



NCAC

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Spot Check Evaluation Form Analysis

Spot Checks Conducted July / August 2009

Background

The National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) is responsible for the administration of the following Child Care Quality Assurance (CCQA) systems:

- Family Day Care Quality Assurance (FDCQA) for family day care schemes
- Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance (OSHCQA) for outside school hours care services
- Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) for long day care centres

NCAC conducts unannounced Spot Checks to ensure that the quality of care provided by child care services is maintained between Validation Visits. All services Accredited by NCAC are eligible to receive a Spot Check. A service may receive more than one Spot Check during its Accreditation period.

Services have the opportunity to provide feedback to NCAC about their Spot Check and the Validator's performance through the submission of a *Spot Check Evaluation Form*. NCAC conducts an annual analysis of the forms received from child care services that have had a Spot Check between 1 July and 31 August of the current year.

The information provided assists in the revision of standards of quality care, development of the administration of the CCQA systems and the provision of resources to services, families, Validators and other key stakeholders.

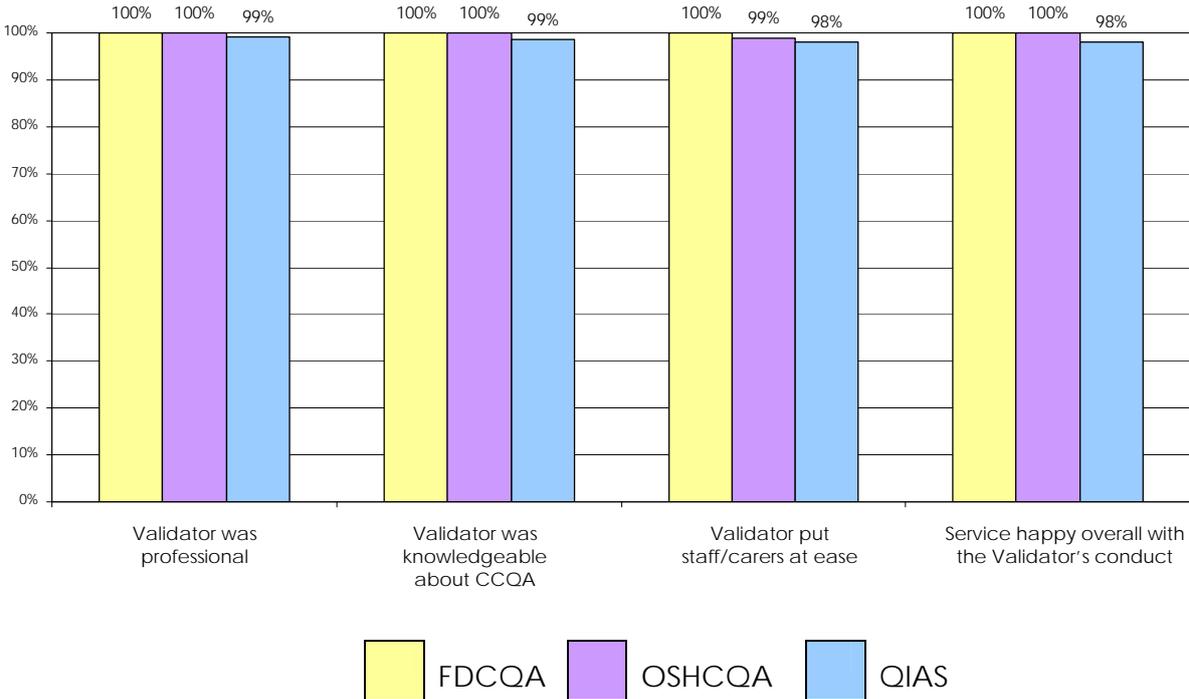
In July and August 2009, 499 Spot Checks were completed. NCAC received *Spot Check Evaluation Forms* from 274 (55%) of those services which had a Spot Check during this period, as follows:

Spot Checks: 1 July 2009 – 31 August 2009			
	Spot Checks completed	<i>Spot Check Evaluation Forms</i> received	Percentage received
FDCQA	29	21	72%
OSHCQA	211	108	51%
QIAS	259	145	56%
Total	499	274	55%

