



## MONTESSORI QUALITY: AUTHENTIC PRACTICE (MQ:AP) SUMMARY

### Why did we have a Montessori quality program review?

The original Montessori Quality Assurance Programme (MQAP), designed in 2007, was reviewed and reengineered in 2021 to meet current industry practice. This resulted in progressing the standards and guidelines and creating a sustainable support network for education services.

This innovative program has at its core a “Guide”, called the Montessori Authentic Practice Guide (MAP Guide), with responsibility within the education service, selected by the leader of that service, to facilitate the quality improvement process, with participation from the staff of the service as well as support from MQ:AP.

### What are the elements of the innovative program?

#### **Promote an Integrated Systems Approach to increase the uptake of the programme.**

- Recognise the Early Childhood rigorous Quality Improvement Process and promote excellence and equity with streamlined reviews of Montessori best practice.
- Recognise the demands of registration and accreditation processes to which Australian schools comply and link MQ:AP integrated systems with support.

#### **Change the process from Auditing for Assurance to Self-Assessments with Verification.**

- Rating services are used when comparing organisations and the Montessori focus is on the individual journey of each service for improvement.
- Align the process given that the Early Childhood/ Long Day services implement self-assessments with the NQS, and public schools are trialling the same model.
- Improve the uptake of the MQ:AP by reducing the cost to members and non-member education services.
- Montessori Quality in simple terms is Authentic Practice. Re-name the programme Montessori Quality: Authentic Practice.

#### **Expand the Quality Standards from four to six to encompass an Integrated Systems approach by including the customer and stakeholders.**

- Build on the four original standards, by developing further the “Leadership” standard to highlight its crucial role in the management of the subsystems.
- The Customer is the “Child”, and a Standard has been developed to ensure that Montessori’s focus on the child is clearly given priority.

- The Stakeholders are the staff, families, and the community (including government) and have been highlighted in recent American Montessori research as being an integral part of the organisational structure and part of the system.
- The colour coding of the Standards aligns with the colour coding of the Australian NQS, so that educators, teachers, and guides can easily link the Authentic Practice Guidelines with the current requirements for Early Childhood services.
- The numbering of the standards differs as they commence with the Child. All subsystems are as important as each other within a system.
- The MQ:AP Standards and Guidelines and process for Self-assessment are on the Montessori Australia website for schools, centres, educators and families to access.

**Development of a Training Program and access to Montessori Quality: Authentic practice Portal with resources for Montessori Authentic Practice Guides.**

- The Montessori Authentic Practice Guide (MAP Guide) is a staff member from the education service appointed to spearhead their MQ:AP process.
- The role of the MAP Guide is crucial to the success of the MQ:AP 'Supporting Reflective Practice', and consideration should be given to the foundational skills that the person has with Montessori principles, pedagogy and practice.
- All MAP Guides are committed to supporting and enhancing the quality of Montessori education in Australia. They have undertaken intensive MAP Guide training and are committed to ensuring that the process is a supportive and positive experience for everyone involved. The aim of the partnership is to develop a confidential and trusting relationship with staff in the education service. The MAP Guide will support the education service on a pathway to meet the quality standards.
- MAP Guides are selected and approved by their employer to be MAP guides for their organisation
- A two-day foundation training program on the MQ:AP Standards and Guidelines and reflective practice will now be offered in as a series of seminars commencing in September.