



# **Educator, Student and Volunteer Handbook**

V2

Family Day Care Providers C & R Cowling-Scaife hopes that the following information is helpful in establishing and developing a family day care service. It is hoped that your experience of working with us is positive and rewarding. This handbook contains a wealth of information to assist you in this process and support and answer many of your questions you may have

**9/14/2015**

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## ABOUT US

The family day care scheme was established by twin Educators Coral and Ruby. Our business will operate under the trading name Family Day Care Providers C & R Cowling-Scaife. We created the family day care scheme to provide parents with a wonderful, safe secure service which allows children to obtain quality childcare in small groups in the home based environment.

Family Day Care Providers C & R Cowling-Scaife scheme maintains high quality care; we provide developmentally appropriate activities and experiences to enhance every area of development, all within a small group, home environment. Family Day Care Educators provide quality Home Based Childcare in accordance with the National Law, National Standards and National Quality Framework.

## WHAT IS FAMILY DAY CARE

Family day care is a unique, home-based childcare service providing quality care for children in the own home of experienced and registered family day care educators, supported by Family day Care Providers C & R Cowling-Scaife. Educators will or have been carefully selected and supervised, and operate under the National Law, National Standards and National Quality Framework for Family Day Care. Educators are registered with Family Day Care Providers C & R Cowling-Scaife to care for a maximum of 4 children under school age or 7 children in total including school age children (less than 12 years of age). Child placements with educators are organised and supported by the Family Day Care Co-ordination Unit. Children aged between the age of 6 weeks and 12 years are nurtured in a small group setting and through the educator's individualised programming are encouraged to further develop their skills and knowledge.

Becoming an educator with Family Day Care Providers C & R Cowling-Scaife means that whilst you're part of a national, leading, progressive team of professionals, you're also building your own business and experiencing a degree of autonomy, flexibility and support. While you will receive training, support and guidance in setting up and maintaining a successful business, you are ultimately responsible for its running and ongoing administration, – similar to any other small business operator. However, flexibility, convenience and independence are your greatest rewards in running your own business from home.

## PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE OFFERING FAMILY DAY CARE IN YOUR HOME

There are many reasons people decide to become a Family Day provider. Some find that caring for other children is a good way to provide playmates and companionship for their own children. Others simply enjoy the laughter and excitement that children bring to their homes. Some need to add to their income without having to work outside of the home, others may have started by offering to care for the child of a neighbour.

Before you decide to care for children in your home, you should consider some practical things very seriously. If you are aware of these factors before you begin to offer day care, the chances that you will enjoy your venture will be greater.

### **Maintaining Quality Care**

Family Day Care Educators are required to provide and maintain a quality childcare service in a safe, healthy, nurturing, friendly home environment. This includes adhering to,

- Current State Regulations,
- Occupational Health and Safety Legislation,
- Scheme policies & procedures

### **It also involves:**

- Participating in National Framework requirements

- Participating in ongoing professional development often outside the hours of their service operation (the hours an educator chooses to work) and
- Providing parents with ongoing information about their child's daily activities.

Educators must fulfil all the administrative and business requirements of a self-employed person, and ensure that records are retained in accordance with the time frames and requirements set out in the National Regulations.

Educators are also required to maintain a safe workplace at all times. This may include developing and completing a daily hazard management check before children come into care and tending to any safety issues around the home promptly.

The support and assistance of the educator's family members in meeting these requirements and providing a professional service is also required.

#### **Having other people's children in your home also means:**

- Providing an environment that recognises and operates in a safe & respectful manner.
- Considering the needs of your family and of the families and children in care.
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Recognising that it is more than 'just babysitting'. Educators need to plan a programme to meet the individual child's needs and interests.
- The Educator is solely responsible for the children at all times, and cannot delegate this responsibility to any other household members.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities of the Educator's Family**

As the words 'Family Day Care' indicate, caring for children in your home involves the whole family. If you have a partner, children, or other family members living in your house, you should, as a family, talk over your plans before starting, because members of the Educator's family play an important role in the children's experience.

While your family members play an important role in the provision of your service it is important to remember that you are the registered Educator. This means that you are responsible for making decisions about the provision of care, the day to day caring duties such as toileting, administering medication, accepting fees and physically receiving children into care and returning them back to their parents in the afternoon. Your family members may wish to become involved by participating in craft, reading stories, playing games etc For Family Day Care services to be successful, it is important that the family is supportive. Families and relatives should:

- Assist with the maintenance of the home, to ensure compliance with O.H. & S. Legislation and Scheme policy requirements.
- Adhere to all State Regulations and Scheme policies such as non-smoking at all times and alcohol/drug free home whilst children are in care.
- Interact in a positive manner with children and their families.
- Ensure that any family member, other than the Educator, is never left alone with a child.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.
- Ensure that only child appropriate TV programs, videos, games and books are accessible to FDC children.
- Recognise the need for privacy if the Educator is discussing issues with staff and/or parents.
- Ensure the use of non-offensive language and tone of voice at all times.
- Recognise that caring for children is not 'just playing' and that the Educator needs time to plan and program
- Treat staff, parents and children with respect.
- Assist the Educator to provide and maintain quality childcare in a safe, nurturing, and friendly environment.
- Support the Educator to attend ongoing professional development

The provision of FDC will impact on all family members. It is important to note that if family members / residents are not able to comply with the guidelines, it may have a negative impact on the Educator's registration.

## **YOURSELF**

Being a Family Day Educator is a responsible job. Before deciding to offer day care for children in your home, you should ask yourself a number of questions which will help you determine if family day care is really for you.

