



National Childcare
Accreditation Council

Validation Evaluation Analysis Report

October – November 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

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, the duration of the Visit (which depends on the size of the service) and the date/s of the Visit.

A service is given the opportunity to provide feedback about their Validator's performance and the Visit in general through a *Validation Evaluation Form*, which may be completed online or in hardcopy. NCAC must receive the form within seven working days of the Visit.

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 2010 – November 2010

During October and November 2010, 525 Validation Visits were completed. NCAC received *Validation Evaluation Forms* from 82% of those services which had a Validation Visit during this period, as follows:

Validation Visits: 1 October 2010 – 30 November 2010			
	Validation Visits completed	Validation Evaluation Forms received	Percentage received
FDCQA	17	15	88%
OSHCQA	187	144	77%
QIAS	321	269	84%
Total	525	428	82%

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 2010. This analysis demonstrates that the majority of services participating in CCQA systems had positive Validation experiences.

Notable Trends from previous *Validation Evaluation Form* Analyses

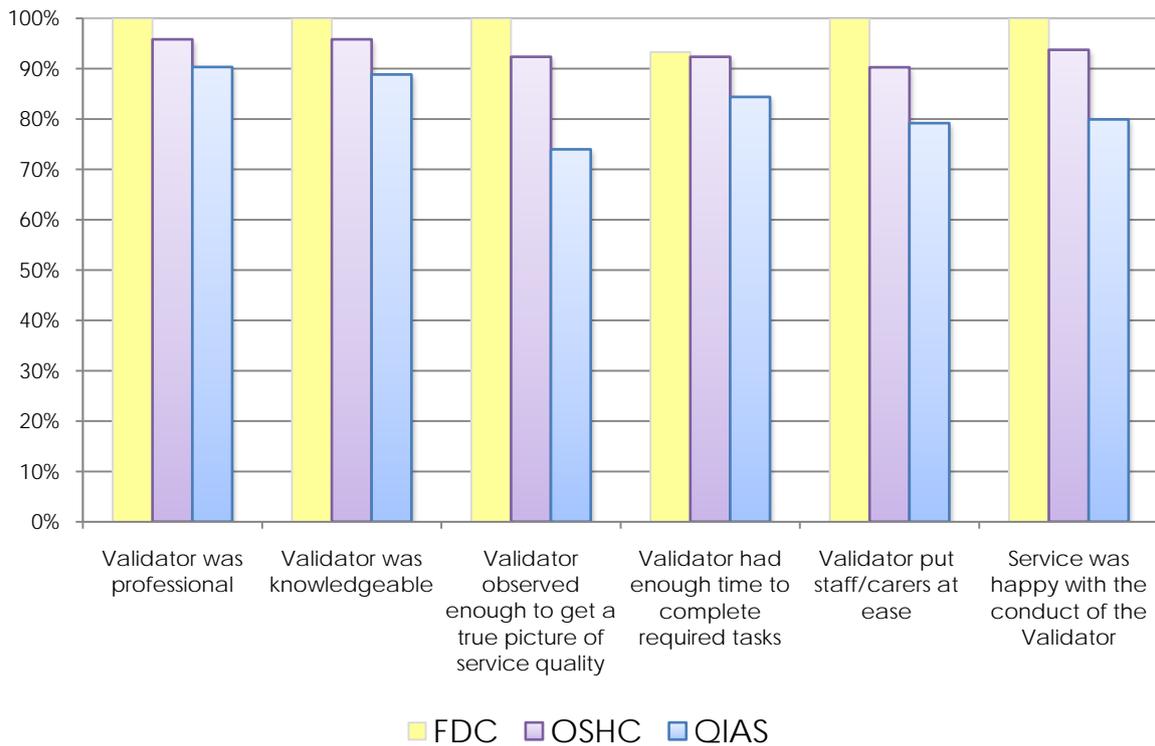
The percentage of *Validation Evaluation Forms* received from services that have had a Validation Visit has dropped slightly from the last reporting period (87% in 2009), and less Visits were completed in this reporting as compared with last year (673 in 2009). The decrease in the number of Validation Visits during October and November 2010 is related to Validators undertaking Phase 2 Assessment Visits under the National Quality Agenda.

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, 92% of child care services indicated that they were satisfied with the process of their Validation Visit.

