Contents

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
✓	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership

Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
Partnerships	
High expectations and equity	
Respect for diversity	
✓ Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
Practice	
Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
Learning through play	Learning through play
Intentional teaching	Intentionality
Learning environments	Environments
Cultural competence	Cultural competence
Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
Outcomes	
Children have a strong sense of identity	
Children are connected to and contribute to their world	
Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
Children are confident and involved learners	
Children are effective communicators	

Encourage sustainable practices

Sustainability means reducing our ecological footprint – our use of the earth's resources balanced with the earth's capacity to regenerate – without affecting our quality of life. All industries, including education and care services, have the opportunity to incorporate sustainability principles and processes into day-to-day operations. Sustainability principles are broadly applied to the workplace in terms of environmental, economic and social aspects. An additional principle is that of workforce sustainability: how staff are trained and retained. This has a direct impact on staff morale.

Environmental sustainability

Environmental sustainability means using the earth's resources without substantially affecting the ability of future generations to access them, including maintaining the beauty of the natural environment. Environmental sustainability is about taking things from the natural environment at a slower rate. For example, using less paper in your workplace may reduce tree logging, which may in turn reduce the amount of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. You can demonstrate this by using the three Rs – reduce, reuse and recycle – as described in the information below.

Reduce

Print or copy as few things as possible. You probably don't need a hard copy of most documents. Printing or copying on both sides of the paper dramatically reduces the amount of paper you use. Buying paper made from recycled products also reduces the environmental impact.

Reuse

Wherever possible, use the same paper again. If you have finished with a copy of something, use the reverse side for notes. If it is something that several people need to read (for example, a copy of an interesting article), consider setting up a system to circulate one copy for everyone to pass on when they have finished.

Recycle

Use a box to collect your paper for recycling at your desk, then transfer it to the recycling bin when it is full. Remember that, for some documents, it is important to comply with your organisation's requirements for storage and disposal. Some documents may need to be shredded before they are recycled to maintain confidentiality.

Information to include when developing a work plan includes:

▶ overall objective of the service

▶ objective of the proposed adjustment/change

▶ project management committee

▶ individual responsibilities of project management committee

▶ delegation of tasks, accountability and reporting procedures

▶ time requirements for project

▶ financial allocations for resources, such as human resources, equipment and time

▶ human resources, such as team members, skills and expertise

▶ terms of engagement for human resources

▶ relevant legislative guidelines

▶ contingency plans

▶ review processes.

Implement the plan

Once the plan is developed and approved, it needs to be implemented. The management team will delegate responsibilities to the members based on the actions or processes decided in the work plan. These are the specific tasks and actions that must be undertaken to advance the project. When executing the plan, organisational policies and procedures must be adhered to, including WHS and any legal requirements.

Example

Address personal issues that intrude on work

Jenna is a team leader at a long day care centre. She and Sheila are responsible for the two- and three-year-old room.

Over a period of a few days, Jenna notices that Sheila is looking pale and tired and is not her usual happy, energetic self. Jenna discreetly turns the conversation to give Sheila an opportunity to talk about how she's feeling, but Sheila doesn't respond. Jenna notices that Sheila's personal issues continue to intrude on her work.

After several days, when the situation hasn't changed, Jenna takes Sheila aside to find out what's wrong. Sheila has family problems and is struggling to balance the extra pressures at home with work. Sheila is embarrassed to be what she calls 'a burden' to her team mate. She also says she's aware that the centre finds it hard to get casual relief staff, so she's reluctant to take time off. Moreover, while she loves the children dearly, at the moment she is struggling to cope with the energetic toddlers in this age group.

Jenna consults with the service director and proposes that a meeting be held with Sheila to discuss her situation, with the suggestion that she be moved into an older group and her shifts rearranged to try to accommodate her immediate needs.

Jenna also suggests that the service focus on finding reliable casual relief staff so that regular staff don't feel as though they are unable to take any time off when they need it.

WHS records must be kept on the topics of:

▶ hazard identification

▶ risk assessment, monitoring and review

▶ maintenance history

▶ accidents, incidents, hazards and near misses

▶ WHS training

▶ ongoing improvement strategies.

