

EARLY YEARS PLACE QUALITY SELF-ASSESSMENT AND REFLECTION TOOL USER GUIDE



Contents

- Welcome..... 3
- What is the QSART?..... 4
- The evidence for effective EYPs 5
- Key domains for effective EYPs 6
- Reflecting on quality..... 7
- Getting started 8
- Using existing data to reflect 9
- Collecting additional data 11
- Further tools and resources 12

Welcome

Welcome to your Quality Self-Assessment and Reflection Tool (QSART).

The QSART has been designed to support quality improvement of the programs, services and support delivered by your Early Years Place, including partner agencies.

Continuous self-assessment and reflection will help your Early Years Place be more effective and better meet the needs of children and families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage.



The QSART was developed by the Centre for Community Child Health at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute and the Queensland Department of Education.

What is the QSART?

The QSART is a series of evidence-based* guides that use reflection questions, checklists and practice examples to help you reflect on and assess how effectively you think your Early Years Place (EYP) is supporting families in your community, and to guide improvement. It consists of the following:

- **User guide** (this document)
- **Places and environments guide**
How calm, safe and accessible is your EYP?
- **Approach guide**
To what extent is your EYP family-centred and community focused? How do you use co-design principles in your EYP? Are your services and programs evidence based?
- **Engagement guide**
How inclusive is your EYP? Do you use any outreach strategies and do you offer any training or employment pathways for families?
- **Management, leadership and quality improvement guide**
Do you have the right management, leadership and governance structures in place to facilitate the best outcomes for families? What planning and improvement processes do you have in place?
- **Staffing guide**
Does your team have the professional skills and practice approaches needed to support your families? Do staff receive appropriate ongoing professional development?
- **Services and programming guide**
Are you offering high quality learning experiences for children? What other services and supports do you offer? How well are services working together to support families?

*The guides use evidence drawn from both research and practice.

The evidence for effective EYPs

The six QSART guides have been developed using the latest research and practice-based evidence on integrated service delivery.

Models of integrated service delivery exist in different forms throughout Australia and internationally; and Early Years Places are one form of integrated service delivery.

The evidence suggests that the following domains are important to enable EYPs to provide the very best support for children and families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage.



Key domains for effective EYPs



Reflecting on quality

The QSART provides an evidence informed structure for considering quality.

Each of the six domains is broken down into elements that influence quality (for example, the 'Staffing' domain includes the elements '*Professional skills and qualifications*', '*Practice approach and values*', and '*Professional development*').

Four levels of progress are outlined, providing general guidelines or practice examples of what EYPs may be doing at each level.

1 - Emerging <i>Early stages of development</i>	2 - Evolving <i>Developing but could be strengthened</i>	3 - Established <i>Standard that all EYPs should be aiming towards</i>	4 - Excelling <i>Advanced features that take time, leadership and collaboration</i>
---	--	--	---



Remember:

The QSART is a tool designed to encourage reflection and guide quality improvement.

Use of the QSART is voluntary, and the self-assessments, ratings and comments are for each EYPs own use. This information may be shared with partner organisations to strengthen integration.

EYPs might choose to prioritise different elements of quality, depending on their local context and community interests and needs.

Getting started

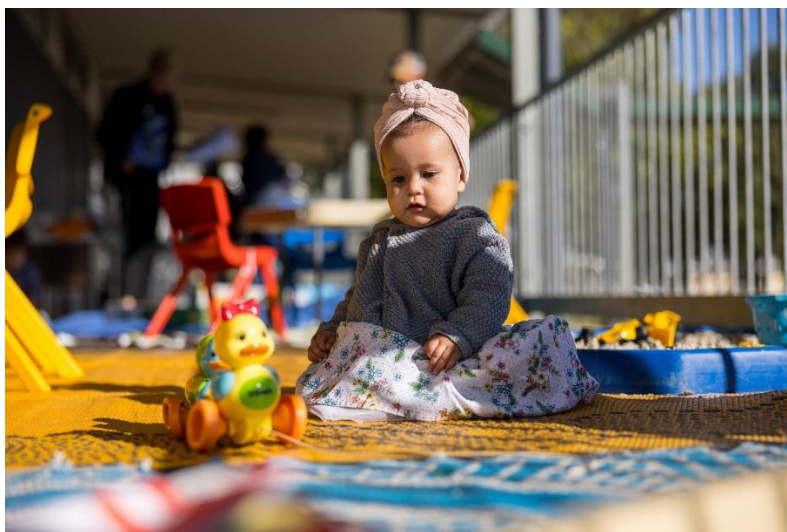
The QSART can be completed **individually** or **in collaboration with others** (for example, EYP staff and services running activities at the EYP). You can also ask for feedback from families using the EYP.

