

# **Armidale and District Family Day Care Ltd**



## **Family Information Handbook**

## **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 acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land***

Our service seeks to build a sense of community between all partners with a shared vision of high quality services and positive outcomes for children in care. Armidale & District Family Day Care acknowledges the principles and practices of the Early Years Learning Framework.

#### **We are committed to:**

- Respecting children's rights as developing, yet capable, individuals.
- Providing children with security, consistency and learning through nurturing relationships.
- Working in partnership with families, educators, staff and management, encouraging their input and respecting their influence and diversity.
- Supporting educators in their professional role to maintain high expectations for children's learning.
- Reflecting on current practice and accessing relevant, high quality, professional development to ensure best practice.
- Upholding the National Regulations and Law, the National Quality Standards and ECA's Code of Ethics.
- Advocating on behalf of all children and promoting Family Day Care as a high quality Early Childhood Education and Care option.

#### **We share the values of:**

- Providing children with a strong sense of belonging and identity within their community.
- Acknowledging the central role of play in learning and the importance and influence of play environments.
- Recognising the learning potential in the natural environment and the need for sustainability.

- Maintaining open and respectful communication with all children, families, staff, management and the wider community.
- Promoting inclusive practices and ethical decision making.
- Maintaining current knowledge of issues within the Early Childhood Education and Care community.

#### 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](http://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;
- ◇ National Criminal Record Check undertaken by the Australian Federal Police;
- ◇ 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 of your potential entitlements under the Australian Government's Child Care Package 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.

### **Enrolment Notices:**

An Enrolment Notice contains information that specifies the details of your child/ren's enrolment with AFDC, and must be approved by your family through myGov.

When you enrol your child into our service, we are required to create an enrolment notice in the Child Care Subsidy System to show when your child is enrolled.

There are three types of Enrolments:

1. Routine care only - casual care is not included;
2. Casual enrolment - no routine care is included, and
3. Routine care with casual care permitted.

AFDC's Enrolment Policy is that no child's enrolment can be "completed" until a family confirms the Enrolment Notice on myGov.

Once Your Child is enrolled, AFDC is required to report attendance for the children.

### **Complying Written Agreements**

Your family needs to enter into an explicit written agreement with AFDC. This agreement will include your family details, commencement date, the type of care to be provided and fees to be paid.

Changes to the Arrangement must be in writing and updated within seven days of the change. These will include a correction to or variation to the Agreement or cessation of care.

### **Immunisation:**

From 1 January 2018, only children who are fully immunised for their age OR have a medical reason not to be immunised OR are on a catch up programme can be enrolled in childcare. Children who have not been immunised due to their parents' vaccine conscientious objection cannot be enrolled in child care.

### **AIR Immunisation History Statement**

Parents must provide an Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) History Statement (that shows a child is up to date or can't be immunised for medical reasons) or an AIR Immunisation History Form (that shows a child is on a recognised catch-up schedule) when enrolling a child in Armidale & District Family Day Care.

Parents can request a copy of their child's AIR Immunisation History Statement at any time (up to their child being 14 years of age):

- \* using their Medicare online account through myGov <https://my.gov.au/>
- \* using the Medicare Express Plus App [www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/)
- \* calling the AIR General Enquiries Line on 1800 653 809

### **Updated Immunisation History Statement**

After each immunisation, parents should provide their child's updated AIR Immunisation History Statement to our Coordination Unit.

### **'Not Up To Date' children**

Children who are on a catch up schedule can be enrolled in our service upon provision of an AIR Immunisation History Form to the service.

**Children who have not had all the recommended immunisations for their age may need to stay at home during a disease outbreak.**

### **Children Vaccinated Overseas.**

If a child has been vaccinated overseas, their immunisation schedule will need to be checked by a GP or nurse who will transfer the information to the AIR. Families may then request an updated AIR Immunisation History Statement for AFDC.

### **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 Subsidy**

The Australian Government provides Child Care Subsidy as a means tested payment provided to services to lower out-of pocket costs for families.

Two things will determine your family's level of Child Care Subsidy in AFDC:

- Family income - your combined family income, and
- The number of hours a fortnight that your family spends in recognised activities for the purpose of the **Activity Test**.

**The Activity Test** test is applied to each parent in a couple relationship or a sole parent.

Activities include paid work, self-employment, training, study, volunteering, paid parental leave and job seeking. In two parent families, the hours of subsidised care will be based on the parent with the lowest entitlement.

You need to contact the **Family Assistance Office** and establish a Centrelink online account through myGov in order to access Child Care Subsidy.

Your subsidy will be paid directly to AFDC as a fee reduction; your family will only pay the gap fee to your Educator.

AFDC will provide your family with a **Statement of Entitlement** fortnightly by email; it will explain the amount paid per hour, the amount of care your family has received and the family gap fee. Please inform AFDC of your most recent email address.

#### **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 or from our website.

#### **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 the 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 within fourteen days 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 Subsidy (CCS) may be entitled to **Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS)**, designed to assist families while they adapt to their circumstances by helping them maintain access to child care. Families requiring further information regarding ACCS should contact the Coordination Unit.

#### **Parent Payment Summaries:**

All families will be provided with fortnightly Payment Advices through AFDC's *Harmony* software package.

#### **Play Sessions:**

Play Session is conducted weekly 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](http://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. Families MUST provide appropriate sun hats and clothing as per the *Sun Safe Policy* when placing children in care.

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 ASA approval must be used. Educators are required to have their child restraints checked by an authorised fitting station annually.

## **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.***