



# A multi-perspective approach to quality: Considerations for the accreditation of long day care services

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New collaborative research project

Driven, in part, by perceived shortcomings of the current reg env

## Problematizing the regulatory environment

Contributes to  
structural and  
process  
dimensions  
of quality



Unfulfilled  
intentions  
and  
detrimental  
spillover  
effects  
impede  
quality and  
professional  
practice

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### HOW QIAS CONTRIBUTES

A guide for quality practice, esp. for teachers with limited experience

Despite the critique, maintaining an accreditation system is crucial. I do not advocate for the abolition of accreditation. But we do need to look at how we can make it more robust, useful and effective.

# Problematizing the regulatory environment cont.

## (A) Unfulfilled intentions

- (i) The Regulation – Minimum standards
- (ii) QIAS: Simplistic approach to quality

## (B) Unanticipated spill over effects

- (i) Impact on time
- (ii) Impact on professional autonomy
- (iii) Impact on job satisfaction

- ⇒ Practical implications for teaching practices and the quality of ECEC provided
- ⇒ Conceptual implications for teaching practices and how we view quality

## (A) Unfulfilled intentions

### QIAS

Simplistic – tick the box; ltd time for validators; validators not teachers;  
lowest common denominator.

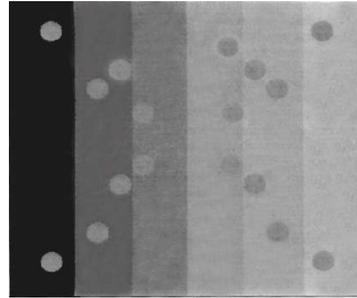
In 2006, 97% of registered centres were accredited; 75% of these  
assessed as high quality. Mismatch with teachers' perceptions  
about the level of quality 'really' being provided.

## (B) Unanticipated spillover effects

- (i) Both QIAS and regs: duplication; paperwork; takes away from children; fear of 'failing'
- (ii) Both QIAS and regs: prescriptive interpretation; ltd scope to exercise leadership and innovation; no recognition of innovation or reflective processes/practical wisdom that underpins high quality
- (

## Autonomy, reflection and 'practical wisdom'

- As professionals, early childhood teachers exercise practical wisdom, combining “expert knowledge with sound judgement and thoughtful action” (Goodfellow, 2003, p. 49).



Teachers feeling constrained by black and white interpretations. Ltd room for grey, to exercise the practical wisdom Goodfellow talks about

# Problematizing Quality

- Foucault (1978, 1980, 1983)
  - “not everything is bad but ... everything is dangerous” (Foucault, 1983, p. 231)
  - power and discourse: power circulates as regimes of truth which privilege certain ways of thinking and doing over others
- Conceptual implications
  - teaching practices: technical, risk oriented, performative
  - approach to quality: objective, standardised (positivist)

a question that won't go away

**power and discourse eg.**, parents can be assured that if the centre their child attends is accredited, then their child will receive quality education and care; that what quality is, is encapsulated by systems of accreditation;

## Recall binary

In the context of ECEC (and QIAS would be an example of this), 'quality' is predominantly viewed as a concept that can be objectively measured and defined, and that is present when specific developmentally appropriate outcomes in children are observed (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007). Such an approach to quality may close off other ways of thinking about how a LDC centre might provide high quality ECEC, and how this high quality might be observed and sustained.

## Working towards a multiple perspective approach

QIAS/OBSERVATION RATINGS SCALE APPROACH TO QUALITY (POSITIVIST)	A COMPLEMENTARY APPROACH TO QUALITY (POSTSTRUCTURALIST)*
Objectively measured using standards and indicators	Subjectively evaluated using collaborative reflection and dialogue
Detached approach to measuring quality - categorical - emphasis on observed behaviour - formal / disciplined - structured data collection - primarily quantitative analysis of data	Participatory approach to evaluating quality - interpretative - emphasis on meaning - largely informal/collaborative - flexible data collection - primarily qualitative analysis of data
Quantitative data used (or primarily used), the meaning of which is not explored (or explored to a limited extent)	Qualitative data used, the meaning of which is explored
Generalisable data is sought	Generalisable data alone seen as deficient: context specificity of data is acknowledged
Seeks evidence	Seeks evidence in context

\* Adapted from Gillham (2000, pp. 7, 52)

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Do you agree that QIAS takes a positivist approach to quality?

Is there scope to utilise both perspectives

Eg., positivist approach for base level quality (min standards); poststructuralist approach for teachers in high quality centres?

Given context of early childhood services (eg., market driven approach; high staff turnover; not all services have university quality teachers) it seems important to have a positivist base. Accountability is important. Regulation through accreditation is important.

QUALITY	High quality
<b>Positivist framework</b>	Poststructuralist framework
<b>Values &amp; assumptions</b>	Values & assumptions
-universality	-contextuality
-objectivity	-subjectivity
-certainty	-uncertainty
-stability	-fluidity
-closure	-provisionality
<b>Process of evaluation</b>	Process of evaluation
-templates	-dialogue
-rating scales/ checklists	-reflection
-prescribed inspection	-collaboration
<b>Culture of evaluation</b>	Culture of evaluation
-compliance	- Decent society (Margalit, 1996)
-performativity	- Social justice (McInerney, 2007; Wishart, Taylor, & Shultz, 2006)
<b>Elements of quality</b>	Elements of quality (Meaning making - Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007)
-structural standards that reflect what current research indicates is conducive to high quality	-risk-taking (Lupton, 1999)
	-trust (Power, 2004)
	-wise professional decision-making (Goodfellow, 2001, 2003)
	-critical reflexivity of staff (Sumsion, 2006)

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Scope with proposed A-E rated system to incorporate a multiple perspective approach to accrediting quality

This slide presents one possible mapping

- Standards base would comprise the minimal level
- Scope to integrate the Regulation???

Decent society – a culture that does not humiliate (QIAS can humiliate teachers eg., through its ‘lowest common denominator’ approach; disparity b/w accountability and pay)

Social justice: does not pit the teacher as the ‘problem’; accreditation occurs in a context where govt addresses other barriers to quality eg., lack of robust national standards; lack of pay parity b/w teachers in primary and early childhood settings

Other elements of high quality?

- Pedagogical leadership
- ??

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