CUMBERLAND
CITY COUNCIL



Family Day Care

How to become a Family Day Care Educator

Cumberland Council Family Day Care

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Office Hours: Monday to Friday, 8.00am – 4.30pm

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Useful Contacts

Child Protection Helpline: 132 111

Family Assistance Office: 136 150

Family Day Care Australia: 1800 621 218

Parent Line: 1300 1300 52





Family Day Care: An introduction

Thank you for showing interest in becoming a registered Educator with Cumberland Council Family Day Care. This information booklet introduces you to Family Day Care. We hope this booklet can help you decide if being an Educator is the right occupation for you.

Family Day Care is a community based quality education and child care service that offers professional and supervised care for children up to 13 years of age in the private homes of approved, registered Family Day Care Educators. The service is managed by the coordination unit to provide the highest standards of quality care for children in a secure and stimulating home environment.

Council's service is regulated and assessed by the Australian Children's Education Care Quality Authority and follows The National Quality Framework. This process recognises the service's strengths and where improvements can be made. The process involves Educators, staff, children, families and management covering all aspects of Family Day Care processes using the assessment tool for continuous improvement of the service.



Family Day Care Educators are people who:

- provide a safe and secure child care service in their own home environment
- are able to adequately care and supervise children and believe that all children in care are individual
- aim to provide play based age appropriate activities
- aim to support and assist the children and families to meet their individual needs.
- promote positive relationships with the child and his or her parents
- are recruited, trained and monitored by the Family Day Care Coordination Unit
- have access to training to develop their skills and knowledge of children and child care practices
- represent the cultural diversity that exists within the community
- have a minimum qualification of Certificate III in Early Childhood Education & Care and a current First Aid, Asthma & Anaphylaxis and CPR Certificate.

The aim of the service

The aim of the service is to provide a quality home based service which abides by the National Regulations and Law, the conditions of the Federal Government and the NSW Department of Education, and adheres to the guiding principles and policies of Cumberland City Council's Education and Care services.

Educators are required to implement a program of suitable experiences each week for all children in care based on the Early Years Learning Framework and My Time Our Place Framework. Daily experiences and opportunities that encourage learning, increase socialisation, promote physical growth and maintain emotional stability are aims of each Educator.

Cumberland Council Family Day Care supports the principles of an inclusive environment which ensures that all children and families are treated equally with no bias based on race, gender, religion, abilities or other factors. Suitably qualified and experienced people from a diverse range of backgrounds are encouraged to apply for positions and are assisted to become Educators for the service.



Family Day Care Educators

There are many reasons why people want to offer care in their homes. Some find that caring for other children is a good way for their own children to socialise with other children. Some need to increase their income without having to work outside the home, while others may have started by offering to care for the child of a neighbour or friend. Many others enter Family Day Care because they truly enjoy the laughter and excitement that children bring to their homes.

Whatever your reasons, if you respect, understand and enjoy children and know how to provide for their growth and development, you have the skills and attributes to be a successful Family Day Care Educator. Before you decide to offer family day care for children in your home, there are some practical things you should consider very seriously. If you are aware of these factors before you begin to offer family day care, the chances that you will enjoy your venture will be greater.

Important points

Caring for children can be hard work, physically and emotionally. Ask yourself:

- Am I passionate about the safety and protection of children?
- Do I have the skills to run a small business?
- Am I in good health?
- Do I have the physical strength and stamina that will be needed?
- Can I handle accidents and emergencies calmly and efficiently?
- Am I flexible enough to handle the surprises that come when children are around?
- How will my partner feel about me caring for other people's children as well as our own?
- If there are other relatives in the house such as grandparents or other household members, how will this affect them?
- Children tend to feel insecure and unloved if they are shifted around from home to home. They need the care of the same adults over a period of time. Would I be able to give the children the continuity of care they need? Can I continue to offer my service for a year or until the children and their families no longer need it?

Your own children may find it challenging to share their parent with other children.

Your own children will have to share their home and possessions.

Your older school children may find the rules hard to accept e.g. not being able to have friends over under 13 years due to the number of children in care.

You will be required to document children's development on a regular basis.

