



# FAMILY DAY CARE INFORMATION BOOKLET

FOR PARENTS & CARERS



Colac Otway Shire Family Day Care  
2-6 Rae Street Colac Vic 3250  
Ph 03 5232 9400  
[familydaycare@colacotway.vic.gov.au](mailto:familydaycare@colacotway.vic.gov.au)

# WHAT IS FAMILY DAY CARE?

Family Day Care (FDC) educators provide flexible care and developmental activities in their own homes for other people's children. Both not-for-profit and for-profit providers may operate FDC services.

FDC services (such as council) are responsible for the effective operation of all components of FDC, including recruiting, training and supporting educators, monitoring care provision, and providing advice, support and information for parents. The service also assists parents to select an appropriate FDC educator for their child.

FDC services can provide flexible care, including all-day care, part-time, casual, before and after school care, and care during school holidays. Some educators may offer overnight or weekend care for parents who are "on call" or work shifts. Educators may be self-employed and supported by an FDC service, while others are employed directly by the service.

FDC educators and services must meet their obligations under the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care and comply with the National Law and National Regulations, and any other applicable state and territory regulations, when providing care to children. An educator may provide care in their home for the maximum number of children, including their own children, in accordance with the National Law and National Regulations.

## PHILOSOPHY

- We believe in contributing to sustainable practices within our service and caring for the environment.
- We are inclusive of children with all abilities.
- We are a Child Safe organisation that listens and values children's voice, promoting participation, empowerment and engagement of children through our service and programs.
- We recognise that all children are unique and deserve to be respected.
- We believe in providing a nurturing, warm, welcoming and safe environment for children to thrive and learn.
- We respect the special relationship between children and their families and incorporate this in all our interactions with children.
- We acknowledge that our community has a diverse range of cultures, values and beliefs which is reflected in our interactions with families, children, educators and the community.
- We are proud of our service in the way that it is a nurturing family environment.
- We will respect the privacy and confidentiality of individuals and families.
- We acknowledge and support the personal strengths, professional experiences and diversity which our colleagues bring to their work and to us as a team.
- We will work together in sharing our goals and practices to achieve the best outcomes for every child in our care.

## CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

Colac Otway Shire Family Day Care is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This is the primary focus of our care and decision-making. Colac Otway Shire Family Day Care has zero tolerance to child abuse.

Colac Otway Shire Family Day Care is committed to providing a child safe environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every FDC Educator and Coordination Unit Staff member involved in our service has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role that they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make while participating in our service.

## PRIORITY OF ACCESS

One of the main reasons the Australian Government funds child care is to meet the child care needs of Australian families. However, the demand for child care sometimes exceeds supply in some locations. When this happens, it is important for services to allocate places to those families with the greatest need for child care support.

The Australian Government has Priority of Access Guidelines for allocating places in these circumstances. They set out the following three levels of priority, which child care services must follow when filling vacant places:

- Priority 1—a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect.
- Priority 2—a child of a single parent who satisfies, or parents who both satisfy, the work, training, study test under section 14 of the A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999.
- Priority 3—any other child.

Within these main categories, priority should also be given to the following children:

- Children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.
- Children in families which include a disabled person.
- Children in families which include an individual whose adjusted taxable income does not exceed the lower income threshold or who or whose partner are on income support.
- Children in families with a non-English speaking background.
- Children in socially isolated families.
- Children of single parents.

## HOURS OF OPERATION

### The Coordination Unit is opened:

Monday through to Friday  
8:30am - 5:00pm  
Closed on Public Holidays  
2-6 Rae Street Colac Vic 3250  
Ph 5232 9400

### FDC Educators:

Work flexible hours to meet the needs of parents and families within their community.  
Educators can offer a wide range of childcare options e.g. part time, full time, before/after school, school holidays care, overnight care, and weekend care.

# FAMILY DAY CARE FEES AND SUBSIDY

## FEES FOR THE SERVICE

Fees are paid to your Family Day Care Educator on behalf of the service at the end of each fortnight. You will receive payment advice from your service that outlines how much you owe for the use of child care. You will need to make arrangements with your Educator to pay your fees.

The services fee schedule consists of the following:

- Core standard hours are charged for any childcare that occurs between 8:00am - 6:00pm
- Non-Core Standard Hours are charged for any childcare that occurs between 6:00pm - 8:00am. Both are charged at a rate of per hour per child. Public Holidays and weekends are charged at the non-standard hourly rate.

