

Armidale and District Family Day Care Ltd



Parent Information

Welcome to Armidale and District Family Day Care

**Coordination Unit Hours:
Monday to Thursday 8:30am – 4:30pm**

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Family Assistance Office – 13 6150

Provider No: 555 002 490L

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What is Family Day Care:

Family Day Care is a unique form of child care where a trained and qualified Educator provides education and care in the Educator's home learning environment.

In a small group comprising a maximum of seven children, of which no more than four of whom are under school age, your child will enjoy activities that reflect their personal interests.

Educators provide consistent and personalised care and as a family you will be able to build a positive working relationship with your Educator.

All this makes for a nurturing, fun and educational experience for your child.

To maintain our high standards of quality and professionalism, each Educator receives regular home visits by early childhood trained Coordinators who provide support and guidance and monitor the provision of care.

Mission Statement

Armidale and District Family Day Care acknowledges the Principles and Practice of Early Years Learning Framework. Our Service seeks to build a sense of community between Educators, Families, Staff and Management with a shared vision of high quality services and positive outcome for children in care.

Philosophy

We believe children learn and acquire new skills when they are:

- * Cared for in small, personal environments that encourage and support them with consistency and security
- * Respected as capable individuals with independent thoughts, complex feelings and responses to the world around them
- * Given opportunities to make choices, to explore, imagine, experiment and revisit past experiences and build on the
- * Inspired by others as they observe, listen play and discover
- * Encouraged to think and discuss ideas with Educators using "teachable moments"
- * Provided access to the natural world and begin to develop an appreciation and an understanding of how it works

We believe that families:

- * Need to be respected as the most important influence in their child's life
- * Have a different structures, needs values and parenting practices and that we need to be flexible, understanding and non judgemental in our approach
- * Need to feel welcome to have input in the program, to share their culture, knowledge and skills
- * Need to be encouraged to work in partnership with Educators, Staff and Management through open communication and consultation

We believe that Educator's need to:

- * Believe strongly in their professional role as teacher, mentor and protector of young children in their care
- * Respond to children with enthusiasm, energy, imagination and adaptability to encourage their development and self esteem

- * Learn about each child in care and stay attuned to their strengths and needs through family input, observation and interaction
- * Genuinely appreciate children's discoveries and share their curiosity about the world
- * Provide programs that are open, flexible and balanced with developmentally appropriate experiences that both challenge and engage children
- * Focus on the process not the product
- * Work in partnership and practice positive communication skills with families and other team members
- * Support the relationship between children, their families and the community
- * Value ongoing professional development by taking opportunities to build on skills and knowledge as they arise
- * Present Family Day Care as a quality child care option to the wider community

We believe that Early Childhood Staff need to:

- * Keep abreast of industry happenings so that they can promote current practice and act as advocates for the sector
- * Be dedicated to ensuring quality care options for families and children through sound Educator recruitment and processes
- * Maintain professionalism and uphold the Regulations, the National Standards and the Code of Ethics
- * Practice inclusion and respect diversity
- * Working in partnership with Educators supporting their ideas and enthusiasm, exchanging knowledge and advice
- * Be committed to building on their own skills and that of Educators by seeking appropriate and relevant training
- * Be committed to open, respectful communication with all team members
- * Seek to maintain an ongoing relationship with enrolled families

We believe that contact with the wider community:

- * Can provide children with a strong sense of belonging and identity if they encouraged to connect with it and contribute to it
- * Can offer children expanded learning opportunities as they investigate different environments and explore new ideas and experiences
- * encourages children to think about the rights and responsibilities associated with living in a community
- * Introduces awareness of diversity, inclusion and tolerance
- * Promote social learning and provides practice "reading: the behaviour of others and learning to respond appropriately

The community both depends on and benefits from the provision of high quality, accessible care for young children. Families who require and use care are the workers and students that keep the community running. The community therefore to support families by supporting a strong early childhood sector.