### **Ask yourself**

- Do I like and know enough about children?
- Can I stay with children for long periods of time?
- Can I give each child the affection, security and protection he or she needs?
- Do I understand and respect the children and their families?
- Do I have the physical strength and stamina that will be needed?
- Can I handle accidents and emergencies calmly and efficiently?
- Am I able to give children the continuity of care they need?
- How do I feel about parents leaving the care of their child to someone else?

## **Legal and business matters**

While family day care is not as complex as running a large business, you should be considering some legal matters carefully. These involve insurance, taxes, budgeting and licensing. All, when taken care of properly, are for your direct benefit, and serve to protect you from unnecessary expense and liability. All childcare in this state is subject to licensing with the State Government. The Office Early Childhood Education and Care employs advisory personnel who are able to advise and assist with all regulation matters.

### **Insurance**

One of the first things you may have to think about is insurance coverage of your home. Children are subject to a wide range of injuries, and while this type of insurance can be expensive, it may serve to protect you and the children.

Each Educator must take out Liability Insurance (including Public Liability and Professional Indemnity).

The National Family Day Care Council (Aust) Inc. (NFDCCA) has a comprehensive insurance plan designed specifically for the unique needs of Family Day Care.

## **FEES AND HOURS**

As an Educator you are considered self employed because you operate your own business. This means that you are able to supply your own fee schedule outlining charges and conditions. There is no guaranteed set income. It will vary depending on the number of children in care and the hours they are in care for.

### **HOW ARE YOU PAID**

Parents pay their portion of the fee to the scheme. Family Day Care Providers C&R Cowling-Scaife will pay the parent gap and CCB/CCR directly to the Educator. Timesheets and attendance records are processed fortnightly.

Please Note: *FAMILY DAY CARE CANNOT GUARANTEE A REGULAR RELIABLE INCOME.*

## **YOUR COSTS**

### **General costs**

Safety and well-being is an absolute priority for the children in our care. All homes must comply with health and safety standards, National Law, National Standards and National Quality Framework. Therefore there will be costs associated with ensuring a safe home and

environment and everyday running costs of a family day care service and you will also need first aid equipment and training.

### **Parent Levy**

Families registered with our scheme are required to pay a Parent levy of 0.80 cents for the total hours you are paid for (eg: per child, per hour they are in care) (GST free).

Families also pay a one off \$35 fee to enrol with our service including signing up to direct debit and then a \$0.88 per fortnightly debit of their invoiced fees.

### **REGISTRATION**

To complete registration with Family Day Care Providers C & R Cowling-Scaife each applicant must meet the following criteria:

- Applicants must be over 18 years
- The coordination unit will visit the applicants home to access the premises suitability, using a safety checklist
- Applicant must provide a letter from a medical practitioner stating they are of good health and free from any medical condition or dependency on medication or substance that could affect their ability to care for children
- A current suitability notice (blue card) for care provider and any household member over 18 years old must have
- The applicant must have a current first aid, CPR, Asthma and Anaphylaxis certificate.
- Provide a vehicle and child restraints safety inspection,
- Sign the Family Day Care agreement.
- Pay \$150 for a one off registration fee payment is to be made on the day of registration

Once all the above processes are completed, the care provider will be registered with Family Day Care Providers C&R Cowling-Scaife Scheme. A certificate of registration from the scheme is provided to the Educator. The certificate of registration is valid for one year and care providers are required to meet the schemes requirements stated above each year to reregister.

### **PAPERWORK**

A certain amount of paperwork is required in every business - family day care is no different. Family Day Care Providers C & R Cowling-Scaife scheme will help you with this side of your business, for example programming and observation requirements, timesheets and government subsidies.

### **TAX REQUIREMENTS**

Family Day Educators are regarded as being Self-Employed by the Australian Taxation Department. You will need an Australian Business Number (ABN), a business Tax File Number it is the responsibility of the educator to lodge a tax return, if a Taxable income is earned, and to keep all records for Taxation purposes. Your home is your principle place of business. This means that you run your business from home and an area of the home is set aside exclusively for these business activities. Further information is available on the Australian Government Australian Tax Office website: [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au) or "Getting it Right—a Tax Guide For educators" is available for purchase through the National Family Day Care Council.

### **THE LEGAL SIDE OF THINGS**

Your business is required to abide by relevant legislation, regulation, acts and national standards. More information on the Child Care Regulations and Act is available on the family Day Care Australia website [www.familydaycare.com.au](http://www.familydaycare.com.au) . Family Day Care National Standards are available on the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs website: [www.facs.gov.au](http://www.facs.gov.au) . Under the Regulations, an Educator can look after a maximum of seven (7) children, of whom a maximum of four (4) children can be under school age. This maximum number of children includes the educator's own children (if applicable).

## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Family Day Care Providers C & R Cowling-Scaife scheme offers many opportunities for training and professional development throughout your career in family day care. Family Day Care Providers C & R Cowling-Scaife scheme strives to continually improve its service to provide a family day care service that is one of the highest quality.

## JOB ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS AN EDUCATOR

To coordinate the learning activities of children in your care, including adequate supervision. Ensure the care and development of each child in the group in accordance with government regulations and monitor the achievements of education objectives.

