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Validation Evaluation Form Analysis

Validation Visits Conducted October / November 2005

The National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) conducts an annual analysis of the *Validation Evaluation Forms* received from services having had a Validation Visit. The *Validation Evaluation Forms* demonstrate the satisfaction of services participating in the Child Care Quality Assurance (CCQA) 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 CCQA systems and the provision of resources to services, families and key stakeholders.

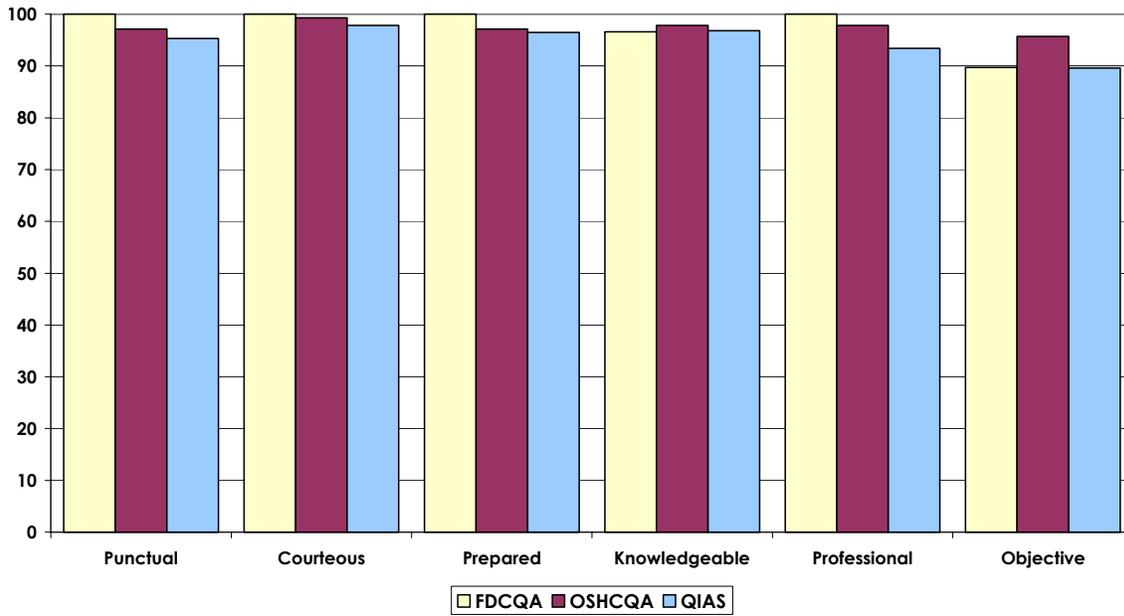
The following report summarises the responses collected from all *Validation Evaluation Forms* for services which received a Validation Visit during October and November 2005 and demonstrates that the majority of services participating in the CCQA systems had positive experiences at Validation.

During October and November 2005, 574 Validation Visits were conducted. A total of **84%** of those services which had a Validation Visit during October and November 2005 returned their *Validation Evaluation Forms* to NCAC, comprising 29 family day care schemes, 136 outside school hours care services and 317 long day care centres.

Perceptions of the Validator:

NCAC aims to have at least 85% of services satisfied with the professional standard of their Validator's work and services are asked a range of questions regarding the professionalism of the Validator. On average, over a range of measures of the Validator's performance, more than **97%** of child care services indicated that they were satisfied with the professional standard of their Validator during the Validation Visit (Figure 1).

