

# PRESCHOOL QUALITY ASSESSMENT WORKBOOK

## 1999

---

### **Acknowledgements**

The Department of Human Services gratefully acknowledges the contributions made to the development of the Preschool Quality Assessment Checklist by Dr Elizabeth Mellor (formerly Associate Professor, Monash University), peak organisations and those services that participated in piloting the checklist.

Published by the  
Early Childhood Services Unit  
Family and Community Support Branch  
Community Care Division, Department of Human Services  
<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/commcare>

---

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>What Do We Mean by Quality?</b>	<b>4</b>	
<b>The Reasons for Quality Assessment</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>About the Checklist</b>	<b>7</b>	
<b>Getting Started</b>	<b>9</b>	
<b>The Seven Steps of Quality Assessment</b>	<b>12</b>	
Step 1	Establish a Sub-committee	13
Step 2	Completing the Checklist	14
Step 3	Meeting as a Sub-committee	21
Step 4	Compiling the Report	21
Step 5	Submit Recommendations to the Management Body for Endorsement	22
Step 6	Review Endorsed Recommendations	22
Step 7	Document & File	22
<b>Checklist of Quality Indicators</b>	<b>24</b>	
1.	<b>Program Plan</b>	<b>25</b>
2.	<b>Program</b>	<b>27</b>
3.	<b>Staff/Child Interaction</b>	<b>33</b>
4.	<b>Staff/Parent Interaction</b>	<b>37</b>
5.	<b>The Environment</b>	<b>39</b>
6.	<b>Health and Safety</b>	<b>43</b>
7.	<b>Administration</b>	<b>46</b>
8.	<b>Roles, Responsibilities and Training</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>49</b>	
1.	A Sample Introductory Letter	50
2.	A Sample Poster	51
3.	A Sample Letter of Invitation	52
4.	Plan for a Parent Information Evening	53
5.	Sample Invitation to Reporting Meeting	54
6.	Resources from The Lady Gowrie Child Centre	55
7.	Resources available from Kindergarten Parents Victoria	56
8.	Resource and Information Organisations	
56		
9.	Department of Human Services Regional List	57

---

# Introduction

The **Preschool Quality Assessment Checklist** (PQAC) was introduced in March 1997 by the Victorian Department of Human Services. The Checklist aims to assist all State funded preschool services to evaluate and improve the quality of the preschool service for all concerned, including parents, staff, management and children.

There are many aspects to operating a preschool service ranging from program planning to administration. The Checklist provides a framework to identify areas that are of good quality, to examine areas to improve and to make plans for the future development of the service.

The management body of the preschool service is responsible for implementing a quality assessment process, but the involvement of parents and staff is essential. Some people may find this process challenging as there will be a range of views on how children learn and develop, the role of the teacher, the role of management and the aims of the preschool service. However, the quality assessment process creates an opportunity to develop a shared view of what is a good quality service.

The **Workbook for the Preschool Quality Assessment Checklist** (the Workbook) has been developed by the Lady Gowrie Child Centre to help those who manage preschool services to use the Checklist as their quality assessment tool. It provides practical information about each of the steps involved in completing the Checklist such as: how to assess the service; what characteristics to look for; and what questions to ask. It includes ideas for involving parents, using the expertise of staff and resolving any conflicts that may arise.

The information in the Workbook draws on consultation undertaken with key agencies involved in preschool services and with teacher groups, and discussions among participants in workshops about the Checklist.

---

# What Do We Mean by Quality?

There are many groups of people involved in each preschool service and each may have different needs and expectations of the service, and a different idea of what is a quality service.

Identifying the range of needs and values of the people involved in your service will be the basis of your service philosophy. Each service will place particular value on different aspects of their preschool service. Services that have non-English speaking families may value multilingual programs, procedures for translating information and training for staff to understand multicultural perspectives. Rural services may value flexibility of hours and days to eliminate excess travel time as well as social opportunities for parents and children who are otherwise isolated. Inner urban services, where families live in homes with less outdoor space, may value large play spaces and opportunities for outdoor play. Families may value flexibility of hours and written communication, management bodies may value parent support and reliable staff, staff may value good communication and adequate resourcing, while children just want to have fun!

Developing the philosophy for your service will mean taking into account the needs and expectations of everyone involved in your service, and balancing those expectations with knowledge about early childhood curriculum and efficient and effective management practice.

Within the early childhood sector, there is broad consensus that quality services for children should include:

- Positive and respectful interactions between staff, children and families.
- Programs developed from a sound knowledge of child development and current learning theory, and based on the individual needs and interests of the children.
- Challenging and safe, indoor and outdoor environments, that provide play based, developmentally appropriate learning opportunities.
- Management practices that allow all groups full participation in decision making and policy development, and clearly communicate service philosophy, goals and implementation practices.

Using the above as a guide, the different groups of people involved in each preschool service can develop a shared understanding of what quality is for their service.

---

# The Reasons for Quality Assessment

Quality assessment procedures are being introduced in most professions, services and industries. The Funding and Service Agreement, which is signed by agencies receiving preschool funding from the Department of Human Services, requires funded agencies to undertake a continuous quality improvement process.

There are many benefits for a service in undertaking a joint review and assessment of the preschool service. A review of the service provides management bodies, parents and staff with an opportunity to work together, to express and understand different points of view, to gain a greater understanding of the service as well as appreciating the importance of early childhood education. It also provides an opportunity to affirm the hard work, skills and commitment of all associated with the service.

In undertaking a quality assessment process, the preschool service will gather a comprehensive range of information to assist with future planning, policy development and to encourage greater parent involvement.

*After completing a quality assessment process you will be able to:*

## **Identify the quality aspects of your service.**

Sometimes we take for granted the way things happen in our service and assume that it happens everywhere. It is important that we recognise the aspects of our service which make it unique. It may be the program, enthusiastic and committed parents or well-maintained and safe buildings and outdoor play environments. By recognising these unique aspects of your service you can ensure this standard is maintained, we can also use them to promote your service to the community.

## **Acknowledge everyone's contribution.**

Working together will allow both parents and staff to gain a greater understanding of the contribution and skills of everyone involved in the service. It will also mean a wider range of information and experience is available in each discussion of quality indicators.

## **Improve communication.**

We may be so busy in our day-to-day tasks in preschool services, working in the program with children or organising administration and management tasks, that we only have time to talk to each other about things that must be discussed or for very brief conversations. The quality assessment process gives us the opportunity to formalise the channels of communication and acknowledge the relationships within the service. With these formal processes in place, it is often easier for effective conflict resolution to take place.

## **Strengthen involvement.**

By being part of the development of ongoing evaluation of your service philosophy and practices, staff and parents develop an ownership of the beliefs of the service and the success of its implementation is more likely. This may then lead to a more cohesive team

---

spirit where staff and parents feel involved and acknowledged as they work toward agreed goals.

**Identify areas for improvement.**

By committing your service to a continuous cycle of quality assurance you are acknowledging that the needs of families and staff at the service are continually changing. It encourages us to look at the procedures and practices honestly and openly. Quality assessment provides us with a system that acknowledges our strengths and challenges our thinking.

For example, the service philosophy and broad goals may need to be updated to accommodate the values and ideas of new families or staff.

**Improve the service.**

By planning and working towards goals for improvement to the service, we can be assured that we have the best possible preschool service for children, families, staff and the community.

**Market the service.**

Once we have identified the quality aspects of the service, we are able to advertise and promote its special features to prospective families, new staff and the community. This commitment to quality will benefit the overall promotion of preschool education throughout Victoria.

---

# About the Checklist

The Checklist consists of three main sections:

## **Section 1 Guidelines**

- Introduction & Overview
- Suggested Process for Implementation
- Glossary of Terms

Resource Agencies

## **Section 2 Checklist of Quality Indicators**

There are 8 Indicator areas that list characteristics of Quality Service

## **Section 3 Proformas**

- Evaluation Discussion Sheet
- Preschool Quality Assessment Report
- Plan of Action

### **The Checklist is a self assessment tool.**

The Checklist has been designed as a resource to be used to evaluate the quality of services. It allows services to evaluate their service against the identified indicators of a quality program. The checklist is a tool that will support evaluation and the information collected is only for the service's use. At no stage does the documentation need to be sighted for verification by anyone outside the service.

### **It is not compulsory to use the Checklist as the quality assessment tool.**

Some services may choose to use another form of quality assessment such as the Commonwealth Government Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS), or they may prefer to develop another quality assurance process. This may involve parent questionnaires, checklists, discussion groups and staff activities to ensure that all aspects of their service are being evaluated. Services should refer to the *Children's Services in Victoria Policy and Procedures-Preschool Supplement* for further information about the requirements of any quality assessment systems implemented..

### **The Checklist does not replace the need to meet the requirements of the Children's Services Act 1996 (the Act) and the Children's Services Regulations 1998 (the Regulations).**

The Act and the Regulations provide minimum standards with which all licensed children's services must comply. Minimum standards in relation to staffing, staff qualifications, space and equipment do not define a good quality service. They merely form the basis for it. Quality assurance provides the opportunity to build on those minimum standards and to continually improve the quality of your preschool service.

---

**Quality improvement is a continuous process.**

As services identify areas they wish to improve they will develop a range of short term and long term goals and work towards achieving these. Because quality improvement is a continuous process, it is not necessary to complete the entire checklist each year. Quality assurance is taking place as long as there is commitment to completing at least part of an assessment process on a regular basis. This would include documenting the process undertaken and the outcomes, and handing these over to the new committee/staff, where relevant.