AFDC Educators, Parents and Staff: May 2012

AFDC Educators, Parents and Staff: May 2012

Service Aim

Armidale and District Family Day Care Ltd. aims to:

- ◇ Facilitate the provision of high quality, flexible, affordable childcare to families.
- ◇ Recruit, train and support educators who will provide an environment which supports the individual child's abilities, cultural heritage, home language, religious beliefs and family lifestyles.
- ◇ Encourage participation in positive, developmentally appropriate experiences.
- ◇ Provide support, advice and understanding of families.
- ◇ Provide opportunities for sharing resources and information, including regular play sessions.

The Service Aim is in keeping with relevant National Legislation and Regulations.

National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework provides a national standard aimed at ensuring high quality, consistent early childhood education and school aged care across Australia. It provides legal requirements that all services must comply with.

The **National Quality Standard** applies to seven quality areas in Early Childhood services and Out of School Hours Care, against which services are assessed:

- Educational program and practice - your child is supported to participate in play and learning;
- Children's health and safety - your child is protected from illness and hazards;
- Physical environment - your child plays in a safe and well maintained environment;
- Staff arrangements - your child is given the attention they need;
- Relationships with children - your child is made to feel supported and welcome;
- Partnerships with families and communities - encourages local community involvement, respect and inclusion of all beliefs and values, and
- Leadership and management - your child is cared for in a positive environment.

Following Assessment, services receive one of the following ratings:

- Working towards
- Meeting, or
- Exceeding.

Families are welcome to discuss ratings with our Coordination Unit and a copy of the NQS can be downloaded from:

www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/the-national-quality-standard

The National Quality Framework sets a higher National Quality Standard to encourage services to continue to improve their programmes and practices.

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) is the first National curriculum framework for Early Childhood Education.

Curriculum in the Early Childhood setting means "all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children's learning and development"

The EYLF recognises that a child's experience in their first 5 years sets the course for the rest of their lives. It guides the practice of all early childhood educators in all early childhood

settings, encouraging Educators to reflect on their own practice and to be open to trying new things.

The EYLF is based on three interwoven concepts:

- Belonging – feeling part of a family, a group or a community, feeling the security of consistent relationships and feeling attachment to safe and predictable environments.
- Being – recognising that young children are very attuned to the present and are engaged with the people and the environment around them.
- Becoming – acknowledging the changes, growth and development of your child's understanding as well as the "challenges associated with learning to participate as a member of a group (family, community or culture)." (ECA "EYLF: Getting Started" Joy Goodfellows, 2009)

There are 5 very positive Learning Outcomes associated with the EYLF.

- Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity
- Outcome 2: Children are connected to and contribute to their world
- Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners
- Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

Management Structure

Armidale & District Family Day Care Ltd. is a not for profit, community based corporation, managed by a voluntary Board of Directors consisting of family members , Educators & Community representatives. It is responsible for the operation of the service; that is:

- Signing funding agreement with the Australian Government,
- Being the licensee & employing managers to operate the service according to Australian Government legislations,
- Providing premises for the Coordination Unit, and
- Providing overall guidance through policy development.

If you would like to find out more about participating in the management of AFDC, please contact the Coordination Unit.

Early Childhood Educators:

AFDC's Educators are self-employed people, selected for their personal qualities and their interest in providing a healthy, safe and stimulating environment for children. All AFDC Educators have:

- ◇ A Certificate III or Diploma in Children's services;
- ◇ Current First Aid, Asthma and Anaphylaxis qualifications,
- ◇ Working With Children Checks which ensure that both they and any adult household members are not deemed to be prohibited persons;
- ◇ A minimum of \$10 million dollars Public Liability Insurance, and
- ◇ A commitment to upholding the National Quality Standards and working within the National Regulations and Law and the National Quality Framework as well as service policies and procedures.

Educator s' Fee Schedules:

Child care fees in Family Day Care are deregulated and Educators, as self employed people, are able to determine their own fees for service and conditions, in accordance with AFDC's Fee Setting Policy.

