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# 1A Identifying information requirements of groups

The people who need information from you the most are your stakeholders. These are people who are linked in any way to your service.

Your stakeholders are a diverse group of people and organisations. Typically, the stakeholders of a child-related service include:

- ▶ staff
- ▶ families who use the service
- ▶ professionals who support your service and its clients
- ▶ specialists who are part of your support network
- ▶ government bodies that monitor compliance or provide support.



## Stakeholders

To ensure you are meeting the expectations of stakeholders, you have to clearly understand their needs, interests and backgrounds, including the communities they live in. You will find that some characteristics of these stakeholders link to your own service context through:

- ▶ the age of children you cater for
- ▶ the community you are situated in
- ▶ the needs your service caters for
- ▶ your management structure
- ▶ your reliance on government services.

## Identifying stakeholder characteristics

There are many ways that you can identify the characteristics of your service's stakeholders.

### Ways to identify the characteristics of stakeholders include:

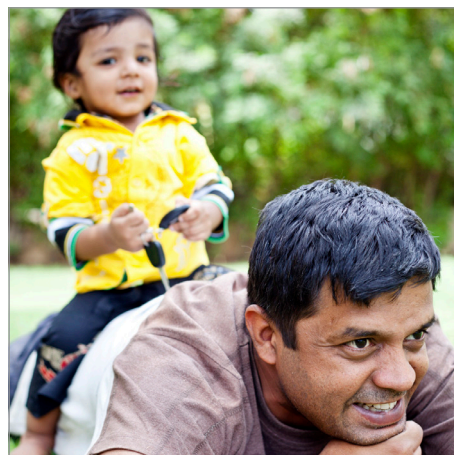
- ▶ talking to people – during orientation visits, interviews, spontaneous discussion, meetings
- ▶ collecting documents – including enrolment or registration forms, questionnaires, a suggestions or comments box, surveys
- ▶ contacting organisations
- ▶ reading handbooks and manuals
- ▶ accessing community information documents that reflect local research
- ▶ researching online.

## Target groups in the community

By employing strategies for finding out information about your stakeholders, you can identify the different groups within the community that will require information from you.

Community groups may include:

- ▶ current users of your service
- ▶ prospective users referred by other organisations, such as maternal child health centres or community services
- ▶ new target groups; for example, people you are marketing to for the first time
- ▶ people in your geographic region
- ▶ special interest groups such as parent groups or exercise groups
- ▶ students and researchers
- ▶ workers in other organisations such as support services or local government agencies.



## Needs of the community

When identifying the information needs of community members, you might look at their overall needs, or the needs of particular target groups.

Once you have identified the target groups in the service community you are addressing, you need to consider the following points through a series of questions.

### Values and needs

- ▶ What is the demographic of the group (age, income, family, languages, employment status, etc.)?

### Existing facilities, resources and programs available

- ▶ How and when are they offered?
- ▶ How successful have other programs been?
- ▶ Is there competition or an opportunity for collaboration?
- ▶ Are there any agencies and organisations that may support your programs?
- ▶ Are there any gaps in the service?

### Needs of current and potential service recipients

- ▶ Who attends and why?
- ▶ Who does not attend and why not?
- ▶ What broad interests are they likely to have?
- ▶ What do they need from you?

### Ways in which devices allow the sharing of information:

- ▶ Posting on social media
- ▶ Engaging in forums and discussion boards
- ▶ Emailing photos or anecdotes of the children at play
- ▶ Forwarding service promotions, policies and procedures
- ▶ Sending reports or other information to specialists
- ▶ Displaying and sharing materials through programs such as Storypark, LIFT, ChildCarers or QK Technologies
- ▶ Organising appointments
- ▶ Managing fees, budgets and invoices

### Example

#### Target group needs

Delilah wants to identify the following information needs of three target groups:

- ▶ She wants to find out what the infant and child health nurse needs to know about the service so it can be promoted to new parents. The target stakeholder is the infant and child health nurse.
- ▶ She wants to find out what the parents need to know about the newly developed format for displaying children's activities. The target stakeholders are the parents.
- ▶ She wants to know how the service is viewed in the community – does it have a positive reputation? The target stakeholders are all those linked to the service.



## Practice task 1

1. What are **two** characteristics of stakeholders that might link to a service context?

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2. What **three** topics could you ask people in target groups about to identify their needs?

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## Maintaining relevant information

All services require basic information to be maintained and made available to stakeholders. This enables the service to run legally and efficiently. Here are some examples of information that should be kept current.

