



Greater Shepparton Enhanced Best Start

Ready Services Audit Tool

'A reflective tool to evaluate and support accessibility and inclusion in Greater Shepparton Early Years Services'

(Reviewed January 2015)

Service name:

Date:

Using the Ready Services Audit Tool

The Ready Services Audit Tool is a key component of the activities and initiatives of Best Start after Greater Shepparton was selected to receive three year funding for Enhanced Best Start in 2010.

The aim of the Ready Services initiative, in line with Enhanced Best Start funding guidelines, was to 'increase access and participation in Maternal and Child Health and kindergarten services, particularly those known to ChildFIRST and child protection', and with a focus on children and families who are undergoing difficult life challenges and/or circumstances.

The Ready Services Audit Tool was developed, piloted and reviewed with kindergarten educators and maternal and child health nurses but has valid application in all early childhood education and care settings.

The six service aspects to be considered by practitioners/services are as follows:

Accessibility looks at advertising strategies; type and content of service information provided including consideration of different languages; enrolment procedures; service locations; and ease of access re signage, disability, parking and public transport options.

Communication considers factors such as orientation practices, dissemination of initial information and ongoing service changes; strategies for ensuring that there is a two-way input and feedback flow between families and the service regarding child and family needs; outreach practices; and promoting community awareness.

Physical Environment includes how the physical environment of the service is welcoming, comfortable and inclusive for all stakeholders; looking at spaces which provide privacy for practitioners and family to have consultations/discussions; and physical spaces and practices which encourage families to spend time together casually where needed.

Inclusion encompasses how information about family characteristics such as structure, background, language, culture and values are sought, acknowledged and celebrated; and meeting the needs of children and families with a range of abilities.

Relationships with Families includes consideration of the key aspects of building and maintaining positive relationships with families; encouraging them to contribute/update information about their child on an ongoing basis; supporting them to build on their knowledge about early childhood; and being a partner in meeting their child's needs.

Reflective Practice relates to opportunities for practitioners to reflect on their individual and group practice; strategies for supporting and promoting learning and development to update their professional skills in all areas including an ongoing focus on working effectively with vulnerable families.

These categories are a guide to support practitioners and services in reflecting on and promoting best practice. However, your professional knowledge and experience is a key part of considering a range of factors to form a comprehensive picture of your service parameters, and a holistic and inclusive approach to working with children and families.

Regular use of the audit tool will support services and practitioners to identify opportunities for improvement in promoting and supporting service engagement and ongoing participation by all families with a key focus on vulnerable families.

The Ready Services Audit Tool is intended to be used annually with a 'whole of centre' approach and input from all stakeholders.

It is recommended that services seek input from families during this process by displaying the tool, inviting comments and providing opportunities for families to participate in the completion of the tool.

The completed tool is to be retained by the service as a key part of their quality assurance processes and for reflection and planning purposes.

1. How accessible is your service for families? (ACCESSIBILITY)	Current practices (evidence/examples of practices)	Opportunities for continuing improvement
How is the service advertised and promoted to the local community?		
What aspects of the service are included in advertising?		
Are enrolment processes user-friendly i.e. not lengthy and too complex?		
Is written material clear and easily understood?		
How do staff engage with potentially new families who casually drop in?		
Do hours of operation meet the needs of current users?		
Can cost be an issue for your families?		
Does public transport support access to the service?		
Is entry to the service easy e.g. if part of a complex or hub, are there clear		

directions?		
Is signage visible from the street?		
Does parking promote accessibility e.g. near centre?		
Is there designated disability parking?		
Is there wheelchair/pram access?		
Are there additional access issues for your service?		
<p>Service self-review – how do you rate your service in regard to accessibility?</p> <p>High Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Is your service meeting best practice criteria?</p> <p>Good Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Is your service achieving at a good quality standard?</p> <p>Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Is your service meeting basic standards?</p> <p>Improvement needed <input type="checkbox"/> Is your service working towards basic standards?</p>		
<p>Additional comments for accessibility by the service provider:</p>		

2. How do you communicate with the families who use your service? (COMMUNICATION)	Current practices (evidence/examples of such practices)	Opportunities for continuing improvement
How is service information presented to families in the orientation phase?		
What methods are used to communicate ongoing service information/changes to families?		
How does the service ensure that information reaches all families?		
How are different literacy levels accommodated?		
How do you access written material in community languages?		
Is access to interpreter services available?		
How do you obtain input/feedback about the centre from service users?		
How is such input/feedback acknowledged?		
How does input/feedback inform service review and practice changes?		
How do you follow up children/families who		

do not attend regularly?		
What do you feel are the most effective methods of communication?		
Is information displayed about additional services in the centre and/or outreach services?		
How does the service inform the wider community about its activities, initiatives and achievements?		
<p>Service self-review – how do you rate your service in regard to communication?</p> <p>High Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Is your service meeting best practice criteria?</p> <p>Good Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Is your service achieving at a good quality standard?</p> <p>Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Is your service meeting basic standards?</p> <p>Improvement needed <input type="checkbox"/> Is your service working towards basic standards?</p>		
<p>Additional comments for communication by the service provider:</p>		

