

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 childcare 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 (AFDC) 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. 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;
- ◇ 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

Childcare fees in AFDC 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 **Surety Fee** of one or two week's full weekly fee prior to the commencement of care. This will be returned to families upon the cessation of care and the payment of all outstanding fees to the Educator.

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

Enrolment Procedures:

Families wishing to enrol their child with AFDC should contact the Coordination Unit.

We will:

- seek information about your childcare 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 childcare 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
- complete AFDC's online enrolment process, and if possible, make an appointment with the Coordination Unit to confirm details of your family's care requirements.

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

During the online enrolment process you will be asked to:

- Complete Enrolment documents;
- 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 Medical Management Plan prepared by a GP for any child with an identified life-threatening illness (e.g. asthma, anaphylaxis, diabetes).

Enrolling children is a requirement under Family Assistance Law regardless of your family's intention to claim Child Care Subsidy. AFDC must lodge an **Enrolment Notice** through our software provider to show that we have entered into an arrangement with your family and that your child is enrolled.

Your family will then enter into a **Complying Written Agreement** with AFDC by accepting the Enrolment Notice you receive from *Redbourne*, our software provider. This is extremely important. If you do not login and accept this, you will not receive any subsidies.

Families have a responsibility to notify the Coordination Unit and your Educator of all changes to your family's detail; address, contact numbers authorised emergency contact, etc.

Armidale & District Family Day Care charges all families a once only Enrolment Fee of \$50.00. The enrolment process cannot be completed until the enrolment fee has been paid.

Conditions of Care with AFDC

Hours of care: The booked hours of care should be negotiated between your family and the educator prior to the commencement of care; normal fees for booked hours of care are payable regardless of whether they are used or not. Should families wish to change their care hours, they should negotiate these changes with their Educator, providing two weeks written notice.

Arrivals and Departures from Care: Families **must** be aware that, when on the Educators premises, your children are your responsibility prior to being signed into care and after being signed out of care.

Access to and Collection of Children: Your educator will only allow access to and release children into care of an authorised emergency contact who has been nominated by your family. The nominated person must be prepared to have proof of identity available for the Educator to sight.

Completion of Attendance Records: Completion of Attendance Records, either electronically or manually, is a legally binding requirement under Family Assistance Law. Families who are enrolled with Educators using **Electronic Attendance Records**

Parenting and Consent Orders: Parenting and Consent orders can only be acted upon where a copy has been provided to the Coordination Unit; a copy of the Order/s will be provided to the Educator for their records.

Health Management Plans: If your child has a health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition such as asthma, diabetes or the risk of anaphylaxis, you must provide AFDC with a Health Management Plan, prepared by a medical practitioner, detailing treatment, medication and strategies to minimise risks whilst your child is in care.

Late Collection of Children: If a child does not arrive within 15 minutes of their booked arrival time, the educator may go about their daily routine. Families must contact the Educator should they be unable to deliver their child into care or collect them on time. AFDC Educators levy penalties on late collection of children.

Payment of Fees

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 childcare, followed by legal action for the recoveries of all outstanding debts.

Debt Recovery: Should AFDC be required to take legal action to recover outstanding fees from a family, the legal costs incurred will be added to the principle of the debt.

Parent Statement of Entitlement

All families will be provided with fortnightly Statement of Entitlement to Child Care Subsidy through AFDC's *Harmony* software package.

Absences from Care

Normal fees are payable for all absences from booked care. Calculated fees are payable for absences from casual care where less than 24 hours' notice has been given.

Absences from care fall into two categories that relate to eligibility for payment of Child Care Subsidy – *Absence Days* and *Additional Absence Days*.

Absence Days

Each child is eligible for Child Care Subsidy for 42 absences per year, across all approved services that they may be using. These absences can be taken for any reason and do not require supporting documentation. Public Holidays are classified as Absence days.

Child Care Subsidy cannot be claimed for absences which occur on a child's first booked day of care nor for an absence from which a child does not return.

Additional Absence Days

Once 42 absence days have occurred in a financial year, Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy can only be paid for any additional absences where they are taken for a reason defined in the Family Assistance Law. These reasons can include any of the following:

- the child, the individual who cares for the child, the individual's partner or another person with whom the child lives is ill;
- the child is attending preschool;
- alternative arrangements have been made on a pupil-free day;
- the child has not been immunised against a particular infectious disease, the absence occurs during an immunisation grace period and a medical practitioner has certified that exposure to the infectious disease would pose a health risk to the child;
- the absence is because the child is spending time with a person other than the individual who is their usual carer as required by a court order or a parenting plan;
- the service is closed as a direct result of a period of local emergency;
- the child cannot attend because of a local emergency (for example, because they are unable to travel to the service), during the period of the emergency or up to 28 days afterwards;
- the individual who cares for the child has decided the child should not attend the service for up to seven days immediately following the end of a period of local emergency.

In shared care arrangements (where separated parents both claim Child Care Subsidy for the child's care), the allocation of 42 absences relates to the child, not to each individual parent.

