

Educators and Family Members Information Handbook

Child Wise Family Day Care Scheme

This Handbook is also for potential Educators to assist them with knowledge about Child Wise Family Day Care Scheme before formally commencing the recruitment process with the Scheme

The terminology 'Educator' refers to the person who directly works with children in early childhood settings, for example, a family day care environment.

What is Family Day Care?

Family Day Care is the provision of quality education and care of other people's children in the homes of suitably selected Educators. Educators care for small groups of children not exceeding seven in total, four of whom, can be preschool children. The Educators' own children are counted in the numbers until the children reach the age of thirteen years.

Educators are recruited, resourced and supported by an early childhood qualified and professional Coordination Unit, whose role is also to monitor the quality of the care provided. The homes of all approved Educators must meet strict safety requirements and comply with all relevant policies and procedures including National Standards and other Government Legislation.

Family Day Care is an inclusive service and welcomes children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and children who may have additional needs.

Child Wise Family Day Care Scheme is a large service with Educators from diverse cultural backgrounds. The Scheme provides flexible hours of care including long day care, part time care or casual care. Care is also provided before and after school and during school holidays. Educators, when able to, take children to and from the local kindergartens and schools.

Child Wise Family Day Care Scheme participates and works within the Australian Governments National Quality Framework.

Child Wise Family Day Care Scheme which as an approved child care service allows families to claim Child Care Benefit (CCB) and the Child Care Rebate (CCR) as reduced fees.

The Scheme comprises of management, the coordination unit staff, parents and Educators and is required to comply with all requirements as set out in the Australian Government, Department of Education Child Care Service Handbook. Educators who sign a Service Agreement with Child Wise are not employees of the scheme but independent contractors. As self-employed persons they are responsible for any payments of income tax and superannuation.

The Role of Educators

Educators must achieve quality standards for the Scheme by:

- Providing a safe, clean home environment
- Having a good understanding of children and implementing a learning program for the children in their care that meets individual children's interests and development
- Complying with all relevant Scheme Policies and Procedures
- Complying with and working within the requirements of the Australian Governments National Quality Framework
- Complying with all administrative requirements
- Having good communication skills
- Ensuring confidentiality with regard to families using Family Day Care
- Attending meetings and training sessions to improve their knowledge of child care and related skills
- Participating in activities facilitated by the FDC coordination unit staff, for example, play and learning sessions for children(playgroup)
- Being available to care for children for a minimum number of children (equivalent to 70 childcare hours per week); and
- Having a clear understanding of the requirements as set out in the Service Agreement

The Role of the Family Day Care Coordination Unit Staff

In providing support to Educators the Family Day Care Coordination Unit:

- Promotes Child Wise Family Day Care Scheme
- Recruits suitably selected Educators
- Facilitates the placement of children into home-based education and care in a fair and equitable manner, according to the needs of families
- Assists Educators to understand and comply with all Federal, State and Local Government policies, standards regulations and guidelines
- Provides ongoing support and training and other resources to Educators to enhance knowledge and child care skills
- Undertakes regular unannounced and announced home visits to Educators to resource, support and monitor the practices of the Educator
- Conducts child care enrolments, monitors and reviews the progress of the children in care
- Monitors and reviews safety requirements including Service Agreement obligations
- Ensures that Educators and parents have access to accurate information in relation to Family Day Care
- Facilitates Educators and parents input into the operation of the Family Day Care Scheme through newsletters, Scheme meetings and annual surveys
- Efficiently administers the Child Care Benefit payments according to the Family Assistance Office guidelines
- Maintains proper and accurate records of all aspects pertaining to the administration of the Family Day Care Scheme
- Manages complaints/issues in accordance with the Scheme's Complaints Policy

The National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework (NQF) is a single national regulatory system and comprises of Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations and a National Quality Standard. The purpose of the NQF is to give children the best start in life through the provision of high quality education and care.

The NQF also promotes quality improvement in education and care services and provides parents and educators with information about the quality of services.

Will becoming a Family Day Care Educator affect my family?

Family Day Care, being a home-based education and care service, will impact on the Educator's family and any other household members. The care must take place in the home where the Educator lives. Care cannot be provided in certain settings.

There must be consultation with the potential Educator's whole family when deciding to use the family home for family day care purposes. There will be changes that occur within the home that will have impact on the potential Educator's family as a result of the provision of family day care. For example, the Educator's time, use and sharing of space both inside and outside the home, the sharing of resources such as the television, some toys and other belongings, the sharing of facilities such as bathroom, toilet and bedrooms and other family commitments.

Part of the challenge of providing a quality home-based education and care service is ensuring that all of the household members are aware of the expectations, the implications and the potential limitations to their existing lifestyle, when undertaking such a career. To have a successful home based family day care service it is necessary to engage all family members seeking their co-operation and commitment to quality home-based care.

