

CLARENCE FAMILY DAY CARE SCHEME

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Information For Prospective Family Day Care Educators

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The Scheme is administered and sponsored by Clarence City Council, is an Approved Service with the Tasmanian Education Department's Education and Care Unit and registered with the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. Clarence Family Day Care Scheme receives some funding from the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

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Clarence Family Day Care Information for prospective FDC educators

Welcome to Clarence Family Day Care Scheme.

This information has been prepared so that people interested in becoming registered educators can gain a greater understanding of what Family Day Care is and how it works. It attempts to cover the most common issues that may arise. Please ensure that you read it and if you have any questions or want to continue in the registration process, contact a member of the coordination unit – phone 6245 8666.

About Family Day Care:

Clarence Family Day Care was established in 1977 to provide quality home based child care. Family day care provides flexible small group care that offers children and their families individual attention and interactions in a supportive family environment. Children can build strong relationships with a familiar educator and group of children. Educators are able to have children from birth until age 13. Educators operate from their own homes and are self employed.

The coordination unit assesses, registers, monitors and supports educators, and offers support to families. The scheme is an Approved Service with the Tasmanian Education Department's Education and Care Unit.

Clarence Family Day Care Scheme is affiliated with the National Family Day Care Council and is committed to the principles of the National Quality Framework. The scheme sees this as a means of ensuring that children in the family day care environment have stimulating, positive interactions and experiences that foster all aspects of their development.

Our Philosophy: is available for you to read in your copy of the 'Clarence Family Day Care Policy Folder', on our website or from coordination unit staff.

Our Vision: To deliver quality home-based child care that provides flexible responses to meet the needs of individual children and their families.

Goals:

- To provide a welcoming, friendly, safe and nurturing environment
- To provide opportunities for children to grow and develop through a variety of interactions and experiences
- To enhance the provision of quality care through support and resources to educators and families
- To promote partnerships with parents, educators, staff and the wider community
- To strive to ensure continuous improvement in all aspects of family day care.

Services provided by the Scheme:

Resource library – Educators and parents are invited to access our resource library that includes books, videos and DVDs on a variety of topics relating to children's and families' wellbeing and development.

Toys and Equipment – Educators are able to borrow a range of toys and books for the children in care to use. There are also stretcher beds available for loan.

Play Sessions – educators are able to book in to play sessions which operate 4 times a week from our facilities in Alma Street. The scheme employs a play sessions leader who facilitates the sessions. These sessions give children the opportunity to socialise with other children and educators in a larger group setting.

In-service training – educators are encouraged to participate in a wide range of in-service programs to further develop their skills, knowledge and their provision of high quality care. There are some training sessions that are compulsory.

Mentoring – visits to experienced educators are organised for new educators prior to commencing.

Children’s special events – these occur at various times throughout the year and include such events as musical performances and children’s theatre.

Referrals – the scheme offers information and support to educators and parents when it is considered that a child may benefit from a referral to another agency.

The Role of the Coordination Unit:

- The coordination unit registers educators in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations. Educators are re-registered every 12 months. Coordination unit staff offer support to educators and visit them on a regular basis. Educators are provided with a written report following each visit.
- The coordination unit attends to administrative duties in accordance with national and state regulations
- In consultation with educators the coordination unit develops and implements policies, practices and procedures.
- The co-ordination unit organises and conducts professional development. Educators are also provided with information on training and in-service workshops undertaken by other service providers.
- Coordination unit staff members are available to discuss concerns and answer any questions an educator or a parent may have. Office hours are 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday.
- The coordination unit operates a waiting list for children who require care within the scheme. Parents complete an ‘application for care’ form and return it to the scheme’s office. The waiting list is dependent on educators’ spaces and the Commonwealth Priority of Access Guidelines. For further information please refer to the Scheme’s Policy – Waiting List & Placement of Children.

Who is a Family Day Care Educator?

- A family day care educator is registered by the scheme to care for small groups of children in her/his own home.
- In accordance with the National Law and Regulations, an educator may not care for any more than 7 children at any one time, including their own children under the age of 13. The number of children is also dependent on the number of appropriate car seats, sufficient space in the family home, and the training, skills and experience of the educator.
- An educator is self employed and nominates the hours and days that she wishes to work, although all educators in our scheme must be available at least 3 days a week unless otherwise negotiated with the Program Administrator. Educators set their own fees.
- An educator may have an approved educator assistant who assists in the provision of care. This will be for short periods of time and have the prior approval of the scheme’s Program Administrator. Educator assistants provide back-up care when necessary.
- By January 2014 all educators must hold or be working towards formal qualifications in child care. All educators must have the ability to provide a warm, healthy, stimulating and safe environment.

