



October 2009 – November 2009

National Childcare
Accreditation Council

Validation Evaluation Form
Analysis

2009

Executive Summary

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

Validation is Step 3 of the CCQA process. 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.

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 and the duration of the Visit, which depends on the size of the service.

Services scheduled for a Visit during October 2009 were provided with a six week timeframe within which the Visit was to occur, but were not advised of the specific date of the Visit.

On 21 October 2009 NCAC announced that, from 1 November, services would be given the specific date/s on which the scheduled Validation Visit was to occur. It was also announced that *Validation Surveys for Families* would cease and no longer contribute to a service's Accreditation Decision.

Validation Evaluation Form Analysis

NCAC conducts an annual analysis of *Validation Evaluation Forms* received from services that have had a Validation Visit between 1 October and 30 November. The *Validation Evaluation Forms* demonstrate the satisfaction of services participating in CCQA systems during Step 3: Validation.

This analysis provides Validator feedback and informs NCAC processes of continuing improvement in the revision of the standards of quality care, developments in the administration of CCQA systems and the provision of resources to services, families, Validators and key stakeholders.

Validation Visits October 2009 – November 2009

During October and November 2009, 673 Validation Visits were completed. NCAC received *Validation Evaluation Forms* from 87% of those services which had a Validation Visit during this period, as follows:

Validation Visits: 1 October 2009 – 30 November 2009			
	Validation Visits completed	Validation Evaluation Forms received	Percentage received
FDCQA	19	19	100%
OSHCQA	197	168	85%
QIAS	457	401	88%
Total	673	588	87%

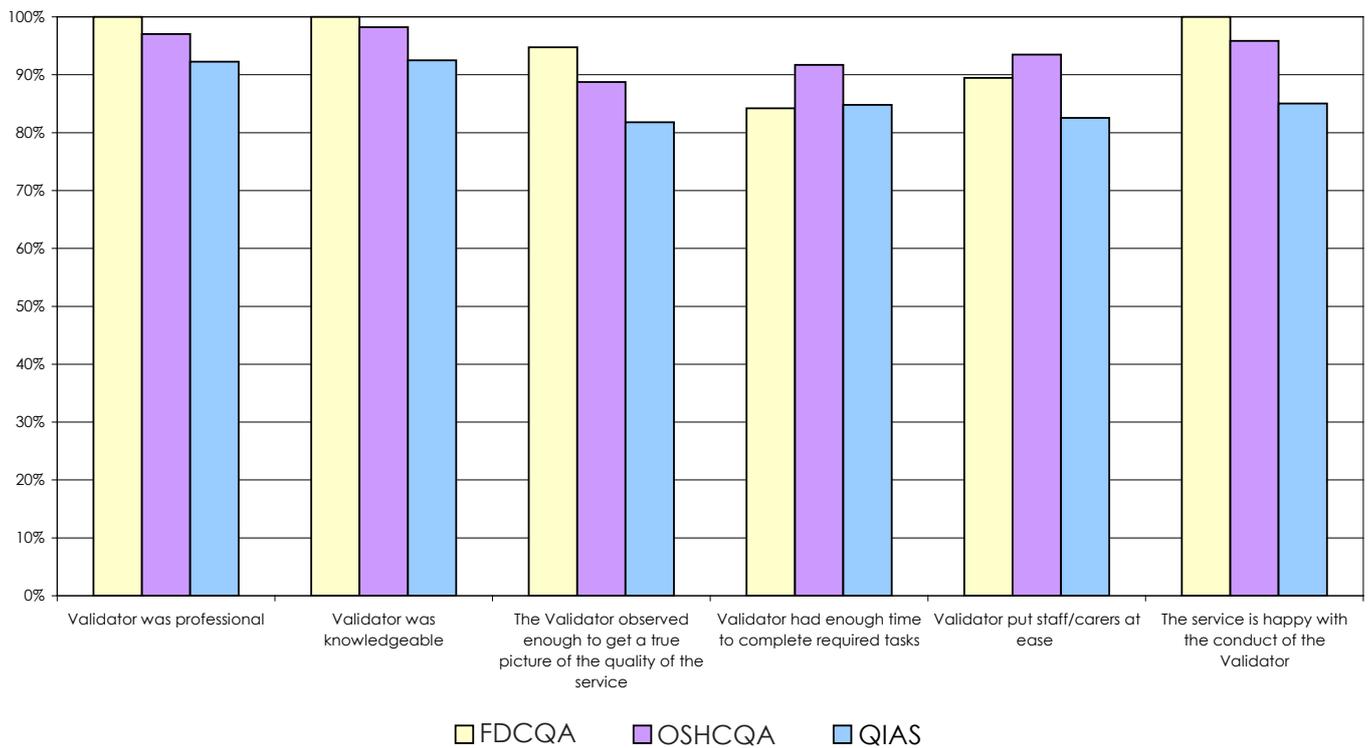
The following is a summary of the responses collected from all *Validation Evaluation Forms* returned by services that received a Validation Visit during October and November 2009. This analysis demonstrates that the majority of services participating in CCQA systems had positive Validation experiences.

