Educational leaders are highly valued and instrumental in establishing, maintaining and continually improving quality education and care for Australia's children.

ACECQA resources, such as *The Educational Leader Resource*, support approved providers and educational leaders to undertake this important responsibility.

The Educational Leader Resource can be accessed or purchased from: www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/educational-leadership

True or False

To be an educational leader you need to be an Early Childhood Teacher (ECT).

Answer: False.

Neither the NQS nor the legislative requirements are prescriptive about the qualifications, experience or required skills for the person chosen to be the educational leader. Qualifications, experience, well-developed knowledge, skills and attributes are all important factors when selecting a suitable educational leader who meets the requirements of Regulation 118.

True or False

The educational leader must be supported in their role.

Answer: True.

NQS Element 7.2.2 requires the educational leader to be supported. This support can take many forms. *The Guide to the National Quality Framework* provides examples of support that may assist the educational leader to effectively fulfill their functions. An authorised officer may seek evidence of this support during assessment and rating.

True or False

An educational leader should always use a distributed leadership style.

Answer: False.

There are many styles and approaches to enacting leadership. The educational leader, team and service context will all influence leadership style. A distributed leadership style, enabling whole teams to take up leadership tasks in collaborative ways, can be very effective in education and care settings. The transformational model, inspiring collective commitment to change, is another approach.

True or False

An educational leader requires a clearly defined role description.

Answer: True.

NQS Element 7.1.3 requires roles and responsibilities to be clearly defined and understood. The educational leader role will be unique to each service context. *The Educational Leader Resource* provides a sample Educational Leader Position Description.

True or False

An educational leader should create the educational program/s for a service.

Answer: False.

NQS Element 7.2.2 requires the education leader to *lead* **the development and implementation of the educational program**. The educational leader collaborates with the educational team, supports educators and provides educational program direction and guidance. Educational leadership is more effective when a team approach is adopted.
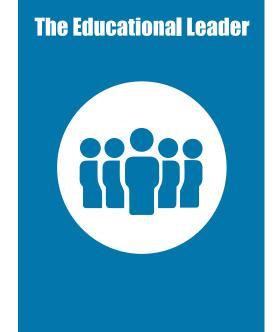
True or False

The educational leader role is optional at a service.

Answer: False.

The approved provider of an education and care service must designate, in writing, a suitably qualified and experienced educator, co-ordinator or other individual as educational leader at the service.

(Regulation 118)

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Discussion Point

In *The Educational Leader Resource*, the following aspirational quote introduces the role of the educational leader in continuous improvement:

'*If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea*'.

(Antoine de Saint-Eupery)

- What does this quote mean to you?
- What are your thoughts when reflecting on your role as an educational leader?

Discussion Point

A key component of the educational leader role is to lead the development and implementation of the assessment and planning cycle.

(NQS Element 7.2.2)

- How is this implemented, practically, at your service?
- Do you have any identified areas for improvement?

Discussion Point

What makes the role of educational leader so important to quality outcomes for children?

Discussion Point

Educational leaders need to be supported in their role.

(NQS Element 7.2.2)

As an educational leader:
- How are you supported?
- What types of support are most helpful to you?
- If you needed greater support, how might you approach or advocate for this?

Discussion Point

Analysis of assessment and rating data demonstrates an interrelationship between NQS Quality Area 7 (Governance and leadership) and NQS Quality Area 1 (Educational program and practice). Services that meet the requirements for an educational leader in QA7 also rate better in QA1 standards and elements.

- Why do you think this is so?
- Does this reflect the experience at your service?

Discussion Point

The Educational Leader Resource outlines **six key actions** that help to map out the scope of the educational leadership role:

- observing
- collaborating
- reporting
- mentoring/supporting
- planning
- researching (ACECQA, 2019).

Each educational leader will organise their role differently. How do these actions reflect the organisation of your role?

Discussion Point

Does the organisation of your role support the educators of your service?

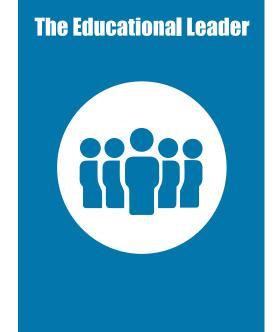How do you know educators feel supported?

Discussion Point

As an educational leader, how do you embed the six **Guiding Principles of the NQF**?

