

Quality Area Three: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

**Self-Assessment Tool &
Quality Improvement Plan Summary**

Quality Area 3: Physical environment

The physical environment is safe, suitable and provides a rich and diverse range of experiences which promote children's learning and development.

Quality Area 3 of the NQS focuses on the physical environment. The physical environment is critical to:

- contributing to children's wellbeing, creativity and developing independence
- providing a diverse range of experiences that promote children's learning and development
- keeping children safe
- creating/organising spaces to reduce the risk of injury.

Additional information and resources about Quality Area 3 are available in the [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#) and on the [ACECQA website](#).

Quality Area 3: Standards and elements

Standard 3.1		The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service.
Fit for purpose	Element 3.1.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.
Upkeep	Element 3.1.2	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.
Standard 3.2		The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.
Inclusive environment	Element 3.2.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
Resources support play-based learning	Element 3.2.2	Resources, materials and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based learning.
Environmentally responsible	Element 3.2.3	The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

Law and Regulations

The table below includes the sections of the National Law (S) and National Regulations (R) underpinning Quality Area 3.

Please assess whether your service is compliant or non-compliant in accordance with the [National Law and Regulations](#), relevant to your service type.

NOTE: If a law or regulation is not applicable to your service or service type, you are not required to select whether you are compliant or non-compliant.

Law (S) / Regulation (R)	NQS	Does your service meet legislative requirements?	Compliant / Non-compliant
R.116-117 R116 R34(f)(iii)	STD3.1	<p>If you have a family day care service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you ensured that all educators' residences or approved venues are safe before children are placed in care, and at least annually? Have you ensured that glazed areas of all educators' residences or approved venues meet the required safety standard? Do you require educators to inform you of any alterations or renovations to their premises? For family day care services operating from a venue, have you submitted an application for approval to operate from a venue? 	<input type="radio"/> Compliant <input type="radio"/> Non-compliant
R.103	STD3.1	Have you ensured that the service premises, venue or residence and all equipment and furniture are safe, clean and in good repair?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Compliant <input type="radio"/> Non-compliant
R104-115	STD3.1	<p>Have you ensured the services premises, venue or residence meets all regulatory requirements? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is the required amount of unencumbered space for the number of children in attendance at the service Arrangements for dealing with soiled clothes, linen and nappies If you have children who are preschool age or younger, have fencing that prevents them going over, under or through it? Are there appropriate toilet, hand washing and nappy change facilities? Is there space for administrative functions and consultation with families? Is there adequate light, ventilation and shade? 	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Compliant <input type="radio"/> Non-compliant

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are all areas of the premises easily supervised? 	
R105	STD3.1	Have you ensured that each child being cared for has access to sufficient furniture, materials and developmentally appropriate equipment suitable for that child?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Compliant <input type="radio"/> Non-compliant
R.113	STD3.2	Have you ensured that children are able to explore and experience the natural environment? For example are there trees, plants and sand?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Compliant <input type="radio"/> Non-compliant

If you answered 'non-compliant': you are not meeting regulatory requirements and should take immediate steps to rectify this non-compliance. Use the box below to note the relevant Law/Regulation with your action.

Standard 3.1: The design and location of the premises is appropriate for the operation of a service

Record up to five key evidence points and/or practices that are currently occurring at your service. Identify if these practices meet the National Quality Standard.

NOTE: You have already indicated your services compliance with the National Law and Regulations. This evidence should demonstrate key practices that reflect the elements in this National Quality Standard.