**POSITION TITLE FAMILY DAY CARE:** Educator

**STATUS:** Registered with Family Day Care Providers C & R Cowling-Scaife as self employed.

Primary responsibilities:

- Abide by the National Law, National Standards and National Quality Framework and follow the Schemes policies and procedures.
- Ensure that developmentally appropriate program is planned and implemented for each child; ensuring children are treated with dignity and respect.
- Assess the needs of each child and monitor their progress.
- Report to parents/guardians on the progress of their child/ren in a confidential manner.
- Ensure that all information is dealt with confidentially.
- To ensure nutritional, clothing, sleeping and toileting requirements of each child is met including nappy changing.
- Create a friendly, secure, stimulating and interactive learning environment for children.
- Ensure health and safety standards are maintained at a high level at all times.
- Maintain suitable developmental records on each child as per regulations and accreditation.
- Report any concerns of suspected harm to coordinator.
- Maintain effective communication with parents/guardians and families of each child.
- Use applicable forms to report incidents, excursions, medication, etc.
- Ensure that children are always supervised as per the regulations and to ensure their safety at all times.
- Follow the Scheme's Code of Conduct.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

### I. IN RELATION TO CHILDREN, I WILL:

1. Acknowledge the uniqueness and potential of each child,
2. Recognise early childhood as a unique and valuable stage of life and accept that each phase within early childhood is important in its own right.
3. Honour the child's right to play, in acknowledgment of the major contribution of play to development.
4. Enhance each child's strengths, competence, and self esteem.
5. Ensure that my work with children is based on their interests and needs and let them know they have a contribution to make.
6. Recognise that young children are vulnerable and use my influence and power in their best interests.
7. Create and maintain safe healthy settings that enhance children's autonomy, initiative and self worth and respect their dignity.
8. Help children learn to interact effectively, and in doing so to learn to balance their own rights, needs, and feelings with those of others.
9. Base my work with children on the best theoretical and practical knowledge about early childhood as well as on particular knowledge of each child's development.
10. Respect the special relationship between children and their families and incorporate this perspective in all my interactions with children.



11. Work to ensure that young children are not discriminated against on the basis of gender, age, race, religion, language, ability, culture, or national origin.
12. Acknowledge the worth of the cultural and linguistic diversity that children bring to the environment.
13. Engage only in practices that are respectful of and provide security for children and in no way degrade, endanger, exploit, intimidate, or harm them psychologically or physically.
14. Ensure that my practices reflect consideration of the child's perspective.

**II. IN RELATION TO FAMILIES, I WILL:**

1. Encourage families to share their knowledge of their child with me and reciprocate by sharing my knowledge of children in general with parents so that there is mutual growth and understanding in ways that benefit the child.
2. Strive to develop positive relationships with families that are based on mutual trust and open communication.
3. Engage in shared decision making with families.
4. Acknowledge families' existing strengths and competence as a basis for supporting them in their task of nurturing their child.
5. Acknowledge the uniqueness of each family and the significance of its culture, culture, customs and beliefs.
6. Maintain confidentiality.
7. Respect the right of the family to privacy.
8. Consider situations from each family's perspective, especially if differences or tensions arise.
9. Assist each family to develop a sense of belonging to the services in which their child participates.
10. Acknowledge that each family is affected by the community context in which it operates.

**III. IN RELATION TO COLLEAGUES, I WILL:**

1. Support and assist colleges in their professional development.
2. Work with my colleges to maintain and improve the standard of service provided in my work place.
3. Promote policies and working conditions that are non-discriminatory and that foster competence, well-being and positive self esteem.
4. Acknowledge and support the use of the personal and professional strengths which my colleges bring to the work place.
5. Work to build an atmosphere of trust, respect and candour by:
6. Encouraging openness and tolerance between colleges
7. Accepting their right to hold different points of view
8. Using constructive methods of conflict resolution, and
9. Maintaining appropriate confidentiality
10. Acknowledge the worth of the culture and linguistic diversity which my colleagues bring to work place.
11. Encourage my colleagues to accept and adhere to this Code.

**IV. IN RELATION TO THE COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY, I WILL:**

1. Provide programs which are responsive to community needs.
2. Support the development and implementation of laws and policies that promote the well-being of children and families and that are responsive to community needs.
3. Be familiar with and abide by laws and policies that relate to my work.
4. Work to change laws and policies that interfere with the well-being of children.
5. Promote co-operation among all agencies and professions working in the best interests of young children and families.
6. Promote children's best interests through community and advocacy.

**V. IN RELATION TO MYSELF AS A PROFESSIONAL, I WILL:**

1. Update and improve my expertise, and practice in the early childhood field continually through formal and informal professional development.
2. Engage in critical self-reflection and seek input from colleges.

3. Communicate with and consider the views of my colleagues in the early childhood profession and other professions.
4. Support Research to strengthen and expand the knowledge base of early childhood, and, where possible, initiate, contribute to and facilitate such research.
5. Work within the limits of my professional role and avoid misrepresentation of my professional competence and qualifications.
6. Work to complement and support the child rearing function of the family.
7. Be an advocate for young children, early childhood services, and my profession.
8. Recognise the particular importance of formal qualifications in early childhood studies, along with personal characteristics and experience, for those who work in the early childhood profession.
9. Act in the community in ways that enhance the standing of the profession.

## **SERVICE PHILOSOPHY**

*“We aim to educate the whole child with a curriculum tailored to each child; children are honoured and valued for their capabilities and individuality. They are encouraged to reach their fullest potential by respecting individual differences in order to foster an enjoyment of learning and a sense of community responsibility in a safe, inspirational and nurturing environment.”*

### **Learning Environments**

Our environments are filled with *order* which is essential for a child to feel secure within their environment, to build on existing experiences, open spaces free from clutter, where every material is considered for its purpose, every corner is ever-evolving to encourage children to be drawn deeply into their interests.

The space encourages collaboration, communication, exploration and builds on the child’s sense of belonging and ownership. The space respects children are capable by providing them with authentic materials & tools that embeds and promotes a natural, sustainable environment.

