



NCAC

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Continuing Improvement Guide Survey Analysis

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Continuing Improvement Guide Analysis

The National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) administers the Child Care Quality Assurance (CCQA) systems for family day care schemes, long day care centres and outside school hours care services across Australia.

As part of Step 4: Moderation of the CCQA systems, Moderators consider the information provided in the following documents, to look at each service as a whole and identify patterns of quality care within the service:

- *Self-study Report* (including the service's *Continuing Improvement Plans*)
- Summary ratings from the *Validation Surveys*
- *Validation Report*
- *Validation Evaluation Form* (if available)
- *Composite Quality Profile*

Moderators use this information to write a *Continuing Improvement Guide* for the service. The *Continuing Improvement Guide* focuses on quality improvement and, based on trends in the Quality Areas evident in the service's composite *Quality Profile*, suggests broad strategies for improvement for the service to consider during its next self-study period.

During July – 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;
- With whom this information is shared 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 as follows:

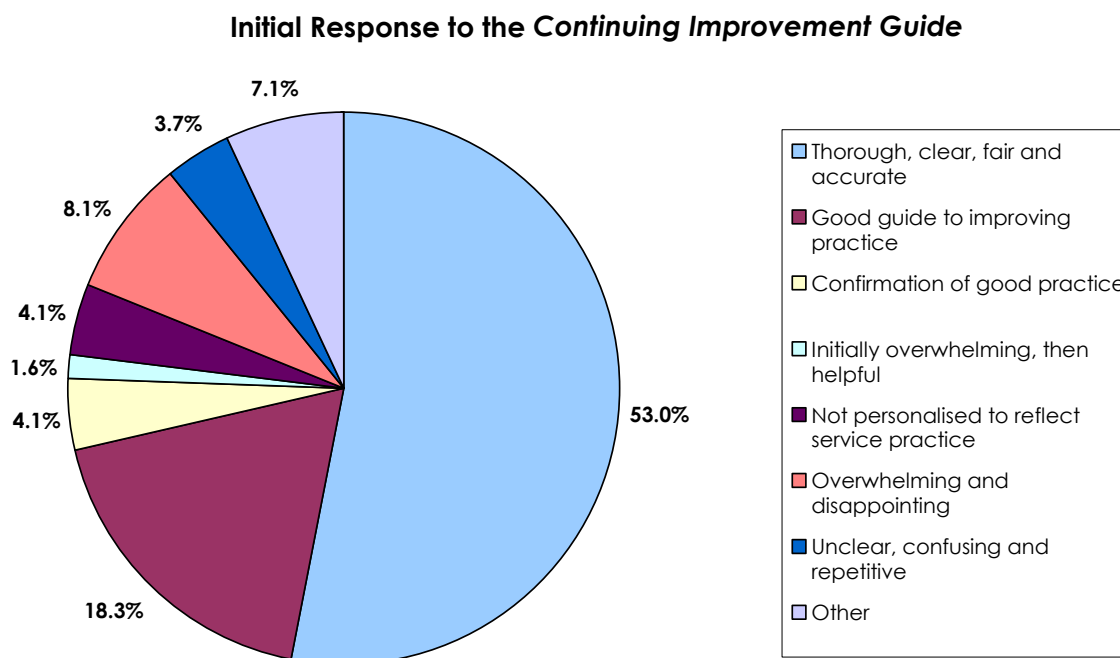
Service Type	Total	%
Family day care schemes	3	0.5
Long day care centres	484	81.3
Outside school hours care services	94	15.8
Long day care / outside school hours care services	9	1.5
Not specified	5	0.8

Of those services providing a response to NCAC, 535 (89.6%) were Accredited, 51 (8.5%) were Not Accredited, and 11 (1.8%) did not provide an Accreditation status.

The following report provides an analysis of the responses received from child care services. This information will inform the continuous evaluation of the CCQA systems and quality improvement of NCAC practices.

Initial Response to the Continuing Improvement Guide

Respondents were asked to record their initial response to the *Continuing Improvement Guide*. 85.5% of respondents provided an answer to this question, as follows:



77% of respondents were positive in their initial response to the *Continuing Improvement Guide*, indicating that it was a clear and accurate guide which confirmed good practice and provided assistance to further improve practice. 16% felt that the *Continuing Improvement Guide* was unclear, confusing, impersonal or overwhelming.