Perceptions of the Validator

Services were asked to rate the performance of their Validator across a number of areas. On average, over a range of measures of the Validator’s performance, more than 98% of child care services indicated that they were satisfied with the performance of the Validator (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Performance of the Validator



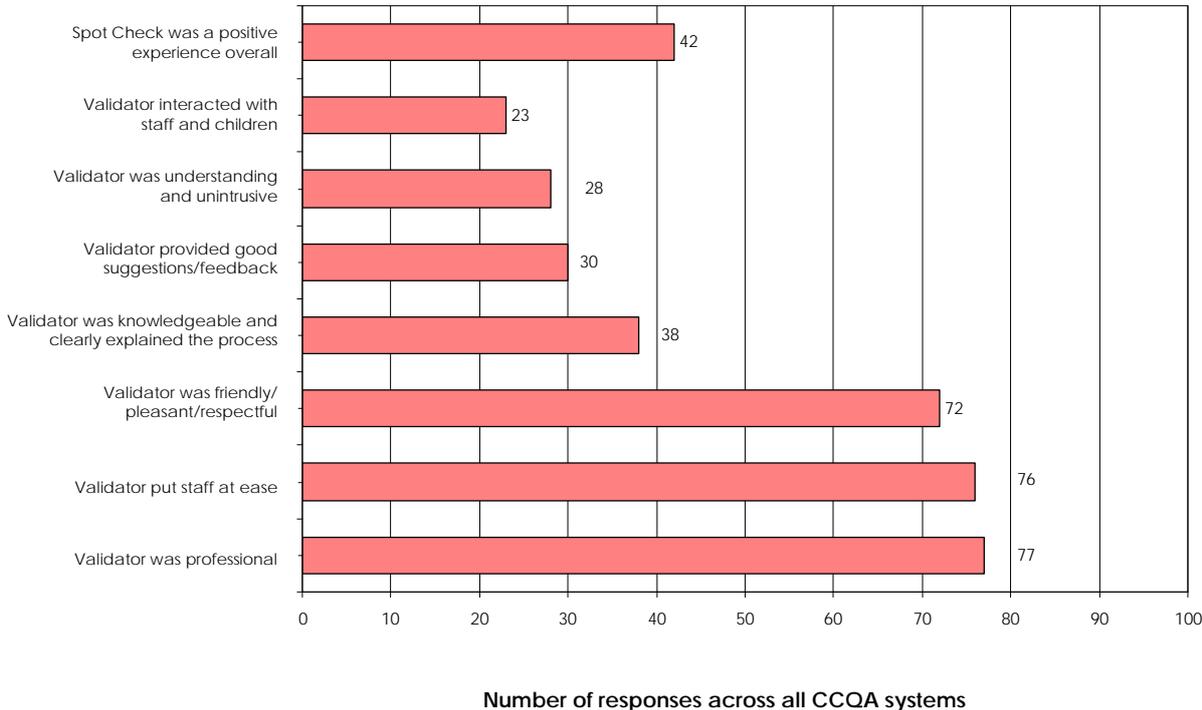
Service Comments about the Spot Check and Validator's Performance

Services were also asked to provide additional comments or feedback about the Spot Check and/or the performance of the Validator (Figure 2). Responses have been categorised and combined due to the similarity in the responses received.

Key Trends:

- 17 family day care schemes (81%) provided additional comments and feedback.
 - 100% of this feedback was positive.
- 71 outside school hours care services (66%) provided additional comments and feedback.
 - 93% of this feedback was positive.
- 99 long day care centres (68%) provided additional comments and feedback.
 - 91% of this feedback was positive.

Figure 2: Comments about Spot Check and Validator Performance



Positive Feedback about the Spot Check and Validator's Performance

The following lists some of the positive feedback received from services about their Spot Check and/or the performance of the Validator.