---

# Getting Started

## **Who is responsible?**

The management body of the preschool service, such as the committee of management, local government, or school board (whichever signs the Funding and Service Agreement), is responsible for ensuring the implementation of a quality assurance process.

## **Promotion of Quality Assessment**

Before the assessment process begins it is important that all staff, parents and members of the management body have a sound understanding of the reasons for the assessment, of its value in improving the quality of the service, and have a willingness to use the assessment process in an open and positive way. This can be done in several ways, for example: inviting all parents and staff to an information meeting, developing a newsletter focusing on quality assessment, noticeboard displays, fliers in languages other than English.

## **To begin the process the management body should meet to:**

- **Decide who will coordinate the Quality assessment process.**

While the management body of the service is responsible for ensuring the implementation of a quality assurance process they are not necessarily the group who will carry out all of the work involved. Your service may decide that a sub-committee, consisting of staff, parents and members of the management body, will coordinate the quality assessment process.

- **Discuss the purpose of the Checklist.**

Think of the Checklist as a tool to assist in quality assessment of the service. Members should spend some time discussing its value and becoming familiar with the suggested process

- **Set realistic objectives for the current year.**

It is important to be realistic about how much can be achieved. It may not be possible for the entire Checklist to be completed in a year so it is important to identify the benefits you hope to achieve by using the Checklist and prioritise the importance of working toward those benefits, to your service.

Objectives may vary from year to year depending on the time available, whether the process has been undertaken before, the clarity of previous documentation and the skills of those involved in the assessment.

Objectives may include:

- To ensure parents understand the Checklist, the ongoing nature of the quality assessment process and its value.
- To ensure all parents and staff feel involved in the process.
- To establish how much of the Checklist will be completed and the way it will be used.
- To identify quality indicators which your service can improve and prioritise a time-line for the process.
- To develop and maintain positive communication between staff, management and parents.

---

### **Set realistic time lines.**

Consider an appropriate time-line for working through the quality assessment checklist at your service. You may choose one indicator a month or particular indicators at particular times of the year.

For example: Indicators 1.1(a) and 1.1(b) discuss the need for a program philosophy and general goals set by parents, management and staff. (Page 7 PQAC) It would be sensible to approach this indicator early in the year to build relationships and establish foundations for other practices, procedures and policies.

If the previous management body completed this indicator you might revisit it to ensure you agree with the philosophy and concentrate on Indicator 8.1 (Page 62 PQAC) which talks about having the roles and responsibilities of staff and management clearly set out in writing.

#### **The time-lines will be dependent on:**

- How many indicators you develop a plan of action for.
- The number of parents and staff involved in the PQAC.
- The availability of documentation of previous assessment tasks.
- Staff and management changes.

### **Manage time soundly.**

Some services may choose to set aside one full day to complete the major part of the task while others may prefer short meetings spread over more time. Times for meetings can be arranged to be held after management meetings. Keep in mind that parents on the PQAC sub-committee may not necessarily be on the Committee of Management. Set clear agenda's and have a chairperson to ensure discussion remains relevant to the agenda and meetings finish on time.

### **Be flexible.**

Be prepared to change plans, perhaps spending time working thoroughly through one or two main areas of assessment rather than covering the entire service in the one year. You will find that indicators link with each other. Assessment of Indicator 4.6 (Page 36 PQAC) discusses the availability of resources on child development for parent use. You may first need to consider Indicator 4.2 (Page 33 PQAC) which discusses the cultural and linguistic needs of parents. Resources may need to be available in languages other than English.

### **Decide how everyone will be informed about the process and how the findings will be communicated.**

You may wish to consider:

- A meeting of all staff with management to discuss the process.
- An introductory letter to each family from the management body. (This should be provided in appropriate languages where necessary)
- Posters on the notice board or wherever parents gather.
- Informal conversations as occasions arise.
- An information evening.

For sample documents and meeting plans see Appendices 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 on *pages 49-56*.

---

### **Encourage involvement.**

When seeking participation it is important to recognise each persons availability to contribute will vary. Some parents will commit to being on a sub-committee while others may be able to assist with noticeboards or fliers. If you are aware of particular skills of parents you may involve them in assisting in the development of a plan of action for one indicator. For example: When considering Indicator 6.6 (Page 54 PQAC) you may identify a concern with the attractiveness of the outdoor environment. A parent who is a gardener may be able to suggest plants, landscaping and a suitable time-line and budget to address this Indicator.

Encourage parents to initially contribute in small ways such as responding to short surveys and putting their written ideas in a suggestion box, with time, they may begin to feel more willing to contribute to a quality assessment process. Make it as enjoyable as possible. Include a social component to meetings. Provide tea and coffee and find a comfortable space to meet in. Consider adult chairs for meetings.

# The Seven Steps

Once the management body has a sound understanding of the checklist process and ways parents can be informed and involved, they can begin.

## The Seven Steps of the Quality Assessment

### Step 1 – Establish a Sub-Committee

Decide on how the sub-committee will be formed.

### Step 2 – Complete the Checklist

Timeframe the process.  
Develop the process for completing the checklist. Make notes on assessing the preschool program.  
Record assessments  
complete the evaluation and discussion

### Step 3 – Meet as a Sub-Committee

Collate the findings  
Discuss findings and any emerging timelines for any improvements of changes that may be needed.

### Step 4 – Compile the Report

Summary of findings of the sub-committee.  
This should include any recommendations from any identified improvement

### Step 5 – Submit Recommendations to Management

Meet with Committee of management to develop a plan of action (if necessary) and decide on how to communicate findings to others.

### Step 6 – Review Endorsed Recommendations

Develop timeframes for continuous review of practices

### Step 7 - Document & File

File a copy of the PQAC.  
Establish a hand-over procedure to the incoming committee.

---

# The Seven Steps of the Quality Assessment

## Step 1 Establishing a Sub-committee

### Deciding on how the sub-committee will be formed

#### Who will be responsible for establishing the sub-committee?

The management body needs to decide how the sub-committee will be established. A member of the management body may volunteer or be appointed to be responsible for setting up the sub-committee. Alternatively, someone else such as a parent who is not on the management body may be chosen or volunteer to be responsible. This may then be the person who takes on the role of convenor of the sub-committee and reports back to the management body, or the group may elect another representative for these tasks.

#### How many should be involved?

The sub-committee should include representatives from the management body, staff and parents. While this would mean a minimum of three people on the sub-committee, in order to spread the workload and to have a wide range of ideas and views four to six members would be ideal.

The smaller the sub-committee, the larger the workload on each member. A sub-committee of three people in one service can't be expected to take on the same workload as a sub-committee of six in another service. Timelines and tasks will need to be set according to the size of the sub-committee.

Likewise be wary of having too people on a sub-committee which means that decision making and organisation takes longer. Everyone can assist the assessment process in some way by participating in surveys, personal discussions with other parents, translating information, etc. You may also ask parents with skills or interest relevant to a particular Indicator to assist for the period you are working on that indicator.

### Establishing a sub-committee.

Consider that an ideal Committee will be one that has representation from all areas of your service. Encourage people with organisational skills who may be able to convene the meetings, also people who represent and understand the values and culture of parents using your service.

If the service operates more than one funded group, you may want to have a parent representative from each of these groups.

Groups for three year olds do not receive funding from the Department of Human Services and so are not required to be part of a quality assessment process. However, by having a parent representative from that group, you not only have impartial representation but have a team member who will have experience in the process and, if the parent is available the following year, will be able to provide invaluable experience and continuity for the process. The quality of the program for the three year olds may also benefit from having a representative participate in the process.

---

Teachers and assistants are an important part of the assessment process. If there is more than one teacher employed in the service they may both decide to be part of the sub-committee, or they may choose to share the task.

### **Holding the first sub-committee meeting**

At the first sub-committee meeting, have copies of the Checklist ready to distribute and discuss.

Discuss:

- The purpose of the Checklist and the process of working through it.
- What people think makes a quality service.
- The indicators - what they mean and some of the terminology used.
- How to assess the indicators, what to look for and questions to ask.
- The rating system.
- Procedures for resolving disagreement.
- Objectives identified by the management body and sub-committee members.

It is imperative that the objectives established emphasise that it is the whole service which is being assessed including administration, maintenance, parent involvement, equipment, communication, as well as the preschool program. It is important to emphasise that the process is not to be used as a staff appraisal tool.

Once the objectives have been discussed and are understood, the sub-committee should establish a reporting mechanism to keep the management body informed about progress of the assessment.

### **Assigning roles and tasks for the sub-committee**

Members of the sub-committee will need to undertake a range of roles and tasks. These may be clearly defined and allocated to sub-committee members at the beginning of the process so everyone knows what will be expected of them. Alternatively, tasks can be allocated to sub-committee members as required so they volunteer only for what they are willing to do at the time.

Some of the roles and tasks include:

Convenor	To organise and run meetings, keep timelines and liaise with management
Parent liaison person	To prepare parent notices, organise parent meetings, distribute and collate questionnaires.
Resource person	To find books, videos and articles as required.
Program interpreter	To explain program issues.
Management representative	To explain administration/policy issues.

