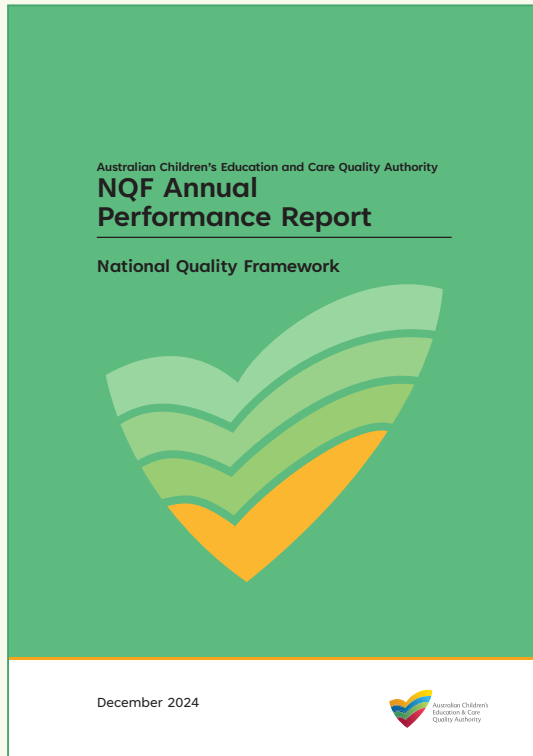


# NQF Annual Performance Report Summary 2024



More details available at [acecqa.gov.au/apr](https://acecqa.gov.au/apr)

## THE NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK

The NQF represents Australia's commitment to provide high quality children's education and care.

It aims to promote the health, safety and wellbeing, as well as ensure the educational and developmental outcomes, of children attending NQF approved services.

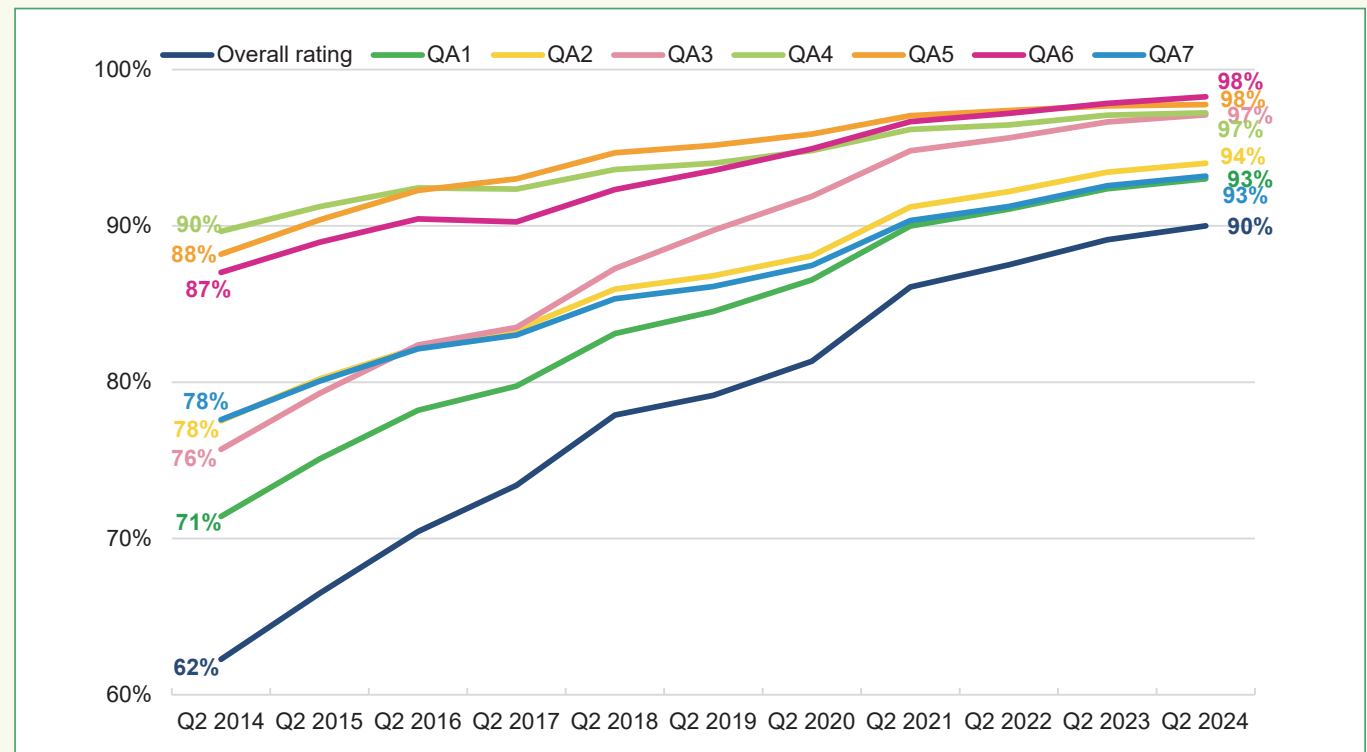
## QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The proportion of services rated **Meeting NQS** or above has increased every year, at both the overall quality rating and for each of the seven quality areas that comprise the National Quality Standard.

