

Preschool specific policy

Policy

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Contact details	Early Childhood Education and Care
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3.3	September 2020	Early Childhood Policy and Programs	Consequential amendment to procedure name
3.4	January 2022	Early Childhood Policy and Programs	Amended advice to ensure preschools are utilising the preschool specific policy and procedures suite.

Acronyms	Full form
NQF	National Quality Framework
NT	Northern Territory

1. Policy

The National Quality Framework (NQF) provides a national approach to regulation, assessment and quality improvement for early childhood education and care services. Most Northern Territory Government preschools operate within scope of the NQF and are assessed and rated by the Regulatory Authority, Quality Education and Care NT.

All government preschools are expected to operate to the standards established by the NQF.

The [Education and Care Services National Law \(National Law\)](#)¹ and [Education and Care Services National Regulations \(National Regulations\)](#)² form part of the NQF and outline specific requirements and quality standards with which early childhood education and care services must comply. This includes regulations regarding policies and procedures, specifically:

- preschools must have policies and procedures in place for matters outlined in Regulation 168
- all staff and volunteers must follow the policies and procedures
- policies and procedures must be readily accessible at the preschool premises.

Failure to meet these regulatory requirements may result in a compliance direction being issued to the Department of Education (the department).

2. Business need

Although the department has a comprehensive range of policies and procedures to guide the operations of schools, these documents do not address all of the prescribed matters listed in the National Regulations. These outstanding matters relate to specific regulatory requirements which only preschools are obliged to meet.

2.1. NQF policy requirements in preschool guide (Regulation 168)

The [NQF policy requirements for preschool guide](#)³ outlines the department's policies and procedures that preschools must implement to comply with the National Law and National Regulations. Some of these are whole of school policies and procedures and others are specific to preschool settings.

A preschool may develop additional policies and procedures to address matters specific to the needs of the service and its staff, children and families. These must not replace or contradict the department's policies and procedures.

2.2. Policy Implementation

It is acknowledged that each preschool is unique in its location, children, families and community and implementation of policies and procedures must reflect the needs of the preschool's individual context.

Preschools should use the department's inquiry cycle to contextualise the requirements outlined within policies and procedures to their local needs.



¹ <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/education-and-care-services-national-law-act-2010/012>

² <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653>

³ <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/preschool-specific-policy>

All preschool staff and volunteers must understand and be able to follow and communicate the processes and practices that are in place. This includes understanding and explaining why certain processes and ways of operating are in place.

Preschools should regularly review their processes and practices to ensure they are meeting the department's policies and procedures, and the specific needs of their service. Adjustments may also need to be made due to policy and procedure updates, changes to the National Law or National Regulations or an incident that occurs at the preschool service.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all regulated government preschools. However, it is expected that unregulated preschool programs meet the standards established by the NQF as outlined in the department's policies and procedures that meet Regulation 168.

4. Terminology

Department policy, guidelines and procedures often use different terminology to that used in the National Regulations. For example, the National Regulations refer to a medical management plan for a child, which is the same as the student health care plan referred to in department policy and preschool health care plan referred to in these guidelines.

When using department documents, it is important to remember that when the intent is the same as the National Law and National Regulations, such terms are interchangeable.

5. Definitions

Approved provider, is a person or legal entity who holds a provider approval under the NQF. Provider approval is a prerequisite for operating an approved education and care service. The Department of Education is the approved provider of all Northern Territory Government preschools. Responsibility for this role has been delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive School Education.

National Quality Framework, is a regulatory system agreed to by all Australian governments to improve quality and drive continuous improvement in early childhood education and care services, including preschools.

Nominated supervisor, is a person nominated by the approved provider who is responsible for the day-to-day management of an education and care service. The department has nominated all principals as the nominated supervisor for their respective preschool (refer to the Responsible person and educational leader in preschool procedures).

Policy, outlines what must be done to adhere to legislative requirements and strategic government policy.

Procedures, outline how to adhere to legislative requirements and strategic government policy.

Policies and procedures, for the purpose of this document, includes guidelines and other supporting documents and templates.

Preschools in scope of the NQF, include centre-based early childhood services that provide a quality preschool program on a regular basis. This scope includes a preschool program delivered in a multilevel class (also known as a composite class) where there are 6 or more children enrolled.

Prescribed matters, are regulatory requirements outlined in the National Law and National Regulations.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Early Childhood Education and Care is responsible for:

- reviewing the department's policies and procedures relating to early childhood education and care to ensure the ongoing compliance of preschools with the National Law and National Regulations.

Principals are responsible for:

- ensuring their preschool operates in accordance with the National Law, National Regulations and department policies and procedures.

Preschool teachers and educators are responsible for:

- ensuring the preschool adheres to the requirements of the National Law and National Regulations and implements department policies and procedures.

7. Related legislation policy and procedures

[Education and Care Services \(National Uniform Legislation\) Act 2011](#)⁴, which adopts the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2011* in the NT

The [Schedule to the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 \(Vic\)](#)¹ sets out the National Law.

- Section 176 Compliance directions

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)²

- Regulation 168 Education and care services must have policies and procedures
- Regulation 170 Policies and procedures must be followed
- Regulation 171 Policies and procedures must be kept available
- Regulation 172 Notification of change to policies and procedures

7.1. Department of Education policies and procedures

The [NQF policy requirements for preschool guide](#)⁵ provides a summary of all the department policies and procedures that preschools are to implement to meet the NQF policy requirements.

⁴ <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/EDUCATION-AND-CARE-SERVICES-NATIONAL-UNIFORM-LEGISLATION-ACT-2011>

⁵ <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/preschool-specific-policy>