

EDUCATION STANDARDS BOARD


*Child Safety Reform
Changes to the NQF*



Education
Standards
Board



Government
of South Australia



We acknowledge that we are meeting on the traditional Country of the Kurna people of the Adelaide Plains and pay respect to Elders past and present.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land.

Child safety reform overview

NQF legislative changes from 2026

Updated legislation strengthens oversight to embed child safety into every service. New National Laws will include safe use of digital devices, making inappropriate conduct an offence, expanding powers of Regulatory Authorities, mandating nationally consistent child safety training and additional measures for family day care.

Transparency and information for parents

Expanding service quality and safety information available to families, empowering informed decisions on education and care. Phase 1 implemented, with Phase 2 being implemented November 2025.

CCTV assessment in services

National CCTV assessment at nominated services to explore the use of CCTV with a focus on ethics, safety and transparency.

Additional measures

- Rapid assessment of child supervision practices







New child safety training

Mandatory child safety training will support educators to have the knowledge, skills ability to detect abuse, escalate concerns and report. The training is being developed by the Australian Centre for Child Protection, with the foundation training package available from February 2026.

National Early Childhood Worker Register

A National Early Childhood Worker Register will give regulators clear visibility of who is working in the sector and where. Testing phase to start in December 2025 with a national roll out from February 2026.

The National Quality Framework (NQF) operates through an applied law system, comprising the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

-  Australia's system for regulating and improving the quality of early childhood education and care services.
-  Key objective is to ensure children experience safe, high-quality early education and care.
-  All Australian Governments have agreed to the NQF.
-  Approved learning frameworks place the highest expectations on learning, development and wellbeing for children.

NQF changes from 1 September 2025 – 2 January 2026

Strengthening Child Safety



Changes September – January

1 September 2025

- Requiring policies and procedures for the safe use of digital technologies and online environments
- Reducing notification timeframes for physical and sexual abuse
- Banning the use of vaping substances

10 December 2025

- Extended limitation period for offences to enable prosecution to be undertaken
- Stop the clock provision introduced
- Strengthened Regulatory Authorities' ability to share and gather information, including from recruitment agencies
- Making it an offence for a person who is subject to a prohibition notice to give false or misleading information to a recruitment agency

1 January 2026

- Quality Area 2 - changes made to Element 2.2.3 title and description to include references to child safety
- Quality Area 7 - changes to Standard 7.1 and Element 7.1.2 to include reference to quality services that are child safe

2 January 2026

- Increased penalties, expanded infringement offences, expansion of regulatory penalties.

NQF changes from 27 February 2026

Strengthening Child Safety



Early childhood worker register

- Established in October 2025 to improve visibility of who is working in the sector
- All NQF providers must enter workforce information
- Information required is the same as current staff record requirements under the National Regulations
- National rollout begins **27 February 2026**
- Approved providers have **one month** to enter details of their current workforce

What does this mean?

Approved providers can now enter staffing details into the Register through the NQAITS portal. A bulk upload system is available.

Key information will need to be recorded for:

Educators, volunteers, students, non-educator staff, teachers (regardless of whether they are registered with the Teachers Registration Board), nominated supervisors, coordinators and FDC educator assistants.

Contact ACECQA for assistance with the Register:

Please direct your questions to ACECQA via the details below or contact NQAITS Help Centre:

Phone: 1300 422 327

Email: workerregister@acecqa.gov

Educator register – FAQ

1. Can employers use the Register to see my work history?
2. Do educators need to register themselves?
3. If I change employers, will the Register show this?
4. If I am an educator, can I access, check, or correct information held about me in the Register?
5. How is the Register managed for staff who work across multiple services?
6. How should casual and agency staff be recorded in the Register?
7. Should adult residents who live in a Family Day Care (FDC) residence be included in the Register?

Working With Children Check

- Individuals must hold a valid Children Check (WWCC) prior to commencing any work in early childhood education and care services
- Staff are mandated to notify the approved provider of any changes to their WWCC status
- Approved providers are mandated to notify the ESB of any changes to WWCC status of staff

What does this mean?

Everyone working in an education and care service must:

- Hold a valid WWCC / Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) clearance before they start working
- Notify their approved provider of any changes to their WWCC / WWVP status

Paramountcy Principle

Changes to the National Law will require all people involved in the **operation and delivery of an education and care service** (including approved providers, persons with management and control (PMCs), nominated supervisors, educators, staff and volunteers (including students)) to ensure that the safety, rights and best interest of children is the **paramount consideration** in the operation of an early childhood service.

