

MONITORING QUALITY OF CARE
including Support and Performance Management of Educators

AIM:

To maintain appropriate standards of care by ensuring the provision of consistent monitoring, support and management of educators.

To keep children safe by regularly reviewing each care environment attached to this service through safety audits, risk assessments and regular coordinator support visits.

To provide a continuing cycle of professional development opportunities to the educators of the service by undertaking regular support visits to educator's services.

RATIONALE:

Clarence Family Day Care understands that appropriate monitoring and support **procedures** will recognise educator's skills; confirm they are fulfilling their duties; and identify their training and development needs. Because family day care educators are working in an environment where they are solely responsible for a group of children for most of the time, CFDC ensures a system of visits and monitoring mechanisms are in place to support educators in their endeavours to achieve high quality education and care services. Coordinator visits to educator's homes also provide opportunities for informal learning; encourage reflective thinking; and promote the modelling of appropriate practices and behaviours. Home visits are an opportunity to share information about individual children in care, child development, early and middle childhood education and care recommendations and the needs of families. The scheme also understands its responsibilities under Work Health & Safety legislation to ensure educators are suitably qualified for their work, and are given adequate guidance and on the job training to enable them to work safely.

The scheme has an understanding of the requirements for educators of family day care education and care services contained within the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations 2011, and the scheme's obligations under this legislation to ensure that appropriate standards are maintained at all times. Education and care services need to be child safe. The scheme will therefore be vigilant in the monitoring and supervision of educators to reduce the risk of exposing children to hazards that may affect their safety, health and wellbeing.

POLICY:

The scheme will strive to have educators provide and maintain a **high** standard of childcare at all times. Coordinators monitor the quality of care provided by educators. Appropriate action will be taken to rectify a loss of standard or breach of law, regulation **or policy** by educators.

Every effort will be made to assist parents or educators who raise concerns about care issues. Co-ordination unit staff will work with parents and/or educators in an effort to resolve those concerns through negotiation and discussion, through awareness of any legal and/or regulatory issues affecting the particular matter and through attention to the rights and responsibilities of the parties involved. Unresolved concerns will be referred to the scheme manager and then to the approved provider of the scheme, if necessary. Further attempts to resolve the matter may be guided with the help of a mediator.

PROCEDURES:

The primary role of scheme staff is to provide support to educators and monitor the family day care environment and the education and care children receive.

Coordinators will make every effort to visit each **service once in every ten working days**, except for new educators who, for an initial induction period only, **may** be visited weekly.

Visits may be unannounced or by appointment, and may occasionally take place at playsessions, networking evenings and/or by telephone, if circumstances prevent contact at the educators premises.

Educators have the opportunity to request additional support visits at times suitable to both the educator and scheme staff.

The purpose of scheme staff conducting visits to educator's homes is to:

- support educators in their role and to enhance the link between the scheme and the educator;
- promote opportunities for two way communication between scheme staff and educators to meet the needs of families;
- assist educators to identify safety issues and take appropriate steps to eliminate risks;
- ensure that a program is delivered to each child, that complies with section 168 of the law and clause 74, 75, & 76 of the regulation;
- assist educators to observe, document and interpret children's skills and interests;
- discuss, plan and evaluate children's experiences;
- provide assistance and access to information and resources such as current recommendations from recognised authorities, and play and learning equipment; and
- identify and implement professional development needs and training opportunities.

Clarence Family Day Care ensures the highest quality of service to its clients through its support systems for educators. The scheme will conduct an annual educator service review prior to registration renewal. Re-registrations will be approved based on the outcomes of service appraisals and ongoing monitoring throughout the previous year.

Play sessions, held at the scheme premises, are opportunities for educators and scheme staff to work together to provide large group experiences for children that are fun and interesting. These sessions are designed to foster children's development and provide them with experiences that enhance the educator's day to day programs in the family day care home. The play sessions provide support and networking for educators and an opportunity for staff to impart knowledge and experiences to educators and to support quality interactions between children and educators.

A toy and equipment library is available for educators to promote access to an increased variety of safe durable toys and equipment that facilitate children's interests and skills, fosters their development and imagination and reflects the diversity within the community.

Monitoring education and care services

- Each family day care educator is provided with a coordinator who will be their support person for any issue regarding the operations of their service.
- Coordinators conduct monitoring and support visits to educator's homes at any time within the educator's hours of operation. Educators who provide overnight, before and after school care and weekend care may be visited by a coordinator during out of hours care sessions. The nominated supervisor of the scheme must be given notification of planned overnight care sessions in writing, and give approval prior to the care taking place.
- Coordinators will ensure home visits are conducted in a professional manner that encourages mutual respect, understanding and trust and facilitates a collaborative team approach to resolving issues and ensuring a quality service.
- Educators who live outside the area in which regular visits are possible are contacted by phone or other technology regularly and supported in any way possible. Educators and their coordinators discuss the development of children and activities provided and other relevant issues.