### Organisation details

Details of the organisation, including the services provided and organisational operations and policies.

### Guidelines and legislation

Guidelines and legislation relating to government agencies and funding sources, including policies and statutory requirements.

### Family details

Family details and other specific data provided by family members (confidentiality requirements must be observed).

### Networks

Network information, including the support services the organisation uses.

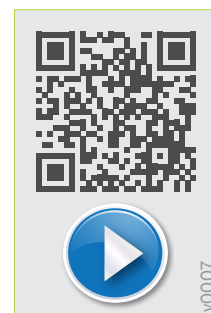
### Professional development resources

Professional development resources, including training and development materials and documents.

## Communicating with family members to gather information

It is important that you interact and communicate effectively with each child's family members. They can provide you with a lot of information about the child's abilities, preferences, behaviours, home environment and cultural background.

Watch this video to learn more about communicating with family members to gather information.



## Collecting timely information

It is helpful to develop a collection of resources before needs arise. This will allow for a greater range of resources when needed.

Think about what stakeholders know about and what they need to know to keep their skills and practice current. Find out about the networks and information strategies that keep them motivated.



**Example****Updating information**

A new family is enrolling who has recently arrived from China. You think they would appreciate the support of a community group within the region to assist with their move and to settle into the community.

You check the information available and find it was last updated 18 months ago. You decide to do a quick internet search on the two specific Chinese groups listed, and find that one has changed address and contact details since the information was last updated.

Before giving the information to the family, you update this information in the file. Date when the change has occurred so that others viewing the information will be aware of when information was last updated.

You decide to do this for all community groups listed.



## Practice task 3

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

### Case study

Brittany finds she has two posters about healthy eating. The first is the Healthy Eating Pyramid poster (2015), and the second is The NEW Healthy Food Pyramid (2008).

1. Which of the posters should Brittany keep as the most current information?
2. What strategy could Brittany use to check on current information about healthy eating?

## Summary

- ▶ The people who need information from you are your stakeholders. They include the general community linked to your service and specific groups.
- ▶ The information needs of the community and specific groups you are targeting will help determine the best way to communicate with them.
- ▶ Update your community information regularly so that you are able to respond to trends.
- ▶ Each type of information may require a different system of storage. Confidential information needs to be kept secure.
- ▶ The resources you provide for others are only useful if they are maintained.
- ▶ One method for keeping information up to date is to conduct an audit. This can be used to identify gaps or inadequacies in the information base.

## Information storage systems

The main purpose of storing information is so that it can be retrieved when required. Information can be stored as hard copies (on paper) or as soft copies (electronically). Here are some examples of paper-based and electronic storage systems.

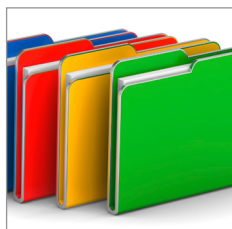
Forms of paper-based storage include:	Forms of electronic storage include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ filing cabinets</li> <li>▶ folders</li> <li>▶ hanging files</li> <li>▶ shelves</li> <li>▶ parent pockets</li> <li>▶ archive folders or boxes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ databases</li> <li>▶ computer files; for example, Microsoft Word or Excel files</li> <li>▶ email</li> <li>▶ memory sticks</li> <li>▶ portable hard drives.</li> </ul>

## Information storage requirements

Different types of information may require a different system for storage. In education and care services, confidentiality is critical. A service's privacy and confidentiality policy should clearly set out the storage, use and disposal requirements for personal information. Personal information needs to be kept in secure filing cabinets in an area that is locked outside of business hours. Likewise, computer records should require password access by authorised personnel.

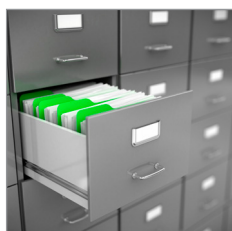
How your service chooses to store information will depend on a range of factors, as outlined in the following table.

### Information storage factors



#### Quantity of information

Large amounts of information are best stored as computer-based files as this not only saves space but also enables ease of access.



#### Space available

Paper-based storage requires more space than electronic storage. Information that is out of date or no longer required should be disposed of, transferred to electronic files or sent to offsite storage.



