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## **Quality Improvement and Accreditation System Quality Trends Report**

**For the period 1 January 2005 to 30 June 2005**

The purpose of this Quality Trends Report is to identify key areas within the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) that long day care centres are performing well in and those which contribute to centres receiving a Not Accredited status. The Quality Areas and Principles are detailed in the QIAS *Source Book* (2001) available for purchase from NCAC. Where references are made to numbered Indicators, these are listed in the QIAS *Validation Report* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2003).

Please note that this Report is conducted twice annually in January and July each year. Past Quality Trends Reports are available on the NCAC website ([www.ncac.gov.au](http://www.ncac.gov.au)) as follows:

December 2003 <i>Quality Trends Report</i>	(1 July 2003 – 31 December 2003)
June 2004 <i>Quality Trends Report</i>	(1 January 2004 – 30 June 2004)
December 2004 <i>Quality Trends Report</i>	(1 July 2004 – 31 December 2004)
June 2005 <i>Quality Trends Report</i>	(1 January 2005 – 30 June 2005)

A comparative analysis of these Reports is included on page 22 of this document.

## QIAS Quality Trends Report

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Long day care centres across Australia are generally performing well as measured by the QIAS. More than **96%** of centres that have completed the 5 steps to Quality Assurance are Accredited as at 1 July 2005. Of the centres that have progressed through the QIAS to 30 June 2005, **41%** have achieved all 10 Quality Areas at a High Quality level. This is a significant achievement and indicates that long day care centres are performing at a high standard.

### The Principles for which centres most often achieve a High Quality standard are:

1.1	Staff create a happy, engaging atmosphere and interact with children in a warm and friendly way.	95%
1.2	Staff guide children's behaviour in a positive way.	87%
2.1	Staff initiate and maintain communication with children, and their communication conveys respect and promotes equity.	89%
2.2	Staff respect the diverse abilities and the social and cultural backgrounds and abilities of all children and accommodate the individual needs of each child.	88%
2.3	Staff treat children equitably.	88%
3.3	The centre has an orientation process for all new children and their families.	90%
4.1	Staff communicate effectively with each other and function well as a team.	86%
6.1	Programs encourage children to make choices and take on new challenges.	86%
6.2	Programs foster physical development.	89%
6.4	Programs foster personal and interpersonal development.	88%
10.2	Staffing policies and procedures facilitate continuity of care for each child.	90%

### The Principles for which centres have most often not met the Satisfactory standards are:

5.1	Programs reflect a clear statement of centre philosophy and a related set of broad centre goals	10%
5.2	Records of children's learning and well-being are maintained by the centre and are used to plan programs that include experiences appropriate for each child.	11%
5.4	Programs are evaluated regularly	9%
7.4	Staff ensure that children are dressed appropriately for indoor and outdoor play and that rest/sleep time and dressing procedures encourage self-help and meet individual needs for safety, rest and comfort.	12%
8.2	Staff implement effective and current food-handling and hygiene practices.	14%
9.1	Buildings and equipment are safe.	14%
9.2	Potentially dangerous products, plants and objects are inaccessible to children	9%

## Quality Area 1: Relationships with Children

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Staff have consistent contact with specific children and get to know the children and their families well. This develops a secure base of trust that gives families confidence in the centre and allows each child to relax, explore the environment and interact positively with other children and with adults. Staff help children to develop and express a range of emotional responses appropriate to their developing abilities. Staff responses are designed to foster children's self-esteem as well as a sense of fairness, empathy and cooperation with others (QIAS Source Book, 2001, page 8).

### Quality Trends:

Most long day care centres achieve High Quality in this Quality Area.

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### Quality Area 1 has two Principles:

**Principle 1.1:** Staff create a happy, engaging atmosphere and interact with the children in a warm and friendly way.

Principle 1.1	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	95	4	0	1

Principle 1.1 was rarely rated unsatisfactory.

**Principle 1.2:** Staff guide children's behaviour in a positive way.

Principle 1.2	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	87	10	0	3

In Principle 1.2 the Indicators that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings were:

**Indicator 1.2.10** – *Staff anticipate children's tension or conflict and tactfully use positive strategies (eg. distraction, redirection, changing the environment, adding or removing materials, modelling behaviour or using words) to prevent and manage these.*

**Indicator 1.2.11** – *Staff involve children in setting the rules where these rules are simple and can be easily understood.*

## Quality Area 2: Respect for Children

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Staff help each child feel valued, capable and interesting by demonstrating respect for the child's skills and background. Respectful and even-handed communication by staff shows children how to communicate effectively with others. By experiencing respect, kindness, fairness, acceptance and empathy, children can develop and learn to express these qualities themselves. By showing respect for children's developing competence, adults promote each child's ability to take calculated risks, to learn new things and to develop self-esteem (QIAS Source Book, 2001, page 15).