Performance of the Validator

NCAC aims to ensure that at least 85% of services are satisfied with CCQA processes. Services are asked a range of questions regarding the performance of their Validator and the recently completed Validation Visit.

On average, over a range of measures of Validator performance, more than 91% of child care services indicated that they were satisfied with the process of their Validation Visit.

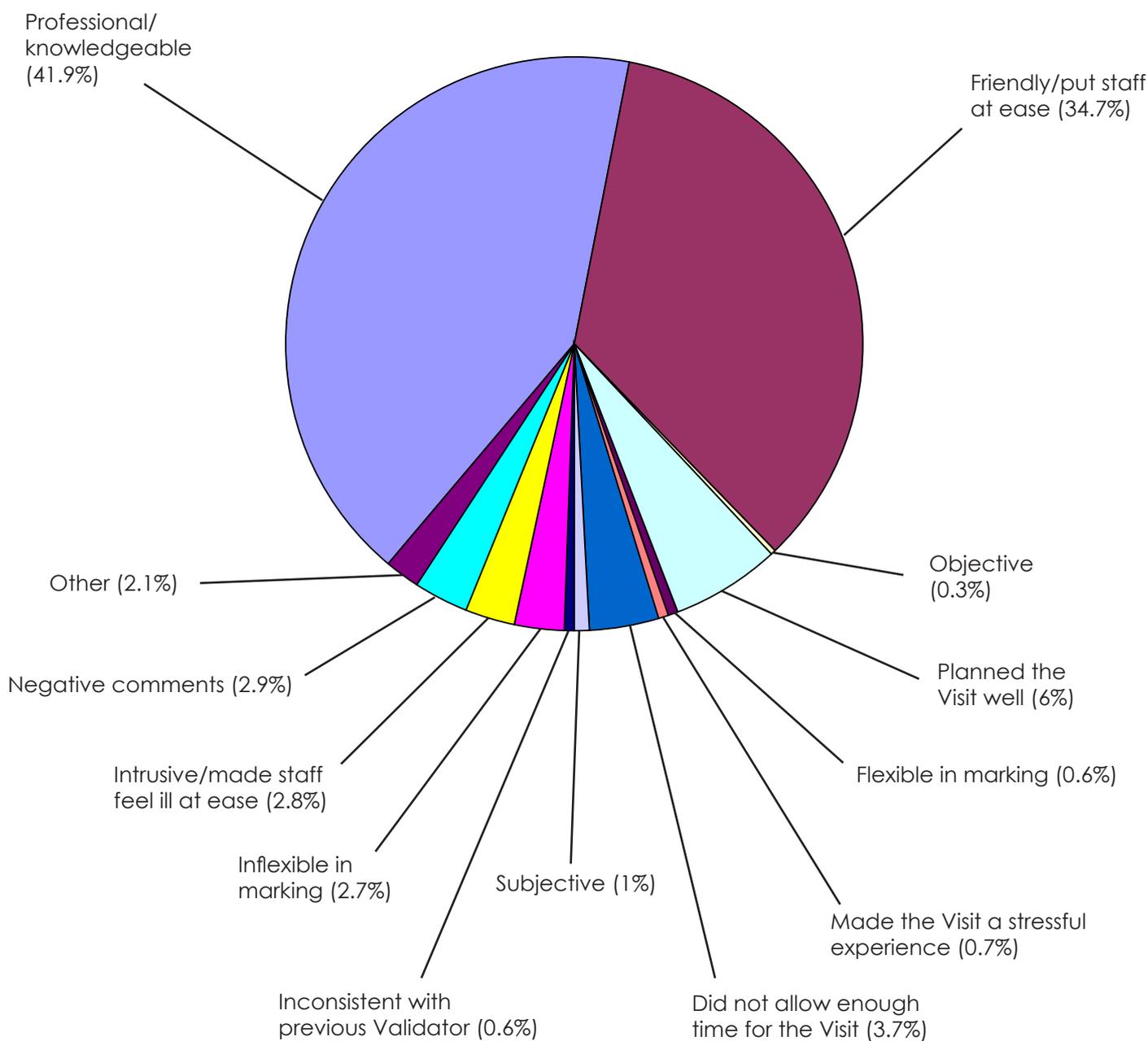
Performance of the Validator



Performance of the Validator

Services were asked to comment on the performance of the Validator. 90% of services provided a response to this question. 85% of those services which provided a response to this question were positive towards the performance of the Validator. Most services identified their Validator as being professional, knowledgeable and friendly.

Service comments on Validator Performance



Performance of the Validator - Service Comments

Family Day Care

Validator was empathetic and had an understanding of difficulties faced by staff and carers in such remote areas. Carers were made to feel comfortable in her presence and felt free to ask her questions about FDCQA. A positive experience all round. **VF1424**

The Validator was very professional and respectfully handled any questions appropriately. The Validator maintained professional boundaries at all times. **VF1120**

During a recent Validation Visit, all carers and staff felt the Validator was professional, friendly, very skilled, open, clear and transparent in the way she conducted the Visit to promote a feeling of support during this stage of the NCAC process. **VF1339**

The Validator was very professional and conducted the Visit in a timely manner. She appeared to have a good knowledge of the family day care industry. This was reflected in the questions asked of the carers and staff. **VF1109**

