

Educator newsletter-January 2017

Happy New Year!!

We hope everyone enjoyed their Christmas/New Year festivities and their break (even if it was only the Public Holidays!) Here's hoping 2017 is a positive year for everyone, both personally and professionally.

WELCOMES AND FAREWELLS

This year we are pleased to welcome Nea Stanley as a registered FDC Educator in Armidale. Some Educators may have already met Nea at Playsession. A warm welcome to Nea on behalf of everyone!

Unfortunately, we will be saying goodbye to Zanna soon. We appreciate the wonderful service she has offered over the past year and wish her all the best in her career at Boongaiai.

GETTING PREPARED

As mentioned at the last Educator/ Staff Forum, we are anticipating being Assessed again this year.

Naturally, we would like to maintain our current rating of Meeting the National Quality Standard (with Exceeding the NQS in Quality Areas 6 and 7) or to improve upon it so we thought we had best start the preparations now.

For those Educators who weren't with us last time in 2012 here is an outline of how Assessment happens:

- AFDC will receive a letter from the NSW Regulatory Authority, the Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate (Department of Education) advising us that a visit will be happening in approximately 6 weeks' time.
- We will be asked to submit a copy of our Quality Improvement Plan and any other documents they require.
- The assessment visit will include the Coordination Unit and a sample of Educator's homes/venues chosen at random by ECECD. We only receive a few days' notice of this selection (therefore everyone needs to be prepared).

- During the visit the Assessor will hold discussions with Coordination Unit Staff and Educators. The Assessor will also sight documentation and observe practice.
- During the visit the Assessor may make general comments or provide the opportunity to make minor adjustments but they will not provide a rating.
- Three to five weeks after the visit a draft report will be provided and the service will have the opportunity challenge any inaccuracies (if there are any) and provide the necessary evidence to support that challenge.
- The final report and rating will be provided approximately 8 weeks after the Assessment and Rating visit.

P.S. If you are selected to be visited during Assessment Liz or I will be there to support you!

Of course, we haven't received that letter yet so in the meantime, please:

- Re-read the What to See, Say, Show resource from NSWFDCA (if you have a copy) or the See, Say, Show summary that we distributed at the last Forum (*If you have misplaced your copy, please let us know and we will send it/print it again for you*).
- Look at each of the Quality Areas separately and reflect on your service. What are your strengths in that area? Could you improve in that area? If improvements are necessary, what goals could you set yourself?
- Have a look at the NQS Assessment and Rating Instrument (attached). You can see comparisons between the different ratings and what it takes to achieve Meeting or Exceeding. This is the rating instrument that Assessors use.
- Have a look at the Guide to the National Quality Standard
<http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/NQF-Resource-03-Guide-to-NQS.pdf>

Recommended reading: The questions for different service types related to each Standard.

- Talk with us about preparing for Assessment on home visits. If you have a question we can't answer we will talk to ECECD.
- Re-read service policies and procedures. This year we will be focusing on several:

January: Excursions and Work Health and Safety; **February:** Emergency Evacuation * **March:** Educational Programme and Practice **April:** Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness **May:** Social Media, **June:** Safe Sleeping **July:** Infection Control **August:** Management of Records **September:** Nutrition, Food, Beverage & Dietary Requirements **October:** Promoting Children's Wellbeing and Resilience

As we will be starting the year with a focus on Excursions could you please carry out your annual risk assessments for routine excursion venues in January and supply them to the Office. Thanks.

We are aiming to provide a training session that will help us all prepare for Assessment and of course we are always reflecting on how the Coordination Unit is functioning.

