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**Quality Improvement and Accreditation System
Quality Trends Report
QIAS Source Book (1st edition, 2001)**

For the period 1 July 2006 to 31 December 2006

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* (1st edition, 2001) available for purchase from the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC). Where references are made to numbered indicators, these are listed in the *QIAS Validation Report* (2nd edition, 2003).

Quality Trends Reports are conducted twice annually by NCAC, in January and July each year. Past *Quality Trends Reports* are available on the NCAC website (www.ncac.gov.au) as follows:

- *QIAS Quality Trends Report* (1 July 2003 – 31 December 2003)
- *QIAS Quality Trends Report* (1 January 2004 – 30 June 2004)
- *QIAS Quality Trends Report* (1 July 2004 – 31 December 2004)
- *QIAS Quality Trends Report* (1 January 2005 – 30 June 2005)
- *QIAS Quality Trends Report* (1 July 2005 – 31 December 2005)
- *QIAS Quality Trends Report* (1 January 2006 – 30 June 2006)

A comparative analysis of these *Reports* is included on page 20 of this document.

The *QIAS Quality Practices Guide* (1st edition, 2005) was implemented in January 2006. The first Accreditation Decisions under the reclassified standards were made available from July 2006 and quality trends against the *QIAS Quality Practices Guide* are now also available in a separate report.

This is the final report analysing quality trends against the standards outlined in the *QIAS Source Book* (1st edition, 2001).

QIAS Quality Trends Report

Long day care centres across Australia are performing well as measured by the QIAS. More than **95%** of centres that have completed the 5 steps of Child Care Quality Assurance to 31 December 2006 are Accredited. Of these services, **79%** have achieved High Quality in all Quality Areas. This is a significant achievement and indicates that long day care centres are performing at a high standard.

345 long day care centres received an Accreditation Decision under standards outlined in the *QIAS Source Book* (2001) between 1 July 2006 and 31 December 2006.

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	94%
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	92%
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	86%
2.3	Staff treat children equitably	85%
3.3	The centre has an orientation process for all new children and their families	92%
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	89%
6.2	Programs foster physical development	89%
6.4	Programs foster personal and interpersonal development	91%
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	86%
7.2	Staff supervise children at all times	87%
10.2	Staffing policies and procedures facilitate continuity of care for each child	92%

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	8%
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	10%
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	11%
8.2	Staff implement effective and current food-handling and hygiene practices	12%
9.1	Buildings and equipment are safe	13%
9.2	Potentially dangerous products, plants and objects are inaccessible to children	9%

Quality Area 1: Relationships with Children

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 achieved High Quality in this Quality Area.

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
%	94	5	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

Principle 1.2 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory.

Quality Area 2: Respect for Children

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 achieved High Quality in this Quality Area.

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
%	92	7	0	1

Principle 2.1 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory.

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
%	86	11	1	2

Principle 2.2 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory.

Principle 2.3: Staff treat children equitably.

Principle 2.3	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	85	14	1	0

Principle 2.3 was not rated Unsatisfactory.

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

Principle 2.4	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	83	9	1	7

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 2.4.7 *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, page 30).

Quality Trends:

Most long day care centres achieved 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
%	85	13	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
%	92	8	0	0

Principle 3.3 was not rated Unsatisfactory.

Quality Area 4: Staff Interactions

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, page 39).

Quality Trends:

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

Quality Area 4 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
%	85	14	0	1

Principle 4.1 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory.

Quality Area 5: Planning and Evaluation

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, page 44).

Quality Trends:

Most long day care centres achieved Good to High Quality in this Quality Area. However, a significant proportion of centres did not meet the Accreditation standards of each Principle.

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
%	77	14	1	8

In Principle 5.1 the indicator that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings was:

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

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
%	78	11	1	10

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 well-being are maintained for all children including those attending full-time, part-time or on a casual or irregular basis*
- Indicator 5.2.4** *Information for 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
%	84	11	1	4

In Principle 5.3 the indicator that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings was:

- Indicator 5.3.7** *The program is clearly linked to the centre's philosophy and broad goals as well as with child progress records*

Principle 5.4: Programs are evaluated regularly.

Principle 5.4	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	78	15	1	6

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

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, page 58).

Quality Trends:

Most long day care centres achieved 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
%	89	10	0	1

Principle 6.1 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory.

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
%	83	15	0	2

Principle 6.3 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory.

Principle 6.4: Programs foster personal and interpersonal development.

Principle 6.4	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	91	8	0	1

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
%	84	13	1	2

Principle 6.5 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory.