### Quality Trends:

Most long day care centres achieve High Quality in this Quality Area.

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### Quality Area 2 has four Principles:

**Principle 2.1:** Staff initiate and maintain communication with children, and their communication conveys respect and promotes equity.

Principle 2.1	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	89	8	0	3

In Principle 2.1 the Indicator that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings was:

**Indicator 2.1.8** – *Staff give notice and reasons when they want children to finish up what they are doing.*

**Principle 2.2:** Staff respect the diverse abilities and the social and cultural backgrounds of all children and accommodate the individual needs of each child.

Principle 2.2	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	88	9	<1	3

In Principle 2.2 the Indicators that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings were:

**Indicator 2.2.3** – *Staff consult with families to clarify the centre's philosophy and family values.*

**Indicator 2.2.5** – *Language used in children's homes is respected and valued in the centre, eg. staff consistently supplement non-verbal communication with key phrases used by the child's family.*

**Principle 2.3:** Staff treat children equitably.

<b>Principle 2.3</b>	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
<b>%</b>	88	12	0	< 1

Principle 2.3 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory.

**Principle 2.4:** Mealtimes are pleasant, culturally appropriate occasions and provide an environment for social learning and positive interaction.

<b>Principle 2.4</b>	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
<b>%</b>	83	10	1	6

In Principle 2.4 the Indicators that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings were:

**Indicator 2.4.4** – *There is cultural variety in mealtime procedures and ways of presenting foods.*

**Indicator 2.4.5** – *Meal times show sensitivity to cultural differences.*

**Indicator 2.4.7** – *Staff talk with children about food from a variety of cultures.*

## Quality Area 3: Partnerships with Families

When they have continuity in the care received at home and in the centre, children can develop security and learn to trust. This continuity also facilitates a smooth transition to formal care. The partnership between families and staff is characterised by an active exchange of information and mutual respect for similarities and differences in child-rearing practices. Families and staff communicate openly about the children and work together for the benefit of each child. Family members are welcome in the centre and contribute their knowledge and skills to enrich the children's program (QIAS Source Book, 2001, pg 30).

### Quality Trends:

Most long day care centres achieve Good to High Quality in this Quality Area.

### Quality Area 3 has three Principles:

**Principle 3.1:** Staff and families use effective spoken and written communication to exchange information about individual children and about the centre.

Principle 3.1	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	81	17	0	2

Principle 3.1 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory.

**Principle 3.2:** Family members are encouraged to participate in the centre's planning, programs and operations.

Principle 3.2	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	78	19	1	2

Principle 3.2 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory

**Principle 3.3:** The centre has an orientation process for all new children and their families.

Principle 3.3	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	90	7	1	2

Principle 3.3 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory.

## Quality Area 4: Staff Interactions

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Staff show respect for each other and acknowledge each other's points of view. Staff teamwork is characterised by equity, mutual respect, open communication and a shared commitment to providing the best possible environment for children and their families. Staff support new employees and each other. To ensure continuity of care for each child, staff also share information about the centre's programs and about the children in their care. Staff value their own professional development and they set goals for themselves that complement the centre's goals (QIAS Source Book, 2001, pg 39).

### Quality Trends:

Most long day care centres achieve Good to High Quality in this Quality Area.

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### Quality Area 1 has one Principle:

**Principle 4.1:** Staff communicate effectively with each other and function well as a team.

Principle 4.1	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	86	13	<1	<1

Principle 4.1 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory.

## Quality Area 5: Planning and Evaluation

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Program plans take account of information gathered from many sources. As an initial base, the program should complement the centre's philosophy and address the centre's broad goals. In addition, because developments occur rapidly in children's early years, the program needs to include up-to-date observations of each child's learning, development and well-being, as well as information from families about their children. As part of the planning process, various contextual issues also need to be considered, such as the location and design of the centre; the children's and families' characteristics; staff backgrounds; and the dynamics within the groups of children and the local community. Program planning and evaluation should be undertaken by staff working together as a team. For teams to function effectively written records of the program and the information used to make programming decisions are essential (QIAS Source Book, 2001, pg 44).

### Quality Trends:

Most long day care centres throughout Australia are achieving Good to High Quality in this Quality Area. However, a significant proportion of centres are not meeting Accreditation standards in relation to each Principle.

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### Quality Area 5 has four Principles:

**Principle 5.1:** Programs reflect a clear statement of centre philosophy and a related set of broad centre goals.

Principle 5.1	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	68	21	1	10

In Principle 5.1 the Indicators that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings were:

**Indicator 5.1.1** – *There is evidence that children's programs and other centre activities reflect the stated philosophy and the broad goals of the centre.*

**Indicator 5.1.3** – *The centre's philosophy and broad goals were developed or reviewed within the past year, with the opportunity for consultation with all staff and families.*

**Indicator 5.1.5** – *The centre's philosophy is sensitive to the cultural values of families and provides for cultural diversity.*



**Principle 5.2:** Records of children's learning and well-being are maintained by the centre and are used to plan programs that include experiences appropriate for each child.

