



# INFORMATION SHEET

## The role of the educational leader

The educational leader has an influential role in inspiring, motivating, affirming and also challenging or extending the practice and pedagogy of educators. It is a joint endeavour involving inquiry and reflection, which can significantly impact on the important work educators do with children and families.

With the role's introduction, a number of myths have emerged about its responsibilities. One of these is that the educational leader must complete all of the programming for all educators. This is a narrow and potentially limiting view of this important role.

### National Quality Framework requirements

The educational leader role is part of **Quality Area 7 - Leadership and Service Management** in the National Quality Standard (NQS). **Standard 7.1** in the NQS requires that effective leadership promotes a **positive organisational culture** and builds a **professional learning community**. Further to this, **element 7.1.4** requires that provision is made to ensure a suitably qualified and experienced educator or coordinator **leads the development of the curriculum** and ensures the establishment of **clear goals and expectations for teaching and learning**.

Supporting this, **regulation 118 of the Education and Care Service National Regulations** requires that the approved provider **designate, in writing, a suitably qualified and experienced educator, coordinator or other individual as educational leader** at the service to lead the development and implementation of educational programs in the service.

Neither the NQS nor the legislative standards are prescriptive about the qualifications, experience, skills or include a role description for the person chosen to be the educational leader. The **flexibility** of these provisions allows approved providers to **choose the person in the service best suited** to take on this role.

### Considerations when choosing an educational leader

When designating an educational leader, consideration needs to be given to whether the person is:

- suitably qualified and experienced
- willing to make time for the role and eager to learn more
- approachable and well respected
- knowledgeable about theories, pedagogy and the relevant learning frameworks
- skilled at supporting educators of varying abilities and learning styles
- knowledgeable about the NQS and related regulatory standards.

### Educational leader strategies

The most effective educational leader views their role as collegial and seeks to play an integral role in mentoring, guiding and supporting educators.

As part of continuous improvement, the educational leader should consider what strategies are needed to improve the educational program in the approved service. Strategies might include:

- **leading and being part of reflective discussions** about practice and implementing the learning framework
- **mentoring other educators** by leading quality practice
- **discussing routines** and how to make them more effective learning experiences
- **observing children and educator interactions**, and making suggestions on how to improve interactions and intentional teaching
- **talking to parents** about the educational program

- **working with other early childhood professionals** such as maternal and child health nurses and early childhood intervention specialists
- **considering how the program can be linked to the community** by working with other community services and groups such as Aboriginal Elders
- **establishing systems across the service** to ensure there is continuity of learning when children change room or attend other services, and then in their transition to school
- **assisting with documenting children's learning** and how these assessments can inform curriculum decision making.

## Resources

Many resources are available to help you to understand and embrace the role of educational leader.

The [Guide to the National Quality Standard](#) offers some suggestions on how the authorised officer may assess if the educational leader is effectively meeting requirements. It is important to remember it is not a checklist but rather paints a picture of what you might expect to see at the Meeting National Quality Standard level.

Early Childhood Australia's resources, including:

- The [Educational Leader Newsletter](#)
- The role of the [Educational Leader E-Learning Videos](#)
- [Talking about practice: The role of the educational leader](#)
- [What Does Leadership Look Like In Early Childhood Settings?](#) Every Child – Vol.18 No.4 2012- Quality in Early Childhood Settings

The IPSP online library has many resources including:

- [The distributive leadership model](#) by Ros Cornish
- [Pedagogical Leadership: Exploring New Terrain and Provocations](#) by Anthony Semann and Rod Soper in *Reflections* issue 47
- [Developing a "Learning Community" for Educational Leaders](#) by Jenny Green & Merise Bickley. Gowrie NSW