Visits may be linked to specific situations such as when:

- an educator is recently registered and inducted;
- a new child and family is enrolled and placed in an educator's home;
- a grievance or complaint is lodged with the service about an educator;
- changes occur to the service's policy and practices, legislation, licensing and/or quality improvement plans; or
- there is notification of a child protection issue relating to an educator, children, families or an educator's family.
- **As a general rule, and when car rosters allow**, educators are visited at differing times and on different days in an attempt to ensure all children in care are observed and their care monitored.

Information gathered on home visits is documented and used to provide feedback to educators and **where applicable may also be used** to provide feedback to families regarding their children's experiences in family day care. During home visits, coordinators will ensure their interactions with children are warm, friendly and respectful.

- Educators and their coordinators will regularly monitor the safety of the care environment **using a range of methods**. Any areas needing attention will be discussed **and documented using the scheme's performance management system, and arrangements for** a follow up visit at an agreed time will be made.
- Any issues, breaches of regulations or non-compliance with specific policies will be addressed immediately.
- If a **written** agreement is made that certain changes are to be implemented or procedures followed this will be signed by both the coordinator and educator and a copy of the document will be provided to the educator.
- Families are encouraged to give feedback to scheme staff members regarding the care of their children. Families are advised that both positive comments and comments identifying concerns are welcome.

Links to National Standards: 2.1.2; 2.3.1; 2.3.2; 3.1; 3.2; 4.1; 4.2.1; 5.1.1; 7.1.2; 7.2.3; 7.3.1

- Any family concerns will be followed up by an unannounced visit to the educator as soon as possible, and will be addressed with the family in line with the scheme's grievances and complaints procedures and child protection policy.
- Educators are encouraged to contact the scheme manager or their coordinator to discuss any difficulties they are experiencing. The scheme manager or coordinator will follow this up with a visit at a time that is mutually suitable to both staff member and educator.
- Coordinators will provide ideas and practical assistance to any educators experiencing difficulties.
- If the difficulties continue, the scheme manager or coordinator and educator will discuss a range of options which may include regular weekly visits until the problem is resolved. The scheme will also provide additional resources and information and, if necessary, contact resource and professional support agencies for additional information or support.
- Coordinators will also discuss how educators are balancing their family day care responsibilities with their home and family commitments, and provide advice and support where necessary.
- Where there are issues with the educator's family members that are adversely influencing the quality of education and care being provided, the scheme manager will arrange a time to discuss the issues with the whole family, and seek a resolution to the problems. If a resolution cannot be immediately found the scheme's grievance procedures will be followed, and (depending on the nature of the issue, and if children's health, safety or wellbeing is at risk) the educator's registration may be suspended until a resolution is found.
Educators are invited to give coordinators input on the type of support they require during visits.
- Educators and coordinators will regularly evaluate visits to determine whether or not the desired outcomes for the children and the educator are being achieved.

Training and development

- All educators and staff will hold (or be actively working towards) a qualification as required by the Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011.
- All educators, **educator assistants** and child care staff will hold a current approved First Aid Qualification.
- All educators, **educator assistants** and child care staff will hold current approved asthma management and anaphylaxis management qualifications.
- All new educators **and educator assistants** will be assessed on **applicable modules** of the **NSW Family Day Care Inc. Educator Induction Package** upon the scheme's acceptance of their application for registration.
- Clarence Family Day Care will coordinate training and development for educators and staff of the service and ensure that training opportunities are provided on an equitable basis.
- The nominated supervisor/scheme manager will ensure that all educators and staff are given adequate access to support, development and training opportunities in line with the requirements of the regulations/standards and law.

Links to National Standards: 2.1.2; 2.3.1; 2.3.2; 3.1; 3.2; 4.1; 4.2.1; 5.1.1; 7.1.2; 7.2.3; 7.3.1

- **Educators and coordinators will collaborate in identifying training needs for the service.**

Training may be in one of the following formats:

- educators/staff share their expertise at training forums held within the organisation;
 - an outside presenter runs an in-service workshop for educators and staff;
 - educators and/or staff attend external workshops, conferences;
 - educators/staff complete short courses relevant to their professional development needs;
 - study towards nationally recognised qualifications;
 - educators/staff learn on the job through taking on new responsibilities within the organisation;
 - relevant resources eg. books, articles, DVDs, websites etc. are accessed in line with individual interests and/or professional development needs.
- Clarence Family Day Care will encourage educators and staff to identify training or professional development that is:
 - relevant to the worker's role;
 - a requirement of their position;
 - linked to **individual and service needs**; and
 - relevant to the forward planning needs of the service.
 - **The success and relevance of training and professional development opportunities will be considered in the planning of future training.** If educators are continually unable to participate in professional development opportunities the scheme manager will discuss how this impacts on their scheme **registration**. Educators are **encouraged** to attend professional development sessions as a quality improvement strategy.

Key Resources: *DEEWR Child Care Service Handbook 2013 – 2014, Section 6.7;* www.deewr.gov.au.
PSC National Alliance Model Policy Template 2012.

Relevant Legislation: *Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011;*
Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010;
National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care 2010;