## **Step 2 Completing the Checklist**

Each member of the sub-committee will be responsible for completing their own individual assessment of the eight indicator areas and the evaluation discussion sheet and so will require copies of the Checklist (*pages 7 – 65 PQAC*) and evaluation discussion sheet proforma (*page 67 and 69 PQAC*).

---

## **Deciding on the Assessment Process**

### **Confidentiality**

Assessing the service will require the sub-committee members to gather information on various aspects of the service, observe the preschool program and discuss matters with staff, management and parents. The sub-committee members need to be aware of the need for confidentiality and to deal with the information which is gathered in an appropriate way. For example, while you are observing the preschool program and taking notes you may become aware of individual children's characteristics, behaviour or developmental stages.

Plans for individual children should not be available to anyone except the staff and the individual child's parents. At no stage should an individual child be identified and/or discussed. Indicator 2.6 (Page 14 PQAC) and Indicator 2.7 (Page 15 PQAC) talk about individual planning. (You may discuss the process with the teacher or a parent could look at their own child's record to develop an understanding of the process to assess these indicators).

### **Assessment Methods**

Completing the Checklist will require a variety of assessment methods. Some indicators will be relatively easy to assess by observation, eg. Indicator 1.1 (Page 7 PQAC) - there is either a program plan on display or there isn't; Indicator 4.6 (Page 36 PQAC)- there is either a parent library or notice board or there isn't.

However, some indicators will require a combination of discussion and observation, eg. Indicator 3.2 (Page 23 PQAC) this will require discussion with the teacher who can explain how experiences are planned and how the environment is prepared to encourage interaction. After discussion, sub-committee members may feel they need to observe the program to see to what extent this is happening and make an assessment of the quality of this indicator.

They may then wish to supplement their information gathering with parent surveys or suggestion boxes to complete some assessments.

### **Assessing the Preschool Program**

If the sub-committee agrees that the preschool program needs to be observed, it is important to be clear about how this should be done.

#### *Understanding the Curriculum*

Because programs for preschool children do not have a set curriculum (ie. a formal course of study with prescribed levels of achievement to be reached) it is often difficult for observers to see what is happening. Young children do not learn in "curriculum areas" such as maths or social science. Their learning is experiential, ie. based on active participation in experiences connected to their real lives. They are not consumers of activities, but explorers and inventors.

For example: During block play, children will be testing shape, size and weight as they select and fit blocks into a structure. They will discuss what they're doing, what they need, how they're feeling, what prompted their interest. Maths, science, technology, language, planning, creativity, memory and self-esteem will all be developed through this play.

---

In early childhood settings, curriculum relates to more than what is going to happen, it is all the planned and unplanned activities and experiences that happen throughout the day, with a prominent focus on individual children.

In reality, the “curriculum” is “the program”. It is everything that goes on each day within the service for the children. Each teacher formulates the program from his/her knowledge of young children in general and of individual children within the group and has an individual way of writing the general aims and goals.

Programs will be different from service to service, from group to group and from year to year depending on the needs and interests of the children and families and individual teaching styles. Many approaches to curriculum are being implemented in Victoria. There are models such as the Creative Curriculum, the Emergent Curriculum, the Project Approach, the Steiner System, the Child-centred Curriculum, Bi-lingual models, and the Montessori Method. All good models focus on children’s interests, needs and developmental levels rather than on arbitrary themes and structured activities.

As assessments are being made, remember that curriculum is “everything that happens”, including experiences, conversations, routines, indoor and outdoor play and that good learning environments reflect the interests of children.

### *Practical considerations*

If after looking at the information on page 18 you feel observation is necessary for assessment. You will need to discuss with the teacher a practical and appropriate time for observations to be done.

When making observations, sit down and remain as unobtrusive as possible. As children become accustomed to having an observer present, and if they understand that the person sitting in the chair has writing to do, they will be more likely to behave naturally and allow the observer to take notes without interruption.

You may prefer to use a more flexible approach by observing the program during the normal course of your preschool contact, bringing and picking up your child, helping with fruit routines, accompanying excursions and other voluntary activities.

If you are making notes and not filling in the checklist as you observe, write up your notes as soon as possible. You are more likely to remember accurately if you rewrite the notes the same day that you observe.

Remember that you will only be able to identify a small part of the overall planned objectives, as not every planned experience will be carried out in the limited time available. Remember too that quality programs rely on flexibility and spontaneity. You will most likely need to talk to the teacher about some of the practices that you have not been able to observe. Again ask him/her when this will be convenient rather than expect time to be available during the session.

## **Assessing the Indicators**

### *Making the Time*

You may choose to set aside a large amount of time (one full day) and complete the Checklist as quickly as possible or, to make the task more manageable, you may wish to break down the eight indicators, or the areas you have decided to focus on, into smaller components. This would mean short, regular meetings once per month or so to discuss two or three indicators and identify what to look for. Members could then complete any observations required and make their assessment of those indicators before moving on to the next two or three indicator areas.

---

### *A team approach*

Although each sub-committee member is responsible for completing the Checklist of indicators individually, you may wish to approach this as a “team” using the following four-step approach.

This provides a time efficient way to assess most of the indicators. The group is able to sight all relevant documentation and staff are able to answer questions and explain program issues.

### **1. Collect a range of documentation to use as the basis of a discussion group.**

For:

You may need:

Indicator 1 <b>Program plan</b>	Handbook. Notice board notices. Policies. Evaluations. Philosophy and Goals
Indicator 2 <b>Program</b>	Children’s Program. Room and playground plan. Individual record proformas. Developmental checklists. Previous group plans. Examples of parent involvement. Daily timetable.
Indicator 3 <b>Staff/child interaction</b>	Behaviour policy. Staff and student information.
Indicator 4 <b>Staff/parent interaction</b>	Handbook. Newsletters. Parent Notices. Policies. Translations. Photos of parent evenings, Notice-board displays, suggestion slips. Surveys.
Indicator 5 <b>The environment</b>	Playroom and playground tour. Policies. Equipment and materials.
Indicator 6 <b>Health &amp; safety</b>	Handbook. Emergency procedure notices. Policies. Maintenance book. Enrolment proformas. First-aid Certificates. Safety checklist. Cleaning roster.
Indicator 7 <b>Administration</b>	Handbook. Copies of Service policies. Meeting minutes. Committee reports. Service philosophy. Induction policy. AGM notices to review policy.
Indicator 8 <b>Roles &amp; responsibilities</b>	Position descriptions. Policies. Record of staff Inservice training. Staff meeting agendas/minutes.

### **2. Meet to review documentation and discuss each indicator using the Workbook Checklist of indicators “look for” and “discuss with” section as a guide. (Refer to page 24)**

Sub-committee members may want to meet to discuss each of the indicators, ask questions and refer to the relevant documentation. Throughout the discussion you may wish to make notes in your copy of the Checklist. You may be able to assess some indicators immediately by sighting documentation, eg. policies or by recalling what you have experienced in your time at the preschool.

### **3. Determine any unassessed indicators:**

---

After the discussion you may still feel that you have not been able to make a rating of one or more of the indicators. You may wish to employ other methods such as:

- Observation of program. You may feel you need to spend some time in the playroom or playground to fully assess the indicator.
- Parent questionnaires. You may wish to have some general parent feedback, eg. a questionnaire to ascertain how parents prefer information disseminated – newsletter, notice board, notes etc. (Indicator 4 Page 31 PQAC).
- Notice board and suggestion box. Parents may respond to a notice on health and safety issues by using a suggestion box (Indicator 6 Page 49 PQAC).
- Incidental conversations. Informal conversations with parents to ascertain extra information.
- Using resources/agencies. Parent library books and resource agencies may have further information.

#### **4. Record your assessment**

- Each member of the sub-committee should record their ratings / comments / recommendations onto their individual Checklist.

---

## Recording Assessments

After the assessment is made, the indicator should be rated and dated.

- 3 – indicator achieved well
- 2 – indicator achieved adequately
- 1 – indicator not achieved

Comments may be added.

Eg.

The basis for your rating eg. Observation documents sighted

A question to be asked during later discussion.

A suggestion for possible action.

(Remember these are your notes only to remind you of how you rated each indicator.)

## Completing the Evaluation Discussion Sheet (page 21)

(Page 67 and 69 PQAC)

As soon as possible after completing the checklist, summarise your results in the Evaluation Discussion Sheet. Note those indicators which you rated as high. List these in section 1 “Service strengths and special features”.

Any indicators you rated as not fully achieved should be listed in section 2 “Aspects needing attention”.

If you have any ideas about how these aspects could be improved, write your ideas in section 3 “Suggested strategies for improvement”.

Sign and date the sheet, and have it ready for discussion with other members of the sub-committee.



---

## Step 3 Meet as a Sub-Committee

### Collating the Findings

Once all sub-committee members have completed the Evaluation Discussion Sheets (Page 67 & 69 PQAC) listing their assessments of service strengths and special features, aspects needing attention and suggested strategies for improvement, they will meet to collate their findings. Members should be prepared to explain their findings and comments, but individual ratings need not be discussed.

If possible all members should agree on the strengths and special features of the service and on those aspects which require attention. However it is important that the group focus on a general consensus and not be too concerned if there are some differences of opinion. Certainly if one member of the group is of a different opinion and feels very strongly about their assessment this can be noted in the report to the management body.

