

NCAC Annual Report 2006/2007



Published by the National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc.
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About NCAC

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 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

We aim to achieve our vision and mission through the administration of Child Care Quality Assurance systems for children's services and through advocacy for children

The National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) supports Australian children's services to provide quality child care, and assists 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 have stimulating, positive experiences and interactions that nurture all aspects of their development.

NCAC endeavours to assist child care professionals to deliver quality child care by providing advice, support and resources.

NCAC also assist families to understand the value of quality care and help them to make informed decisions when selecting a child care service.

The new Vision, Mission and Values of the NCAC Strategic Plan 2007 - 2010 will guide NCAC operations from 1 July 2007. Please see page 9 for more information.

The Year in Review

NCAC faced many new and exciting challenges during 2006/2007, working in collaboration with all stakeholders to support the provision of quality care in Australian children's services.

NCAC worked to implement several important changes to the CCQA systems during 2006/2007, including:

- Unannounced Validation Visits
- Staff Validators
- Spot Checks of Accredited services; and
- The development of an integrated Child Care Accreditation System.

These changes are designed to deliver a more robust and reliable Quality Assurance process and to improve the quality of care provided for every child in child care every day. New processes will ensure greater consistency and efficiency in the conduct of Validation Visits and enhance the validity of Accreditation Decisions for all services.

During 2006/2007, NCAC developed policies and procedures to enable the implementation of unannounced Validation Visits, Spot Checks and the introduction of Staff Validators. NCAC worked with child care services across Australia to ensure a smooth transition as these changes were implemented.

NCAC began the recruitment of staff Validators from 1 July 2006, unannounced Validation Visits commenced in September 2006 and the first Spot Checks were conducted in October 2006. The response of services to these changes has been positive and NCAC would like to thank all services for their ongoing support and commitment to the provision of quality care.

NCAC is currently working to support all services participating in the CCQA systems to understand and prepare for the implementation of the Child Care Quality Accreditation System. NCAC looks forward to working with child care services across Australia as we develop and implement this initiative.

As an organisation, NCAC believes strongly in continuous quality improvement and has been working to evaluate and improve our practices. During 2006, NCAC began working towards achieving AS/NZS ISO 9001:2000 certification and all NCAC staff were involved in the process of identifying opportunities for improvement, assessing risks, documenting procedures and implementing action plans. In January 2007, NCAC became Accredited as a Quality Endorsed Company.

In addition to becoming a Quality Endorsed Company, NCAC was recognised as an Employer of Choice for Women 2007, by the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency. We are committed to providing a fair and equitable workplace for all men and women employed at NCAC.

The *NCAC Annual Report 2006/2007* 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 the CCQA systems.



June McLoughlin
Chairperson



Denise Taylor
Chief Executive Officer

NCAC Board Members

In 2007, NCAC farewelled Ms Pam Jackson from the NCAC Board. NCAC extends its appreciation to Ms Jackson for her service to NCAC and commitment to ensuring quality child care experiences for all children enrolled in child care services in Australia.

NCAC welcomed Dr Lindsay Heywood and Ms Naomi Wilson to the Board in February 2007. Ms Wilson comes to NCAC with a wide range of experience in children's services, while Dr Heywood has a breadth of knowledge of quality systems. NCAC welcomes the experience and knowledge that our new members bring to the 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.

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. The redevelopment and refocusing of early childhood and family services and systems to better meet the needs of families and young children is a key interest.

June is a foundation member of NIFTeY and ARACY, and is active on a number of boards of community agencies including the Parenting Research Centre and NCAC. June has extensive networks across all states in the early childhood field (both government and non-government) and also sits on various other advisory Committees concerned with early childhood, early childhood intervention and family support / parenting issues.

Geraldine Atkinson

Geraldine Atkinson has been involved in education for 30 years. She 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.

Geraldine 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) 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).

Andrew has chaired a child care centre management committee, and has management experience in higher education.

Lindsay Heywood

Lindsay Heywood is CEO of the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters Ltd (NAATI). He was formerly the National General Manager, Quality Development, with General Practice Education and Training Ltd. Within that role Lindsay designed and implemented the inaugural national quality review and accreditation process for providers of vocational education and training for general practice.

Lindsay has a background in professionally orientated education across several fields, with a particular interest in professional standards, accreditation and the development of quality systems.

Lindsay has extensive practical experience as a quality evaluator for Australian businesses through the Australian Business Excellence process and has post-graduate qualifications in research, corporate governance and business administration. He has developed quality systems in universities and for government accreditation of private providers of tertiary education. Lindsay is also a member of the National Steering Committee for review and improvement of the Australian Business Excellence Framework.

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 holds qualifications in both early childhood and workplace training.

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.