Outside School Hours Care

We found her to be very professional and unintrusive whilst visiting our service. We have been through this process twice before and found this Visit to be the most positive. **VC7263**

The Validator performed her duties in a professional and efficient manner and was careful to remain in the background so as not to disrupt our program. **VC6905**

Validator provided clear instructions as to how the Visit was to progress. Ensured that her communication was clear and understood by all. **VC7004**

The Validator clearly requested information or documentation as needed if not seen during the observation of the staff, displays and children. The Validator spoke to all staff in a pleasant manner providing opportunity for feedback and explanation as needed. The Validator was able to clearly explain documentation and the processes during the Validation Visit and Quality Assurance. **VC7664**

Long Day Care

The Validator was very fair and reasonable, giving us suggestions about how we might be meeting criteria, taking plenty of time to look through a large sample of children's records to get a good overall idea of our system, spending time in each room on both days to ensure consistency and taking our comments into consideration. **VQ25528**

The best Validator we have ever had. She did not just read the questions from the booklet, she knew what she needed to find out and obtained a lot of answers through general conversations. **VQ25968**

The Validator was extremely professional and very approachable. Her knowledge and practical application of the NCAC criteria was exceptional. The Validator allowed ample time to flag any queries that may have required further information. The Validator 'blended in' as a member of our service. Her approach was relaxed but positive and professional. **VQ26467**