### If there is disagreement...

- 1. Refer back to the Indicator.**  
Read through and ensure that all members agree on the meaning of the indicator.
- 2. Check terminology and appropriate documentation.**  
Refer back to the Glossary of Terms (Pages 4 and 5 PQAC) and any relevant service information - handbook, programs plans, etc.
- 3. Use an alternative assessment method.**  
Parent questionnaire, parent survey, suggestion box.
- 4. Use resource books, telephone support, agencies, talk to other services.**
- 5. Agree to disagree.**  
Indicate the disagreement in the report to the management body and include strategies to resolve the issue in the plan of action for next year.

## Step 4 Compile the Report

Once there is general agreement on the assessment of each of the indicators, the sub-committee will complete all sections of the Checklist. It is important to refer back to the objectives. This will enable you to comment on the process used and indicate some sense of priority for recommendations. The Preschool Quality Assessment Report should be completed with recommendations.

The report should clearly state:

1. What the sub-committee agreed were the strengths and special features of the service.
2. Which indicators are not being achieved to the satisfaction of the sub-committee and require attention.
3. A priority list and suggested time-line to implement improvements.
4. Ideas or strategies for improving indicators not being achieved to the satisfaction of the sub-committee.
5. Who should be responsible for each action.
6. The training or resources required to make the improvements.

- 
7. Recommendations regarding next year's assessment process, general changes to service delivery, priority of proposed strategies, etc.
  8. When a review of the recommendations should take place.

## **Step 5 Submit Recommendations to the Management Body for Endorsement**

The report and recommendations should be presented at a meeting of the management body.

The management body has overall responsibility to ensure that a quality assessment procedure is carried out and that all the recommendations of the sub-committee are considered. It is important that it receives an accurate and objective record of the process and of the recommendations made.

Members of the sub-committee may be required to answer questions or give details about their lists and recommendations or the convenor may act as spokesperson for the sub-committee.

At this meeting, or subsequently, the management body will decide:

- When to compile a Plan of Action (Page 75 PQAC). It would be invaluable to incoming committees to have plans already made which have identified areas that need improvement, as well as some ideas of how this is to be done, who is responsible and when this should be completed.
- How the information will be made available to all the parents. By providing notices, newsletter articles or a special meeting, parents can share in the achievement of completing the assessment and in the positive results that have come from it. By keeping parents informed and involved they are more ready and willing to work towards future goals.

## **Step 6 Review Endorsed Recommendations**

By completing a Plan of Action (Page 75 PQAC) and writing the dates when recommended actions should be reviewed, the management body takes responsibility for the monitoring of the proposed changes. Some recommendations may be very simple and easy to achieve and can be carried out immediately. Others may be for large-scale changes requiring equipment, building and playground redesign or require change in the longer term, such as possible changes to the enrolment process for the coming year. These will take time to achieve completely and may need to be broken down into some short term goals. All records of recommendations and plans are handed over to the incoming management body to ensure such long term plans are completed.

## **Step 7 Document and File**

A copy of the completed Checklist should be filed with management documents as well as any plans of action. Quality assessment is a continuous process and it is essential for new management that it has a record of the objectives, process and recommendations of previous assessments. It is imperative that these be handed over to the new management body with all other information.

Although the Preschool Quality Assessment Report and the Plan of Action are not read by the Department of Human Services' staff, they are available to the service and, with the discretion of the management body, to the wider preschool community.

---

Undergoing a quality assessment process such as the Checklist will promote a sense of ownership and achievement for those who contribute to the preschool service. Continuous development of a quality assessment process can be used to measure and plan for quality improvement within the service.

---

# Checklist of Quality Indicators

The following pages list the quality indicators from the Preschool Quality Assessment Checklist and give some guidance about things to look for and/or discuss. These suggestions are by no means exhaustive but are starting points for group discussions and individual observations.

Each preschool is unique, each group of children is different and each teacher plans and works in an individual way. It is important to remember that individual services will achieve the indicator in different ways.

# 1. Program Plan

## The yearly framework for the activities involving staff, children and parents associated with a preschool.

Every preschool service should have a service philosophy (shared values and beliefs about children in their preschool year) as well as a list of broad goals indicating what learning will take place based on these beliefs and values. Each family using or intending to use the preschool service needs to understand this philosophy, the broad goals, ongoing plans and periodic evaluations as they relate to programming for their child. When the philosophy, goals, plans and evaluations are developed in consultation with parents, they are able to understand and comment on the program and participate in a way that meets their needs. They are able to understand what goals staff are working towards and how they are planning to meet the needs of individual children within the service.

---

### **Indicator 1.1** (Page 7 PQAC)

There is a clearly written plan of the program on display or readily available, which includes each of the following:

- a) A statement about the program's principles/philosophy that has been prepared by staff and management, and discussed with parents.
- b) General goals that have been set by staff and parents that indicate the concepts, skills and attitudes to be gained through the program.
- c) Goals that reflect the needs of the children.
- d) Longer-term and shorter-term statements of developmental outcomes it is planned children will achieve.
- e) Weekly/fortnightly written plans for individual children and for groups of children that include an overview of the content to be developed over that period and strategies for achieving this.
- f) An evaluation plan that shows how the goals, the development outcomes and the acquisition of concepts, skills and attitudes will be evaluated.

### **Discuss:**

- When was the philosophy last reviewed and by whom?
- How the planning format incorporates group and individual goals.
- How evaluation of the ongoing objectives is made known, eg. newsletters, photos, evaluations.
- How ongoing objectives are achieved.
- How the goals reflect the needs of children.

### **Look for:**

- A written statement of the values and beliefs about the purpose of early childhood education. This may be the philosophy statement already agreed upon by the service.
  - A written statement of the learning (ie. changes in attitudes, skills and knowledge) which may be expected during the year for the majority of children. (These are the general goals (1.1(b)).)
  - A list or chart of the objectives, activities and experiences planned for the next week or fortnight and some indication of the staff role in guiding children's development and learning.
-

---

**Indicator 1.2** (Page 8 PQAC)

General goals include:

- a) Assisting children make the transition from home/child care to preschool.
- b) Developing an understanding that each child is special and all have different needs identifying and understanding cultural differences.
- c) Enhancing children's self-concept and self-esteem.
- d) Developing life skills and competencies.
- e) Extending children's knowledge of their local community.
- f) Assisting children to make the transition from preschool to school.

**Discuss:**

- How the general goals were developed.
- The developmental, cultural and educational value of the goals.
- Community involvement in the service.
- What links are in existence with local primary schools.

**Look for:**

- A list of general goals (see 1.1(b)) which may include all or some of the ones given and also others important to your particular situation.
  - Excursions, Visitors eg. Library, Police visit, nature walk.
  - Network meetings.
-

## 2. Program

### All the planned activities and learning experiences that occur in a preschool.

Based on the philosophy and broad goals and the recorded observations of individual children, the teacher plans to meet the needs and foster the interests of the group of children in general and each individual child within the group.

Each teacher will have an individual style and format for planning the program, but all will incorporate a planned environment made up of:

#### Space.

Incorporating “permanent learning areas”, both indoors and out, set up to meet the needs of the group. Art area, library, block area, sand pits, drawing equipment and dramatic play would be available every day to be used in an endless variety of ways.

#### Time.

Planning of sessions that allows children to complete tasks, extend their play, choose their group experiences and control their routine times. Time for children to explore, revisit and repeat in an unrushed day.

#### Adults.

Adults who provide support, challenge and encouragement as children explore the environment.

#### Equipment and Materials.

A supply of quality materials, representing a range of cultures, selected to cater for all stages and to support different play and learning styles. This equipment and materials can be bought and/or recycled, natural and/or produced. Children will be able to choose for their play from a variety of materials to be used in a variety of ways.

#### Indicator 2.1 (Page 9 PQAC)

The content (planned experiences, understandings, skills, attitudes) is:

- a) Based on the interests and experiences of the children at the service.
- b) Sensitive to differences, eg. differences in culture, appearance, development, beliefs.
- c) Free from cultural bias.
- d) Free from gender stereotyping and bias.

#### **Discuss:**

- The links between observations of children’s interests and the written plan - how individual differences in style and temperament are taken into account.
- The way unplanned and spontaneous events and interests are incorporated into the program.
- How children’s suggestions and ideas are respected and the way the ‘plan’ is changed accordingly.

#### **Look for:**

- A program that matches wide-ranging interests, languages and skills so that each child feels both competent and stimulated.
- A plan which includes songs, stories & experiences which reflect all cultures and languages.
- A program of experiences in which all children have equal opportunity to take part.

---

#### Indicator 2.2 (Page 10 PQAC)

#### **Discuss:**

#### **Look for:**

---

The planned learning experiences assist children to:

- a) Explore their environment.
- b) Explore their feelings.
- c) Experience challenge.
- d) Experience success.
- e) Explore their ideas through a range of materials.
- f) Participate in problem solving situations.
- g) Experience social interaction with adults, another child and a group of children.

- How children's thinking is challenged in the presentation of materials, by adult interactions with the children, by the way the room and playground are set up, and by the planning of an appropriate time table.
- The way play is extended so that children have the opportunity to solve problems and develop new skills (ie. materials added, questions asked, suggestions made, resource books provided).
- How opportunities are provided for children to repeat experiences as often as they need to so they can explore further, deepen their understanding, and practise skills.
- A range of materials attractively arranged and ready for children to use in open-ended ways, either alone, with another child or in groups ('open-ended' means that there is no pre-planned 'result').
- Staff showing appreciation of children's efforts and helping them develop skills and complete chosen tasks.
- Children having access to equipment to extend their play.