Family day care

SF3801: *We find the Spot Check is a positive experience and helps us to reflect on our practices and continue to grow and develop quality services for children, families, carers and staff. The Validator was professional, welcoming and warm.*

SF3771: *We feel the Spot Checks are an opportunity for us to demonstrate our improvement strategies and provide us with feedback to affirm we're on the right track.*

SF3518: *Our Validator presented a professional image of NCAC. He was pleasant and non-threatening to FDC staff and to the carer visited. We were very pleased with the Visit and outcome. On a personal note, it was good for me to have a male visit for Validation.*

Outside school hours care

SC3981: *As this was my first Spot Check as Coordinator, I asked what the reasons behind the Spot Checks were and if any of this service's practices need to be assessed. The Validator answered all questions in a way that was easy to understand.*

SC3897: *Having the Spot Check did not interfere with our routine/program and staff were able to continue without interruption. Positive feedback was well received.*

SC3509: *The Validator was very professional, had knowledge in vacation care and understood the flexibility and fun orientated program, which was appreciated by all.*

SC2908: *She was friendly and interacted with children. She taught us all a new game. She made us feel relaxed and confident that we are providing good service.*

Long day care

SQ3431: *I found the Spot Check to be a very positive experience. The Validator was extremely friendly, approachable and made the staff feel at ease. She seemed to have a great understanding on quality areas and what should be a priority at the centre. Thank you.*

SQ3578: *Our Validator was extremely professional, reassuring and encouraging. She was respectful of our efforts, issues and the journey in which the centre had travelled. She was polite, observant and non-intrusive during her Visit.*

SQ3898: *She was helpful in assisting me through the processes of a Spot Check Visit/Accreditation and networking me with resources to seek further information. This was fantastic as I am new to the position.*

SQ3082: *We were impressed with the professionalism of the Validator and thorough way in which she unobtrusively checked all aspects of the centre.*

SQ3371: *It was good for the centre to experience a positive NCAC Visit. Our previous Visit was a fiasco of negativity.*

SQ3766: *We'd like to thank our Validator, she was very kind and made us all feel at ease during her Visit to our centre.*

Negative Feedback about the Spot Check and Validator's Performance

The following section lists all of the negative feedback received from services about their Spot Check and/or the performance of the Validator.

Family day care

SF3519: *Strongly feel the care provider should be phoned prior to the Visit, ie when the Validator arrives at the Coordination Unit office. This would save time and frustration for the Validator and be respectful to care providers.*

Outside school hours care

SC3324: *I was disappointed to sign acknowledging we hadn't met a policy on hygiene. In this instance, it only involved one child who sneezed and I didn't send him to wash his hands again (as the child is autistic and was struggling with a death in the family). I understand the need for consistency and the need for high hygiene standards but in this instance, I went with what I thought suited the individual child.*

SC4170: *Staff commented having a Validator just sit and stare was not comfortable (nothing wrong done by the Validator, just commenting on how they felt.)*

SC3545: *Hard to think on one's feet for a Spot Check, especially often busy working.*

SC3510: *Our Spot Check was held on vacation care from 8am to 9am. I felt this was too early as the Coordinator did not start until 9am and could only evaluate the last ten minutes of the Spot Check. If possible, next time it would be better if the Spot Check was held in before and after school care.*

SC3781: *The kids actually seemed a bit freaked out with this Visit, I don't know why seeing as we've had them before.*

Long day care

SO4052: *It was a very quick Visit and did not give us time to think or reflect on what the Validator commented on. It was not until the Monday after the Visit at a staff meeting that we found a discrepancy with what she did/did not see.*

SO4105: *It was a pity the Visit was late on Friday afternoon after a big week. The Visit felt rushed with little time to consider reply or to consult with staff about comments. As we must post procedure notices on the wall for students and visitors, there is no flexibility for experienced staff to incorporate other ways of meeting children's needs.*

SO4124: *Unfortunately staff get stressed in these situations and don't know what to do. We had a DOCS Visit a few weeks ago which was quite stressful for the staff.*

SO3078: *Staff felt uneasy - Validator stood and had arms crossed.*

SO4098: *Felt that the visit wasn't long enough, would have liked the Validator to spend more time in rooms and give feedback to staff regarding positive interactions.*

SO3920: *The Validator was not clear in indicating which quality area, principle and indicator she was referring to when she spoke about practices not meeting the standard. Director had to call NCAC to find out the principles she was referring to.*

SO3444: *Not able or willing to answer questions specific to our centre. Inappropriate hat brought to centre. Didn't know if, or when, new system was occurring. Unaware that issue of electrical caps had been addressed by NCAC after centre raised issue in writing.*