### **Approach**

Every child brings with them deep curiosity and potential and this innate curiosity drives their interest to understand their world and their place within it. Children are allowed to develop freely, through social collaboration, working in groups, where each child is an equal participant, having their thoughts and questions valued they will feel connected to everything and are naturally caring to each other and the world around them. We will respond to children’s ideas and play and use intentional teaching to scaffold and extend each child’s learning. Children have the freedom to follow their interests, and activities will be designed to support their natural development therefore giving children power to educate themselves through their own investigations.

### **Partnerships**

We value and recognise the unique contribution of each family to the quality of care provided. The scheme welcomes family and community participation and encourages involvement within the service and scheme, as a whole. Working in collaboration, educators and coordination unit aim to extend involvement and develop genuine partnerships with families and the community in the education of children. Partnerships are about working together through partners contributing different skills, knowledge and perspective in complimentary ways and sharing in the decision making.

## **ABOUT THE COORDINATION UNIT**

The key role of the coordination unit is to support and resource the highest standard of Family Day Care for children. The coordination unit will work in partnership with educators to uphold organisational values, meet required legislation, National Standards and the formal Family Day Care Quality Assurance system.

### ***What can an Educator expect from the coordination unit?***

- We provide subsidised fees for families (CCB-child care benefit)

- Access to an equipment and resource library.
- Professional workshops and in-service training.
- Regular visits and contacts
- Play ideas and resources
- Playgroup sessions
- Monthly meetings to discuss issues regarding the providing of quality care

### **Referrals**

Families from the waiting list, according to the educator's availability (Referrals are made from the Waiting List by Family Day Care staff, in accordance with the Priority of Access (governed by Families and Community Services).)

### **HOME VISITS**

Coordinators provide support to Educators. Home visits enable Coordinators to develop professional working relationships with educators and their families. Home visits are unscheduled and scheduled and occur at different times and days to observe care in progress, educators interaction with the children and monitor children's development. Home visits also ensure that regular assistance and support is offered to the Educator in their day to day work. Clear, open and honest communication is encouraged between educators and Coordinators to ensure that the home visit is productive. All home visits are documented and signed by both educator and Coordinators.

Home visits comprise the following elements:

- Monitoring the quality of care and safety standards
- Supporting the educator
- Observation of children in care
- Discussion of service issues
- Maintenance of administrative records

### **PLAYGROUPS**

As part of our service to parents/guardians and children, playgroups are facilitated by Coordinators for educators and children in their care.

Educators are encouraged to attend playgroups to:

- Provide and encourage interaction for children in care,
- Provide and encourage interaction between educators for support and networking, and
- Enhance program planning.

### **EQUIPMENT**

The service provides equipment and resource library such as toys and equipment, cots, high chairs, strollers and car restraints for use by educators. Equipment provided complies with relevant Australian standards. Maintenance checks are conducted regularly throughout the year during home visits and when equipment is returned to the library. Educators are required to have a supply of toys, equipment and art supplies.

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The service provides an annual training calendar that covers a variety of topics relevant to professional development in Family Day Care. Further training is provided to the service through external training providers.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Parents/guardians and educators are encouraged to work together to ensure children are receiving the best possible care in Family Day Care. One of the most important aspects is open, honest and sensitive communication between both parties. Each has a responsibility to respect the other, which can be achieved by regular informal exchanges of information. It is both the educators and parent's/guardian's responsibility to keep each other "up to date"

with information relating to the children, eg, the children's health, whether the children have slept well or are unhappy for a particular reason. To assist in making the child care placement a positive experience, educators need to be aware of children's daily routines and any issues relating to their care. Parents/guardians also need to know of their children's day in Family Day Care. Caring for children is both satisfying and extremely demanding. A sharing of satisfaction in children's progress and a word of praise or appreciation is valued and can lighten the day.

#### **Some specifics about communicating with parents**

1. Make your self available to parents when possible. Quick exchanges at arrival and departure times can be profitable communication periods.
2. Make parents feel comfortable about exchanging information with you. Be open and available and be aware that the environment affects communication
3. Keep records so you can report specifics to parents. A great tool for this is the Daily Record or a Communication Book
4. Develop your listening skills.
5. Regard communication as a two way street.

#### **MANAGING GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS**

*A 'grievance' shall be defined as a wrong, real or imagined, considered as grounds for complaint which can potentially be resolved.*

*A 'complaint' shall be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction to an authority on or about an offender or offence.*

- To ensure the scheme's grievance/complaint procedures are accessible to all participants including, families, educators and staff.
- To acknowledge the right of all parties to confidentiality and respect.
- This Policy is based on the values held by the scheme. Complaints, grievances and feedback are seen as opportunities for the organisation and its employees to learn and to improve its services. The learning that has occurred through any use of this Policy and Procedure should be documented and shared to encourage an open approach to continuous improvement of services.
- To ensure all stakeholders of Family Day Care Providers C & R Cowling-Scaife have the right to raise grievances/complaints without fear of retribution or jeopardy to their position within the service.
- To enable parents to raise concerns about the conduct of the scheme that affects them.
- All grievances and complaints should be made to the coordination unit in writing and all approved requests will be responded to in a timely manner up to and including 14 working days.
- To enable educators to raise concerns about the scheme that affects them.
- To enable coordination unit staffs to monitor the quality of care provided and adequately raise concerns about that care.
- To enable staff to raise concerns regarding working conditions and staff relations.
- To enable all stakeholders the opportunity to respond to concerns raised and be provided with follow up procedures.
- To enable the aggrieved to have a support person or interpreter present during any consultations.