- The rights and best interests of the child are paramount.
- Children are successful, competent and capable learners.
- Equity, inclusion and diversity underpin the framework.
- Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are valued.
- The role of parents and families is respected and supported.
- Best practice is expected in the provision of education and care services.

Discussion Point

The approved provider of an education and care service must designate, in writing, **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.

(Regulation 118)

- As a group, discuss the qualifications and experience you believe are necessary for an individual to undertake this role.
- What other skills and attributes might support their effectiveness?

Discussion Point

'*Professional networks are a powerful way to connect with others in similar roles, to exchange ideas, share challenges and celebrate successes*' (ACECQA, 2019).

- Which educational leadership networks are you a part of?
- How do they support your professional practice?
- How do you support the professional practice of others?

Discussion Point

If you undertake a number of roles, other than the role of the educational leader at your service, how do you balance your responsibilities and manage your time across these multiple roles?

Discussion Point

As educational leader at your service, what would be the legacy of your professional body of work?

Discussion Point

A **'Community of Practice'** approach encourages educators and teams to share knowledge, experiences and resources and to work collaboratively towards common goals and quality improvement.

- Does your educational team use a 'Community of Practice' approach?
- Why? Why not?

Discussion Point

The educational leader role may be enacted differently in different service types (e.g. family day care, long day care, outside school hours care, preschool/kindergarten).

- What might be the similarities in these roles?
- What might be the differences?

Discussion Point

As educational leader, how do you support the members of your educational team to confidently and regularly implement the **principles, practices and learning outcomes of the approved learning frameworks**?
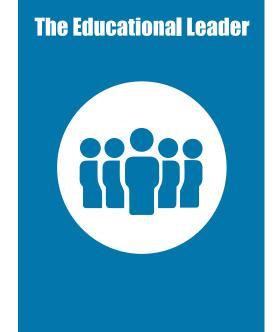
- How do you assess educators' confidence and use?
- How do educators seek greater support from you?

Discussion Point

How do you contribute to or support the professional development of your educational team?

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Multiple Choice

The Educational Leader Resource outlines an **Educational Leadership Model** with four intersecting dimensions that form the basis of educational leadership (ACECQA, 2019).

Which of the following is not one of these four dimensions?

a. relationships
b. knowledge
c. authority
d. reflection
e. professionalism

Multiple Choice

Which National Regulation/s underpin the role of the educational leader in an education and care service?

a. Regulation 74
b. Regulations 118 and 148
c. Regulation 75
d. Regulation 114
e. Regulations 73 and 118

The approved provider must designate, in writing, a suitably qualified and experienced individual as educational leader at the service. **(Regulation 118)**

The staff record must include the name of the person designated. **(Regulation 148)**

Multiple Choice

A key responsibility of the educational leader is to support educators to understand, implement and share the **assessment and planning cycle**. Which of the following elements is not a part of the assessment and planning cycle?

a. collect data
b. plan
c. reflect/review
d. document
e. act/do
f. mentor
g. analyse learning

Multiple Choice

Leading practice includes considering how the **Exceeding NQS themes** are reflected in your service's programs, practices and policies. Which of the following is not an Exceeding NQS theme?

a. Practice builds relationships.
b. Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community.
c. Practice is embedded in service operations.
d. Practice is informed by critical reflection.

Multiple Choice

During an assessment and rating visit, what educational leadership practice might an authorised officer **observe, discuss or sight** evidence of?

a. the educational leader working with educators to plan for children's learning
b. how the approved provider supports the educational leader
c. how educators are mentored and supported
d. designation of the educational leader in the staff record
e. all of the above

Multiple Choice

To facilitate effective mentoring, *The Educational Leader Resource* outlines **four 'Rs' of mentoring** that need to be considered (ACECQA, 2019).

Which of the following is not one of the four 'Rs'?

a. reciprocal
b. responsive
c. reactive
d. reflective
e. respectful

Multiple Choice

The role of the educational leader was first articulated in legislation in which year?

a. 2018
b. 2009
c. 2019
d. 2012
e. 2013

While there had previously been positional leadership roles (e.g. Director or Co-ordinator), the role of educational leader was first articulated in legislation in 2012, with the introduction of the NQF.
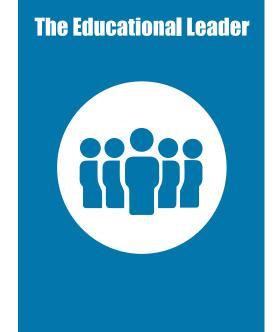
Multiple Choice

The educational program delivered to all children being educated and cared for by an approved service must be:

a. based on an approved learning framework
b. delivered in a manner that accords with the approved learning framework
c. based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child
d. designed to take into account the individual differences of each child
e. all of the above.