Public Holidays: Normal fees are payable for absences due to gazetted Public Holidays in area in which care is being provided if the child would normally have attended care on the day were it not to have been a Public Holiday.

If care is required on a gazetted Public Holiday, the individual Educator's *Public Holiday* hourly fee will be payable.

Closure of an Educator's Service

An Educator who chooses to close their service must provide families with two weeks' written notice. Families **do not pay fees** to their educator when the Educator's service is closed.

Should your Educator become unwell or have a family emergency, they will provide families with as much notice as possible and will notify AFDC's 24 hour emergency contact.

Alternative care: If your family's Educator is unavailable for any reason, AFDC will endeavour to provide your family with alternative care whenever possible. Families requiring alternative care should contact AFDC's 24 hour emergency contact number Ph: **0417 550 072**.

Child Care Subsidy

Child Care Subsidy is a means tested payment provided to families to lower out of pocket costs. Your family's level of Child Care Subsidy will be determined by 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**, including 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.

To access Childcare Subsidy you should follow these steps:

- Contact the **Family Assistance Office**;
- Establish a **Centrelink online account** through **myGov**. You can sign up for one at www.my.gov.au.
- You will request the hours of care you require per fortnight, based upon how many hours of activity (e.g. work or study) you (and your partner, if applicable) perform per fortnight.

AFDC encourages families to lodge their claim prior to enrolling their children in care., as Child Care Subsidy can only be backdated for a period of 28 days.

Your family will then enter into a **Complying Written Agreement** our service. You must do this by accepting the Enrolment Notice you receive from *Redbourne*, our software provider. . This is extremely important. If you do not login and accept this, you will not receive any subsidies.

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.

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.

Immunisation

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 :

- * using their Medicare online account through myGov <https://my.gov.au/>
- * using the Medicare Express Plus App 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.

Child Protection:

Mandatory Child Protection training and awareness must be current for AFDC Coordination Unit and Educators; Coordination Unit staff and Educators are mandatory reporters with an obligation to ensure the safety, welfare and well-being of children in care.

Complaints & Grievances

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

1. Complaints and concerns held by families 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 securely stored 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.

Play Sessions and other 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 written permission 24 hours in advance.

Play Sessions are conducted by AFDC regularly during school terms, in partnership with Armidale Community Preschool. Families using care in Armidale are encouraged to provide

their educator with permission to participate in Play Session. For further information, please contact the Coordination Unit.

Children's Illnesses & Exclusion Periods

Sick children must be excluded from care. Educators and the Coordination reserves the right to exclude a child who they regard as being 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.

Families whose children are suffering from infectious diseases must exclude them from care for the periods prescribed by the NSW Department of Health. Recommended periods of the more common illness infections are as follows:

Conjunctivitis	Exclude until discharge from eye has stopped.
COVID-19	Minimum of 14 days from testing and confirmation, with the requirement for a medical authorisation prior to returning to care.
Diarrhoea and Vomiting	Exclude until there has been no Diarrhoea and Vomiting for 24 hours. In a mini-epidemic, NSW Health may prescribe an exclusion period of 48 hours.
Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease	Exclude until blisters have dried.
Head Lice (Pediculosis)	Exclude until the day after appropriate treatment has commenced.
Herpes Simplex (Cold Sores)	Exclude until sore has completely dried.
Impetigo (School Sores)	Exclude until antibiotic cream has been applied for at least 24 hours. Sores on exposed skin surfaces must be covered with a watertight dressing.
Influenza	Exclude until child is feeling well.
Ringworm	Exclude until the day after appropriate treatment has commenced.
Rotavirus	Exclude until vomiting and diarrhoea has ceased for 24 hours.
Scabies (and other mites)	Exclude until the day after appropriate treatment has commenced.

Please Note:

The above list is not exhaustive. Exclusion periods for infectious diseases are as prescribed in *Staying Healthy in Childcare*.

Children who have been prescribed antibiotics must be excluded from care for 24 hours following the commencement of the dosage or until the child regains health.

Incidents, Injuries, Illnesses and Trauma

Should a child suffer an incident, injury or trauma., 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. Should the occurrence be of a serious nature, an ambulance will be called. An Incident, Injury, Accident and Trauma Report will be completed and copies will be provided to the family.

If a child requires emergency medical attention the Educator or a member of the Coordination Unit 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.

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.

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 Quality Standards, Early Years Learning Framework and My Time, Our Place.

Families are provided with a copy of the *Medical Conditions 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.

AFDC Educators should have copies of all policies available for families to refer to.

Parent/Guardian Survey

AFDC seeks to ensure that all families have the opportunity to become involved in our service and welcomes your input and feedback. We would like your permission to survey you six weeks after your child/ren has commenced care.

- **YES**, I would like to receive AFDC's survey.
- **NO**, I prefer to receive no communication.

Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement:

I have read, understood and agree to abide by the Conditions of Care of Armidale & District Family Day Care, along with its policies and procedures, and I acknowledge that the payment of all fees is mandatory.

Signature

Date

Name

Please complete and return this page to AFDC upon commencement of care by email, mail or via your Educator.



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 childcare service.