NQF Orientation for New Educators

What is the NQF?
The NQF is short for the National Quality Framework. This is the name of the new regulation and quality system for children’s services across Australia. There are a number of systems and documents that are included in the framework. The NQF includes:

- The National Body
- The NSW Regulatory Authority
- The National Law & Regulations
- The National Quality Standard
- An Assessment & Rating System

The National Body - Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)
This organisation was formed to implement and oversee the National Quality Framework across all states and territories of Australia. Their role is to ensure that the National Quality Standard is applied consistently across the country and review rating decisions for services. They also provide information, guides and resources via their website and e-newsletters. Website: http://acecqa.gov.au/home/

The NSW Regulatory Authority - Department of Education and Communities (DEC)
In NSW, the Regulatory Authority is the Department of Education and Communities, also referred to as DEC. They are responsible for ensuring services are complying with the National Law and Regulations, assessing services based on the Quality Standards, monitoring service delivery through spot checks and following up on incidents and complaints. Website: www.det.nsw.edu.au/what-we-offer/early-childhood-education-and-care

The National Law & Regulations
The Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations have been in force since January 2012. These apply to all Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services in NSW. Services are required to have a copy of these documents on site at all times for reference. ACECQA has provided a guide to working within the Law and Regulations.

The National Law and Regulations are made up of compliance-based directions to guide everyday practice and management. There are penalties involved for services in not meeting the law and regulations. It is important that all staff are aware of services responsibilities in being compliant.

The National Quality Standards
The National Quality Standards (NQS) are made up of 7 Quality Areas, 18 Standards and 58 Elements that services are assessed against to determine the level of quality being provided to children and families.

As part of this process services have to document their continuous improvement processes in a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). For more information, a copy of the Guide to the NQS should be available at the service.

Assessment and Rating
The Assessment and Rating process is made up of submission of the QIP, a visit by an Assessment and Compliance Officer from DEC to assess the practices of staff and the service overall in regards to the National Quality Standards and a quality rating being given to the service. This occurs in each service every 1-3 years depending on their previous quality rating.

What documents apply to the NQF & where can I get copies?
ACECQA have developed a range of resources for the NQF that are available for download from the ACECQA website and include:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- My Time, Our Place – The National Framework for School Age Care
- Guide to the National Quality Framework
- Guide to the National Law and National Regulations
- Guide to the National Quality Standard
- Guide to Developing a Quality Improvement Plan
- Quality Improvement Plan template

Who can apply for a Certified Supervisor’s Certificate?
Certified Supervisor Certificates apply to individuals working in services. An educator will apply for a Certified Supervisor’s Certificate either because their service has requested it or because they want to enhance their working opportunities. All OSHC services must nominate a person on every shift to be the Responsible Person who is the person in charge of the day-to-day operations of the service for that shift. This person must hold a Certified Supervisor’s Certificate to accept this role. A Certified Supervisor Certificate costs $30 and is transferrable across service locations.
**OSHC Qualifications**

Under the NQF, there are currently no required qualifications for any staff members working in OSHC services in NSW. Services can individually decide to employ staff who have qualifications if they consider them necessary.

**Training**

Whilst there are no formal qualifications for OSHC in NSW, some training is required to improve the knowledge and skills of staff under the Law and Regulations. This includes:

- Any Certified Supervisor who is placed in the role of Responsible Person must have completed an approved course in Child Protection. The list of approved courses can be found on the DEC website.

- There must also be at least one person on every shift who has completed approved courses in First Aid, Asthma and Anaphylaxis.

**Who is who in running the service?**

**Approved Provider:**

The Approved Provider is the governing management of the service. Depending if the service is not-for-profit or privately owned, the Approved Provider could be in the form of a Parent Management Committee, school P&C group, an individual person or an organisational management structure. The Coordinator of your service will be able to tell you who the Approved Provider of your service is.

**Nominated Supervisor:**

The Nominated Supervisor is the person who has taken responsibility for overseeing the service in conjunction with the Approved Provider. This person could be the Coordinator, a Manager or other nominated person and they are responsible for operation of the service regardless of their physical presence.

For further information, call Network on (02) 9212 3244 or visit www.networkofcommunityactivities.org.au