(Section 168 of the Education and Care Services National Law)

Scenario

You have been the educational leader of a service for two years, but will shortly be taking 12 months leave. You have established efficient systems and effectively lead the development and implementation of the educational program and assessment and planning cycle. Educators state they feel well supported.

You will have one week with the new educational leader before you leave. During this time, what would be your professional priorities for:

- educators?
- the new educational leader?
- the approved provider?

Scenario

You have been appointed as the educational leader of a new three-room long day care service that is yet to open. The approved provider wants your input into defining the educational leader role and responsibilities and how they, as the approved provider, can best support you.

What would be your response?

Scenario

The educators at your service have effective but diverse approaches to implementing the educational program and assessment and planning cycle in their respective rooms.

As educational leader, how do you lead this process while ensuring the educators maintain their professional autonomy?

Scenario

The educators at your service have limited planning time and are expecting you, as educational leader, to develop their programs.

How do you respond to this situation?

Scenario

Your service has recently been rated Exceeding NQS for Quality Areas 1 and 7. You have been approached by a local service for help with their educational programs and practices.

What are some of the key messages you could share with them?

Scenario

A member of a child's family approaches you and states they don't understand the 'learning documents' that their educator is emailing them.

As educational leader, how might you approach this?

- What information would you gather from the family member?
- What information would you gather from the educator?
- How could you support communication between the educator and family to ensure documentation is readily understood by the family?

Scenario

An educator in one room of your service is having difficulty with the assessment and planning cycle, particularly the analysis of each child's learning.

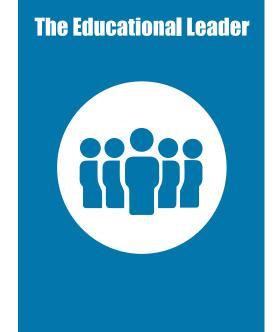- How could you support the educator?
- What resources would you use?

Scenario

The educators at your service have critically reflected on the outdoor learning environment and would like to commence an **action research project** to improve the educational program in this space.

- As educational leader, how could you support them?
- What would you envisage your role to be?
- What might 'success' look like?

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Scenario

You are an educational leader working across a number of services in different locations. As educational leader, how could you support the educators and educational teams in these services?

- What might be the challenges of such a role?
- What might be the opportunities?

Scenario

You are doing a short presentation on educational leadership to visiting, overseas education and care professionals. The role of educational leader is not designated in their country.

- How would you describe the educational leader role within the Australian context?
- What resources might you recommend to support their understanding?
- If they were considering establishing this role in their country, what would be your advice?

Activity

Collect the **educational program/s** currently displayed at the service.

- Ask each educator to explain how the educational program is being implemented in their room/for their grouping of children.
- Is there a shared understanding of the program within each room?

Activity

At a team meeting, collect the current **service philosophy** and the **educational program/s** currently displayed at the service. Review and compare them.

- Is the educational program/s consistent with the service philosophy?
- If not, what are the inconsistencies?
- As educational leader, how could you contribute to the process of making the service philosophies and educational program more cohesive?

Activity

At a team meeting, invite educators to each share their perspectives on implementing **the assessment and planning cycle**.

- What are their strengths?
- What are their challenges?
- What support would they find helpful?
- How could this be shaped into professional development?

Activity

The Educational Leader Resource identifies a number of **key mentoring resources** (Part One: Mentoring) and outlines the **four R's of mentoring** (Part Two: Mentoring educators).

Review these resources and identify:
- your strengths as a mentor
- the type of professional development that could support you as a mentor.

Activity

Review the record-keeping systems and processes that you use to keep track of conversations, meetings, planning, feedback and decisions regarding the education program, the assessment and planning cycle and your role as educational leader.
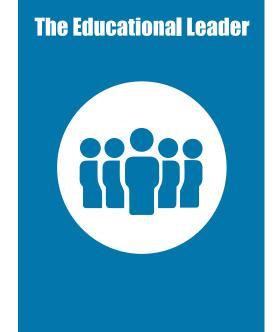
- Are they accessible?
- Are they effective?
- Do they support quality practice?
- Do you use them consistently?
- Could you explain them to somebody else, such as an authorised officer?