Educators Fee Schedules may include individual hourly rates for:

- Core Hours of Care (8 am – 6 pm);
- Out of core Hours (6 pm – 8 am);
- Before and After School and Vacation Care;
- Weekend and Public Holiday Care;
- Casual Care; and
- Penalties for the late collection of children.
- Educators may request a **Bond** of one or two week's full weekly fee prior to the commencement of care. This bond will be returned to families upon the cessation of care and the payment of all outstanding fees to the Educator. Families should be aware that there is no Child Care Benefit claimable on Bonds.

Educators provide families with a copy of their fee schedule at the time of interview.

Enrolment Procedures:

Families wishing to enrol their child with Armidale & District Family Day Care should contact the Coordination Unit.

We will:

- seek information about your child care needs,
- provide you with more detailed information about AFDC,
- advise you on the availability of government child care subsidies (See *Child Care Benefit and Child care Rebate*), and
- give you the names, addresses and telephone numbers of Educators, dependent on the days and hours of care you require and the availability of suitable Educators.

Should we be unable to refer you to suitable Educators immediately, or your care be required at a future date, your family's needs will be recorded in AFDC's Waiting List and we will communicate with you a regular basis until your care requirements are met.

When you have been given names of Educators, it is then your responsibility to:

- arrange an appointment to meet & interview Educators as soon as possible,
- provide Educators with details of your care requirements, setting aside sufficient time for Educators to get to know you and your child,
- select the Educator you believe to be the most suitable for your child care needs,
- request details of the Educator's individual fee schedule,
- inform other Educators that you have interviewed that you will not be using their service, and
- make an appointment with the Coordination Unit to register your child/children with Armidale & District Family Day Care.

Please allow at least two business days prior to the planned commencement of care for the completion of the enrolment process.

During the enrolment interview, you will be asked to:

- Complete an Enrolment Form and Individual Child Information Forms
- Carefully read AFDC's Conditions of Contract and acknowledge your agreement to them,
- Provide copies of your children's Immunisation History Reports
- Provide copies of your children's Birth Certificates,

- Provide details of your Customer Reference Number (CRN), your children's CRN's, dates of birth 's & Medicare numbers,
- Provide copies of any court (custody and access) orders as may be in place,
- Provide a Health Management Plan prepared by a GP for any child with an identified life threatening illness (e.g. asthma, anaphylaxis, diabetes), and
- Pay a one off \$50.00 enrolment fee.

Parent/Educator Contracts:

As part of the enrolment process, a Parent/Educator Contract will be prepared in triplicate, reflecting the hours of care which you have booked for your children. Both you and the educator are required to sign all three copies of the Contract. You retain one copy of the contract, the Educator retains the second copy and the third is held by the Coordination Unit.

Your Educator needs to be consulted regarding any changes to your contracted hours of care, and if you wish to change or terminate a contract, 2 week's notice must be given & all fees due must be paid before care ceases.

You will be required to complete a Variation to Care form when you wish to vary your care hours or notify the cessation of care.

Immunisation:

Under Australian Government legislation, a family wishing to enrol a child in our service **must** provide a copy of one of the following documents

1. A **current ACIR Immunisation History** which shown that the child is up to date with their scheduled immunisations;
2. A **current ACIR Immunisation History Form** on which the immunisation provider has certified that the child is on a recognised catch-up programme;
3. A **ACIR Immunisation Exemption - Medical Contradiction Form** which has been certified by an immunisation provider for a child who cannot receive one or more vaccine(s);
4. An **ACIR Immunisation Exemption - Conscientious Objection Form** which has been certified by an immunisation provider and a parent/guardian.

Parents may obtain a copy of their child's Immunisation History Statement by contacting Medicare.

Ph: 1800 653 809 www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/online

Children who are younger than seven must meet the Australian Government's immunisation requirements or have an approved exemption from the requirements for the family to be eligible for Child Care Benefit

Priority of Access Guidelines:

The Australian Government has Priority of Access guidelines which we must follow when filling vacancies. The guidelines are as follows:

- Priority 1: A child at risk of serious abuse or neglect,
 Priority 2: A child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who satisfy, work, training or study.
 Priority 3: Any other child

Where a service has no vacant places and is providing child care for a child who is a Priority 3 under the Priority of Access Guidelines, the service requires that child to leave the child care service in order for the service to provide a place for higher priority child, 14 days notice of the requirement for the child care service must be given.