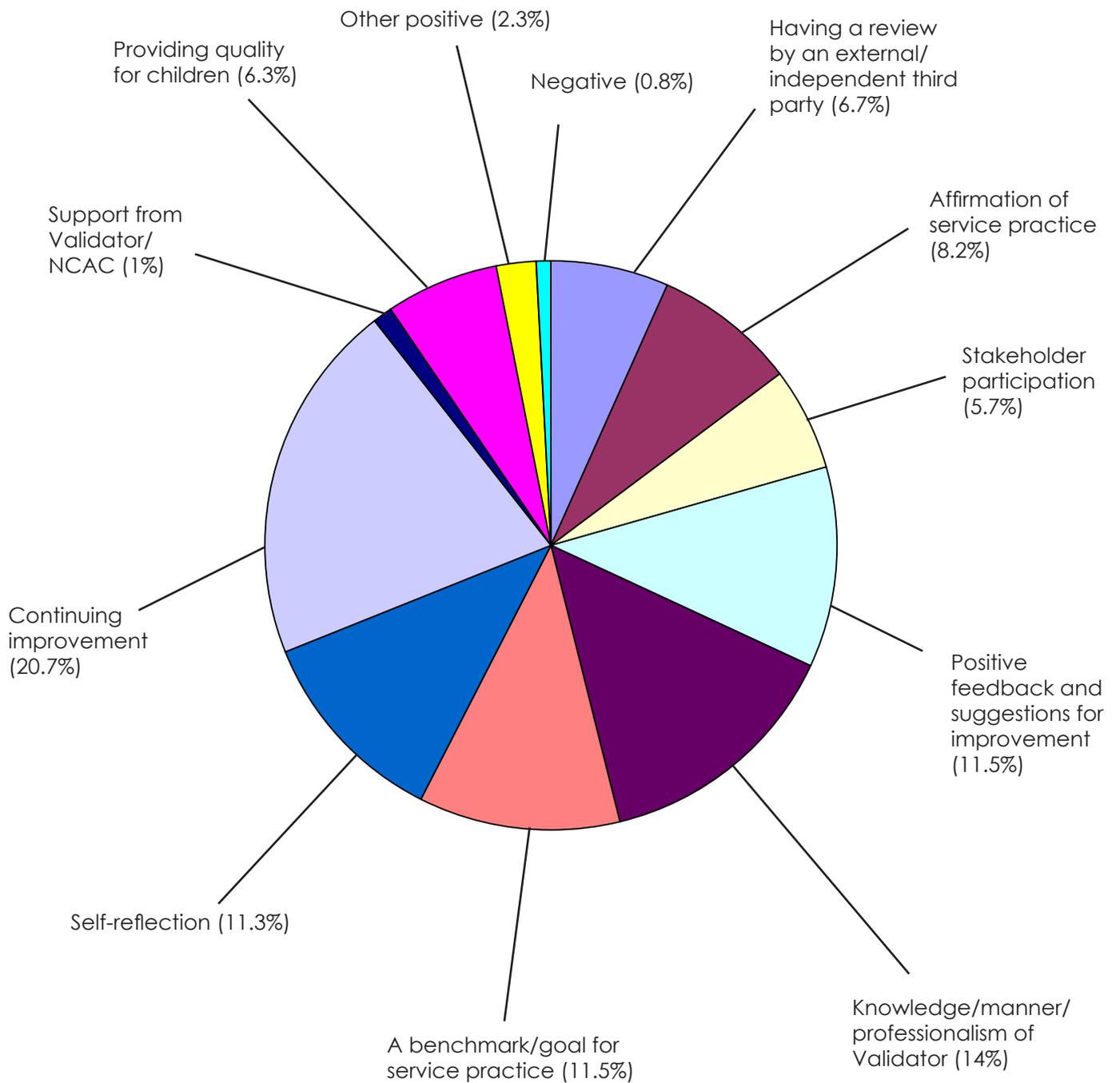
She was polite and courteous at all times. She put me and my staff at ease, especially as this was our first [time through the] Accreditation process. Plus she knew her stuff! Thank you for a pleasurable experience. Keep up the excellent work. **VQ26470**

The Validator immediately made all the staff feel relaxed and comfortable with the process. She discreetly observed the class/staff practices and questioning was kept in a conversational style. This approach allowed the Visit to be non-intimidating and provided an opportunity to witness best practice by staff. **VQ25871**

Positive Aspects of the Validation Process

Services were asked to comment on the most positive aspects of Validation. 90% of services provided a response to this question. 99% of those services which provided a response to this question were positive about the Validation process. Most services identified Validation as an opportunity to gain feedback and input from Validators, benefit from the Validator's expertise and continue with improving service practices.

Service comments on Positive Aspects of the Validation Process



Positive Aspects of the Validation Process - Service Comments

Family Day Care

To reflect on the current practices. To empower carers to welcome professionals into their homes and present the service they offer. **VF1141**

The pride and confidence carers feel after a successful Visit that validates the work they do each day. Having a Visit plan on the first day enabled the Visit to run smoothly and efficiently. Much better than previous process. **VF1390**

Validation indicates our level of achievement and provides feedback on aspects of our service where we can work to improve quality. It is also a meaningful indicator for families using our service or families seeking an Accredited service. **VF1113**

Carers received some positive feedback regarding their practice. The Validator was very clear in her communication with staff and carers. The assistance provided by NCAC staff during the Visit was polite and helpful. **VF1243**

Outside School Hours Care

The process ensures centres are updating policies and reviewing procedures continuously. Keeping centres in line with standards, ensuring excellent child care is available nationwide. **VC6432**