***Please note: An Emergency evacuation diagram and description need to be displayed at EACH exit from your home or venue.**

OUR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

These are our current Service goals:

Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice

To ensure service playsessions remain viable (with opportunities to network and socialise, establish a sense of belonging and provide a safe venue for outdoor play)

To ensure reflection on Educational program and practice is encouraged for both Educators and Staff

To establish an Educational Leader's focus group to assist Educators to build on their observation, planning and documentation skills

To communicate with families about the importance of learning in the early years

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

To ensure Educators, Educator's Assistants, Educator Family Members and Staff are all aware of their duty to protect children (Child Protection Training or Awareness and Social Media Policy)

To look at the option to introduce managed risk in children's play

To establish and maintain sound infection control practice

Quality Area 3: Physical Environment

To strongly focus on the importance and influence of the physical environment during Educator induction

To build on sustainable practices

Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements

To attract and recruit motivated Educators with appropriate qualifications or the commitment to acquire them.

To reflect on our approach as Coordinators- how can we ensure our responsibility to oversee Educator's compliance does not inhibit teamwork?

To encourage team building and participation through mentoring

To plan professional development around identified interests and needs

To invite Educators to participate in policy review

To search for and share a range resources that can be used to support practice

Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children

To discuss the Service Philosophy and ECA's Code of Ethics in relation to children as part of each Educator's induction.

To use resources such as ECA Learning Hub videos and our power point presentation "Developing Children's Agency" to prompt discussion about children's capacity and capability

To include articles in newsletters and on the Facebook page that focus on relationships with children (expectations, social/emotional responses, encouraging self-management, promoting self-esteem)

To include a discussion during induction about preparing the Educator's own children for sharing their home and their mother with Family Day Care children

Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities

To review and improve the enrolment package for families

To develop relationships with community and support agencies through meeting attendance and involvement in community events.

To survey families regularly to gain their input i.e. feedback on practice and procedure.

To acknowledge the successes, achievements and community involvement of Educators and Staff and the service itself in a Community File.

Quality Area 7: Leadership and Management

To add reflection on the Service's QIP to the agenda for staff meetings

To determine the level of satisfaction with the service's induction process by surveying newly registered Educators or newly employed staff within 3 months of them commencing their role.

To develop a folder for projects undertaken or information distributed by the Educational Leader

To develop a staff handbook for administration processes that will support best practice and consistency.

We have started to review the QIP again and have already identified some gaps we need to fill so now seems like the ideal time to ask for your feedback /suggestions. Please let us know.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Apart from Preparation for Assessment we are considering offering training to support and strengthen business practices. We are also considering asking Board Member, Jo Bird, if she could provide us with an introduction to educational apps and using technology with young children. *Do you have any other interests or suggestions?*

*Speaking of Business Practices we have a suggestion to make about **Family Fee Practices**:*

As part of our enrolment process, we are able to request families to pay their first week's calculated fee in advance to their chosen Educator.

Upon the request of individual Educators we can:

- *Provide families with a fee estimate based upon their care hours*
- *Provide details of the Educator's BSB and account number, and*
- *Advise the family that it is a condition of the Educator's Fee Setting Procedure that care cannot commence until the first week's fees are paid.*

If you would like to participate in this process, please advise us and we will implement this procedure, adding the condition to your individual fee schedule.

YARNIN' CIRCLE

AFDC has recently joined a Yarnin' Circle set up in our area by Gowrie NSW in partnership with KU Children's Services and Include Me. We have met with staff from LDC services and Preschools from around the area.

The main objective of the Yarnin' Circle is:

“To take participants on a learning journey of cultural competence and to develop and expand their views, skills and knowledge relating to the inclusion of indigenous perspectives”.

We meet again in February and after that it is up to our group to establish regular networking meetings. *Would anyone be interested in joining us if some meetings were held in the evening?*

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Are you entering craft in this year's Show? The Show is happening on 10th and 11th February. Check the Armidale New England Show Society Facebook page for details.

The Autumn Festival will be held on March 18th this year. We are planning to take advantage of our CBD location to both promote Family Day Care and celebrate the day.

One thing you won't have to do!

You will be pleased to know that you no longer need to have the child's ID number for your documentation.

A Schedule for Timesheet processing has been attached

STAY POSITIVE.....

