

# QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN IN CHILD CARE



Part A:

University of Canberra is a small early learning service for 36 children. The facility operates daily from 9 AM to 4 PM, emphasising nature-based play and sustainable practices.

Current QIP:

For the assessment, quality area 1 and quality area 3 have been chosen. Suggested changes are highlighted in the yellow text in both Qips, and they have been updated in the quality improvement plan template.

QIP 1

Key improvements sought for Quality Area 1							
Improvement Plan							
Standard/element	Issue identified during self-assessment	What outcome or goal do we seek?	Priority (L/M/H)	How will we get this outcome? (Steps)	Success measure	By when?	Progress notes
1.3 1.3.3	<p>We have identified that parents, families and carers are not engaged in Assessment and Planning, while it is great that families trust us we are keen to keep them informed of our work, the program and the children's progress.</p> <p>A recent survey of parents has indicated they are NOT keen to have an online platform for this, but are happy to use digital resources (eg videos, Apps etc). As a team we would like to explore ways to use the space near entry (walls and a display table) to share our program and invite parents to respond and add to this.</p>	Increased engagement from parents	H	<p>Sharing our program with children and families.</p> <p>Inviting parents to write or talk about what we are doing.</p> <p>(director comment: it would be great to use technology here eg you could add the iPad or QR codes to children's videos sometimes?)</p> <p>Are a manager I'm keen for families to feel invited to contribute and maybe they feel rushed on pick up and drop off. How else can we do this?</p> <p>To keep the families informed, a dedicated digital tool, such as a projector, can be used to display students' progress. The projector will cost around \$800, plus a extra installation cost of \$100 will occur.</p> <p>Personalised videos of kids can also be made and shared with parents personally and on the projector. To do so, either a new employee must be hired or an existing staff member must be paid overtime, as creating custom video for each child would require time.</p>	Increased engagement from families, including more written or spoken comments about what we are doing and connections to home contexts.		1/2/24 We've started adding some of our work to the wall, but noticed not all parents can read this content and some families are rushed at collection so make only quick comments.

Proposed Suggestions in QIP 1

QIP 3

Key improvements sought for Quality Area 3							
Improvement Plan							
Standard/element	Issue identified during self-assessment	What outcome or goal do we seek?	Priority (L/M/H)	How will we get this outcome? (Steps)	Success measure	By when?	Progress notes
Standard 3.1 (indoor area)	<p>As a team we have been reflecting on NOS 3 – and how the environment is suitable and provides a rich and diverse range of experiences that promote children's learning".</p> <p>Several educators in the preschool room have noticed that the space children most often use for dramatic play is suitable but does not always enable a "rich and diverse" opportunity for learning.</p> <p>We would like to re-design this space to facilitate extended engagement in dramatic play including access to flexible dress-up resources, elements for imaginary play and extend children's current interest in play with babies.</p>	Increased engagement in dramatic play indoors	M	<p>Children will be more engaged in this space and all children (including different ages and genders) will feel comfortable participating in dramatic play.</p> <p>(director comment: is this how you will achieve this?)</p> <p>A wardrobe containing different bins for different themed costumes can be placed for dressing up. Props for a kitchen setting for playing can also be arranged.</p> <p>Multiple and flexible playing stations can be designed to pretend play multiple scenarios in the same space. This can be achieved by placing rugs and using movable dividers.</p>	<p>Increased use of this space, respectful use of the resources.</p> <p>Children being able to add to the resources in this space based on their interests</p>		1/2/24 We've started on this, adding the book shelf as an invitation to ideas and increased the number of dolls to enable more children to engage, but we do not yet feel this is inviting dramatic play and children do not currently add resources to this area.

Proposed suggestions in QIP 3 (Part 1)