### Others fees include:

- Travel to and from services such as kinder and school if required.
- Meals such as breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks if required.

Educators charge different hourly rates within Council's fee schedule depending on the qualifications, experience and type of care they can offer so please contact educators individually. Council's Family Day Care current fee schedule is attached to this booklet.

### Administration Fees

The service charges families an Administration Levy to cover costs of administration within the service. This is charged per hour of care per child for the use of the service. The current hourly rate is listed on the current fee schedule attached to this booklet.

### Non Payment of Fees

Child care will be cancelled if a parent does not make fortnightly payments. Please contact your FDC Educator if you are having difficulty with payments.

## CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

### What are the eligibility requirements?

To be eligible for the Child Care Subsidy (CCS), all of the following requirements must be met:

- The child must:
  - Be a 'Family Tax Benefit child' or 'regular care child.'
  - Be 13 or under and not attending secondary school.
  - Meet immunisation requirements.
- The person claiming the Child Care Subsidy, or their partner, must:
  - Meet residency requirements.
  - Meet the Child Care Subsidy activity test (or be eligible for an exemption)
  - Be liable to pay for care provided under a Complying Written Arrangement (their written agreement) with their child care provider.
- Child care must be provided by an approved provider in Australia and not be part of a compulsory education program, for example school.

There are exemptions for individuals who genuinely cannot meet some eligibility requirements.

### How much can a family receive?

The level of subsidy a family receives will depend on three factors:

- Income – a family's (both partners) combined income.
- Activity test – what activities the individual and their partner undertake or exemptions that might apply.
- Service type – the type of approved child care service used, for example Family Day Care.

### Activity test

The number of hours of subsidised child care to which a family will be entitled will depend on how much time parents spend undertaking recognised activities, for example work, training, volunteering or study.

### Service type

There is an hourly rate cap for each hour of child care provided which differs depending on the type of approved child care service used. Centrelink determines the Family Day Care hourly rate and reviews this annually.

### How will the Child Care Subsidy be paid?

Child Care Subsidy will be paid directly to child care providers to pass on to families as a fee reduction so that their fees are reduced at the time they use child care. Families will pay their provider the difference between their subsidy and the fees charged. Families will not be able to elect to receive their subsidy as a lump sum at the end of the financial year. Families will need to make a claim for Child Care Subsidy when (or before) each child starts attending care.

Visit the Department of Human Services Child Care Subsidy website [humanservices.gov.au/childcaresubsidy](http://humanservices.gov.au/childcaresubsidy)

### Absence from care

CCS is paid for up to 42 absence days for each child per financial year. Absence days are referred to as "Initial 42 days absence" in the family assistance law.

- Each child receives a new set of initial 42 absence days at the beginning of the financial year.
- These absence days can be taken for any reason (provided the day being reported as an absence is a day on which care would have otherwise been provided).
- These absence days cannot be reported before a child has begun care or after a child has left care (first and last day absences).

If your child is absent from care you will need to notify your FDC Educator as soon as possible. If your child is absent on their first day of care or their last day of day care, under CCS guidelines you will not be entitled to CCS for that day and you will be required to pay full fee for the care.

The number of absence days each of your children in care have taken are outlined on your payment advice each fortnight. Once all the first 42 absence days have been used CCS will also be payable for absences taken for these reasons:

- Illness (with a medical certificate).
- Non-immunisation (with written evidence).
- Rostered days off/rotating shift work (with written evidence).
- Temporary closure of a school or pupil-free days.
- Periods of local emergency.
- Shared care arrangements due to a court order, parenting plan or parenting order (with copy of documentation).
- Attendance at preschool.
- Exceptional circumstances.

Absence days taken for the above reasons, after the first 42 absence days have been used, are called "additional absence days". There is no limit on the number of these days for which CCS may be paid, as long as:

- They are taken for the reasons specified above.
- Supporting documentation (where required) is provided.
- They are days on which care would otherwise have been provided. If you are going on holidays you need to let your FDC Educator know as soon as possible these absences are covered under your 42 days with CCS.

# STARTING FAMILY DAY CARE

## USEFUL THINGS TO KNOW

Many children experience some anxiety about separating from their parents or caregivers when they start care. This is normal, and may take a little time to resolve depending upon the child's age and temperament.