The Validation process provides our service with a continuing basis for improvement. Preparing for Validation helps us to reflect on our practices and establish more efficient working routines. This in turn helps us to provide a higher quality service. **VC9640**

The Validation process illustrates and confirms the essential aspects of quality care and ensures that the service is providing the best possible environment to cater for the needs of children, families and staff. It highlights areas that are sometimes overlooked and demands that changes be made. It allows for the formalisation of evaluation of the service. **VC9204**

The process ensures the safety of children through various avenues, eg health, hygiene. It ensures services are operating under licensing and standards, that children's wellbeing and growth at an individual level are being offered/met. **VC7538**

Long Day Care

Having the opportunity to work towards certain goals and improve on aspects of our service, with clear guidelines to help us do this. Having the opportunity to explain aspects of our service to the Validator. **VQ25681**

The most positive aspect of the Validation process is knowing that we are providing a high level of care for our children and families and this is validated by receiving a high number of good and high quality indicators. **VQ25841**

I felt the Validator was reasonably sympathetic to the circumstances surrounding our Accreditation Visit. Our director was away so I had to step into the acting director role and was grateful for the guidance I received through the process. I found the Validator knew the QIAS very well and observed us thoroughly over the two days. **VQ25627**

What really makes a positive impact and difference on our daily practice is working through the source book *[Quality Practices Guide]* throughout the year, coupled with the information booklets and fact sheets sent out by NCAC. **VQ25878**

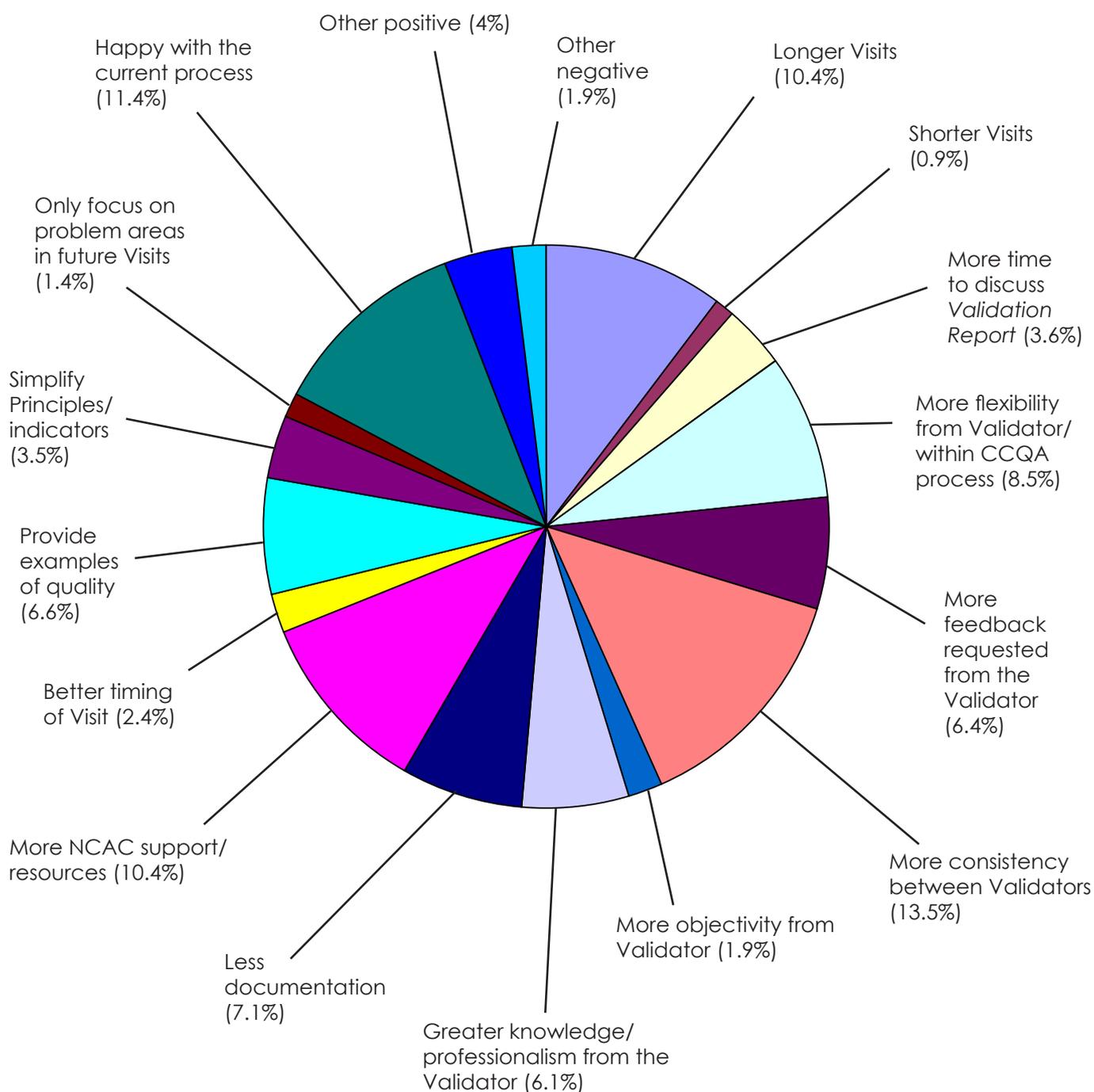
The Validation process encourages the team to revisit practices and policies and to implement change. **VQ25799**