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

Principle 6.6	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	86	10	1	3

Principle 6.6 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory.

Quality Area 7: Protective Care

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, page 78).

Quality Trends:

Most long day care centres achieved High Quality in this Quality Area. However, a significant proportion of centres did not meet the Accreditation standards of Principle 7.4.

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
%	86	11	0	3

Principle 7.1 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory.

Principle 7.2: Staff supervise children at all times.

Principle 7.2	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	87	10	0	3

Principle 7.2 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory.

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

Principle 7.3	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	85	14	0	1

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.

Principle 7.4	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	83	6	0	11

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

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

Quality Trends:

Most long day care centres achieved High Quality in this Quality Area. However, a significant proportion of centres did not meet the Accreditation standards of Principle 8.2.

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
%	83	12	1	4

In Principle 8.1 the indicator that most often resulted in Unsatisfactory ratings was:

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*

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

Principle 8.2	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	74	13	<1	12

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

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 practice*

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

Principle 8.3	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	85	12	0	3

Principle 8.3 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory.

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

Principle 8.4	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	85	14	0	1

Principle 8.4 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory.

Quality Area 9: Safety

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, page 104).

Quality Trends:

Most long day care centres achieved High Quality in this Quality Area. However, a significant proportion of centres did not meet the Accreditation standards of Principles 9.1 and 9.2.

Quality Area 9 has three Principles:

Principle 9.1: Buildings and equipment are safe.

Principle 9.1	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	71	15	1	13

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

- Indicator 9.1.1** *Toys and equipment are made available to children only in areas where they may be used safely, eg. wheeled toys are used only in safe riding areas*
- 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 9.1.5** *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
%	74	16	<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
%	83	14	1	2

Principle 9.3 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory.

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, page 113).

Quality Trends:

Most long day care centres achieved High Quality in this Quality Area. However, a significant proportion of centres did not meet the Accreditation standards of Principle 10.1.

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
%	82	12	0	6

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 10.1.6 *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
%	92	8	0	0

Principle 10.2 was not 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
%	78	18	1	3

Principle 10.3 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory.

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

Principle 10.4	High Quality	Good Quality	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
%	80	17	0	3

Principle 10.4 was rarely rated Unsatisfactory.

Comparative Quality Trends Analysis

The National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) has conducted seven QIAS *Quality Trends Reports* for long day care centres:

- *QIAS Quality Trends Report* (1 July 2003 – 31 December 2003)
- *QIAS Quality Trends Report* (1 January 2004 – 30 June 2004)
- *QIAS Quality Trends Report* (1 July 2004 – 31 December 2004)
- *QIAS Quality Trends Report* (1 January 2005 – 30 June 2005)
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- *QIAS Quality Trends Report* (1 July 2006 – 31 December 2006)

These *Quality Trends Reports* demonstrate a number of quality trends in the performance of long day care centres against the standards of quality care outlined in the *QIAS Source Book* (2001).

Notable trends 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. Across the June 2005, December 2005 and June 2006 reporting period the proportion of High Quality ratings fluctuated.
- Between the June 2006 and December 2006 reporting periods, the average variation of High Quality ratings across all Principles was less than 2 percentage points. High Quality ratings rose for 16 of the 35 Principles.
- Unsatisfactory ratings remained relatively stable across all Principles, rising in only 8 of the 35 Principles. The average variation in Unsatisfactory ratings across all Principles was less than 1 percentage point.
- The standard of care provided by most long day care centres is consistently of a Good to High quality standard.

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.

NCAC Support for Services

The purpose of this *Quality Trends Report* is to identify key areas within the QIAS that long day care centres are performing well in and those which contribute to schemes receiving a Not Accredited status.

NCAC aims to work in partnership with long day care centres to facilitate and support continuous improvement to the quality of child care provided for children in Australia. The *Quality Trends Report* assists NCAC to provide targeted support to schemes as they progress through the QIAS.

NCAC has implemented several initiatives, addressing concerns raised in the *Quality Trends Reports* as follows:

- The *NCAC Policy Development Guide* was introduced in October 2006, to assist services to research, develop and review policies in collaboration with stakeholders. The *NCAC Policy Development Guide* is available on the NCAC website (www.ncac.gov.au).
- NCAC's quarterly newsletter, *Putting Children First*, was distributed to all services participating in the Child Care Quality Assurance systems in June, September and December 2006. Articles supporting quality practices included:
 - *Meeting Quality Assurance Requirements with Minimal Resources*
 - *Planning Experiences for Children*
 - *Environmental Experiences in Child Care*
 - *Electrical Safety in Children's Services*
 - *Ask a Child Care Adviser – Dental Health*
- NCAC *Factsheets* are distributed to all long day care centres that register to participate in the QIAS, providing information for long day care staff on a variety of issues identified to be problematic in the *Quality Trends Reports*:

Factsheets	Relevant Principles
<i>Developing a Service Philosophy</i>	1.2, 1.5, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 7.1, 7.2
<i>Safety in Children's Services</i>	5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5
<i>Food Safety</i>	6.2
<i>Developing a Policy</i>	1.2, 1.5, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 5.1, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.5, 6.6, 7.1, 7.2
<i>Managing Complaints</i>	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 7.1

NCAC will continue to use the information provided in the *Quality Trends Reports* to develop ways to effectively support long day care centres participating in the QIAS.

Quality Improvement and Accreditation System Comparative Quality Trends

Comparative statistics of the December 2003, June 2004, December 2004, June 2005, December 2005, June 2006 and December 2006 *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
	Dec-05	96	3	0	1
	Jun-06	94	5	0	1
	Dec-06	94	5	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
	Dec-05	91	6	0	3
	Jun-06	88	9	1	2
	Dec-06	87	10	0	3
Quality Area 2					
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
	Dec-05	92	6	1	1
	Jun-06	90	8	0	2
	Dec-06	92	7	0	1
Principle 2.2	Dec-03	79	17	1	3
	Jun-04	81	15	0	4
	Dec-04	89	8	0	3
	Jun-05	88	9	1	2
	Dec-05	89	8	0	3
	Jun-06	88	10	0	2
	Dec-06	86	11	1	2
Principle 2.3	Dec-03	81	19	0	0
	Jun-04	85	15	0	0
	Dec-04	89	11	0	0
	Jun-05	88	12	0	0
	Dec-05	90	10	0	0
	Jun-06	88	11	0	<1
	Dec-06	85	14	1	0

Quality Area 2		High Quality (%)	Good Quality (%)	Satisfactory (%)	Unsatisfactory (%)
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
	Dec-05	87	5	1	7
	Jun-06	85	10	1	4
	Dec-06	83	9	1	7
Quality Area 3					
Principle 3.1	Dec-03	73	24	<1	2
	Jun-04	74	24	0	2
	Dec-04	82	17	0	1
	Jun-05	81	17	0	2
	Dec-05	82	15	1	2
	Jun-06	83	16	0	1
	Dec-06	85	13	0	2
Principle 3.2	Dec-03	69	27	<1	3
	Jun-04	72	26	0	2
	Dec-04	80	18	0	2
	Jun-05	78	19	1	2
	Dec-05	85	12	1	2
	Jun-06	82	16	1	1
	Dec-06	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
	Dec-05	91	7	0	2
	Jun-06	91	7	1	1
	Dec-06	92	8	0	0
Quality Area 4					
Principle 4.1	Dec-03	80	19	1	0
	Jun-04	83	17	0	0
	Dec-04	87	13	0	0
	Jun-05	87	13	0	0
	Dec-05	92	7	1	0
	Jun-06	87	12	0	1
	Dec-06	85	14	0	1
Quality Area 5					
Principle 5.1	Dec-03	61	27	<1	11
	Jun-04	64	25	1	10
	Dec-04	72	17	1	10
	Jun-05	68	21	1	10
	Dec-05	73	15	1	11
	Jun-06	72	18	1	9
	Dec-06	77	14	1	8

Quality Area 5		High Quality (%)	Good Quality (%)	Satisfactory (%)	Unsatisfactory (%)
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
	Dec-05	79	9	2	10
	Jun-06	78	12	1	9
	Dec-06	78	11	1	10
Principle 5.3	Dec-03	77	19	1	3
	Jun-04	78	17	0	5
	Dec-04	83	11	1	5
	Jun-05	79	13	1	7
	Dec-05	84	9	2	5
	Jun-06	85	11	1	3
	Dec-06	84	11	1	4
Principle 5.4	Dec-03	62	27	1	9
	Jun-04	64	24	2	10
	Dec-04	72	20	1	7
	Jun-05	69	21	1	9
	Dec-05	72	17	2	9
	Jun-06	78	15	1	6
Quality Area 6					
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
	Dec-05	92	5	1	2
	Jun-06	88	10	1	1
	Dec-06	89	10	0	1
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
	Dec-05	92	6	1	1
	Jun-06	89	10	0	1
	Dec-06	89	10	0	1
Principle 6.3	Dec-03	73	22	1	4
	Jun-04	76	20	0	4
	Dec-04	83	13	0	4
	Jun-05	82	15	0	3
	Dec-05	86	11	1	2
	Jun-06	84	14	0	2
	Dec-06	83	15	0	2