Example

Ensure workers comply with correct work practices

Sally is the coordinator of an education and care service. She finds that staff use disposable gloves inappropriately. Some staff are unnecessarily using gloves for almost every task, leading to a shortage of gloves. Other staff do not use gloves in situations where it would be safer to do so, potentially compromising the hygiene of the service.

Sally reads the workplace procedure relating to personal protective equipment (PPE), infection control and the use of disposable gloves, and finds it is lacking detail. It needs to be rewritten to include appropriate use of disposable gloves.

She rewrites the procedure in collaboration with the cook, a team leader and an educator. In addition, Sally suggests that the topic be raised in a meeting with all staff and that posters be placed at the site of all dispensers to encourage the safe and appropriate use of gloves.

Practice task 2

1. Outline how to actively promote compliant practices.

2. What actions can you take to collect information that contributes to the review or implementation of a work practice, policy or procedure?

Topic 2

In this topic you will learn about:

Develop and implement staffing processes

The success and effectiveness of program delivery depends on the quality of the staff, the service's capacity to recruit, induct and develop them, and the effectiveness of performance monitoring, training and development. Most supervisors and managers play a lead role in developing and implementing staff processes, so understanding the principles of staff management is important. You need to be able to identify human and physical resource requirements, and manage the performance and development of members of your work team.

Privacy and confidentiality laws

Each state and territory has different laws that govern privacy and confidentiality, though the guiding principles are similar. Most states and territories have laws designed to regulate how information is managed in education and care services. You should be familiar with the main points in the legislation that govern the state or territory you work in. There are also Commonwealth Acts that apply to the whole of Australia; for example, the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) protects all personal information handled by businesses.

Privacy legislation, including 13 Australian Privacy Principles, regulates how information is handled by businesses and Australian government agencies.

Find more information about privacy laws at: http://aspirelr.link/oaic

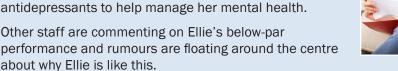# Why is confidentiality so important?

Releasing service information could compromise the privacy of children, families, staff and the service as a whole. It may even compromise people's reputations, professional standing or personal safety. It is also detrimental to the image of the service.

All education and care services have a confidentiality or privacy policy to ensure information held by the service is managed in accordance with relevant legislation. Some services may also have a social media policy to monitor and regulate who may comment publicly about service matters.

Example

Dealing with personal information about staff

Ellie is currently experiencing personal difficulties. In addition to caring for an elderly parent whose recent illness has required her to take time off work, Ellie has also been diagnosed with a tumour which, while now confirmed as benign, has caused her considerable anxiety. During this time, Ellie has been taking antidepressants to help manage her mental health.

Other staff are commenting on Ellie's below-par performance and rumours are floating around the centre about why Ellie is like this.

Assistant director Joanne, who is aware of the reasons behind Ellie's absences and performance issues, decides to deal with the rumours. With Ellie's permission she tells Ellie's colleagues of the benign growth and the medication Ellie is taking to stabilise her moods.

When staff become aware of the difficulties Ellie is dealing with, they immediately rally round to support her as much as possible.

2C Participating in recruitment processes

Coordinators and supervisors are often required to participate in recruiting new staff. This may involve:

▶ reviewing a position description to ensure it still aligns with the actual job role

▶ advertising the position

▶ shortlisting candidates

▶ interviewing and then selecting the best candidate.

Education and care involves significant responsibility for the social, emotional and physical development of young children. The recruitment process is critical as the people you choose need to have the knowledge, skills and qualifications to do the job, and also the right attitude and demeanour.

Recruitment process

Your service's recruitment policies, procedures and strategies define how you recruit staff and should focus on attracting the best candidate for the role. You must always follow your state or territory equal opportunity and anti-discrimination laws as well as diversity principles to ensure that all people are treated with equity throughout the recruitment process. Make sure you are familiar with the wording you can and cannot use.