This will be known as the ‘paramount consideration’.

What does this mean?

The National Law already includes the Guiding Principle that the rights and best interest of children are paramount.

The new 'paramount consideration' will extend the existing Guiding Principle, making it a statutory duty to ensure that the safety, rights and best interests of children underpin every level of decision-making in all areas of operating a service.

Devices in ECEC services

Service-supplied devices or **service-authorized devices** (for family day care) must be used to **capture, store or transmit images of children** while at an education and care service and for the purpose of providing education and care.

Personal devices will not be permitted to be in a person's possession or under a person's control while working directly with children in centre-based services.

In limited circumstances, approved providers can provide an exemption.

What does this mean?

A personal device includes any type of device which **can capture an image, or devices which can store or transmit an image** (for example, a USB drive).

An approved provider of an education and care service must supply a device (**service-supplied device**) to be used to capture, store or transmit images for this purpose.

In FDC services, an approved provider must authorise a device (**service-authorised device**) to be used to capture, store or transmit images for this purpose.

ECEC devices – FAQ

1. Are smart watches banned (e.g. Apple watches)?
2. Where can I find the ACECQA template for personal device exclusions?
3. Can I do mandatory training using a personal device?
4. Can family members use their personal devices while at the service?

Child safety training

The requirements for who must complete child safety training has been expanded. The requirement extends to:

- Persons with management or control;
- Nominated supervisors;
- Persons in day-to-day charge;
- Staff members (including those who do not work with children and FDC coordinators)
- Volunteers, including students (including those who do not work with children).

Requirement to complete refresher training every 2 years.

What does this mean?

Approved providers must ensure that nominated supervisors, staff members and volunteers including students at the service know and understand their obligations under the relevant child protection law.

New child safety training is mandatory and nationally consistent.

Approved providers have until 27 August 2026 to ensure staff complete the foundation training.

Child safety training – FAQ

1. Who needs to complete the new child safety training?
2. How much does the child safety training cost?
3. Is Geccko the same as JW Gecko / Gecko Learning?
4. I have finished the Geccko training. Do I still have to complete RRHAN-EC or Safe Environments child protection training?

Inappropriate conduct

New provisions in the National Law make it an offence to subject a child to **'inappropriate conduct'** in early childhood settings. The new offence strengthens child safety measures by prohibiting behaviours that are not acceptable. This includes:

- whether it is likely to cause harm (physical, emotional or psychological) to the child,
- whether it transgresses expectations about what is acceptable in an education and care service,
- the child's age and developmental stage
- whether the behaviour is sexual, violent or aggressive.

What does this mean?

The legislation references conduct that a **reasonable person** would consider to be inappropriate in the circumstances, while that child is being educated and cared for at an education and care service.

Factors that will not be taken into account in determining whether the conduct is inappropriate include whether or not the child consented to the conduct, and whether the person accused of the offence is related to the child.

NQF changes to Family Day Care 27 February 2026

Strengthening Child Safety



Family day care premises

Authorised Officers will be able to enter and inspect areas of a family day care (FDC) premises **beyond the part of the FDC residence** in which education and care is provided.

Approved providers must risk assess areas near the FDC residence that are accessible to children and ‘approve’ the area to be used for providing education and care.

What does this mean?

This change allows for authorised officers powers of entry to extend to include FDC residence regardless of if they are used for care. For example:

- A room in the FDC residence
- An area outside, but near, the FDC residence
- A shed or garage at the same premises on which the FDC residence is located

These new provisions allow for the consideration of risks to children if they can access other areas of the premises beyond the FDC residence.

The changes apply to new assessments and each annual reassessment (not retrospectively).

Meet the Regulator

16 June 2026 - Meet the Regulator event

All early childhood education and care services and approved providers are invited to join the ESB at our Meet the Regulator event to be held across 2 sessions on Tuesday 16 June 2026.

It is an opportunity to engage with ESB and explore topics that matter most to the sector.

Further information, including how to register will be shared via a Sector Alert in the coming weeks.

Thankyou

[Child safety | ACECQA](#)

See ACECQA website for further information on:

- Establishment of a National Early Childhood Worker Register
- Managing Devices in Education and Care Services
- Mandatory Child Protection & National Child Safety Training
- What's Already Changed (from 1 September 2025)
- Changes from 27 February 2026

Complete this short survey to provide feedback on this webinar:

<https://app.sli.do/event/kyYUp7rV5k9n6gmLm8UBHH>

Contact us: 1800 882 413

educationstandardsboard@sa.gov.au