Principle 5.2	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	75	13	1	11

In Principle 5.2 the Indicators that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings were:

- Indicator 5.2.1** – *The centre has a policy on confidentiality and security of child progress records.*
- Indicator 5.2.2** – *Concise progress records of children's learning and wellbeing are maintained for all children, including those attending full-time, part-time or on a casual or irregular basis.*
- Indicator 5.2.3** – *Child progress records cover major areas of learning and wellbeing and focus on competencies rather than on deficiencies.*
- Indicator 5.2.4** – *Information from families and staff is recorded regularly in child progress records.*
- Indicator 5.2.5** – *Child progress records are analysed and used as a main source of information for planning experiences for each child and for groups in which the child participates.*

**Principle 5.3:** Programs cater for the needs, interests and abilities of all children in ways that assist children to be successful learners.

Principle 5.3	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	79	13	1	7

In Principle 5.3 the Indicators that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings were:

- Indicator 5.3.1** – *Written program planning is undertaken for all groups of children.*
- Indicator 5.3.3** – *Program planning focuses broadly on developing children's strengths rather than on what they cannot do.*
- Indicator 5.3.7** – *The program is clearly linked to the centre's philosophy and broad goals as well as with child progress records.*
- Indicator 5.3.10** – *The program covers outdoor and indoor areas and both are used for many experiences that span many aspects of learning.*

**Principle 5.4:** Programs are evaluated regularly.

<b>Principle 5.4</b>	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
<b>%</b>	69	21	1	9

In Principle 5.4 the Indicators that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings were:

**Indicator 5.4.1** – *Program evaluation covers all groups of children and all program elements.*

**Indicator 5.4.2** – *Program evaluation is linked to regular follow-up planning.*

**Indicator 5.4.3** – *There are regular written records of program evaluations.*

**Indicator 5.4.4** – *There is regular evaluation of the structure, processes and content of the program.*

## Quality Area 6: Learning and Development

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Play is one of the key ways that children learn. Children learn effectively when they are encouraged to exercise choice and self-direction. Ideally this should be with willing play partners using equipment and materials that are designed for flexible and creative use.

As they explore and experiment with language, relationships, ideas and suitable equipment and materials, children learn about themselves and their world. When they explore through play, children work out their own comfort zones and adjust the level of challenge and the amount of practice they engage in. In this way, they meet their own needs for learning and development across the cognitive, socio-emotional and psychomotor domains.

To maximise learning opportunities, the centre should provide a safe, stimulating and challenging environment for self-directed play. In this context, the environment should allow each child to self-select their play activities and should provide enough time for them to explore, create, experiment and express themselves.

It is important to recognise the spontaneity that characterises children's play and to use such opportunities to promote learning and development throughout the day. Sensitive adults will sometimes be included in children's play, but need to take care that adult participation does not stifle children's initiative. However, adults can often help children to develop their skills (for example – by helping infants reach toys; writing signs and messages; modelling interactions skills; reading instructions; playing musical instruments; helping to solve difficult problems, and so on). Adults can also help children research relevant information and provide the children with emotional support (QIAS Source Book, 2001, pg 58).

### Quality Trends:

Most long day care centres throughout Australia are achieving Good to High Quality in this Quality Area.

### Quality Area 6 has six Principles:

**Principle 6.1:** Programs encourage children to make choices and take on new challenges.

Principle 6.1	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	86	11	0	3

In Principle 6.1 the Indicators that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings were:

**Indicator 6.1.3** – *Children have ready access to resources and are not dependent on adults to get things for them.*

**Indicator 6.1.4** – *There are sufficient resources to minimise conflict over their use.*

**Principle 6.2:** Programs foster physical development.

Principle 6.2	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	89	10	0	1

Principle 6.2 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory.

**Principle 6.3:** Programs foster language and literacy development.

Principle 6.3	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	82	15	0	3

In Principle 6.3 the Indicator that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings was:

**Indicator 6.3.8** – *If children watch a television or video segment or use computers as part of the program, staff share the experience and discuss issues with them.*

**Principle 6.4:** Programs foster personal and interpersonal development.

Principle 6.4	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	88	10	0	2

Principle 6.4 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory.

**Principle 6.5:** Programs foster curiosity, logical inquiry and mathematical thinking.

Principle 6.5	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	81	15	0	4

In Principle 6.5 the Indicators that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings were:

**Indicator 6.5.2** – *Staff focus on fostering inquiry and thinking processes rather than on closed activities designed to teach concepts such as colours and shapes.*

**Indicator 6.5.5** – *Planning takes account of the needs of each child and shows a detailed understanding of cognitive development and interests.*

**Principle 6.6:** Programs foster creative and aesthetic development using movement, music and visual-spatial forms of expression.