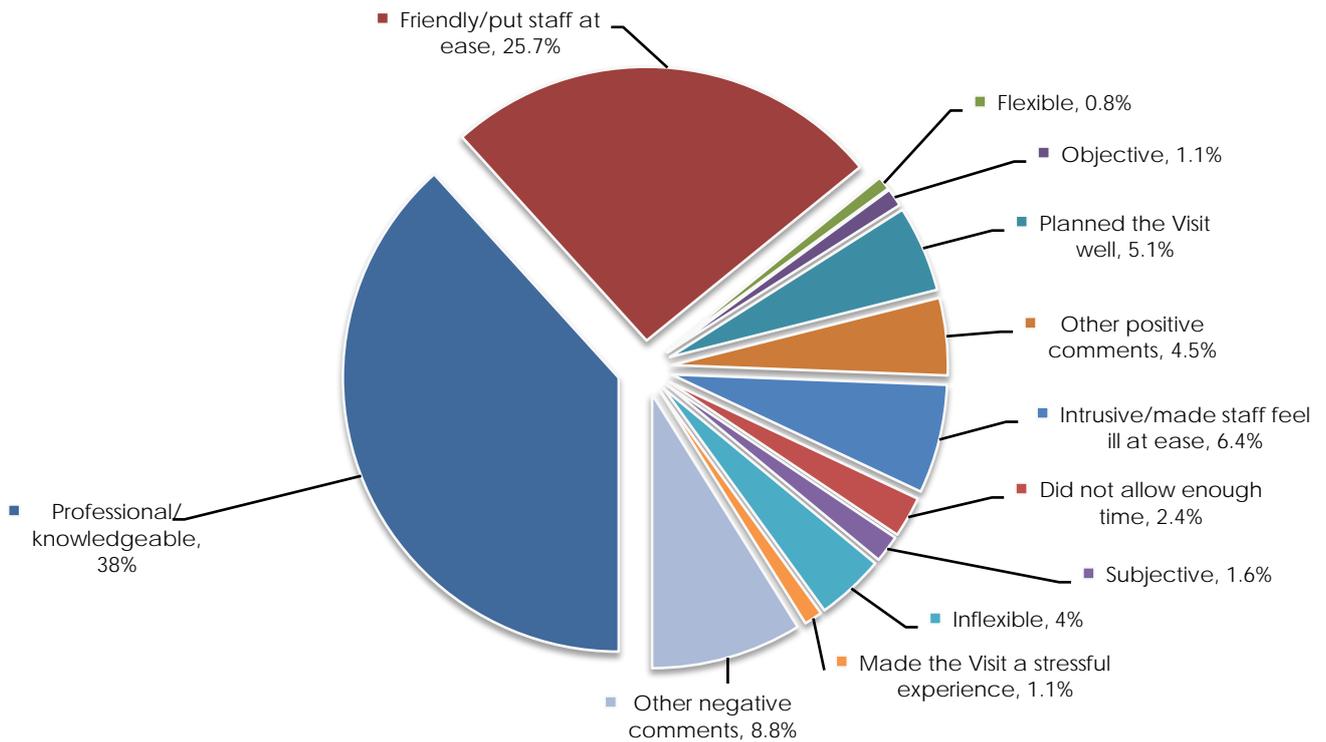
Figure 1: Performance of the Validator



Performance of the Validator

Services were asked to comment on the performance of the Validator. 87% of services provided a response to this question. 75% 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.

Figure 2: Service Comments on Validator performance



Performance of the Validator – Service Comments

Family Day Care

The Validator was punctual, courteous and professional throughout the Visit. She displayed empathy and understanding towards carers and staff, helping them feel at ease and enabling them to relax and participate in the process more easily. During the discussion of the Validation Report, she made every effort to assist us meeting the quality indicators. It was a pleasure to have her in our service. VF1235

Due to the fact the Validator had a large geographic area to cover – Day 3, 365km to visit 2 carers, I felt the Validator found time was pressing and had very long days. Tasks were completed, however under pressure. VF1350

Outside School Hours Care

The Validator asked for specific pieces of information which could be found by looking in service pamphlet racks or in evidence provided. I believe that if the Validator had more time they would have been able to source this information without asking staff so many questions. VC8216