---

**Indicator 2.3** (Page 11 PQAC)

The planned learning experiences provide opportunities for the children to enhance their skills as follows:

- a) Physical development - fine and gross motor skills.
- b) Social/emotional.
- c) Intellectual.
- d) Language.

**Discuss:**

- How the program is planned to provide a variety of experiences, ie. time and space for climbing and running as well as equipment for drawing, painting, cutting, threading building, manipulating and extending the imagination..
- Ample opportunity to play freely with different groups.
- Interest areas and discussions that extend children's thinking.

**Look for:**

- Evidence that equipment and materials are arranged to interest and challenge children, taking into account individual levels of competence.
  - A range of books, pictures, music and drama props freely available to children.
  - Gradual change to the program over time in response to children's interests and program goals.
-

**Indicator 2.4** (Page 12 PQAC)

The planned learning experiences provide a mix of:

- a) Indoor and outdoor activities.
- b) Child-initiated and staff-initiated activities.
- c) Individual, small group and some larger group activities.
- d) Active and quiet activities.

**Discuss:**

- The daily schedule and how it allows for uninterrupted time and space for practice of new skills rather than sessions divided strictly into time slots of 'indoors', 'outdoors', 'group time' and snack-time.
- Encouragement for small groups of children to work on their own projects.
- How opportunities are made available for children to experience a variety of group formations eg. small and whole-group, child-initiated and adult-initiated.

**Look for:**

- Learning taking place anywhere - indoors or outdoors - and according to weather conditions and time of day, materials being used in different places to foster learning.
- Children taking responsibility for their own learning as far as practicable, with staff respecting their choices and challenging them to further development.
- Quiet spaces for children to retreat to. Active spaces for children to socialise in. A balance of space and experiences.

---

**Indicator 2.5** (Page 13 PQAC)

- a) The planned learning experiences regularly include ideas, concepts and skills from each of the following curriculum areas: language and communication, mathematics, music, art and creativity, science and technology, physical education/movement, health, and social science.
- b) Information is given to parents to help them understand learning experiences and curriculum areas.

**Discuss:**

- Examples of 'teachable moments', the unpredictable happenings that trigger questions and a sense of inquiry from children and how adults act on these moments.
- How children are encouraged to be involved in every stage of any creative process, eg. cubby building, no matter how different the finished product may be from the adult expectations.
- How curriculum areas in pre-school are inter-linked and occur in play, routines and conversations.

**Look for:**

- Notice boards or newsletters which explain children's current interests and ways of learning to parents.
- Information provided for parents in languages other than English when required.
- Parent Libraries.
- Speaker or parent evenings.

**Indicator 2.6** (Page 14 PQAC)

The teacher develops specific objectives for individual children, based on regular, written observations across all aspects of each child's development.

**Discuss:**

- The methods used for recording observations, eg. cards, notebook, post-it notes and the type of records kept – anecdotes, developmental checklist etc.
- How these observations are incorporated into the planning for individual children and for the group.

**Look for:**

- Evidence of observations and individual planning in your own child's records.
  - Proformas of checklists and individual objectives and strategy formats.
- 

**Indicator 2.7** (Page 15 PQAC)

The program incorporates both longer-term (for approximately a two to six month period) and shorter-term (approximately a two to six week period) objective for each child.

**Discuss:**

- How objectives are stated in developmental terms, ie. appropriate to children's age, needs, temperament and previous experience.
  - How objectives for the group and for individuals are incorporated into the planning.
- 

**Look for:**

- Evidence of short and long term goals in your own child's records.
- 

**Indicator 2.8** (Page 16 PQAC)

Longer-term (two to six months) and shorter-term (two to six weeks) objectives are discussed with each child's parents.

**Discuss:**

- How the teacher keeps parents informed, eg. parent meetings, informal discussions, journals.
  - How she/he shares specific observations and examples of child's 'work'.
  - How this is done with non-English speaking parents.
- 

**Look for:**

- Your own experience in discussions with the teacher about your child's goals.

**Indicator 2.9** (Page 17 PQAC)

The program is enriched by regularly incorporating skills and information provided by parents and members of the community.

**Discuss:**

- Ways in which parents and other citizens are included in the Service's program.
- How their willingness to be included is determined and encouraged (Initial interview? Newsletter?).

**Look for:**

- Volunteers being included to read to children, help them cut fruit, use tools, sew, dance, garden etc.
  - Visits to the service from the community and parents as well as excursions to local areas organised when relevant to the objectives of the program.
- 

**Indicator 2.10** (Page 18 PQAC)

The program considers the additional needs some children may have in such a way that all children in the group benefit, eg. the program provides opportunities for children to develop an understanding of others' needs.

**Discuss:**

- How staff encourage and discuss, as appropriate, understanding behaviour.
- How staff foster positive, friendly interactions between all the children and guide them to consider the needs of others.

**Look for:**

- Children showing concern for each other.
  - Experiences provided for children with additional needs that also offer positive opportunities for other children.
  - Inclusion of all children in the program.
- 

**Indicator 2.11** (Page 19 PQAC)

Routines (eg. setting up, snack times, packing away) provide opportunities for children to develop self-help and social skills.

**Discuss:**

- How routine activities are planned to be pleasant experiences eg. snack time, being with a friend, and talking.
  - The expectations that are fostered are appropriate for the children's development levels (ie. staff help is available as needed).
  - How the layout of the room encourages choice.
- 

**Look for:**

- Children being actively involved in routine activities, eg. packing away, setting tables, pouring drinks.
  - Friendly interactions between staff and children during routine activities.
-

**Indicator 2.12** (Page 20 PQAC)

Children are able to choose activities and decide their own mix of quiet and more vigorous activities.

**Discuss:**

- Ways in which activities and materials will be changed to offer further challenges during the year.
- How children for whom choice is difficult are offered just one or two activities.

**Look for:**

- Children being encouraged to try new materials or experiences.
  - Children being supported in playing alone when appropriate.
- 

**Indicator 2.13** (Page 21 PQAC)

The program is flexible enough to respond to weather and other conditions and to capitalise on spontaneous or unexpected learning opportunities

**Discuss:**

- The balance between whole group, small group, and individual activities, structured and unstructured activities, fine and gross motor activities.
- How staff make use of occasions which arise during the play to extend children's thinking.

**Look for:**

- Staff flexibility in taking advantage of weather changes to move equipment and materials, to have spontaneous discussion and experiences.
  - Maximum use of outdoor space to meet children's need for physical activity and to enable them to develop control of their body.
  - Concern for safety in the sun – hats worn, equipment set up in the shade etc.
-

### 3. Staff/Child Interaction

#### How children and staff get along together, how they communicate and what they communicate to one another.

The role of the adult in preschool programs varies according to the developmental stage of the child and individual learning styles. The quality of the interactions between adult and child is one of the most crucial elements of the program. Each child should experience interactions with adults which make him/her feel valued and respected as a unique and capable individual.

---

#### **Indicator 3.1** (Page 22 PQAC)

Staff show enjoyment in working with all children by responding warmly and supportively (this includes laughing, smiling and gesturing, as well as speaking)

#### **Discuss:**

- How staff respond to children's questions, comments and requests, and how they reinforce the importance of each individual.
- What responses staff use to express negative feelings.
- How staff accept minimal use of English from children of non-English speaking backgrounds.

#### **Look for:**

- Staff showing pleasure in children's company.
- Staff ensuring that interactions with the children are positive and respectful.
- Staff communicate to children pleasure in their developing skills and increasing knowledge.
- Staff being sensitive to and exploring ways to communicate effectively with children from non-English speaking backgrounds.

---

#### **Indicator 3.2** (Page 23 PQAC)

Staff provide opportunities for children to talk with one another and with staff about their ideas and their feelings.

#### **Discuss:**

- How staff promote children talking to each other as they engage in "pretend" play and other activities.
- Room arrangements which provide some quiet places for children to talk together.

#### **Look for:**

- Staff communicating to individual children as they play.
  - Staff talking with smaller groups about books, pictures, collections of objects, etc.
  - Staff sensitivity to children not wanting to be interrupted.
-

---

**Indicator 3.3** (Page 24 PQAC)

Staff frequently use language to extend and encourage children's learning by:

- a) Sharing information and posing questions that help children formulate and talk about their ideas.
- b) Providing comment that extends children's understanding.
- c) Regularly engaging all children in conversations that are meaningful to them.
- d) Asking open-ended questions and challenging the children to discover answers.
- e) Recalling and reflecting on activities and experiences with the children to help them "learn about thinking and learning".

**Discuss:**

- How staff encourage children to share ideas and to develop group problem solving skills.

**Look for:**

- Staff accepting children's comments about stories, discussions and other experiences, and commenting positively on their ideas and thinking.
- Staff are at children's level when engaged in conversation.
- Note:
- Teaching not only occurs when staff are 'using language'. The activities and experiences they plan, the way they organise the room, the environment, the playground and plan the day's timetable are all designed to accomplish the goals of the curriculum.

---

**Indicator 3.4** (Page 25 PQAC)

Staff use positive means to guide children's behaviour, including redirection, anticipation and eliminating potential difficulties.

