



National Quality Framework

E-Tips



Gai Lindsay

Project Officer, Preschool Growth Program

Gai holds a Diploma of Teaching (ECE) and a Bachelor of Education Studies. Gai has worked as a preschool teacher and director for 20 years, largely serving in community-based preschools in NSW. She is a passionate advocate for community-based services and has been very active in the Children's Choice Campaign, currently serving as a moderator of the NSW preschools e-group. In recent years, Gai has been honoured to receive awards for her work including a CeeCe's Advocacy Award (2007) and an ACE award for Outstanding Achievement in Education (2008) and a 2008 REAIE scholarship to participate in the 2008 study tour to Reggio Emilia, Italy. Gai is very excited about the opportunity to support and affirm the efforts of directors, preschool staff, families and committees to build capacity and viability for community-based preschools in NSW.



I sense urgency in the early childhood sector to engage, understand, apply, assimilate and embrace the National Quality Agenda and all of the new ideas that encompasses. There is great excitement for early childhood professionals to see early childhood issues rating so highly in the national agenda. It is satisfying to be part of the development of a new culture of 'early childhood' in Australia...

BUT...

"Hands up" for those feeling just a little bit overwhelmed!

Tip #90

Take TIME and slow down the NQF train!

I would like to encourage us all to take a deepbreath and to think about the value in slowing down and taking time to ensure that our NQF journey is meaningful and authentic for all of the staff in a children's service. It is too often the case that the leader in a service will charge ahead, read and assimilate new ideas (and apply them) much faster than others in the team are comfortable with.

Tip #91

Reflect on the challenge of leading a team.

I speak from experience and, as a Director in a preschool, I was often guilty of being so excited about the potential in a new idea or philosophy that I would neglect to ensure that my colleagues had the time to embrace the vision I had in a way that was authentic for them. A workshop on team dynamics with Colin Slattery (Semann & Slattery) assisted me greatly in being aware of this and suggested an analogy that supported me to reflect on the challenge of leading a team.

I hope that this story may be helpful for you as you explore the NQF with your early childhood colleagues and the children and families in your communities.

Colin suggested that the service is like a train on a journey with the team's leader driving the train and stoking the engine. Others are along for the journey and their comfort level, feelings and enjoyment of the journey are highly affected by what the 'driver' of the train gets up to. The engine driver has a clear view of the track ahead and so feels quite confident to speed the train up (furiously shovelling coal into the engine!). Some passengers in the train will be in the carriages just behind the engine and can also see the way ahead and feel reasonably comfortable when the train takes some corners at a faster rate. They may even feel comfortable enough to suggest a new direction and take a turn at stoking the engine themselves from time to time.

The analogy could go on and be quite lengthy, but the upshot of the imagery is to remember the people coming along for the ride in the caboose at the end of the train. Their idea of a comfortable journey is that they can clearly view the scenery along the way (rather than it being a confusing blur!); travel at a leisurely pace and be prepared and forewarned about bends in the track when they occur. They also hope to arrive (intact and sane!) at the same destination as the engine driver and the other passengers. My advice to all of the EC train drivers out there is to ensure that your train does not derail or run out of steam along the way.

Tip #92

For the NQF journey to be authentic – everyone must be 'on board' and hopefully stay on board.

We also need to think of the diverse travelling needs of all of the passengers on the NQF train. In children's services, this is not only the educators. Are there carriages on your train for the children and the families and

the management team of the service? Is the journey one that makes sense to all of them?

Tip #93

So, on your NQF journey take the time to reflect and value the landscape.

Stop the train at a way station now and then, so that everyone can think about where they have come from and together plan the way ahead. Consider the need to drive the train more carefully around philosophical bends so that everyone on board comes along for the ride.

Tip #94

Sometimes we are all in such a hurry that we forget to “value time FOR children as well as time WITH children.” (Gambetti in Edwards, Gandini & Forman (eds.), 1998 p.427.)

Take the time to work as a team and engage in pedagogical reflection that results in meaningful continuous improvement for all staff. Accept that authentic change takes time.

Tip #95

The NQF is not a destination but a journey.

We do not have to see or even build the entire track straight away. We have time to enjoy the journey and the ‘track’ and the ‘train’ will and should look different for every service.

All Aboard? Enjoy the journey!

Our thanks to Gai Lindsay.

Do you have questions about the National Quality Framework?

The **National Quality Framework (NQF)** will bring about key changes for children’s services throughout Australia. Children’s Services Central will provide you with more information through the E-Tips. If you have any questions about the NQF, please email us on info@cscentral.org.au.

For more information on the NQF visit www.cccnsw.org.au/changes.

Children's Services Central - Supporting the provision of quality, inclusive, children's services

Children's Services Central is the Professional Support Co-ordinator in New South Wales and is an initiative funded by the Australian Government under the Inclusion and Professional Support Program. Children's Services Central is managed by a consortium of key organisations that resource and support the sectors of children's services in New South Wales.

Children's Services Central
Building 21, 142 Addison Road, Marrickville NSW 2204
Ph: 02 8922 6444 | Fax: 02 8922 6445
info@cscentral.org.au
ABN 81 174 903 921