The Validator was fantastic from the beginning – her warm, positive attitude and personality ensured an easy transition into our service. Her professionalism was demonstrated through her knowledge on quality assurance. Overall we were extremely impressed with her performance. VC8412

The Validator was friendly and knowledgeable. She was happy to answer any questions, she explained the process well and got along well with the staff and children. VC8320

Long Day Care

The Validator was very fair and watched staff for a good period of time. Staff liked that the Validator was looking at documents while watching – they felt they were not being stared at. VQ28299

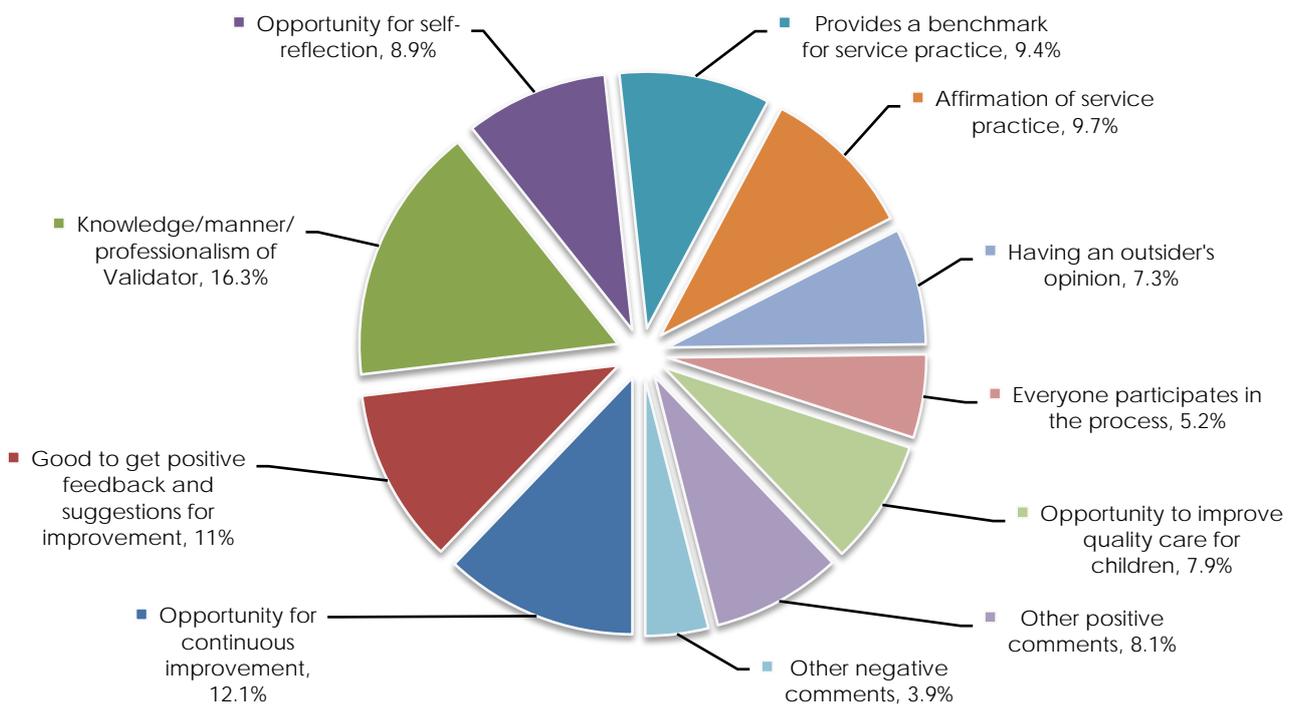
Our Validator was very knowledgeable in regards to the process and it was helpful to us that she had an understanding of the EYLF [Early Years Learning Framework] as we are now starting to transition to the new framework. VQ34383

Although the time spent was sufficient to observe the practices of the service, staff felt the Validator was unable to see outside the norm. This was particularly true about the challenges faced when children bring lunch from home. VQ28098

Positive aspects of the Validation process

Services were asked to comment on the most positive aspects of Validation. 89% of services provided a response to this question. 96% 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.