#### **Principles of managing grievances and complaints**

It is expected that coordination unit staff/management/educators/families will work together to create open, honest and caring relationships which form bonds of respect and trust. Where this occurs most grievances/complaints may be settled amicably between the parties involved. If however this does not occur the following steps should be followed.

All educators and families have free and open access to the grievance and complaints process.

Grievances and complaints are best resolved as close to the source as possible. The process is impartial, fair, and consultative and is undertaken in a cooperative and confidential manner. *(If anonymity is requested)*

Those involved are encouraged to reach a fair and mutually acceptable resolution. Any person involved in a grievance or complaint will not be disadvantaged or victimised as a consequence of raising such a matter.

Grievances and complaints should be raised in a private and quiet manner away from other adults, from all children and families.

In all instances the issue of concern is raised as early as possible and directly with the individual/s involved.

Such discussions about issues of concern should be documented.

Educators and coordination unit have a right to seek assistance from a support person, and have them as an observer in discussions, when responding to a complaint about them.

Discussing issues as they arise provides a positive opportunity to gather a range of views about the schemes practices and contributions to improving the service.

Any person bringing a complaint or grievance or feedback in relation to this Policy must be able to substantiate it.

### **General steps in resolving a grievance or complaint**

- Get a clear picture of what is each person's issue
- Clarify the issue to be resolved
- Seek possible solutions, from all parties
- Negotiate action/s to be taken
- Reach an agreement
- Undertake the action/s
- Review the issue/grievance has been resolved

### **Managing complaints or concerns from parents**

The parent should initially raise the matter with your educator. This gives your educator an opportunity to resolve the issue if possible.

If the issue is not resolved, contact the coordination unit. The coordinators can discuss various options available to you and assist you to choose an option during the discussion and offer assistance in resolving concerns of conflict situations.

All educators will be provided with clear written guidelines detailing the grievance. Educators and coordination unit use a positive approach and view complaints as an opportunity to understand families' attitudes and needs.

If unresolved, the client is required to provide a statement in writing specific to the grievance. The statement should go to the FDC office; the statement is to be written up to and including 14 working days or scheme will conclude that the complaint was dropped. A prompt response to the grievance will be in writing up to and including 14 working days. The FDC office –will advise the individual/s against whom the complaints are made equally as promptly, and will provide them with copies of the complaints. A meeting will be scheduled with both parties separately to discuss the issues raised. Both parties involved in the complaint process will be advised on expectations of any matters pertaining to their conduct for the duration of the investigation, in order to assist in the resolution of the matter in as speedy and respectful manner as possible.

The FDC office will undertake a thorough investigation as quickly and as respectfully as possible.

Witnesses may be approached both internally and externally as part of the investigation. The FDC office will report back to both parties on the outcome of the investigation. Records will be kept of the process, progress and outcome of the investigation and any actions taken. The FDC office will keep both parties advised on the progress of the investigation.

If the grievance is not resolved, the Educator or the Client may: Terminate care as per the Scheme's termination process written on parent agreement.

If the issue is not resolved, contact the licensee and request further discussion on the issue. The licensee may choose to mediate between yourself and the other party or refer the matter to a mediator.

Where the grievance is verbally brought to the attention of the Scheme without the Educators knowledge, the scheme will seek written permission from the client to contact the Educator and advise them of the issue. This will enable both parties to work out a possible solution to the issues raised.

If the matter is still unresolved the parent can take their concerns to the authorised relevant resource officer from The Department of Communities and or National Child Care Accreditation Council for further information.

### **Managing complaints or concerns from Educators**

The issue is initially raised with the coordination unit allowing them and the educator an opportunity to resolve the issue together, if possible.

If the issue is not resolved you can contact the licensee and request further discussion on the issue. The licensee may choose to mediate between yourself and the other party or refer it to a mediator.

If/when the educator obtains independent legal assistance the matter is directly referred to Family Day Care Providers C&R Cowling-Scaife legal advisers.

### **Educator Grievance with Client**

Discussion between the educator and the client concerned to resolve the concern.

Where the grievance is verbally brought to the attention of the Scheme without the client's knowledge, the scheme will seek written permission from the educator to contact the client and advise them of the issue. This will enable both parties to work out a possible solution to the issues raised.

If unresolved, the educator is required to provide a statement in writing specific to the grievance within and up to 14 working days. The statement should go to the FDC office. A prompt response to the grievance will be in writing within and up to 14 working days. The scheme will advise the individual/s against which the complaints are made equally as promptly, and will provide them with copies of the complaints. A meeting will be scheduled with both parties separately to discuss the issues raised. Both parties involved in the complaint process will be advised on expectations of any matters pertaining to their conduct for the duration of the investigation, in order to assist in the resolution of the matter in as speedy and respectful manner as possible.

The scheme will undertake a thorough investigation as quickly and as respectfully as possible.

Witnesses may be approached both internally and externally as part of the investigation.

The scheme will report back to both parties on the outcome of the investigation. Records will be kept of the process, progress and outcome of the investigation and any actions taken. The scheme will keep both parties advised on the progress of the investigation.

If the grievance is not resolved, the educator or the client may: Terminate care as per the scheme's termination process written on parent agreement.

### **Managing complaints or concerns from parents regarding Coordination unit staff and service**

The parent should initially raise the matter with the scheme. The scheme has opportunity to resolve the issue if possible.

The coordinators can discuss various options available to you and assist you to choose an option during the discussion and offer assistance in resolving concerns of conflict situations. All initial discussions will be recorded with clear written guidelines detailing the Grievance Coordination unit and service use a positive approach and view complaints as an opportunity to understand families' attitudes and needs.