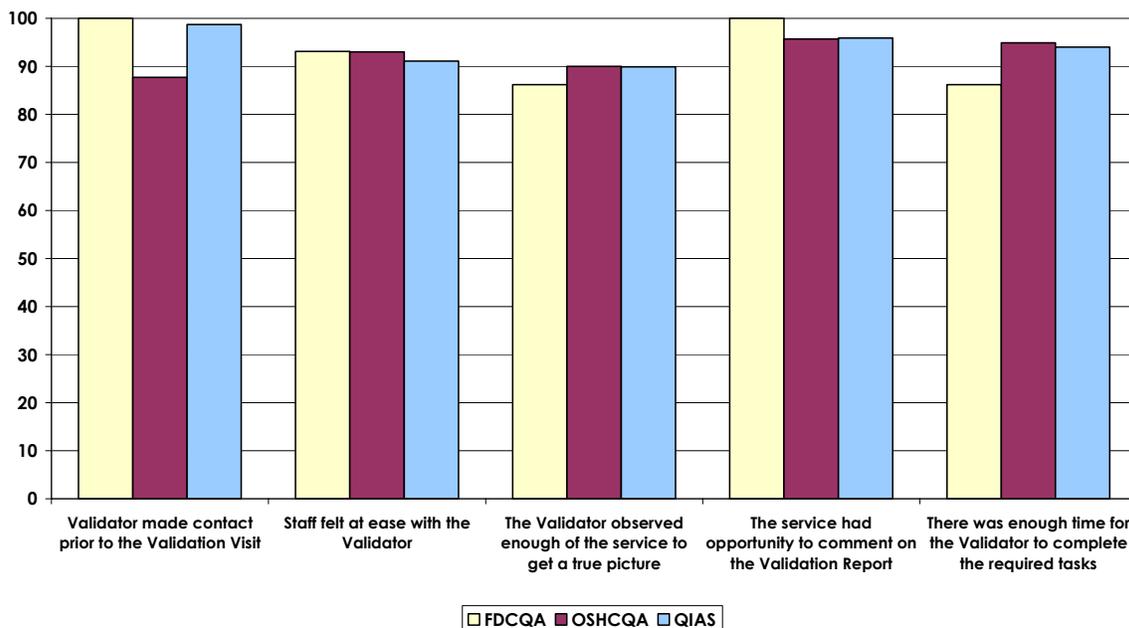
Figure 1: Perceptions of the Validator



Completion of the Validation Visit:

Services are asked if they were satisfied with the completion of the procedural aspects of the Validation Visit. On average **93%** of services were satisfied with the completion of Validation Visit procedures (Figure 2).

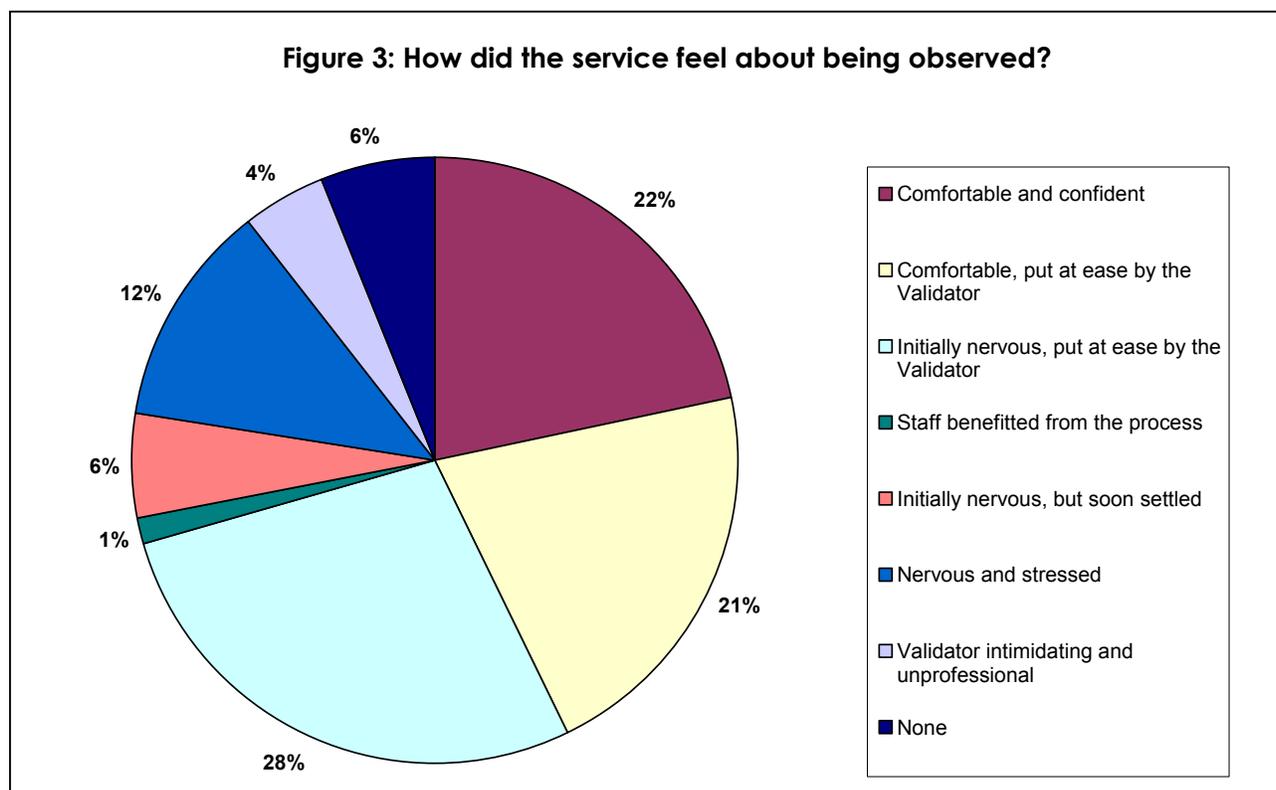
Figure 2: Completion of the Validation Visit



How did the service feel about being observed?