Anyone considering becoming an Educator should be able to offer more than one year's commitment to the service. Educators are required to have a minimum qualification of Certificate III in Children's Services.

Other household members

As the words "Family Day Care" indicate, caring for children in your home involves your entire family. Working in the home brings a unique set of considerations around how your family (spouse and children) might need to respond, support or adjust to this. 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.

Household members will also be required to hold and produce a valid WWCC clearance. Refer to Child Protection section in this booklet.



Support

If, after carefully considering these factors and talking them over with your family, you decide that you would really enjoy and benefit from the experience of taking care of children in your home, then you can begin to plan to become an Educator. You will need to think about many things now – possibly rearranging your house, licensing, budgeting, business and legal matters, all the things involved in running a small business.

The coordination unit is staffed by trained professionals who provide the link between Educators, parents and Cumberland City Council.

The coordination unit supports Educators by visiting them regularly in their homes. The service also provides:

- administration assistance
- marketing tools
- resourcing people to support you
- alternative and emergency care for children
- regular family newsletters and Educator memos
- guidance and support to assist Educators accommodate children with additional needs
- training opportunities
- playsessions
- library of books and resources available to borrow
- policies and procedures.

New Educators are linked to other Educators in their locality on a "buddy" system to develop networking skills amongst Educators.

Playsessions

Playsessions are held weekly at the family day care premises during the school terms. Planned experiences for both children and Educators are available.

The aim of playsession is not only to have fun and stimulate the children but to also provide social and supportive interaction for Educators.

At playsession the children can participate in a range of learning experiences supported and encouraged by the Educators and coordination unit staff. Playsession also gives Educators the opportunity to learn new ideas and activities to use in their own homes.

Educators who are licensed to drive (Educators must have held their "P" plates for a minimum of six months) are invited to attend playsession on a weekly basis. Non-driving Educators will be placed on a roster and either transported to playsession or backyard and park playsession will be offered.

There is no cost to attend playsession; however a fee applies to Educators who require to be transported to playsessions by the coordination unit.

Financial matters

As a self-employed person registered with Family Day Care, all Educators are responsible for paying their own taxes, and keeping adequate records relating to their business. If you rely on a weekly income, we advise against considering family day care as a career option as there is no guarantee of income.

Educators set their own fees, manage the collection of fees and must always issue a receipt for any money received.

Some of the costs of caring for children in your home are deductible from your income tax. Family Day Care Australia has produced a taxation guide which has details of a package specifically designed for its members, covering such items as:

- What deductions are Educators entitled to claim?
- Formulas for differentiating between Family Day Care business and family use.
- Record keeping – how do Educators prove their claims?
- Tax rebates, Medicare levies, superannuation, paying taxes etc.



Home environment

Your home will be your workplace which offers a "family" environment that is safe and hygienic for children. Some wear and tear on your house is normal when young children are around. Think about the cost of repainting and other upkeep to ensure your home is presentable at all times.

Potential Educators are required to pass an interview and have a Risk Assessment Home Safety Audit conducted in their home. This is a thorough inspection that covers both the indoor and outdoor environment. Children cannot be placed in care until all safety requirements have been met. As a Family Day Care Educator you will be required to make modifications to your home.

Potential Educators who live in rented premises need written authority from the owner or real estate agent, to care for children on the premises. A standard form is available from the coordination unit.

Potential Educators who live within a Strata Title Body need written authority from the Strata Body prior to caring for children.

As a service provider of Cumberland City Council, you must provide a tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol free environment for the children in your care. This means that you will not smoke or be affected by alcohol or drugs, nor allow any others to smoke or be affected by alcohol or drugs in the presence of children in your care. This rule also applies when travelling in your car.

If taking regular prescription medication, you must ensure that this does not impair your capacity to provide education and care to children and you will be required to obtain yearly medical certificates.

Child Protection

Cumberland City Council's Child Protection framework supports children and young people having safe and happy experiences in our community, accessing our facilities and in the care of our services.

The Policy informs staff, Educators, FDC Educators, volunteers, students and contractors of their responsibilities when working with children. This ensures Council implements best practice approaches to child protection, including implementing processes for the prompt and confidential response to all allegations involving a child or young person. Council is committed to the ongoing education of children, young people and families, staff, volunteers, contractors and key stakeholders about their rights, responsibilities and mandates around child protection.