Access to and Collection of Children:

Educators will only release children in their care into the hands of an authorised pick up who has been nominated by the family. The authorised pick up must be at least 18 years of age.

Parenting and Consent Orders made by the Courts may only be acted upon where a copy has been provided to the Coordination Unit. Families must be aware that the Coordination Unit will provide a copy of any such order to the Educator.

Alternative Care:

If a family's Educator is unavailable for any reason, the Coordination Unit will endeavour to provide the family with alternative care whenever possible. Families should contact the Service's Emergency Telephone Number (0417 550 072) in these instances.

Child Protection:

All AFDC staff members and Educators are trained in child protection and Educators must take all possible measures to ensure that children are protected from harm and are supervised at all times.

AFDC staff and Educators are mandatory reporters.

Child Care Benefit (CCB), Child Care Rebate (CCR) & Jobs, Education & Training Child Care Fee Assistance (JET):

The Australian Government provides child care assistance to families through CCB and CCR. CCB is a means tested payment, based upon your family's income. CCR is not a means tested payment.

To be eligible for **CCB** the requirements are:

- The child must attend a CCB approved service (AFDC is approved),
- The child must meet the Australian Government's Immunisation requirements,
- Your family must be liable for payment of your child care fees, and
- One parent must meet the Australian Government's Australian residency requirements.

CCR provides working parents with up to 50% of their out of pocket expenses (after CCB is applied) up to the annual cap of \$7,500 per financial year. There is no separate claim for CCR - the rebate is paid to you automatically if you are eligible for CCB (even at zero rate) regardless of your family's income.

You can choose from a range of payment options for both CCB & CCR, they are:

- to have both CCB & CCR paid as a fee reduction to our service on a fortnightly basis;
- To have CCB only paid as a fee reduction and choose to receive your CCR either quarterly or annually as a lump sum payment, or
- To pay your Educator the full fee and receive all your child care assistance as a lump sum annual payment.

You need to contact the **Family Assistance Office** at Centrelink to ensure that you are assessed for CCB and CCR. You can do that either in person at a Centrelink Office, by calling **136150** or visiting the my.gov.com.au website.

You should ensure that the parent that enrolls the children into care is also the parent who applies for CCB & CCR. Our Coordination Unit staff will provide you with more comprehensive information upon enrolment.

If you are undertaking an approved course of study in order to return to the mainstream workforce, you may also be entitled to **JET Childcare Assistance**. If you feel that your family may be eligible for this subsidy, talk to our staff who will provide you with eligibility criteria.

Complaints & Grievances:

In order to foster positive relations between families, Educators & the community, Armidale & District Family Day Care has formal arrangements for handling complaints; ensuring they are dealt with fairly and promptly.

1. Complaints and concerns should generally be discussed in the first instance with the educator;
2. If the matter is not resolved at this level, families should bring the matter to the attention of AFDC's Nominated Supervisor or Business Manager, and
3. Should these steps be unsuccessful, or inappropriate, the matter should be raised with AFDC's Board of Directors.

Please Note: Neither Directors nor the Coordination Unit Staff are able to make decisions which override pre-existing legislation.

Families may obtain a copy of AFDC's Complaints Handling Policy from the Coordination Unit.

Confidentiality & Privacy:

AFDC protects the privacy and confidentiality of all individuals by ensuring that all records and information about children, families, Educators, staff and management are kept in a secure place and are only accessed by or disclosed to those individuals who need the information to fulfil their responsibilities at the service, or in line with pre-existing legislation.

The service's Confidentiality and Privacy policies are available from our website, at Educator's homes and upon request from the Coordination Unit.

Excursions:

Educators are authorised to take children to social and educational activities outside their homes; these are termed routine excursions. Routine excursions are local excursions to the shops, library, park playsessions and other Educators & friend's houses.

