

ACECQA asks Educational Leaders to ‘demonstrate an understanding of the expectations of the sector and, specifically, the National Regulations, NQF, NQS, approved learning frameworks, child development, theory and **philosophy** ...’¹

On the topic of **philosophy**, it is easy to misunderstand each other so let’s get some of the language right:

- **Philosophy (Personal)** This is about you, and is the sum total of your personal and professional influences that you have built into perspectives, refined, thought and read about, acquired and worked through over your life including your professional life.
- **Philosophy (Personal professional)** This is about that which you take into your workplace. We each have taken aspects of our personal philosophy into the workplace but have left some elements of it at the workplace door. This may be because the workplace environment only calls on part of your personal philosophy and it may be because you have made some personal compromises to work there, overlooking any gaps or clashes.
- **Philosophy (Service)** This is about what is required in the National Quality Standards² - Quality Area 7 – ‘7.1.1 Service philosophy and purpose: A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service’s operations.’ It is developed and reviewed collectively, after shared discussion, research and learning, and with building a purpose and a sense of community for children and families in mind.

This is what we are asked to use in our professional practice leadership Quality Area 1 – 1.1.1 asks that ‘The educational leader and educators use an approved learning framework and the service philosophy to consider the service’s approach to learning, development and wellbeing, and the way in which these guide everyday practice and development of the education program’.

- **Influences** This is about the professional shopping cart of learning and knowledge that has an impact on you and your professional thinking and that can directly be seen as steering your practice.

Reflections:

In our practice ACECQA asks³ that we reflect on;

- How can the service philosophy be utilised to drive a culture of change?
- How is the vision in the philosophy communicated to others?
- Does the team understand the vision?

¹ <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-03/TheEducationalLeaderResource.pdf>

² https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-01/Guide-to-the-NQF-3-Assessment-and-rating_1.pdf

³ When we say this, we are referring to the way ACECQA collects and talks about the requirements from the National Quality Framework.

When your role is to lead professional practice.

Educators will deliver their professional practice only when they understand exactly what they are asked to do.

For new and even experienced Educational Leaders, this is perhaps one of the most complex areas of work - communicating the context and purpose of the role and how each piece of professional practice, [the tasks if you like] adds to that purpose.

Successful leadership in early childhood is a matter of communication more than anything else⁴ Rodd

With Educators coming to us from all over the world, with their qualifications coming from literally hundreds of institutions, and from across the last 2 or more decades, we can't ever assume that Educators know and understand the local context of their work - that is what you want to happen in your service and why.

Educational Leaders acknowledge that to achieve your goals for the service, you may need to create a culture in which change is possible, agreed, well understood and consistently implemented.

- How can the service philosophy be utilised to drive a culture of change?
 - Make the philosophy a shared work
 - Make the philosophy part of the reason for everything you develop in the service
 - Revisit the meaning of the philosophy as a group together
 - Relate the progress that you are making together to progress on achieving the goals of the philosophy.
- How is the vision in the philosophy communicated to others?
 - Understand it yourself
 - Talk about it often to internalize it and to have it heard
 - Find ways to represent the philosophy around the service, for example as captions on displays.
- Does the team understand the vision?
 - Provide training on the philosophy
 - Read it together, more than once, highlighting key phrases and discussing them
 - Have rooms make a presentation on it as they put it into practice in their area
 - Provide training to staff to orient other new staff on it.

Reflective question for you:

If someone read your QIP, would they find our philosophy in it's words and goals?

⁴ Rodd, J. (2013). Leadership in early childhood: The pathway to professionalism (4th ed.). Sydney, NSW: Allen & Unwin. Cited also in <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-03/TheEducationalLeaderResource.pdf>