When children first attend care they are often susceptible to illnesses. This is because their immune system has not yet developed to cope with exposure to the larger number of other children that they come into contact with in care.

Children may do or eat things that they would not normally at home, as they respond to the new environment and to modeling by other adults and children.

## WHAT TO BRING

Parents should bring the following items to Family Day Care in consultation with their Educator:

- Nappies & wipes (if your child is not toilet trained).
- Plastic bags for soiled clothes and nappies.
- Change of clothes.
- Warm jacket on cool days.
- Sun hat/beanie (sun hats need to be broad brim hats in accordance with our Sun Smart Policy).
- Lunch box. It's recommended that parents put in enough food for the day plus a little bit more as children's appetite changes while they are in care, also we advocate healthy eating in FDC.
- Drink bottle - water is preferred.
- Milk bottles, formula or breast milk (if child is being bottle feed).
- Bed linen - cot sheets, blankets or sleeping bag.
- Comfort toy if required.

## EXCURSIONS/ROUTINE OUTINGS

Educators at times take children on outings such as to the park, library, school and kindergarten. These outings can be valuable experiences for children's learning and development. Parents are required to complete a Routine/Non routine permission form if they wish their children to take part in these activities.

## TIMESHEETS/ATTENDANCE RECORDS

Parents are required to sign in and out every time their child either attends care or is booked into care. If your child is away from care and was scheduled to be there you will need to sign for that day of care.

Parents must use their legal signature or pin code when signing off on a timesheet. Timesheets can only be signed off on by a person who is 18 years or over.

If your child is absent from care you must arrange with your Educator to have that absence signed off on before the end of the fortnight.

Our FDC Educators have Electronic Timesheets and pin codes that are allocated to parents and guardians before they start care.

## SHARE INFORMATION WITH YOUR FDC EDUCATOR

Our service uses a variety of communication strategies to suit the needs of families using our service. It is important that families and Educators seek opportunities to discuss your child's experiences and interests. This can be done through:

- Informal conversations when children arrive and leave.
- Daily diaries/communication books.
- Telephone conversations.
- Communication boards/signs for information about things such as individual children's eating, sleeping, nappy changing toileting during the day.
- Information on activity displays describing the experiences that the children have been involved in.

## EDUCATION PROGRAM

FDC Educators develop an educational program for children in their care so the children can grow and learn at their own rates and abilities. The focus of these plans needs to cover the following themes:

- The child will have a strong sense of identity.
- The child will be connected with and contribute to his or her world.
- The child will have a strong sense of wellbeing.
- The child will be a confident and involved learner.
- The child will be an effective communicator.

# POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Families are able to see the service's policies and procedures at any time and are encouraged to do so. The folder with this information is located in each FDC Educator's care environment. Our policies are reviewed frequently and we give parents opportunities to provide input into these policies.

### Access to Information

Parents are entitled to request access to information pertaining to their child at any time. Information such as:

- About the content and operation of the educational program insofar as it relates to that child.
- Information about the child's participation in the program.
- Assessments of the child's developmental needs and interests.
- The period of time that the child has been educated and cared for by the service.

## CHILDREN'S IMMUNISATION STATUS

Under the 'No Jab, No Play' legislation, before enrolling your child in our Family Day Care Service, we will have to first obtain evidence from you that your child is:

- Fully immunised for their age OR
- On a vaccination catch-up program OR
- Unable to be fully immunised for medical reasons.

Homeopathic Immunisation or Conscientious Objection is not an exemption under the 'No Jab No Play' legislation. Immunisation Records can be obtained through the MyGov Website.

## MEDICAL CONDITIONS

All children that have a medical condition attending Family Day Care must provide a medical management plan outlining their condition and the medical treatment of that condition. This must be done at the point of enrollment and an update must be submitted on an annual basis.

Medical conditions may include asthma, anaphylaxis or diabetes. The medical management plan must be kept up to date at all times. Medical management plans must be completed in consultation with a medical professional.

## ILLNESSES & INFECTIOUS DISEASES

FDC Educators are not expected to care for children who are unwell as they may infect healthy children and your FDC Educator and their family. It is a requirement that if a child unwell then they are not to attend care.

It's the parent's responsibility to inform their Educator if their child has developed an infectious or communicable disease. Examples of this are head lice, influenza, COVID-19, gastro.

The child/ren are to be excluded from care until the infectious period has passed. Parents can obtain the exclusion period information from the Department of Health.