The client is required to provide a statement in writing specific to the grievance. The statement should go to the FDC office. A prompt response to the grievance will be in writing within and including 14 working days.

The FDC office –will advise the individual/s against whom the complaints are made equally as promptly, and will provide them with copies of the complaints. A meeting will be scheduled with both parties separately to discuss the issues raised. Both parties involved in the complaint process will be advised on expectations of any matters pertaining to their conduct for the duration of the investigation, in order to assist in the resolution of the matter in as speedy and respectful manner as possible.

The FDC office will undertake a thorough investigation as quickly and as respectfully as possible.

Witnesses may be approached both internally and externally as part of the investigation. The FDC office will report back to both parties on the outcome of the investigation. Records will be kept of the process, progress and outcome of the investigation and any actions taken. The FDC office will keep both parties advised on the progress of the investigation. If the issue is not resolved, contact the licensee and request further discussion on the issue. The licensee may choose to mediate between yourself and the other party or refer the matter to a mediator.

Where the grievance is verbally brought to the attention of the Scheme without the complainant/s knowledge, the scheme will seek written permission from the client to contact the complainant/s and advise them of the issue. This will enable both parties to work out a possible solution to the issues raised.

If the matter is still unresolved the parent can take their concerns to the authorised relevant resource officer from The Department of Communities and or National Child Care Accreditation Council for further information.

### **Managing complaints or concerns from Staff**

Raise the matter with the other party. This gives both parties the opportunity to resolve the issue, if possible.

If the issue is not resolved raise the issue with the senior coordinator (if the grievance/complaint concerns the senior coordinator contact the licensee.)

If the issue remains unresolved the licensee should be contacted to mediate between the two parties.

If the matter cannot be resolved it may be referred to the Australian Industrial Commission, State Department of Communities or other relevant authority.

### **Managing complaints or concerns from all other people**

Coordination unit will:

Document a complaint raised by any other person at first point of contact.

Gather as much information as possible about the nature of the complaint.

Request identification of the complainant but assure them of the confidentiality of their report, (*if anonymity is requested*).

Wherever possible, request the complaint be also received in writing.

Undertake an initial investigation to ensure the complaint is not vexatious.

Proceed in accordance with process for managing non-compliance.

### **Monitor Feedback and Addressing Concerns**

Develop and implement strategies that will address parents' concerns.

Develop and implement strategies to ensure that initial and ongoing placement is successful.

Observe children as often as possible and in as many different situations as possible to monitor progress of care.

Develop and implement strategies to address co-ordinator and Educator concerns with regard to placement of child and family needs.

### **Settlement procedures**



### **Between the Scheme and the Educator**

The issues of concern are identified. The Co-ordinator should clarify which sections of the regulation (if any) are being breached and/or what the impact of the Educators care or facilities would have on the care of the children and/or the families of the children being cared for by the Educator.

The Co-ordinator should consult with the other co-ordinators and the licensee about the process to address the issues at this stage. The Educators right of confidentiality needs to be considered when selecting the licensee's representative so is nominated to manage the issue. The Educator should also have the opportunity to raise any issues regarding the conduct of the scheme with the licensee.

The Co-ordinator has an informal discussion with the Educator in which the Educator is given feedback about the areas in which their care meets or exceeds the minimum standards; the issues of concern are discussed and a plan of action, including time frames, are negotiated with the Educator. This should be documented with a copy of this documentation given to the Educator. The Licensee may need to consider any relevant correspondence.

If the issues are not resolved two co-ordinators or a co-ordinator and a representative of the licensee should conduct a formal meeting with the Educator to outline the areas of concern, outline the assistance that would be provided by the Scheme to address the issues, negotiate a plan of action, including time frames with the Educator and negotiate a time for a review of the plan of action.

The decision made at this meeting should be documented and the Educator issued with a copy of the documentation.

Consideration should also be given, in this and all subsequent steps, to any communication barriers for the Educator (are there any language, literacy or other barriers) and the need for a Educator to have access to an advocate. If the issues are not resolved the Co-ordinator and/or the Licensee should have another formal meeting with the Educator in which the plan of action is reviewed and the Educator is given clear written information about the potential outcomes of these issues not being addressed.

If the issues are not resolved the Licensee may suspend or not renew the Educators Certificate of Approval. If this occurs, the licensee must inform the Educator that they have the right to make oral and written submissions to have the decision reviewed by the Licensee with 14 days and consider any oral or written submissions of the Educator that may clarify any issues or change the decision to suspend or not renew the Certificate of Approval. As a result of this the Licensee may remove the suspension or re-issue the Certificate of Approval, remove the suspension or re-issue the Certificate of Approval and impose conditions on the Certificate of Approval, continue the suspension or non-renewal of the Certificate of Approval for a specified period to allow any outstanding issues to be addressed or cancel or not renew the Certificate of Approval.

If the Certificate of Approval has conditions imposed on it or the suspension is continued or the Certificate of Approval is cancelled or not renewed, the Licensee must within 30 days of receiving the Educators submission give written reasons for the decision.

### **Between an Educator/Parent and a Co-ordinator/Scheme**

The Educator/Parent has the right to approach the Co-ordinator/Scheme concerned. The Educator has a right to have the grievance addressed in a sympathetic and sensitive manner. The Educator/Parent has the right to contact the coordination unit responsible for grievances and the right to expect a safe course of action.

If the issue is not resolved the coordination unit may call a conference between the two parties concerned to attempt to find a resolution or an acceptable compromise by both parties.