It is important that anyone who is likely to be affected by the work is aware of the implications prior to making a commitment. When the home is used for paid work it becomes a 'workplace' during the hours of operation and as with other workplaces there are restrictions.

It is essential that potential Educators involve their family members in the decision to undertake Family Day Care and to prepare them for the additional responsibilities that are part of having Family Day Care children in their home. There must also be a balance between family life and professional life, for this reason, it is essential that sufficient leave from caring for children is taken on an annual basis.

The Roles and Responsibilities of the Educator's Family Members

The members of the Educator's family play an important role in the provision of Family Day Care. They must be responsive and supportive of the Educator in the provision of family day care in the family home. They must also have an awareness and understanding of the Educator's obligations and undertakings as set out in the Service Agreement with Child Wise Family day care.

The roles and responsibilities of the Educator's family members are to ensure that:

- There is warm, friendly and respectful interactions with the family day care children and their families
- It is understood that the Educator is the primary person responsible for the direct care and supervision of the family day care children
- Alcohol or drugs are not to be consumed (or under the influence of) in the presence of family day care children
- No smoking occurs in the presence of family day care children either in the home or car. If smoking does occur outside the hours of family day care operation, the home is thoroughly aired prior to the children arriving into care
- If privy to personal information about a family in care, confidentiality is to be maintained at all times
- Religious and cultural differences of families are respected
- The family day care children are not to be exposed to television programs, including DVD's videos or computer games that are not suitable for children. This includes music that contains offensive lyrics
- A safe environment is maintained in accordance with the Scheme's Safety Policies during family day care hours of operation
- There is an understanding of the importance of informing the Educator and the Coordination Unit Staff of any issues relating to suspected child harm/abuse

- There is an awareness of the Occupational Health and Safety requirements in Family Day Care
- There is an awareness of the role of the coordination unit staff. The Family Day Care Team Leader and Resource Officers have a responsibility to address any issues that may arise that are contrary to quality education and care. A collaborative approach is encouraged to assist with and clarify any misunderstandings. This includes any breaches of the Service Agreement that may have a direct or indirect effect on the provision of family day care.

Will I need to make changes to my home?

Yes, in order for your home to comply with the Scheme's Policies and Procedures including Education and Care Services National Law, the potential Educator will be required to make some changes to both the inside and the outside. Many of the changes will be required to ensure the home is a suitable environment in which to undertake home based education and care. Some of the changes will be for safety reasons, others will be to ensure that there is enough space to allow for a suitable child care setting.

An extensive Home Safety Assessment is carried out by the Coordination Unit staff and this will determine what changes will be necessary. There must be discussion and agreement with family members about the areas that will be available for use for Family Day Care and those areas that will be out of bounds.

All areas of the home which are available during family day care hours of operation must comply at all times with Child Wise Family Day Care Scheme's hygiene and safety requirements and the National Quality Standard.

What if I rent my home?

If you rent your home, your landlord must give permission in writing for the home to be used for the purpose of family day care. It is essential that the landlord (owner) is made aware that there may be costs involved in making changes to the home for safety reasons, for example, adequate fencing and that the walls in the home will need to have holes drilled, in order to install a fire extinguisher and fire blanket. The payment of 'landlords' insurance is also required. The cost of this insurance is paid by the potential Educator.

What equipment will I need to provide for the provision of Family Day Care?

Educators must supply all items of developmentally appropriate equipment. These items include kinder mattresses, prams, strollers, high/low chairs, child size table and chairs and any other equipment necessary for the provision of quality child care.

All equipment purchased by Educators must comply with Australian Safety Standards, where such standards apply or relevant written safety guidelines. Equipment must be used strictly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and includes the suitability of the piece of equipment to the weight/height/age of the child.

All furniture used by children must be safe and appropriate for example, child size tables and chairs. The provision of rugs and pillows are inclusive of a comfortable and inviting setting.

The Scheme has on loan to Educators, car safety restraints for children from birth to 4 years (18 kilograms) and booster seats for children up to the age of 7 years old at no cost.

Please note the purchase of second hand equipment is strongly discouraged due to the history and safety of the equipment being unknown.

Computer Access/Email Address:

All Educators are required to have access to a computer, their own secure email address to enable documentation/correspondence to be forwarded and a working printer.

Educational Program for Children (Play based Learning):

Educators will be supported by the coordination unit staff to develop an educational program guided by the Early Years Learning Framework (Belonging Being and Becoming) and My Time Our Place Framework for school age care in Australia.