Comments regarding the initial responses of services to the *Continuing Improvement Guide* included:

- *I felt the continuing improvement guide was very relevant and in line with our self-study and plans for continuing improvement*
- *Pleased to see it read as an individualised report, supporting what we already do and offered usable suggestions for ongoing improvement*
- *Initially disappointed, more interested in the graph [Quality Profile], however, all made more sense when viewing later*
- *We couldn't really see how it related to our service as it's so 'generic'*
- *Felt it was valuable feedback. We were most surprised at how insightful the improvement guide was. Thanks*
- *Found it difficult to take. How can someone that has never been to the Centre tell us how to improve especially considering we had a perfect Validation Report and all high quality surveys?*
- *I believe it is beneficial to services to be offered positive suggestions and ideas related to their continuing improvement*

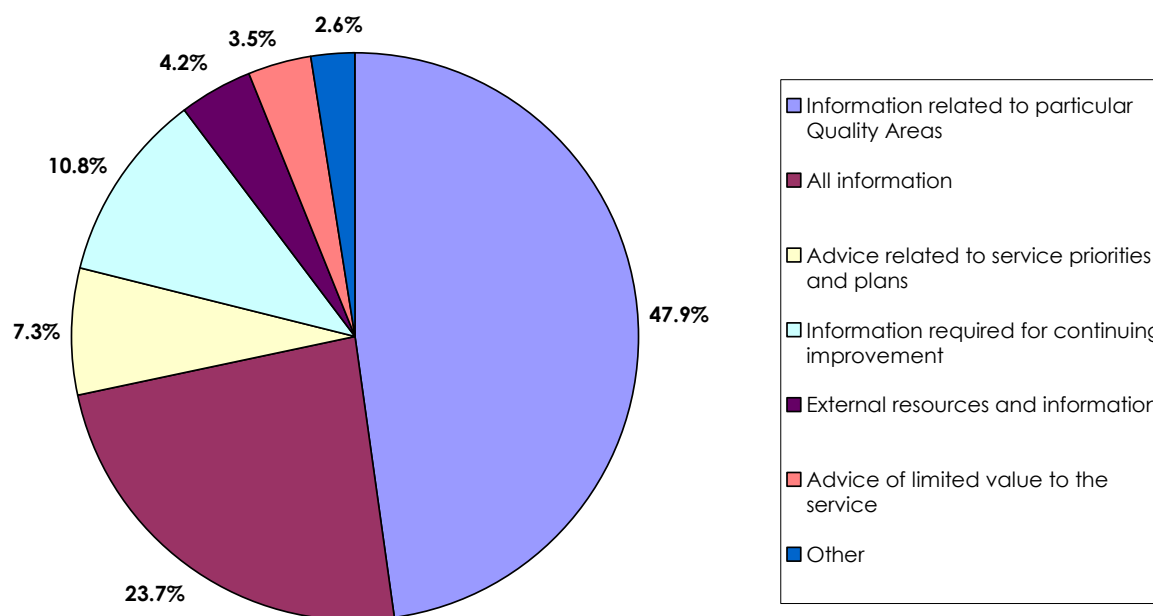
Using the *Continuing Improvement Guide*

When asked if the service acted on the guidance offered in the *Continuing Improvement Guide*, 85.7% of Not Accredited services stated that they had used this information for future progress through the Quality Assurance process. Of these:

- 60.3% stated that this guidance highlighted areas requiring attention and provided support for continuing improvement;
- 15.5% used the information provided to access resources, training and support;
- 12.1% used the *CIG* to communicate information to staff and families;
- 6.9% used the information in other ways; and
- only 5.2% felt that the information was not useful.

Priorities for Action

94.4% of all services confirmed that they did act upon the guidance that was offered in the *CIG*, and prioritised the following information for action:



Where information related to Quality Areas was prioritised for action, the following areas were considered to be of the most immediate concern:

- | | |
|--|-------|
| • Health, hygiene and safety | 32.6% |
| • Programming and philosophy | 20.7% |
| • Policies, procedures and management | 20.7% |
| • Links to families and the community | 10.9% |
| • Diversity and equity | 6.5% |
| • Relationships with children and interactions | 4.3% |
| • Occupational health and safety | 4.3% |

Comments regarding service priorities for action included:

