

In school age education and care services, the educational program supports learning through play and leisure, as outlined in the national approved learning framework, *My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia* (MTOF V2.0 2022).

The Australian, State and Territory Education Ministers have agreed to changes to the National Quality Framework (NQF). This includes changes to documentation requirements in some states.

DOCUMENTING PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOL AGE SERVICES



This information sheet describes:

- changes in documentation requirements for school age children in South Australia (SA), Tasmania (Tas), Victoria (Vic) and Western Australia (WA)
- continuing documentation requirements for school age care services in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT)
- documentation requirements for all school age care services.

WHEN DO THE CHANGES START?

The changes for SA, Tas, Vic and WA will commence in late 2023.

Where can I get further information?

Visit <https://www.nqfreview.com.au/>

Visit your [regulatory authority website](#)

AMENDED LEGISLATION

- SA – Regulation 325B Programs for children over preschool age
- Tas – Regulation 345A Programs for children over preschool age
- Vic – Regulation 359A Programs for children over school age
- WA – Regulation 373A Programs for children over school age.

CHANGES TO THE DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN IN SA, TAS, VIC AND WA

From 01 July 2023, services that educate and care for school age children in SA, Tas and Vic will start to follow the same documentation requirements as services in the Northern Territory (NT), New South Wales (NSW) and Queensland (Qld). They will not be required to keep documentation of individual evaluations of school age children. Please check the legislation for the commencement date in WA.

To meet these requirements, the approved provider must ensure that evidence about the development of the educational program for a child over preschool age is documented.

Services are required to understand each child and their strengths, ideas, abilities and interests and their progress across the learning outcomes as part of the planning cycle. This can be reflected in documenting how and why the educational program has been developed to support all children to participate in the program.

Services in all states and territories with a mix of school age children and children preschool age or under are required to document individual child assessments for the children preschool age or under and align these to the relevant approved learning framework. In preparing the documentation, services must consider the period of time that the child is being educated and cared for by the service ([regulation 74](#)).

NO CHANGES TO THE DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ACT

There is no change to the current documentation requirements for school age services in the ACT. This will ensure that the program reflects the individual needs of the specific community of children attending the service, proportionate to each individual child's needs and attendance rate as per the national approved learning framework, My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia (MTOP V2.0 2022).

Therefore, evaluations of each child's wellbeing, development and learning continue to be required for school age children educated and cared for by services in the ACT. The evaluation should be proportionate to the amount of time the child attends the service and the complexity of their individual needs. Children with a disability or behavioural challenges will need greater support and consideration. This is in accordance with established regulatory practice in the ACT.

WHAT DOES 'PROPORTIONATE TO A CHILD'S PATTERN OF ATTENDANCE AND COMPLEXITY OF NEEDS' MEAN?

Documenting evaluations of a child's wellbeing, development and learning can be impacted by varying (and sometimes infrequent) attendance patterns of school age children, in comparison to other service types.

Therefore, the evaluation documentation that is collected by educators should be comparable to a child's pattern of attendance at the service. Educators should also consider the complexity of every child's needs when collecting or documenting an evaluation of their wellbeing, learning and development.

Authorised officers will consider a range of factors when determining if a service's evaluation practices meet the intent of Quality Area 1 (Educational Program and Practice) of the National Quality Standard (NQS) and [regulation 74](#), including:

- children attending the service frequently. For example, children who attend regular morning and afternoon sessions each week will have more information collected and used to inform curriculum decision-making for their involvement and progress in the program over the course of a year.
- children's individual needs and how educators have considered these in the detail and scope of the children's documentation.

Documentation of the program is a key component of an ongoing planning cycle that enhances and extends child and young person's wellbeing, learning and development.

MTOP defines evaluation as practices that involve educators' critical reflection on the effectiveness of their planning and implementation of curriculum (MTOP V 2.0, p. 28).

DOCUMENTING THE PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL AGE CARE SERVICES

Educators enact and extend play and leisure activities that are both active and passive, structured and spontaneous, including mealtimes, personal care routines, and indoor and outdoor environments. The program includes all the spontaneous and planned experiences for children at the service designed to support their wellbeing and facilitate learning. It includes all the interactions, experiences, routines and events.

Services should ensure the program:

- is based on the [approved learning framework](#) and delivered in accordance with the framework
- is based on the developmental needs, interests, and experiences of each child
- is designed to consider individual differences of each child
- contributes to the five learning outcomes for each child.

The above information is in accordance with [National Regulation 74](#) and therefore applies to all services that are in scope of the National Quality Framework (NQF). Services located in SA, Tas, Vic, WA, NT, NSW and Qld are not required to keep documentation of individual evaluations of school age children. They will, however, need to document the educational program.

HOW ARE SCHOOL AGE SERVICES UNIQUE?

The NQS acknowledges middle childhood and recreational programs for school age children as distinct from early childhood programs. School age education and care programs supplement children's formal schooling. The educational program is focused on active learning, social development, and wellbeing, and recreational or leisure activities to support each child's continuity of learning.

WHY IS DOCUMENTATION IMPORTANT?

Documentation makes children and young people's learning visible and helps ensure children and young people's wellbeing and need for rest, leisure and engagement are being met through the program.

WHAT ARE THE DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN?

School age education and care services across Australia are required to document the educational program. In the ACT, evaluations of each child's wellbeing, learning and development are also required (see 'Continuing documentation requirements for ACT' above).

WHAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING DOCUMENTATION?

There is no prescribed method in the National Law or Regulations for documenting the educational program, assessments or evaluations. There are many different electronic, visual and paper based ways to document. A service can explore a range of styles and methods to determine what works best for their children, families and educators.