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 education 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 a longstanding commitment to Quality Assurance processes. She was involved in the AECA pilot accreditation project, contributed to training reviewers and worked as a Moderator and as a member of the Accreditation Decisions Review Committee (ADRC). Marie currently lives in Queensland where she is working as a consultant.

Naomi Wilson

Naomi Wilson is a trained and experienced early childhood teacher, involved in the child care arena for 25 years. She was a founding member and Chair of the Cairns and District Child Care Development Association, started and ran the TAFE Cairns Child Care training courses and lectured at James Cook University.

Naomi's achievements include the establishment of the first Playgroups in Queensland and fostering their growth in the far north, and working with inclusion and multicultural issues in child care. In 1990 she received a state award for Services in Early Childhood and has served on national and state early childhood planning committees.

Naomi has served as an elected Local Councillor (Mulgrave). She has also served as an elected State Member (Mulgrave), holding positions of Parliamentary Secretary and then Minister for Families, Youth and Community Affairs, where she was involved with child care policy development.

Naomi operates a counselling practice and owns a custom built long day care centre in Cairns.

Corporate Governance

NCAC is responsible for the administration of Child Care Quality Assurance (CCQA) systems for child care services eligible to receive Child Care Benefit funding from the Australian Government on behalf of parents and families. 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;
- determining all policies governing the operations of NCAC;
- approving the annual and long-term budgets for presentation to the Minister for approval;
- reviewing the annual performance of NCAC in meeting its objectives; and
- reporting to the Minister on progress with the CCQA systems.

Composition of the NCAC Board

In 2006/2007 the NCAC Board consisted of a Chairperson and six members appointed by the Australian Government Minister responsible for children's services.

NCAC Board Meetings

The Board meets seven times each year for meetings scheduled every six to eight weeks. Additional meetings, including teleconference meetings, are held as required.

In 2006, NCAC began holding Board Meetings in capital cities around Australia, which now include an afternoon tea attended by representatives of peak bodies in the child care field. This provides Board Members with the opportunity to share information with members of the sector and to maintain a current knowledge of issues in the field.

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 the Board Member and those of the 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.

Commitment to Corporate Governance

The NCAC Board is committed to best practice corporate governance at NCAC. In April 2007, Board Members and Executive Management participated in a Corporate Governance workshop.

ISO Certification Project

During 2006, NCAC worked with SAI Global to implement the AS/NZS 9001:2000 quality management standards.

NCAC Management demonstrated its commitment to ISO by allocating resources and planning a schedule for the development and implementation of a Quality Management System. All NCAC staff were involved in the process of identifying opportunities for improvement, assessing risks, documenting procedures and implementing action plans.

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. At the end of 2006, NCAC undertook a quality audit and achieved Accreditation as a Quality Endorsed Company in January 2007.

NCAC is committed to continuous improvement of our quality management practices and will complete surveillance audits every six months as a requirement of certification. The first audit was successfully completed in May 2007.



NCAC Strategic Plan 2007 - 2010

During 2006/2007, NCAC finalised work on the *NCAC Strategic Plan 2004 – 2007*, and began development of a new strategic plan.

The *NCAC Strategic Plan 2007 – 2010* outlines a revised Guiding Principle, Vision, Mission as follows:

Guiding Principle:

Putting Children First

Vision:

Quality experiences and positive outcomes for all children

Mission:

To set standards to improve the quality of child care and accredit services that meet the standards

The *Strategic Plan* also details three outcomes which will guide NCAC operations:

Outcome 1:

Successful implementation of Child Care Accreditation System

Outcome 2:

Our business structure and systems are responsive and sustainable

Outcome 3:

NCAC is the recognised leader in quality assurance in child care in Australia

The *NCAC Strategic Plan 2007 - 2010* will be operational from July 2007.

Employer of Choice for Women

In February 2007, NCAC received acknowledgement as an Employer of Choice for Women from the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency. The Award acknowledges those organisations recognising and advancing women in the workplace.



Community Involvement

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

During 2006/2007, NCAC staff supported:

- Cancer Council Australia and New South Wales
- Cystic Fibrosis Australia
- Jeans for Genes, Children's Medical Research Institute
- UNICEF
- Red Cross Blood Bank
- Royal Blind Society
- The Salvation Army
- World AIDS Day

Staff Awards

Several NCAC staff received awards during 2006/2007:

The dedication of Debra Finlay was acknowledged with the presentation of a Rotary Pride of Workmanship Award by the Rotary Club of Strathfield in November 2006.

On 24 January 2007, Merise Bickley, Eric Randall, Karen Swift and Denise Taylor were each presented with an Australia Day Medallion in recognition of their outstanding service to children, commitment to NCAC and children's services, and dedication to the provision of quality care for all children in Australia.