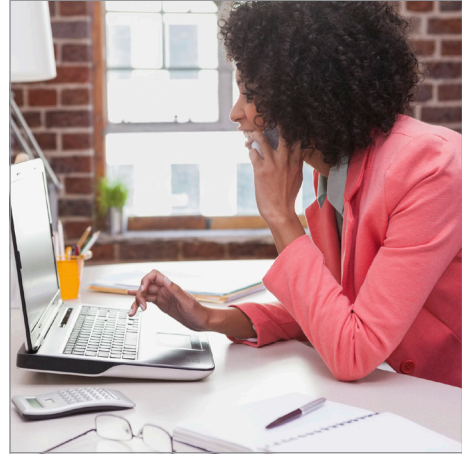
#### Confidentiality

Confidential information needs to be stored securely in locked cabinets or in password-protected electronic files. In either case, access is limited to authorised personnel who have a copy of the key or know the password. When it comes to disposal, you may need to use a secure recycling method such as shredding, or contact a company that specialises in this process.



## 2B Implementing strategies to address information requirement gaps

Due to the enormous amount of documents, records and support materials you will access and provide, it is natural that you will, at times, find gaps in the information. These might occur due to changes in industry standards, legislative requirements, roles and responsibilities, or due to new trends. At times this might occur when you are asked questions that you have not considered before, or when you wish to respond in a unique or individual way to a question, need or request from a stakeholder.



### Addressing gaps in information resources

It is essential that you keep up to date with changes or requirements, identifying any gaps that you notice and adding to your resources when you find appropriate materials. Just as important is ensuring your record-keeping and information systems are kept updated.

By maintaining current knowledge and skills, you will identify gaps in information.

#### Some ways you can maintain knowledge and skills include:

- ▶ participating in professional workshops, discussions and seminars
- ▶ talking with others in the industry
- ▶ seeking feedback from stakeholders
- ▶ evaluating the effectiveness of current policies and procedures annually
- ▶ using social media to stay up to date with others in the industry
- ▶ joining children's services-related forums or community groups
- ▶ working with specialists and other outside support services
- ▶ having regular staff and room meetings
- ▶ using the internet for research or accessing the ACECQA website at <http://aspirelr.link/acecqa> to research and cross-check information
- ▶ subscribing to newsletters, journals and other professional materials (digital or print).



You can find help for using these software applications online or through video tutorials on YouTube.

Many internet sites provide hints on how to develop specific presentations. Here are a few ideas.

### Useful internet sites for information creation



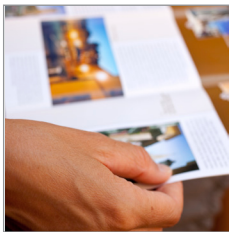
#### Make a brochure

Online PC Learning: <http://aspirelr.link/make-a-brochure>



#### Create fact sheets and action alerts

The Health Advocacy ToolBox: <http://aspirelr.link/create-a-factsheet>



#### Produce your own marketing leaflets

The Marketing Donut: <http://aspirelr.link/produce-marketing-leaflets>



#### Poster basics

NYU Libraries: <http://aspirelr.link/create-research-posters>

## Managing the project

When you develop information materials yourself, there are specific steps that can be followed. By systematically working through the following stages you will be able to effectively manage the material development process. This includes setting time lines for each stage of the process, allocating tasks to other people who may also be involved, and having a process in place to resolve issues that you may encounter.



# 2E Identifying appropriate formats

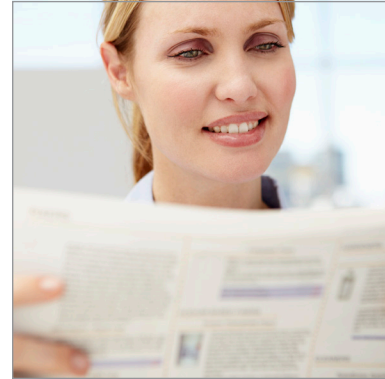
Once you ascertain the need for, or have found gaps in, information sources, and identify implementation requirements, you will be required to identify the most suitable presentation formats.

Options will depend on how, why and for whom you are implementing the materials. Whether you are addressing an issue, asking for feedback, updating a policy or procedure, or simply providing information of interest or need to stakeholders, each will require you to decide on the most appropriate presentation format.

## Audience requirements

Each service, agency or organisation will provide information resources in different presentation formats. When you look at developing your own resources, remember that people will want to access information that takes their preferences into account. For example, they may prefer information to be written, spoken, illustrated or demonstrated.

People are more likely to retain information that is presented in a combination of complementary methods. For example, a talk and demonstration on correct hand-washing technique can be supported by a pamphlet and a simple graphic poster in the bathroom.