Figure 3: Service Comments on positive aspects of Validation process



Positive aspects of the Validation process – Service Comments

Family Day Care

It is an opportunity for the service to have an external assessment without bias. This helps us to identify areas of service provision that we need to improve and gives recognition of what we are doing well. VF1235

That we were notified of the date ahead of time and the Validation plan/Visits were shared at the start. We appreciated feedback given each day. VF1248

Outside School Hours Care

The most positive outcome after having our Validation Visit is that we have picked up a few little things that we have already or are in the process of changing, for example, the points that were not occurring are now being put into place to be occurring. The non-occurring points were practices that we could correct and have occurring straight away. VC8528

The actual preparation ensures that the whole service reviews and reflects on best practice. In our case, we knew what we did and why we did it, but realized that often it was hard to find concrete evidence. So much of what we do is practical application. VC8313

When the Validator was unsure of something she was happy to ring NCAC to clarify the indicator. Also knowing when the Validator was coming so we can roster one staff member to be there with the Validator and not be short staffed was really good. VC8028

Long Day Care

To get an outside view of the service on things that may otherwise get overlooked on a day to day basis. VQ29854

Validator had a good knowledge of the system and was very professional. VQ35082

It is important that there is quality control of centres and that centres are providing a safe, nurturing, fun and educational environment for all children. Having an outsider come in to provide feedback on our policies, procedures and interactions. VQ34325

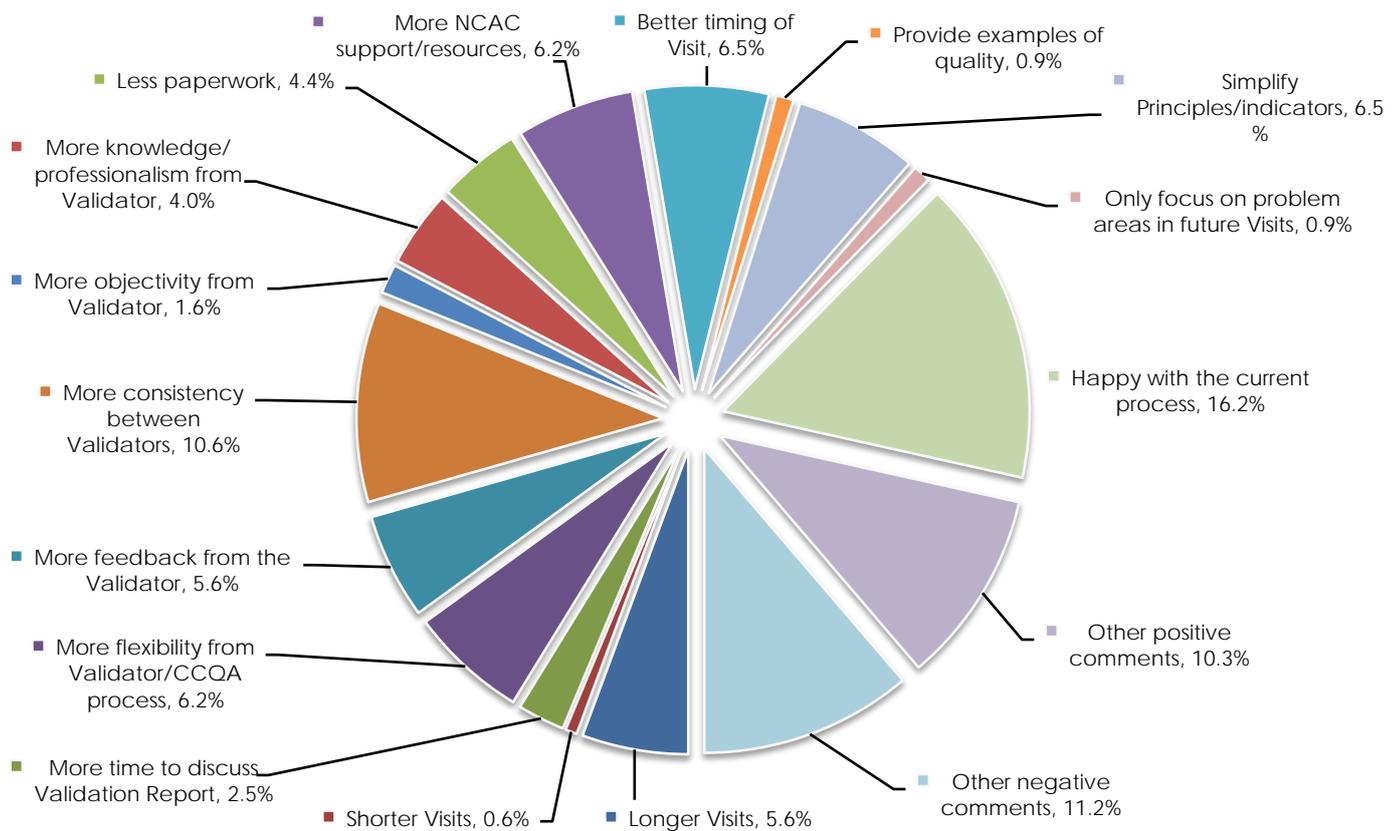
Confirmation of our achievements and feedback for centre staff on areas of improvement. Provides future directions for improving our service and setting goals to achieve high quality ratings. VQ33273