If a educator wishes to takes a child on a non-routine excursion, one that is not included in their regular programme, then the Educator must ask your family to provide permission in writing in advance..

Illness, Medication & Accidents:

All absences due to illness or accident will be charged at the normal rate.

In line with NSW Health legislation, the service must ensure sick children are excluded from care when necessary. This practice, in conjunction with effective hygiene practices, is designed to reduce the risk of cross infection and to ensure the health and well being of all children. The Educators and/or Coordination Unit reserves the right to exclude a child regarded to be too unwell to be adequately cared for in a Family Day Care environment. In this case the family, or authorised person, will be contacted and arrangements will be made for the child to be collected.

If a child requires emergency medical attention then the Educator or another member of staff will make all reasonable attempts to gain the required treatment and will contact the family or an emergency contact immediately..

Should a child be required to take medication whilst in care, an "Authorisation to Administer Medication" form should be completed & signed by the parent on the day the child requires the medicine.

Should a child have an accident, the Educator will ensure that all reasonable attempts are made to notify the family or emergency contact as soon as possible, and will seek the support of the Coordination Unit. An accident/incident report will be completed and copies will be provided to the family.

Nutrition:

AFDC encourages families to provide children with food and drinks that are nutritious, adequate in quantity, varied and able to be offered at frequent intervals, appropriate to the developmental needs of the individual child.

Drinking water should be available at all times, and Educators will encourage children to drink water instead of juices.

Payment of Fees:

Educators within AFDC follow fee setting and charging practices set by Australian Government.

The weekly fee is payable to the Educator on the first care day of each week, or by prior arrangement.

Payment of all fees is mandatory. Failure to pay fees will result in the cancellation of child care, followed by legal action for the recoveries of all outstanding debts.

In the case where ... *"families are experiencing hardship – exceptional cases where a family's income does not truly reflect their capacity to pay the normal fee charged"*, families who are eligible for Child Care Benefit (CCB) may be entitled to **Special Child Care Benefit (SCCB)**, designed to assist families while they adapt to their circumstances by helping them maintain access to child care. Families requiring further information regarding SCCB should contact the Coordination Unit.

Receipting:

The fees payable by families is recorded on the Educator's Attendance Record and Educators issue receipts to all families upon receipt of payments.

Play Sessions:

Play Session is conducted on Thursdays during school terms, in partnership with Armidale Community Preschool, and Educators are encouraged to give the children in their care the opportunity to participate in Play Session. For further information, contact the Coordination Unit.

Programming:

Educators are required to plan and programme activities and learning opportunities for the children in their care, based on the interests of the individual child and the group of children and the Educator's daily evaluations and reflections.

Families are encouraged to contribute to the programming by providing their Educator with information about their child's interests.

Service Policies and Procedures:

Service policies and procedures are based upon the requirements of the National Regulations and Law, the National Standards and the Early Years Learning Framework. They reflect AFDC's Philosophy, our beliefs about how children learn and what we need to do to protect their health & safety, the importance of families, the role of Educators, staff and the community.

Our service policies provide guidelines for management, staff, Educators and families; they are reviewed regularly in a consultative manner.

All families are provided with a copy of the *Health Policy* upon enrolment. Families' adherence to this policy is important to protect the health of both Educators and children. Access to other policies is provided via AFDC's website:

www.armidaleanddistrictfamilydaycare.com and Educators have hard copies of all policies available for families to refer to.

A summary of selected AFDC policies which have not been previously referred to in this Family Handbook, and are particularly relevant to families includes:

Child Safe Environment

The care environment must abide by National Regulations and Standards. Coordinators support Educators and provide advice on meeting and maintaining the level of safety required. Educators undertake a daily safety check before children arrive and there is an annual safety audit performed at re-registration time.

Educator's Assistant

Educators can apply to use the services of an Educator's Assistant, approved by AFDC, who can provide up to 4 hours relief care per week (to cover situations such as the Educator needing to attend an appointment).