The opportunity to have someone preview and value the work that staff and families and management commit to the operations of a community-based service. **VQ25990**

Suggestions for Improvement

Services were asked to provide suggestions on how the Validation process could be improved. 75% of services provided a response to this question. Of these responses, the most common suggestions were regarding greater consistency between Validators, more time allocated to the Visit and more NCAC support and resources.

Service Suggestions for Improvement



Suggestions for Improvement - Service Comments

Family Day Care

Validators to have a great understanding of individual legislation/regulations and practices to eliminate unnecessary angst and time spent defending and justifying acceptable and common state practices that were different to the Validator's own experience and therefore bias. A much faster notification of result after Validation Visit has occurred. **VF1142**

The emphasis on multicultural experience without programming concerns me. We need to be very careful it is portrayed appropriately and not in a tokenistic manner (not just because it is a requirement). **VF1141**

By having better communication between the Validator and the Coordination Unit before a Visit. **VF1338**

Outside School Hours Care

The workload in preparing *Self-study Reports*, acquiring surveys and preparing evidence for the Validation Visit, on top of the usual planning and facilitation of the program, is quite heavy. There should be a way of validating the service without significantly increasing the workload of staff. **VC6656**

Our Validator was very professional and I would have liked her to be able to offer more feedback or any additional ideas on our practices. **VC6839**

It is very labour intensive. Even with a positive attitude and experience, the work load on the one coordinator is almost suffocating. We manage a high staff turnover/loads of casuals and have no admin support. The work load is huge and usually carried out by one person. There is a lack of consistency within the same organisation during Validation Visits. **VC7079**

Being a single staff member service, some of the things in the *Validation Report* are not relevant to me, ie dealing with other staff. It would be good to have a *Validation Report* that caters to single staff service needs. **VC9321**

If the service was given a checklist prior to the Visit so time is not wasted searching for documents (eg. police checks). **VC7602**

Long Day Care

Having been involved in the Accreditation process since it was implemented I feel the process we have now is successful and easy to follow. I still think the Validation Visit dates should not be given to the centres and continue as unannounced Visits. **VQ25744**

To make the whole process more user-friendly and supportive by having the Validator give suggestions on "how to improve" rather than "occurring" or "not occurring" ranking. **VQ26267**

Longer time frames to review and provide additional evidence once the Validator has completed her ratings. Definitions provided pre-visit for some words such as 'regular', 'systematically' and 'compliance' so these are not up to an individual's interpretation. **VQ25862**

The negative stigma of Validation is definitely softening. I think that is a reflection of the Validators. They are warm but thorough and even help by explaining or giving examples. With taking away the parent surveys and notifying of Validation dates it has already improved. **VQ26575**

Go back to a system that allowed the Validator to write about the service and what it is doing rather than a tick box system. That doesn't really give an overall picture of the service to the Moderators. **VQ26580**

Instead of a six week gap and now changed to notifying services of the Validator's Visits, had you thought about a two week gap? **VQ26394**

