



Samaritans

Compassion Integrity Justice

INFORMATION FOR FAMILY MEMBERS ABOUT FAMILY DAY CARE



This information is provided as a guideline for family and household members of a person who is considering becoming a Family Day Care Educator, and we suggest you read this handout in conjunction with the Educator Booklet.

Family Day Care is child care provided in an educator's home. The Family Day Care Educator is the primary educator for these children, however it is understandable that the educator's family will also have an influence on the children in care, and may even become an important part of their lives.

The emphasis in Family Day Care is *family*, and as such you will become an important role model for the children in care as much as the primary educator.

When considering starting a business such as Family Day Care, all household members should discuss how it will become a part of their environment. There will be aspects of Family Day Care you will need to become familiar with, and certain changes it may make in the household.



FAMILY DAY CARE AND YOUR FAMILY

The reason Family Day Care has been such a growth area in childcare is because of its very nature of being family focused. It is not just the educator but the whole family that makes the Family Day Care experience for the children in care.

Your role in the children's care is just as important as that of the educator. In Family Day Care we would be looking for a family who would:

- Treat everyone in Family Day Care with respect
- Help the educator provide a safe, nurturing and friendly environment
- Support the educator with ongoing professional development
- Assist with home maintenance to ensure OH&S, Legislative and service policy compliance
- Adhere to Regulations and service policies with such things as smoking & alcohol/drug free home whilst children are in care
- Maintain confidentiality at all times
- Ensure appropriate television, games and books are available to children in care
- Remember to sign in all visitors over 12 years of age
- Understand the need for privacy
- Ensure appropriate dress, language and behaviour around children in care
- Understand that being an educator is not just "babysitting" but a profession that requires time for completing paperwork, planning, programming and training.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A FAMILY DAY EDUCATOR?

A Family Day Educator is a self-employed child care provider working from their own home.

Being an educator will be the focus during care hours, so the main responsibilities will be with the children in their care. This means:

- Being with the children at all times
- Providing them with stimulating activities and playing with them
- Making sure their needs are being met (e.g. food, personal needs)
- Making sure they are safe, happy and secure

There are also a number of other things an educator will be required to do, such as:

- Completing relevant paperwork
- Maintaining financial bookwork
- Maintaining the care environment within regulations (e.g. safety, OH&S)
- Ensuring all records and information they hold are kept confidential and up to date

THE PARTNER OF A FAMILY DAY EDUCATOR

As the family home is going to become a business and care environment, there will be some changes made to accommodate the requirements of care, both for policy and legal reasons. This may alter some aspects of the running of the household, such as:

- Locking of doors and gates during care hours
- What items may or may not be kept in the refrigerator (e.g. alcohol)
- Locking away of medicines, sharps and other dangerous items
- Inability to operate certain equipment during care hours
- Making certain locations inaccessible to small children, e.g. garage, garden sheds, placing child gates in certain areas etc.

Other considerations may be:

- Increased noise during care hours – impact on shift working families
- Visitors – being aware the home is now also a business and care environment, e.g. signing into visitor's book, non-smoking environment, extended calls etc.
- Holidays – planning in advance

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD – YOUNG CHILDREN

For young children a care environment can be both an enriching and rewarding experience. Their own personal preschool!

Family Day Care can cause some disruption though, as new little people invade their private space, start using their toys and start calling on their mum or dad for shared attention.

You might wish to consider keeping special toys separate from care toys to avoid accidental breakage or disagreement over unwillingness to share “special” friends. Define care areas and keep children’s bedrooms off limits so this space remains theirs.

Teach children the difference between being mum or dad and Family Day Care work time so they come to recognize a different set of rules are in place. Some educators use a special piece of jewelry or item of clothing with the Family Day Care logo to define work time.

New rules about behaviour, routine times, access to television etc. might come in during care hours and children need help to understand that this might happen as well, and the service can provide you with ideas and resources to help with the transition

With time and help young children can become part of the care environment with little problem and enjoy having a special set of friends to come and play each day at their home. They will also enjoy the new ideas, activities and access to equipment that Family Day Care will provide.

OTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS – OLDER CHILDREN

Older children often thrive in the care environment and love to become a part of the day to day running of the program. For children in care, they can become a positive role model, someone to look up to.