- An educator must be aware of the social, emotional, intellectual and physical needs of the children they have in care.
- An educator is concerned with the development and welfare of each child in they have in care.
- An educator may offer information and support to parents when requested.

The Educator's Family:

Before a person decides to become a family day care educator consideration needs to be given to the educator's own family's needs and interests. When the family home is used as a workplace the educator and her family have to share many aspects of their life with other children and their families. This may mean an invasion of family time and space and changes in the family's daily routines. There will be demands on the educator's time, energy and resources by others outside the family group. A person considering becoming an educator needs to think very carefully about the impact this will have on the changing needs of his/her own family.

The Registration Process:

Once you have decided to proceed with the registration process, the Program Administrator will meet with you, look at your home environment and discuss any changes that may need to be made. This initial visit gives you the opportunity to talk about running a small business, safety screenings, first aid, and any other issues that you need to consider prior to becoming a registered educator.

You will need to have lodged your safety screening form and all persons over 18 years who live at your home must have had a Criminal History Check within the 6 months prior to initial registration. Glass and fire certificates are also required before you continue. As you progress through the registration process the Program Administrator and/or other coordination unit staff will organise further visits and training sessions which will give you the opportunity to discuss the Education and Care National Law, National Regulations and National Quality Framework, the scheme's policy folder, and insurance, maintenance of records, attendance sheets, payment, programming for the children in your care, resources and routines. Initial registration is for 6 months. A registration fee is charged.

The First Few Months:

These first months can be exciting, challenging, rewarding and nerve wracking for you and your family – all at the same time! Sometimes it may seem overwhelming as you try to cope with scheme policies and procedures, scheme and parent expectations, and your own family life. Staff in the coordination unit are at the other end of the phone and are always willing and ready to support and help you. So please ring at any time.

A field worker will visit you regularly and this gives you the opportunity to discuss any issues relating to the provision of care in your home including:

- Your care environment
- Daily routines
- Programming
- Health, hygiene, safety and nutrition
- Managing your business
- Scheme meetings, professional training and development and resources
- Working with children
- Communicating with parents
- Legal issues
- Balancing family, friends and your commitments to, and the wellbeing of, the children in care

Developing a profile:

A profile is a useful tool for promoting yourself and your business to prospective parents. It is to include:

- Relevant personal details about you, your family, pets, interests and hobbies, and anything special you may like to include
- Your personal philosophy and your goals as an educator
- Daily routines
- Children's activities
- Photos of children in your care playing, creating, sharing or going out may be included with parent's permission
- References, 'thank you' notes
- Training, conferences you have attended
- All relevant registration documents

Income:

As a self-employed small business owner there is no guarantee of an income. Although staff try to fill vacancies promptly, there may be times when families leave your care, they can't be quickly replaced, and your income is dramatically reduced. This is a factor you will need to reflect on when considering becoming a family day care educator. Your business plan should include planning for fluctuations in your income. When determining your fees think about the annual income you wish to earn and balance this with the cost of providing your service.

The Placement Process:

A staff member from the coordination unit will contact you to talk to you about your availability to care for a particular family who is on the scheme waiting list. If you are available, the parent will be given your name and phone number and be asked to contact you to arrange a convenient time to meet you.

At this meeting you may like to discuss the following points:

- The sorts of activities you do with the children
- Where children sleep
- Your pets and where they are kept
- If you go out and where you go
- What type of car you have and the restraints you use
- The ages of the other children in care

Also provide the parents with copies of your policies and any other relevant information.

Other topics for discussion may include:

- The child's favourite things
- Any fears the child may have
- Extra clothing and accessories such as sunscreen that the parent will need to provide
- Eating habits and food preferences
- Sleep times – if applicable
- Toileting – if applicable
- Behaviour management
- Medication
- Who will be dropping off and collecting the child, other family members and emergency contacts
- Exact details about the days and times care are required.
- Payment options

The final decision on whether you enter into a contract to provide care for the family is yours. If you have any concerns or further questions please talk to the parent or to the coordination unit. If you decide not to go ahead with the placement, please let the coordination unit know as soon as possible.

Familiarisation visits are important for you, the child and the parents. If the child has not been left before, it may take several visits for him/her to feel comfortable about being left with someone else.