If still insoluble, the coordination unit will refer the issue to the Licensee for its determination. Should this arise, then both parties have the right to represent their side to Licensee.

The Licensee will have the right to the final decision.



### **Between a Co-ordinator/Administration Officer**

The objective of this procedure is to ensure as fair as possible that grievances are resolved by negotiation and discussion between the parties.

In the first instance the employee shall attempt to resolve the grievance with the party/ies involved. If the grievance is still unresolved the matter shall be referred to the Licensee.

It is agreed that the above steps take place within 14 days.

Until the grievance is determined work shall continue normally in accordance with the custom and practice existing before the grievance arose, while discussions take place, (unless the nature of the grievance is such that a suspension from work is warranted). The Licensee will determine what constitutes a suspension.

In the event that the resolution of a grievance ends with the dismissal of an employee a reasonable reference will be advanced, dependent upon the circumstances.

In the event that dismissal is the only course of action considered by the Licensee and the employee will be given a chance to resign rather than be dismissed.

### **Termination of Care**

When a child terminates care, please advise the office and Educator via written notification. On the written notification of Permanent Termination – you must advise the date when the child/ren will cease care and the reason for termination. Form 108 Termination/ Agreed Termination can be used to provide termination (please contact the coordination unit for this form).

The educator's copy of the written notification should be filed with each parent's enrolment form, as it is the current contract.

2 weeks' notice is required to be given in writing or 2 weeks full fees in lieu of notice may apply. If a child is to cease care and gives an Educator the required notice and then does not attend their last session of care during that last week CCB is not payable on termination of care unless care is actually used.

If a child is absent for more than a week without contact by the family, care may be terminated and full fees for the period are due immediately.

Failure to pay your fees may also result in termination of care.

2 weeks notification given at any time during your educators leave will not incur CCB and the family will be required to pay full fees.

### **Scheme Cancellation of Care- (Children)**

CCB is not claimable for absences in regards to termination of care unless care is used until up to and including the last day.

We will give families 1 week notice for termination of care.

On the written notification of Permanent Termination – you must advise the date when the child/ren will cease care and the reason for termination. Form 108 Termination/ Agreed Termination must be used to provide termination (please contact the coordination unit for this form).

### **Carer Cancellation of Care- (Children)**

When ceasing care the Educator must ensure that:

Written notification is sent to the Coordination and client, including the last date care that is to be provided, date and reason of notice.

When giving verbal notification it must be followed up immediately by written notification to the client and coordination unit

Educator is not required to give families more than 1 week notice for termination of care.

On the written notification of Permanent Termination – you must advise the date when the child/ren will cease care and the reason for termination. Form 108 Termination/ Agreed Termination must be used to provide termination (please contact the coordination unit for this form).

The Educators copy of the written notification should be filed with each Parent's enrolment form, as it is the current contract.

## Agreed termination

When both parties agree that the care arrangement is not working agreed termination is allowed. Both parties must sign the agreed termination form and submit it to the coordination unit office.

## Termination of Educator scheme agreement

### Non Compliance with the Family day care Educator scheme agreement, standards, policies and procedures

When managing a complaint of non-compliance Family Day Care Providers C & R Cowling-Scaife scheme will act fairly, in good faith and without bias and give the care provider the opportunity to adequately state their case and assist in the identification of methods to rectify the breach if possible.

Non-compliance is not abiding by the Act, Regulations, National standards and frameworks, including the policies and practices which support the above or not actively participate in the and or collaborate with the coordination unit to achieve assessment of the scheme and strive for high standards. Any non-compliance is seen as a breach of the agreement

### Procedure for non-compliance

When managing an alleged breach the coordination unit will:

- Document the alleged breach identified or complaint reported
- Confirm the sections of the agreement, Family Day Care National Standards, Family Day Care Providers C & R Cowling-Scaife scheme policies and procedures, Act, Regulation, standards and frameworks the Educator may have breached and the implications this may have on the children and families in care.
- Raise the allegation/s promptly with the Educator and give them an opportunity to respond.
- Document the alleged breach identified or complaint reported (if applicable on the visit sheet and have coordination unit and Educator sign the document).
- Investigate the breach further if required. If the allegation is not substantiated the coordination unit will finalises the process and document the outcomes.

### Substantiated breaches

- Establish the level of risk or severity and develop an action plan to resolve the breach if possible.
- The Educator will receive a letter that outlines the severity and details of the breach, confirm the action required and the consequences of the failure to comply or resolve the breach.
- Action plan will include a time line to resolve the breach by and the consequences of the failure to comply or resolve the breach.
- If the breach is extreme or severe the action plan may include suspension of the Educator, relocating children to another Educator, termination of agreement, informing the department of families. (*suspension of Educator*- the Educator will be immediately suspended in the event of reported or investigated for allegations of or charged with offences against children, offences including violence, drugs or other substances, drink driving or sexual offences and if the breach is referred to the police). Note: no child care benefit will be paid while an Educator is suspended.
- The Educator must rectify the breach immediately. If the Educator is suspended the Educator must comply before being reinstated.
- If failure to comply with resolving the breach a letter of termination of agreement will be sent.

## Immediate termination of the agreement

The agreement can be terminated immediately if Family Day Care Providers C & R Cowling-Scaife is satisfied that the breach is confirmed. E.g.:

- The Educator will be immediately terminated in the event of being charged with offences against children, offences including violence, drugs or other substances, drink driving or sexual offences and if the breach is referred to the police.
- Any risk of harm to children.
- Under the influence of drugs or alcohol or other harmful substances.
- Fraud or theft by the Educator in relation to the delivery of the service.
- Any harassment or abuse of an authorised adult involved in the scheme.