As the first Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance (OSHCQA) Validation Visits commenced in September 2004, most of the *Validation Evaluation Forms* received from outside school hours care services during October and November 2005, were for services experiencing their first Validation Visits. Similarly, most family day care schemes were progressing through Family Day Care Quality Assurance (FDCQA) under the revised *Quality Practices Guide* (2nd edition, 2004) for the first time.

As demonstrated by Figure 3, 43% of services were comfortable and confident throughout their Validation Visit. A further 34% of services, while initially nervous, soon settled or were put at ease on meeting their Validator.



Notable difference between service types included:

- A higher proportion of long day care centres were relaxed and confident throughout their Validation Visit, than family day care schemes and outside school hours care services.
- A lower proportion of outside school hours care services remained nervous and stressed for the duration of the Validation Visit than long day care centres and family day care schemes, with most settling or being put at ease by the Validator.

Comments about how services felt during Validation included:

Family Day Care:

VF403: *The Validator's positive attitude of looking for what we do in our scheme, not what we don't do, resulted in the coordination unit feeling relaxed and comfortable throughout the Validation Visit.*

VF352: *Both carers and staff were very anxious about the process as it was new for many of us. The Validator helped us feel at ease and was very professional throughout the Visit.*

VF401: *We were open to having the practices of the scheme observed and confident in the quality of our services. However, the nominated carers were naturally nervous and the weight of being representatives of the scheme was stressful.*

Outside School Hours Care:

VC1882: *Being the first time going through Accreditation has been a good experience to all staff members. Broadening our knowledge of the Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance.*

VC257: *Initially the staff and myself felt anxious and a little nervous about being observed as we weren't really sure what to expect. At the time of Validation Visit we discovered that it wasn't anywhere near as daunting as we thought it would be.*

VC2255: *Initially staff felt a little nervous however after a very short time staff relaxed and were able to focus on the children and not the Validator. The Validator was excellent in her role - quiet, unobtrusive and a relaxed friendly manner with children, staff and parents.*

Long Day Care:

VQ15522: *We are absolutely committed to the QIAS believing it to be an important way to ensure an industry maintains standards and continues to look at ways to improve work practices. During this Validation the majority of staff felt uncomfortable about being observed. The Validator's manner was aloof and on occasion insensitive to the needs of staff eg. choosing busy times to ask questions and making negative comments.*

VQ16113: *The Validator prepared us prior to the visit on her observation techniques, so the staff felt prepared. She observed a variety of experiences during the days, but was never obtrusive or too conspicuous. She was a very objective observer and used effective questioning techniques.*

VQ15769: *Most staff felt nervous however our Validator made everyone feel comfortable and relaxed. Her manner was non-intrusive and she interacted warmly with both the staff and children. All staff commented on how comfortable they felt and how the Validator contributed to this.*

What other suggestions does the service have for improving the Validation process?

Family day care schemes, outside school hours care services and long day care centres provided a range of suggestions for improving the Validation process. 63% of services responded to this question. Of those that provided a response:

- 22% provided general suggestions for improving the Validation process. These included the streamlining of standards documents to avoid repetition, 'spot checks' of services and the recognition of diverse philosophies at Validation.
- 19% raised concerns regarding the scheduling and duration of Validation Visits. Many felt that there was not enough time to adequately view the *Validation Report*. Others suggested that the length of a Validation Visit based on licensed places is too long, and should instead be determined by current occupancy.
- 16% suggested that Validator training be improved to encourage greater consistency between Validators, increase objectivity and ensure that correct procedures are followed. It was also suggested that Validators be allowed to provide more feedback and reassurance regarding service practice.
- 11% of services were positive about the CCQA systems, while 9% reported positive experiences at Validation. Only 1% of services reported negative experiences at Validation.
- 9% of services suggested that NCAC communication and resources provided to services could be improved. Suggestions included more training about what to expect at Validation, a list of evidence to be provided by the service to the Validator and how it may be presented, information about how ratings are determined at Moderation and the provision of the *Validation Report* to all services.
- 9% of services commented on the *Validation Surveys*, suggesting that the *Validation Survey for Families* be made more user friendly and include space for comment, and that the *Survey for Children* should be adjusted to meet the age requirements of school age children.
- 5% of service provided a range of other responses.