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

Staff Service Awards

NCAC acknowledges the following staff for their ongoing commitment to NCAC:

Five or More Years of Service

- Yvette Barton Moderator Adviser 5 years
- Yvonne Barton-Leach Validation Support and Development Officer 5 years
- Carolina Cabrera Payroll Officer 5 years
- Joanne Cernuda Validation Coordination Officer 5 years
- Debra Finlay Manager, Information and Support 5 years
- Carolyn Gray Data Entry Officer 5 years
- Vivian Hawkes Administration Officer 5 years
- Lorna Hughes Child Care Adviser 5 years
- Jan McFarlane QA Training and Support Officer 5 years
- Angela Owens Communications Officer 5 years
- Melissa Perkins Manager, Customer Services 5 years
- Emma Rean Validation Coordination Officer 5 years
- Julieanne Ucles Administration Officer, Moderation Team 5 years
- Lisa Wilson Validation Support and Development Officer 5 years
- Merise Bickley Team Leader, QA Training and Support 7 years
- Kathy Nguyen Team Leader, Finance 7 years
- Kim Nguyen Team Leader, Marketing Communications 7 years
- Eric Randall General Manager, Corporate Services 9 years

Ten or More Years of Service

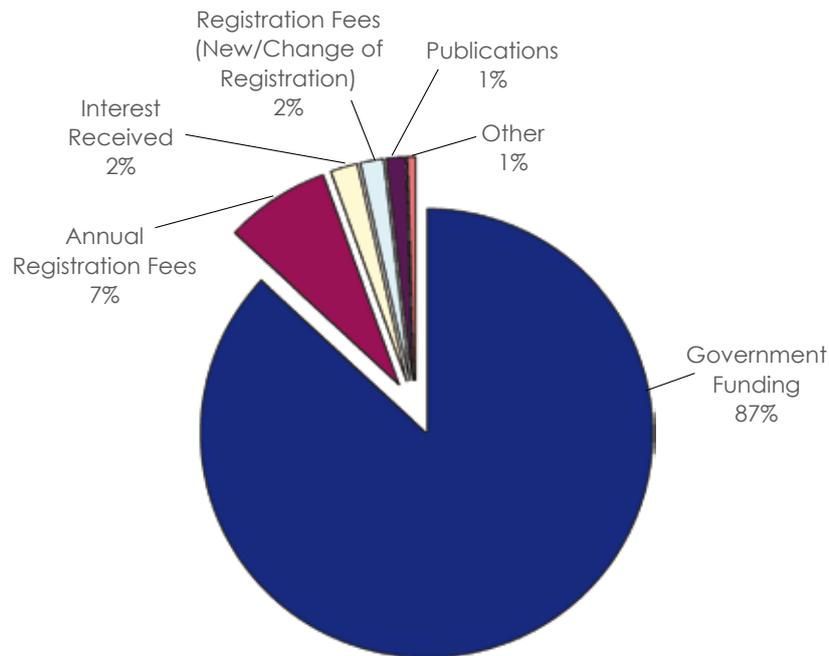
- Susan Reade General Manager Quality Assurance 10 years
- Elizabeth Robinson General Manager Communications and Marketing 10 years
- Denise Taylor Chief Executive Officer 10 years

Financial Overview

2006/2007 Budget

During 2006/ 2007, 87.03% of NCAC's total income came from funding provided by the Australian Government. The majority of the remaining 12.97% was derived from annual registration fees. The following chart shows a breakdown of NCAC income sources for 2006/2007.