Standard 3.1 (sandpit area)	<p>As a team we have been reflecting on QIS 3 – and how the environment is suitable and provides a rich and diverse range of experiences that promote children's learning.</p> <p>In exploring the outdoor space we have observed that children in the sandpit are often asking for resources and we are considering how we could design some storage equipment or shelves to improve the design of the space (including storage of resources).</p>	<p>Increased engagement in dramatic play in the sandpit space, including allowing access to more resources.</p>	M	<p>Additional storage will be purchased OR found and made available for children. (director comment: This needs some more detail – also you can have a budget of \$1 000 but can you also align this to the sustainability focus?)</p> <p>Mud kitchen style shelves can be added to display all the toys. To design a mud kitchen, an expense of 180\$ is expected.</p> <p>A movable trolley on wheels can also be used as a weatherproof storage solution. The material inside the trolley can also be rotated as children's requirements. The trolley would cost 100\$.</p> <p>Children can also be engaged in deciding the design.</p>	<p>Multiple forms of play will be seen in the sandpit – including dramatic play, with children able to access resources.</p> <p>Increased use of this space, respectful use of the resources, including children helping in packing away.</p> <p>Children being able to access and care for resources in this space based on their interests.</p>	1/2/24 As a team have begun researching waterproof option and looking at ideas for labelling to support children with packing up.
Standard 3.2 (sand pit area)	<p>As a team we have been reflecting on QIS 3 – and how the environment is suitable and provides a rich and diverse range of experiences that promote children's learning.</p> <p>In exploring the outdoor space we have observed that children in the sandpit are often asking for resources linked to dramatic play, for example one day Mary observed children "making potions" and a few days later Clara observed children "cooking and making cakes". The team are keen to re-consider resources and materials to enhance this play in the sand pit area.</p>	<p>Increased engagement in dramatic play in the sandpit space, including allowing access to more resources.</p> <p>(director comment: This seems to be the same as above – you need different outcomes here)</p>	M	<p>Additional resources for use in the sandpit will be purchased OR found and made available for children. (director comment: This needs some more detail – also you can have a budget of \$1 000 but can you also align this to the sustainability focus?)</p> <p>Additional visual prompts, examples and provocations will be added to make dramatic play in the sandpit.</p> <p>(director comment: how will you involve the children in this?)</p> <p>A small extension near the sand pit area for storing the kitchen shelves, toys, and digging tools. A mobile trolley in dedicated bins can be placed. Each bin would cost \$100 and 10\$.</p> <p>For dramatic play, open-ended toys, such as fabric pieces, shall be placed. Such a drama toy collection will allow kids to create multiple scenarios from the same props.</p>	<p>(director comment: This seems to be missing?)</p>	1/2/24 As a team we are keen to go to the green shed and are starting to consider what resources to add to this space. The children have asked for some cooking pots in group discussions.

Image: Proposed suggestions in QIP 3 (Part 2)

Practical Ways to Enhance Quality:

**Quality Area 1:** To enhance parental engagement, a projector can be installed to display the children’s progress in video format. Personalized videos highlighting each child's development could also be showcased on the projector, offering an interactive way for parents to stay connected with their child's learning journey.

**Quality Area 3:** To improve the physical environment, a mud-style kitchen shelf arrangement can be implemented to organize toys in a visually appealing manner. Additionally, a mobile sandpit trolley can be designed to engage children in the outdoor sandpit area. Sustainable materials for this mobile trolley can be sourced from families and charity shops. Children can actively participate in sorting and labeling the materials, making the process a hands-on learning experience.

Part B: Reflection on the QIP Process

The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) serves as a structured and ongoing approach to reflect on current practices at the University of Canberra's early learning service. The aim is to identify strengths

and areas for improvement, set objectives, and document actionable plans for quality enhancement. This aligns with the National Quality Framework (NQF) in Australia, which requires all approved services to prepare and continuously update a QIP (Harrison et al., 2023).

In this context, the QIP for the University of Canberra focused on identifying and refining childcare practices to meet the evolving needs of children and families (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, 2014).

The initial analysis of QIP 1 and 3 revealed that while parents trust the service, there is a need for better communication and interaction to strengthen the partnership between the service and families. Parents' involvement is integral to children's learning and development (Ramia et al., 2023). Parents expressed a preference for digital communication via apps and videos rather than through traditional online platforms or social media. In response, the proposal to install a projector screen at the entrance was made to showcase children's progress, emphasizing the critical role of parents in supporting their child's learning journey.

The projector screen, displaying personalized videos of children's development, offers a cost-effective and innovative approach to enhancing parental engagement. This solution aligns with the educators' goal of making learning more transparent and fostering two-way communication with parents, thus promoting a collaborative relationship and a hopeful vision for the future of early childhood education.

In Quality Area 3, the physical environment—both indoor and outdoor—was reimagined to support diverse, imaginative, and self-directed learning experiences. According to Reggio Emilia's educational philosophy, the environment is considered the "third teacher" (Strong-Wilson & Ellis, 2007), recognizing its fundamental role in shaping children's learning experiences.

The suggestion to create a mobile sandpit trolley, sourced sustainably from second-hand shops, and involving children in sorting and labeling materials, supports the development of autonomy and environmental sustainability. Integrating sustainability into the curriculum and daily practices aligns



with the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) principle of "Sustainability," encouraging children to take responsibility for the natural world (Kim & Dreamson, 2020).

During the formulation of the QIP, challenges emerged in sourcing sustainable and safe toys for the children. To address this, parents and educators were encouraged to bring open-ended play materials to help meet budget constraints.

Overall, the QIP process has reinforced my dedication to creating high-quality early learning communities through ongoing, critical reflection and collective action. It has also highlighted the importance of involving both children and families in the planning process, fostering their overall development and instilling confidence in the effectiveness of the QIP process.

## References:

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority. (2019). *Guide to developing a Quality Improvement Plan*.  
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- Burns, L. L., Mangione, M., Brown, L., & Hocking, L. (2019). *Quality Improvement in Australian early education and care settings: The Australian Educational Research Report 2019-2020*. <https://www.aecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-07/Quality%20Framework%20-%20Guide%20to%20developing%20a%20QIP.pdf>
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