

What you can see and ask for at your service

You need to know your child will be safe, happy and given opportunities to learn and grow when enrolled at an education and care service.

Long day care, preschool/kindergarten, family day care and outside school hours care services around Australia are working to meet the same national standards to ensure children are given the best start to life and learning.

How is your service regulated?

National law and regulations

Most services are regulated and must comply with requirements under the National Quality Framework and National Quality Standard.

These include requirements for:

- the number of staff and their qualifications
- ensuring children's health and safety
- service space and layout
- the quality of developmental and learning experiences for children.

There may be other laws and regulations in your state or territory which education and care services must comply with.

Regulating education and care services

There is a regulatory authority in each state and territory to monitor, assess and visit each service to ensure legal requirements are met.

The regulatory authority also works with services to help them improve and ensure children have quality learning experiences.

Contact details for your local regulatory authority are at:

www.startingblocks.gov.au/other-resources



What should you see on display at your service?

Quality ratings

Services are assessed and quality rated by their regulatory authority against the National Quality Standard.

Services are required to display their quality ratings.

Ask your service about their quality rating and learn how they are working to meet the National Quality Standard.

For information on service ratings visit:

www.startingblocks.gov.au/findchildcare

Documentation

Your service must display certain information including emergency and evacuation floor plans, the name of the approved provider and educational leader, contact details of the nominated supervisor in charge, any conditions the service must meet and more.

Educational program

Information about the educational program should be displayed at the service so you can see how your child is supported to participate in play and learning.

You can request information about the content and delivery of the program, your child's participation and copies of assessments or evaluations documenting your child's progress.

What does your service need to tell you about?

Change to fees

You must be provided with 14 days' notice of any change to fees charged or the way fees are collected.

Incidents, injury and illness

If your child is involved in any incident, injury, trauma or illness, your service must notify you as soon as possible (but no later than 24 hours) after the event.

Infectious diseases

Parents or authorised emergency contacts must be notified as soon as possible if there is an infectious disease outbreak at the service, for example chicken pox or hand, foot and mouth disease.

Medication and medical conditions

If your child has a specific health care need, allergy or medical condition, you are required to provide a medical management plan to the service and consent for medication to be administered.

You will need to work with the service to assess and minimise any risks. The service should provide you with a copy of the service's medical conditions policy.

In an emergency, emergency services or a registered medical practitioner may administer medication to your child.

If the medication treated an anaphylaxis or asthma emergency, your service must call you and emergency services as soon as possible.

Policies and procedures

Your service will have policies and procedures about enrolment, medication, managing complaints, incidents and more.

You must be given 14 days' notice before there is a change to a policy or procedure that may affect the service's provision of education and care. For example, changes to food allergy policies which would exclude certain foods that your child may bring to the service.

However, if your service believes the notice period would pose a risk to children, you will be notified as soon as possible after the change is made.

Excursions

Services must have your written authorisation before your child is taken on an excursion outside the premises. The authorisation must include your child's name, a description of the excursion, the mode of transport, the number of staff to supervise and that the service has done a risk assessment of the excursion.

If the excursion is a regular outing, for example a weekly trip to the library, your authorisation may only be needed every 12 months.

What can you ask to see at your service?

Quality Improvement Plan

All services will have a quality improvement plan for you to review. The plan describes the service's strengths and areas identified for improvement.

Compliance record

If your service is not complying with the national law or regulations, the regulatory authority may direct the service to take action and fix the problem.

The compliance record may include information about any changes to the way in which your service is allowed to operate or directions to the provider to take action. For example, if the service failed to follow their sun safety policy, the regulatory authority may direct the service to train or retrain their staff in using it.

All services must have a record of their compliance. You can request to see this record. It must not contain any information that would identify any person or child.

Serious non-compliance including prosecutions against a service may be published by the regulatory authority on their website.

Visit www.startingblocks.gov.au/other-resources for more information.

Where can I lodge a complaint?

Children benefit when families and educators work in partnership. If you have any concerns or worries, you should talk to your service or the approved provider in the first instance as relationships strengthen from clear and open communication. If you wish to make a complaint, contact the regulatory authority.