

SAMARITANS



Early Childhood Educators Information Booklet



Samaritans

Compassion Integrity Justice

CHILD CARE WORKER (CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR) APPLICATION PACK

For Cessnock/Singleton/Dungog Regions

Sponsor: Samaritans Foundation



Samaritans

Compassion Integrity Justice

Please note: reference to educator in this document also means Child Care Worker

USEFUL WEBSITES:

www.fivestarfdc.com.au Five Star Family Day Care

www.nswfamilydaycare.com.au NSW Family Day Care Association

www.familydaycare.com.au Family Day Care Australia

www.ncac.gov.au National Childcare Accreditation Council

www.kids.nsw.gov.au Commission for Children & Young People

www.community.nsw.gov.au Department of Community Services (DoCS)

www.fdca.com.au/fdccansw/index.html NSW Carer's Association

Samaritans Mission Statement

Identity

The Samaritans Foundation was established in 1984 as the social welfare organization of the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle which covers the Hunter, the Manning and the Central Coast regions of New South Wales. We seek to express God's care for all people, particularly those who are vulnerable and marginalized in our community.

Vision

For communities where there is love, peace, justice, reconciliation and dignity for all people, where there is care for the vulnerable and their environment and where each individual has the opportunity to contribute and participate fully in community life.

Mission

We seek to provide unconditional support to people in their needs and to promote social and economic policies which alleviate human suffering.

Aims

We aim to:

- Provide effective and professional social welfare services within a community development framework, with particular regard to those marginalized through disability, injustice, intolerance and lack of opportunity
- Promote social caring activity in partnership with parishes through volunteer and self-help groups
- Promote with courage the development and implementation of social policy which is consistent with Christian teaching; evaluate and comment on social and economic change openly, positively and with integrity
- Actively pursue opportunities for growth that give expression to the mission of Samaritans.

Core Values

- Compassion
- Integrity
- Justice

Samaritans Five Star Family Day Care is committed to uphold the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** and the obligation of all those who work with children to protect children from harm, respect their dignity and privacy and safeguard and promote every child's well-being
www.unicef.org

Dear Applicant

Thank you for your inquiry about becoming an educator with Samaritans Five Star Family Day Care.

This booklet will answer the many questions you may have about the work of an educator and the Scheme to help you consider whether this is the work for you.

As an educator you will need to:

- ✓ Enjoy good health
- ✓ Be aware of safety
- ✓ Have an enthusiastic attitude
- ✓ Be open to advice and suggestions, and be prepared to have regular home visits from staff
- ✓ Be patient, reliable, responsible and concerned for the welfare of children, and have no history of neglect, abuse or violence.

Please read this booklet thoroughly before completing your Application for Registration and the Educator Applicant Questionnaire attached. If you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Good luck, and I look forward to receiving your application.

Janine Voigt

Certified Supervisor

When you have completed your Application and Questionnaire, please make an appointment to return them to the office, so that I can discuss any other concerns you have in person.

Office address:	"The Stables" Bishopgate St Singleton NSW 2330 (PO Box 263 Singleton NSW 2330)	4 Kearsley Street Aberdare NSW 2325 (PO Box 568 Cessnock NSW 2325)
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WHAT IS FAMILY DAY CARE?

Family Day Care is provided in an educator's own homes, but, **IT IS NOT a babysitting service.**

Family Day Care is a childcare service, licensed and regulated by Department of Human Services (Community Services) and funded by the Commonwealth Government. It provides care and education for children aged 0-12+ years in the homes of registered home-based childcare workers with the support, guidance and monitoring of qualified and experienced early childhood teaching staff.

Our service is sponsored by Samaritans Foundation and offers care to families of all religions, cultures, backgrounds and to children with additional needs on a full-time, part-time, occasional, before/after school or emergency basis. Families experiencing emergencies or with non-standard working hours are also able to access care on weekends, evenings and overnight (for work purposes) as needed.

OUR STAFF AND THEIR ROLES

Our staff are qualified and experienced in early childhood care and education, and are able to assist you with any problems in the provision of care. They are:

Certified Supervisor:	Janine Voigt
Support & Development Officer:	Cherie Pauling
IHC Supervisor/CDO:	Karen Lewis
Child Development Officers:	Sandy Hart Melanie Howlett
Administration:	Kylie Ledger Donreve Miles Madison Andrews (trainee)

In respect to educators our role is to provide you with:

- Advice and assistance to overcome difficulties in dealing with parents, caring for children and paperwork
- Training (see section on other services)
- Support and guidance complying with regulatory & legislative requirements
- Assistance in carrying out your duties in a businesslike and professional manner
- Resources, information packages and special programs to meet the needs of individual children where necessary and at special times of the year
- Access to play sessions and excursions
- Assistance with selection of suitable toys and equipment, as needed.

