



National Childcare
Accreditation Council

Spot Check Evaluation Analysis Report

July – August 2010

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.

Following the Council of Australian Governments' endorsement of the National Quality Framework in 2009 and the subsequent transition to a new National Quality Standard in 2012, changes were made to NCAC's Spot Check policy in December 2010. New Registrations and Not Accredited services are now eligible for a Spot Check, highlighting the importance of services to maintain quality child care during this transition period.

Executive Summary

In July and August 2010, 632 Spot Checks were completed. NCAC received *Spot Check Evaluation Forms* from 464 (73%) of those services which had a Spot Check during this period, as follows:

Spot Checks: 1 July 2010 – 31 August 2010			
	Spot Checks completed	Spot Check Evaluation Forms received	Percentage received
<i>FDCQA</i>	11	9	82%
<i>OSHCQA</i>	137	86	63%
<i>QIAS</i>	484	369	76%
<i>Total</i>	632	464	73%

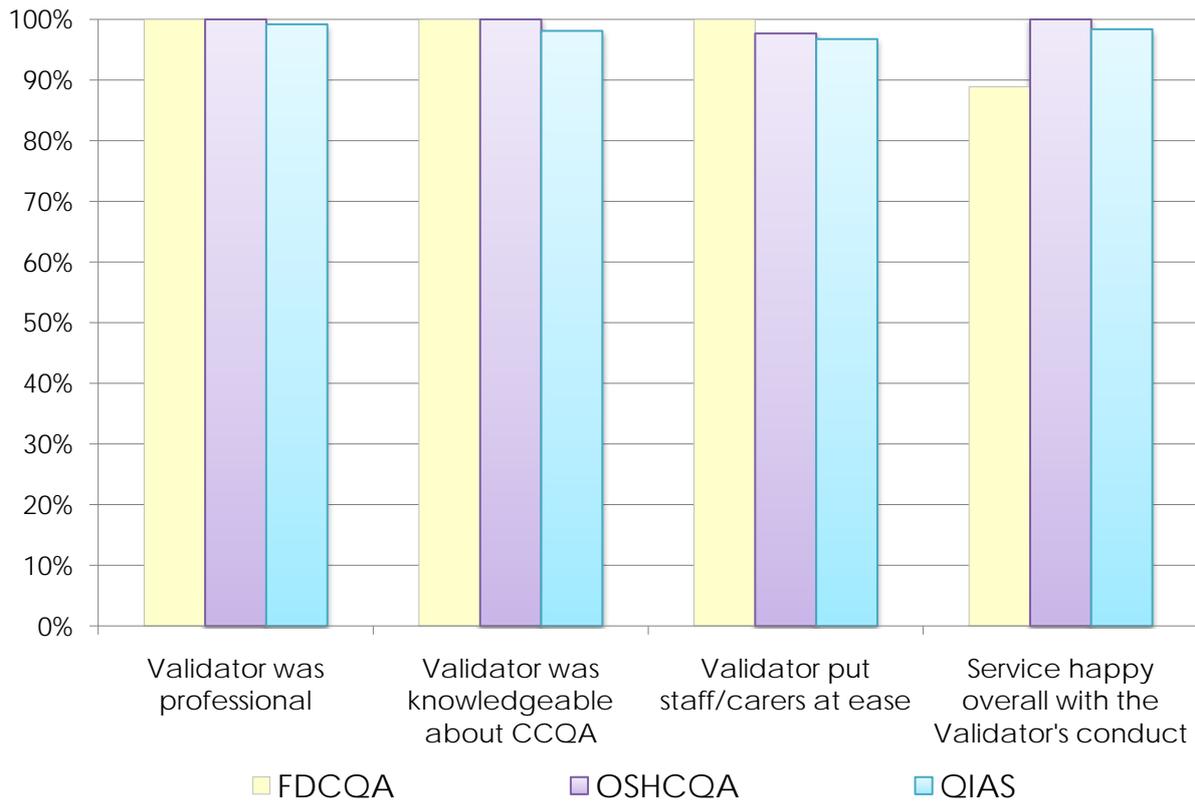
Of the *Spot Check Evaluation Forms* received, an average of 98% of child care services were satisfied with the performance of their Validator and 97% of the comments provided regarding the Spot Check and Validator performance were positive.