The planning of each day should be child focussed, with sufficient time being given, so that routines and transitions, for example, mealtimes and rest/sleep times go as smoothly as possible. Program planning includes a balance of indoor and outdoor play experiences. The Family Day Care Coordination Unit staff can assist Educators with setting up appropriate play spaces for children and offer advice and support with program planning, which best meets the needs of individual children.

Fees and Charges

Child Wise Family Day Care Scheme is responsible for charging fees to parents and setting fee charging policies and procedures. The fee includes a payment to family day care to assist with the administration costs associated with operating the service. Fees and charges are revised on an annual basis.

Educator Remuneration

Family Day Care will pay the educator the amount due at their agreed hourly rate. As agents for the Scheme, the Educator also collects parent's portion of the fee on behalf of the Scheme.

Number of Children in Care

There is a limit on the number of children who may be cared for by an Educator. This allows for the provision of quality child-care with varied age groups, that is responsive to children's individual needs.

In accordance with National Education and Care Services National Law, the total number of children in care at any one time must not exceed **seven** including the Educator's own children.

- The maximum number of children under school age must not exceed **four** including the Educator's own pre-school children
- A child becomes school-age from the 1 January in the year that the child is enrolled to commence school for the first time for example preparatory level.
- The number of children referred to the Educator will be at the discretion of the coordination unit staff.

Enrolling Children into Family Day Care

It is the Scheme's responsibility to enrol children into family day care. When a parent first enquires about family day care, information is provided to them about the Scheme. A 'Request for Care' may also be taken at that time detailing information about the care requirements. The enrolment of children into family day care involves the coordination unit staff identifying families specific care requirements. Families are then matched with suitable Educators taking into account their skills and experience, the dynamics of the group and space available in the home.

Educators cannot provide education and care for a child without the prior knowledge of the coordination unit whose role is to ensure that all processes are completed prior to the commencement of care.

Monitoring, Support and Supervision of Educators

Early Childhood Education Leaders carry out regular unannounced home visits to Educators. The purpose of the visit is to resource and support Educators in all aspects of their child care practices. Home visits include the monitoring of all requirements as set out in the Scheme's

Policies and Procedures Manual and the Service Agreement, to assist with quality outcomes for the children in care.

Parents have an expectation that the quality of the education and care provided to their child is regularly monitored by family day care staff. It is also a requirement of the Australian Government.

Educators may also, at any time, request a response visit from their Early Childhood Education Leader to assist and support them with any issues that may have arisen during the course of their duties.

Training and Professional Development

It is a Service Agreement requirement that Educators attend training to continuously improve their skills and knowledge. All training arranged by the Scheme is held in the evening. There is no child care available.

Scheme Meetings

The Scheme facilitates regular meetings. These meetings allow Educators and parents to develop a greater understanding of all aspects of Family Day Care including consulting together when considering the revision of policies and procedures, general administration changes including coordination unit staff changes and other issues.

Attendance at these meetings is strongly encouraged. It is a great way to network and meet with other Educators.

Administration

Accurate and thorough documentation in all aspects of family day care, education and care is a critical component of the work Educators undertake. Sufficient time must be set aside to ensure children's information is accurate at all times, that timesheets are correctly completed and receipts are issued to families upon the payment of fees. Training in timesheet compliance is carried out prior to the signing of the Service Agreement.

Child Protection

All Family Day Care Educators and anyone aged 18 years and over residing in the family day care home or premises (for example, granny flat) are required to undertake a police check and pay associated costs, prior to signing a Service Agreement with Child Wise Family day care.

The *Working with Children Act 2005* requires that all persons working in child-related work have a current Working with Children Check Card. Educational and Care Services National Law requires all persons aged 18 years and over residing in the family day care home to have a current Working with Children Check Card.

All Educators have a duty of care to ensure that the children in care are safe, secure, supervised, receive adequate food and are protected at all times. All Educators, Coordination Unit Staff and Management, although not mandated to report children, who may be at risk of harm, to the Department of Human Services Child Protection Unit, are required to act as though mandated and to follow Child Wise Family Day Care Scheme Child Protection Policy.

Training on child protection is provided to all Educators when required.

Grievances/Complaints/Issues

Preamble

It is recognised that from time to time a complaint and grievance about the service will arise. All complaints and grievances received will be used as a tool in identifying quality improvements.

Policy Statement

To maintain service quality any complaint, grievance, issue or concern about the Scheme will be dealt with in a professional and timely manner.