- *Involving parents more - we had already identified this area but it was helpful to receive the correct guidance*
- *To re-develop the actual Continuing Improvement Plan so it was a 'live' document that was also progressive. In doing this it also encompassed all other areas*
- *Health and safety, child protection. The children are the most important, and need to be cared for appropriately*
- *Some points were able to be implemented immediately, others will be discussed and gradually introduced*
- *Satisfactory indicators first, then working towards the High Quality indicators*
- *Strengthen team work and encourage more family participation - because a good team has a flow on effect - staff happy, content, so are the children, so are the families*

Sharing the Continuing Improvement Guide

Of those services which provided a response, 97.8% had shared the *Continuing Improvement Guide* with others at the service. Of these:

- 69.2% shared this information with the service staff and management;
- 19.8% shared this information with families and staff at the service;
- 9.4% shared this information with all stakeholders; and
- 1.6% shared this information with other child care centres and organisations.

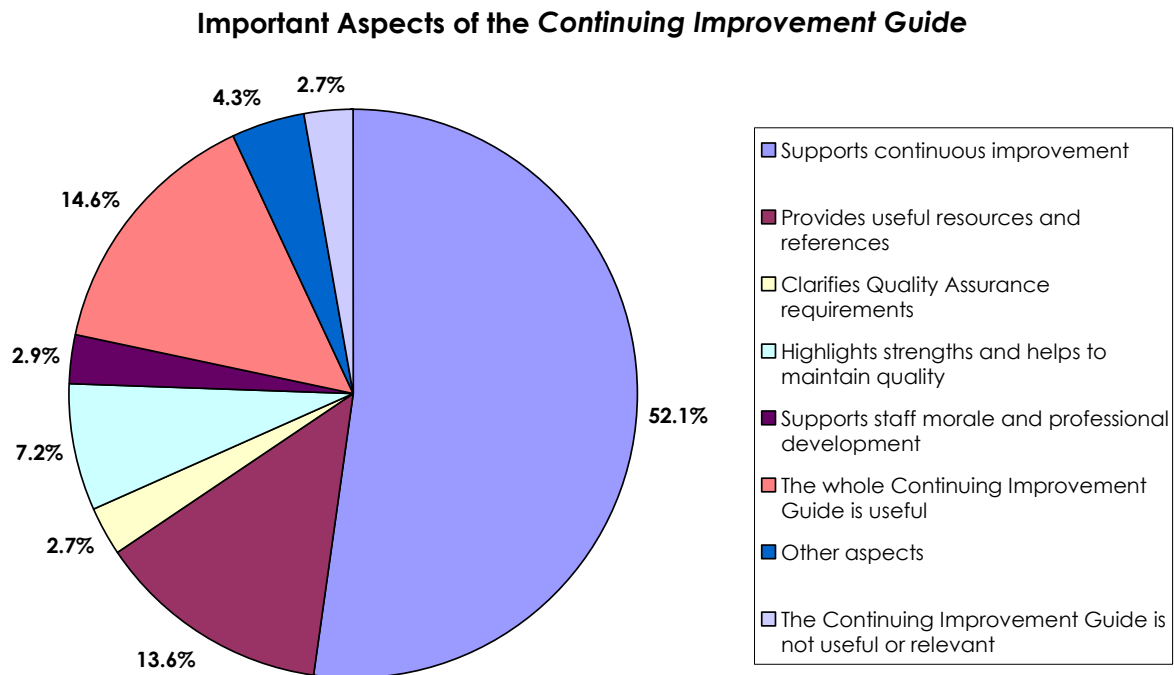
This information was most commonly shared with stakeholders through staff, parent and management meetings. Other means of distributing and utilising the information included display or publishing, informal discussion at the service or through training and workshops.

Comments regarding how the information was shared included:

- *All staff and parents. Copy of guide was placed in staffroom and also displayed at reception for parents to read*
- *All staff and upper management. Parent meeting and a summary sent out to all families with newsletter*
- *Staff and management, eventually parents and families, in celebration mostly*
- *All our management, our staff and families. Resources also forwarded to our services who have not yet been through accreditation*
- *Staff and committee as well as children - meetings and general conversation*

The Most Important Aspects of the *Continuing Improvement Guide*

Respondents were asked to identify the most important aspects of the *Continuing Improvement Guide* for the service. 63.2% of respondents provided an answer to this question as follows:



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. Only 3% of services felt that the *Continuing Improvement Guide* was not useful or relevant.