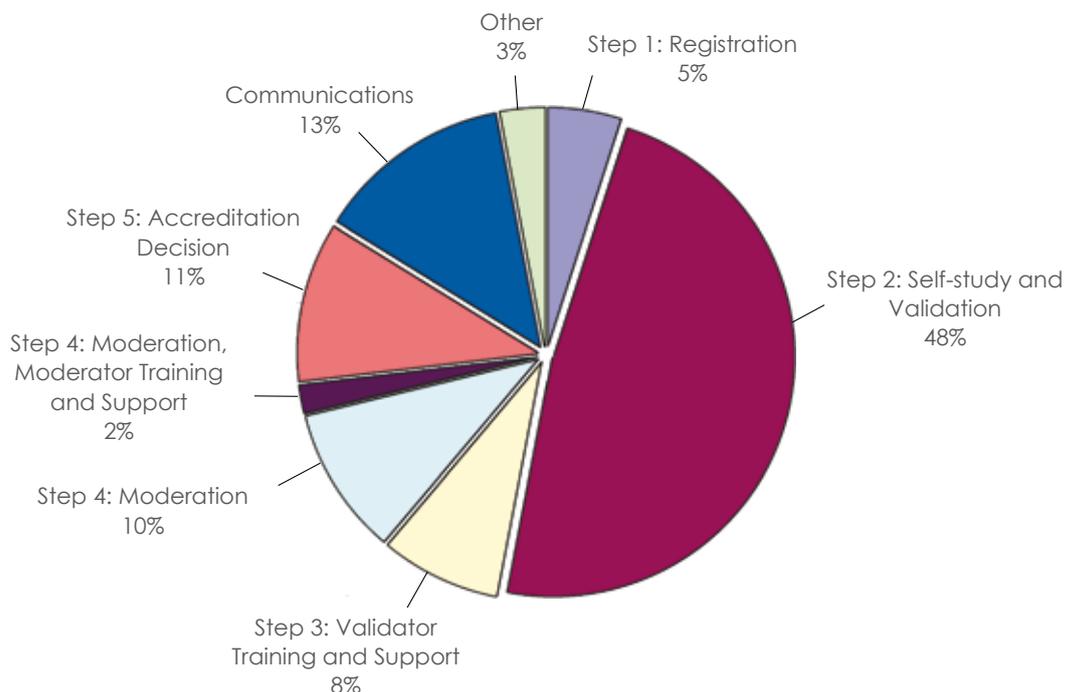
NCAC Income Sources 2006/2007



Distribution of Resources

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 2006/2007 as follows:

Distribution of Resources 2006/2007



CCQA Changes

Changes to the CCQA Systems

On 18 May 2006 the Hon Mal Brough MP, Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA), announced several important changes to the CCQA systems as follows:

- Unannounced Validation Visits;
- Staff Validators;
- Spot Checks of Accredited services; and
- The development of the integrated Child Care Accreditation System.

Each of these changes will strengthen the Quality Assurance process, and ensure that all children receive quality child care.

These changes had a significant impact on NCAC operations for the 2006/2007 financial year, as NCAC worked to implement each process and to ensure a smooth transition for services participating in the CCQA systems.

Services were kept informed of the implementation of these changes through written correspondence from NCAC, and through NCAC's quarterly newsletter *Putting Children First*.

Staff Validators

From 1 July 2006 NCAC began directly employing Validators on a contract or casual basis to undertake all Validation Visits. Staff Validators need to meet a selection criteria which includes relevant qualifications and experience. The first group of Staff Validators were trained in September 2006.

As employees of NCAC, Staff Validators are able to conduct a greater number of Validation Visits and Spot Checks. They receive extensive training and a higher level of feedback and support from NCAC. Maintaining a pool of comprehensively trained Validators is of significant benefit to the sector, ensuring greater consistency and efficiency in the completion of Validation Visits.

NCAC records have shown increased satisfaction with Validator consistency since the introduction of Staff Validators. Feedback received through *Validation Evaluation Forms* and anecdotal evidence suggests that the professionalism and consistency of Staff Validators are supported by the field.

Unannounced Validation Visits

Unannounced Validation Visits recognise the importance of children receiving consistent quality care every day.

After a service's *Self-study Report* has been received, NCAC selects a Validator to conduct the Validation Visit of the service. A letter is sent to the service advising the Validator's name, the duration of the Visit, and a timeframe of six weeks within which the Visit will occur. The Validator does not provide the service with the specific date that they will attend the service.

In the past services had expressed concern that the Validation process caused unnecessary stress due to the 'artificial' nature of the pre-appointed Validation Visit. Services also identified the difficulty for the Validator to observe genuinely 'typical' practice. NCAC is pleased to implement constructive feedback from services.

Unannounced Validation Visits commenced for all services due to submit a *Self-study Report* from 1 July 2006. The first unannounced Validation Visits were completed in September 2006.

Spot Checks

Services that have been through the CCQA process and are Accredited are randomly selected to receive a Spot Check. NCAC may also schedule a Spot Check as part of an investigation of a written complaint about a child care service.

During a Spot Check, a NCAC Validator attends a service without notice to observe:

- progress made by the service to self-assess and improve on a continuing basis;
- any practices not meeting the standard required for Accreditation and immediate action taken by the service to address these;
- service practice in relation to issues raised in a written complaint (where applicable).

Spot Checks of Accredited services commenced in October 2006.

Child Care Accreditation System

During 2006, NCAC and FaCSIA commenced working towards the development of an integrated CCQA system which will apply to family day care schemes, long day care centres and outside school hours care services. This system has been named the Child Care Accreditation System (CCAS).

The CCAS will identify common, core elements of quality care in family day care, long day care and outside school hours care environments. However, the CCAS recognises the importance of those elements which make each care environment unique and retains those components of quality care specific to each service type.

Draft CCAS Standards were developed throughout 2006/2007. The first Draft Standards were made publicly available on the FaCSIA and NCAC websites from January to April 2007 together with a draft framework for the CCAS. A significant amount of feedback was received from stakeholders during this period, and incorporated into the Standards document.