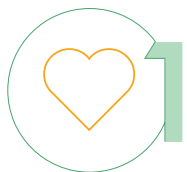
## OVERVIEW OF THE SECTOR

As at 30 June 2024:

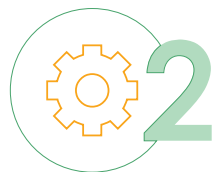
- Around 17,700 children's education and care services approved to operate under the NQF, including:
  - » 9143 long day care services
  - » 5044 outside school hours care services
  - » 3092 preschools/kindergartens
  - » 423 family day care services



\* QA1 – Educational program and practice; QA2 – Children's health and safety; QA3 – Physical environment; QA4 – Staffing arrangements; QA5 – Relationships with children; QA6 – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities; QA7 – Governance and leadership



## Chapter 1 Children's health and safety



## Chapter 2 Educational program and practice



## Chapter 3 Children from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds



## Chapter 4 Workforce



## Chapter 5 Service provider perceptions of the NQF

- At the request of the Australian Government, ACECQA undertook a review of child safety arrangements under the NQF in 2023. The review confirmed that the NQF is a robust regulatory scheme with a strong focus on continuous quality improvement to ensure children are safe, healthy and thriving in approved education and care services.
- 94% of services with a published quality rating achieve Meeting National Quality Standard or above for children's health and safety – the highest proportion since the introduction of the NQF in 2012.
- The rate of reported serious incidents in 2023/24 was 148 per 100 approved services, higher than the rate of 139 in 2022/23.
- The rate of confirmed breaches in 2023/24 was 201 per 100 approved services, higher than the rate of 193 in 2022/23.
- 93% of services with a published quality rating achieve Meeting NQS or above for educational program and practice – the highest proportion since the introduction of the NQF in 2012.
- For the first time, more than three-quarters (76%) of family day care services are rated Meeting NQS or above, up from half (50%) six years ago.
- There is a high degree of correlation between performance against educational program and practice (Quality Area 1), and leadership (Standard 7.2). This demonstrates the critical role of educational leadership in ensuring high quality educational programs.
- Children from disadvantaged backgrounds reap the greatest benefit from quality early education and care.
- Australian researchers from the Australian Education Research Organisation and the Queensland Brain Institute recently found that children who attended a service rated Exceeding NQS had consistently lower rates of developmental vulnerability than children in services rated Working Towards NQS.
- While the proportion of services in the most disadvantaged areas rated Meeting NQS or above has increased steadily since 2017, there remains a persistent and widening gap when compared to the proportion of services in the most advantaged areas.
- *Shaping Our Future* (2022-2031) is the ten-year national workforce strategy for the children's education and care sector, which aims to ensure a sustainable, high-quality workforce.
- Almost 10% of services hold a staffing waiver, with the proportion rising to 16% for long day care services. These waivers mostly relate to temporary issues in meeting early childhood teacher staffing requirements.
- The number of enrolments in the Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care has decreased from just under 75,000 in 2016 to less than 25,000 in 2023, with the current entry requirement having a significant impact on the number of people who are eligible to apply to undertake the qualification.
- Less than one third (30%) of early childhood initial teacher education students who commenced their studies in 2019 completed their studies within four years.
- Governments have been committed to monitoring and reducing unnecessary burden associated with the National Quality Framework since its introduction in 2012.
- In June 2024, ACECQA invited all approved providers to participate in the seventh survey on this topic. Overall, 2,100 approved providers responded, equating to a response rate of 34%.
- The survey found:
  - » overall support for the NQF remains strong, above 95% across all seven surveys undertaken by ACECQA.
  - » the proportion of respondents selecting a rating of 'very burdensome' for their perception of administrative burden has slightly decreased in the latest survey, ending a sequence of increases since the 2017 survey.