The recruitment process generally involves following a series of defined steps, beginning with the tasks shown here.

Steps in the recruitment process

1 Identify the need for additional staff.

2 Review or prepare a position description.

3 Advertise the position.

4 Take applicants through a selection process.

5 Select the best applicant.

Skills to assess of the interviewee include:

▶ their knowledge of the job requirements

▶ evidence of the skills they have

▶ how they use problem-solving skills in the workplace

▶ their capacity to deal with interpersonal conflict in the workplace

▶ what motivates them

▶ in what type of working environment they are most productive.

Example

An interview process

An education and care service's group leader, Arlene, is leaving the service soon. Arlene is asked to participate in the recruitment of her replacement because she knows the children in her group so well and has a good understanding of the type of person best suited to the role.

During the interviews, Arlene is able to ask job-specific questions. One of the children in her group has autism, so during the interview Arlene asks targeted questions to establish each candidate's skills and knowledge for assisting children with autism, as well as getting a feel for whether the candidate has the capacity to work in the education and care setting.

Finally, time is allocated for each candidate to visit Arlene's room where she observes each one interacting with the children.

Practice task 6

1. Write a job description for a diploma-level educator position using this template. Include all relevant information. Ensure that your information is current (use the internet to check for appropriate legislation).

Job description
Job title:
Salary:
Location:
Classification and position number:
Overview of service's business activities and structure:
Purpose of job:
Key relationships and accountability:
Key duties and tasks:

Training

▶ Identify training possibilities to address gaps in performance.

▶ Consider all options for training and help the staff member decide the best methods.

▶ Provide information about where to access the training or professional development, and advise on the support they will receive from the service.

Develop a learning plan

Once a person's learning needs are identified, you need to prepare an individual learning plan. This outlines the objectives of the training and shows when and how learning needs will be met. It should indicate:

▶ priority areas

▶ the time frame for achieving the objectives

▶ training methods to be used

▶ specific skills or knowledge to be taught or developed.

It is useful to have a formal process in place to organise a learning plan and to help team members understand the need for the skill and how it will benefit them in their work. Encourage them to contribute to solutions for their learning.

Consult to finalise the plan

Finalise the learning plan together so both you and the employee understand what has been decided. In consultation with the team member, discuss the issues outlined below.

Skills, goals and needs

▶ The skill or learning need

▶ Learning goal/s

▶ How the skill corresponds with tasks

▶ How the skill corresponds with learning and team goals

▶ How the skill corresponds with the service's objectives

▶ How the skill will benefit the individual, team and service

Learning support

▶ Options available to address the need

▶ Preferred learning style

▶ How skill achievement will be demonstrated

▶ Resources needed, including facilities, equipment and time

▶ The cost of training

▶ Arrangements that need to be made in the workplace

Emergency procedures

During an emergency, everybody needs to follow the emergency procedures, know where exits are located and participate in emergency evacuation drills so they know how to get themselves and others out of the building quickly.

People may have different responsibilities during an emergency because they have received special training.

You may need to use emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers and hoses, fire blankets and first aid kits.

Watch this video to learn about what constitutes an emergency.

v0076

Example

Record the training need

Peta has been at the service for 12 months. She is enrolled and progressing well in Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care. Gina, the centre's director, meets with Peta to discuss additional training needs for the next six months. Peta is feeling motivated to access training through internal and external methods. Peta's record of training needs is shown below.

Training and development record

Staff member: Peta				Date: 1 June 2018	
Task required	**Skill level required**	**Skill level possessed**	**Training to achieve desired work outcomes**	**Who is responsible**	**By when**
Lift children out of cots	Knowledge of correct manual handling of children	Basic	Formal instruction in-house at next staff meeting	Gina	12 June 2018
Assist with behaviour management	Sound knowledge of child development and behaviour management strategies	Beginning	Attendance at workshop	Peta	30 July 2018
Gain understanding of EYLF	Basic	Nil	Read EYLF	Gina to provide documentation. Peta to read and discuss with Gina and team leader.	1 August 2018

2. What are some common service and referral bodies you may collaborate with?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Summary

▶ Education and care services collect and store sensitive information relating to staff and staffing processes. Policies and procedures should clearly detail how to handle and store confidential information.