Concept	Element ID	Element	Identified evidence and key practices		Confirm
Fit for purpose	ELE3.1.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.	1.	NWOOSH has invested in furniture that can be moved to allow flexibility around the indoor and outdoor environment. In the centre, movable cupboards are utilised to store books and construction items, which can then be moved around the room to set up different areas and locked into place for safety. Boxes storing items in the inside areas allow the moveability of activities to be set up in various positions. The use of sporting tubs assists with the moveability outside.	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Met <input type="radio"/> Not Met
			2.	NWOOSH has age appropriate furniture available to ensure all children can have access to the items and activities. There are three different sizes of chairs available to children to suit their physical needs. This is extended to the different heights of tables which includes an adjustable table to suit the different heights of children. The craft trolley is also at a child height to ensure ease of access.	
			3.	With the approval of expanded numbers last year, NWOOSH negotiated with the school to have access to the school canteen for preparation of afternoon tea and storage of items. This ensured that the appliances and utensils were suitable and appropriate for the number of children coming to the service and allowing for every child's dietary needs to be met. The designated area is supplementary to the kitchen in the main room, which is used as a greater focus for cooking activities.	

			<p>4. NWOOSH has various resources available to children across the different spaces to encourage relaxation and resting. These resources include soft foam mats and the straw mats in the outdoor environment that are used by all age groups. The indoor environment resources include beanbags, cushions, tents, soft puzzle mats and teepee's that are used to facilitate rest areas and allow flexibility and autonomy for children to set up.</p> <p>5. NWOOSH has a room dedicated for the older children (Year 4-6) as part of the SKOOSH program. This allows the older children a space for privacy for activities and conversations. A further example of this space being fit for purpose is the access to both a reverse cycle air-conditioner and heater to allow for an adjustable and comfortable environment.</p>	
Upkeep	ELE3.1.2	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.	<p>1. NWOOSH has a designated staff member as the WHS lead. This allows for a consistent and strong focus on WHS cycles and maintenance at the centre. Having a WHS lead allows all matters to be collated in one area and ensure that any issues are dealt with in a timely matter. This also enables better tracing of any issues and ensuring procedures are consistently being reviewed to ensure all upkeep is up-to-date.</p> <p>2. NWOOSH ensures that all items are clean and safe through regular checks being conducted. WHS checks are conducted prior to the commencement of session to ensure that all areas at the premises are safe and clean. Educators are informed through daily posts through Deputy that outline any new issues and action to be taken. The educators are also updated through the tri-termly staff meetings to ensure any issue gets covered and allows for ease of tracking.</p> <p>3. NWOOSH ensures the upkeep of the centre through the use of cleaning checklists. These checklist cover all areas and equipment to ensure all areas are covered. This also included recently creating new COVID checklists to ensure areas that were identified for more frequent attention were attended to. Educators also assist in a washing roster of items required to be cleaned and the local dry-cleaner is used for excursion clothing & play items when required.</p>	<p> <input checked="" type="radio"/> Met <input type="radio"/> Not Met </p>

			<p>4. NWOOSH also has cleaning processes beyond the educators daily and termly routines that assist in keeping the premises well maintained. This includes the engagement of school cleaners everyday during term time. NWOOSH also has external cleaners contracted on a weekly all year basis that come on the weekend to ensure a deep clean is conducted on the premises. NWOOSH also engages an external company to do maintenance on the centre's dishwasher that ensures continual working order.</p> <p>5. NWOOSH embeds the practice of upkeep into the daily routines within the program. This involves the use of 'pack-up' and 'tidy-up' times to ensure that equipment and the premises is kept safe and clean at all times. Children can assist in areas such as ensuring outdoor equipment is collected and placed next to the shed for storage. This also builds on a sense of ownership of the items at NWOOSH. An educator processes the equipment to ensure items are accounted for and in working order.</p>	
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Standard 3.2 The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play based learning

Record up to five key evidence points and/or practices that are currently occurring at your service. Identify if these practices meet the National Quality Standard.

NOTE: You have already indicated your services compliance with the National Law and Regulations. This evidence should demonstrate key practices that reflect the elements in this National Quality Standard.

