



# Providing weekend and overnight care

Under the National Quality Framework (NQF), approved providers now have greater flexibility to provide education and care services to children for extended hours, including weekend and overnight care, in centre-based services.

Centre-based services delivering extended hours of care must meet the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Law (National Law) and the Education and Care Services National Regulations (National Regulations) at all times that education and care is being provided. In addition, there are a range of factors to consider to meet the National Quality Standard and provide better educational and developmental outcomes for children.

## Staffing requirements

Minimum staffing requirements must be maintained at all times education and care services are provided, as outlined in the specific provisions of the National Law and National Regulations as shown at right:

Reg 120	Educators under 18 years of age to be supervised
Section 161	Nominated supervisor
Section 162	Responsible person
Reg 123 , 298, 300, 301	Educator-to-child ratios
Reg 126, 299	General educator qualifications
Reg 130–135	Requirements for early childhood teachers
Reg 136	First aid qualifications

More information about staffing requirements is available on the department's website at: [www.dete.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood](http://www.dete.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood).

## Building requirements

As well as meeting building standards under the relevant building laws, services must meet the relevant physical environment requirements outlined in regulations 103 to 115 of the National Regulations.



If your service is delivering extended operating hours, you must ensure children's health, safety and wellbeing, giving special consideration to the facilities available including:

- bedding and linen (sufficient for the number of children and appropriate laundering of items)
- personal hygiene (appropriate for cleaning teeth etc. before going to sleep)
- sleep monitoring (sleep areas, staff distribution, and available facilities)
- bathing and toileting (availability and accessibility to rooms whilst ensuring supervision)
- overnight security (access to the service by unauthorised persons).

Extending the operating hours may also impact on the ability of a service to comply with local planning and development requirements. Check these requirements with your relevant local authority.

### Policies and procedures

Policies and procedures must be in place at the service, as outlined in regulation 168 of the National Regulations. Special consideration should be given to policies and procedures about the following:

- operating hours
- arrival and collection of children
- incident, injury, trauma and illness
- emergency and evacuation
- providing a safe environment for children.

The approved provider and nominated supervisor must ensure that children being educated and cared for by the service are protected from harm and hazards. Failing to protect children from harm and hazards is an offence under section 167 of the National Law and attracts a maximum fine of \$10,000 for an individual and \$50,000 in any other case.

### National Quality Standard

The National Quality Standard (NQS) is a key aspect of the NQF which promotes continuous quality improvement in early childhood education and care.

Service practice is assessed against the seven quality areas of the NQS and a rating given for each quality area and an overall service rating.

The requirements of the NQS apply at all times children are in attendance at the service and all aspects of service delivery, including extended hours, are considered in the assessment process.

When considering changing the operating hours of an education and care service, you should ensure the changes will not impact negatively on the service's ability to meet the NQS.

More information about the NQS and the assessment and rating process is available on the department's website at [www.dete.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood](http://www.dete.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood).

### Notification of extended hours

The department must be notified of any changes to the hours and days of operation of an education and care service under Section 174 of the National Law.

To do this, you need to complete a [Notification of change of information about an approved service form](#) (SA12). It is recommended you submit the notification prior to changing the hours of operation to ensure the service continues to meet legislative requirements, and any potential issues are identified.

However, if there is a condition on the service approval related to hours of operation (such as restricting operation to before school, after school or during school holidays, or specific hours of operation), you must apply to amend the condition and complete an [Application for amendment of service approval form](#) (SA03). There is no fee to amend a service approval.

The service cannot operate outside of the hours specified, until the department approves an amendment of the service approval conditions.

The department will review each notification and application for amendment on a case-by-case basis.

This may include a visit to the service and a risk assessment to determine if extending the hours of operation is appropriate.

The department may place conditions on the service approval to restrict the extended operating hours (to certain hours of the day and ages of children) or may refuse to amend the service approval if there are concerns for children's health, safety or wellbeing.

Notification and application forms are available on the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority website at [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au).

### Information to be displayed

Information about the extended hours and days of operation, including conditions on the service approval, must be updated and displayed at the service when the notification and application is approved, under regulation 173 of the National Regulations.

Further details about what information must be displayed is available on the department's website at [www.dete.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood](http://www.dete.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood).

This information sheet was developed for centre-based services and is to be used as a guide only. Approved providers should refer to the Education and Care Services National Law, Education and Care Services National Regulations and the National Quality Standard.