The streamlined system will strengthen and improve CCQA, reducing the burden on individual services and enabling other child care service types to participate in CCQA.

Further consultation with the sector will take place during 2007. A series of public consultations are scheduled across Australia prior to field testing of the draft CCAS Standards. Comments received from NCAC stakeholders will complement the advice being provided to FaCSIA and NCAC by the National Advisory Group.

Further information about the development of the CCAS will be placed on the NCAC website (www.ncac.gov.au) as it becomes available.

Service Response to Changes

NCAC is committed to continuous quality improvement and has consistently sought feedback from stakeholders regarding the CCQA changes. Feedback received from services about the changes includes:

Having unannounced Validation allows the centre to show the quality of their practice as it occurs daily.

After going through an unannounced visit the process is less stressful and gives a better picture of how services really operate.

Not a 6 week period for Validation. Staff are nervous as it is, and now making it unannounced for 6 weeks is far too long, it impacts on them and then can impact on children.

Unannounced visits and spot checks ensure that quality practice is everyday and ongoing not just a mock up for the validator.

I don't feel that unannounced visits are necessary if spot checks are being put into place.

The centre believes that regular spot checks and no specific validation visit dates is a step in the right direction to ensure quality care throughout all centres.

We strongly agree that general 'spot checks' between Validation Visits would help ensure processes are genuine and ongoing.

Having had discussions with carers, some are concerned with the integrated standards as all 3 services are very different. However, after reading these [draft] standards, it is possible to use them across all services.

NCAC strives to deliver adaptable and dynamic systems which are responsive to the needs and interests of all stakeholders. The CCQA changes present a great opportunity to further promote the best possible outcomes for all stakeholders.

Constructive suggestions and comments from stakeholders contribute significantly to the continuous improvement of the CCQA systems.

Step One: Registration

Family day care schemes, outside school hours care services and long day care centres eligible to receive Child Care Benefit funding from the Australian Government on behalf of parents and families must register with NCAC to participate in the Child Care Quality Assurance (CCQA) systems. An Annual Registration Fee is payable for continued participation in the CCQA systems. On registration, each service receives a *Certificate of Registration* and a Registration Kit which includes an initial supply of the publications required for participation in the relevant CCQA system.

Services Registered to Participate in the CCQA Systems as at 30 June 2007	
Family Day Care Quality Assurance (FDCQA)	326
Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance (OSHCQA)	3,212
Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS)	5,360
Total	8,898

Between 1 July 2006 and 30 June 2007, 760 new services registered with NCAC comprising 18 family day care schemes, 321 outside school hours care services and 421 long day care centres. NCAC also recorded 602 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 19 family day care schemes, 120 outside school hours care services and 463 long day care centres.

Step Two: Self-study and Continuing Improvement

The provision of quality care for children requires continuous attention to self-study and quality 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 the Quality Areas and Principles in the relevant *Quality Practices Guide*, and allows services to illustrate the quality of their practices.

Self-study Reports Received 1 July 2007 - 30 June 2007	
Family Day Care Quality Assurance (FDCQA)	52
Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance (OSHCQA)	1,205
Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS)	2,150
Total	3,407

Step Three: Validation

All child care services submitting a *Self-study Report* from 1 July 2006 received an unannounced Validation Visit. After a *Self-study Report* has been received, NCAC selects a Validator to conduct the Validation Visit of the service. A letter is sent to the service advising the Validator's name, the duration of the Visit (depending on size of the service) and a timeframe of six weeks within which the Visit will occur. The Validator does not provide the service with the specific date that they will attend the service. When a Validator is selected, *Validation Surveys* are sent to the service for completion by the service director, staff, families and school age children.

Validators are trained by NCAC to validate the quality practices of the service, based on the indicators of quality specified in the relevant *Quality Practices Guide*. Ratings are determined through observation and discussion of practice with staff and carers.

Validation Visits Completed 1 July 2007 - 30 June 2007	
Family Day Care Quality Assurance (FDCQA)	110
Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance (OSHCQA)	1,382
Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS)	2,024
Total	3,516

Step Four: Moderation

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

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

Validation Visits Moderated 1 July 2007 - 30 June 2007	
Family Day Care Quality Assurance (FDCQA)	140
Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance (OSHCQA)	1,393
Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS)	2,156
Total	3,689

Moderation of the last reports for the QIAS *Source Book* (1st edition, 2001) was completed in October 2006. Moderation of the first Validation Visits for the QIAS *Quality Practices Guide* (1st edition, 2005) commenced in July 2006.

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* ratings. Accredited services receive a *Certificate of Accreditation*, which must be displayed at the service. Services that are Not Accredited must submit another *Self-study Report* within a timeframe determined by NCAC.

The Accreditation Decisions made during 2006/2007 demonstrate the commitment of Australian children's services to the provision of quality child care.