<b>Principle 6.6</b>	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
<b>%</b>	81	13	0	6

In Principle 6.6 the Indicators that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings were:

**Indicator 6.6.2** – *Music is featured as a key part of the program rather than just as a background or adjunct to other activities.*

**Indicator 6.6.5** – *Painting, collage and other art media are used for creative and aesthetic experiences, rather than for 'busy activities' or staff-directed activities.*

**Indicator 6.6.6** – *Staff regard stencils and colouring-in as 'busy activities' and minimise their use.*

## Quality Area 7: Protective Care

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Management and staff share a responsibility to keep up to date with current thinking and practices and with the legal requirements that relate to the health, welfare and protection of children in child care. Central to this Quality Area are staff sensitivity and responsiveness to early signs of illness or distress; to the basic physical and emotional needs of children; and to signs and Indicators that may suggest problems requiring development support or protective action. In exercising duty of care in the areas of health, welfare and protection of children, staff are engaged frequently in risk assessment. Therefore, staff require the support of clearly documented policies and procedures to help them reduce risk and satisfy legal requirements. Effective communication between staff and with families is also essential (QIAS Source Book, 2001, pg 78).

### Quality Trends:

Most long day care centres throughout Australia are achieving Good to High Quality in this Quality Area. However, a significant proportion of centres are not meeting Accreditation standards in relation to Principle 7.4.

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### Quality Area 7 has four Principles:

**Principle 7.1:** The centre has written policies and procedures on child protection, health and safety; and staff monitor and act to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of each child.

Principle 7.1	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	83	11	<1	5

In Principle 7.1 the Indicators that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings were:

- Indicator 7.1.2** – *There is provision for keeping staff up to date with their responsibilities and practices in relation to child protection, health and safety.*
- Indicator 7.1.4** – *The centre has a process for developing and implementing individual health management plans for children with specific medical needs.*
- Indicator 7.1.5** – *All staff observe and respond to signs of illness in children and these observations are recorded systematically.*
- Indicator 7.1.7** – *Policies and procedures related to child protection, health and safety will include child protection, sick children, administration of medications, accidents and emergencies and infection control.*

**Principle 7.2:** Staff supervise children at all times.

<b>Principle 7.2</b>	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
<b>%</b>	82	14	0	4

In Principle 7.2 the Indicators that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings were:

**Indicator 7.2.1** – *All areas accessible to children are supervised.*

**Indicator 7.2.2** – *All children are within sight and/or hearing of staff at all times.*

**Indicator 7.2.3** – *At all times, children are closely attended on the change table and in any other place that presents high risks.*

**Indicator 7.2.4** – *Children are always attended when they are eating or drinking, including from bottles.*

**Indicator 7.2.5** – *To ensure effective supervision, staff position themselves and arrange equipment, furniture and activities appropriately.*

**Principle 7.3:** Toileting and nappy-changing procedures are positive experiences and meet each child's individual needs.

<b>Principle 7.3</b>	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
<b>%</b>	76	22	0	2

Principle 7.3 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory.

**Principle 7.4:** Staff ensure that children are dressed appropriately for indoor and outdoor play and that rest/sleep-time and dressing procedures encourage self-help and meet individual needs for safety, rest and comfort.

<b>Principle 7.4</b>	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
<b>%</b>	80	7	<1	12

In Principle 7.4 the Indicators that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings were:

**Indicator 7.4.1** – *Sleep procedures and sleep equipment take account of current safety advice from recognised health and safety authorities eg. cots do not contain pillows, doonas or bumper pads.*

**Indicator 7.4.4** – *Policies on sun protection and clothing are consistent with current advice from recognised health and safety authorities.*

**Indicator 7.4.5** – *Staff are consistent in their efforts to protect children from exposure to the sun.*

**Indicator 7.4.6** – *Staff model the centre's sun protection policies.*

**Indicator 7.4.7** – *The centre maintains current information from recognised health and safety authorities, eg. leaflets on sun protection and sleep equipment safety, and this information is readily available to staff and families.*

## Quality Area 8: Health

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Management and staff share a responsibility to keep up to date with current health research and with practices recommended by relevant safety, health and nutrition authorities. Staff need to be sensitive and responsive to each child's daily nutritional needs and eating patterns, food preferences and cultural or special dietary requirements. This should be complemented by a focus on the child's emotional well-being and on providing developmentally appropriate support for each child's growing confidence and independence.

