

Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)

## **Linking the AEDC with the *National Quality Standard***

Resources for Queensland  
early childhood education  
and care services



# Linking the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) with the *National Quality Standard* (NQS)

This document has been designed to support early childhood educators in services to understand the meaningful and practical connections between the AEDC and the NQS.

A key intent of the AEDC is to provide educators and teachers with information to add to their understanding of how children are developing in the community—this increased understanding can be used for planning for quality improvement.

## Background on the AEDC

The AEDC provides important information about the development of Australian children across a whole community as they start school. It is not designed as a tool to assess individual learning. The AEDC data are reported at a community level, not for individual children.

The AEDC measures whether children are developmentally 'on track', 'at risk' or 'vulnerable' with respect to each of the five AEDC domains.



## Background on NQS

The NQS consists of seven Quality Areas that are important to outcomes for children. Each Quality Area comprises standards (high-level outcome statements) and elements (outcomes which contribute to meeting the standards). The seven Quality Areas are:

### National Quality Standard - Quality Areas

1. Educational program and practice
2. Children's health and safety
3. Physical environment
4. Staffing arrangements
5. Relationships with children
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
7. Governance and leadership

The NQS recognises that every educator plays a vital role in contributing to improving quality practice and outcomes for young children. Advocating shared leadership, Quality Area 7 affirms the role reflective educators play in building positive culture and professional learning communities. Reflecting on and using the AEDC data can assist services to achieve the NQS, as each of the AEDC domains links with NQS Quality Areas.

## Linking the AEDC with the NQS

The following table shows some links between the AEDC domains and the NQS areas. It should be noted that this is not an exhaustive list; rather, it offers some examples as demonstration.

AEDC Domains	NQS Areas
Physical health and wellbeing	NQS Areas: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6
Social competence	NQS Areas: 1, 5, 6
Emotional maturity	NQS Areas: 1, 2, 5, 6
Language and cognitive skills (school-based)	NQS Areas: 1, 5
Communication skills and general knowledge	NQS Areas: 1, 5, 6, 7



## Key links between the AEDC and the NQS

This section describes in more detail how the AEDC relates to specific aspects of the NQS.

### NQS Quality Area 1 Element

1.1.1—curriculum decision-making contributes to each child’s learning and developmental outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.

Educators and coordinators plan with each child with the outcomes in mind (*Early Years Learning Framework*, p. 19).

As the AEDC tracks children’s developmental outcomes, this can also help to provide context and inform curriculum decision-making.

If AEDC data indicate high vulnerability on one domain there may be more focus generally on this domain at a service level. For example, community level vulnerability in the physical health and wellbeing domain could mean including additional programming to support children’s gross and fine motor skill development.

### Reflection

- What does our AEDC community data tell us about developmental strengths and vulnerabilities in our community that could be used to inform decisions about children’s daily experiences and routines?
- How do we demonstrate in the program that we are addressing community strengths and vulnerabilities, while also valuing children’s ideas, thinking and interests?

## NQS Quality Area 6—Collaborative partnerships with families and communities



The AEDC provides important contextual information about children's development, which can provide a basis for early childhood education and care services to form collaborative partnerships with families and communities.

Collaborative partnerships focused on improving outcomes for local children can work towards improving children's development in areas of vulnerability identified by the AEDC.

Family is the most powerful influence on children's lives, and learning outcomes are most likely to be achieved when educators and families work in partnership to ensure the experiences planned for children are meaningful.

Early childhood educators can support families within the service, or in the broader community, to access resources to expand on children's strengths as well as support areas of vulnerability identified in the local AEDC data.

Building an understanding of strengths and vulnerabilities in the community may help educators to support families and connect them with community services.

### Reflection

- How can we share information with families about early childhood development using the AEDC?
- How can the AEDC help to provide a focus for what community resources would be relevant to our service, and to the children in the service and their families?
- How do we support families to access relevant community resources and services?
- How do we respect other cultures and make families feel welcomed? How do we encourage families to contribute to children's experiences in ways that are meaningful for them?

## Element 6.2.3 Community engagement

Building connections between the education and care settings and the local community is important to support children's learning and wellbeing.

Community-level AEDC data can provide a starting point for locally-driven action and community partnerships or networks to work towards improving children's learning and development outcomes.

Early childhood educators can use the AEDC data for their community as a platform to start a conversation and form networks with other organisations and service providers such as local schools, community services and other early childhood education and care services. Collaborative community partnerships help to build community capacity to support and enrich families' capability to nurture and support their children as they develop and transition to school.

Developing strong relationships and collaboration informed through the use of relevant data supports planning and implementation of effective transition practices.

### Reflection

- How can partnerships between early childhood services, schools and other community organisations work to meet the needs of children and their families?
- What strategies could be implemented through these partnerships to effectively support children in areas identified through the AEDC? How effective are existing strategies and how can we build on them?
- What practices can be put in place to enable early childhood education and care services and schools to work together to effectively support children as they transition to formal schooling?
- What is happening in our local community that is relevant to our work with children and families? How can we best be involved?

## Using the AEDC to inform your Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

As the NQS links with the AEDC, the data can be used by services to assess the quality of their practices against the Standard in their QIP.

The AEDC can also assist services to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement in QIPs. When considering areas for improvement, early childhood educators may want to address any community-wide vulnerabilities demonstrated by the AEDC data.

Quality improvement strategies can be put in place that address any areas of vulnerability shown by AEDC, and this can assist services to meet the NQS.



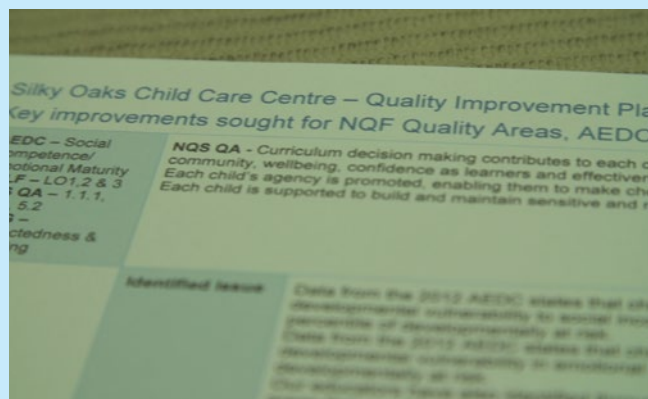
### Silky Oaks Child Care Centre

Silky Oaks Child Care Centre in Manly West, Queensland used the AEDC data to inform their QIP. To develop the plan they focused on the needs of children and families in the community, and looked at the AEDC domains to see where vulnerabilities were. Silky Oaks Child Care Centre has noted in their QIP that data from the 2012 AEDC indicates between 6.9% to 17.1% of children in their feeder suburbs were developmentally vulnerable on the social competence domain.

Centre Director Tracey Longley then worked with educators at the service to plan programs and access resources to improve children's development in the area of social competence, which are now reflected in their QIP. For example, in relation to Standard 1.1, the QIP includes that educators will use strategies and ideas from training undertaken on how to support the emotional regulation of children, enhance their social skills and focus on mindfulness in the groups. This includes reviewing and reflecting on successes and refining the program to suit the children's needs.

*When our service looked at our Quality Improvement Plan, most of our information has been derived from all stakeholders, the parents' wishes, the children ... but having the Australian Early Development Census has just added another dimension to how we can inform our Quality Improvement Plan.*

—Tracey Longley, Centre Director



To access further AEDC resources please visit <https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/>.

To access the AEDC data please visit [www.aedc.gov.au](http://www.aedc.gov.au).

