

October - November 2008



NCAC

**National Childcare  
Accreditation Council**

*Validation Evaluation Form*

**Analysis**

# Executive Summary

The National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) conducts an annual analysis of *Validation Evaluation Forms* received from services that have had a Validation Visit.

The *Validation Evaluation Forms* demonstrate the satisfaction of services participating in the Child Care Quality Assurance systems with **Step 3: Validation**.

The results of this analysis inform Validator feedback and NCAC processes of continuing improvement in the revision of the standards of quality care, developments in the administration of the Child Care Quality Assurance systems and the provision of resources to services, families, Validators and other key stakeholders.

NCAC is responsible for the administration of the following Child Care Quality Assurance 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

After a service's *Self-study Report* has been received, NCAC selects a Validator to conduct the Validation Visit of the service. A letter is sent to the service advising the Validator's name, the duration of the Visit (depending on size of the service) and a timeframe of six weeks within which the Visit will occur. The service is not advised of the specific date that the Validator will attend the service.

Validators are trained by NCAC to validate the quality practices of the service, based on the indicators of quality specified in the relevant *Quality Practices Guide*. Ratings are determined through observation and discussion with staff and carers. Validators conduct Validation Visits in the Child Care Quality Assurance system in which they are trained and experienced.

During October and November 2008, 1004 Validation Visits were completed. NCAC received *Validation Evaluation Forms* from 85% of those services which had a Validation Visit during this period, as follows:

Validation Visits 1 October - 30 November 2008			
	Visits Completed	Forms Received	Percentage Received
FDCQA	41	41	100%
OSHCQA	317	257	81%
QIAS	646	552	85%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1004</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>85%</b>

The following report summarises the responses collected from all *Validation Evaluation Forms* returned by services that received a Validation Visit during October and November 2008, and demonstrates that the majority of services participating in the Child Care Quality Assurance systems had positive Validation experiences.

