Talking about the quality of your education and care service is one topic that all educators and staff should be effective in communicating; whether this is with families, children, the community, management or an Assessment and Compliance Officer (ACO). We need to be able to identify what quality means in our individual service and how this is reflected in the education and care we provide.

Where do we start?

Professional conversations with educators, management and the broader community, provides us with a chance to critically reflect on our practices, discuss change and plan for continuing improvement. To build confidence and knowledge of the National Quality Framework, we need to use staff and team meetings to explore the Guide to the National Quality Standard, discuss the Quality Improvement Plan, review the National Regulations and reflect on the service philosophy. These opportunities are invaluable to become familiar with the terminology, support understanding, increase knowledge and prepare educators and staff for assessment visits.

Our daily conversations with families are a perfect opportunity to practice talking about the work that we do with children and highlight the quality of the education and care we offer. By making conversations with families meaningful, we are able to provide families with an insight into what their child is doing and why they are doing it. These conversations allow us to give some insight into how we plan for children’s interests, needs and development and the vital role we play as educators.

Regular staff and team meetings allow services to come together and reflect on their practices. Setting aside time on the agenda to discuss the National Quality Standard (NQS) allows educators and staff to have conversations and increase their familiarity with the assessment process.
Preparing Educators for Assessment

Ask the Questions

How often do you reflect on the following question – what does quality look like in our service? Use this question as a starting point for conversations about what quality means for educators, staff, children and families in your service. Consider your philosophy – how does our philosophy influence our environment, our curriculum and your interactions with families and children?

Provoke thinking about quality by periodically asking:

- What do we do well?
- What do we want to do better?
- How can we make this happen?

Encourage educators and staff to write down their questions about the NQS in a central location. Use these questions to form the basis of team reflections where all contributions and thinking are welcome.

Use the Resources

Take the time to explore the Guide to the National Quality Standard. Consider how each element is reflected in your environment and as a team get to know your service from a quality perspective. Use the guide to support preparations for the assessment visit by having regular discussions using the observe, discuss and sight methodologies that are provided for each element.

Self-Assessment and planning for continuing improvement encourages services to critically reflect on why you do what you do. Make sure to stop for a moment and look at what you have already achieved and what you already do well. Take the time as a team to review these achievements and consider the strengths of your service and individual educators and staff as these are important steps in identifying the quality within your service.

Ensure everyone at your service is familiar with your Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). Educators, staff and management need to be familiar with the QIP and how your service is implementing the QIP.

ACECQA has published three new resources to assist services with assessment and ratings:

- National Quality Standard Assessment and Rating Instrument (This is the document that will be used by DEC during assessment visits).
- Guide to Assessment and Rating for Services
- Guide to Assessment and Rating for Regulatory Authorities

These give a good understanding of how the assessment process works.

Take the First Step

Start talking about your practices and take a moment each day to reflect on why do you do what you do.