

**Armidale & District Family Day Care
Educator Additional Approval Procedure (Over Ratio)**

Related documentation Policy/policies:	Inclusion Policy, Code of Conduct, Educational Program and Practice, Child Protection, Promoting Children’s Wellbeing and Resilience.
Regulation/s/ Standards:	National Regulations 123, 123A, 124, 136, NQS 4.1.1
Other procedures:	Management of Records, Supervision, Placement.
References:	The Education and Care Services National Regulations, ACECQA Educator to Child ratios reference sheet, ACECQA guide to QA4. Identifying a child at risk Department of Education Fact sheet 1/2/2024.
Date effective	October 2024
Date for review	October 2027
Purpose	To outline conditions under which AFDC may provide approval to Educators to exceed the ratio requirements set out in the National Law and Regulations. To assist families and community in providing care for children at risk and children in rural and remote areas.
Responsibility	Management, Coordinators, Educators and Families

Key information:

- AFDC Educators or families using AFDC services may request additional approval to exceed the maximum ratio of 1:4 children preschool age or under if they are considered to be residing in a rural and remote area - Regulation 124 (6)(c).
- Families in rural and remote areas have limited access to Education and Care services. AFDC’s rural and remote areas are Walcha, Guyra and Glen Innes.
- Exceptional circumstances for additional approval can also extend to those families who have four siblings being cared for by an Educator and require care for an additional child. The Educator may then be provided with approval to care for a fifth child of the family - Regulation 124 (6)(a).
- A child considered to be at risk - Regulation 124 (6)(b), will have priority of access to care on AFDC’s waitlist. If there are no spaces available with an AFDC Educator, AFDC may provide approval for an Educator to care for more than the maximum ratio of 1:4 children preschool age or under.

Procedures:

- AFDC families, must, where possible, provide at least 24hrs notice (within office hours) when seeking an additional approval. Consideration will be given to emergency approval upon request. Office hours are **Monday – Thursday, 8:30am – 4:30pm.**
- AFDC Families requiring additional approvals in rural and remote locations must request a *Parent/Guardian Request for Additional Approval Form* from the AFDC office. Families must complete the Form, providing the following information:
 - Why the Approval is required, and
 - How long the family will be requiring the Approval.

The *Request for Additional Approval Form* must be returned to the AFDC office prior to a request being granted. The Nominated Supervisor or their representative will notify the family if their request has been approved.

This procedure does not apply to a child under Regulation 124 (6)(b).

- The coordination unit staff may use their discretion to authorise a request without receiving the family's request form in certain circumstances such as, their regular Educator is unavailable to work on that day.
- Where possible, the Coordination Unit will fill any available spaces within other AFDC Educator services in a rural and remote area prior to granting Additional Approvals.
- Educators who are granted approval to care for more than the 1:4 ratio for children preschool aged or under and 1:7 ratio including school age children will need to have completed all outstanding actions, as identified by Coordinators, and have ensured that their documentation is kept up to date, prior to approval being granted.
- Educators must maintain an environment which is safe, clean, and adequate for the provision of care to the additional child.
- Coordination unit staff will inform families and Educators if a request for additional approval is granted and will email a letter to the Educator detailing:
 - the child's full name,
 - date of birth,
 - date the approval was granted; commencement and end date, and
 - the person granting the approval.
- Educators who are granted additional approvals, on an ongoing basis, to exceed prescribed ratio, will receive more frequent routine visits from the Coordination Unit.

Coordination Unit Responsibilities:

- To consider, where possible, any available spaces with alternative Educators; thereby ensuring that regulatory ratios are maintained for all Educators. Consideration of the age of the child and consistency of care will be taken into account, along with other factors.
- To assess if the Educator, to whom the additional approval is sought, has completed all outstanding actions, and has ensured that their documentation is up to date.
- To assess whether the relevant Educator's environment is safe, clean and adequate for the provision of care to the additional child. To communicate with the Educator to ensure they feel competent to include an additional child into their care.
- To communicate with families to inform them if their child has been granted an additional approval and the Educator who has been provided with the approval.

- To write a formal Additional Approval formal letter with the above details, place a copy of the letter on the Child's *Harmony* record and email a copy to the Educator for their records.
- To enter the Additional Approval on the Additional Approval Register in AFDC's Office General database.
- To regularly monitor the Additional Approval, register for ongoing approval reassessments.

Educators Responsibilities

- To communicate with other available Educators to see if they have vacancies prior to asking a family to request an additional approval.
- Where possible, to keep within ratio of 1:4.
 - a) If a child is absent on a day that an approval has been granted to have an additional child, the Educator will seek permission from the Coordination Unit prior to replacing the absent child.
 - b) If the additional child is absent, the Educator will not offer the additional child's place to another child.
- To ensure that the program and relevant documentation of their service is kept up to date while caring for the Additional Child.
- To ensure that their environment is safe and clean while caring for the Additional Child.
- To ensure that AFDC's approval letter, emailed to them by Coordination Unit staff, is securely filed.
- To endeavour to avoid going on excursions unless excursion risk assessments state that the ratio will be 1:5 and strategies are documented for how this will be managed.
- To ensure all that all family authorisations state that the ratio is 1:5 and have been signed by all families.

Families Responsibilities

- To contact the office as soon as they know that they will require an additional approval and request a *Request for Additional Approval Form*.
- To return the *Request for Additional Approval Form*, having completed all areas, prior to when they require care to commence, so that the request may be considered.
- To understand that if there is another Educator with an availability that means the service can stay within ratio of 1:4, they may not get the Educator of their request.