

# The Quest for Quality



A revised NQS knowledge game

HANDBOOK

## Contents

Introduction	Page 3
Background	Page 3
How to get started	Page 5
Spinner options	Page 5
How to play	Page 7
Adapting the game	Page 8
Ideas for teams	Page 9
Ideas for groups	Page 10



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## Introduction

*The Quest for Quality* is a trivia-style game developed for educators in education and care services. The game explores the seven quality areas in the revised National Quality Standard (NQS) through sector specific knowledge. *The Quest for Quality* also facilitates the development of relationships through team building activities and discussion starters. *The Quest for Quality* was designed as a capacity building tool for educators. It provides educators an opportunity to integrate an element of fun into their professional discussions and critical reflection. It can be adapted for use in a variety of contexts, or to meet the unique needs of your setting. Just like children, adults do not all learn in the same way. *The Quest for Quality* has been designed to cater for a range of learning styles, and to allow educators at any stage of their education and care career to contribute their wealth of knowledge and experience.

## Background

### What is the National Quality Framework (NQF)?

The NQF includes:

- The National Law and National Regulations
- The National Quality Standard (NQS)
- An assessment and quality rating process
- Approved learning frameworks

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) is the national body that guides and reports on the NQF, while regulatory authorities in each state and territory are responsible for its implementation.

## What is the NQS?

The NQS sets a national benchmark for early childhood and outside school hours education and care services in Australia. It gives services and families a better understanding of what makes a quality service. The NQS is linked to the national approved learning frameworks, the *Belonging, Being, Becoming: Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF) and the *My Time Our Place: Framework for School Age Care* (FSAC), and brings together the seven quality areas of the NQS that are important to improving outcomes for children. The seven quality areas are:

1. Educational program and practice
2. Children's health and safety
3. Physical environment
4. Staffing arrangements
5. Relationships with children
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
7. Governance and leadership.

## ***The Quest for Quality and the NQF***

*The Quest for Quality* helps educators to make connections between the National Law, National Regulations, NQS and the nationally approved learning frameworks used to guide curriculum decisions in their services, (EYLF and FSAC). In understanding these connections and developing a thorough knowledge of these guiding documents, educators are better able to adopt a holistic approach to creating quality programs, experiences and environments for children.

## ***The Quest for Quality, critical reflection and your Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)***

*The Quest for Quality* encourages educators to critically reflect on their own practice. Simply by playing *The Quest for Quality*, you are engaging in critical reflection! Documenting the discussions that take place during gameplay will provide your service with evidence of critically reflecting on practice. This can be used:

- to inform content for your QIP
- to facilitate positive changes in practice, policies, partnerships and procedures
- as evidence of critical reflection during the assessment and rating process.

If your reflections lead to the implementation of changes, be sure to revisit the topic again and engage in further reflection to evaluate the effectiveness of these changes.

## How to get started

In order to prepare *The Quest for Quality* cards for gameplay, you only require resources and materials that are commonly available in education and care services. Only the cards are required to play the game. Attached to the cards is an optional spinner, which can also be printed, cut out and laminated.

### You will need:

- White A4 Paper
- Printer
- Scissors or guillotine
- Split pin (optional)
- Laminator and laminating sheets (optional)

### Preparation

1. Print the game template (ignore margin warnings). For optimal results, in the print options, print '2 sided', use colour printing and select and 'flip on short edge'
2. Cut out the cards using scissors or a guillotine
3. The cards can be laminated if you wish to prevent any damage
4. If you wish to use the spinner, cut it out and assemble using the split pin

## Spinner options

A spinner is provided in the PDF document containing the cards. As stated above, the spinner can be printed out and assembled using the split pin. If you do not have a pin, or just want to try something different, there are a variety of spinner adaptations to choose from, some that don't even include the spinner!

### Option 1

This option is useful if you do not have a pin or paperclip and want a simple way to play with what you already have. All you need to do is print and cut out the spinner. The player needs to close their eyes while another person moves the spinner around so that the player with their eyes closed doesn't know where the categories are. The spinner is placed in front of the player.

The player, still with their eyes closed, places a finger on the spinner. The player can then open their eyes to see which category they have picked.

## Option 2

Instead of using a spinner, the card category titles can be printed and cut out, and placed in a hat, bag or anything similar that you have available. Players can then place their hand in the hat and pull out a category. Alternatively, if you do not wish to print and cut out the category titles, you could write the category titles on pieces of paper yourself.

## Option 3

Paddle pop sticks are often readily available in education and care services. You will need nine of them and then write a category title on each of them. Place them in a glass and they are ready to go. Players can close their eyes and pull a paddle pop stick out of the glass, revealing the category they have picked. To make it a little trickier, you can use 18 paddle pop sticks and put each category in the glass twice.

## Option 4

Have some playing cards? Allocate a number to each category. The **Quality Areas** can be one through to seven, and **ACECQA Knowledge** and **Wild Cards** can be numbers eight and nine. Get nine playing cards numbered one through to nine. Give them a shuffle. Without showing the player the cards, ask them to pick one. The number on the card they have chosen reveals the category picked.



## How to play

**Objective:** Be the first player to collect one card from each category.

### On your turn:

1. Spin the wheel!
2. When the spinner lands on a category (or a category is chosen through your preferred method, see *spinner options* on pages 5 & 6), you must answer a question from the corresponding card pile.
3. The player to your right takes the top card from the category the spinner landed on and reads it aloud to you.

## Card categories:

*The Quest for Quality* consists of three card categories:

- **Quality Area** cards
- **ACECQA Knowledge** cards
- **Wild Cards**.

### Correct answers

If you answer a question correctly, initiate a discussion or get everyone to participate in an activity, you are able to keep the card. It is now the next player's turn.