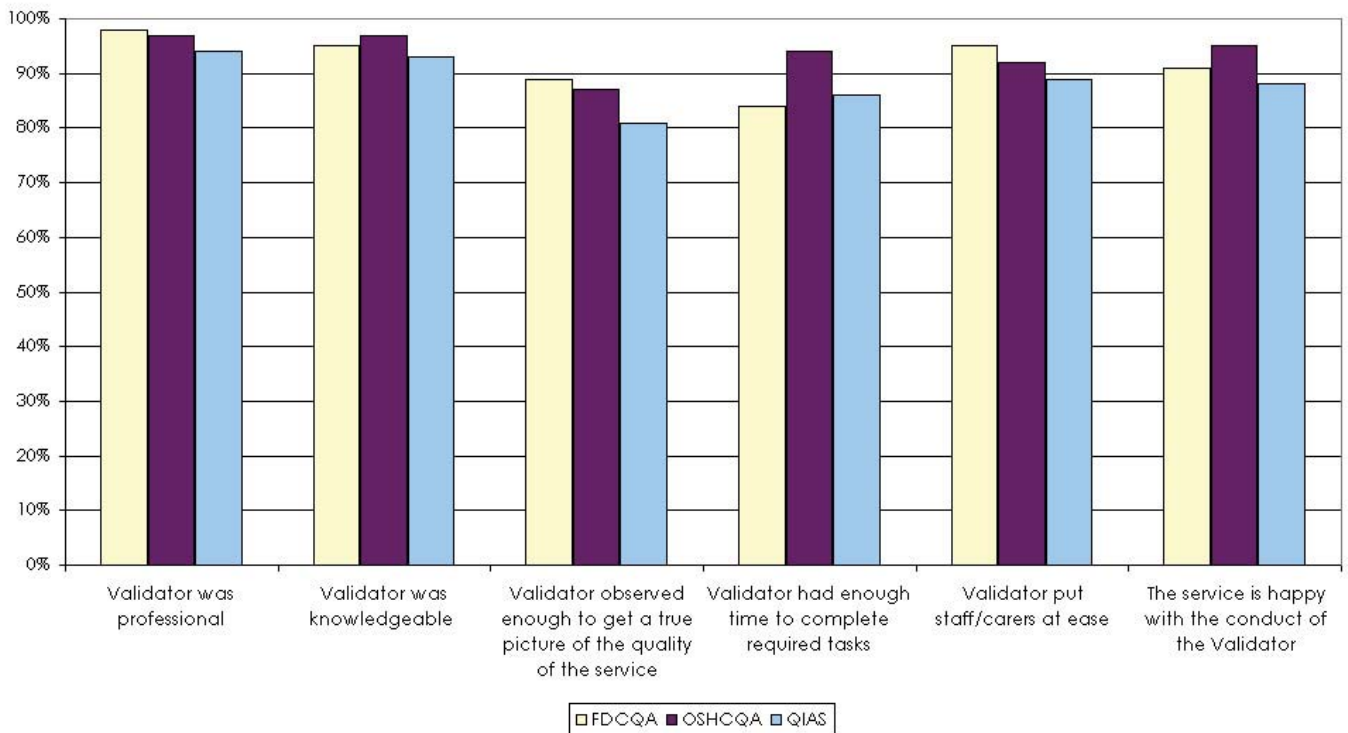
# Validator Performance

## Perceptions about the Validator

NCAC aims to ensure that at least 85% of services are satisfied with Child Care Quality Assurance processes. Services are asked a range of questions regarding the performance of their Validator and the completion of their Validation Visit.

On average, over a range of measures of the Validator's performance, more than 90% of child care services indicated that they were satisfied with the completion of their Validation Visit (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Performance of the Validator**



# Validator Performance

## Comments from services about the performance of the Validator

### Family Day Care

*The Validator, whilst completely professional, shared enough information about the process to ensure we knew what stage the process was at and what her time frames and expectations were. Carers were comfortable in her company. The overall Validation process was stress free and provided opportunity to show her what we do. [VF794](#)*

*The Validator dealt very professionally and openly with carers from other cultural backgrounds, ensuring that they understood what she was asking. All carers reported feeling comfortable with her. [VF940](#)*

*Our Validator put all carers at ease and made it an enjoyable experience. She was very professional, punctual and knowledgeable about quality assurance. Being a new service, it was not daunting at all and we are able to learn a lot from the experience and this will help us with our Continuing Improvement Plan. [VF978](#)*

*Some questions were hard for carers to answer and the Validator was unable to ask them a different way. Carers and coordination unit staff felt some questions were closed. Carers all felt that the Validator did her best to put them at ease. [VF989](#)*

### Outside School Hours Care

*Our Validator was a very pleasant and professional person, who had a relaxed disposition along with a thorough approach and a vast amount of knowledge. She was very unobtrusive during her visit which I believe allowed her to see a real and thorough picture of our service. [VC4354](#)*

*The Validator was very professional at all times. I don't believe that any Validator has enough time to complete the huge number of tasks that are required of them - they do well. The Validator kept to the timetable which reduced stress. [VC4355](#)*

*The Validator was friendly, helpful and very approachable. She was wonderful at explaining the process and reassuring the staff. She also was very thoughtful in the way she minimised the impact her presence would have on the usual operation of the staff and service. [VC5087](#)*

### Long Day Care

*During the two days that the Validator stayed at our centre, she acted both promptly and professionally. She skillfully observed every room and completed all the required tasks efficiently. Her friendly personality was immediately apparent to the staff, as were her extensive skills and experience in Quality Assurance. [VQ22002](#)*

*The Validator was quite strict we feel in her markings of some indicators. There were instances where she said some indicators should not be marked, however she saw one minor incident. We feel this is not marking 'typical practice' of the centre. [VQ22239](#)*