## Presentation options

The way you present any type of information needs to cater to the specific needs of the individuals, groups and audiences that you are targeting. Every person will have a preferred way of processing and understanding the information presented to them. When presenting materials, it is vital to ensure that you consider these preferences and cater as closely as possible to those specific needs.

Here are some presentation options to consider.

### Presentation options based on individual needs



#### For people who prefer to take in information through listening, use

- ▶ recordings
- ▶ DVDs
- ▶ discussions
- ▶ face-to-face training sessions
- ▶ online webinars
- ▶ meetings
- ▶ conversations
- ▶ audio books.



#### For people who prefer to take in information through reading, use:

- ▶ books
- ▶ factsheets
- ▶ brochures
- ▶ pamphlets
- ▶ noticeboards
- ▶ posters
- ▶ reports or documents
- ▶ emails
- ▶ websites
- ▶ maps
- ▶ charts
- ▶ colour-coding
- ▶ key words
- ▶ checklists
- ▶ pictures/cartoons.

## Learning checkpoint 2

# Addressing information requirements

### Part A

1. List some sources of information you could use when researching issues.

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2. What are some ways you can maintain your knowledge and skills so you can identify gaps in information resources?

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3. Outline some methods that could be used to collect information when developing new materials.

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4. How do copyright laws apply to newly developed information materials?

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### Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

#### Case study

Wilma is developing a new resource for families. It will provide guidance and general information regarding healthy eating and the foods children bring into the service. The policies provided to parents at the beginning of the year have not been successful as children are bringing in inappropriate foods.



## Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

**3A** Evaluating the adequacy of information

**3B** Implementing strategies to continuously improve information

## Evaluating and maintaining quality information

In order to maintain an adequate range of quality information materials, it is essential that you evaluate these regularly and include them in your continuous improvement strategies. This activity might be something you add to your quality improvement plan (QIP) under National Quality Standard (NQS) Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership.



The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and *Belonging, being & becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia*.

National Quality Standard	
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
✓	Quality Area 7: Leadership and service management
Early Years Learning Framework	
Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
	High expectations and equity
	Respect for diversity
	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
	Holistic approaches
	Responsiveness to children
	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching
	Learning environments
	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions
	Assessment for learning
Outcomes	
	Children have a strong sense of identity
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators



### Implement the change

Implement changes to improve the information material and/or system.

Consider the following:

- ▶ How can we support the team when introducing change?
- ▶ How can we support the stakeholders when introducing the change?



### Review the change

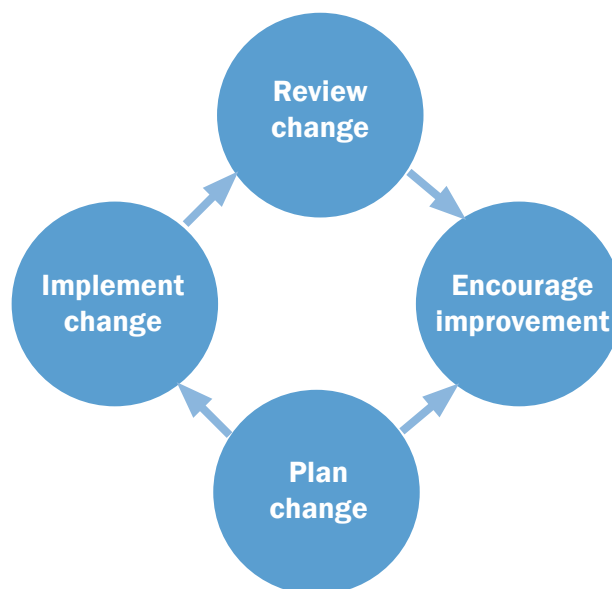
Review and monitor changes.

Consider the following:

- ▶ Is the change improving performance? Why or why not?

## The continuous improvement process

The following diagram illustrates the four stages of the continuous improvement process and the ongoing relationship they have with each other.



## Measure continuous improvement

It is useful to measure continuous improvement because it helps determine the effectiveness of the improvement process, and it poses questions relating to how others understand information. In addition, it gives additional feedback relating to the proposed need for change, reflection or input of others.

The main points to consider when measuring continuous improvement are outlined here.

### Assessment tools

- ▶ In education and care services, the assessment tool used is a QIP.
- ▶ Your QIP should include reference to information materials and resources, and their evaluation and maintenance.