▶ Coordinators and supervisors need to understand privacy and confidentiality obligations and responsibilities.

▶ Adequate human and physical resources are required to provide quality education and care. Legislation, government policy and service policies and procedures outline the requirements for quality care, including building requirements, staff-to-child ratios, and the materials and equipment required.

▶ Coordinators need to be able to identify and plan to meet the resource needs of their workplace.

▶ Recruiting, selecting and inducting new staff may involve reviewing position descriptions to ensure they align with the actual job role, advertising the position, identifying candidates for short-listing, interviewing and then selecting the best candidate.

▶ Service procedures should identify how to conduct the recruitment process.

▶ The objective of orientation and induction is to ensure that new staff members are provided with the necessary information, resources and motivation to succeed in their roles.

▶ Orientation and induction processes can also be used to equip an existing staff member with the knowledge they need to transition into a new or more senior role.

▶ When you provide instructions and additional support to all staff, this gives staff the ability to extend on and evaluate their current performance levels and the opportunity to work with assistance on those areas needing some specific attention.

▶ When you provide professional advice you should first complete some research to check your sources and details are up to date.

▶ Professional development is central to quality early childhood education, and should offer a structured process for extending staff skills and knowledge in ways that enhance program outcomes for children and offer a career pathway for staff.

▶ Other service providers may help you to gauge a level of best practice, and provide you with new knowledge, techniques or methods.

▶ Regardless of why and how you interact with and access information from others, collaboration is vital for ensuring future quality outcomes.

Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

3A Reflecting on your own practice

3B Aligning your leadership practice with the organisational philosophy

3C Maintaining professional boundaries

Maintain a professional approach to leading a work team

As a leader, you need to take responsibility for your own professional conduct, but also guide others in your service to maintain professionalism. By reflecting on your practice and making positive decisions, you are able to support your colleagues and lead the service to deliver best practice.

Methods to update skills and knowledge

Self-reflection, along with self-evaluation, involves looking at what you are doing, analysing its effectiveness, and changing to create a more suitable outcome or practice. Once you have reflected and evaluated, you may want to update your skills and knowledge to meet your expectations.

Methods for updating skills and knowledge:

▶ Completing some professional development through training, workshops, webinars, etc.
▶ Working with a mentor or gaining professional supervision and feedback
▶ Completing further study or higher qualifications
▶ Seeking advice and support from an external body or expert
▶ Reading articles, journals, newsletters and websites
▶ Networking internally in your service and externally, at conferences, meetings or online through social media
▶ Asking questions
▶ Visiting other services

Example

Take responsibility for your own actions

A delivery of essential supplies has not arrived at the centre. The director calls in Judy, the staff member responsible for preparing the order and asks her to follow up with the suppliers.

When the suppliers indicate that no order has been received, Judy is asked to explain what has gone wrong. Judy says that she put the signed purchase order form on the director's desk over ten days ago. The director denies receiving the form, making her annoyance plain. She calls the supplier to place a priority order for the supplies, knowing this will incur an additional fee. Judy is annoyed because she knows she followed procedure.

Days later, when filing some papers from her desk, the director finds the purchase order among some personnel files. The director immediately calls Judy in to admit her mistake. Judy's feelings of concern are soothed by this swift apology. Judy is aware of the director's heavy workload and knows how easily mistakes are made by people under pressure.

Both agree that ordering supplies should be a delegated responsibility – in future, Judy will place the orders herself, with the director only needing to sign off on purchases above a certain cost.

Learning checkpoint 3
Maintain a professional approach to leading a work team

Part A

Explain why it is important for a leader to take responsibility for their own behaviour. How can an effective leader achieve this?

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

> ### Case study
>
> You are the group leader of a room in a long day care service. The service has just been taken over by new owners and you are concerned that the members of your team will be stressed and unsettled by the change. Your priority is to help make the transition as smooth as possible. The new management is also planning to extend the kitchen to separate the meat preparation area from the raw food preparation area.