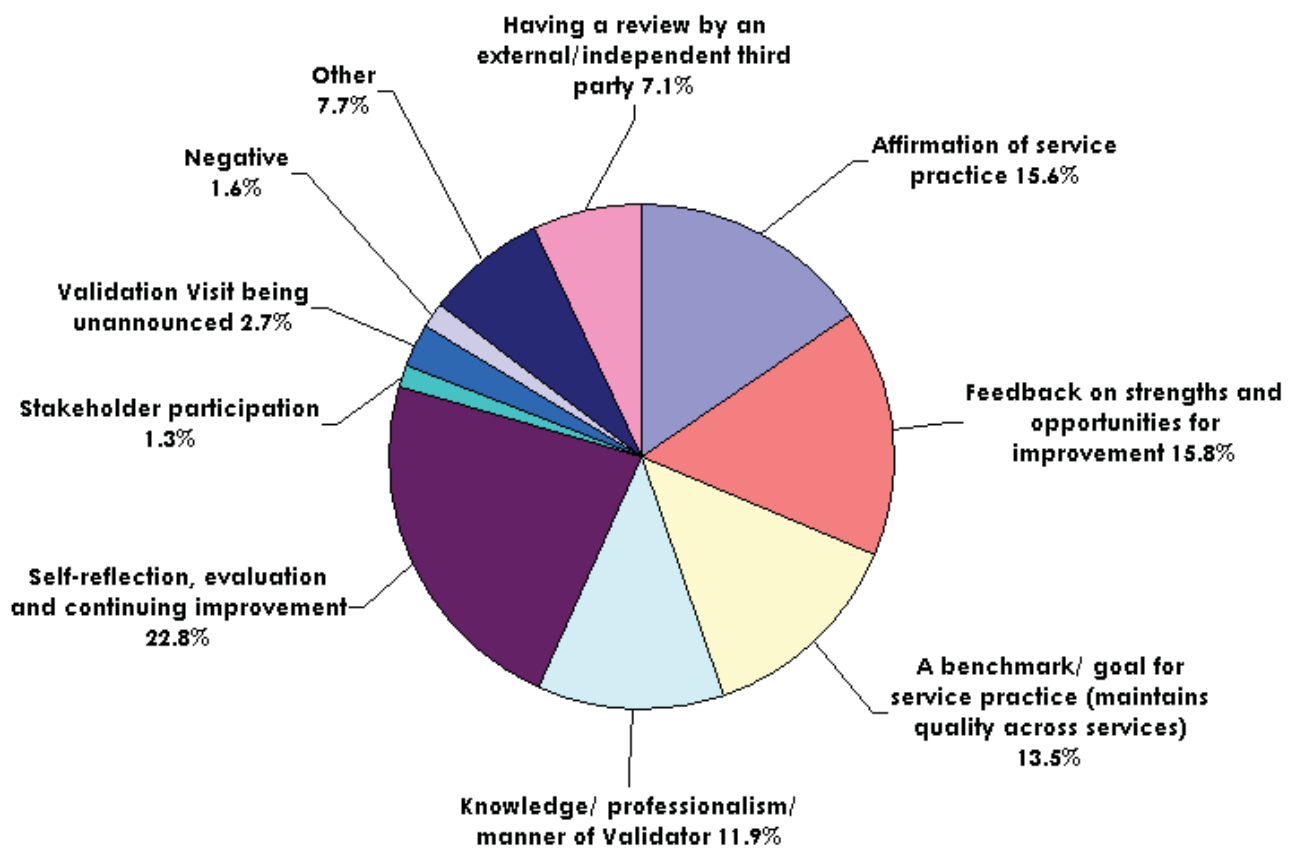
*We found our Validator to be very professional, efficient and friendly. We recognise that the job of a Validator is a very difficult one, and we found ours to undertake all aspects of her role very well. For some staff the Validation process can be a stressful and nerve racking experience as we all endeavour to do well, but our Validator put all staff at ease, enabling us to perform our roles to the best of our ability. Our Validator was an excellent ambassador for NCAC, and really helped to make this process a very positive and constructive one. [VQ23464](#)*

# Validation Process

## Positive Aspects of the Validation Process

Services were asked to comment on what they considered to be the most positive aspects of the Validation process. 87.7% of services provided a response to this question. 98.4% of those services that provided a response to this question were positive towards the Validation process (Figure 2). Most services identified Validation as an opportunity for self-reflection, evaluation and continuing improvement.

**Figure 2: Positive Aspects of the Validation Process**



# Validation Process

## Comments from services about the positive aspects of the Validation process

### Family Day Care

*Through the process we are able to find out more of what we need to improve to maintain a high quality service for families and children who are using our services. [VF1019](#)*

*Validates for both care providers and staff that the continuing work that occurs between Validation Visits is of value and change can be seen and measured. [VF841](#)*

*During the entire Validation process our scheme saw it as an opportunity to enhance the service that we provide to the community. Our Self-study Report was a real team effort and everyone has ownership of the Continuing Improvement Plan and we have been actively working on it since our report was submitted earlier this year. But the most positive aspect of the process has been the enormous sense of achievement and the great sense of pride that the seven carers who were visited have experienced. [VF938](#)*

*Confirmation that we are providing high quality care. Objective opinion of where we need to improve. [VF825](#)*

### Outside School Hours Care

*Discovering and streamlining processes and procedures so that the energies of staff are child focused. Finding easier ways to improve and ensure quality care for children and ensuring every child is having a safe, positive, stimulating experience while in care. [VC5030](#)*