Family Day Care Quality Assurance		
Progress of Services as at 30 June 2007		
Accredited	274	89.3%
Not Accredited	33	10.7%
Total Through 5 Steps	307	
New Services	19	
Total Registered Services	326	

Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance		
Progress of Services as at 30 June 2007		
Accredited	2,080	86.5%
Not Accredited	325	13.5%
Total Through 5 Steps	2,405	
New Services	807	
Total Registered Services	3,212	

Quality Improvement and Accreditation System		
Progress of Services as at 30 June 2007		
Accredited	4,208	92.4%
Not Accredited	348	7.6%
Total Through 5 Steps	4,556	
New Services	804	
Total Registered Services	5,360	

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 children's services, and acts independently from and makes recommendations to NCAC. Between 1 July 2006 and 30 June 2007 NCAC received 10 FDCQA, 7 OSHCQA and 51 QIAS recommendations from the ADRC following review of Accreditation Decisions.

Training and Support

Validators

Validators are qualified and experienced child care professionals with recent child care experience.

From 1 July 2006 NCAC began directly employing Staff Validators on a contract or casual basis to undertake Validation Visits. NCAC continues to work with existing peer Validators while recruiting Staff Validators.

Applicants must undertake an intensive, five day training course conducted by NCAC and successfully demonstrate competency at the conclusion of the training program. A total of 1 FDCQA, 6 OSHCQA and 9 QIAS Validator Training sessions took place during 2006/2007.

Validators can access support from NCAC's Validation Team during and outside of office hours. Extensive performance feedback is provided to Validators regarding comments from *Validation Evaluation Forms*, Moderator feedback, and issues relating to comments and ratings provided in *Validation Reports* completed by the Validator.

NCAC Staff Validators now have access to a Validator login facility on the NCAC website. This ensures that all Validators have access to current information on NCAC policies and procedures, CCQA developments and relevant information such as state and territory legislative requirements.

Feedback received by NCAC suggests that the professionalism and consistency of staff Validators are supported by the field. For more information please refer to the *Validation Evaluation Form Analysis* available on the NCAC website (www.ncac.gov.au).



Moderators

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

Moderator Refresher Training took place in February and March 2007 for each of the CCQA systems. No initial Moderator Training took place during 2006/2007.

The NCAC Moderation and Accreditation Team provides regular support to Moderators. Performance feedback is provided regarding the analysis of Moderation documents and the completion of the *Continuing Improvement Guide* for services.

Endorsed QA Trainers

The NCAC Quality Assurance (QA) Training and Support Program has delivered NCAC QA Trainer Training throughout Australia, and initiated a system for the endorsement and support of QA Trainers. As of 1 April 2007, 133 QA Trainers were endorsed by NCAC.

Endorsed QA Trainers hold qualifications in early or middle childhood education, care, recreation or youth services and are also expected to hold a Certificate IV in Workplace Training and Assessment, or the equivalent in adult training experience. Applicants are required to demonstrate their knowledge and experience of CCQA processes and systems.

NCAC endorsement allows a QA Trainer to deliver training on CCQA processes using the NCAC Endorsed QA Training Kit to meet the needs of child care professionals working through each of the CCQA systems. Endorsed QA Trainers can use the NCAC Endorsed Trainer logo for advertising purposes and are listed on NCAC's website as an endorsed provider of QA training.

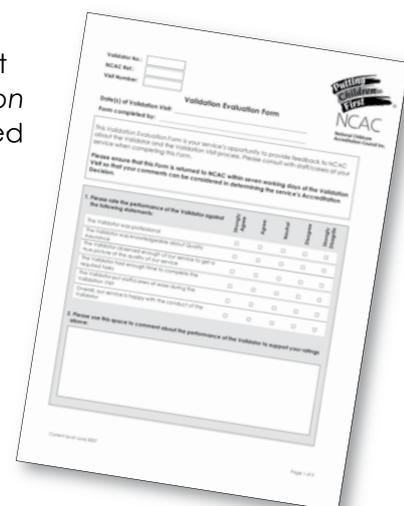
Endorsed QA Trainers have access to telephone support from the QA Training and Support Team. During 2007, the *On Track* newsletter was developed to provide current information and ongoing communication with Endorsed QA Trainers.

