

COAG reforms quality reforms for childcare announced

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed today to a partnership between the Commonwealth and state and territory governments to establish a “rigorous” National Quality Agenda for early childhood education and care.

The long awaited quality changes have now been announced.

A summary of these changes **for NSW services** follows:

RATIOS

Ratios (for preschools and long day care centres:

- Babies | 1:4 | January 2012
- Toddlers | 1:5 | January 2016
- Preschoolers | 1:10 | Current

Ratios for FDC:

- 1:7 with a maximum of 4 children not yet attending school by January 2014

QUALIFICATIONS

Qualifications for LDCs and preschools:

• OUR TEACHING REQUIREMENTS HAVE BEEN GRANDFATHERED!

For NSW services the current requirements for services above 40 children to have 2 teachers, and to have a further teacher for every additional 20 children will be retained.

Other states will be required to have 1 teacher for services with between 25 and 60 children and 1.5 teachers for services with between 60 and 80 children and 2 for 80+ children.

Services with less than 25 children will be required to have a teacher in attendance for “some of the time” a service is being provided to children.

Services with above 26 children will be required to have a teacher. This is a change for NSW services as previously only services above 29 places were required to have a teacher.

- **All staff in LDC and preschools to have a Certificate III (or getting one) by 2014.**
- **50% of staff to have a Diploma (or getting one) by 2014 (teachers can be included in counting the 50%).**

Qualifications for FDC:

- All carers to have a minimum Certificate III or getting one by 2014.
- All coordinators to have a Diploma or be getting one by 2014.

REGULATIONS

There will be a national regulation and Act – administered and enforced by State and Territory regulatory agencies guided by a new national body. NSW Regulation will be repealed.

ACCREDITATION

A new National Quality Standard comprises quality areas, standards and elements will be introduced and will apply to LDC, FDC, Preschools and OSHC.

The quality areas are:

1. Educational program and practice;
2. Children's health and safety;
3. Physical environment;
4. Staffing arrangements, including staff-to-child ratios and qualifications;
5. Relationships with children;
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities;
7. Leadership and service management.

Each individual quality area contains a number of standards, which are high level outcome statements. The NQS contains 23 standards with between two and six standards for each quality area. Under each standard sits elements. The NQS is the totality of the quality areas, the standards and the elements.

The NQS includes two prime structural indicators of quality of care: staff to child ratios and the educational qualifications of the workforce.

Services will be required to submit a Quality Improvement Plan outlining how they are meeting the NQS. Services will be visited by an "appropriately qualified assessor", and will receive a written report afterwards. This assessment will form the basis of a service's ratings. Each service will receive an overall rating and a rating for each of the seven quality areas. Your overall rating will determine how often you need to be assessed (e.g. Excellent or high quality will only be assessed every three years.)

There will be a five level rating system – Unsatisfactory, Operating Level, National Quality Standard, High Quality, Excellent.

NCAC will continue to operate for two years and then be replaced by a new national body.

For more information go to:

[COAG Meeting Outcomes, National Quality Agenda | PDF download](#)

[COAG Meeting Outcomes, Early Childhood Education Care Quality Reforms | PDF download](#)