*It provides a benchmark for quality care for services to enable them to improve the standard of care. After the process and initial report, the service can obtain an accurate picture of their particular practice and work to achieve better quality care. [VC5854](#)*

*Quality Assurance is important to our service. To this end we would welcome expertise and support in achieving quality improvement and compliance. The current validation process does not facilitate this outcome in a supportive and cooperative manner. [VC5720](#)*

*It gives you clear expectations of how the service should function and it provides the service with feedback that can improve the service. [VC4961](#)*

*Knowing what is required by our service to improve our standards. As our service is relatively new this was invaluable. [VC5418](#)*

### Long Day Care

*It ensures that the centre is running to the standards required. It shows families what type of service it is and how to choose quality child care for their children. [VQ26174](#)*

*The chance to show someone all your hard work and to have it appreciated is very fulfilling. [VQ123170](#)*

*Whilst we support the idea of accreditation, the staff do not feel the current system creates standards or supports positive feedback that they can implement. We do not feel positive about our validation experience. [VQ22060](#)*

*The guidance and connection to 'quality' - which is the shared vision of every Australian centre. The advisory and support role played by NCAC - rather than feeling isolated we feel linked to other centres. [VQ23399](#)*

*Adopting a practice of continuing improvement. Reflecting and reviewing practices and procedures and processes in all aspects of our service. Identifying areas of strength and areas to improve. Working collaboratively with parents. [VQ24101](#)*

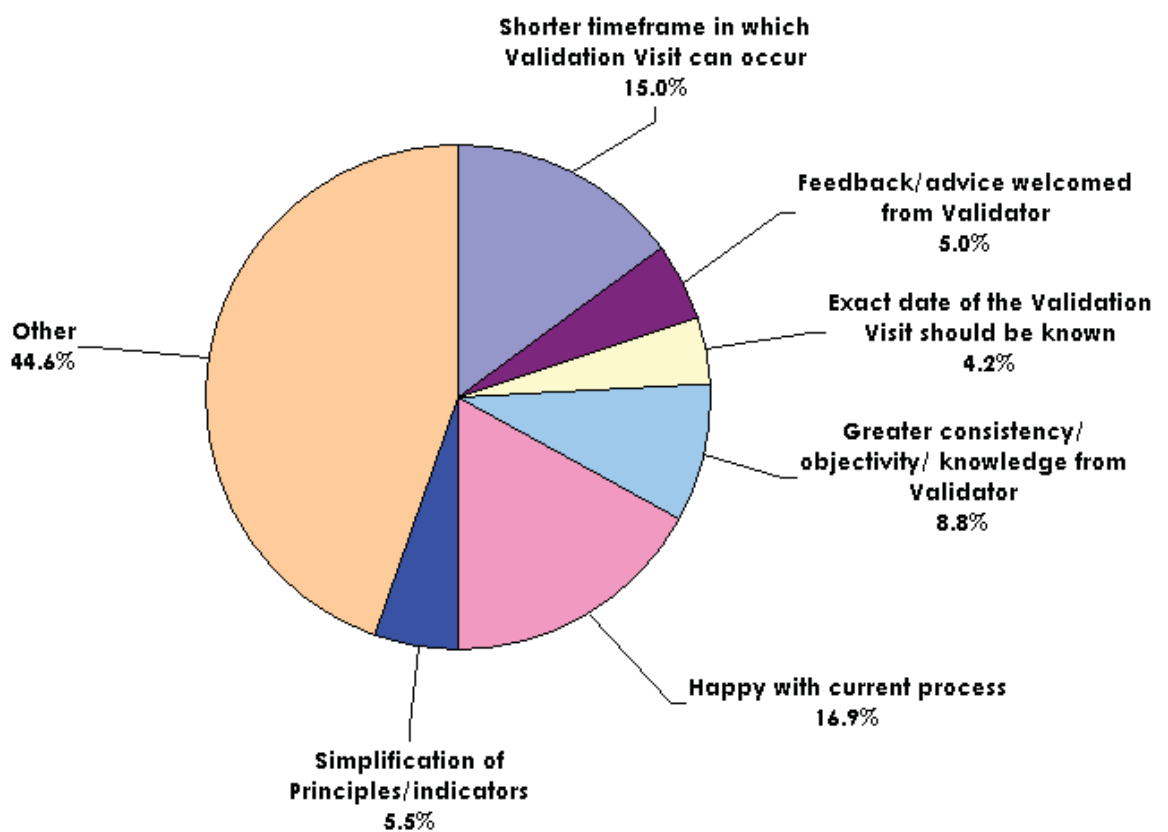
# Validation process

## Suggestions from services about how to improve the Validation process

Services were asked to provide suggestions on how the Validation process could be improved (Figure 3). 87.4% of services provided a response to this question. While a number of services indicated that they were happy with the current process, a significant proportion of services requested that the six week timeframe in which the Validation Visit can occur be shortened, or that the exact date be known. 'Other' includes such suggestions as:

- Validator's time should be allocated differently during the Validation Visit
- Greater flexibility in interpretation of indicators
- Less documentation
- Amend/discontinue *Validation Surveys*
- More time with the *Validation Report*
- Unsure

**Figure 3: Areas for Improvement**





# Validation Process

## Suggestions from services about improving the Validation process

### Family Day Care

*Wording in the Quality Practices Guide could be simplified. Carers with limited English have difficulty understanding the terminology. Many carers are meeting indicators but have difficulty understanding questions and verbalising their practices. The Validator was very supportive of helping carers to understand questions, but it is very difficult for CALD<sup>1</sup> carers. [VF972](#)*

*Parent surveys may need further consideration. Collection is a challenge as many parents find them too time consuming. [VF1028](#)*

*A shorter window of time for the Validation Visit would be less stressful for coordination unit and care providers. The waiting exacerbates stress levels. [VF785](#)*

### Outside School Hours Care

*I would like to see more time allocated to these visits. We had a lot of evidence prepared but the Validator was still very rushed trying to see everything. [VC4870](#)*

*I feel that there should be information on what sort of evidence is required for certain things. There were many things marked 'Not Occurring' and yet I know they do occur. It was just that there was no evidence. But in most cases I don't know how to prove these things do take place. [VC5425](#)*

*If an indicator is marked 'Not Occurring' it would be of great assistance if the Validator was able to give some advice on meeting the standard next time. [VC7586](#)*

### Long Day Care

*The wording of a number of the Principles is not specific enough. Words like 'regular' and 'simple' are quite meaningless. There is far too much scope for subjective interpretation. A number of the Principles have components that are double and triple barreled in their consequence with the outcome that even if two of the three areas referred to are done to the highest standard, that element is marked as either Unsatisfactory or Not Occurring. [VQ27120](#)*

*Take away the dates for the six week visit and allow the Validator to arrive unannounced following the completion of the Self-study Report and surveys. A centre should be comfortable knowing that a Validator can arrive at any time because their 'High Quality' practices are their everyday practice. [VQ22051](#)*

*It would be nice to see NCAC moving away from 'paper' reports and using e-mail etc for Self-study and Validation Reports. All NCAC reports could and therefore should be supplied electronically. [VQ22247](#)*

*It might assist centres if they received a visit from someone prior to their visit from a Validator, to help them work through and understand the accreditation process. [VQ22306](#)*

*The timeframe of one hour to read the Validation Report and find evidence is not enough time! As a way of improvement, there should be a seven day timeframe for this process and then the Validator should finish the visit at the end of this period. In this way the document can be read in a calm and extensive way and allowed to follow up on further points. [VQ23112](#)*

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<sup>1</sup> Culturally and Linguistically Diverse



# Additional Comments

## Additional comments from services about their participation in Quality Assurance

Services were asked to provide additional comments about their participation in Quality Assurance. 54% of services provided a response to this question. Of these:

- 47.3% provided positive comments about their participation in Quality Assurance
- 33.0% provided comments concerning the specific circumstances surrounding practices identified throughout the Validation Visit as 'Not Occurring'
- 19.7% reiterated comments provided to earlier questions, such as shortening the six week timeframe in which a Validation Visit can occur, amending/discontinuing surveys and allocating more time to conduct the Validation Visit.

