



FAMILY DAY CARE INFORMATION BOOKLET

FOR POTENTIAL EDUCATORS



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

INTRODUCTION TO FAMILY DAY CARE

Family Day Care is a network of individuals (Educators) providing childcare and developmental activities in their own home, for other people's children.

It is an alternative option to centre-based care for families who require childcare.

FDC provides care for children aged mainly between 0 - 6 years but can provide care for school children up to the age of 12 years and beyond in special emergency situations. FDC is a flexible service providing care according to families' needs.

This includes:

- Full- time care.
- Casual or occasional care.
- Part- time care.
- Overnight or weekend care.
- Emergency care.
- Before and after school care.
- School holiday care.

Family Day Care is a quality co-ordinated childcare service funded by the Federal Government and sponsored by the Colac Otway Shire Council.

Preschool and primary school aged children are cared for in the home of carefully screened and registered Educators. The FDC service offers quality care for children in a safe, secure and caring environment.

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.

FAMILY DAY CARE BUSINESS

Your home-based business offers tax advantages and the ability to spend more time with your own children as well as working from home. You can choose your income level and work hours to suit the priorities of you and your clients.

Your Family Day Care service is part of the National Quality Standards process, so the parents using your service will know that their children are receiving quality care. As with any small business, there are number of costs that you will need to outlay before you get started. Start up costs include any home maintenance or changes required to meet safety standards; equipment and materials.

SKILLS & QUALITIES

Educators are required to work within Commonwealth Government regulations and scheme guidelines to:

- Provide quality home-based child care in a safe and healthy environment.
- Ensure that the physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs of the children in care are met.
- Be accountable for the safety and wellbeing of the children in care.
- Educators need to demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the key responsibility areas as contained in the Position Description, and be able to meet the requirements of the selection criteria.
- Incorporate and understand the National Quality Frameworks.

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.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS

The National Quality Standards set a national benchmark for the quality of education and care services. It will also give services and families a better understanding of a quality service. This will enable families to make informed decisions about the services providing education and care to their child.

The NQS is a key aspect of the National Quality Framework. It brings together the seven key quality areas that are important to outcomes for children.

The Seven Quality Areas to the NQS are:

- QA1. Educational program and practice.
- QA2. Children's health and safety.
- QA3. Physical environment.
- QA4. Staffing arrangements.
- QA5. Relationships with children.
- QA6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities.
- QA7. Leadership and service management.

The resource we use for NQS is the Guide to the National Quality Standard Assessment and Rating process by ACECQA.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Continuing education programs and in-service training are an integral part of the quality care provided and the quality of the service. Professional development assists educators and Co-ordination Unit staff to extend their knowledge base and skills in order to provide and maintain high quality home-based child care for young children.

Professional development is an essential component in the effective operation of a quality Family Day Care Service. During orientation training, Educators are provided with information and a range of topics are discussed. These include:

- A background to Family Day Care.
- Agency and services available.
- Placement of children with educators.
- Fees and administration.
- Field visits.
- Role of the Coordination Unit.
- Health, hygiene and safety.
- Child development.
- Behaviour guidance.
- Children's experiences.
- Mandatory reporting – child protection.
- Program planning.
- Early Years Learning Framework.
- Regulations.

This training will take place at the Family Day Care offices and will continue during regular home visits by the Resource Officers.

Educators are given resources upon their appointment to help them in their role as educators. Some of these include Early Years Learning Frameworks, Policy Manual and service delivery forms.

RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND REGISTRATION OF EDUCATORS

To attract new educators notices are placed in newspapers, community buildings, newsletters, and general liaison takes place with other services.

Educators are carefully selected and supported by the Co-ordination Unit. Educators come from a wide range of backgrounds and different cultures, and are assessed against the scheme's selection criteria.

The registration process can take some weeks to complete as per the following procedure:

- An application form is provided to the Co-ordination Unit.
- Suitable applicants interviewed by two staff.
- A staff member interviews the family in the Educator's home.
- Police checks are returned clear on application and all family members 18 years and over need to have one as well.
- Working With Children Checks must be carried on potential educators and family members 18 year and over living at home.
- Reference checks are conducted.
- A medical is carried out by a registered GP.
- Applicant spends time with an experienced educator.
- Applicant participates in orientation training.
- The FDC Unit complete a Home Safety Check on the potential FDC Educator's care environment.
- Educators are required to have current public liability insurance (available through Family Day Care Australia).
- Educators agree to obtain a First Aid Certificate, CPR, asthma and anaphylaxis qualifications.
- Educators must sign the Colac Otway Shire's Family Day Care Educators' Agreement document.
- Educators must have an understanding that they are approved by Council to provide a service, and therefore not employees of the Colac Otway Shire.
- Council educators are responsible for payment of tax on time, and keeping accurate records of income and expenditure.