Notable difference between service types included:

- More long day care centres raised concerns regarding parent surveys, while outside school hours care services raised concerns regarding children's surveys.
- A higher proportion of family day care schemes requested additional support and training from NCAC than outside school hours care services and long day care centres.
- A higher proportion of long day care centres raised concerns regarding Validator training and consistency.
- Comments regarding the scheduling and duration of Validation Visits were most often made by family day care schemes and outside school hours care services.

Suggestions from services to improve the Validation process included:

Family Day Care:

VF401: *More information to be provided to schemes to clarify the process of Moderation. For example, how the indicators are weighted against each other; how the good and high quality indicators are taken into account; and what happens if a satisfactory indicator is not met but good and high are.*

VF418: *Perhaps more training and clarity on policy requirements and how to achieve these without gaps.*

Outside School Hours Care:

VC2255: *The time frame of the validation process was good. The availability of information relevant to the validation process was also very helpful. Staff felt comfortable with their understanding of the process.*

VC2119: *Our suggestion would be that survey forms for children need to be more younger age friendly or have different form for lower grades and preschool children as we experienced that some of them could not comprehend at all.*

VC2263: *The process is much clearer and more workable now we have experienced it. We provided a little too much documentation which we now realise is not necessary as we evidenced every indicator. Our Validator was open with us and gave us clear and frequent opportunity to respond throughout the process.*

VC2853: *Some guidelines on what types of things would be considered evidence, especially for areas that are more abstract or intangible. More space allowed for service comments in Validation Reports.*

VC1155: *We felt more than one hour is necessary for the viewing of the Validation Report, to enable personnel to fully check and respond to all areas of concern.*

Long Day Care:

VQ16020: *The process was a very positive experience which I believe the Validator's attitude contributed positively. She had a relaxed approach and demonstrated professionalism at all times.*

VQ16485: *I found the NCAC Accreditation process extremely subjective, dependent on your Validator's own beliefs. Interpretations of each question are so variable, making it difficult to meet them.*

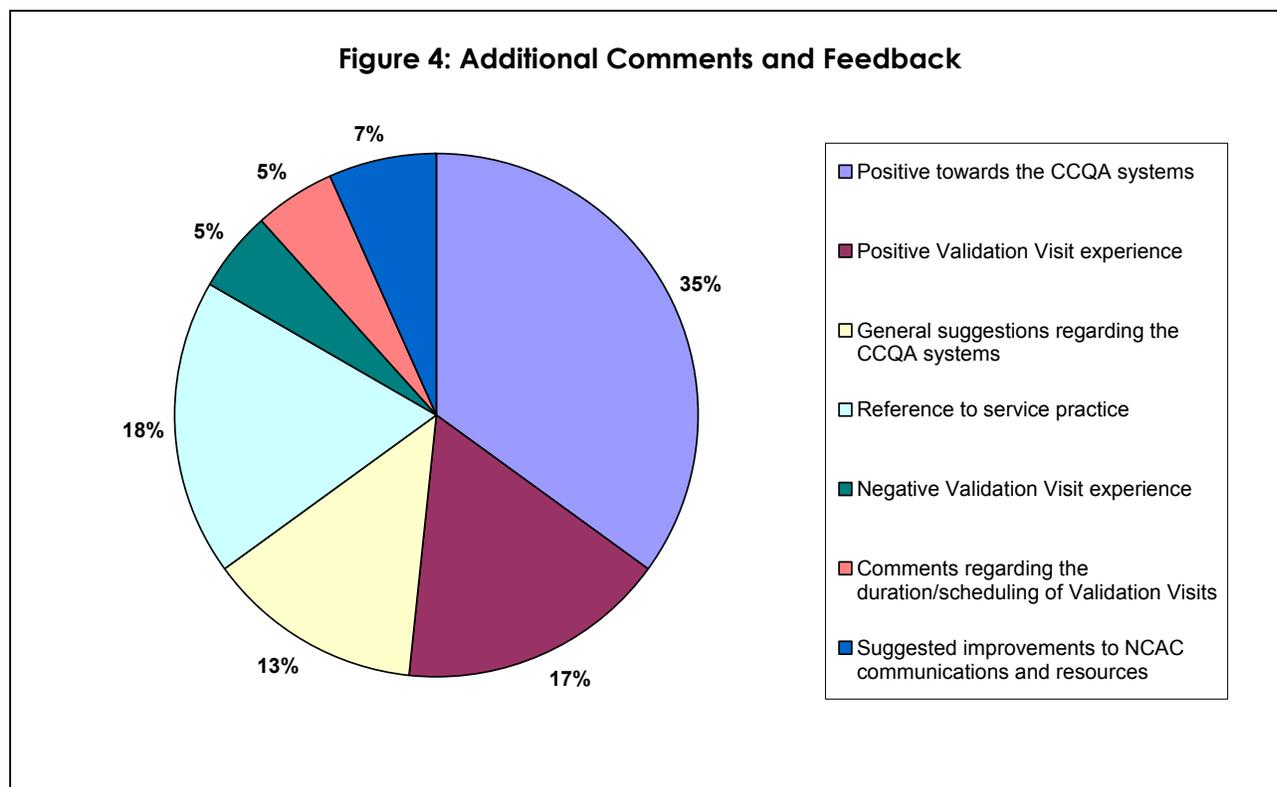
VQ15591: *The number of quality indicators tend to make the validation process a hurried and detached one. Although the family surveys have changed slightly since our last review, they still pose a concern to many parents. Parents expressed a desire to be able to write comments.*