Procedure

- The Scheme may be notified of a complaint or concern by an identified person either in writing or by the telephone
- The complaint or concern may involve an Educator, staff or parents of the children in care
- Educators and staff will be informed of the complaint and have an opportunity to respond
- If the complaint is about program related issues, parents are encouraged to take their concerns in the first instance, directly to their Educator for discussion and if required the Family Day Care Team Leader or a Family Day Care Resource Officer may assist in resolving the matter
- The Family Day Care Team Leader or other representative will record all complaints or concerns
- Should a complaint appear to be of a serious nature, the Family Day Care Team Leader or other representative may request the complaint to be put in writing to reduce the possibility of any misunderstanding
- Details of complaints that appear to be of a serious nature will be registered with Council's Legal and Governance Unit
- Any complaint that relates to the safety or wellbeing of a child while in care, may result in the Service Agreement of the Educator being suspended while the complaint is being investigated
- Council may require the services of an independent person to investigate the complaint
- The Educator or staff member may have an independent support person present during any formal discussions
- The Educator, staff member or parent may request an independent person to act as a mediator to assist in resolving the complaint
- An interpreter may be organised, if required
- All parties involved will be notified of the outcome of a complaint in writing, which will include:
 - Details of the complaint
 - The action taken to resolve the complaint
 - Outcome/decision of the complaint

If any party is dissatisfied with the outcome or decision made in relation to any complaint they can refer the matter on to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development or the State Ombudsman's Office.

Reference: Child Wise FDC (Legal and Governance Unit)

Selection process for potential Educators in Child Wise Family Day Care Scheme

Child Wise Family Day Care Scheme recruits Educators from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds when required. Applicants must be at least 18 years of age.

The process used in the selection of suitable Educators is a series of steps which must be completed prior to signing a Service Agreement with Child Wise family day care.

- Upon enquiring about being an Educator the Scheme's Information Handbook is forwarded to the potential applicant

- Initial site visit conducted by FDC staff
- Written Application to be an Educator and successful formal interview
- Police Clearance Checks of the applicant and any person living on the premises aged 18 years and other
- State Department of Justice Working with Children Checks for both the applicant and any person aged 18 years and over living in the family day care home
- Home Safety Assessment conducted by FDC staff and satisfactory completion of the tasks required by the applicant
- Level 2 First Aid Course to be successfully completed and a copy of the Certificate to be given to FDC staff
- Attainment of Level 1 Food Handlers Certificate
- Current accredited training in Asthma and Anaphylaxis management
- Public Liability Insurance coverage for \$10 million either with the Family Day Care Australia or similar insurance broker
- Landlord's insurance (also with the Family Day Australia or similar insurance broker). This policy provides cover to landlords where a tenant operates a Family Day Care Scheme from a rented property
- Reading, agreeing to and signing of the Service Agreement

The fees and charges for the above requirements are to be paid for by the Applicant

All Educators sign a Service Agreement with Child Wise Family day care when all the above steps are successfully completed. The signing of the Service Agreement binds the Educator's commitment to the Scheme through adherence to:-

1. The Department of Education, Child Care Service Handbook
2. The Family Assistance Office Guidelines
3. National Quality Framework (www.aceqa.gov.au) (Potential Educators are required to check this website for further information)
4. Child Wise Family Day Care Policies and Procedures Manual

The following websites will provide information on safety in the home and car safety:

- www.rch.au/safetyshop
- www.kidsafevic.com.au
- www.mfb.org.au and
- www.sidsandkids.org;

What requirements will be necessary in order to apply to Child Wise Family Day Care Scheme to be an Educator.

The Scheme recruits suitable Educators from diverse cultural backgrounds, when required. Upon reading this information, if you believe that you have the attributes and the commitment necessary, to provide quality home based education and care for other people's children, with Child Wise Family Day Care Scheme, please Telephone Abdirahman Omar on 02 8764 8517. An appointment will then be arranged for a visit to your home in the first instance. The purpose of the visit is to discuss the suitability of your home and to further discuss the provision of family day care with you and other family members.

The evaluation and selection of Educators is based on the following criteria:

Evaluation criteria	Relevant elements
Experience and Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of Certificate III in Children's Services is essential • Previous experience with children is essential • Willingness to participate in ongoing professional development
Knowledge and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient English comprehension and speech • Ability to communicate well with parents, children and staff

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- A basic knowledge of child development
 - Literacy and numeracy skills
 - Ability to provide appropriate educational experiences for children
 - Ability to manage children's behaviour in a positive manner
 - Knowledge of general hygiene procedures
 - Knowledge of safety issues and awareness of potential hazards
 - Knowledge of nutrition and safe food handling practices
 - Ability to plan an appropriate routine for children in care

Attitudes

- Acceptance of the need for a range of child care services
- Acceptance of and sensitivity to the individual needs and differences of young children and their families
- A positive attitude towards the Family Day Care Scheme
- A positive and professional relationship with the Coordination Unit staff
- A strong commitment to the provision of quality education and care within the Scheme

Other requirements

- Current NSW Working with Children Clearance
 - Clear current Police Check
-