Council's child protection documents including the Child Protection Policy can be accessed at cumberland.nsw.gov.au/child-protection.

Registration

Educators are required to sign an agreement to abide by the regulations and any additional guiding principles, policies and procedures adopted by Council and/or the service. Failure to meet Council's guiding principles, policies and/or procedures could lead to deregistration.

From January 2014, registered Educators may care for a maximum of 7 children aged under 13 years of age, including their own, but never more than 4 children who are preschool age or under. The number of children that an Educator can provide care for may be less than this, dependant on the home safety audit.

It is expected that Educators complete a level of training as approved by the coordination unit. All Educators and adult household members over the age of 18 years are required to always hold and provide a valid Working with Children Check (WWCC) before being accepted as an Educator and for ongoing work.

As this is a child-related role, those who do not hold a valid WWCC clearance cannot be engaged or continue to work and will be deregistered.

Insurance

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require all Educators to have Public Liability Insurance.

What equipment and resources will I need?

As you will be caring for children of various ages, you will need equipment for all stages of development. Most Educators start out with equipment from a required list before commencing care. Resources then build up over time.

Educators are required to utilise the Cumberland City Council Toy Library where toys, equipment and a wide range of books, CDs and tapes are available for borrowing to extend your resources.

As you purchase toys and equipment, it is important to remember that children need a variety of activities throughout the day. Be sure to have at least:

- Art and craft material
- Construction toys
- Infant toys
- Books, puzzles and threading material
- Accessible shelving for children
- Child sized table and chairs
- Dress-ups – bags, shoes hats etc. Dress up clothes of any type and props from the home children can use
- Items to build with – this could be as simple as empty boxes
- Things to make music with or listen to music on
- Space to crawl, walk, run, roll and throw a ball
- A place to play with water or sand without worrying about a mess being made
- First aid kit
- Fire safety equipment

You do not need to spend a lot of money on toys and equipment if you set up your home creatively.





How do I join Family Day Care?

If you are confident that you wish to continue with your application, please complete the online Educator's Application form at applynow.net.au/jobs/CC754-family-day-care-educator-application-form.

Be aware that the service does not always need Educators in all areas. This means your wait on the waiting list might be longer than someone who lives in an area in which there is a high demand for care. When the need in your area arises, the coordination unit will contact you by telephone or email to arrange an interview and home safety check in your home.

Please note that an application to be an Educator with Cumberland Council Family Day Care does not necessarily result in registration. The selection criteria must be met and there is a limited number of vacancies for Educators in each suburb.

Unsuccessful applicants

A matrix rating system is used to determine the suitability of prospective Educators. An application may be rejected for reasons that include, but will not be limited to the following:

- Invalid WWCC clearance of applicant or other household member/s
- Suitability of the applicant or other household member/s
- References unavailable or unfavourable
- Unsatisfactory Risk Assessment of the applicant's home
- Unsatisfactory medical report
- Inability to demonstrate the capacity to supervise and care for the children adequately
- Refusal by prospective Educator to comply with an obligation within service and legislative requirements.

A prospective Educator that disagrees with the decision of the coordination unit may appeal this decision to the Manager Children, Youth & Families in writing, stating the reasons for appeal.



What will the service expect of me?

- To conduct the service according to the National Regulations and Law, guidelines and guiding principles, policies and procedures of Cumberland City Council Education and Care services.
- To be reliable, flexible and co-operative.
- To attend and participate in playsessions regularly.
- To keep the coordination unit staff informed of all changes in your care.
- To conduct your service as a small business.
- To respect children's and parent's confidentiality and not to discuss them with other Educators or parents.
- To regularly attend Educator training and inservices.
- To allow the coordination unit staff into your home while children are in care.
- Sign off and adhere to Education and Care Code of Conduct Handbook.

Educators can determine their work hours but core availability between 7am – 6pm is preferred. The availability of children to suit your hours is dependent on the community needs. The more flexible you are as an Educator, the quicker your vacancies will be filled.

Emergency and weekend care is a need in our community and being able to offer care over the weekend or evening for shift workers is favourable.



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