You may choose to reflect on **one domain** or **multiple domains** and you can return to the QSART as often as you like.

As a guide, it will take approximately **30-60 minutes** to reflect and self-assess against one domain, depending on the number of people involved and the level of discussion.

1. Select a domain (or domains).
2. Read through each description and choose the rating that best describes the situation at your EYP*. Record your rating in the space provided.
3. Record any reflections (achievements, challenges and learnings) and other strategies you are using at your EYP that relate to this domain.
4. Use the reflection questions to think about areas for development or ideas you want to try to improve quality in this domain.

***You may wish to consider the reflection questions first before using the rating checklist. There is no right or wrong way to use the QSART – use it in the way that best suits your EYP.**



Using existing data to reflect

EYPs collect data bi-annually for their Periodic Performance Reviews (PPRs). It is not essential to use PPR data with QSART, but you might find some of the data you have collected helpful in informing your reflections and self-assessments. The table below outlines PPR data that is relevant to each domain.

Domain	Relevant PPR data
Places and environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of children; No. of parents/carers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds ○ identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander ○ with disability • No. of parents/carers who received intensive support • No. of parents/carers surveyed that report the EYP assists them in accessing the support services they need • Narrative reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ outcomes for parents and carers ○ what is going on in your community – what are the issues that impact your client? ○ What other specific challenges may have affected your service delivery and achievement? • Case study (individual child, parent/carer, family)
Approach	
Engagement	
Management, leadership and quality improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies for improvement • Action plan

Domain	Relevant PPR data
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Development • Case study (worker)
Services and programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities delivered • Activity reporting – partners; partnerships; what’s working; what didn’t work; challenges; participation; evidence base; outcomes • Case Study (program, activity, group or new initiative) • Parent feedback - No. parents/carers surveyed who reported: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ they are satisfied with the activity ○ they are benefiting from participating in the activity ○ their child/ren are benefiting from participating in the activity

Collecting additional data

Suggested questions to add to parent surveys

Here are some questions EYPs could include in their existing parent surveys to provide further feedback on the first 3 domains (Places and environments; Approach; Engagement).

- *How welcome did you feel at the EYP?*
- *Did your child/children feel safe and welcome at the EYP?*
- *Do you feel listened to by EYP staff?*
- *Do you think the EYP is inclusive of all families and cultures?*
- *Do you have opportunities to provide feedback to the EYP?*
- *Do parents have a say in what the EYP does? (i.e. activities, programs, decision making)*
- *What would make the EYP more welcoming for all families in your community?*
- *Why do you think some families don't attend the EYP?*

Informal data collection methods

Here are some quick and easy ways to collect feedback from families to provide a snapshot on how your EYP is going:

- A yes/no question where parents put a token in either the “yes” or the “no” jar. For example, *Is our EYP culturally safe for all families?*
- An open-ended question which parents can answer with a post-it note. For example, *write down 3 words you would use today to describe the EYP.*
- Ask parents to rate their visit to the EYP today (i.e. *How welcome did you feel? How engaged were your children in the activities?*) on a piece of string or a ruler using the scale below.



Further tools and resources

The list of resources for each domain have been developed by the University of Melbourne to assist with building further understanding and also to foster conversations within Early Years Places. Note that actions and activities developed and delivered by Early Years Places must be consistent with the Department of Education's Integrated Service Delivery Guidelines.

Approach

- **Early Years Challenge: Supporting Parents to Give Tamariki a Great Start in Life.** The Southern Initiative/Auckland Co-Design Lab. <https://www.aucklandco-lab.nz/reports-summary/early-years>
- **Walk alongside: Co-designing social initiatives with people experiencing vulnerabilities** The Victorian Council of Social Service. <https://vcoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/VCOSS-Walk-alongside-codesign-July-2015.pdf>
- **Sources of Evidence.** Auckland Co-Design Lab. <https://www.aucklandco-lab.nz/resources-summary/enablers-for-change-mn9mt-kfet3-mhw9n-wy4bl-gzsfr-p4amk-wknew>
- **Child and Family Partnerships Toolkit.** Emerging Minds. <https://emergingminds.com.au/resources/toolkits/child-and-family-partnerships-toolkit/>
- **Co-Design Framing and Enabling Participation Guide.** Auckland Co-Design Lab. <https://www.aucklandco-lab.nz/resources-summary/framing-amp-enabling-participation-guide>

Engagement

- **Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement.** National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/no-search/rbc-sfe-guide-pro-work-with-families.pdf>
- **Using the Family Partnership Model to Engage Communities.** Centre for Community Child Health. https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccch/150130_Using-the-Family-Partnership-Model-to-engage-communities_Report.pdf
- **Authentic Engagement: The Nature and Role of the Relationship at the Heart of Effective Practice.** Centre for Community Child Health.