The Validation process confirms that our centre is closely adhering to current NCAC recommendations and guidelines and does so at a high quality service level. Our policies and procedures are continuously reviewed and as such any minor areas which need to be addressed, as noted by the Validator, have already been amended accordingly. VQ28661

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.

Figure 4: Service suggestions for improvement



Suggestions for Improvement – Service Comments

Family Day Care

More information could be provided to the schemes on the marking system, especially in regards to scoring in the different quality areas. *VF1254*

In educator's homes, looking at the evidence assembled first before asking questions. Not taking the educator's focus off the children in case. *VF1564*

Services having the knowledge of what NCAC/Validators consider 'clear' guidelines to be. Consideration for council/community sponsored services and different limitations and requirements, eg consultation. *VF1225*

Outside School Hours Care

There are some indicators of the *Self-study Report* that could be tailored slightly to relate more to out of school hours services. *VC8548*

Multisite services to be assessed by the same assessor and then I would not have to answer four sets of questions. *VC8451*

The Validation Visit could be conducted over 2.5 days. Although we didn't feel rushed, I'm sure it was difficult for the Validator to achieve everything in one day, particularly as our hours of operation are from 8.30am to 4.30pm. *VC10946*

Long Day Care

I hope that the National Quality Agenda takes the emphasis off programming in advance for children and caters for child-led and child-initiated activities, and thus criteria for programming critiques the actually learning environment and programs in practice, and child learning outcomes to reflect the EYLF. *VQ28504*

Lack of flexibility and varying levels of interpretation of indicators. *VQ33539*

Validators should be able to give some feedback to the service, even if not suggestions about practices, they should be able to comment on things the service is doing exceptionally well. Having the Validator in your service could be really positive if they were able to share their knowledge and ideas, not just ticking boxes. *VQ35140*

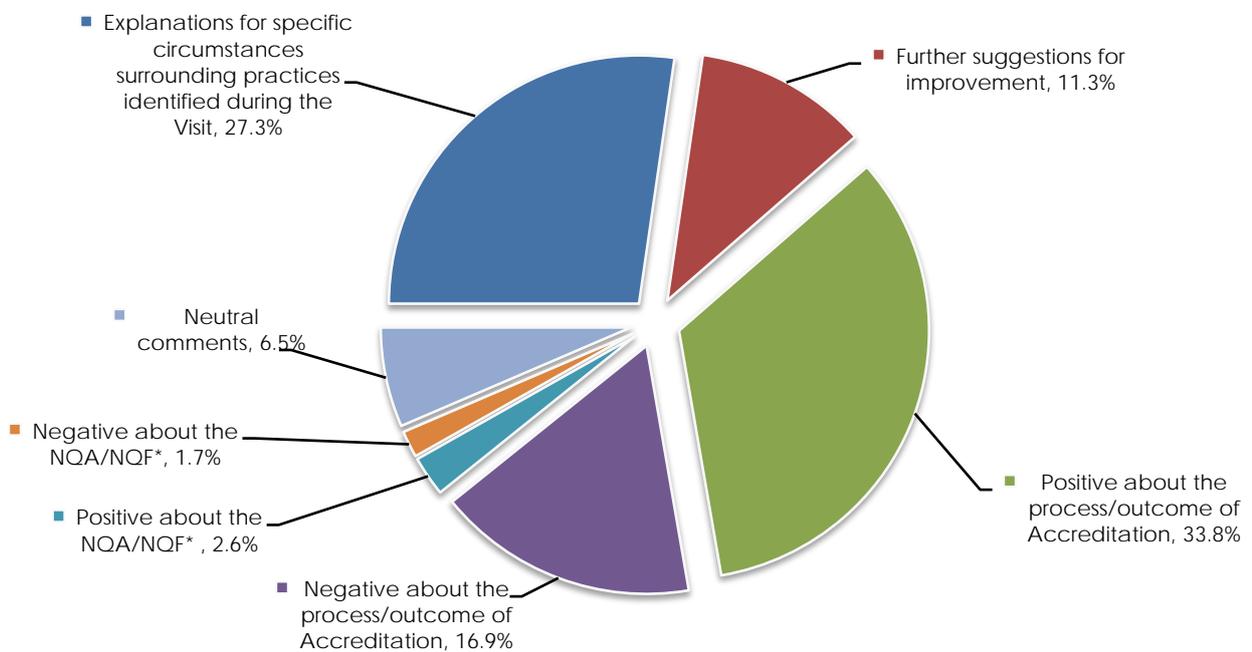
More consistency is needed with the decision making when deciding on whether an indicator is occurring or not occurring. *VQ32844*