3. How welcoming and friendly is your service? (PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT)	Current practices (evidence/examples of such practices)	Opportunities for continuing improvement
How is your service's first point of contact for families welcoming, friendly and inclusive? i.e. entry to the service?		
How is your service's overall physical environment welcoming, friendly and inclusive?		
What other aspects of your service make new families feel welcome and included?		
How are families encouraged to spend time in the service?		
Is there space/s for staff/educators to spend time with families in privacy?		
Is there space for families to spend time together casually?		
<p>Service self-review – how do you rate your service in regard to physical environment?</p> <p>High Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Is your service meeting best practice criteria?</p> <p>Good Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Is your service achieving at a good quality standard?</p> <p>Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Is your service meeting basic standards?</p> <p>Improvement needed <input type="checkbox"/> Is your service working towards basic standards?</p>		
<p>Additional comments for physical environment by the service provider:</p>		



4. How does your service respect and respond to the diversity of families in your service? (INCLUSION)	Current practices (evidence/examples of such practices)	Opportunities for continuing improvement
How are different family characteristics such as structure and background acknowledged?		
How is family input and knowledge about their child's background sought and used?		
How does your service meet the needs of children and families with a range of abilities?		
How are the different cultures/values/beliefs of all children and families acknowledged and celebrated?		
<p>Service self-review – how do you rate your service in regard to inclusion?</p> <p>High Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Is your service meeting best practice criteria?</p> <p>Good Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Is your service achieving at a good quality standard?</p> <p>Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Is your service meeting basic standards?</p> <p>Improvement needed <input type="checkbox"/> Is your service working towards basic standards?</p>		
<p>Additional comments for inclusion by the service provider:</p>		

5. How are positive relationships with families promoted in your service? (RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES)	Current practices (evidence/examples of such practices)	Opportunities for continuing improvement
How do you begin to build a positive relationship with a new family?		
How do you encourage families to contribute/update information about their child on an ongoing basis?		
How do you support families to build on their knowledge about early childhood and help them to meet their child's needs?		
How do you/your team maintain positive relationships with families if there are concerns /complaints?		
What do you feel are the key aspects of maintaining positive relationships with families?		
<p>Service self-review – how do you rate your service in regard to relationships with families?</p> <p>High Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Is your service meeting best practice criteria?</p> <p>Good Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Is your service achieving at a good quality standard?</p> <p>Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Is your service meeting basic standards?</p> <p>Improvement needed <input type="checkbox"/> Is your service working towards basic standards?</p>		
<p>Additional comments for relationships with families by the service provider:</p>		

6. How does your service promote reflective practice and professional development? (REFLECTIVE PRACTICE)	Current practices (evidence/examples of such practices)	Opportunities for continuing improvement
How is reflective practice promoted in the service?		
What opportunities do staff/educators have to reflect on their <u>individual</u> practice?		
What opportunities do staff/educators have to reflect on their <u>team</u> practice?		
How is professional development supported in the service?		
How are staff/educators provided with specific opportunities to develop/update their skills in working with vulnerable families?		
<p>Service self-review – how do you rate your service in regard to reflective practice?</p> <p>High Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Is your service meeting best practice criteria?</p> <p>Good Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Is your service achieving at a good quality standard?</p> <p>Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Is your service meeting basic standards?</p> <p>Improvement needed <input type="checkbox"/> Is your service working towards basic standards?</p>		
<p>Additional comments for reflective practice by the service provider:</p>		

Date: _____ Completed by: _____ (Service representative) _____ (Signature)

Ready Services Audit Summary and Action Plan

Name of Centre/service: _____ Date: _____

Audit Area	Service's Self Rating	Continuing Improvement Opportunities/Strategies
Accessibility		
Communication		
Physical Environment		
Inclusion		
Relationships with Families		
Reflective Practice		

APPENDIX 1: [Links to National Quality Assurance documents and processes for all early years education and care services](#): For easy reference this appendix has been developed to assist services and practitioners to link the Ready Services Audit Tool with the National Quality Standard and associated quality practices.

Accessibility:

QA 3 – Standard/Elements 3.1

QA 6 – Standard/Elements - 6.1.1, 6.1.2, 6.1.3, 6.2.2, 6.3.2, 6.3.3, 6.3.4

Communication:

QA 6 – Standard/Elements 6.1.1, 6.1.2, 6.1.3, 6.3.1, 6.3.2

QA 7 – Standards/Elements 7.2.3

Physical Environment:

QA 3 – Standard/Elements 3.1.1,

QA 5 - Standard/Elements 5.1.1, 5.1.3

QA 6 – Standards/Elements 6.1.2, 6.2.1

Inclusion:

QA 1 – Standard/Elements 1.1.2, 1.1.4, 1.1.5,

Relationships with Families:

QA 1 – Standard/Elements 1.1.4

QA 6 - Standard/Elements 6.1.2, 6.2

QA 7 – Standards/Elements 7.3.4

Reflective Practice:

QA 4 – Standards/Elements 4.2, 4.2.2

QA 7 – Standards/Elements 7.1.4, 7.2.2, 7.2.3