for free download from the NCAC website or may be ordered from NCAC.



Expos and Conferences

During 2005/2006, NCAC participated in a number of expos, which provided an opportunity for NCAC to distribute information about the CCQA systems to families, prospective parents and child care professionals.

NCAC attended the Ashfield (NSW) Community Expo in August 2005, distributing information about quality child care to the local community, including translated information.

The Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane Pregnancy, Babies and Children's Expos were attended in October 2005, April 2006 and June 2006 respectively. October 2005 was the first time NCAC had attended the Melbourne expo and June 2006 the first time for the Brisbane expo. Sydney has now been attended three times, becoming an annual event for NCAC. A total of 16,500 show bags of information were distributed across the three expos.

In March 2006, NCAC attended the NIFTeY Conference in Sydney and in May 2006, the National Family Day Care Council Australia Conference at Alice Springs (NT).

PCF Reader Survey

The *Putting Children First Reader Survey* was distributed with copies of *Putting Children First* and made available on the NCAC website in March 2006. The Survey was conducted to gain feedback from stakeholders on *Putting Children First*, NCAC resources and publications and the NCAC website to contribute to future improvement and development of these resources.

The last survey was conducted in April 2003. The 2006 survey received 1965 responses from readers of *Putting Children First*. The survey also sought feedback on resources in addition to *Putting Children First* and the website. Information was also sought on the *CCQA Support Documents*, *Factsheets* and brochures and the Online Store that was added to the website in 2005.

The results of this survey will be made publicly available on the NCAC website (www.ncac.gov.au) during October 2006.

NCAC Communications

NCAC Website

In February 2006 NCAC launched its redesigned website. Over the past years the NCAC website has grown significantly to include comprehensive information about NCAC and the CCQA systems, a search facility for all child care services registered with NCAC, an Online Store, research papers, statistical information, reports and resources, translations, online training modules and links to relevant organisations.

During 2005 the website was evaluated, and several areas requiring improvement were identified. In redesigning the website, NCAC has used this evaluation to enhance the way in which information is accessed and how the website is navigated by users.



Much of the information previously found on the website is still available, but has been redefined and reorganised into a more usable structure. Some new additions include:

- A 'click trail' at the top of each page to help with navigating the website. The click trail shows where the page being viewed is located within the site
- The 'Search the NCAC Website' facility is now available on every page
- Printer-friendly pages

NCAC introduced an Online Store to the website in July 2005. All NCAC publications and resources can be purchased through this facility with payment by credit card. Once an order is placed an order confirmation is sent to the purchaser's e-mail address and a Tax Invoice is created upon checkout. NCAC also offers discount for bulk orders of publications and dispatches publications within two days of order placement.

NCAC continues to ensure we meet Australian Government and World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) requirements for website accessibility. We are committed to maintaining the website to ensure accuracy and usability for all users.

Accessibility

NCAC works to ensure a high level of accessibility to information about the CCQA systems.

Many NCAC publications have been translated into community languages. This includes translations of the *Handbooks* and *Validation Surveys for Families* for each of the CCQA systems. Extracts of the *FDCQA Quality Practices Guide* are also available in translation on the NCAC website.

All translated resources are available as a free download from the NCAC website, or a copy may be requested from NCAC.

Additional support is available for people from non-English speaking backgrounds in the form of translation assistance. Telephone callers to NCAC who require translation support are able to contact the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450.

Some publications are also available for purchase in an audio CD format. These provide support to both those who are vision impaired and those who have a better understanding of spoken rather than written English.

The NCAC website is also accredited through Vision Australia, achieving a World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Level A conformance rating online, ensuring equal access to information about NCAC and the CCQA systems for people with vision or cognitive impairment, and those in rural and remote areas.

NCAC Communications

International Exposure

The CCQA systems administered by NCAC are unique as they are the first Child Care Quality Assurance systems in the world to be linked to Government funding through legislation, and have recently attracted international attention. During 2005/2006, NCAC provided information and advice to delegations from Korea and New Zealand visiting Australia to learn more about the CCQA systems.

Child Care Advice

NCAC provides telephone and e-mail support to services participating in the CCQA systems, families seeking quality care for their children, students and educators, resource and advisory agencies and interested parties.