## Educator or Scheme Termination procedure

- The Educator must provide the coordination unit with a minimum of two weeks' notice when terminating their agreement.
- The coordination unit must provide the educator with a minimum of two weeks' notice when terminating their agreement - unless immediate termination.
- Educators must return all intellectual property including but not limited to: documentation pertaining to the children and families in care, forms or service documentation, posters or anything with the services scheme logo, resources and equipment borrowed from or belonging to the scheme within one week of the termination of this agreement and anything that has the scheme logo on it.
- Attendance records must be completed correctly and submitted to the service for processing and all booked hours must be signed for including in the case of termination of care absent days before any outstanding monies are paid. Fees will only be paid to the educator once relevant contributions from the government department and parent/guardian have been made to the Company.

## PROCEDURE FOR ENROLLING NEW FAMILIES

When you are talking with parents looking for child care it is important to have an interview. Firstly the parent must decide whether you and your home are right for the child. Secondly you must decide whether this parent is someone you can work with and whether your home would be a good place and a suitable match. It is important to take the time to discuss any concerns on either side.

### 1. First contact: phone call

Some basic information should be discussed in the first phone call.

Information you will need from the parent includes:

- Age/s of child/ren
- Hours and days when care is needed
- Contact details
- Any special requirements: allergies, disabilities & language.

Information parents will need from you:

- A brief description of the kind of program you have to offer.
- A little about your self
- Your location, fees and hours of operation

First impressions have a strong influence. Be well organised and confident. It may help you to teach your family members to take phone messages in a confident pleasant business like manner. Care provider who answer their phone calls with promptness, respect and willingness and in a pleasant and professional manner are more likely to give a great first impression.

### 2. The interview/visit

The visit should be scheduled at a time of day when you will be able to take sometime to talk with parents and allow parents to see what you normally do with the children. The success of the educator starts at the time of the interview by the way you market yourself and your service. For some parents it will be the first time they have sought care for their child/ren. They may not know what they want or perhaps don't know how to ask you for

what they want. When parents meet you for the first time you can put them at ease with your manner. It's also a chance for you to see how the new child/ren fit into your group. All parents will want to see different things for example toys and equipment, Educator child interactions, style of programming, cleanliness and safety precautions and most important they will want to know about your values, discipline style and other personal information about yourself and your family. You can make them feel comfortable by showing them your educator profile book (which gives examples of photos, references, registration certificate and more). Show parents around your premises and explain where children will sleep and eat and the safety features of the house. Educators need to discover what parents want to. The best way to do this is to listen to parents. Ask them open ended questions like why, how, who and what so that the questions to those questions are more than just yes or no. This visit is a great time to discuss fees and payment procedures, paperwork for parents, policies and procedures regarding illness, fees, nutrition, etc. You need to make your expectations clear to parents before they enrol. The visit is also time for you to get to know and learn about the child/ren. Like eating, sleeping, home routine, and any other important information about the child/ren.

## **SETTING UP YOUR ENVIRONMENT**

Your home should be set up so children can play happily with each other and by themselves. There should be access for children to have self selection and storage for their belongings. To facilitate good play, toys and materials should be attractively arranged and presented.

- Basic equipment and materials you will need for family day care
- Child sized table and chairs
- Individual beds for children to sleep on and cots for younger children
- A nappy change area or table
- An outdoor area
- Art and craft materials
- Props and dress up for pretend play
- Music
- Storage containers for equipment
- Books
- And assorted toys and equipment

## **TIPS FOR EDUCATORS**

### ***Organising your time***

Care providers need to manage time effectively. Time management means setting goals for yourself. Consider these 4 rules for setting goals:

1. Choose goals that you can achieve
2. Choose realistic goals
3. Have only a few goals
4. Have a list of goals and prioritise it.

### ***Looking after yourself***

Caring for children can drain your reserves of energy and your patience. Children are constantly on the move. They chatter without stopping, ask questions and make mess. Frustration and extreme fatigue may occur when one is constantly interrupted and drained of physical and mental energy.

Some tips to distress

- Take a Break (even for 10 min) at the end of the day before throwing yourself into making meals and starting family time.
- Be satisfied with your job- have realistic expectations of the job and yourself
- Don't change parents' attitudes they have a right to their own beliefs
- Balancing the activity times during the day with quiet times
- Pace yourself so that you will have energy for the children in care and your own family

- Make the day fun for yourself and the children (plan fun outings for you and the kids)
- Take regular leave/time off

### ***Network support services***

There are a few services that care providers are able to tap into for support.

1. Family Day Care Australia: FDCA (formerly the National Family Day Care Council of Australia – NFDCCA) is family day care's national professional association. Our role is to support, enhance and resource family day care services, and lead the way for family day care in the Australian childcare industry. We work on behalf of the family day care community – Educators, coordination unit staff, families and operators/sponsors – to ensure the strength and continued growth of family day care in Australia  
PH 1800658699 or website [www.familydaycareaustralia.com.au](http://www.familydaycareaustralia.com.au)
2. Queensland care providers association: The Queensland Care Providers Association Inc is a non-profit organization, which has been set up by Family Day Care Providers to co-ordinate, assist, backup, support and liaise on their behalf as they carry out their business of providing quality child care in a home based environment  
[www.qcpa.org.au](http://www.qcpa.org.au)
3. Queensland Family Day Care Association: The Family Day Care Association of Queensland (FDCAQ) has been supporting the child care industry since 1977, playing a significant industry leadership and education role across Queensland, providing support to local services, service users and Educators by strengthening networks, providing resources, advice, representation and advocacy, delivering programs and sponsoring service