1. Explain how you could ensure your team's morale is maintained during the transition period.

2. What types of relationships with staff could affect your potential to lead the team, and how could this occur?

4B Communicating effectively with staff

Maintaining effective workplace relations requires effective communication skills, including open body language, active listening, and skills in conflict resolution and management. Staff need clarity about their own role and to understand expected standards. There should be acceptance of diversity, and fair and equitable working conditions for all.

To be an effective communicator, you should use methods that are positive, respectful, person-centred, empowering and responsive. Positive communication promotes the dignity and rights of the person being communicated with or about. A coordinator is legally and ethically obligated to respect the rights of staff and clients during all communication. Empowering language focuses on the person, and their goals and positive attributes.

Effective and positive communication

Communicating effectively means more than simply talking to someone; it requires active listening, observing for congruence between words and body language, and accepting others' rights to express their points of view.

An overview of the key characteristics and advantages of effective communication and listening are shown here.

Effective listening

▶ Actively listening to what the other person has to say
▶ Understanding and reading nonverbal signals, such as body language and facial expressions
▶ Using active, reflective and open-ended questions
▶ Recognising the signs of potential conflict

Effective communication

▶ Indicating that you value the other person
▶ Showing respect
▶ Helping to build rapport
▶ Assisting in developing a trusting relationship
▶ Giving the other person confidence that their perspective is valid and is being heard
▶ Helping to resolve situations of conflict

Three star rating

▶ Provide each participant with three star stickers.

▶ Ask them to place their stars on the ideas for resolution that they most agree with. They can choose one or more ideas.

▶ Use the visual representation to see which ideas for resolution most suit the whole group.

Example

Facilitate group discussion

Liz wants to get the team of staff she is currently working with involved in a group discussion regarding the policy on choosing cooking activities to be completed with children. She has noticed that sugary and salty foods are often chosen for cooking activities and this breaches the nutrition policy guidelines of foods to provide children.

Liz writes an agenda, arranges a suitable location and sets a time for the discussion. She notifies all staff and lets them know the topic by providing the agenda.

Once the meeting commences, Liz explains the purpose of the meeting, topic of discussion, goals and objectives. She includes a fun ice breaker to help staff feel relaxed.

Liz opens the discussion and then gives each staff member the chance to voice their thoughts. The discussion begins well and staff agree that the recipes they use should be more nutritious; however, they are unsure where to find suitable recipes.

Liz clarifies the group position and suggests they brainstorm ideas for collecting healthy recipes. The group shares their ideas and then each participant goes away from the discussion with a research task to complete.

Practice task 15

Read the case study and answer the questions that follow.

Case study

You are the room leader supervising Billy, who is training to be an educator. You notice that each time you request that Billy completes a cleaning task, he asks another staff member to do this for him. When you ask the other staff member what is happening, they tell you that Billy doesn't know how to complete many of the cleaning duties so they are helping him out by doing the task for him. You decide that you must have a meeting with Billy to find out about his skills and to identify any support he may need.

Take the role of the room leader and role-play this meeting with a colleague or fellow learner taking the role of Billy.

Ask a third person to evaluate the role-play with you and give you feedback about how effective your communication skills were. Summarise their response using the following observation checklist to record points for discussion.

5B Identifying areas for improvement

Many workplaces rely on work groups and team processes to achieve organisational goals. Providing quality care in an early childhood education service requires a commitment from the whole staff and individual work groups. Effective work teams rely on sound leadership, group cohesion and a commitment to organisational outcomes. In a positive work team environment, team leaders seek feedback about the effectiveness of group processes and foster an environment that is open to change.

Team meetings, whether formal or informal, are a common avenue for gathering feedback and suggestions for change. Effective leaders can use positive team energy to drive and implement change.

Effective teams

A work team is a group of well-organised, interdependent individuals who share responsibility for specific organisational outcomes. For a team to be effective, team leaders and supervisors need to focus on the tasks, relationships and attitudes of team members.