Whether the families or the centre provide food, the centre needs to follow proper food-handling procedures to ensure that the food eaten by children is safe and retains its nutritional value. Eating should be a pleasurable experience, as well as a nutritional one. It can also help to introduce children to a variety of food from both their own and other cultures. Evidence suggests that the primary factors in promoting child health are effective hand-washing, nutrition, breast-feeding and immunisation. In relation to immunisation, centres need to:

- Provide families with relevant information on immunisation schedules for children;
- Provide names of local agencies offering immunisation services;
- Monitor each child's immunisation profile;
- When there are outbreaks of a notifiable disease, implement a policy for the exclusion of any children who are not immunised, as well as those carrying the disease, and advice must be sought from relevant health authorities; and
- Keep current information for families on childhood diseases that are not preventable by immunisation.

Cultural difference are also significant and must be recognised and accommodated by staff when planning for health at the centre (QIAS Source Book, 2001, pg 92).

### Quality Trends:

Most long day care centres achieve Good to High Quality in this Quality Area. However, a significant proportion of centres are not meeting Accreditation standards in relation to Principle 8.2.

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### Quality Area 8 has four Principles:

**Principle 8.1:** Food and drink are nutritious and culturally appropriate and healthy eating habits are promoted.

Principle 8.1	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	80	13	<1	7

In Principle 8.1 the Indicators that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings were:

**Indicator 8.1.2** – *The centre has a written nutrition policy that was developed/revised in consultation with families and is consistent with advice from recognised health authorities.*

**Indicator 8.1.5** – *Drinking water is readily available to all children throughout the day.*



**Principle 8.2:** Staff implement effective and current food-handling standards and hygiene practices.

Principle 8.2	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	66	19	1	14

In Principle 8.2 the Indicators that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings were:

- Indicator 8.2.1** – *The centre has a written food safety plan, which includes food handling and storage.*
- Indicator 8.2.4** – *Food and drinks consumed by children are stored and handled in keeping with safety advice from recognised health and safety authorities.*
- Indicator 8.2.5** – *Staff wash and dry their hands effectively before preparing, serving or eating food; after each nappy change; after assisting each child with toileting; after wiping a nose; after handling animals; and after any other unhygienic practices.*
- Indicator 8.2.6** – *Staff implement hygienic toileting procedures, eg. the cover of the change table is cleaned or disposed of after each nappy change.*
- Indicator 8.2.11** – *Staff actively discourage children from eating food which has been handled by another child, unless the handling was hygienic.*
- Indicator 8.2.12** – *Staff do not permit children to eat food or use a utensil that has dropped on the floor.*
- Indicator 8.2.13** – *Staff make consistent efforts to ensure that children do not share mouthed toys and that such toys are cleaned thoroughly between uses.*

**Principle 8.3:** Staff encourage children to follow simple rules of hygiene.

Principle 8.3	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	78	16	<1	5

In Principle 8.3 the Indicators that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings were:

- Indicator 8.3.1** – *Staff consistently set an example of good health and hygiene practices that are based on recommendations from recognised health authorities.*
- Indicator 8.3.2** – *Staff actively promote each child's hand washing and drying procedures before eating; after toileting; after handling animals; after wiping noses; and after other unhygienic practices.*
- Indicator 8.3.5** – *Toilets and hand-washing facilities are easily accessible to each child.*

**Principle 8.4:** The centre acts to control the spread of infectious diseases and maintains records of immunisation.

<b>Principle 8.4</b>	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
<b>%</b>	82	16	0	2

Principle 8.4 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory.

## Quality Area 9: Safety

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In relation to the safety of children in child care, management and staff share a responsibility to keep up to date with the current research and practices recommended by relevant health and safety authorities. Also, centres are subject to workplace health and safety legislation that has implications for children, staff and anyone else who enters the premises. Within the legislated guidelines, staff need to recognise the fine balance between child safety and the risks children take to create and meet new challenges in their physical world. Child safety is enhanced when staff are sensitive and responsive to each child's patterns of risk-taking behaviour and predict accurately a child's additional needs for support in new and challenging situations (QIAS Source Book, 2001, pg 104).

### Quality Trends:

Most long day care centres throughout Australia are achieving Good to High Quality in this Quality Area. However, a significant proportion of centres are not meeting Accreditation standards in relation to Principles 9.1 and 9.2.