Our duties also include:

- Visiting your home to monitor children's progress and your care environment and training needs
- Carrying out formal observations of children's skills

OTHER SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE SCHEME

Play Session

Play session provides you with an opportunity to participate with the children in a wider range of activities. The children mix in larger groups to extend their social skills and you are able to develop professional support networks with other educators. Play sessions are not compulsory but are valuable to your work and are highly recommended.

Toy Library

Toy library provides a wide range of play equipment for all ages of children. There is no cost involved, however breakages due to improper use must be paid for.



Resource Book/Video/DVD Library

Our library provides a wide range of books, videos and DVDs covering many topics relevant to your work. There is no cost involved.

Training

Newly registered educators must complete Orientation & Induction Training of some face to face and some self-paced modules (covering communication, child development, behavior guidance, administration and OH&S) unless exemption is given by the nominated supervisor for previous study.

In-service training workshops are provided throughout the year. Workshop topics are chosen in consultation with educators. Some workshops will be compulsory, others optional (but highly recommended). All educators must attend at least 3 in-service workshops/professional development opportunities each calendar year to continue registration. Workshops are usually arranged on weeknights. Childcare is not available for in-service workshops.

Certificate III in Children's Services will be a minimum requirement by 2014.

COMMITMENT TO CARE PROVIDING

Before becoming an educator you will be required to:

- ✓ Undergo a criminal record check and Working With Children Check along with other adult household members
- ✓ Obtain a medical certificate from your doctor to say you are fit and healthy to work with children
- ✓ Have or obtain First Aid qualifications & complete a Risk Assessment on your home for suitability as a care environment
- ✓ Have referees who will be happy to provide written and/or verbal references for your application
- ✓ Undertake an orientation/training process

What will be expected of me as an educator?

During care hours you should consider your home to be your workplace and conduct yourself in a friendly, but businesslike manner. For example:

- ❖ Communicate with parents (your customers) in an honest and tactful manner
- ❖ Be reliable and available at agreed times and days
- ❖ Restrict your housework, sporting and leisure activities, appointments and the bulk of your shopping before/after care hours

As an educator you must also work at all times within the National Quality Standards. The NQS provides a learning framework and regulations that require you to:

- Provide an environment where children are safe and protected at all times
- Provide constant supervision of children
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of parents and children – discuss situations with staff only (not other educators, friends, or your family members)
- Work with parents in the care of their child by discussing children's daily needs, showing empathy and respect for parent's values, beliefs or the reasons they use care and offering support and being sympathetic to families' needs.
- Limit the number of children you care for at one time
- Spend time playing and talking with children, help and encourage them to become independent and provide for their physical needs (e.g. toilet training, regular nappy changing, quiet areas, nutritious food etc.)
- Plan for children's needs, taking into account their strengths, capabilities, cultural interests and experience.
- Observe children's learning, plan for their future needs and complete all necessary paperwork.
- Participate in professional development and in-service training and scheme meetings and play sessions when arranged

These are some of the key elements of the regulations – a full copy will be provided to you before you accept registration.

You will not be expected to:

- × Care for sick children
- × Wash nappies/clothing or makeup infant formulas/sterilize feeding equipment
- × Continue caring for a child if insurmountable difficulties occur (after attempts to resolve the problem have failed)

What about my other commitments?

You will be able to go on outings (e.g. visiting library, parks, playgroups, concerts, displays etc.) and attend to minor tasks such as paying bills or small amounts of shopping as long as parents have agreed and you can still adequately supervise the children. Other activities (e.g. visiting friends, helping at your child's school, playing sport, hobby groups etc.) must be left for after care hours.

You must carefully supervise children at all times when visited by friends or relatives (these people may not be as aware of safety as you will become). All visitors should sign a Visitor's Book.

Other considerations

You should consider the days, hours and length of time you are willing to commit to providing Family Day Care and your family's lifestyle (e.g. shift working partner)

Children quickly form bonds with their educator. It is distressing for both the child and parent if their educator frequently takes days off, has excessive amounts of holidays or decides to discontinue care after only a short amount of time.