**Discuss:**

- Service behaviour guidance policy.
- How and when staff use verbal directions to help children control their behaviour.
- Emotional guidance, eg. approval expressed by words, smiles, etc.
- How children are involved in establishing expectations.

**Look for:**

- Staff positioned within the room for adequate supervision and prevention of problem behaviour.
- Room arrangements which reduce crowding and overflow.
- Ample equipment for all children.
- Children receiving positive attention and encouragement.

---

**Indicator 3.5** (Page 26 PQAC)

Staff encourage children to develop their own ideas and learning by providing time for uninterrupted play, eg. at times children play in groups without staff prompting or suggesting a change in activity.

**Discuss:**

- How children are allowed time to finish activities without hurrying.
- How opportunities for children to extend their play are enhanced by comment, suggestion or question,

**Look for:**

- A timetable that has large blocks of time so that concentrated and complex play can develop.
- Routines that do not interrupt children's play, eg. snack time when

---

---

or by the offer of additional material. a child is ready.

---

---

---

**Indicator 3.6** (Page 27 PQAC)

Staff encourage children to choose their own playmates.

**Discuss:**

- How children are being given guidance about ways to make friends, and enter group play.
- How staff plan to encourage children to extend their range of playmates.
- Why staff encourage children to extend their friendship combinations.

**Look for:**

Children choosing who they'll sit with for morning tea, story time, etc.  
Staff supporting children's choice to play with children who speak their own language.

---

**Indicator 3.7** (Page 28 PQAC)

Staff provide guidance for children regarding how to consider the needs of other children, eg. as a model for children to follow, they actively listen to what children have to say and show kindness and consideration for others.

**Discuss:**

- How staff plan opportunities to discuss the needs of others and how to consider those needs.

**Look for:**

- Staff encouraging, by modelling and discussion.
- 

**Indicator 3.8** (Page 29 PQAC)

Staff assist children to solve areas of disagreement by being available to listen and talk through any disputes or conflicts.

**Discuss:**

- Conflict resolution strategies that staff employ.
- How staff act appropriately when "talking through" does not resolve conflict, eg. separation of children, providing more materials or re-direction of play.

**Look for:**

- Staff assessing disputes or conflicts before stepping in.
  - Staff assisting children to resolve their own conflicts by modelling and teaching problem-solving techniques.
- 

**Indicator 3.9** (Page 30 PQAC)

Staff acknowledge and value children's achievements, eg. children's creations are displayed and staff notice and comment on new skills.

**Discuss:**

- How staff show that they value effort, creative thinking, persistence, and good work habits as well as things children create such as sandcastles, block constructions and artworks.

**Look for:**

- Staff commenting on children's generous acts, sustained concentration, caring behaviour, and coping with frustration.
  - Provision and encouragement for children to display projects, art and documentation of work.
-

## 4. Staff/Parent Interaction

### How staff and parents get along together; how they communicate and what they communicate to each other.

Parents seek and appreciate involvement in their child's program in different ways and in different amounts. Each parent brings to the program a unique knowledge of their own child, while staff provide a sound understanding of child development and group planning principles. Parent and teacher collaboration can provide programs that comprehensively meet the needs of individual children.

---

#### **Indicator 4.1** (Page 31 PQAC)

Parents are welcome at all times. A range of strategies is used to encourage parents to participate in the program and the service's activities.

#### **Discuss:**

- Ways in which parents are made aware that they may visit at any time.
- The reasons why some parents may not be involved in the program.
- Ways in which parents are invited to be involved in the Service's activities.

#### **Look for:**

- Notices inviting parents to participate in a variety of ways.
- Acknowledgment of involvement, 'thank you' notices in newsletters and on notice boards, etc.

---

#### **Indicator 4.2** (Page 32 PQAC)

Strategies used under Indicator 4.1 consider the different needs, availability and cultural backgrounds of parents, eg. work commitments and the need for multilingual notices.

#### **Discuss:**

- Ways in which individual needs/concerns of parents are considered when information is being exchanged, eg. notices translated into community languages, meetings held during the day time as well as evenings.

#### **Look for:**

- Translation of parent notices.
- Parents being encouraged to spend time whenever they are available.
- Alternative ways of helping – not just at fruit time but also gardening with children, helping with woodwork, demonstrating cooking, collating at home, bringing in recycle materials for the program, etc.

---

#### **Indicator 4.3** (Page 33 PQAC)

There is a range of ways in which teachers and parents exchange stories, information, ideas and opinions, both formally (eg. interviews) and informally (eg. notice boards, photos).

#### **Discuss:**

- The variety of ways that exchanges occur.

#### **Look for:**

- Evidence of giving and receiving information – newsletters, displays, questionnaires, library books, videos, etc.
  - Availability of staff at drop off/pick
-

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>up times.</li> <li>Regular feedback about your own child.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Indicator 4.4</b> (Page 34 PQAC)</p> <p>Parents are regularly kept informed about their child's progress, including a meeting at least once a year to discuss their child's development.</p>	<p><b>Discuss:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plans for meetings with individual parents.</li> <li>See Indicator 2.8</li> </ul>	<p><b>Look for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent meeting notices and schedules.</li> <li>Information exchange at arrival and departure time, during session times, and at other times.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Indicator 4.5</b> (Page 35 PQAC)</p> <p>Parents are particularly encouraged to participate in program goal setting and evaluation.</p>	<p><b>Discuss:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborative approaches to goal setting between staff and parents. eg. meetings, individual discussion, questionnaires, home visits etc.</li> <li>How these goals are incorporated into the children's plans.</li> <li>Methods used to measure parents' satisfaction, eg. suggestion box, individual discussion, feedback in newsletter.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Look for:</b></p> <p>Goal setting and planning in your own child's records.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 4.6</b> (Page 36 PQAC)</p> <p>Parents have access to resources about young children's growth and development, eg. parent book/video library, guest speakers (linked to Indicators 2.8 and 4.1).</p>	<p><b>Discuss:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ways parents are encouraged to use the resources.</li> <li>Additional resources available, eg. referral to specialist agencies.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Look for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A readily accessible supply of appropriate resources.</li> <li>Staff encouraging use of resources.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Indicator 4.7</b> (Page 37 PQAC)</p> <p>Information is provided to parents to foster an understanding of the preschool program and curriculum areas. This information includes ways in which parents can contribute to the children's program.</p>	<p><b>Discuss:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer to Indicators 2.5, 2.8, 2.9, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4 and 4.5.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Look for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notice boards, newsletters, discussion with individual parents and meetings.</li> </ul>

## 5. The Environment

**This includes the preschool building, its contents, the organisation of the contents and the surrounding outdoor areas, as well as play materials.**

The physical environment provided for children and their families gives them a clear message of how they are valued. Environments need to be safe, flexible, uncluttered, aesthetically pleasing, challenging and able to be used by the children in an infinite variety of ways.

---

### **Indicator 5.1** (Page 38 PQAC)

The environment is planned to provide opportunities for children to experience:

- Individual play.
- Interaction with another child.
- Interaction in a small group.
- Participation in a large group activity.

#### **Discuss:**

- How inside and outside space is arranged so children can move freely between activity areas.
- The arrangement of indoor and outdoor play so that some “withdrawing” places are available, eg. Quiet places and opportunities for solitary play.

#### **Look for:**

- Carefully prepared areas which encourage some individual play (small table with chair and special set of materials) as well as space for children to play together in large building projects, eg. house, shop, road works.
- Thoughtful use of shelves, screens and dividers.

---

### **Indicator 5.2** (Page 39 PQAC)

The environment challenges children to explore, discover, pose questions and seek possible answers.

#### **Discuss:**

- How materials are arranged so as to invite manipulation and investigation.
- Plans for changes, for additions, for ‘surprises’.

#### **Look for:**

- Children having independent access to materials.

---

### **Indicator 5.3** (Page 40 PQAC)

The environment is sufficiently flexible for changes initiated by children’s interests to be adopted (linked to Indicator 2.14), eg. climbing equipment or children’s tables can be rearranged.

#### **Discuss:**

- How equipment and materials lead to children re-discovering possibilities. This will not always mean materials are added; they may also be re-arranged or withdrawn.

#### **Look for:**

- Staff responding to children’s ideas for change of equipment, space and materials.
- Materials available for children to self select .
- Complimentary experiences near each other. Eg: Cars, signs and trees near the block area.

---

**Indicator 5.4** (Page 41 PQAC)

The environment includes quiet areas with furnishings such as chairs, rugs and cushions where children can relax and be alone, both indoors and outdoors.

**Discuss:**

- Discuss how these places are made available indoors and outdoors.

**Look for:**

- Consider the welcome messages in the environment and the general aesthetics.
- Look for quiet places indoors and outdoors.

---

**Indicator 5.5** (Page 42 PQAC)

Space is organised to assist play and learning, eg. walkways are kept clear and vigorous activities are not placed next to activities requiring quiet and reflection.

**Discuss:**

- Use of dividers and shelves to create pathways and spaces.
- Why activities are placed in particular areas.

**Look for:**

- Look for uncluttered spaces and clear pathways.
- Look for children engaged in experiences.

---

**Indicator 5.6** (Page 43 PQAC)

The sounds in the environment are mainly pleasant, eg. laughter, conversation and exclamations of excitement, rather than enforced quiet, shouting or over excitement.