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### Quality Area 9 has three Principles:

**Principle 9.1:** Buildings and equipment are safe.

Principle 9.1	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	66	20	<1	14

In Principle 9.1 the Indicators that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings were:

**Indicator 9.1.3** – *The centre has policies and procedures for safety checks and maintenance of buildings and equipment and these are consistently implemented.*

**Indicator 9.1.4** – *In areas accessible to children, there are systematic audit procedures to identify and remove physical hazards to children and/or staff, eg. grounds are checked each morning for dangerous objects, floors are swept after meals, tables are cleaned as required throughout the day, and adequate precaution is taken in selecting equipment for mixed age groups*

**Indicator 9.1.5** – *In areas accessible to children, power points have secure, protective caps or internal safety barriers to any object other than a three-point plug.*

**Indicator 9.1.6** – *All electrical cords are out of reach of children or are secured and double-adaptors are not used in areas accessible to children.*

**Principle 9.2:** Potentially dangerous products, plants and objects are inaccessible to children.

Principle 9.2	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	68	22	1	9

In Principle 9.2 the Indicators that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings were:

**Indicator 9.2.2** – *Medications, detergents/cleaning products, garden chemicals and other dangerous products are clearly labelled.*

**Indicator 9.2.3** – *Medications, detergents/cleaning products, garden chemicals and other dangerous products are inaccessible to children at all times.*

**Indicator 9.2.4** – *Containers for soiled nappies and other soiled clothes are securely covered and the contents are not accessible to children.*

**Principle 9.3:** The centre promotes occupational health and safety.

Principle 9.3	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	77	18	2	3

In Principle 9.3 the Indicators that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings were:

**Indicator 9.3.1** – *The centre's staff handbook includes information for staff about occupational health and safety issues.*

**Indicator 9.3.2** – *The centre has clear guidelines for staff to report concerns about occupational health and safety issues to centre management.*

## Quality Area 10: Managing to Support Quality

The goals of Quality Area 10 are that the centre has an effective overall management plan. Families and staff receive up to date information about relevant management decisions. Families and staff have appropriate opportunities to comment on management decisions and centre procedures. Ongoing quality improvement, continuity of care and cultural sensitivity are promoted through:

- staffing practices;
- systematic monitoring of centre operations;
- families and staff contributions to relevant management decisions; and
- professional development of staff

(QIAS Source Book, 2001, pg 113).

### Quality Trends:

Most long day care centres throughout Australia are achieving Good to High Quality in this Quality Area.

### Quality Area 10 has four Principles:

**Principle 10.1:** Management consults appropriately with families and staff and written information about the centre's management is readily available to families and staff.

Principle 10.1	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	74	18	1	7

In Principle 10.1 the Indicators that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings were:

**Indicator 10.1.1** – *Centre management provides for families to be involved in an advisory, consultative or decision-making role and the areas in which they can contribute are stated clearly.*

**Indicator 10.1.2** – *Information about centre management structures and processes is readily available to families.*

**Indicator 10.1.4** – *The centre's grievance and complaints procedures are included in handbooks or equivalent information material.*

**Indicator 10.1.6** – *Where the centre has a current certificate of Accreditation from the National Childcare Accreditation Council, the certificate is clearly displayed for families, staff and visitors to see.*

**Principle 10.2:** Staffing policies and practices facilitate continuity of care for each child.

Principle 10.2	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	90	10	0	<1

Principle 10.2 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory.

**Principle 10.3:** Management provides an orientation program for new staff with a focus on the centre's philosophy, goals, policies and procedures.

Principle 10.3	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	73	20	1	6

In Principle 10.3 the Indicators that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings were:

**Indicator 10.3.1** – *The centre has a comprehensive induction process in place for new staff.*

**Indicator 10.3.2** – *There is a brief orientation and induction process specifically for new relief staff.*

**Indicator 10.3.3** – *New staff receive an orientation to the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System if they have not previously worked with the system.*

**Indicator 10.3.5** – *New staff receive a written copy of the centre's philosophy, goals and policies; a job description; conditions of employment; and information about grievance procedures.*

**Indicator 10.3.6** – *Key aspects of the staff handbook are highlighted for staff to read before starting to work directly with children.*

**Principle 10.4:** Management provides and facilitates regular professional development opportunities for staff.

Principle 10.4	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	76	17	0	6

In Principle 10.4 the Indicators that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings were:

**Indicator 10.4.2** – *Staff meet regularly and the meeting agendas and outcomes are documented.*

**Indicator 10.4.3** – *Resources, skills and ideas are shared at regular staff meetings.*

**Indicator 10.4.4** – *Management provides for and encourages participation in a variety of regular professional development opportunities for staff.*

## Comparative Quality Trends Analysis

The National Childcare Accreditation Council has conducted four QIAS Quality Trends Reports for long day care centres:

<b>December 2003 Quality Trends Report</b>	<b>(1 July 2003 – 31 December 2003)</b>
<b>June 2004 Quality Trends Report</b>	<b>(1 January 2004 – 30 June 2004)</b>
<b>December 2004 Quality Trends Report</b>	<b>(1 July 2004 – 31 December 2004)</b>
<b>June 2005 Quality Trends Report</b>	<b>(1 January 2005 – 30 June 2005)</b>

Notable trends apparent in the data include:

- Across the December 2003, June 2004 and December 2004 reporting periods the proportion of High Quality ratings achieved for every Principle progressively increased. This trend has now regressed, with an average decrease of 2 percentage points across almost all Principles during the June 2005 reporting period. An increased proportion of High Quality ratings was achieved only for Principle 9.2 during this period.
- Notable reductions in High Quality ratings were evident in Principles 5.5, 7.3, 8.2 and 8.3 during the June 2005 reporting period.
- As the percentage of centres achieving Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory ratings has remained relatively stable, reductions in the proportion of services achieving High Quality ratings have resulted in a corresponding rise in Good Quality ratings during the June 2005 reporting period.
- While the proportion of long day care centres achieving High Quality ratings has decreased during the June 2005 period, High Quality ratings remain noticeably higher than those of the December 2003 reporting period, with an average difference of 7 percentage points. This indicates that, while these figures have not increased during the June 2005 reporting period, the overall standard of care provided by long day care centres is higher than that of December 2003.

Certain Principles have been consistently problematic across all reporting periods. Particular attention to these Principles is required to improve the performance of long day care centres in the corresponding Quality Areas. The following Principles have received consistently high proportions of Unsatisfactory ratings:

5.1	Programs reflect a clear statement of centre philosophy and a related set of broad centre goals.
5.2	Records of children's learning and well-being are maintained by the centre and are used to plan programs that include experiences appropriate for each child.
7.4	Staff ensure that children are dressed appropriately for indoor and outdoor play and that rest/sleep time and dressing procedures encourage self-help and meet individual needs for safety, rest and comfort.
8.2	Staff implement effective and current food-handling and hygiene practices.
9.1	Buildings and equipment are safe.

The following Principles have received consistently high proportions of High Quality ratings across all reporting periods:

1.1	Staff create a happy, engaging atmosphere and interact with children in a warm and friendly way.
1.2	Staff guide children's behaviour in a positive way.
2.1	Staff initiate and maintain communication with children, and their communication conveys respect and promotes equity.
2.2	Staff respect the diverse abilities and the social and cultural backgrounds and abilities of all children and accommodate the individual needs of each child.
2.3	Staff treat children equitably.
3.3	The centre has an orientation process for all new children and their families.
4.1	Staff communicate effectively with each other and function well as a team.
6.1	Programs encourage children to make choices and take on new challenges.
6.2	Programs foster physical development.
6.4	Programs foster personal and interpersonal development.
10.2	Staffing policies and procedures facilitate continuity of care for each child.

The purpose of the biannual QIAS *Quality Trends Report* is to identify key areas within the QIAS in which long day care centres are performing well, and those which contribute to centres receiving a Not Accredited status. These reports have identified the substantial accomplishments of long day care centres participating in the QIAS, and NCAC will continue to monitor this progress with the *Quality Trends Report*.



## Quality Improvement and Accreditation System Comparative Quality Trends

Comparative statistics of the December 2003, June 2004, December 2004 and June 2005  
Quality Trends Reports

Quality Area 1		High Quality (%)	Good Quality (%)	Satisfactory (%)	Unsatisfactory (%)
Principle 1.1	Dec-03	92	7	0	<1
	Jun-04	93	6	0	<1
	Dec-04	96	3	0	1
	Jun-05	95	4	0	1
Principle 1.2	Dec-03	80	16	<1	3
	Jun-04	82	15	0	3
	Dec-04	88	9	0	3
	June-05	87	10	0	3
<b>Quality Area 2</b>					
Principle 2.1	Dec-03	82	15	<1	2
	Jun-04	84	14	0	2
	Dec-04	89	7	0	4
	Jun-05	89	8	0	3
Principle 2.2	Dec-03	79	17	<1	4
	Jun-04	81	15	0	4
	Dec-04	89	8	0	3
	Jun-05	88	9	<1	3
Principle 2.3	Dec-03	81	19	0	<1
	Jun-04	85	15	0	0
	Dec-04	89	11	0	0
	Jun-05	88	12	0	0
Principle 2.4	Dec-03	76	15	1	8
	Jun-04	79	14	0	7
	Dec-04	85	8	0	6
	June-05	83	10	1	6
<b>Quality Area 3</b>					
Principle 3.1	Dec-03	73	24	<1	2
	Jun-04	74	24	0	2
	Dec-04	82	16	0	1
	Jun-05	81	17	0	2
Principle 3.2	Dec-03	69	27	<1	3
	Jun-04	72	26	0	2
	Dec-04	80	18	0	1
	Jun-05	78	19	1	2
Principle 3.3	Dec-03	85	13	0	1
	Jun-04	86	12	0	2
	Dec-04	92	7	0	1
	Jun-05	90	7	1	2
<b>Quality Area 4</b>					
Principle 4.1	Dec-03	80	19	<1	<1
	Jun-04	83	17	0	0
	Dec-04	87	13	0	0
	Jun-05	86	13	<1	<1