Concept	Element ID	Element	Identified evidence and key practices		Confirm
Inclusive environment	ELE3.2.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.	1.	NWOOSH has enhanced the participation of every child through the development and resourcing of colourful and sensory resources. This was identified to assist not only the children at the centre with additional needs but also for our younger age group to aid with their learning. The outdoor equipment purposefully has a variety of colours as an example. These resources allow multiple and flexible in their use.	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Met <input type="radio"/> Not Met
			2.	NWOOSH conducts excursions both in the Vacation Care program and as part of the Skoosh Termly Program. These excursions allow the children to explore new concepts and expose them to the world beyond, such as Tree-tops, Horse Riding, Rock Climbing & Inflatable World. These examples show the activities have differing levels of difficulty that can challenge the children but allow them to explore at their level in both a built and natural environment.	
			3.	NWOOSH encourages the children to engage with their natural environment through the program and areas that are accessible. The outdoor environment has a rock area that children can use to play on, create rock paintings and engage in water and mud play. There are also gardens which the children learn through routines and activities to develop respect for, aiding their experiences in the natural environment.	

			<p>4. NWOOSH uses different sized groupings that allow for children to be involved at different levels of the program. For eg: small table groupings are used for afternoon tea in each of the age areas that allow for closer social interactions and developing relationships. Educators assist in running big group games, for eg: Capture the Flag, that allow children from all ages to participate. Stationed areas are also set up to allow smaller group or individual interactions, such as the homework table.</p> <p>5. NWOOSH communicates with parents to source materials, activities and resources for the centre that will help engage their children. An example of this is parents suggesting different types of Pokemon cards that could be purchased for the centre as they knew their children were engaged with this through the program. Another example was the inclusion of minecraft activities in the program as parents had mentioned this was popular with their children and helped them to engage.</p>	
Resources support play-based learning	ELE3.2.2	Resources, materials and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based learning.	<p>1. NWOOSH sets up equipment that is appropriately age-based for the K-3 and SKOOSH environments, while also ensuring common interests are catered for in both to ensure sufficient supply. An example of this is the sourcing of age-appropriate board games for both programs, such as Monopoly Junior for K-3 and Monopoly for SKOOSH. Another example is the provision of Lego found in both environments to ensure sufficiency in number and accessibility to all children.</p> <p>2. NWOOSH utilises the set up of stations in implementing the program. By setting up the program this way, it allows children to access the materials and participate in the activities with minimal wait time. Another eg. during every afternoon session the outdoor equipment is unpacked from the shed to allow access for the children to use without waiting or requiring staff assistance. The equipment is set up to allow for child initiated & open ended play, as well as for structured program activities</p> <p>3. NWOOSH engages the children in selection of equipment to ensure it meets their interests and needs. Educators through the use of formalised surveys and verbal feedback collate the information to guide purchasing of equipment. This allows for sufficient number of, for example, both soft and hard balls to be obtained, to ensure all children have the opportunity to use the equipment in a safe and age appropriate manner. Equipment is purchased that can be used on an ongoing basis.</p>	<p> <input checked="" type="radio"/> Met <input type="radio"/> Not Met </p>

			<p>4. Through the huddles each session with educators in their stage based areas, NWOOSH enables focus on the development of children's competencies, as seen through observations, and ensure activities are implemented with appropriate and sufficient resources. Educators, through these huddles, talk about active supervision and participation, being involved with the children to assist in development of their competence and challenging them through role-modelling activities.</p> <p>5. NWOOSH has sourced materials that encourage children to participate & learn responsibilities for everyday life, including connecting to the community. This is done through real-life resources, such a cooking utensils & dress-ups that allow children to explore & engage with open-ended play. Families & educators support this resourcing by donating items for re-use. An example was handbags as part of imaginative play & allowed educators to discuss the use of handbags in a real world context.</p>	
Environmentally responsible	ELE3.2.3	The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.	<p>1. NWOOSH consistently implements a program of activities that develop a child's understanding of environmental practices. This has seen the development of a club that relates to a focus on the environment. A Nature Club during Term 3, 2020 focused on the outdoor & natural environment. NWOOSH also programs activities in Vacation Care that have a sustainable focus such as our 'Frog Hotel' & 'Loose Parts Play'. These were programmed due to continuous demand for sustainable activities.</p> <p>2. NWOOSH has appointed a staff member to be the sustainability leader that allows for a focused holistic approach to sustainability outcomes at the centre. This has allowed for activities and projects in the program to be educator and child lead. For example, educators becoming involved in the recycling initiative with 'Who Gives A Crap' who use recycled materials for toilet paper. This has allowed the educators to lead children in discussions of why we use this company and recycling materials.</p> <p>3. NWOOSH assists the children to become environmentally responsible through communication with families. Shout-out posts on Kinderloop and Facebook posts on sustainability have been tagged to highlight initiatives taken by the centre. This included mentioning the practices of recycling bread-tags to be re-used in other projects. The families and children have been involved by bringing the bread tags from home to the centre, as well as the centre recycling bread tags as part of this initiative.</p>	