HOW FAMILY DAY CARE OPERATES

FDC is organised and supported by operators/sponsors who are non-profit incorporated community-based organisations and local government. The operator/sponsor employs staff from a Co-ordination Unit, which oversees the day-to-day running of the scheme and ensures that all Educators are offering good quality childcare.

Family Day Care is governed by the Education and Care Services National Regulations, Education and Care Services National Law Act and National Quality Standards.

MORE SPECIFICALLY A CO-ORDINATION UNIT IS:

- Staffed by qualified/experienced people in the field of early childhood development.
- Answerable to the operator/sponsor for the day-to-day running of the scheme.
- The contact point for parents requiring child care.
- Responsible for arranging the placement of children according to the needs of the parents and educators.
- Responsible for the assessment and recruitment of suitable educators.
- Responsible for providing support and guidance to Educators.
- Responsible for monitoring educators to ensure the provision of quality care.
- Responsible for ensuring access to in-service training programs for educators.
- Responsible for maintaining and submitting documentation relating to Commonwealth subsidies e.g. operational profiles, fee schedules, child care benefit claims, financial reports etc.
- Responsible for publicising the scheme within their local area.
- Responsible for liaising with the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Social Services.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF EDUCATORS ARE TO:

- Provide quality care to children.
- Undergo assessment by the Co-ordination Unit of their suitability to meet the needs of children in their care.
- Ensure that provisions are made in their home for the children's physical and emotional wellbeing.
- Be involved with the Co-ordination Unit in continuous assessment and review of their capacity to provide quality care.
- Be receptive to ongoing support from the Co-ordination Unit and regularly take part in in-service training to improve their skills and knowledge about caring for children.
- Develop and maintain trusting relationships with families and children.
- Be aware of the operations of the FDC schemes, and the roles of individuals and operations involved.
- Participating in the National Quality Framework Process.
- Adhere to their responsibilities under the Regulations and Act.

SUPPORT SERVICES

FIELD VISITS

As a Family Day Care Educator you will be working as a professional person from your own home.

As you are dealing with other people's children, completing paperwork, and working on your own, you will require some monitoring and support to assist you to fulfil all the requirements of your role as an Educator and deliver a high quality program for children.

An important way in which this is done is through field visits. On a regular basis, your Field Officer will visit you while you are working. These visits may be scheduled so that you and the Field Officer can discuss any relevant issues.

The Field Officer will drop in at different times and days to observe care in progress, interact with the children, and monitor their development.

It is important that the Field Officer sees how your care operates so that he/she can help you evaluate your work, and offer you assistance in planning activities and managing children's behaviour.

If you are having difficulties of any sort, your Field Officer can help you to identify and discuss possible resolutions. Use them as a resource for information and a sounding board for ideas.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

In-service training is held at certain times during the year, on various topics related to childcare issues and personal development. Educators must have a Level 2 First Aid Certificate, CPR and asthma, anaphylaxis management training, can be provided through the Coordination Unit. These First Aid Courses are compulsory as they are a regulatory requirement.

Certificate 3 in Children's Services will also be arranged for anyone who has not obtained this qualification, under the Education and Care Services National Regulations all FDC Educators must enrol in Cert 3.

NEWSLETTERS/MEMOS

Newsletter and memos are distributed to educators and families which includes articles about childcare, activities and information regarding FDC, as well as the broader childcare industry.

These newsletters and memos are intended to keep everyone informed of relevant Family Day Care issues and items of interest. Contributions from educators, children and staff are most welcome.

TOY LIBRARY/EQUIPMENT

A toy library is available for all educators to use. Toys, books, tapes and art equipment are available. The loan period is normally 1 month, but can be extended if necessary.

Literature on many aspects of childcare are also available. Educators are expected to wash/wipe items before returning them, and to ensure all items are accounted for. Staff should be notified if any items are broken or unsafe.

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE APPLYING TO BE A FDC EDUCATOR

There are obvious benefits to being a FDC Educator such as the time and cost saved from not having to travel to and from work; and the opportunity to combine care for your own children and family members with a fulfilling and worthwhile job; flexible work hours that can fit around family responsibilities. On the other hand becoming an FDC Educator can be challenging for yourself and your family, when considering becoming an educator you need to take into account the effect this will have on your family.

