

Queensland Childrens Activities Network (QCAN) State Conference 30 – 31 August 2003

Becoming an Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance Validator: An opportunity for professional development

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Introduction

Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance (OSHCQA) aims to provide school aged children in outside school hours care throughout Australia with high quality care that best promotes their learning and development while recognising the importance of social interactions and recreation. The broad objective of OSHCQA is to ensure that children in outside school hours care have stimulating, positive experiences and interactions that foster their self-esteem and confidence. It does this by defining quality in outside school hours care, by providing a way to measure the quality of care provided by the service and identifying areas for on-going quality improvement.

The National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc (NCAC) has administered OSHCQA since its inception on 1 July 2003.

Outside school hours care services will progress through the five step process listed below:

- Step 1: Registration
- Step 2: Self-study and Continuing Improvement
- Step 3: Validation
- Step 4: Moderation
- Step 5: Accreditation Decision

As part of Step 3: Validation, an outside school hours care peer Validator, selected and trained by NCAC, visits the service to validate its quality practices.

Selection Criteria for becoming an OSHCQA Validator

The selection criteria for OSHCQA Validators has been determined by the NCAC and is as follows:

- A minimum of a seven year mix of a qualification that is recognised by the [*National Standards for Outside School Hours Care \(June 1995\)*](#)* and recent experience in middle childhood service delivery. At least two years of the recent experience must be in outside school hours care
- Currently operating in an outside school hours care service in a role that involves regular contact with children and their families

* The *National Standards for Outside School Hours Care* (June 1995) recognises the following qualifications:

A degree in teaching (primary and/or Early Childhood), an associate diploma in child/or youth or recreation... shall be considered as an acceptable qualification

- Currently operating in a service that is making satisfactory progress through OSHCQA
- Knowledge of middle childhood development
- Understanding of, involvement in and commitment to OSHCQA
- Demonstrated ability to work with and relate to adults in an evaluative setting
- An ability to operate in an objective and professional manner
- Knowledge of and commitment to social justice and equal opportunity

Validator Training

Validators undertake a five day competency based training program, conducted by NCAC. Validators build on the abilities and knowledge they have to develop skills necessary to undertake Validation Visits. The training covers:

- An overview of NCAC's role in administering Quality Assurance
- An-in-depth understanding of OSHCQA
- Preparing for and conducting the Validation Visit
- The Validator Code of Conduct

Becoming an OSHCQA Validator

The process of applying to become an OSHCQA Validator includes:

1. Completing and submitting an OSHCQA Validator Application Package
2. A telephone interview
3. Successful undertaking of the competency based Validator Training Program

The role of an OSHCQA Validator

The Validator does not make the Accreditation Decision. The role of the Validator is to visit a service and validate its' quality practices. The Validator will observe practice, view evidence and ask questions to gather information which will enable them to validate the quality indicators in the OSHCQA *Validation Report*. The Validator also collects the *Validation Surveys* and returns them to NCAC together with the *Validation Report*.

NCAC Support for Validators

- Telephone Support
- Pager service
- Feedback telephone calls
- One day update sessions
- Quarterly Validator Bulletin

Professional development opportunities

The professional development that results from completing the Validator Training Program and undertaking Validation Visits can include:

- a greater understanding of OSHCQA;
- an in depth knowledge of the OSHCQA *Quality Practices Guide* and therefore quality practices in outside school hours care; and
- observation and evaluation of a variety of care practices in a range of settings.

Positive Outcomes

Positive outcomes for children, families, staff and management of having an OSHCQA Validator in their service includes:

- Broadened knowledge base of OSHCQA
- Maintain momentum in service's own progression through OSHCQA processes
- Skills to compliment and enhance quality and delivery of care

Interested in being a Validator?

If you are interested in becoming an OSHCQA Validator, a Validator *Application Package* and training dates will be available on the NCAC website from December 2003. Alternatively in December you may wish to contact a member of the Validator Program Team on 1300 136 554 to request a Validator *Application Package* be forwarded to you.

Training for OSHCQA Validators will commence in July 2004