Additional Comments

Services were asked to provide additional comments/feedback regarding their participation in CCQA. 54% of services provided a response to this question. 17% of services were negative about the process/outcome of their Validation Visit.

34% of the respondents were positive about the Accreditation process/outcome, and 27% provided explanations for specific circumstances surrounding practices identified during the Visit.

Figure 5: Additional Comments



* NQA = National Quality Agenda

* NQF = National Quality Framework

Additional Service Comments

Family Day Care

Having a support person in the carer's home to engage with the children while the carer talked to the Validator was very beneficial and promoted a more relaxed and calm environment. The carers were able to focus on the Validator and the questions and go through documents, etc. VF1220

Our Validator was outstandingly good. NCAC and the Validator are to be congratulated on this choice. The Validator had the right temperament, knowledge, experience, skills and attitude to the work. Her rural background was very comforting to all. Thank you again. VF1240

Outside School Hours Care

The Validation was a worthwhile experience and the service at the school can now work on improving its quality of care to the highest standard. VC10249

I loved the ease of online self-study process. It was so much easier for me. VC8188

We are happy to be participating in the process, this was our 3rd successful Visit and we're looking forward for the National Quality Framework and the middle year framework implementation. VC8311

We were very pleased with the Visit and feel that we have come a long way since we were last assessed. We would like to thank the Validator for being warm and professional which made it a pleasurable day. VC10981

Long Day Care

Great way for parents and the community to recognise staff's hard work and continued efforts. VQ28299

Our centre is in a rural area and we do find it hard to employ experienced and qualified staff. VQ28612

Given the amount of time my staff have spent preparing for and participating in this process, I am pleased to now have time to spend in the playrooms interacting with the children and supporting the staff. As this is our centre's first Accreditation, I can only hope and pray that next time it will be a lot less daunting. VQ30033

Our centre highly values taking part in the QA process as it validates the fantastic job we do every day. I believe it also gives us useful feedback and goals to work towards in a continuous improvement plan. VQ27873

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 CCOA systems and the provision of resources to services, families and other stakeholders.

Initiatives employed in response to feedback from *Validation Evaluation Forms* received during 2010 included:

- The ability for services to complete and submit *Validation Evaluation Forms* online through the NCAOnline system
- More professional development opportunities for Validators and attendance at NCAC conferences to hear from keynote speakers in the child care sector
- Additional resources for services with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
- NCAC staff attending information sessions on the new National Quality Framework to remain up to date with sector changes
- Enhanced communication with Validators through the Validator Extranet
- Individualised performance feedback to Validators to further improve consistency and objectivity in validating child care practice
- 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 educators
- The publication of articles in various industry magazines such as *Early Years* and *JiGSAW*, covering issues such as continuous improvement and working collaboratively with other educators
- NCAC staff delivering presentations, visiting services and attending national expos, conferences and meetings
- The review of NCAC's website content and resources to assist services with issues identified in the *Validation Evaluation Forms*.