CONSIDER:

- Will your family understand that you will be working from home?
- Will they accept that this is your job even though you are at home and that you won't have the same flexibility as before?
- Will they be positive role models for young children and enjoy the FDC experience?
- What changes will need to be made to the family home? Which spaces will need to be shared? Which ones will be out of bounds and how will this be managed?
- How can you ensure your family's privacy?
- What will stay the same and what will need to change? Think about things such as family mealtimes, teenagers who want to sleep in, a partner who is a shift worker, having friends around to play or sleep over, your own children's other activities, such as sports practice and music lessons.

HOUSEWORK

Caring for children will mean that some housework (apart from day to day cleaning for hygiene purposes) will have to wait until FDC hours finish. Children's activities will result in mess and clutter in the home, and there will be wear and tear on the furniture and fingermarks in all sorts of places.

When you become a FDC educator your house becomes a child care venue. This requires you to balance your family space with facilities for children's play and routines.

PARENTS

You will need to accept the diversity of the families we work with. Family Day Care is a business relationship as well as a friendly one, and you will need to work with families and share information to ensure the best of care for their children. Remember, your business and income will only be as good as the service you provide.

CO-ORDINATION UNIT STAFF

Staff provide support and guidance to both families and educators. Under regulations, staff will need to undergo visits to your home. Consider if this will suit your family before commencing.

FAMILY DAY CARE AND YOUR FAMILY

Family Day Care Can be a very positive fun experience for the whole family.

Family Day Care children are the sole responsibility of the Educator and must be under their supervision at all times.

PERSONAL POSSESSION/ HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE

The following items must not be accessible to children and locked away at all times.

- Cigarettes, ashtrays and alcohol.
- Inappropriate videos, books, pictures and magazines.
- Own children's special toys/possessions.
- Unsafe personal possessions and valuable items of family members

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

All members of the family and visitors must abide by the Scheme's Positive Behaviour Management Policy.

This includes:

- Always using appropriate language.
- No physical or verbal punishment.
- Use of positive guidance strategies.
- All children are to be treated equally.

This includes your own children's behaviour being managed positively.

ACTIVITIES THAT MAY NOT OCCUR WHILST CHILDREN ARE IN CARE

- No smoking at any time in the care environment.
- No consumption of alcohol whilst children are in care.
- No inappropriate computer games, videos or television in the presence of FDC children.
- No dangerous tasks to be undertaken in areas accessible to children such as ironing or power tools.
- Family pets must be kept in a separate area during Family Day Care hours unless they are part of a programmed educational activity.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Family members/residents will invariably view or hear information regarding families attending FDC.

This information is strictly confidential and cannot be discussed with anyone else.

The Educator may need to discuss certain incidents or concerns with family members to seek advice or support. This information cannot be discussed with any other persons, other than the Coordination Unit staff under any circumstances.

The Educator is the primary person responsible for communicating with families about their children and FDC issues. If an issue arises, family members/ residents should discuss this privately with the Educator, who will decide how to best deal with the situation.

EDUCATORS' FAMILY MEMBERS EDUCATION & CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS

The Family Day Care Scheme must make sure that a family member residing in the care environment has a criminal history record check issued not more than 6 months before an application is considered, then renewed every third year as per Colac Otway Shire FDC Policy.

FDC Educators and their family members must have a current Working With Children Check, working with children card or working with vulnerable people check issued on the basis of a criminal history record check or a current teacher registration.

Family Day Care Educators must inform the Coordination Unit if any new person over the age of 18 years who resides or intends to reside at the educator's family day care residence.

The FDC Educator must keep a record of all visitors to a Family Day Care residence while children are being educated as part of a Family Day Care service.

The FDC Educator must never leave a child with a visitor to the residence.



FURTHER INFORMATION

WEBSITES

If you would like to know more about Family Day Care you are encouraged to view the following websites:

FAMILY DAY CARE AUSTRALIA:

www.familydaycare.com.au/childcare_career

COLAC OTWAY SHIRE:

www.colacotway.vic.gov.au

FAMILY DAY CARE CO-ORDINATION UNIT

SHARYN RYAN

Family & Children Services Co-ordinator

Email: sharyn.ryan@colacotway.vic.gov.au

Phone: 5232 9425

Mobile: 0427 566 146

JO GARNER

Field Officer & Educational Leader

Email: jo.garner@colacotway.vic.gov.au

Phone: 5232 9428

Mobile: 0427 366 523

CARMEL WESTMORELAND

Family & Children Services Administration Officer

Email: carmel.westmoreland@colacotway.vic.gov.au

Phone: 5232 9488

FAMILY DAY CARE MAIN OFFICE

2-6 Rae Street

Colac Vic 3250

Phone: 5232 9400