

NQF

6 QUALIFICATIONS

What do I need to know about Qualifications under the National Quality Framework?

THE NEW NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK (NQF) FOR EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES COMMENCES FROM THE BEGINNING OF 2012.

This fact sheet, the sixth in a series produced for education and care services by the Professional Support Co-ordinator's Alliance, summarises information about qualifications requirements for educators under the National Quality Framework.

One of the core changes of the National Quality Framework is the increase in qualifications required by educators working in early education and care services from January 2014. At this stage, there are no changes to the qualifications requirements for those working in out-of-school hours care services.

A significant evidence base has shown that one of the key indicators of quality early education and care is the qualifications that educators hold – the higher the qualifications held by educators, the higher the quality of education and care that children attending the service receive.

Studying for a qualification provides an opportunity to gain skills, knowledge and important understandings of children's learning. Combined with practical components of experiential learning and mentoring, it gives a sound foundation for educating and caring for children.

The new Education and Care National Regulations 2011 establish a number of required qualifications that those working in services must have.



CERTIFICATE III IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES

This is the minimum qualification that all educators need to have.

All educators who do not have a higher qualification will need a **Certificate III** or be enrolled in a Certificate III course by **January 2014**. This includes all Family Day Care educators (some extensions of this timeframe apply for staff who have been employed continuously in early education and care services for 15 years – see Part 7.1 of the Regulations.)

Educators can obtain a Certificate III, by studying with a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), a TAFE institution or equivalent training body in their state or territory. Another alternative is the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). RPL is one way to have current skills and knowledge assessed by an RTO to see if they meet current industry standards. RPL assessment recognises skills and knowledge, no matter how, when or where the learning occurred.

A POINT TO NOTE: STATE DIFFERENCES

Some of the qualification requirements change according to which state or territory a service is located in. It is important that you check the exact requirements for your state or territory. Different states and territories also have different dates by which they must comply with the new requirements. Qualifications requirements are found in Division 4 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. Chapter 7 contains provisions that affect particular states and territories.

DIPLOMA LEVEL EDUCATION AND CARE QUALIFICATION

At least 50 per cent of the educators who are required to meet the relevant educator-to-child ratios for the service, must have, or be actively working towards, at least an approved diploma level education and care qualification by January 2014. If educators are to be counted towards this requirement by being enrolled in a diploma course, they must already hold a Certificate III qualification.

All Family Day Care co-ordinators must have an approved diploma level education and care qualification.

EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHING DEGREE

Depending on the service size, there are requirements under the NQF for early education and care services to have access to teaching staff. Generally, the requirement is as follows:

- ▶ Under 25 children = service must have access to an early childhood teacher for at least 20 per cent of the time;
- ▶ 29 to 59 children = at least six hours on that day, if the service operates for 50 or more hours a week or for 60 per cent of the operating hours of the service on that day, if the service operates for less than 50 hours a week;
- ▶ 60 to 80 children = as for 25 to 59 children + a second teacher for at least three hours on that day, if the service operates for 50 or more hours a week; or for 30 per cent of the operating hours of the service on that day, if the service operates for less than 50 hours a week;
- ▶ 80+ children = as for 25 to 59 children + a second teacher for at least six hours on that day, if the service operates for 50 or more hours a week; or for 60 per cent of the operating hours of the service on that day, if the service operates for less than 50 hours a week.

FIRST AID QUALIFICATIONS

Whenever a service is open, there must be an educator on site who has first aid qualifications. These qualifications must include training in anaphylaxis management training and emergency asthma management. All Family Day Care educators must also hold these qualifications.

EDUCATIONAL LEADER

Every education and care service needs a suitably qualified and experienced educator, co-ordinator or other individual as educational leader at the service to lead the development and implementation of educational programs in the service.

QUALIFICATIONS AND THE NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD

The Regulations outline the minimum qualifications that services must adhere to. The National Quality Standard encourages services to undertake continuous learning to update and maintain educator knowledge. This includes undertaking a range of professional development experiences which challenge and extend current thinking.

A quality service will see educators and co-ordinators hold or be supported to achieve qualifications that are higher than the minimum required under the regulation.

FINDING THE RIGHT PLACE TO STUDY FOR A QUALIFICATION

It is important that educators research the training providers and institutions they are considering.

Quality curriculum, training and education is so important for a great outcome in achieving a qualification. Consider the content of the curriculum, support available to you as a student, arrangements for teaching and studying and the resources of the training body or institution.

Be sure to research carefully to guarantee your investment is worthwhile.



WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK?

GO TO: www.pscalliance.org.au or www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy_Agenda/Quality/Pages/home.aspx

The PSC Alliance has prepared a series of NQF Fact Sheets as well as newsletters and e-tips which your service can receive

by email. To find out more or to get copies please contact your state or territory Professional Support Co-ordinator.

