NQF Evaluation Framework – Program Logic Model

NQF objectives	Regulatory activities	Regulatory outputs	Short term (0-4 years) outcomes	Medium term (4-8 years) outcomes	Long term (8+ years) outcomes
To ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending education and care services	• Monitor and enforce compliance with the National Law and Regulations	• Quality rating results, including reassessment trends	All parties to the NQF recognise the national benchmark set by the National Law and Regulations. This includes the National Quality Standard for the quality of education and care services across seven quality areas, including structural and process aspects of quality such as:	Providers of services and educators are guided by the requirements of the NQF, including the National Quality Standard, in the provision of quality education and care, including through:	Children, families and the wider community realise the individual, economic and societal benefits of quality children's education and care, including:
To improve the educational and developmental outcomes for children attending education and care services	• Assess and rate education and care services against the National Quality Standard, including ratios and qualifications	• Notifications data trends (e.g. serious incidents; complaints)	• educator-to-child ratios • educator qualifications • approved learning frameworks • minimum operating requirements in the National Law and Regulations	• supporting children's safety, health and wellbeing • the development of quality educational programs • the implementation of a cycle of continuous improvement	• improved transition to school • positive educational and developmental outcomes for children • better social inclusion • reduced disadvantage
To promote continuous improvement in the provision of quality education and care services	• Support and promote continuous improvement in quality	• Data linkage initiatives			
		• Operational activity data			
		• Compliance and enforcement data and trends			
		• Administrative burden research			
To improve efficiency in the regulation of education and care services, including the reduction of regulatory burden	• Monitor and promote consistency in the implementation of the NQF	• Good practice guides (e.g. Guide to the NQF)	Governments and the sector recognise efficiencies gained through streamlined regulatory arrangements following the introduction of the NQF	Governments and the sector benefit from: • a more effective and efficient regulatory model • reduced regulatory burden	All parties to the NQF realise the efficiency benefits and cost-effectiveness of a unified national system
		• Families research			
To improve public knowledge and access to information about the quality of education and care services	• Educate and inform families, community and the sector	• Communication, engagement and educational activities	Families and the wider community access and understand information about service quality	Families and the wider community give increased priority to information about the quality of education and care services	Families and the wider community are more engaged with the NQF, including the benefits of quality education and care

NQF objectives	Long term (8+ years) outcomes	Key evaluation questions
To ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending education and care services To improve the educational and developmental outcomes for children attending education and care services To promote continuous improvement in the provision of quality education and care services	Children, families and the wider community realise the individual, economic and societal benefits of quality children's education and care, including: • improved transition to school • positive educational and developmental outcomes for children • better social inclusion • reduced disadvantage	**1. To what extent have children, families and the wider community benefited from the NQF? For example, for children attending services Meeting the NQS or higher:** a. are fewer children experiencing developmental vulnerability[1]? b. is transition to school improved for preschool age children? c. what impact does frequency and duration of attendance have on outcomes? d. how do outcomes compare to those children who did not attend ECEC/OSHC? **2. To what extent do children's experiences in early childhood education and care and school age care settings support their wellbeing[2], learning and development? What are the effects for different groups of children (e.g. children of different ages, socio-economic backgrounds, cultural backgrounds)?** **3. In the longer term, to what extent have educational, employment, health and wellbeing outcomes been improved? For which children, families or communities has the improvement been greatest?** a. What do longitudinal studies and other measures say about children's educational and development outcomes (e.g. AEDC, NAPLAN results)? b. Have inequalities between groups of children been reduced (e.g. children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds; lower socio-economic backgrounds; children in remote and regional areas)?
To improve efficiency in the regulation of education and care services, including the reduction of regulatory burden	All parties to the NQF realise the efficiency benefits and cost-effectiveness of a unified national system	**4. To what extent has the NQF provided an integrated and unified national system with consistency of understanding and application of the National Law, and collaboration among regulators?** **5. To what extent is the NQF an efficient and cost-effective regulatory system[3] from the perspective of:** a. the sector? b. governments? **6. To what extent are the benefits of the NQF proportionate to the costs?**
To improve public knowledge and access to information about the quality of education and care services	Families and the wider community are more engaged with the NQF, including the benefits of quality education and care	**7. To what extent are families and the wider community aware of the NQF?** **8. To what extent has the NQF contributed to engaging families and the wider community in understanding the importance of high quality education and care for improving outcomes?**

1. Consistent with the five domains measured by the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC): physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills (school-based), and communication skills and general knowledge.
2. There is no single or agreed way to define or measure 'wellbeing'. Examples of measures that could be used include the Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI) and the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10).
3. This includes consideration of all aspects of the regulatory framework under the NQF, including the requirements under the National Law and National Regulations, and may include consideration of administrative obligations and regulatory actions related to applications and approvals; operational requirements; monitoring, compliance and enforcement; fees; reviews; and assessment and rating.

