

## The Influence of National Quality Standards

The industry of Early Childhood education has come a long way since the inception of the National Quality Frameworks (NQF) in 2012.

For those of you that don't know the specifics, the NQF is a series of National Laws and Regulations, Quality Standards and Frameworks, and assessment and rating processes designed to improve the overall wellbeing and education of Australian children.

While there are several key benefits of the NQF, their website has listed the major benefits for both parents and children to include;

- Improved educator to child ratios to ensure children have greater care and attention;
- Educators with increased skills and qualifications;
- Better support for children's learning and development through approved learning frameworks; and,
- Consistent and transparent information on educators, providers and services in the national NQF register.

2016 research shows that 66% of reassessed Centre-based services improved on their assessment. This indicates that by introducing and continuing to develop the NQF, children are being given the best start to life.

The influence of this Framework at over 14,000 Centre-based services in Australia sees children build confidence and self-esteem, develop resilience and communication skills, as well as encouraging them to want to learn.

To check out how your child's Centre is rated or to find a Centre near you, check out the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority's new website, Starting Blocks – <http://www.startingblocks.gov.au>.

Billy's Buddies Strongly Supports the NQF and has modelled its Programs around the seven Quality Areas as demonstrated below:

- 1) **Education Program and Practice** – Billy's Buddies contributes to a child's learning and development by increasing their hand-eye coordination, gross motor skills, communication and confidence.
- 2) **Children's health and safety** – By adding a Healthy Habits component to the Program, Billy's Buddies Coaches, touch on key lifestyle and healthy eating habits that will improve the child's overall well-being.
- 3) **Physical Environment** – Each child is physically challenged through play by exploring different themes and skills in a fun, games-based environment. The Billy's Buddies Program also promotes an inclusive environment where all children are eligible to participate.
- 4) **Staffing arrangements** – Billy's Buddies is dedicated to ensuring each Coach is supported, mentored and sufficiently trained to enhance a child's learning and development.
- 5) **Relationships with Children** – We have developed several engagement and behavioural management techniques to ensure that each child is respected and supported throughout their time with Billy's Buddies. Our Coaches are taught these techniques during their initial training before attending monthly reviews.
- 6) **Collaborative partnerships with families and communities** – Billy's Buddies regularly communicates with families through fortnightly newsletters. These newsletters ensure parents are sent updates around the child's lessons over the past two weeks.
- 7) **Leadership and Service Management** – By implementing an automated registration system in early 2017, we were able to redirect our focus and spend more time developing our Program, improving our relationship building techniques and managing our communication with families and staff.