

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) from the Hard to Reach Staff

Quality Area 1:

1. Why do we have to do this?
2. When do we have time to interact with the children is we are doing all this documentation?
3. Is this my role? I'm just a Cert 3?
4. I can't do this!
5. I don't do computers!
6. I'm not sure what to do...
7. Who are we doing this for?
8. Is it enough?
9. Who is it for?
10. How do I choose what to document? And who are we aiming it at?

Our responses to question 10:

- Document relevant information that is related to children's current interests and strengths. Don't write what you can actually 'see' in the photo. Write in terms that are easily understood by all – aiming at parents. A photo tells 'a thousand words'.
- Aim documentation at parents – referencing the EYLF for educators and any visitors that might arrive (ie. Spot checks).
- Document the important or teachable moments / interests that you observe with the individual child.
- Always refer back to 'better outcomes for children'
- Meaningful moments, children's interests, relationships, learning outcomes and the child.

Quality Area 2:

1. Why do we need to update our policies?
2. So why don't children (aged 3-5) have to sleep during the day?
3. Why do we need to let parents know what their child has eaten when parents pack their own food?
4. How do we encourage parents to send 'healthy food'?
5. Why can some children's anaphylaxis medication be kept in the fridge and others kept in a locked cupboard?
6. Why can't children brush their teeth at child care?

Our responses to question 2:

- Some may not need it! They have a choice.
- Beds available if needed – quiet time
- All children rest – those that need a nap have one.
- Respect family's needs and balance these with children's needs – quiet time offered for all children.

- In our 3-5s room, the children that sleep go into our 0-3 room and I swap and take their children that don't (or won't) sleep.
- Children that need a sleep have the opportunity.

Quality Area 3:

1. How do we bring natural elements into the playground?
2. How do we handle indoor and outdoor time at the same time?
3. Fence heights around the whole yard?

Our responses to question 1:

- Small tree cut offs / logs
- Leaves in baskets
- Boulders, stones, stepping stones
- Hanging pots, pots, plants on walls
- Landscape gardener invited to the centre, someone with quality references from other centres – design a plan that can be implemented and added to by educators and families that reflects the centre community
- Tap into parents skills, interests and qualifications
- All of the above! Refer to the EYLF / NQF, lots of discussions, collaborative approach (keep the faith!)
- Pots with plants, put in a vegetable garden bed.

Quality Area 4:

1. How do we fairly program (ie. who gets what hours)?
2. What other ways can we think of to have more programming opportunities?
3. Why do we have to sign in and out as the Nominated / Certified Supervisors?
4. Are we meant to have the same ratios over meal breaks and programming times?

Our responses to question 4:

- Yes? Burnout
- Change break times and programming times
- Yes, according to Regs – even when children are sleeping. Can be tricky and seem like a waste of time when all children are asleep.
- Get someone in just for lunch cover.

Quality Area 5:

1. How do you deal with children that are burnt out and not coping with care and make staff not get frustrated with them?
2. How can play be learning?
3. What are strategies for comforting children that don't want you to comfort them?
4. How do we deal with toys that come in from home?

Our responses to question 4:

- Secret bag – take turns
- Birthday toy
- As a comfort toy
- Basket in office or out of sight until they go home
- We have a rule that no toys from home (as they can get lost and cause conflicts / sadness). However if parent using it as a settling / separation technique we let parent know we will put the toy aside as soon as the child is occupied or no longer needs it.
- Have a special day for the children to do news with something special and send out a note to parents in advance
- "Project Wombat's Holiday" – the children in our 0-3 room (Wombat Room) each have a turn to take home Wally-the-Wombat and take photos to add to a photo album about the week their family shares with Wally.
- Balance between child / family needs and the centre's needs.

Quality Area 6:

1. Why do children and families need to come to enrolment / orientation?
2. Why do we need to be involved within the community?
3. How do we document our involvement with this community – the level of?
4. How do we get involved within the community?
5. How do we get families involved?

Our responses to question 3:

- In day books
- Photos
- Newsletters
- Excursion evaluations
- Newspaper
- Document conversations with parents in our room diary...even if it's minor, it's still involvement
- Special events book – document welcome night, Mother's Day, Father's Day, afternoon teas, special visitors, excursions
- Discussions at meetings – staff and committee and minute these.

Group Work – Breaking Down Quality Area 4

4.1 What is it about?

- Qualifications
- Ratios
- Team dynamics – balance of years of experience
- Consistency of staffing
- Nominated Supervisor / Certified Supervisors available at all times
- Educational Leader – defining roles and responsibilities, professional development opportunities, documenting their attendance, arranging programming times for shared learning and thinking, room leader meetings. How do they support other educators?
- Displaying who is in charge and who is the Educational Leader
- Ratios and breaks

4.2 What is it about?

- Code of ethics and conduct (ECA Code of Ethics and service code of conduct)
- Understanding the philosophy
- Culture of the service

4.2.1

- Discussions at staff meetings
- Job descriptions
- Policies
- Consistency of staffing
- Recruitment of Cert 3 for casual staff

4.2.2

- Evident in everyday practice
- Room meeting / staff meeting minutes
- Team building
- Communication books
- Gratitude book – what are we grateful for?

4.2.3

- Strengths are used in program development
- 'Act of Kindness' tree
- Strengths and virtues document
- Seen in everyday practice