Activity

To organise the educational leader role and support time management, *The Educational Leader Resource* identifies **six key actions**: observing; collaborating; reporting; mentoring/ supporting; planning; and researching (ACECQA, 2019).

- Keep a record of your time over a week to identify how you apply your time to these actions.
- Are you using your time effectively?
- How could you improve time management?

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Activity

At a team meeting, brainstorm and list the many ways in which **critical reflection** occurs at the service.

- How is critical reflection recorded?
- Is there meeting time which is dedicated to critical reflection?
- Is critical reflection usual and embedded practice?
- How does critical reflection inform your practice?
- As educational leader, how could you further support critical reflection?

Activity

'*Design a monument that captures you as an educational leader. The monument may include words, phrases, symbols and any other design elements you like to visually communicate who you are, what you stand for, and how you would like to be known. You want someone viewing this to recognise your professional characteristics, your values, and the traits and capabilities you believe are important in a professional and ethical educational leader*' (ACECQA, 2019).

- Draw, paint or create your monument.
- Would the educators in your team use the same descriptors as you?
- What makes you believe this?
- Has your monument changed over time?

Activity

At a staff meeting, undertake a role play.

Two educators will act as a new family that has recently joined the service and another educator will act as the educational leader.

Act out a role play with the educational leader describing their role to the family and the family asking questions.

Activity

Brainstorm all of the ways that an educational leader could be **supported by their approved provider**.

- Are these supports available at your service?
- If not, how could they be implemented?

Activity

At a staff meeting, brainstorm what an authorised officer might **observe, discuss and sight** evidence of at the service, when assessing **NQS Element 7.2.2: Educational leadership**.

See:

Guide to the National Quality Framework - Assessment guide for meeting Element 7.2.2.

Activity

In two minutes, list the ways you have made a difference to, or influenced, quality outcomes for children at the service.

Encourage educators at your service to reflect on their achievements in this area.
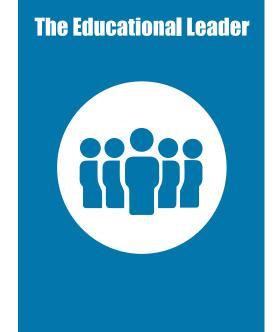
Activity

List your top five achievements since starting in the educational leader role.

Invite educators to identify strengths they believe you bring to the team.

Activity

List five things you believe that you can offer others, through mentoring, and five things that you would like to be individually mentored on.

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Activity

Consider this aspirational quote:

'The function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers.'

(Ralph Nader)

Identify ways that you are creating, or could create, more leaders within your educator team/s.

Consider what opportunities currently exist and what opportunities could be developed.

Activity

Register your educational team as a *BeYou* **Learning Community** and commit to a whole-learning-community approach to mental health and wellbeing.

To get started:

https://beyou.edu.au/account/learning-community/apply

Activity

At a team meeting, use the guided conversation, four-step **'Circle of Change' model** (Cartmel et al, 2015) to support educators to engage in reflective practice:

Step 1: Deconstruct

Step 2: Confront

Step 3: Theorise

Step 4: Think otherwise

See:

The Educational Leader Resource: Part Two - Reflection.

Activity

View *The Educational Leader Resource* **videos** to listen to different perspectives on educational leadership.

See:

https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/educational-leadership

Activity

Review your educator and team meeting administration processes and documentation.

Are they effective, efficient and accessible?

The Educational Leader Resource includes helpful sample templates for meeting administration. These are located at the back of the resource.

Activity

At a team meeting, invite educators to share their current **educational program documentation**, such as children's assessments or evaluations. **(Regulation 75)**

As a team, reflect on whether this current documentation is:

- capturing meaningful assessment/evaluation of children's learning and development
- supporting curriculum decision-making
- impacting on interactions with children
- achievable, on a long-term basis
- readily understandable by educators
- readily understandable by families.

As educational leader, how could you lead any changes to improve practices?

Activity

At a team meeting, brainstorm possible **investigations, new approaches or action research** that the educational leader could implement to enhance understanding of practice or potentially improve practice.

See:

The Educational Leader Resource: Part Three.

Activity

Workplace wellbeing impacts educator capacity to provide high quality education and care.

To improve understanding of educator wellbeing and enable responsiveness to wellbeing needs, conduct a wellbeing survey of educators.

Review the survey findings and consider what could be promoted or changed to support and improve educator wellbeing.

See: **BeYou**

https://beyou.edu.au/fact-sheets/your-wellbeing/staff-wellbeing

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