In comparison with the *Spot Check Evaluation Analysis Report* for the period 1 July to 31 August 2009, there were 133 more Spot Checks completed within this two month period in 2010, with NCAC also receiving a higher percentage of *Spot Check Evaluation Forms*.

Perception 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, 98% of child care services indicated that they were satisfied with the performance of the Validator (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Performance of the Validator



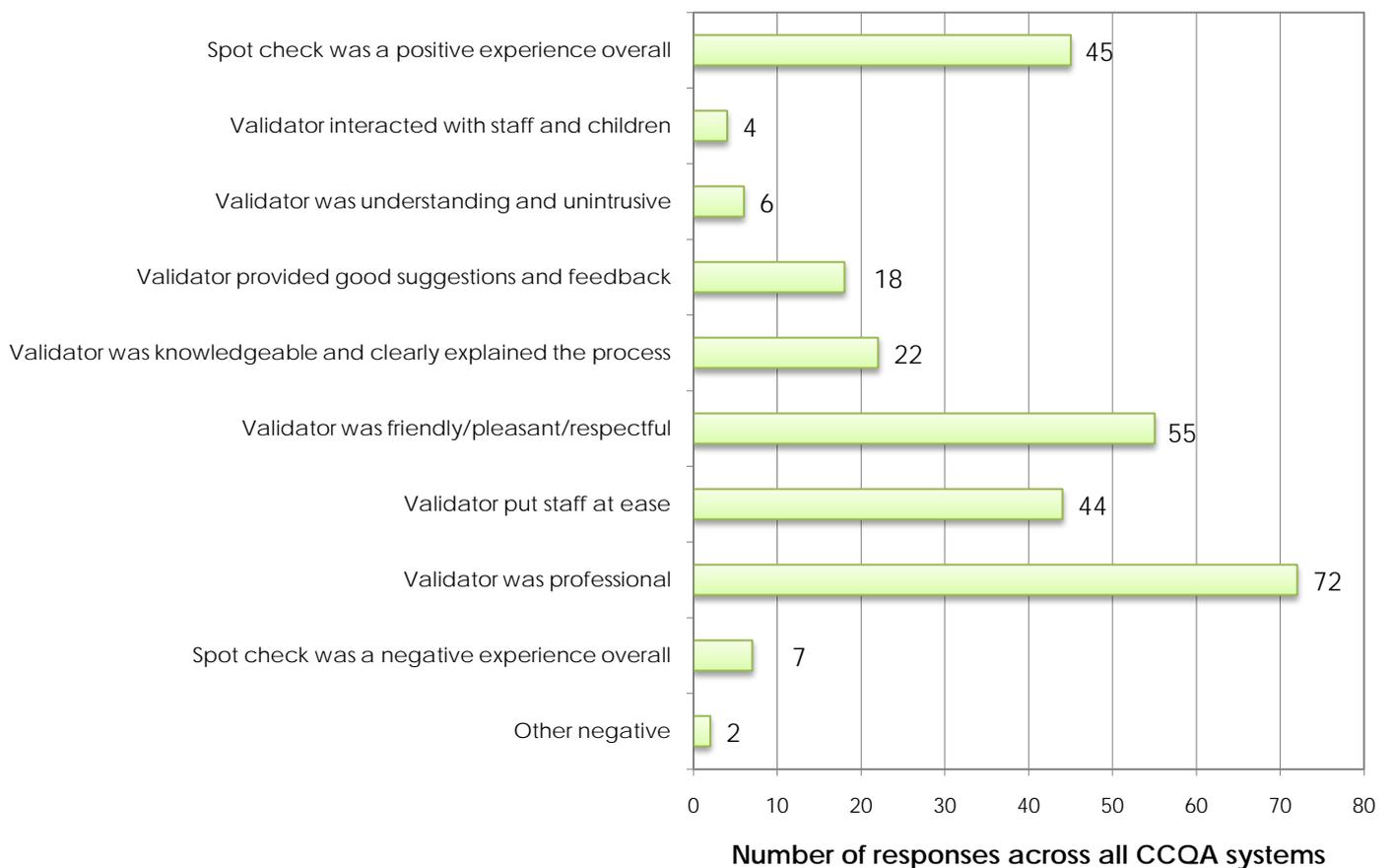
Service Comments about the Spot Check and Validator's Performance

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. Across all CCOA systems, 275 (59%) services which submitted a *Spot Check Evaluation Form* provided additional comments and feedback. On average, 97% of this feedback was positive.