Before committing to provide care you should consider carefully your availability, your other commitments and your family needs. Enclosed is a booklet to share with your family about Family Day Care and what it will mean to them.

Providing a Family Day Care service is an interesting and rewarding experience and is a valued childcare option for parents and children. You will become an important part of many young children's lives.

It will allow you to be involved in the workforce, earn an income in your own home, have access to a range of resources and assistance and continue to care for the needs of your own family. If you enjoy the company of children, this may be the career for you.

HOLIDAYS, SICKNESS & TIME OFF

You are at liberty to take holidays at any time throughout the year however you should provide us and your families with as much notice as possible (minimum two weeks).

We will, to the best of our ability, arrange alternate placement of children in your care for the period of absence in the case of sickness of you and your own children, or for your holidays.

Alternate care can also be arranged for you to take 'time off' to attend to urgent matters, with a relief educator when available

If you are frequently unavailable to provide care the Coordinator will assess with you whether your registration and bookings need to be renegotiated.

If you are unavailable to care for any reason you are unable to charge a fee for that time.

You should therefore plan your finances to avoid over-commitment of earnings.



PREGNANCY



Please advise the service office if you are pregnant, or are considering pregnancy.

Pregnancy is not a reason for rejecting your application, however it will have a bearing on the type of placements made until after your delivery to avoid excessive lifting and reduce the disruption to families using care.

You can continue to care as long as you feel well and are able to provide adequate care, however we recommend you take a minimum leave of 1 month prior to your due date and 6 weeks after the birth. Should you wish to continue/return within this time you will need to provide medical certificates stating your fitness at regular intervals.

You can remain registered while on leave for a period of 6 months. If longer leave is required you will need to reapply for Registration when ready to return.

TAXATION

Educators are deemed self-employed contractors, not employees of the service by the Taxation Office. You will be responsible for the payment of tax on earnings and for keeping records of your income/expenditure. Many tax deductions are available (e.g. a proportion of your electricity, rent/interest payments, care registration, repairs, cleaning costs etc.) and we recommend you use an accountant/tax agent to ensure you receive the maximum benefit. The National Family Day Care Council has developed a Tax Guide in conjunction with the Australian Taxation Office – ask at the office if you wish to view or purchase a copy of this guide. They also have an accounting service and tax tips on-line – visit www.familydaycare.com.au.

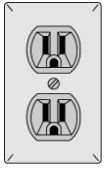
USING HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES & EQUIPMENT

Household appliances should be used with extreme caution at all time.

- Electrical appliances should be unplugged and placed in a cupboard whenever possible. Never leave electrical cords dangling.
- Electric jugs and kettles must be emptied after each use
- Saucepans, fry pans, woks etc. must be used with extreme caution only by an adult and filled with cold water immediately after use. Children should not be given access to your kitchen while these items or ovens are in use.
- Electric mixers and toasters are to be used by an adult only and should be put away immediately after use
- Vacuum cleaners (except dust busters), sewing machines/over lockers, irons/ironing presses etc. mowers and lawn trimmers and exercise equipment must be used out of care hours only.



RESIDUAL CURRENT DEVICES



Residual Current Devices (RCD's) are installed on house electrical circuit boards to prevent accidental electrocution. Under current legislation you will be required to provide paperwork from an electrician to show your home's residual current device (RCD) is in working order and covers all areas of care. This will be required prior to final registration and ongoing every two (2) years.

GLASS

Any glass in the area that will be used for care up to a height of 750mm is currently required to meet Australian Safety Standards and be either toughened safety glass or coated with a film to meet Australian Safety Standards, or otherwise barred so children cannot access the glazed area.

Information will need to be provided prior to final registration that the glass in your care environment meets the correct standards or has been made child safe, and the coordination unit can help you with information on how to do this.

PETS

All pets at your home must be kept in an area which is inaccessible to children. Keeping dogs on chains and runs is insufficient.

You must keep play areas free of food and water containers, faeces and holes dug by pets.

You may allow children contact with small pets whilst the pet is under your close physical control for short periods only and the parent has given written permission. If permission is granted, it should be identified as an activity on your program.

You must ensure your pet is free of skin complaints, vaccinated and wormed regularly and is well maintained.