Educator's Assistants hold a Working With Children Check, a current First Aid Certificate and undertake Child Protection training and some orientation training. They must have a current First Aid Certificate and undertake Child Protection training.

Families are required to be informed when the Educator's Assistant will be working, and are required to give their permission. Families who do not approve have the option to take their child out of care for the period that the registered Educator is away from the service without charge.

Emergency Evacuation

Educators are required to practice fire drills with all children in care every three months.

Excursions

Supports the undertaking of safe routine and non-routine excursions

- Venue must meet safety guidelines (e.g. no water hazards),
- Risk assessments completed and supplied to Coordination Unit,
- Family permission provided, and
- Educators using vehicles to transport children must use approved child restraints & have vehicle's anchor points checked by an approved checking station annually.

First Aid

Educators and Coordinators are required to have First Aid Asthma and Anaphylaxis training.

Educators and the Coordination Unit must maintain a fully equipped First Aid Kit.

Infectious Diseases

- Excluding children from care when ill,
- Promotion of regular hand washing, hygienic nappy changing & nose wiping (using gloves),
- Washing toys regularly, cleaning the care environment, and cough 'etiquette'.

Interactions with Children

As a Service we abide by Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics. We respect the dignity and rights of every child. We believe that interactions with children should be warm and responsive, that children should be encouraged to have input and make suggestions about what happens for them during the day. We believe that programs need to be planned and developed around their interests. We believe strongly in the value of play and the learning opportunities it provides.

Monitoring support

It is the role of Coordinators to support Educators. Home visits are undertaken by Coordinators regularly, giving Educators and Coordinators an opportunity to discuss children's needs and development, the program of experiences that has been presented, quality improvement goals, training opportunities, areas of support needed and regulatory or compliance

Visitors

While children are in care, Educators are required to ask every visitor to their home to sign a Visitor's Book or Register.

Children cannot be left unsupervised with any visitor.

Water Safety

Children are not to be taken to venues where there are bodies of water but water play can occur at Play Session and at the Educators' premises under supervision. Tubs and troughs of water need to be emptied if they cannot be continually supervised.

Settling Children into Care:

Children vary in how long they take to settle into a new child care setting. Some will settle on their first day while others will show some form of distress for some weeks before settling comfortably and happily. Even confident children can find the adjustment to a new environment, and the related change of routine, difficult at first. Talking to children and encouraging them to voice any anxieties may be a helpful strategy.

Children can also experience great excitement at this time, and may be tired by the end of the day. The early weeks of care are a time of adjustment. Consistent routines can help children to manage the change. Strategies may include:

- sending a favourite toy or comfort item (safe and non-unbreakable);
- telling your Educator about your child's favourite activities (that may be used to calm the child), and
- establish a 'consistent' goodbye routine.

The enrolment process provides families with a key opportunity to exchange important information, including specific information about your child's eating and sleeping routines, their likes and dislikes and their interests. This information will assist your Educator to provide positive experiences for your child.

Sun Protection:

AFDC's Educators operate in accordance with the NSW Cancer Council's recommendations and the service's Sun Safe Policy, which suggests strategies to limit exposure to UV rays at peak times. Educators and children are required to wear sun hats when outdoors

Transport:

When travelling by car, Educators are required to have each child appropriately restrained according to Roads and Maritime Services legislation. Appropriate child restraints bearing the Australian approval must be used. The family may be approached to supply these restraints.

Armidale Out of School Hours Care

Armidale & District Family Day Care Limited is the proud sponsor of Armidale Out of School Hours Care, which provides after school care and vacation care at Sandon Public School Hall.

In accordance with *"My Time, Our Place"*, the Framework for School Aged Care in Australia, Armidale Out of School Hours Care provides quality child care for school aged children, offering both indoor and outdoor activities.

Children have choices of structured activities as well as opportunities to create their own play.

The service programmes reflect gender equity, are inclusive, culturally relevant and encourage independence in decision making.

Armidale & District Family Day Care was established in 1983 and is the only locally operated, community based service in Armidale. Thank you for considering us as your preferred child care service. Please contact our Management and team for further information.