For older children some of the things they may have to think about are:

- that there will be small children in the house, so they will need to help with keeping the care environment safe (e.g. not leaving small items around that could causing choking hazards, electrical items, hot drinks etc.)
- there will be changes to routines in the house, for example access to television or the types of shows they might be able to watch at certain times, computer access, games etc.
- or the types of equipment they can and can’t use in the backyard during care hours (e.g. trampolines, the pool)

Children over 16 years and still living in the household will be required to complete Working With Children Check Forms as part of the Registration process as they are considered Young Adults under the NSW Regulations. Your children’s visitors will also need to be aware of the Family Day Care rules when care is operating, and need to abide by these rules when visiting during care hours.

PETS

Pets are often an integral part of the family and can be an important part of the care program, however there are regulations and policies in place about access to family pets during care hours.

Pets need to be inaccessible to children during care hours unless permission has been given by the parent of the child in care, and the pet is under control of the educator at all times. The pet's bedding, food, toys and other items cannot be accessible to children, and care areas should be free of pet droppings, digging, holes etc. Pets should not travel in the same car that is transporting a child in care.

For both the safety of your pet and the children in care, it is important to manage the interaction of children in care and animals, as at times both can be a little unpredictable! However, there is no reason you cannot include your family pet as part of the care experience.



PROTECTIVE BEHAVIOURS

Child protection is an issue that needs to be addressed amongst all family members, not just the educator, and is a consideration for any visitor who has contact with children in care.

Child protection deals with any allegation, statement, assertion or accusation of abuse or neglect or that a child has been in danger of abuse or neglect. These may be made in written or verbal form by the child, someone on behalf of the child, or someone who has seen or is aware of the abuse. Any allegation must be investigated. An allegation of misconduct also falls into this category, and includes things such as possession of child pornography.

A partner will also get to know the families and children in care, so it is important to remember that strict confidentiality needs to be maintained with any information you may receive or learn during your association with families in care.

When playing or interacting with the children in care you will need to think about what behaviours you are modeling, e.g. appropriate dress, language, physical actions etc. Sometimes what may be appropriate for your family might not be for the care environment. Your partner or the staff will be able to help you with information about this.

Touching

When caring for a child there is physical contact. This may involve hugging, comforting, and reassuring. There are also times when physical needs require an educator to touch a child. Only a registered educator may help a child with this; it is not appropriate for any other household member or visitor to see to a child's physical needs.

Communication

It is recommended that educators and parents maintain regular communication about the day's programs and activities, including visitors to the household.

Visitors & Others

An educator should always remain in contact with the children in care. Guests, visitors and other family members should not be left alone with children or have personal physical contact with the child.

Guests and family members need to be aware of appropriate dress standards and behaviour when around children in care.

Educators should maintain a visitors register (e.g. exercise book) and ensure anyone visiting the household sign in and out for both safety and OH&S reasons. Long term visitors (e.g. family members coming to stay for 7 days or more) will be required to complete Working With Children Checks.

Smoking

Family Day Care is a “smoke free” environment and smoking is not permitted whilst children are in care. Smoking is not permitted in vehicles used to transport children in care.

If smoking is allowed after care hours, ashtrays and smoking implements need to be put away and the area cleaned of all ash, cigarettes and odour before children come into care. The environment should be well ventilated.

Drugs & Alcohol

The care environment must be drug and alcohol free at all times whilst children are in care.

Hygiene

All visitors, guests, members of the household and the educator must maintain a good level of hygiene, both personal and within the care environment.

Only the registered Family Day Care Educator can help the children in care with personal hygiene needs, and where possible, children should be encouraged to develop independence and self-help skills.



Discipline

It is inappropriate to use any form of physical or verbal punishment in disciplining children. This includes physically restraining a child, using harsh verbal, abusive or derogatory language, yelling or screaming at a child, depriving a child of their liberty, withdrawing food or other items from a child, or threatening the above.

Family members are not to use any form of behaviour management with children in care; this should be handled by the Family Day Care Educator **only**.

Safety

Educators have a Duty of Care to ensure children are in an environment that is safe, caring and nurturing and will protect them from harm. Procedures and practices should be in place to ensure there is minimal risk of injury or harm to a child in care.

All members, guests and visitors to the household are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that would keep children safe.

OH&S

It is an educator’s responsibility to maintain a safe working environment and ensure the workplace is conducted within the requirements of OH&S legislation.