If you are unsure how your pet will react with children, **do not allow contact.**



SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

We will need to conduct a risk assessment of your home and yard before registration and at frequent intervals while you are providing care.

You will be handed a copy of the Risk Assessment with this booklet. Please read the document carefully. If you are concerned about any items listed please discuss this with the Coordinator. We can often suggest a way problems can simply (and cheaply) be rectified.

You will be provided with verbal and written details of any items found requiring attention (after your home risk assessment has been conducted) and these will need to be completed before registration can take place.

You are also considered a workplace, so should meet the requirements of OH&S regulations.

SUPERVISION REQUIREMENTS

You are responsible for providing constant supervision of children. You should arrange your home so you can see, hear and be aware of what children are doing and always be outdoors with the children.

You must keep yard gate latches in place and locked during care hours, and exterior doors locked when indoors.

If a child is sleeping in another room you must leave the door ajar and physically check the child, completing a sleep chart regularly. You may never go outdoors with other children while a child (including a baby) is asleep. The use of a baby monitor **does not** replace your supervision requirements.

We recommend the use of cordless phone and answering machines if you have concerns about missing calls and/or are likely to receive many or lengthy calls.

Educators should not be using the internet or email during care hours, unless it is part of an educational experience with children in care and reflected in the programming.

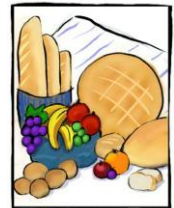
You may ask another adult to provide supervision only in emergencies **when you are physically unable to do so** and when staff have been contacted.

PROVIDING MEALS

Most families enrolled prefer to send meals and snacks along with their child, however you may occasionally be asked to provide meals for the child in care (particularly in nighttime care situations or if the parent is running late on a particular day or has not packed sufficient food).

If you provide meals on any occasion a fee is paid by the parent for each meal or snack provided. **All meals must be nutritious and varied** and take into account the family's beliefs. Educators must register with council if they are going to be providing meals on a regular basis and undertake training on Food Safety Handling.

Assistance is available from staff in planning meals if needed.



NUMBERS OF CHILDREN

Please note numbers INCLUDE any children of your own under 12 years

You may care for up to 7 children at one time on your premises, HOWEVER:

- ✓ Only 5 of these children may be under school age at any one time
- ✓ No more than 2 of these children may be under 2 years of age
- ✓ 1 of these children must be a temporary or occasional placement or as negotiated with the Coordinator

Your own children (and their friends under 12 years visiting without an adult) ARE counted regardless of whether an adult in **your household** is present. You may work with a lesser number of children if you wish.

HOW PAYMENT IS MADE

As a service funded by the Commonwealth Government we offer eligible families access to Child Care Benefit (CCB). All fees are charged on an hourly basis for each child in care and parents are responsible for payment of fees direct to the Educator each week in advance. All booked care is paid for (even if the child leaves early etc.).

Families who are eligible to receive CCB pay the difference between their entitlement for CCB and the full fee. The balance is paid to the educator by the scheme each fortnight.

For permanent placements:

- ✓ Absences are charged the usual fee
- ✓ Where care IS used on a public holiday a higher fee can be paid.

Educators set their own fees, and these fees need to comply with DFACS guidelines and Service Policies. These can be discussed with the Certified Supervisor.

HOW PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN IS MADE

STEP 1 – Parents call the office to enroll their child and discuss their requirements/expectations. We also inform them of service policies.

STEP 2 – The placement officer assesses current vacancies, the family's needs and your preferences for care to determine the most appropriate placement for the child.

STEP 3 – The service will contact you to ask whether you agree to the placement

STEP 4 – If you agree, your name will be given to the parent along with the names of other available educators.

STEP 5 – The parent will contact you directly to arrange a mutually convenient time to discuss the placement and will bring an Enrolment Acknowledgement signed by the office. This is your opportunity to present your home and yourself in a professional way.

STEP 6 – After visiting each educator the parent will make their selection. If chosen, the parent will contact you and arrange a first day and time - the office will contact you if the parent has chosen another educator.