Comments regarding the most important aspects of the *Continuing Improvement Guide* 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*
- *Strategies given for systematic ongoing review - the core of the accreditation process in my view*
- *It gave us reassurance that our improvement plans were worthwhile and resources to find further information*
- *Having clearly stated the reason and also the strategies to amend any non-occurring [indicators]*
- *Guidance and practical suggestions on how to improve our services*

Changes to the *Continuing Improvement Guide*

Services were asked if they felt that anything should be included or changed in the *Continuing Improvement Guide*. 40.2% of respondents provided an answer to this question. Of those respondents, 54.4% felt that no changes to the *Continuing Improvement Guide* are necessary.

Suggestions for improvement to the *Continuing Improvement Guide* were as follows:

- 7.5% felt that the document could be made more user-friendly for services in format and language;
- 7.1% suggested that the recommendations for continuing improvement were too broad and should be more specific and more detailed;
- 6.7% felt that the *Continuing Improvement Guide* should be more individualised to reflect the practices of each service and improve the relevance of the advice given;
- 5.4% felt that the *Continuing Improvement Guide* could provide more affirmation and recognition of service achievement;
- 3.8% suggested that the *Continuing Improvement Guide* should provide more information regarding appropriate resources and references;
- 3.3% felt that the information in the *Continuing Improvement Guide* should be cross-referenced to other information, including the service's previous Accreditation Decisions and *Continuing Improvement Plans*; and
- 11.7% of services provided other suggestions or information in their response.

Comments suggesting improvement to the *Continuing Improvement Guide* included:

- *Maybe letting staff know what a great job they are doing already and that children will benefit from their hard work*
- *Should only state what aspects needing further development, no comment if already achieved high quality*
- *Even more practical strategies and suggestions could be offered to centres and an even more extensive list of resources/contacts they could use*
- *The way the information is presented: cluttered, too cramped. Layout needs improvement*
- *The improvement guide was very clear and easy to understand and very helpful*
- *Clearly some points are included as generic references but when these are not issues requiring improvement it doesn't make sense and diminishes the value of the whole document*
- *A little less impersonal. Each centre is individual (which the accreditation process actively promotes) but the *Continuing Improvement Guide* is quite rigid*
- *No, good advice for services on individual level*
- *We found it positive and helpful for our particular need*

Format and Style of the *Continuing Improvement Guide*

Services were asked a series of questions regarding the format and style of the *Continuing Improvement Guide* and the information it provided, and were asked to rate their responses. The majority of services providing a response to these questions 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statements made. The majority of those services which 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' with these statements were Accredited.

- 94.9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the writing style used in the *Continuing Improvement Guide* was clear. Comments indicated that the *Continuing Improvement Guide* was clear, concise and supported continuing improvement.

26.7% of respondents that provided a comment suggested that changes could be made to the clarity, format and language of the *Continuing Improvement Guide*.

- 94.6% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the attitude towards the service in the *Continuing Improvement Guide* was respectful. Comments indicated that the *Continuing Improvement Guide* was reflective of service practice, supported continuing improvement and assisted professional development.

22% of respondents that provided a comment suggested that the *Continuing Improvement Guide* was not respectful or reflective of service practice.

- 94.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the strategies offered in the guidance points were respectful. Comments indicated that the guidance provided in the *Continuing Improvement Guide* was practical, relevant and realistic.

21.1% of respondents that provided a comment suggested that the guidance provided was limited or insufficient, while 18.4% felt that it was not respectful of the service.

- 90.9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the resources recommended in the *Continuing Improvement Guide* were appropriate. Comments indicated that the resources were helpful and appropriate.

19.3% of respondents that provided a comment felt that the suggested resources were not helpful or appropriate. A further 10% felt that more resources could be suggested to assist services.

- 75.6% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the resources recommended in the *Continuing Improvement Guide* were readily available. 6.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

34.8% of respondents that provided a comment experienced difficulty in accessing the resources or required more information. 7.1% felt that the resources were cost prohibitive and 19.6% had not yet attempted to access the suggested resources.

How This Information Will Be Used

NCAC consistently seeks the views of the child care community about 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.

NCAC aims to work in partnership with services to actively support continuing improvement to the quality of child care provided for children in Australia. The *Continuing Improvement Guide* is one way in which NCAC can support services in their progress through the CCQA systems.

The constructive feedback provided by child care services regarding the *Continuing Improvement Guide* will inform quality improvement of NCAC practices. NCAC will use this information to review the effectiveness of the current *Continuing Improvement Guide* and determine whether the format, style and information provided in the *Continuing Improvement Guide* adequately meet service needs.