**Discuss:**

- Discuss what is an acceptable noise level.
- Discuss the adults role in providing a good model.

**Look for:**

- The busy hum of children playing, talking, singing as they are involved in purposeful activity.
- An atmosphere conveying a sense of happy involvement of staff and children.
- Vigorous joyful play outdoors.

---

**Indicator 5.7** (Page 44 PQAC)

All children have equitable access to all materials and are encouraged to use all materials. Children are challenged to use materials in ways that are non-stereotyping and not gender specific, eg. props for hospital play do not assume that nurses will be female and doctors male.

**Discuss:**

- How plans are devised with a multicultural perspective, giving all children access to all materials.
- How encouragement is given to children to ask for materials they need.
- How children are encouraged to try-out the range of materials over time.

**Look for:**

- Experiences designed to take into account the diversity of children's backgrounds and capabilities and to avoid gender bias.
  - Staff responses and guidance that demonstrate that children are encouraged to use materials that are non stereotyping and non gender specific.
-

---

**Indicator 5.8** (Page 45 PQAC)

There is a sufficient range of materials to cater for the number of children and their various stages of development.

**Discuss:**

- Discuss how open-ended materials and equipment cater for a variety of skills and developmental levels.
- Discuss the role of commercial and recycled play materials.

**Look for:**

- A range of difficulty within each category of material to cater for the individual levels of interest and skill, eg. puzzles and books designed for 3 year olds and 6 year olds.
  - Equipment and experiences which are open-ended to suit varying developmental levels and interests.
- 

**Indicator 5.9** (Page 46 PQAC)

Materials reflect cultural differences and assist children to understand cultural diversity.

**Discuss:**

- The cultural diversity of the local community and of the families using the service as well as the broader community in which children will live in the future.
- Purchasing, borrowing and sharing strategies used to ensure children have familiar play materials appropriate to their culture.

**Look for:**

- Books, food, music, pictures and play materials that reflect the cultural diversity of Australian society, eg. books and pictures depicting a range of family structures, ethnic backgrounds and age.
  - Music tapes or CDs which use different voices, languages and instruments.
  - Play materials such as dolls, “dress ups” and kitchen implements depicting other cultures in the home corner.
- 

**Indicator 5.10** (Page 4.7 PQAC)

Space and staff are used effectively to ensure areas are not crowded and children are well supervised at all times.

**Discuss:**

- ‘Silent management’ of space, eg. four chairs placed at a table to show that four children can use the materials at one time.
- How staff note the mood of a particular child, or of a group of children so that guidance can be appropriate.

**Look for:**

- Evidence that the total space available – indoors and outdoors – is used as a learning and teaching environment.
  - Staff positioned for adequate supervision as required by the time of the year, weather, numbers and characteristics of children.
-

---

**Indicator 5.11** (Page 48 PQAC)

The environment includes attractive and informative displays (linked to Indicator 1.1).

**Discuss:**

- The types of displays used throughout the service and their purpose.

**Look for:**

- Displays to interest children, eg. pictures of different kinds of buildings hung at child's eye level in block area; collections of related objects – eg. footwear including thongs, ballet slippers, gumboots, clogs, sandals, baby bootee or Nature Displays.
  - Displays to interest parent, eg. children's art work with explanatory captions, photo sequences of block buildings, collections of clay objects made by children, lists of songs learned, books read, poems enjoyed and samples of children's discussion ideas.
-

## 6. Health and Safety

**This applies to all aspects of the preschool service and program, including play materials and equipment.**

Developing children's ability to make decisions about health, safety and nutrition is a part of the preschool program. Although a totally "risk free" environment is not only impossible to achieve but inappropriate for the four and five year old child, adults need to have procedures in place to ensure that children's health and safety are not put at serious risk.

<p><b>Indicator 6.1</b> (Page 49 PQAC) Children are able to arrive at and leave the service safely.</p>	<p><b>Discuss:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy of parental responsibility.</li> <li>• Arrival and departure procedures and policies.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Look for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-locking gate.</li> <li>• Rules about car parking.</li> <li>• Policy of parent and child greeting and farewelling staff.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Indicator 6.2</b> (Page 50 PQAC) All families are notified of emergency procedures.</p>	<p><b>Discuss:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The environment surrounding your service and possible emergencies.</li> <li>• Eg: Is in an aeroplane flight path or on a busy road which is frequented by petrol tankers?</li> <li>• Written procedures developed by the Service for emergency evacuation in case of fire, gas leak, siege/hostage situations and other possible emergencies.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Look for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information in parent handbook regarding emergency procedures.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Indicator 6.3</b> (Page 51 PQAC) All staff are familiar with emergency procedures.</p>	<p><b>Discuss:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency procedures and how they were developed (inservice training, consultant, staff/committee workshop).</li> <li>• How information is passed onto relief staff, students, volunteers and parents</li> <li>• .</li> </ul>	<p><b>Look for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of staff knowledge of emergency procedures as outlined by the Service policy document, eg. evacuation, hostage, children/staff illness or accident.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Indicator 6.4</b> (Page 52 PQAC) Evacuation procedures are practised with the children at least once a term.</p>	<p><b>Discuss:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The explanations given to children about what is being practised and why.</li> <li>• Plans for debriefing children after practice.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Look for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans to practise evacuation with children.</li> <li>• Report to committee on evacuation practice.</li> </ul>

---

**Indicator 6.5** (Page 53 PQAC)

All materials and equipment are regularly checked to ensure they are clean and in good condition.

**Discuss:**

- Procedure for reporting broken, unsafe or unclean items of equipment to committee.
- Safe storage of such items until they are repaired.
- Maintenance procedures

**Look for:**

- Materials and equipment in a clean and safe condition.
- 

**Indicator 6.6** (Page 54 PQAC)

The indoor and outdoor environment is kept clean, safe and attractive.

**Discuss:**

- Procedure for maintenance and cleaning both indoors and outdoors.
- Eg: Contract cleaners or gardeners, working bees, child free days for staff at the end of each of each term.

**Look for:**

- List of daily, weekly, monthly cleaning tasks and who is responsible.
  - General attractiveness of environment, eg. shelves tidy, pictures neatly displayed, rooms uncluttered and paths swept.
  - Safety checklists.
-

## 7. Administration

Work that goes on behind the scenes supports the quality of the service. Policies and procedures are needed to ensure accurate information is available to both current and new parents, so that consultation can occur between staff and management and contact is maintained with other agencies and local schools.

---

### **Indicator 7.1** (Page 55 PQAC)

The service has written policies and procedures for daily operation, eg. hours of operation, fees, holidays, illnesses and confidentiality.

#### **Discuss:**

- The need for these under the Children's Services Centre Regulations and the Funding and Service Agreement.
- Which policies, information must be on display.

#### **Look for:**

- Handbook with details of philosophy and basis for programs, policy on guidance and discipline, safety and emergency procedures, hours and fees policy, staff qualifications and experience, health – sick children, sick staff and notice of infectious disease, excursions and late collection of children.

---

### **Indicator 7.2** (Page 56 PQAC)

The policies and procedures under Indicator 7.1 are regularly reviewed and updated.

#### **Discuss:**

- Procedures to review and update policies.
- Ways new staff, committee members and students on placement are given information about policies.

#### **Look for:**

- The date that the policies and procedures were last reviewed and updated.
- Handbook updated to incorporate new policy decisions.
- Policies reflected in practice.

---

### **Indicator 7.3** (Page 56 PQAC)

Regular meetings between staff and managers/committees of management are held for the purpose of monitoring and planning the program and discussing issues and policies.

#### **Discuss:**

- The respective roles and responsibilities of staff and management in the operation of the service.

#### **Look for:**

- Minutes of meetings and copies of reports.

---

### **Indicator 7.4** (Page 58 PQAC)

Written information about the service, its management, administration and program is available and distributed to parents.

#### **Discuss:**

- The service handbook – contents, updating procedures and distribution to parents.

#### **Look for:**

- Handbook compiled by staff and committee available to parents.
-

---

**Indicator 7.5** (Page 59 PQAC)

There is an introduction process for new parents and children.

**Discuss plans for orientation. These may include:**

For parents:

- Meeting before children start attendance.
- Opportunity for parents to stay until children settle.
- Written information about possible reactions to separation.

For children:

- Short visit before entry.
- Shortened sessions if necessary.
- One to one attention as needed.

**Look for:**

- Parents being encouraged to stay with their child when needed.
- Written information about how to handle separation.
- New children being given one to one attention when required.

---

**Indicator 7.6** (Page 60 PQAC)

The teacher liaises regularly with other early childhood support services which children at the service may be utilising.

**Discuss:**

- How teacher keeps in touch with other services – Family Day Care, Child Care, Early Intervention Program – which child may be attending.

**Look for:**

- Networks and memberships.
- Meetings
- Contact lists.

---

**Indicator 7.7** (Page 61 PQAC)

The teacher liaises regularly with the schools that the children are likely to attend.

**Discuss:**

- Ways liaison between kindergarten and school is developed and maintained, eg. prep teacher invited to visit session, visits to schools arranged for children and parents prior to attendance.

**Look for:**

- Committee reports that include information about the transition process.

## 8. Roles, Responsibilities and Training

The Preschool service is a professional organisation that requires all the people involved to have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and of the expectations of management and funding bodies.