<https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccchdev/CCCH-ARACY-Parent-Engagement-Conference17-Paper-Oct2017.pdf>

- **How Outreach Facilitates Family Engagement with Universal Early Childhood Health and Education Services in Tasmania, Australia: An Ethnographic Study.** Early Childhood Research Quarterly. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0885200620300466?via%3Dihub>

Management, leadership and quality improvement

- **Outcomes/Perspectives Tool.** Auckland Co-Design Lab. <https://www.aucklandco-lab.nz/resources-summary/outcomes-perspectives-tools>
- **Ideation Concept Cards.** Auckland Co-Design Lab. <https://www.aucklandco-lab.nz/resources-summary/ideation-concept-cards-1>
- **Integrated Service Delivery Category Guidelines.** Qld Department of Education. <https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/fundingAndSupport/Documents/integrated-service-delivery-category-guidelines.pdf>

Places and environments

- **Cultural Actions Catalogue** <https://beyou.edu.au/resources/cultural-actions-catalogue>

Staffing

- **Be You fact sheets – trauma, mental health, wellbeing, relationships, social and emotional learning.** Be You/BeyondBlue. <https://beyou.edu.au/fact-sheets>
- **In Focus: Trauma-Informed Care** Emerging Minds. <https://emergingminds.com.au/resources/in-focus-trauma-informed-care/>
- **8 Things to Remember about Child Development.** <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/8-things-remember-child-development/>
- **Relationship-Based Practice: Emergent Themes in Social Work Literature.** Iriss. <https://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/insights/relationship-based-practice-emergent-themes-social-work-literature>
- **Strengths-Based Approaches for Working with Individuals.** Iriss. <https://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/insights/strengths-based-approaches-working-individuals>

Services and programming

Queensland Government Department of Education Resources

- **Integrated Service Delivery Category Guidelines.** Qld Department of Education.
<https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/fundingAndSupport/Documents/integrated-service-delivery-category-guidelines.pdf>
- **Regulating for Quality: Queensland's risk-based approach to regulating early childhood education and care.**
<https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/aboutUs/Documents/regulating-quality-policy.PDF>
- **Foundations for Success.** <https://foundationsforsuccess.qld.edu.au/>
- **Inclusion for service providers.** <https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/early-years/inclusion/inclusion-for-service-providers>

Further reading and tools

- **Raising Children Network.** Parenting Research Centre and Centre for Community Child Health. <https://raisingchildren.net.au>
- **Guide to the National Quality Framework.** ACECQA (2020). Sydney, NSW: Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).
<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-09/Guide-to-the-NQF-September-2020.pdf>
- **Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF)** Approved learning framework under the NQF for young children from birth to five years of age.
https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-02/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf
- **Raising Children Network.** Parenting Research Centre and Centre for Community Child Health. <https://raisingchildren.net.au>
- **'Development' fact sheets** Be You/Beyond Blue. <https://beyou.edu.au/fact-sheets/development>
- **Supporting Evidence – Mentally Healthy Communities; Learning Resilience; Family Partnerships; Early Support; Responding Together.** Be You/BeyondBlue. <https://beyou.edu.au/about-be-you/supporting-evidence>

- **Skills for Social Progress: The Power of Social and Emotional Skills.** OECD Skills Studies. https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/skills-for-social-progress_9789264226159-en#page
- **Supported Playgroups for Children from Birth to Five Years.** The Benevolent Society. <https://www.parentingrc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Supported-playgroups-for-children-from-birth-to-five-years.pdf>
- **Early Childhood Education Toolkit.** Evidence for Learning. <https://evidenceforlearning.org.au/education-evidence/early-childhood-education-toolkit>
- **Communicating with Parents tip sheet.** Evidence for Learning. <https://d288jjeqo2x7eq.cloudfront.net/documents/guidanceForTeachers/Communicating-with-parents.pdf?v=1655449150>