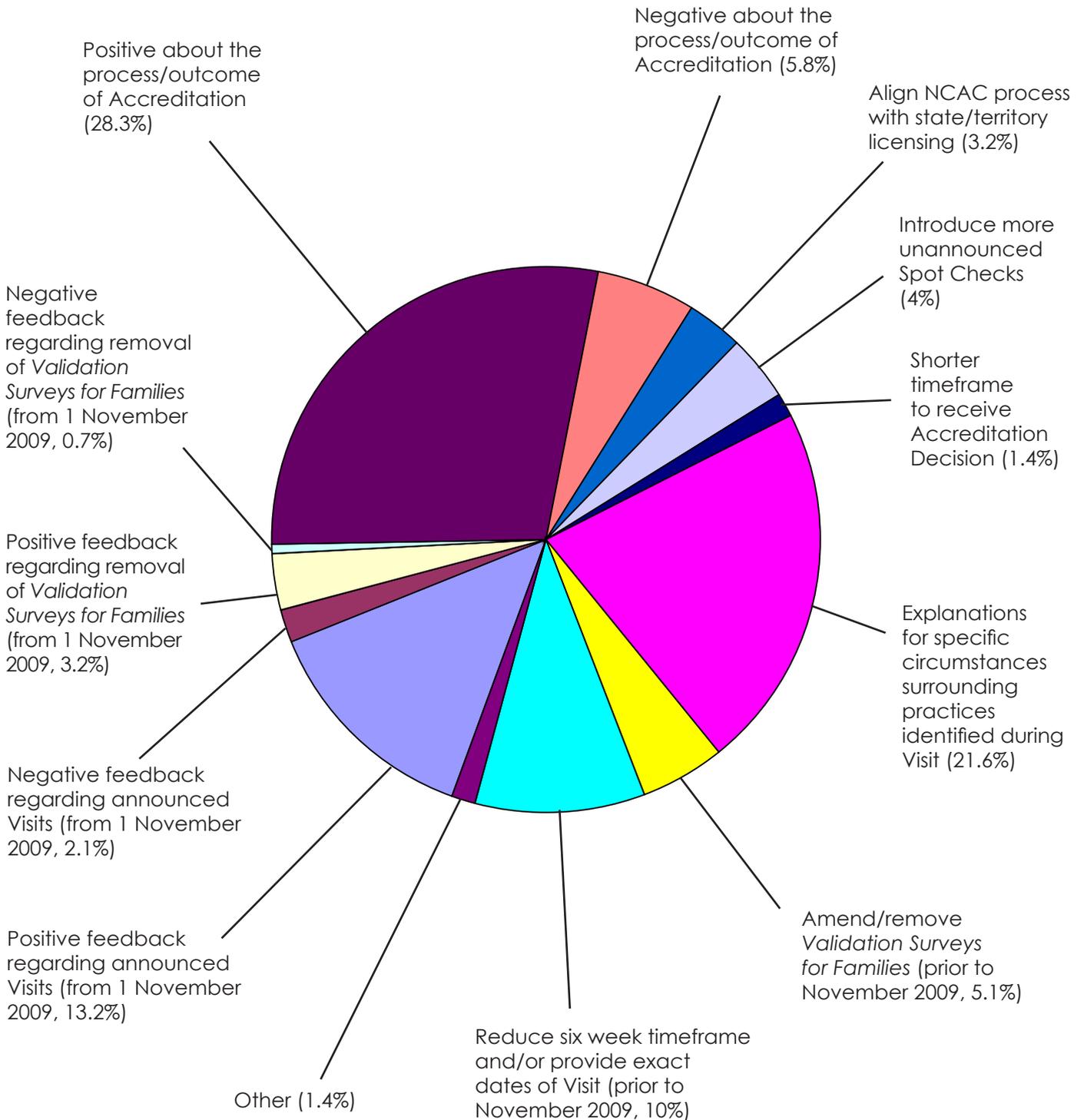
Reward those centres who do the right things, eg 2.5 years for high quality, 1 year for less. **VQ26392**

Additional Comments

Services were asked to provide additional comments/feedback regarding their participation in CCQA. 57% of services provided a response to this question. Less than 6% of services were negative about the process/outcome of their Validation Visit.

25% of the respondents commented on the changes regarding announced Validation Visits and the removal of *Validation Surveys for Families*. Of these, 86% provided positive feedback about the changes.