Of the *Spot Check Evaluation Forms* received:

- 3 family day care schemes (33%) provided additional comments and feedback.
 - 100% of this feedback was positive.
- 55 outside school hours care services (64%) provided additional comments and feedback.
 - 100% of this feedback was positive.
- 216 long day care centres (59%) provided additional comments and feedback.
 - 96% 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.

Validator was very professional whilst still making me feel very relaxed and happy about the visit. From my point of view Spot Checks carry more viability than Validation Visits as you get to see the service with no pretences. **RC931**

The Validator was very sensitive to the children's emotional needs especially in the infants room as the children became insecure and upset with an unfamiliar adult and because of this she observed staff practices from outside the room. **RQ2755**

The Validator was unintrusive and made staff feel at ease in their programs. It was positive for the staff to know their practices were in line with the expectations of NCAC. **RQ6503**

We value these visits as they assist all educators in improving on their performances and keeps us on our toes. **RQ5981**

The Validator was pleasant and explained exactly what would happen during the visits. She was clear in her explanation... the care providers felt at ease when the Validator was present in their homes. **RF150**

The Validator was very professional and made the staff feel at ease. It would be great to receive these types of visits for Accreditation rather than 2 days of extreme stress for myself and staff. **RQ705**

A very pleasant visit. Nice to hear some positive feedback from a professional level. The Validator was easy to approach and very friendly. **RQ1986**

We saw the service spot check as a beneficial process to ensuring we're meeting the standards required for Accreditation. The procedure keeps us on our toes. We saw the Validator as a professional whose main focus was ensuring our service was complying with what is expected. **RC3101**

Great comments from the Validator – gives us areas to work on with the staff and able to develop an effective action plan. Good to have positive feedback. **RQ4464**

We were happy with the amount of practices the Validator found meeting especially because those listed were practices we work hard towards everyday. **RQ6433**

Validator was clear in the process for the day, kept to the schedule, was not obtrusive but very much blended into the environment which set the staff at ease. Staff were nervous at first but Validator was very approachable and had a positive disposition. **RQ1476**

The Validator was very knowledgeable and appeared to have a lot of experience in OSHC. By far the best experience we have had with any NCAC staff member. **RC2032**

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.

The Validator's appearance was extremely casual. Validator asked if I would like to hear the 'bad things' or the 'good things' about our service. Validator issued 'instructions' about what we were to do to address the issues and used 'irrelevant' examples to emphasise her point and became flustered when I asked her to show me in the NCAC Handbook where that is written. **RQ6123**

Although the Validator was friendly with the director, little contact was made with staff. We understand that the role of the Validator is to look for examples of quality practice, however the Validator stood in the nappy change area with arms crossed observing staff member who was very anxious. **RQ5262**

The Validator was quite aloof and although did not say anything, her not saying much was a bit of a problem which made staff feel ill at ease. **RQ4937**