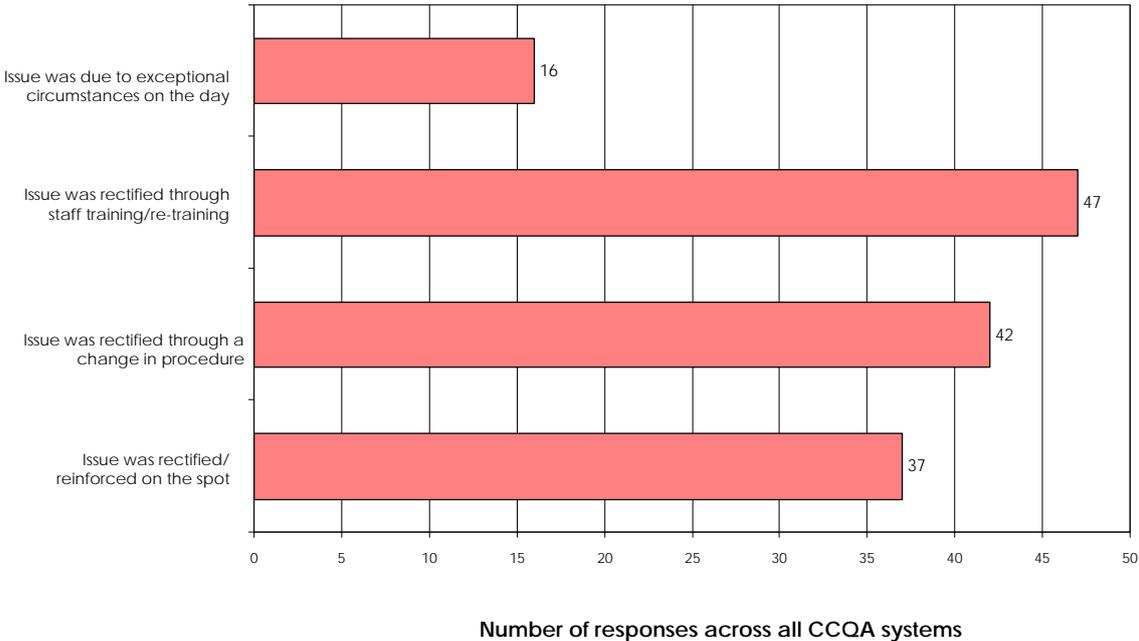
Comments on practices identified as Not Meeting the Accreditation Standard

Services were asked to provide additional comments on practices identified as not meeting the standard required for Accreditation during the Spot Check (Figure 3). Responses received were specific to the practice identified and some commented more broadly on the Spot Check process. Responses have been categorised and combined due to the similarity in the responses received.

Key Trends

- 5 family day care schemes (24%) provided comment.
- 31 outside school hours care services (29%) provided comment.
- 61 long day care centres (42%) provided comment.

Figure 3: Comments on practices identified as Not Meeting the Accreditation Standard



NCAC support for stakeholders

In keeping with the principles of continual improvement, NCAC actively seeks the views of the child care community about all aspects of CCQA. The constructive feedback provided by child care services on their *Spot Check Evaluation Form* informs Validator feedback and the development of resources to support services, families and other stakeholders.

Support for services provided in response to the feedback from the *Spot Check Evaluation Forms* received during 2008/2009 included:

- **Validator training:** Continuing improvement of Validator Training to ensure greater consistency and objectivity. All NCAC Validators completed five days of competency-based training in the NCAC office in Sydney.
- **Policy changes:** In March 2009, NCAC's *Conflict of Interest Policy for Validation Visits and Spot Checks* was revised to allow Validators to return to the same service more than once. Services can telephone a Child Care Adviser if they are aware of a potential conflict of interest when advised of the Validator's name.
- **Quality Companions:** NCAC developed a series of *Quality Companions* in response to feedback from NCAC Child Care Advisers and services. These resources were designed to assist services in their progression through the five steps of Child Care Quality Assurance.
- **Online facilities:** Development began on a facility that will allow services to submit their *Spot Check Evaluation Form* via the NCAC website.