You may reject a placement (before or after interviewing the parent) if you:

- Know the family in another capacity (e.g. friend, workmate of family member, neighbour etc.) and feel it may affect the relationship
- Feel that you do not have the skill/knowledge/experience to deal effectively with the child or parent placement
- Feel that it would be detrimental to other children already in care (or your own) to accept the placement
- Feel you are currently working to your capacity

- Are unable to fully satisfy the requirements for care (e.g. transport, non-standard hours of care etc.)
- Feel it would create difficulties with other family members

SERVICE POLICIES

Policies are developed in consultation with educators, parents and the community. A full copy of the Service Policies is available for inspection at the office; a copy is given to all registered educators. Once registered, a current policy document must be available at the childcare premises. Policies include items such as:

Smoking

You must at all times provide a tobacco smoke free environment for the children, including indoors, outdoors and on outings

Healthy Eating

Parents and educators must provide children with healthy food/drinks on a day to day basis whilst in care. This allows educators to teach their own children healthy eating and encourage lifelong healthy eating habits in children. Provision is made, however, for celebration of birthdays, cooking activities, special treats etc.



Play Equipment

Play equipment with a fall height of 1.5 metres or above must not be used by any child in care.

Any play equipment must comply with Kidsafe recommendations. More information is available from the service office or on the Kidsafe website www.kidsafe.org.au.

Full size or junior trampolines must not be used by children in care and must be stored in a safe manner. Mini trampolines or rebounders may be used.

Medication

All medication (including vitamins and natural remedies etc.) must be stored in an area inaccessible to children and secured by means of a childproof lock at all times. We recommend storage of medication requiring refrigeration in a lockable cashbox in the refrigerator.

Equal Opportunity & Confidentiality

Access to work and care is given to parents, educators and staff in accordance with Government regulations, irrespective of race, religion, ability, culture or economic circumstances.

All information gathered regarding children, families, educators or staff is **strictly confidential** and must be kept so as to prevent access by unauthorized persons. Information you may hold relating to children or their families should be discussed with the parents of the child, staff or those authorized by law to have access to such information **only**. **All information is subject to the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988, PPIP Act 1998, HRIP Act 2002, and the Children's Services Regulations 2004, and breaches of these Acts and Regulations can attract severe penalties.**

Guiding Children's Behaviour and Children's program

Actions which are intended to threaten, humiliate or frighten the child, smacking, force feeding, and isolation MUST NEVER be used in any form to deal with children's behaviour

Swearing, use of humorous or pet names for children, disparaging terms and shouting must not be used. You should never bite children back should biting occur. Should difficulties arise with children's behaviour staff will assist to develop and implement a plan of action for overcoming inappropriate actions.

Educators must focus on positive reinforcement of behaviour and independence, co-operation, problem solving and the development of a positive self-image must be encouraged at all times.

Should you wish to discipline your own children this must be done in a manner that does not frighten or intimidate children in care.

THE REGISTRATION PROCESS

You have taken the first step in becoming an educator by requesting this information package.

Should you decide to continue you should make an appointment to return your completed Application for Registration and medical certificate certifying your fitness to provide care for children. We will then require a criminal record check, Working With Children Check and home risk assessment. We will also forward a short request for information to people you nominate as referees to ask them about your character and suitability to provide care.

Your responses to the issues discussed at your interview, your answers to the Attitudinal Questions contained in your application and the results of checks conducted in your home, your criminal record and referees will be assessed.

You will be asked to obtain the consent of your landlord if you are living in rented premises OR provide us with a copy of your current Rates Notice if you own or are buying your home. You may also be asked to attend play sessions if these are available in your area so that we may assess your interactions with children.

When you have completed the above we will contact you and let you know whether we can offer you registration as a Family Day Care provider in your area. If we can offer registration you will be asked to pay a Fee of \$100 and you will be booked into a New Educator Training Program, a five day program designed to give you in-depth information on becoming an educator and the requirements of being an educator. You will be provided with copies of Government Regulations, National Quality Framework and Registration Resource Folder. You will need to have current First Aid Qualifications and to have taken out Public Liability Insurance before you accept children in care.



WHAT TO DO NEXT

If you have discussed the information contained in this booklet with your family and have decided you would like to become an educator, please:

- Complete the application form
- Obtain a medical certificate from your doctor
- Contact the people you name as referee to let them know you have provided us with their names
- Complete (with all adult members of your family) the Police Criminal Record Checks and Working With Children Checks and also signed Prohibited Persons Declaration
- Make an appointment to return all the forms above to the office and discuss your application further.

Again, caring for young children is a rewarding occupation. We look forward to receiving your application and/or answering any other questions you might have.