---

### **Indicator 8.1** (Page 62 PQAC)

The respective roles and responsibilities of each staff member and members of the management body are set out in writing and readily available.

#### **Discuss:**

- The need for roles and responsibilities to be clearly defined and understood by staff and management.

#### **Look for:**

- Management handbook.
  - Position descriptions for all staff members.
- 

### **Indicator 8.2** (Page 63 PQAC)

The written roles and responsibilities under Indicator 8.1 are regularly reviewed for renegotiation or revision, as appropriate.

#### **Discuss:**

- The need for both staff and management to actively participate in regular review.
- Approximate timelines, rules and responsibilities for review

#### **Look for:**

- Evidence of periodical review and update, eg. at time of appointment of new committee or change of staff.
- 

### **Indicator 8.3** (Page 64 PQAC)

Staff are expected and encouraged to undertake in-service/professional development programs, eg. in first aid, meeting the needs of individual children, and dealing with ethical issues in children's services.

#### **Discuss:**

- The range of ways which staff may undertake professional development, eg. peer support, training workshops, conferences, forums meetings with other early childhood educators.
- The value to the service of staff regularly updating knowledge and practice.

#### **Look for:**

- Policy for staff in-service, eg. payment, time in lieu.
  - Feedback (in committee reports and/or newsletters) from staff who have attended professional development activities.
  - Request forms for attendance at professional development activities.
  - Staff professional development log.
- 

### **Indicator 8.4** (Page 65 PQAC)

Time is reserved for regular staff meetings.

#### **Discuss:**

- The value of regular opportunity for communication between staff.
- How time is allocated for staff meetings.

#### **Look for:**

- Notes on weekly or fortnightly staff meetings.
  - Consistent guidance from all staff and consistent expectations of children's behaviour.
-

# Appendices

## A Sample Introductory Letter

# Happy Valley Preschool (Inc)

Dear Staff and Parents,

Our Kindergarten/Preschool/Children's Service is participating in a process of evaluation using the Preschool Quality Assessment Checklist (PQAC).

This process has been initiated by the Department of Human Services with the ultimate aim of improving services of early childhood education.

We will be looking carefully at the service and activities of the Service, identifying our strengths and noting areas for improvement.

To explain the Checklist process and its impact on our Service, I will soon be arranging a meeting for all parents. In the meantime, information about Checklist will be posted on the parent notice board in the porch. Please contact me, or ask the teacher if you would like further details.

or

A sub-committee is being formed to work on the Checklist. If you are interested in being part of the evaluation process, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

on behalf of the Management Committee/School Board/other  
which may be relevant

*Appendix 1*

## A Sample Poster

### **WE'RE DOING A CHECKLIST!**

WHAT IS PQAC?

The Preschool Quality Assessment Checklist.

WHAT'S IT FOR?

To help us evaluate the service we offer.

WHO WILL DO THE WORK?

A sub-committee representing parents and staff.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN?

We'll make improvements!

Come to the meeting on ..... at ..... to hear more about it!

*Appendix 2*

## A Sample Letter of Invitation

# Happy Valley Preschool (Inc)

Dear Parent,

As you know we are taking part in the Preschool Quality Assessment Checklist (PQAC), a process aimed at assessing and improving the quality of our Service.

We have arranged an Information meeting at the Service on ..... at .....

We will have an introduction to the Checklist and learn about what we have to do. There will be time for you to make comments and ask questions, then we will form a small sub-committee of volunteers to complete the PQAC questionnaire.  
or

We have formed a sub-committee of volunteers - Ms AB, Ms CD, Mr EF and Ms GH and we will tell you our plans.

The meeting will finish at .....

This will be an opportunity for you to hear about this new process, and to offer to take an active role in the sub-committee if you are able or make comments and ask questions.

We look forward to seeing you on .....

Yours sincerely,

*Appendix 3*

## Plan for a parent information evening

Planning for a parent information evening should include discussion of the following:

- Suitable start and finish time
- Should we offer childcare?
- Will we offer refreshments – before or after?
- How will we set the room? (seating, heating, cooling)
- Chairperson
- Agenda
- Number of speakers and whom.
- Introductions - name tags, greeters
- Chalkboard/flipchart/overhead projector/handout

Arrangements will vary according to the local conditions; parents may not be used to getting together to discuss ideas, they may not know each other well, or they may be unsure of their role in the process.

The Chairperson should become familiar with the PQAC and be able to answer questions such as:

1. Why does the PQAC have to be done?
2. What are the benefits?
3. Are there disadvantages?
4. How long will it take?
5. Can we ensure that any improvements will be maintained?

*Appendix 4*

## Sample Invitation to Reporting Meeting

# Happy Valley Preschool (Inc)

Dear Parents,

I write to tell you that we have finished our first Checklist (PQAC).

The following people representing parents, staff and the management body formed the sub-committee which did the work: Mrs AB, Mr EF and Ms GH, with Ms IJ as chairperson.

They made and collated observations about our service, listed our strengths and weaknesses and made recommendations for improvement. The management committee has formed a plan of action to implement their suggestions.

To share the results of the PQAC with you, and to thank the four people who have worked so hard, we're having a meeting on ..... at .....

Do come and show your appreciation and hear how we plan to make our kindergarten an even better place in the months ahead!

Yours sincerely,

*Appendix 5*

# Resources from The Lady Gowrie Child Centre

36 Newry Street, North Carlton 3054. Phone: 9347 6388

## Books

### About Programming and Planning

- Bredekamp, S (Ed)., Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs, NAEYC, USA, 1989
- Arthur, L. et al., Programming and Planning in Early Childhood Settings, Harcourt Brace, Australia, 1993
- Dodge, D and Phinney, J., A Parent's Guide to Early Childhood Education, Pademelon Press, Castle Hill, 1991
- Milne, R. et al., Affirming Family Diversity, FKA / MRC, Richmond, 1994
- Clarke, P., English as a Second Language in Early Childhood, FKA, Richmond, 1992

### About Staff-Child Interactions

- Warren, R., Caring: Supporting Children's Growth, NAEYC, USA, 1989
- Stone, J., A Guide to Discipline, NAEYC, USA, 1969
- Flear, M., Staff Child Interactions, AECA, Canberra, 1995
- Stephen, H., Conflict Resolution with Young Children, AECA, Canberra, 1993

### About Staff-Parent Interactions

- Waters, J., Making the Connection: Parents and Staff in Early Childhood, LGCC, Melbourne, 1996
- Waters, J., The Notice Board Book, LGCC, Melbourne, 1994
- Harris, V., Building Partnerships with Parents, LGCC, Brisbane, 1995

### About the Environment

- Vergeront, J., Places and Spaces for Preschool and Primary (indoors), NAEYC, USA, 1987
- Vergeront, J., Places and Spaces for Preschool and Primary (outdoors), NAEYC, USA, 1994
- Kritchevsky, S., Planning Environments for Young Children, NAEYC, USA, 1979

### About Health and Safety

- Plested, D., Health and Safety in Early Childhood Centres, AECA, Canberra, 1993
- Llewellyn, J., The Australian Guide to Children's Health, Pademelon Press, Castle Hill, 1994

### About Administration

- Farmer, S., Policy Development in Early Childhood Services, Community Child Care Co-op., Sydney, 1995
- Sebastian-Nickell, P & Milne, R., Care and Education of Young Children, Addison Wesley Longman, Melbourne, 1996

## Videos

- The Creative Curriculum, Trister-Dodge, USA, 1992
- What We Do at Kindergarten, Miles-Milwright, 1987

## **Available from Kindergarten Parents Victoria**

48 High Street, Northcote 3070 Phone: 9818 3978

- Preschool Matters - A quarterly newsletter providing up-to-date information on all aspects of kindergarten.
- KPV Policy Kit - Includes most DHS policies required in the Funding and Service Agreement.
- Information Sheets - Assistance for your committee on every aspect of kindergarten management.
- Industrial Bulletin - The latest industrial relations information in a detailed and easy to read format.
- Employer Management Manual.

## **Resource and Information Organisations**

The following organisations are also able to supply advice and resources:

The Lady Gowrie Child Centre (LGCC)

36 Newry Street

Carlton North 3054

Phone: 9347 6388

Kindergarten Parents Victoria (KPV)

48 High Street,

Northcote 3070

Phone: 9818 3978

Free Kindergarten Association, Multicultural Resource Centre (FKA/MRC)

9-11 Stewart Street

Richmond 3121

Phone: 9248 4471

Uniting Church Children's Services Unit,

Uniting Church in Australia

130 Little Collins Street

Melbourne 3000

Phone: 9251 5268

## **Resource and Information Organisations cont.**

### **Children's Services Officers Department of Human Services**

#### ***Metropolitan Regional Offices***

Eastern Metropolitan Region  
Box Hill  
Phone: 9843 6000

Western Metropolitan Region

Footscray  
Phone: 9275 7000

Southern Metropolitan Region

Dandenong  
Phone: 9213 2111

Northern Metropolitan Region

Fitzroy  
Phone: 9412 5333

#### ***Country Regions***

Loddon-Mallee Region  
Bendigo  
Phone: 5434 5555

Gippsland Region  
Traralgon  
Phone: 5177 2500

Barwon South Western Region  
Geelong  
Phone: 5226 4540

Grampians Region  
Ballarat  
Phone: 5333 6669

Hume Region  
Shepparton  
Phone: 5832 1500