Validation Evaluation Form Analysis

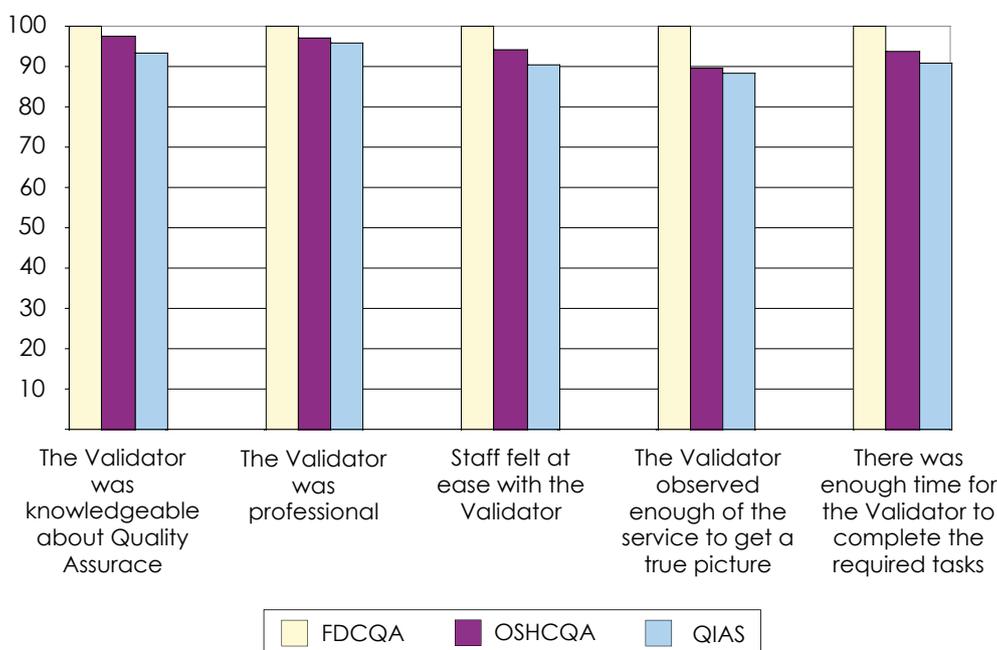
Consistent evaluation of the CCQA systems was undertaken by NCAC throughout 2006/2007. Part of this process included the annual analysis of *Validation Evaluation Forms* received from services having received both announced and unannounced Validation Visits during October and November 2006.

NCAC received *Validation Evaluation Forms* from 86% of those services which had a Validation Visit during this period. A total of 535 services returned their *Validation Evaluation Forms*, comprising 18 family day care schemes, 229 outside school hours care services and 288 long day care centres. Over **95%** of services indicating that they were satisfied with their Validation Visit.

The results of the *Validation Evaluation Form Analysis* for 2006 are demonstrated in the following table:



Completion of the Validation Visit



Those services which received an announced Validation Visit were asked to rate their Validator across a range of performance measures. On average, services rated the performance of their Validator as follows:

Performance of the Validator	
The Validator was punctual	92%
The Validator was courteous	99%
The Validator was prepared	99%
The Validator was objective	95%

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 information to and maintains open communication with the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA), peak child care bodies, Professional Support Coordinators, licensing authorities and the Accreditation Decisions Review Committee (ADRC).

Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

The Australian Government, through FaCSIA, is responsible for managing the CCQA framework. It has funding agreements with NCAC and the ADRC. Inclusion and Professional Support Services are also funded by the Australian Government. The department has legislative responsibilities for managing child care services that do not comply with CCQA requirements.

The Australian CCQA systems are unique as they are the first QA systems in the world to be linked to child care funding through legislation and to be funded and supported by a Federal Government. The CCQA systems are linked to the Child Care Benefit payments received by services on behalf of the families of children in their care. As such, it is important to maintain open communication between FaCSIA and NCAC regarding the progress of Australian children's services in the CCQA systems.

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

Accreditation Decisions Review Committee

The ADRC is comprised of members appointed by the Australian Government Minister responsible for children's services. The ADRC acts independently from, and makes recommendations to, NCAC. Regular meetings are held between NCAC and the ADRC regarding the progress of services through the CCQA systems.

Peak Child Care Bodies

Communication with peak child care organisations representing services around Australia provides NCAC with feedback on our performance, and on the administration of the CCQA systems. Sector representatives are invited to attend Board Meetings held around Australia to ensure ongoing communication about current issues in the child care sector.

Professional Support Coordinators

NCAC has developed positive relationships with Professional Support Coordinators in each state and territory that support child care services to achieve quality practices. These organisations provide vital support to services progressing through the 5 Steps of CCQA, especially those struggling to meet the required standards.

NCAC advises Professional Support Coordinators of Not Accredited services in their state or territory. NCAC also provides six-monthly reports to Professional Support Coordinators advising of the progress of services through CCQA and quality trends in each of the CCQA systems. This exchange of information ensures that services are supported in their progress through CCQA.

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 advise state/territory licensing authorities of the progress of services through CCQA, and provide information about quality trends in each of the CCQA systems. These reports assist NCAC to maintain effective communication with licensing authorities.