			<p>4. NWOOSH engages the children to become environmentally responsible through everyday practices at the centre. On a visual level, this involved creating 'Rufus' a recycle bin that provides children with a fun interactive way to learn about the practice of sustainable behaviours. The recycled craft play bins were coloured yellow for consistency with the recycle bins used in the home environment. Through the Committee & discussion with Council the centre was able to source it's own recycling bin.</p> <p>5. NWOOSH collaborates with the local community to further extend children's opportunities to become environmentally sustainable. NWOOSH worked with the local pre-school (NWCPS) in working together to collect bottle lids for a re-cycling project. Educators and families have been involved in supplying bottle lids for them and discussing what projects this goes towards. NWOOSH also works with the local school to recycle ink cartridges used at the centre.</p>	
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Quality Area Three: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Standard 3.1 The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service.

Standard 3.2 The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.

The physical environment provides the practical landscape for quality implementation of practice & programming. To operate and provide care at a high-quality level of service it is vital to reflect upon current practice, recognise areas of improvement & develop S.M.A.R.T. goals to implement these changes. The focuses of improvement for this area include:

- At an NQF workshop educators reflected collaboratively with an educational leader that feedback channels for all stakeholders regarding service environment and facilities' design were available but ease of access could improve. Increasing feedback channels regarding setup of service from educators, children & families increases opportunities to provide feedback which in turn sustains an engaging planning cycle and program that fosters inclusive & explorative play-based learning.
- Due to the impact of COVID19 upon day-to-day operations and the heightened awareness regarding cleaning, it was reflected by staff that whilst they have a strong basic understanding of pre-COVID-19 internal cleaning processes that there was a shift in expectations which required instruction.

Progress Notes: The development of COVID-19 daily cleaning daily checklists for both in-term AM/PM sessions & VAC sessions. These checklists empowered staff to adopt a proactive approach to cleaning as these checklists clearly identified expectations. The designation system of termly cleaning items was reorientated to allocating tasks per session instead of per week to empower staff to take initiative in the most efficient & effective manner.

- An observation by educators and children has been the challenge of maintaining a level of order of the resources in the SKOOSH inside play environment. This is a concern not just regarding tidiness and access to resources but also the level of responsibility and care some of our older children are taking in regard to respecting their dedicated space.

Progress Notes: The displaying of both SKOOSH-contract and NWOOSH general rules within the space has been essential to resetting expectations of SKOOSH children. A visual guide to SKOOSH routine is also displayed to communicate expectations of responsibilities regarding pack up.

- A Sustainability Online Workshop was led by our sustainability leader for our educators. During this workshop it was reflected that it would be beneficial for children and educators to extend on their knowledge and understanding to lead in implementing additional sustainable initiatives at NWOOSH.

Progress Notes: It was brainstormed that through visual information roadmaps and displays, created in collaboration with the sustainability leader, educators and children regarding our centre's continual commitment to sustainability, knowledge and understanding can be easily accessed and conveyed.