NCAC's Child Care Advisers provide telephone support to callers. In the twelve months to June 30 2006, information and support was provided to 13,061 telephone callers.

Between 1 July 2005 and 30 June 2006, NCAC received and responded to 1,052 e-mail enquiries. Where possible, NCAC endeavours to address all e-mail enquiries within 5 working days.

For advice about the CCQA systems, choosing quality child care or NCAC publications, please contact NCAC by telephone on 1300 136 554, or e-mail (qualitycare@ncac.gov.au).

Complaints about Quality Practices in Child Care Services

The CCQA systems encourage positive, open communication between child care services and families regarding issues such as the service's program and management practices.

Families are now more aware of the level of quality they may expect from a service and their right to comment on service practice. NCAC has also achieved a greater profile. As a result, NCAC has also received a significant increase in the number of enquiries and complaints from families, staff and members of the public about child care services. Complainants are encouraged to resolve the issue directly with the service where possible. NCAC can only act when a written complaint is received.

A total of 531 telephone complaints and 111 written complaints in relation to the quality of care provided by registered services were received by NCAC in 2005/2006 as follows:

For information about NCAC complaints handling please refer to NCAC's website (www.ncac.gov.au).

Complaints Received by NCAC about Quality Practices in Child Care Services 1 July 2005 - 30 June 2006

	Telephone Complaints	Written Complaints
FDCQA	57	8
OSHCQA	59	20
QIAS	415	83

Communication with Key Stakeholders

NCAC is committed to maintaining effective communication with key stakeholders to ensure that services are provided with the support and assistance they require when progressing through the CCQA systems. NCAC provides regular important information to and maintains open communication with the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA), peak child care bodies, Child Care Professional Support Coordinators, licensing authorities and the Accreditation Decisions Review Committee (ADRC).

NCAC Communications

Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA)

The Australian Government, through FaCSIA, is responsible for managing the CCQA framework. It funds and has funding agreements with NCAC and the ADRC. Inclusion and Professional Support Coordinators are also funded by the Australian Government to assist child care services to implement CCQA. The department has legislative responsibilities for managing child care services that are not complying with the requirements of the CCQA systems.

The CCQA systems are linked to the Child Care Benefit payments received by services on behalf of the families of children in their care. FDCQA is also linked to the Operational Assistance approval for family day care schemes. As such, it is important to maintain open communication between FaCSIA and NCAC regarding the progress of children's services in the CCQA systems.

Monthly reports are provided to FaCSIA documenting the compliance of services with the CCQA systems, while six-monthly reports advise state and territory departments of the progress of services through the CCQA systems, and provide information about quality trends in the CCQA systems. These reports ensure that effective communication is maintained between FaCSIA and NCAC.

Accreditation Decisions Review Committee (ADRC)

The ADRC is comprised of members appointed by the Australian Government Minister responsible for children's services and acts independently from and makes recommendations to NCAC. NCAC holds regular meetings with the ADRC to ensure open communication regarding the progress of services through the CCQA systems.

Peak Child Care Bodies

Peak child care organisations representing services are important to NCAC and communication with these bodies provides NCAC with feedback on our performance, and on the administration of the CCQA systems. NCAC holds bi-annual meetings with peak organisations to provide an open channel of communication.

Child Care Professional Support Coordinators

NCAC has developed positive relationships with Professional Support Coordinators nationwide that support child care services to improve practice. These organisations provide vital support to services progressing through the 5 steps of CCQA, especially those struggling to meet the required standards. NCAC thanks the staff and management of the various Professional Support Coordinators who have worked hard to assist children's services around Australia during 2005/2006.

Six-monthly reports advising Child Care Professional Support Coordinators of the progress of services through the CCQA systems, and providing information about quality trends in the CCQA systems, are an important part of maintaining effective communication between these bodies and the NCAC.

Licensing Authorities

Communication with Australian state and territory licensing authorities is an important part of the administration of the CCQA systems. The CCQA systems build on the licensing standards and, as such, communication between NCAC and licensing authorities ensures the effective coordination of licensing and CCQA processes.

Six-monthly reports advising state/territory licensing authorities of the progress of services through the CCQA systems, and providing information about quality trends in CCQA systems, are an important part of maintaining effective communication between these bodies and NCAC.



NCAC

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