

CASE STUDIES ON THE ASSESSMENT AND RATING VISITS



.....
Community Child Care spoke with three OSHC services that have recently participated in the assessment and rating visits and have shared their experience with OSCAR.
.....

Rebecca Ford is the Early Years Practice Leader in the outside of school hours care in Leongatha. Rebecca has a supportive role with the service. This service has been operating for two years under UnitingCare Gippsland and a long time before that with the Leongatha Primary School.

Overall, how was the whole assessment and rating visit process?

The assessors did two days at the service and had a one-hour conversation with the coordinator of the program before the session. The process wasn't as daunting as we had expected. We were bombarded with a lot of questions that could be a bit tricky when you have one ear and eye on the children and are trying to answer the assessors.

What was the authorised officers' main focus? For example were they focused on paperwork or observations or talking to the educators and children?

They were focused on asking questions and gathering as much information as they could in such a short time. Quality Area 7 – Leadership and service management – appeared to be the big areas as well as the partnerships with the school, the program and management. They discussed possible staffing issues, medical forms and medical action plans, ensuring that children's records were complete and the nominated supervisor and educational leader letters were stored on file.



Did they look at your quality improvement plan (QIP)?

Yes, and they referred to it throughout the time they were at the service.

Was there sufficient time for discussions during this process?

Yes. The assessors compiled questions at the end of the first day and asked them the following day; the educators felt there were a lot of questions.

Did you feel the authorised officers were supportive through the whole process?

Yes. The assessors were aware the educators were nervous and acknowledged that fact. They allowed the staff time to answer questions and attend to children if needed. We found them very supportive.

As a team, how did you prepare for the assessment visit?

As a team educators were well supported by management. We talked about the possible questions the assessors would ask and discussed areas that we could challenge. We talked about the QIP and ensured that all educators had an understanding of the content. We laid down some team rules that if you didn't know the answer to a question that you would answer with, 'Can I think about that for a minute and get back to you?' and that it is okay to take time to answer questions.

How were staff and educators feeling prior to undergoing assessment?

Very nervous! The program had gone through under NCAC Quality Assurance a couple of times previously and knew what to expect but of course with a new system there is always an element of uncertainty.

Were there aspects of the visit that you feel you will be better prepared for next time?

The service was very prepared but some of the processes weren't clear to educators, such as: when a parent enquires about placing their child in a service, what questions are asked, who do they ring, what goes in the enrolment pack and what happens after the family has completed all the paperwork?

What was the key to demonstrating to the assessor that you were complying with the National Regulations and demonstrating the National Standards?

The observations the assessors made of the educators interacting with the children, the discussions they had with the children, the information displayed in the service. The key is not to hide anything and to have all your evidence displayed or available so the assessors can flick through it or read it on the wall. It is better to have lots of evidence than not enough because then you can talk about it and explain the process to get the point across. ▶▶



‘On the day of the visit, once the children arrived, we forgot the officer was even there. She seemed to just ‘fade’ into the background, and our routines and interactions were that of any other day.’

Kelly Zsarbo, Educational leader and Coordinator from Banyan Fields Primary School OSHC. The service opened in March 2011.

Overall, how was the whole assessment and rating visit process?

Initially, the process was very daunting. The thought of having someone come out and observe our every move was rather nerve racking. However, the assessor called me prior to the visit and explained what was going to be happening on the day. I then relayed this information back to my staff. The call definitely put us somewhat at ease. On the day of the visit, once the children arrived, we forgot the officer was even there. She seemed to just ‘fade’ into the background, and our routines and interactions were that of any other day.

What was the authorised officers’ main focus? For example were they focused on paperwork or observations or talking to the educators and children?

All of the above! The visit began with the assessor looking at some paperwork including staff records, the information on display, individual observations, our policy and procedure document and our program plan. I was given time to explain how the programming comes about and how it links to the NQF.

Did the assessment officers look at your QIP?

It was obvious the officer had thoroughly read the QIP; she seemed to know from start to finish what was written in there.

Was there sufficient time for discussions during this process?

Yes, before the session had started and once the children had all left there was plenty of time for discussions.

Did you feel the authorised officers were supportive through the whole process?

Most definitely, it’s hard not to be nervous but she continued to remind us that this is a time to celebrate and ‘show off’ what we have achieved.

It was difficult, however, to have no indication of our rating on the actual day.



Brooke Salter, OSHC Director at RecWest Braybrook. The service has been operating for 2½ years.

Overall, how was the whole assessment and rating visit process?

The communication from the start to the end of the rating and assessment process was comprehensive and I found this helpful.

I felt the assessment visit was thorough and more informative than previous assessment visits. The officers made staff and children feel comfortable when observing in the rooms.

What was the authorised officers' main focus? For example were they focused on paperwork or observations or talking to the educators and children?

The officers didn't focus on one particular area. They spent time observing educators interacting with children and talking with the educators, along with viewing paperwork and participating in discussion.

Did the assessment officers look at your QIP?

No.

Was there sufficient time for discussions during this process?

There were two authorised officers who visited the program over two days and discussions took place with both officers during the visit, providing ample time for discussion.

Did you feel the authorised officers were supportive through the whole process?

I felt the officers were supportive during discussions and when interacting and observing children and staff.

CCC would like to thank Rebecca and UnitingCare Gippsland Leongatha OSHC, Kelly and Banyan Fields Primary School OSHC and Brooke and RecWest Braybrook for sharing their experiences in this edition of OSCAR. 🍷