Quality Area 6		High Quality (%)	Good Quality (%)	Satisfactory (%)	Unsatisfactory (%)
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
	Dec-05	93	5	0	2
	Jun-06	90	9	0	1
	Dec-06	91	8	0	1
Principle 6.5	Dec-03	75	20	0	5
	Jun-04	76	19	0	5
	Dec-04	84	11	0	5
	Jun-05	81	15	0	4
	Dec-05	88	8	1	3
	Jun-06	84	13	0	3
	Dec-06	84	13	1	2
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
	Dec-05	86	7	0	7
	Jun-06	84	11	1	4
	Dec-06	86	10	1	3
Quality Area 7					
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
	Dec-05	84	11	0	5
	Jun-06	87	10	0	3
	Dec-06	86	11	0	3
Principle 7.2	Dec-03	78	17	<1	4
	Jun-04	79	17	0	4
	Dec-04	85	10	0	5
	Jun-05	82	14	0	4
	Dec-05	79	16	1	4
	Jun-06	83	11	0	6
	Dec-06	87	10	0	3
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
	Dec-05	77	22	0	1
	Jun-06	83	16	0	1
	Dec-06	85	14	0	1

Quality Area 7		High Quality (%)	Good Quality (%)	Satisfactory (%)	Unsatisfactory (%)
Principle 7.4	Dec-03	74	13	0	13
	Jun-04	76	13	1	10
	Dec-04	80	6	1	13
	Jun-05	80	7	<1	12
	Dec-05	81	3	1	15
	Jun-06	79	7	1	13
	Dec-06	83	6	0	11
Quality Area 8					
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	0	7
	Dec-05	83	9	1	7
	Jun-06	83	12	1	4
	Dec-06	83	12	1	4
Principle 8.2	Dec-03	62	24	0	14
	Jun-04	66	22	0	12
	Dec-04	73	16	0	11
	Jun-05	66	19	1	14
	Dec-05	70	13	1	16
	Jun-06	76	11	0	13
	Dec-06	74	13	<1	12
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
	Dec-05	83	13	1	3
	Jun-06	85	12	0	3
	Dec-06	85	12	0	3
Principle 8.4	Dec-03	73	25	0	2
	Jun-04	78	19	0	3
	Dec-04	84	15	0	1
	Jun-05	82	16	0	2
	Dec-05	83	13	1	3
	Jun-06	84	13	0	3
	Dec-06	85	14	0	1

Quality Area 9		High Quality (%)	Good Quality (%)	Satisfactory (%)	Unsatisfactory (%)
Principle 9.1	Dec-03	57	29	<1	13
	Jun-04	59	28	1	12
	Dec-04	67	19	1	13
	Jun-05	66	20	<1	13
	Dec-05	69	16	2	13
	Jun-06	67	20	1	12
	Dec-06	71	15	1	13
Principle 9.2	Dec-03	57	34	3	6
	Jun-04	64	27	1	8
	Dec-04	67	24	1	8
	Jun-05	68	22	1	9
	Dec-05	67	20	3	10
	Jun-06	73	17	1	9
	Dec-06	74	16	<1	9
Principle 9.3	Dec-03	66	25	2	7
	Jun-04	72	21	1	6
	Dec-04	78	17	1	4
	Jun-05	77	18	2	3
	Dec-05	81	12	2	5
	Jun-06	83	13	1	3
	Dec-06	83	14	1	2
Quality Area 10					
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
	Dec-05	79	15	1	5
	Jun-06	77	18	0	5
	Dec-06	82	12	0	6
Principle 10.2	Dec-03	83	17	0	0
	Jun-04	85	15	0	0
	Dec-04	90	10	0	0
	Jun-05	90	9	0	1
	Dec-05	92	8	0	0
	Jun-06	90	9	0	1
	Dec-06	92	8	0	0

Quality Area 10		High Quality (%)	Good Quality (%)	Satisfactory (%)	Unsatisfactory (%)
Principle 10.3	Dec-03	62	29	1	8
	Jun-04	67	26	0	7
	Dec-04	76	18	1	5
	Jun-05	73	20	1	6
	Dec-05	79	14	1	6
	Jun-06	75	19	1	5
	Dec-06	78	18	1	3
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	7
	Dec-05	83	12	0	5
	Jun-06	80	16	0	4
	Dec-06	80	17	0	3
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					
1 July 2005 – 31 December 2005 719 centres					
1 January 2006 – 30 June 2006 623 centres					
1 July 2006 – 31 December 2006 345 centres					