No comments of ease to carers. **RQ6428**

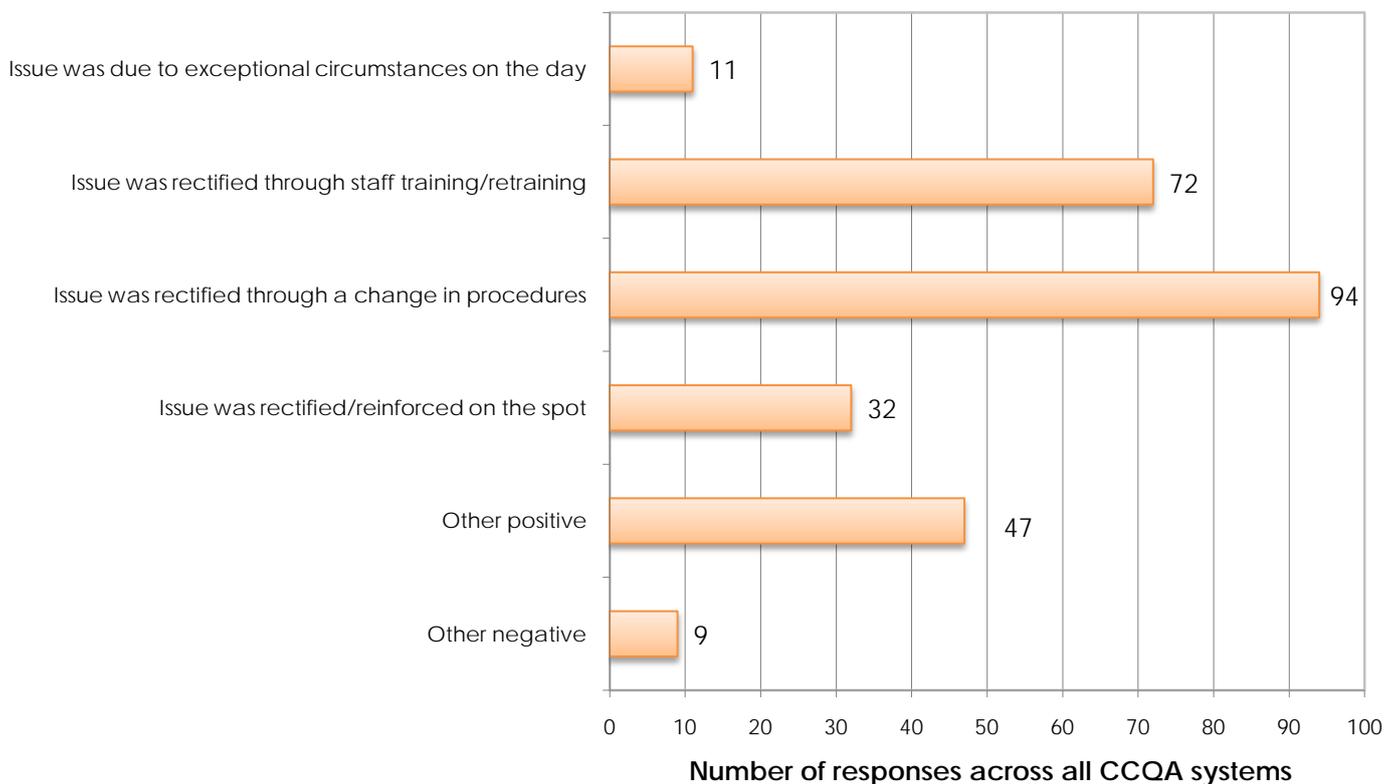
Comments on practices identified as not meeting the Accreditation standard

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.

Of the *Spot Check Evaluation Forms* received:

- 5 family day care schemes (56%) provided comment.
- 39 outside school hours care services (45%) provided comment.
- 220 long day care centres (60%) provided comment.

Figure 3: Comments on practices identified as not meeting Accreditation standard



NCAC Support for Stakeholders

In keeping with the principles of continuing 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 2010 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.
- **NCAConline:** Services are now able to submit their *Spot Check Evaluation Forms* electronically via the 'NCAConline' on the NCAC website.
- **Policy changes:** Feedback from services has shown that many are unable to fund external OHS and Food Safety Audits. Changes have been made to the current recognised authority requirements for Validators to identify during Visits, making it acceptable for services to be audited by any person who is external to the service and has the knowledge and ability, but not necessarily the qualifications, to carry out audits and provide an audit report as per the required state/territory legislation.
- **Additional resources:** NCAC developed additional resources detailing how to appropriately source and date policies from recognised authorities and has continuously provided telephone and website support to services on this issue. In July 2010, changes were made to the dating and sourcing requirements for Validators to identify during Visits, making it acceptable for services to simply provide a source, document/website name and policy review date.