### Types of card

- **Trivia question:** Answer the question correctly in order to keep the card
- **Multiple choice:** Answer the question correctly in order to keep the card
- **True or false?:** Answer true or false correctly in order to keep the card
- **Discussion point:** Initiate a discussion regarding quality practices and perspectives with the group in order to keep the card
- **Activity:** Carry out the activity in order to keep the card
- **Scenario:** Initiate a discussion based on the scenario in order to keep the card
- **Who am I?:** Answer correctly in order to keep the card

## Incorrect answers

If you get the answer incorrect, you do not get to keep the card. The player to your left then has the opportunity to answer the question. If they get the answer correct, they keep the card. If they also answer incorrectly, the player to their left can answer the question. This is repeated until someone gets the correct answer, or everyone in the group, except the person reading the card, has had an opportunity to provide an answer. If every player answers incorrectly, the reader will share the correct answer and the card is returned to the bottom of the pile of cards in its category.

In each instance, the player has the option to PASS, and an offer to play the card goes to the player on their left.

## Icons to look out for



If you see this icon on a card, everyone in the group will need a device that allows you to **take photographs** to complete the activity. Devices you could use may include, digital cameras, iPods, iPads, tablets, mobile phones, or any other device that allows you to take a photo that can then be viewed by the group.



If you see this icon on a card, everyone in the group will need a **pen and a piece of paper**, or something similar to write their answers or ideas on.

## Adapting the game

*The Quest for Quality* was designed to be easily adapted in a variety of ways; in order to provide a more personalised and relevant experience for your individual team and context. Below are some suggestions for adapting gameplay.

### Focusing on a *Quality Area*

With the cards separated into the different ***Quality Areas*** as categories, *The Quest for Quality* gameplay can easily be adapted to focus on a specific quality area or areas.

For example, your service may have recently undergone the assessment and rating process, and been identified as requiring improvement in a particular quality area or areas. In this instance, you may choose to use only the cards for the area/s in which your service would like to improve.



## Focusing on the *Wild Cards*

Recently established services or services welcoming new team members may choose to play with only the *Wild Cards*, and focus gameplay specifically on team building and ice-breaking exercises and activities. The *Wild Cards* can also be used as ice-breakers for mentors to get to know their mentees, to break up the usual format for team meetings, or to inspire questions when interviewing potential new team members. You may choose to focus on a *Wild Card* question or activity together as a group, and then exclude the Wild Cards completely from gameplay – focusing only on the NQS.

### Blank cards

The blank wild cards can be used to create questions and answers for specific topics not covered by the other cards, or a topic that relates directly to the context of the setting. Such as:

- What to do if you find a cane toad in the outdoor area?
- What is our service's flood evacuation procedure?
- What do you do when the water tank gets low?

You may also like to use the blank cards to promote relationship building within your team:

- How many children does Rebecca have?
- What is Delana's surname?
- How many pets does everyone have? What kind? What are their names?

Remember to keep questions friendly, and be respectful of what people may or may not like to share with the group. If players are uncomfortable asking a question under normal circumstances, the blank cards could be a great way to have that question asked anonymously without singling out the team member who asked it. In this instance, each team member can be given a blank card to write a question on before the game begins, and the cards can be shuffled into their appropriate card category.

## Ideas for teams

Working in an education and care service is essentially about building and maintaining relationships. Educators strive to develop and maintain productive relationships with children, families, fellow educators, and the community in which they live. Respecting others' viewpoints and acknowledging that everyone has a contribution to make is essential to developing trusting relationships and innovative practice in an education and care service. *The Quest for Quality* can be used as a tool for building and strengthening relationships between the members of an education and care team.

## Peer-pairing

Educators can team up into peer-pairs, in order to take the pressure off team members who may not feel comfortable or confident in answering trivia questions in front of the group. Peer-pairs could be decided based on experience or skill level, pairing more experienced or knowledgeable educators with less experienced members of the team. This could also present an opportunity for mentor/mentee relationships to be established. Services with existing mentoring programs may choose to have mentor pairs play on the same team.

## Team trivia challenge

This version of the game is played without the *Wild Cards*. Divide the group into equal teams. Ask each team to designate a Team Captain, who will be responsible for reading the other team's cards aloud. Agree on how long gameplay will run and set a timer. The team with the most cards collected when the time runs out, wins!

# Ideas for groups

## Treasure hunt

This is a fun way to play if you do not have a spinner! An educator hides the cards around the room. To determine the number of cards to hide, divide the number of cards by how many educators will be playing so that each educator collects an equal number of cards. Players must hurry to find their cards before regrouping. As per normal gameplay, the player to your right reads their cards aloud to you. Your collected card will be read out to the person on your left.

## Reflective brainstorm

Choose a card to focus on for a team meeting in order to stimulate a reflective discussion amongst educators. Take a few minutes to unpack the relevance to your specific setting. This is a quick and easy way to incorporate *The Quest for Quality* cards into your existing team meeting format without dedicating a significant amount of time to play the game.

## Networking

*The Quest for Quality* can be used as a resource to facilitate networking in a variety of ways, such as:

- family day care coordination unit meetings
- establishing relationships between education and care services
- local area service director network meetings

The possibilities for adapting *The Quest for Quality* gameplay are truly endless – through trial and error, lots of fun, and (hopefully) some inspirational team discussions, you will soon discover what works best for you and your team!

## Where to next?

*The Quest for Quality* presents a fun, innovative opportunity for your team to collaboratively reflect on your setting's current practices, and help to identify opportunities for **quality improvement, professional development, reflection** or for further **discussion**. The experience may help you to reflect on your team's current knowledge and understanding. It may also assist you in identifying your team's strengths and areas in which you may like to improve.



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