VQ15293: *The questions for the parent survey should be simplified. This process proved stressful for staff as families were confused and unable to answer - thus many were not returned or incorrectly filled out.*

VQ16406: *All staff agreed that the process and the Validation Visit have been positive experiences reaffirming the process, procedures and philosophies and goals we are all attempting to fulfil each day and throughout the year.*

Please share any additional comments of feedback on your service's participation in the CCQA systems.

Services were asked to provide additional comments and feedback regarding their participation in the CCQA systems. 60% of services provided a response to this question. Of those respondents, a large proportion of services were positive towards the CCQA systems and their experiences at Validation (Figure 4).



Notable differences between service types included:

- A higher proportion of family day care schemes requested additional support through NCAC communications and resources, including information on what to expect at Validation, and Moderation ratings.
- A higher proportion of long day care centres were positive with regards to their Validation Visit.

Additional Information

Child care services are provided with the opportunity to attach additional information to the *Validation Evaluation Form* for consideration at Step 4: Moderation.

- 16% of respondents provided information regarding service practice in relation to the Indicators and Principles marked Not Occurring in their *Validation Report*.
- 1% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their Validator during the Validation Visit.
- 83% of respondents did not provide additional information.

Additional comments and feedback received from services included:

Family Day Care:

VF401: *The Accreditation process requires a great deal of commitment and resources. However, it brings continued improvement, increases quality, and leaves an overall sense of pride and achievement to all those involved.*

VF431: *We felt that in some cases the scrutiny of the scheme enabled us to have an outside, objective opinion of our practices, which can only assist us to highlight future areas of improvement.*

VF561: *The moderation process needs to be much more transparent. We would like to see much more information on weighing of indicators and how the various components, ie. the surveys, Validation Report and Moderation, are counted towards the final result and how the scheme scored in each of them. This is after all a process of continuous improvement.*

Outside School Hours Care:

VC1273: *The entire process has been so beneficial to our service and staff. It was something we knew was necessary, but didn't want to tackle. However, once we began we have learned so much and have set in place processes for continuous re-evaluation and improvement.*

VC388: *The QA process we feel ensures that the community recognises the professionalism & commitment that is the backbone of a quality outside school hours care program.*

VC2255: *The workload has been huge - often the perceived need to document procedures has taken time away from the real focus of our day - the children. However the improvement in the quality practices undertaken by our service due to working through and analysing our performance in each quality area has been worthwhile.*

VC2119: *I would like that services who are aiming to achieve good quality and high quality also have examples of practice and examples of documentation that would help them when working on obtaining high or good quality Accreditation.*

Long Day Care:

VQ16010: *This was my first time through the QIAS system and I was a bit unsure at first. After reading all the information, going to in-services run by NCAC and talking with my Validator, I now feel a lot more confident about the process and look forward to the next time.*

VQ15131: *More training sessions should be available for directors/staff in their local area or training sessions/talks from professionals from NCAC should be conducted to improve staff's knowledge and expectations of the Accreditation process and what documentation is expected from their centre.*

VQ15469: *We believe that QIAS has a positive affect on the childcare industry. Sometimes, however, the amount of paperwork expected seems to draw us away from the children, which is why we're in the industry.*

VQ15809: *Parents' surveys seem unrealistic as most parents are not present for most of the day. Even though programs/evaluations are displayed and information is available in handbooks etc, parents still comment that they have no knowledge of this area or mark the low ratings – parents' questions are too generic to child care centres and not the general public.*

VQ15660: *We feel very proud to participate in the QIAS. It is a challenging, rewarding and exciting journey. QIAS is an ongoing process that involves staff, children and parents. It is a great way to improve and maintain high standards in children's services.*