In preparing documentation, it is important to consider:

- the period of time a child is being educated and cared for by the service
- how the documentation will be used by educators at the service
- how the learning outcomes outlined in the approved learning framework are reflected
- whether the documentation is understood and available to educators and families.

INVOLVING CHILDREN IN DOCUMENTATION

School age care services should have processes to enable children and young people to influence the program in response to their own strengths, ideas, abilities, and interests, and be able to show how this occurs.

The service should also demonstrate an effective process to ensure each child's participation and engagement in the program. This may be demonstrated by educators engaging in critical conversations with children and young people and documenting the actions taken resulting from these conversations. Ensuring each child is included in the program doesn't necessarily mean a large volume of written documentation.

The focus is on ensuring the service is inclusive of all children and young people. For example, the service may have noted that many children and young people are interested in a project, and this is reflected in the program. The program should also reflect how the wellbeing, learning and development of a child that is not interested in the project has been planned for. When educators support each child's interests, learning and developmental needs, they can effectively communicate their understandings of the child and include them within the educational program.

HOW MUCH TO DOCUMENT?

Educators and service leaders can make the decisions about how much to document, based on their unique context, the age of children attending, attendance patterns and how the documentation will be used by educators and with families.

A key consideration is the amount of time that the child is being educated and cared for by the service. For example, children attending the service frequently are likely to have more information collected and documented over the course of the year than those attending infrequently. However, this will depend on the individual needs of the child.

Educators and service leaders are encouraged to focus on the quality of the documentation and how it is used to enhance wellbeing, learning and development outcomes for children rather than the quantity of documentation collected for individual children.

Documentation occurs at every stage of the planning cycle and making it visible encourages the revisiting of ideas and concepts. Providing children and young people with opportunities to participate in documentation and assessment of wellbeing, learning and development supports children to become effective communicators.

TYPES AND FORMATS OF DOCUMENTATION

There are many ways to document evaluations of children and young people's learning – electronic, audio, visual, digital and paper-based.. Each format must demonstrate analysis of their learning to meet the requirements of the National Regulations. Quality documentation focuses on an aspect of learning, not just 'what we did'.

Some examples which an authorised officer may sight include enrolment information, details on children and young people's strengths, ideas, abilities and interests along with ongoing evidence of their engagement and participation in the program. Other examples may include:

- **Learning stories or narratives of key events that demonstrate:**
 - » educators understand the children and young people and their own practice, have identified outcomes, and suggested ways to build on children's learning and development
 - » children and young people have described the experience and why it was important to them.
- **Photographs with captions, photographic sequences or video clips that demonstrate:**
 - » children and young people showing themselves as active participants and decision-makers
 - » the experiences children and young people are engaged in, their skills, development and progress.
- **Observations or reviews that demonstrate:**
 - » educators evaluating events and activities for extension
 - » children and young people's feedback has contributed to a decision to continue or extend on an aspect of the program.
- **Journals that demonstrate:**
 - » educators reflecting on their own practice and interpreting the feelings, thoughts and ideas of children, families, and colleagues.
- **Examples of children and young people's work, contributions and learning**
 - » this could include work sample's such as drawings, reflections or photographs that children have created, as well as children and young people's thoughts and ideas about the program and their learnings.

WHAT DOCUMENTATION WILL AN AUTHORISED OFFICER CONSIDER IN THE ASSESSMENT AND RATING PROCESS?

In determining if a service is maintaining appropriate and relevant documentation, the authorised officer may discuss with your service how educators:

- articulate how each child is reflected within programmed experiences
- obtain and document children's ideas, interests and challenges
- gather information about common trends and how this is included in the program
- collect information regarding all children
- support children to document their ideas, abilities and challenges
- ensure that age-appropriate experiences and resources are provided to children
- make decisions about the educational program
- make decisions about the type and format of documentation
- ensure documentation is readily available and understood by families
- involve children in documenting their own wellbeing, development and learning progress
- are responsive to children's strengths, ideas, abilities and interests in developing the program.

They may also observe practices, interactions and relationships that demonstrate:

- mind maps and surveys being completed by children and educators
- children sharing their ideas with peers and educators using this information to incorporate into the program
- children and young people conducting surveys to influence changes in the program and routine
- children and young people planning, conducting, and sharing meetings with their peers to influence the program
- children and young people recording their own program ideas and risk assessments and these ideas being reflected in planned experiences
- educators, children, and young people reflecting together on what aspects of the program work and what areas can be improved
- conversations between children, young people, and educators about aspects of practice and ideas being implemented
- educators working with children and young people to reflect on their own learning and experiences.

They may sight documentation:

- about children and young people's participation in the program that is collected by the child and by educators in a format that is interesting for the children, young people and their families
- showing the evaluation of children and young people's wellbeing, learning and development, including how they feel and what they know, can do and understand, and further goals established with input from children and young people
- about programs that include planned experiences and/or strategies to support program goals
- showing examples of children and young people having opportunities to contribute to program planning and evaluation.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Visit the [ACECQA website](#) to view:

- the [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#)
- the [national approved learning frameworks](#)

These have recently been updated. Version 2 of Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia and My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia are now available and approved providers, services and educators should familiarise themselves with these versions as soon as practicable. Both versions can be used throughout 2023, before the original versions of these documents are revoked from 1 February 2024.

Victorian Department of Education of Training, [Planning for children in school age care](#)

Acknowledgment: The information in this publication is accurate pending the Australian, state and territory Education Ministers' agreement to amended regulations.