

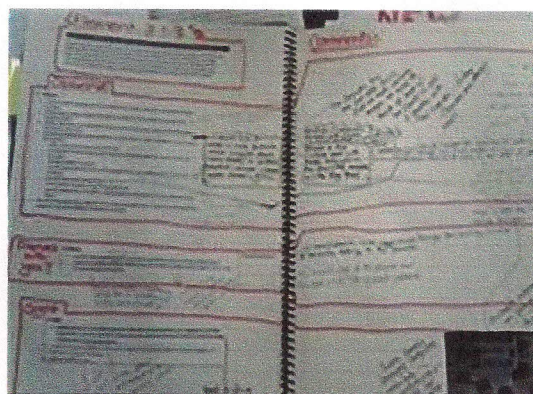


Our Journey with the National Quality Framework

Annie O'Sullivan and Kellie Henson are co-owners and Directors of Little Cherubs Children's Centre in Gerringong. They have always endeavoured to achieve high quality and have done so through Accreditation. With the introduction of the National Quality Framework they decided to embrace the National Quality Standard as a team. Annie and Kellie joined the NQF Preparation Working Group in Wollongong as a means of networking, gathering information, tips and as a source of motivation.

How our self-assessment process began

After the first meeting of the NQF Preparation Working Group, we took ideas from the group back to a team meeting and decided the best way to tackle the NQS was to break it down into smaller 'chunks'. We chose Quality Area 3: Physical Environment to work on first. We used a visual diary and 'cut up' the standards and elements and divided them into Observe, Discuss and Sight. We glued each component into the diary leaving room for educators to reflect and comment on the following:



- What are our strengths?
- What areas need improving? Suggested improvements?
- Some reflective questions around current practice?
- What elements require further reflection by the whole team?

Every educator has time off the floor each week for dedicated reflection. We now often observe educators spontaneously jotting ideas as they come to mind throughout their busy days.

What will we discuss and reflect upon?

Prior to a staff meeting we formulated a Quality Improvement Plan for this quality area based on

evidence from our reflections. This information formed the next section of the diary and provided insight into-What we would discuss and reflect upon?

We continue to gather resources from readings, visits to other centres, seek input from families, children, other professionals and our own professional development. We reflected on our philosophy, policies and the new Regulations in relation to this area and this formed the next section of our diary.

Including families

To build on family involvement we made a wall chart and placed it on the door for families to access. We creatively decorated it to draw the children and families attention and titled it *Celebrating our Physical Environment*. We asked the question-What do you like best? It provided us with the most comments we have ever received from families and the children.

Celebrating our strengths

Every educator brings unique and valued comments to the book. As a motivator at our last staff meeting we concentrated on the strengths within the team. We made named envelopes for each educator then cut out a number of hearts. We then wrote two strengths for each educator and ourselves and placed these in the envelopes. We encouraged educators to open their envelope and read aloud their strengths. You could feel empowerment taking place as we read our strengths. It was amazing. We believe it helped the educators to believe in themselves as valued contributors to our team.

The next step

By now as you can imagine *Our Physical Environment* diary has grown into an amazing, living document! It is very organic in its form...not 'pretty', but it truly reflects our community. We have now moved onto Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children and are following the same process, but this does not mean we are finished with the physical environment.

Coming soon!

The Children's Services Central **Professional Development Calendar** will be distributed to services in mid to late January 2012 and will be available electronically on the website at this time. Please remember to get your bookings in early to avoid disappointment.

For more information visit www.cscentral.org.au

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