<b>Quality Area 5</b>					
Principle 5.1	Dec-03	61	27	<1	11
	Jun-04	64	25	1	10
	Dec-04	72	17	0	10
	Jun-05	68	21	1	10
Principle 5.2	Dec-03	67	18	<1	14
	Jun-04	70	16	0	14
	Dec-04	77	11	0	12
	Jun-05	75	13	1	11
Principle 5.3	Dec-03	77	19	<1	3
	Jun-04	78	17	0	5
	Dec-04	83	11	0	5
	Jun-05	79	13	1	7
Principle 5.4	Dec-03	62	27	1	9
	Jun-04	64	24	2	10
	Dec-04	72	20	0	7
	Jun-05	69	21	1	9
<b>Quality Area 6</b>					
Principle 6.1	Dec-03	79	18	<1	2
	Jun-04	81	16	0	3
	Dec-04	88	10	0	2
	Jun-05	86	11	0	3
Principle 6.2	Dec-03	83	16	<1	<1
	Jun-04	85	14	0	1
	Dec-04	89	10	0	1
	Jun-05	89	10	0	1
Principle 6.3	Dec-03	73	22	<1	<5
	Jun-04	76	20	0	4
	Dec-04	83	13	0	4
	Jun-05	82	15	0	3
Principle 6.4	Dec-03	84	15	0	<1
	Jun-04	84	14	0	2
	Dec-04	89	9	0	2
	Jun-05	88	10	0	2
Principle 6.5	Dec-03	75	20	<1	5
	Jun-04	76	19	0	5
	Dec-04	84	11	0	5
	Jun-05	81	15	0	4
Principle 6.6	Dec-03	76	18	<1	5
	Jun-04	77	17	<1	5
	Dec-04	84	11	0	5
	Jun-05	81	13	0	6

<b>Quality Area 7</b>					
Principle 7.1	Dec-03	74	19	<1	6
	Jun-04	79	15	0	6
	Dec-04	83	12	0	5
	Jun-05	83	11	<1	5
Principle 7.2	Dec-03	78	17	<1	4
	Jun-04	79	17	0	4
	Dec-04	85	10	0	4
	Jun-05	82	14	0	4
Principle 7.3	Dec-03	71	28	0	1
	Jun-04	74	25	0	1
	Dec-04	81	18	0	1
	Jun-05	76	22	0	2
Principle 7.4	Dec-03	74	13	<1	13
	Jun-04	76	13	1	10
	Dec-04	80	6	1	13
	Jun-05	80	7	<1	12
<b>Quality Area 8</b>					
Principle 8.1	Dec-03	70	20	1	9
	Jun-04	76	16	1	7
	Dec-04	81	12	0	7
	Jun-05	80	13	<1	7
Principle 8.2	Dec-03	62	24	<1	14
	Jun-04	66	22	0	12
	Dec-04	73	16	0	11
	Jun-05	66	19	1	14
Principle 8.3	Dec-03	72	24	<1	3
	Jun-04	76	19	1	4
	Dec-04	84	13	0	3
	Jun-05	78	16	<1	5
Principle 8.4	Dec-03	73	25	0	2
	Jun-04	78	19	0	2
	Dec-04	84	15	0	1
	Jun-05	82	16	0	2
<b>Quality Area 9</b>					
Principle 9.1	Dec-03	57	29	<1	13
	Jun-04	59	28	1	12
	Dec-04	67	19	1	14
	Jun-05	66	20	<1	14
Principle 9.2	Dec-03	57	34	3	6
	Jun-04	63	27	1	8
	Dec-04	67	24	1	8
	Jun-05	68	22	1	9
Principle 9.3	Dec-03	66	25	2	7
	Jun-04	72	21	1	6
	Dec-04	78	17	1	5
	Jun-05	77	18	2	3

<b>Quality Area 10</b>					
Principle 10.1	Dec-03	65	23	<1	11
	Jun-04	69	23	1	7
	Dec-04	75	17	1	7
	Jun-05	74	18	1	7
Principle 10.2	Dec-03	83	17	0	0
	Jun-04	85	15	0	0
	Dec-04	90	10	0	0
	Jun-05	90	10	0	<1
Principle 10.3	Dec-03	62	29	1	8
	Jun-04	67	26	0	7
	Dec-04	76	18	0	5
	Jun-05	73	20	1	6
Principle 10.4	Dec-03	68	27	0	5
	Jun-04	71	25	0	4
	Dec-04	79	17	0	4
	Jun-05	76	17	0	6

Reporting period of 6 months to end of month specified. Figures rounded to the nearest whole percentage.

Number of long day care centres which received an Accreditation Decision in each 6 month period:

- 1 July 2003 – 31 December 2003 = 1, 013 centres
- 1 January 2004 – 30 June 2004 = 1, 106 centres
- 1 July 1 2004 – 31 December 2004 = 1,003 centres
- 1 January 2005 – 30 June 2005 = 858 centres