



NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK WHO IS COVERED

From 1 January 2012, the National Quality Framework will be established under an applied laws system comprising the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations.

Services covered by the National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework will initially cover most:

- long day care services
- outside school hours care services
- preschools (or kindergartens)
- family day care services.

These services were selected to operate under the National Quality Framework, as they cover the majority of children currently in education and care services. The Australian Government and state and territory governments agreed that a system that encompasses all types of education and care will take several years to achieve.

Services not covered by the National Quality Framework may be regulated by relevant state or territory laws.

Refer to the *Who Is Not Covered Information Sheet* for further information.

Definition of education and care service

The National Law defines an 'education and care service' as:

Any service providing or intending to provide education and care on a regular basis to children under 13 years of age other than services specifically excluded by the National Law or National Regulations.

- **Note this definition does not preclude services from offering education and care to children over 13 years of age. For example, some outside school hours services may have older children present, although the service is providing or intending to provide education and care for younger children.**

Types of approved services

The National Law and National Regulations provide for two service categories:

- **Centre-based** services—most long day care, outside school hours care and preschool or kindergarten services and
- **Family day care** services.

Definition of preschool program

The National Quality Framework will cover most services which deliver preschool programs. The National Law defines a 'preschool program' as:

- **an early childhood program delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher to children in the year that is 2 years before grade 1 of school.**

Programs delivered to children two years prior to grade 1 are called kindergarten in some jurisdictions (Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania).

Possible future inclusions

Excluding certain types of education and care through the National Regulations makes it possible for these types of services to be brought into the National Quality Framework at a later stage by amending the National Regulations.

Over time, the Australian Government and state and territory governments will consider how and when excluded services may be more easily brought into the National Quality Framework.

To underpin this consideration, analysis will need to be conducted to assess the unique characteristics of each type of service. This will ensure that a full cost–benefit analysis and broad consultation is undertaken. This will also ensure that services have time to prepare to meet key elements of the National Quality Standard.

Contact your state or territory Regulatory Authority if you are unclear whether your service is covered by the National Quality Framework. The contact details for Regulatory Authorities are available on the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority's website at www.acecqa.gov.au.