A well-formed, effective work team that is clear about its goals works best with a leader who is prepared to delegate tasks and solicit feedback from the team to inform decisions. Effective team leaders see themselves as part of the work team, not apart from it. Some characteristics of work teams are outlined in the following information.

General characteristics of work teams

▶ Established structure
▶ Interdependence between team members and a sense of team identity
▶ Particular, recognisable roles, values and norms
▶ Clearly identified common goals and tasks
▶ Patterns of communication and behaviour

Team member characteristics in effective teams

▶ Listen to each other to understand and empathise, rather than to defend or explain
▶ Speak openly, honestly and spontaneously about the ways in which their interaction is or is not fulfilling organisational objectives
▶ Deal with specific, task-related behaviours
▶ Openly inquire about how they can improve their work together as a team

4 **Listen to what the staff member says**

Is there a barrier to performing tasks to required standards, such as, materials, resources or training? If so, discuss these and develop strategies to remove barriers.

If performance issues are behavioural, turn the focus to the employee and ask them for ideas on how to improve and move toward targeted work outcomes. Ask the employee how you can help and what role they would like you to play.

5 **Agree on actions and record as an action plan**

This plan states who will do what, how it will be done and the outcomes expected. It also states the consequences for continuing non-performance.

Once agreement is reached, set review dates.

6 **Sign a formal agreement**

Both parties sign the record and a copy is given to the employee.

Counselling etiquette

The objective of counselling should be to work collaboratively with the staff member to arrive at a mutually acceptable approach to dealing with a performance issue. If you can agree on what the problem is and an acceptable solution, the long-term outcome should be positive.

If it is not dealt with in a constructive and positive manner, non-performance can manifest itself in ways that can be detrimental to the service, team, families and children. Supervisors and coordinators must have the confidence and abilities to perform counselling to address non-performance and minimise the impact on the service.

Strategies for conducting a counselling session

Effective strategies that you can use when conducting counselling sessions are outlined below.

Put the other person at ease

Put the staff member at ease. You are there to help and improve their performance.

For example, use appropriate body language and open communication. Do not use blaming language.

Clearly explain the reason for the session

There should be no ambiguity about the reason for the session. Be specific and factual.

For example, 'Iggy, in the last two weeks you have been late four times to your shift. We are here to discuss this and determine how we can stop this from occurring in the future.'

Express your thoughts clearly and honestly

Express your thoughts and feelings about the situation, emphasising its importance.

For example, 'I think we urgently need to address this due to the impact it is having on the children and the effectiveness of transitions into rooms.'

6C Monitoring and evaluating performance

Monitoring staff performance and addressing any issues is imperative to maintaining a well-functioning service. A high standard of staff performance brings many benefits to a service, most notably quality education and care, and high staff morale. Staff need to know how they are performing and have the opportunity to participate in reviewing their performance and setting goals for ongoing development.

You need to be familiar with your state or national employment awards and industrial relations processes when dealing with performance issues to ensure that workers' rights are maintained.

A performance appraisal is a common action that occurs in education and care services. It links with NQS Element 7.2.3: Educators, co-ordinators and staff members performance is regularly evaluated and individual plans are in place to support learning and development.

Performance appraisal process

The performance appraisal process must be carried out in line with service policies and procedures. This process includes complying with a number of other procedures, some of which are outlined below.

Procedures to comply with during performance management:

▶ Conducting informal reviews throughout the year
▶ Timing of formal appraisals
▶ Informing workers of a formal review
▶ Conducting the review appropriately
▶ Providing information if there is a dispute
▶ Taking follow-up action after a formal review
▶ Documenting and storing performance appraisals

Monitoring performance through appraisals

Most performance monitoring is conducted through performance appraisals. Performance appraisals deal specifically with an employee's performance over a given period of time and their ability to fulfil specific personal, team and service goals.

A performance appraisal is a tool for measuring performance against selected criteria. The criteria will be both quantitative and qualitative, providing a measure for the quality of performance as well as quantity (for example, meeting specific targets).