Additional Comments



Additional Service Comments

Family Day Care

We enjoyed the Validation experience this time as our Validator made everyone feel relaxed and was able to assist our 100% NESB [Non-English Speaking Background] carers to understand what she was asking for. **VF1327**

Validation is a positive experience to affirm quality practices being maintained by carers and Coordination Unit staff. It also allows the service to grow with changes being implemented nationally. **VF1113**

It would be good to be able to build a rapport with Validators so that the same people can see the progression you've made and assist in a more helpful way (because they know your history). **VF1155**

Outside School Hours Care

I feel that the surveys are highly important in the QA process. It is a concern that valuable feedback from parents, students and staff will not be included from now on. **VC6916**

Our service was happy with the way the Validation process went. Much better knowing dates as we were able to put on extra staff member to assist when coordinator needed to be with the Validator. **VC6638**

Staff and management do their best during the period of preparation for the *Self-study Report* and Visit to provide high quality child care. Each time, we gain more experience to be prepared for any check, spot or the next [Validation Visit], and we will be more organised and [have] more documents ready and work hard for the improvements that need to be done. **VC6923**

We are really pleased with the result and appreciate the Validator's time and support throughout the Validation Visit. I think this experience was a positive one for all the participants at our centre. Thanks. **VC6704**

Even though QA was a challenge, the staff drew together as a team and became more aware of families' and children's needs as a positive outcome. **VC7725**

Long Day Care

Happy to hear that the six weeks have been altered as this can be quite stressful leading up to a Visit but would prefer a two week process, not set dates. **VQ25937**

Being given the Validation Visit dates removes the feeling of constant stress. The Accreditation process was used as a tool to revisit aspects of our centre with a new director, assistant director and third in charge. I prefer Spot Checks as all centres should be meeting Accreditation indicators at all times. **VQ26472**

This time we found the experience much more positive. We believe the Visit was realistic in terms of expectation and allowed the centre to showcase and identify aspects of the centre that make us unique. **VQ25993**

We appreciate NCAC decisions regarding the changes they have made. We would appreciate a review regarding the Principles. Paperwork should be reduced and more observable Principles included with existing observable Principles. **VQ30995**

It would also be nice to have a date that we would receive a Decision by. The NCAC website is very resourceful. **VQ25596**

The Validator needs to make staff comfortable and more at ease. The Validator's attitude on the day can greatly affect, and be detrimental to, the Validation process. **VQ31506**

It's a must for all services to participate in Quality Assurance because it gives early childhood staff the opportunity to gain a broad understanding of high quality care and guides them to achieve it. **VQ25451**

Additional Information

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 Report* and *Validation Evaluation Form* to determine patterns of typical practice at the service. Prior to 1 November 2009, *Validation Surveys for Families* were also taken into consideration when determining the Decision. 22% of respondents provided information regarding service practice in relation to the indicators and Principles marked Not Occurring in their *Validation Report*.

Notable Trends from previous *Validation Evaluation Form* Analyses

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 85-87%).

However the total number of *Validation Evaluation Forms* received between October and November 2009 (588) was significantly lower than the number received between October and November 2008 (852). This corresponds with a decrease in the number of Validation Visits which were conducted between October and November 2009 (673) – down from October and November 2008 (1004) and October and November 2007 (682).

The decrease in the number of Validation Visits during October and November 2009 is related to changes to NCAC's *Registration Policy* which were implemented in early 2009. Under this *Policy* all services changing ownership are treated as new services and given 18 months to submit an initial *Self-study Report*. Many services that changed ownership during this period had previously had *Self-study Reports* due during early 2009/2010.

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* remained stable for this reporting period with 22% in October and November 2008 also providing additional information.

NCAC Support for Stakeholders

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

Support for services provided in response to feedback from *Validation Evaluation Forms* received during 2009 included:

- Enhanced Validator communication through the Validator Extranet and training and professional development opportunities for Validators to ensure greater consistency and objectivity
- The publication of articles in *Putting Children First*, NCAC's quarterly magazine, covering issues such as supporting children's development, effective procedures and working with other professionals
- The publication of articles in various industry magazines such as *Oscar* and *JiGSAW*, covering issues such as supporting families, adopting risk management strategies, understanding NCAC processes, hygiene practices and programming
- NCAC staff delivering presentations to family day care schemes, visiting OSHC services and attending national expos, conferences and meetings
- The development and review of resources such as *Quality Companions* to assist services with issues identified in the *Validation Evaluation Forms*.