NCAC aims to provide children's service providers and families with information that is current, accurate and comprehensive with relation to the quality of child care in Australia. We also endeavour to ensure that information on the requirements of the CCQA systems is accessible and easy to understand. A number of publications and new communication initiatives were delivered in 2006/2007.

Putting Children First

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

During 2006/2007 *Putting Children First* focused on the following topics:

- CCQA Changes
- Planning Experiences
- Policy Development and Review
- Marketing Your Service
- Settling Children into Care
- Safe Environments
- Children and the Media
- Professional Development
- Managing Change Effectively in Child Care Services

Putting Children First is made 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.

NCAC Website

The NCAC website (www.ncac.gov.au) provides current information regarding the CCQA systems. During 2006/2007, the website was updated with information regarding NCAC initiatives including:

- The CCQA changes
- Spot Check policies and procedure
- The NCAC *Policy Development Guide* and sample Policy Templates
- The draft *Guide to the CCQA Standards*
- Current research reports
- The latest resources for services and families

Policy Templates

Effective policies are essential to ensuring that all stakeholders have the same understanding and expectations about what happens in a child care service. Effective policies inform and guide daily practice and need to be current, clearly written and easily accessible to all service stakeholders.

During 2006/2007, the *NCAC Policy Development Guide* was produced to assist services to identify, develop, review and evaluate policies as indicated in the relevant *Quality Practices Guide*. It will assist to establish a collaborative approach with stakeholders, and clarify the importance of reviewing policies on a regular basis.

NCAC encourages services to reflect upon daily practice; seek current and accurate information from recognised authorities; and collaborate with children, families, staff and carers throughout the policy development process.

Factsheets

A range of *Factsheets* have been developed to assist family day care schemes, long day care centres and outside school hours care services as they progress through CCQA. Each *Factsheet* explores examples of practice, issues to consider and further information for child care professionals.

NCAC continues to develop *Factsheets* for family day care schemes, long day care centres and outside school hours care services to support their participation in the CCQA systems.

Factsheets are available for download from the NCAC website, or may be ordered from NCAC.

Expos and Conferences

During 2006/2007, NCAC participated in a number of public events, to distribute information about the CCQA systems and quality child care to families and child care professionals.

NCAC attended the Ashfield Community Expo in August 2006.

NCAC also attended The Pregnancy, Babies and Children's Expos in Brisbane (July 2006), Melbourne (October 2006), Adelaide (March 2007) and Sydney (June 2007). These Expos give NCAC an opportunity to provide information to a large number of families across Australia each year.

NCAC attended the Association of Children's Welfare Agencies conference in August 2006, the Child Care NSW conference in April 2007 and the Network NSW conference in May 2007, providing information and resources to participants.

NCAC representatives presented information about the CCQA systems to child care professionals at the following conferences during 2006/2007:

- National Association of Community Based Children's Services Conference (July 2006);
- Early Childhood Australia Conference (September 2006);
- Office for Children Queensland (August 2006);
- Western Australian Department of Community Development – Outside School Hours Care Conference (October 2006);
- New South Wales Family Day Care Conference (October 2006);
- Childcare Associations Australia Forum (March 2007);
- Child Care NSW Conference (April 2007).



Child Care Advice

NCAC provides support to services participating in the CCQA systems, families seeking quality care for their children, students and educators, resources and advisory agencies and interested parties by telephone on 1300 136 554, or e-mail at qualitycare@ncac.gov.au.

NCAC's Child Care Advisers provide telephone support to 18,261 telephone callers in the twelve months to 30 June 2007, while NCAC received and responded to 1,622 e-mail enquiries for this period.

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 quality they can expect from a service. NCAC has also achieved a greater profile among families. As a result, there has been 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 on a written complaint.

A total of 399 telephone complaints and 112 written complaints about registered services were received by NCAC in 2006/2007 as follows:

Complaints received about quality practices 1 July 2006 - 30 June 2007			
	FDCQA	OSHCQA	QIAS
Telephone Complaints	28	62	309
Written Complaints	8	25	79

Accessibility

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

NCAC publications, including *Handbooks*, *Validation Surveys*, *Choosing Quality Child Care* and extracts of the *FDCQA Quality Practices Guide*, are available in community languages. Translated resources may be requested from NCAC or are available as a free download from the NCAC website. Telephone customers who require translation support are also able to contact the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450.

NCAC also provides an audio CD format of each of the *Handbooks* and *Quality Practices Guides* to support both those who are vision impaired and those who understanding spoken English better than written.

An accessibility audit of the NCAC website (www.ncac.gov.au) was undertaken by Vision Australia to assist NCAC to ensure equal access to online information for all web users. The NCAC website has Level A conformance with the World Wide Web Consortium's (WC3) Web Accessibility Initiative.



NCAC

National Childcare
Accreditation Council Inc.