Sometimes a child and/or the parents find separation difficult. Delaying the parent's departure may make this more distressing for the child. The parent needs to say goodbye, wave at the door and leave. The parent is welcome to phone you at any time to see how the child is getting along. Parents often need reassurance and feedback about their children whilst in care, and educators need to be aware of the parent's perspective of their child's care. Open and effective communication between you and the parents helps ensure that the care you provide is most suited to the needs of the child and his/her family.

Concerns, complaints and grievances:

Clarence Family Day Care has a formal process for dealing with concerns, complaints and grievances. Any concerns you have (or the parents of children in your care have) will be dealt with promptly, fairly, sensitively and confidentially. If you have any issues please discuss them firstly with the person concerned and/or the Program Administrator. If this course of action is not satisfactory then the complaint can be referred to the Manager of Customer Services, Clarence City Council.

For further information please refer to Clarence Family Day Care Scheme Policy – Grievance Policy

Other information:

- **Administration levies** are charged to you and to the families using your care by the coordination unit. It is a standard rate and payable fortnightly. It is taken out of your CCB payment.
- **Child Care Benefit (CCB)** is paid by the Commonwealth Government to assist parents with the cost of care. Parents must contact the Family Assistance Office prior to the commencement of care to obtain a CRN (Customer Reference Number) for themselves and their child or children. Care cannot commence until Clarence Family Day Care Scheme has this information.
- **Child Care Rebate (CCR)** is also available for eligible families through the Family Assistance Office.
- **Delivery and collection of children** can only be by the parents or a person over the age of 18 nominated by them on the child's enrolment information. If at any time an unauthorised person is to collect the child, the parent must inform you in writing prior to that person collecting the child. The educator is entitled to ask the person for identification.
- **Signing the child in and out of care** noting the actual times of care is essential and is to be completed by the person delivering and collecting the child on the day the child is in care.
- **Absences** must also be signed for.
- **Booked hours** are to be adhered to unless the parents have negotiated otherwise with you. The educator is entitled to charge a late fee and this is not covered by Child Care Benefit.
- **Changing hours of care** needs to be negotiated with you. For permanent changes in the booked days and/or hours parents are required to give you notice as detailed on your policy and complete a new 'Contract of Care' form.

- **Change of enrolment details** such as change of address, phone numbers contact names, must be forwarded to you and to the office immediately.
- **Cancelling care** requires one or two week's notice as detailed on your fee policy. If the child is not in care for this time, full fee is charged as DEEWR does not pay Child Care Benefit in lieu of notice unless it is an approved absence (eg. illness with an accompanying medical certificate).
- **Payment for care** should be discussed at your first meeting. Educators are operating their own business and are entitled to be paid punctually. Keep the relationship friendly but professional, even with family and friends – you have delivered a service and are therefore entitled to be paid promptly.
- **A holding fee** is charged to reserve a child's place when the child is absent. This is usually the full fee.
- **Public holidays** are to be paid for if the child is normally in care and you are normally available to work on that day.
- **Allowable absences** occur when a child is not in care due to holidays, sickness without a medical certificate and casual absence days. Child Care Benefit is paid on 42 days per financial year including public holidays. Once this allowance has been utilised full fee applies.
- **Payment for care whilst the child is at kindergarten** is required when the educator takes the child to and/or collects the child from kindergarten and provides care for the remainder of the day.
- **Walking to and from school** is an option for some children. The parent is required to complete the appropriate form before the child begins to walk between your home and school. Your responsibility commences when the child arrives at your home.
- **Excursions** are undertaken by many educators. Educators must have an excursion policy and parents are required to sign excursion consent forms. Please discuss excursions with parents at the placement interview.
- **Sickness** – when a child is unwell parents are asked to consider very carefully whether it is reasonable for him/her to be going into care. Asking an educator to accept a sick child places all other children at risk of infection and can cause great inconvenience to other families and to the educator. You may wish to discuss this with parents at the time of placement
- **Infectious diseases** are common in children. When children spend time in child care and are exposed to larger numbers of children, infections can spread very quickly. The scheme has an Infectious Diseases Policy that is given to all parents on the back of their admission form, and has policies in place to reduce the risk of illness and cross contamination. Please be familiar with these policies and practises.
- **Food and clothing** are to be supplied by the parents.
- **Confidentiality** is expected of all people involved in the scheme.
- **Under the 'Child and Young Persons and their Families Act 1977'** educators and coordination unit staff are 'prescribed persons' and as such are mandated to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. It is compulsory for all educators to attend mandatory reporting training sessions.

Clarence Family Day Care hopes that your time with the scheme is rewarding and enjoyable. We welcome your feedback and suggestions on ways to improve our service to you.