### Family Day Care

*We believe the validation process has been a very good learning tool, and we feel from this point our scheme can only improve. [VF1035](#)*

*It would be helpful to have a document for services to use that clearly explained what indicators meant - how they would be interpreted. It is difficult to prepare and assist carers when staff believe the indicator is occurring, yet have a misconception. Plain language in any new document is strongly recommended. [VF940](#)*

### Outside School Hours Care

*We took on board all the aspects of our previous Continuing Improvement Plan and incorporated the changes into the running of the service which enabled us to be quite confident that the performance of the service would come up to high expectations. As a result of Quality Assurance children's services are much better quality for children. [VC4416](#)*

*As a new service this was our first accreditation and we feel the entire process has given us a good grounding for developing a Continuous Improvement Plan to better improve our service. [VC5388](#)*

*It is very hard to get university students who are employed part-time to embrace the whole Quality Assurance process. Many schools cannot afford to pay staff for any extra time spend outside their normal working time for the input needed for the Quality Assurance process. Many services have part-time staff that move in and out of the workplace. Services spend money they cannot afford on professional development and then the staff move on. [VC5398](#)*

### Long Day Care

*Quality Assurance is a great way of continually improving; it rewards the process not the outcome. [VQ123170](#)*

*708 indicators is too, too many. Not enough help for getting it right and how many policies are needed, where to source them. [VQ22120](#)*

*We would like Validators to be more positive and share ideas for improvement/change... We get "we can't offer that. It's not our job". What happened to sharing knowledge? The Validators obviously have qualifications and experience in the industry? It seems the purpose for accreditation has been forgotten: to support centres to offer high quality care. [VQ22146](#)*

*Reassuring to know that Validation is conducted by someone from within the industry with a real knowledge of the realities and practicalities of child care. [VQ23146](#)*

*I have appreciated the communication from NCAC to help us through out first time of Accreditation. [VQ23966](#)*

# Additional Information

## Validation Evaluation Form attachments

Services are provided with the opportunity to attach additional information to the *Validation Evaluation Form* for consideration at Step 4: Moderation. Moderators consider information in the service's *Self-study Report*, *Validation Surveys*, *Validation Report* and *Validation Evaluation Form* to determine patterns of typical practice at the service.

- 22% of respondents provided information regarding service practice in relation to the indicators and Principles marked 'Not Occurring' in their *Validation Report*.
- 78% of respondents did not provide additional information with their *Validation Evaluation Form*.

## Notable Trends from previous *Validation Evaluation Form* Analyses

- The total number of *Validation Evaluation Forms* received between October - November 2008 (852) increased significantly from the number received during October - November 2007 (584) and October - November 2006 (535).
- This growth corresponds with an increase in the number of Validation Visits conducted between October-November 2008 (1004) - up from October-November 2007 (682) and October-November 2006 (622).
- Accordingly, the percentage of *Validation Evaluation Forms* received from services that have had a Validation Visit has remained stable across the past three reporting periods (around 85-86%).
- The level of satisfaction expressed by services about the completion of the Validation Visit has also remained stable across the past three reporting periods (more than 90%).
- The proportion of services that provided additional information with their *Validation Evaluation Form* increased for this reporting period from around 14-15% in October-November 2006/2007 to 22% in October-November 2008.

# Support and Advice for Services

## Support for services

NCAC consistently seeks the views of the child care community about all aspects of Child Care Quality Assurance. The constructive feedback provided by child care services on their *Validation Evaluation Form* informs the developments in the administration of the Child Care Quality Assurance systems and the provision of resources to services, families and other stakeholders.

NCAC support for services provided in response to the feedback from *Validation Evaluation Forms* includes:

- The provision Policy Templates, available on the NCAC website to assist services to achieve Satisfactory standards.
- Continuing improvement of Validator training, to ensure greater consistency and objectivity.
- The publication of articles in *Putting Children First*, NCAC's quarterly newsletter, to assist services as they progress through Quality Assurance, covering issues such as unannounced Validation Visits, inclusion and professional support for services, policy development and NCAC support and resources for services.
- The development of resources such as *Factsheets* to assist services with issues identified in the *Validation Evaluation Forms*.
- Advising the government about suggestions for changes to the CCQA systems.

## Child Care Advice

NCAC provides telephone and e-mail support to services participating in the CCQA systems, families seeking quality care for their children, students and educators, resource and advisory agencies and other interested parties.

NCAC employs experienced and professional Child Care Advisers to provide support to families and services in areas such as:

- Quality practices
- Understanding CCQA processes
- Preparing for a Validation Visit
- Understanding Accreditation Visits
- Spot Checks
- Lodging a complaint
- Understanding the Standards outlined in the *Quality Practices Guide*
- Choosing quality child care

Child Care Advisers may be contacted between 8.30am-5.00pm (NSW time) on 1300 136 554, or via e-mail ([qualitycare@ncac.gov.au](mailto:qualitycare@ncac.gov.au)).