NQF objectives

To ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending education and care services

To improve the educational and developmental outcomes for children attending education and care services

To promote continuous improvement in the provision of quality education and care services

Medium term (4-8 years) outcomes

Providers of services and educators are guided by the requirements of the NQF, including the National Quality Standard, in the provision of quality education and care, including through:

- supporting children's safety, health and wellbeing
- the development of quality educational programs
- the implementation of a cycle of continuous improvement

Sub questions

1. To what extent does the NQF support and improve children's safety, health and wellbeing?

a. What is the health and safety profile of NQF services as measured by:
   i.   Quality Area 2 of the NQS?
   ii. incidents and complaints relating to children's safety, health and wellbeing?
   iii. monitoring, compliance and enforcement action?
b. To what extent are services supporting children's wellbeing according to:
   i. quality rating results for NQS standards and elements with a specific focus on children's wellbeing (e.g. Element 1.1.1, Element 2.1.1, Element 6.1.2 and Standard 6.2)?
   ii. how well educators are promoting learning in Outcome 3 (*Children have a strong sense of wellbeing*) of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the Framework for School Age Care (FSAC)?
c. Are there differences across service types (e.g. according to different service characteristics such as service sub-type, jurisdiction, provider management type, ARIA+ and SEIFA classification)?
d. What does the compliance profile of service providers and their services look like under the NQF? Does the compliance profile accord with the quality rating profile of services?
e. What actions are regulatory authorities taking to respond to incidents / complaints / non-compliance?
   i. How are these actions used to inform regulatory authorities' priorities?
f. To what extent are regulatory interventions improving the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending education and care services?
   i. What types of interventions are more effective?

2. Which service providers are achieving high service ratings for Quality Area 1 – Educational program and practice?

a. To what extent is this outcome associated with the role of the educational leader and other staff factors (e.g. qualifications, turnover)?
b. What lessons can be learned from the curriculum decision-making in these services?
   i. To what extent are children realising the benefits of attending these services? Are some children benefiting more than others?

3. To what extent has the NQF contributed to continuous improvement over time for services?

a. How has the quality profile of services changed over the lifetime of the NQS?
   i.   To what extent have service ratings improved at reassessment?
   ii. Is the rate of improvement the same for all services and provider management types? What are the characteristics of services and providers who have improved the most/least (e.g. service type, provider management type, jurisdiction, historical factors)?
   iii. What are the barriers to improvement?
   iv. What role have other programs and tools played in continuous quality improvement (e.g. Quality Support Program; conditions on approvals; minor adjustments; waivers; suspensions (s.70(d) National Law))
b. What can we learn from service providers and leaders whose services are exceeding standards?
c. How best can service providers whose services are working towards standards be encouraged?

NQF objectives	Medium term (4-8 years) outcomes	Sub questions

To improve efficiency in the regulation of education and care services, including the reduction of regulatory burden	Governments and the sector benefit from:
	• a more effective and efficient regulatory model
	• reduced regulatory burden
		4. To what extent is regulatory burden being reduced for providers under the NQF?
		  a. To what extent has the national system improved regulation from the provider perspective?
		  b. To what extent have refinements, such as legislative changes, reduced the costs of operating under the NQF over time?
		5. To what extent are governments realising benefits from the NQF?
		  a. To what extent are the governance arrangements for the NQF effective?

To improve public knowledge and access to information about the quality of education and care services	Families and the wider community give increased priority to information about the quality of education and care services	**6. To what extent has the NQF contributed to family and community knowledge and understanding of quality in education and care services?**
		  a. To what extent has it led to increased priority being given to information about the quality of education and care services?
		  b. What other sources of information influence decision-making?
		7. To what extent does knowledge and understanding differ according to specific family and community groups (for example, migrant communities, OSHC families, vulnerable and disadvantaged families, new families)?
		  c. How do we use that knowledge to better target groups with lower levels of awareness?