

Family Day Care

Enrolment, Orientation and Using Care



Merri-bek
City Council

Section: 6 Collaborative Relationships with Families and Communities

Policy ID Number: 6.1

Link to National Quality Standard: 6.1.1, 6.1.2, 6.1.3, 6.2.1, 6.2.2

Link to Education and Care Services National Legislation: As175, r160, r161, r162, r177, r178, r179 r181, r182

1 Policy Statement

Family Day Care will facilitate access to care, enrolment and orientation processes to meet the unique needs of each child and family. This will support them during their transition to the service, help to develop collaborative partnerships, and promote a sense of belonging to the service community.

2 Rationale

Family Day Care is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where protecting children and preventing and responding to child abuse is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of all Educators, Educator family members, work experience/work placement students and volunteers irrespective of their involvement in child related duties.

To ensure all information required for legislative requirements is collected prior to care commencing.

To implement a flexible and responsive enrolment and orientation process which will assist children and families to have a seamless transition into the service and the Educator's home.

To support families and Educators to understand their roles and responsibilities in accessing, enrolling into and utilising care.

3 Procedures

3.1 General

- Family Day Care is available for children 0-12 years old or up to commencement of secondary school.
 - Infants must have commenced their immunisations as per the prescribed Victorian Immunisation Schedule prior to starting care.
 - In some circumstances the age limit can be extended in consultation with the family, Educator and Coordination Unit; this is assessed on a case by case basis in line with relevant legislation.
- Educators can care for up to seven children at a time
 - A maximum of four of these children can be preschool aged
 - The Educators own children are included in ratios until they turn 13.
- When placing children into care, consideration will be given as follows:
 - Children at risk of serious abuse or neglect; and/or
 - A child of a sole parent who satisfies, or both parents who satisfy, the activity test through paid employment.
 - Priority will be given to families that live, work or study in Merri-bek.

- All criteria being equal applications will be allocated a place according to their place on the waiting list and current care vacancies.

3.2 Registration

- Families can access care either by
 - Registering for FDC via Council's Child Care Central Registration system
 - Direct referral from an Educator
- The Child Care Registration Officer (CCRO) will manage registrations once they have been received. This will include contacting families to confirm their interest in vacancies and maintaining a waiting list when care is not available and/or not required until a future date.
- The CCRO will provide the FDC Intake Officer with the details of prospective families that can fulfil any reported vacancies.
- The CCRO will discuss care requests with Educators prior to referral. Educators may decline any care request. There may be a delay in filling vacancies depending on the demand for care and the available places.
- The CCRO will provide families with available options for care. Families will make a time to meet with the Educator/s, and after this meeting both the Educator/s and families will provide feedback.
- Once an Educator has been selected enrolment will occur.
- Urgent requests for care will be managed if possible, and families supported to access care.

3.3 Enrolment

- Prior to commencing care an enrolment form must be completed for each child by the family. All sections of the enrolment form must be completed, and other relevant documents provided, including an Immunisation History Statement, any relevant medical management plans and Court Orders if applicable. Care cannot commence until all documentation has been completed and/or provided.
- Once documentation has been submitted
 - A Resource Officer will complete an enrolment interview with the family. This will clarify service and Educator requirements and answer questions for the family.
 - An Administration Officer will ensure all data is current in the service's software system and provide the Educator access to the records of children enrolled into their care.
 - The Educator will ensure they have access to all enrolment documents via the service's software system prior to the child commencing.
- Families are required to keep all information current. Information can be updated at any time by emailing the Coordination Unit.
- The Coordination Unit will contact families annually to update enrolment information. Families need to complete this by the due date.

3.4 Care for Educator's own children and relatives

- Educators own children will be counted in child care ratios until they turn 13. However, an Educator cannot access Child Care Subsidy (CCS) while caring for their own child.
- Educators have no entitlement to claim CCS for placing their child into care with another FDC Educator on the same day that they provide FDC services. There are limited exceptions that can be assessed on a case by case basis.

- Educators can care for relatives such as a niece or nephew, cousin or grandchild. In these circumstances to meet CCS legislative requirements the Coordination Unit and the Educator must ensure that less than 50 per cent of the children being provided care in each CCS fortnight are related to the Educator.
- Any relatives of an Educator must complete all enrolment requirements prior to accessing care.

3.5 Orientation

- An orientation program will be designed in consultation with the Coordination Unit, the Educator and the family. This will be flexible and responsive to the child and family's needs, providing the child time to adjust and settle into the new environment.
- It is recommended that orientation is for a period of two (2) weeks. Anything longer needs to be discussed and agreed between the Educator, family and Coordination Unit.
- The Educator will record the child's orientation booking and attendance in the service's software system. Families will be charged for the hours of care used during orientation.
- Once orientation has been completed the Educator will submit the permanent booking via the service's software system.

3.6 Access to the care environment

- The Educator will make available to families the areas of the home and outdoor space that will be accessed by children while in care.
- The Educator will only provide access to families and/or authorised nominees that have been listed on the child's enrolment form.
- Families are encouraged to keep arrival and departure times brief but in keeping with the child's needs. If a family would like a longer discussion with the Educator regarding their child, please arrange this at a mutually agreed time.
- The Educator will provide the parent/guardian of a child access to the care environment at any time their child is in care with the Educator unless permitting the parents/guardians entry would:
 - pose a safety risk to children and/or the Educator; and/or
 - contravene a court order.
- Where court orders have been provided, the Educator will follow the requirements of the court orders and only provide access to the child and care environment to those authorised by the court orders.
 - If a non-custodial family member arrives the Educator will indicate they cannot release the child and contact the police and then the Coordination Unit for support.

3.7 Relocation care

- If an Educator is unavailable to provide care the Coordination Unit will endeavour to organise relocation care for a family if they require this. The family needs to contact the Coordination Unit to request this.
 - If a family is relocated, they will pay the fee of the Educator they are accessing care with.
 - The original Educator will not be paid when they are unavailable.

3.8 Overnight and 24-hour care

- In some circumstances care can be provided for children overnight or for 24-hour periods, evidence may be required. Generally, this would be for work related purposes, hospitalisation of

a single parent or family bereavement. Other circumstances could be considered by the Coordination Unit on a case-by-case basis.

- The Coordination Unit must approve all overnight or 24-hour care prior to it occurring. Families requiring this care must contact the Coordination Unit during business hours or via their Educator.
- If a family's regular Educator cannot provide overnight or 24-hour care the Coordination Unit will endeavour to relocate the family to an Educator who is available to provide this care.
- If a family exceeds their allocated CCS hours and is not eligible for Additional Child Care Subsidy, they will be liable to pay all additional fee costs in relation to overnight or 24-hour care.

4 References

- [Education and Care Services National Law Act](#)
- [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)
- [National Quality Standards](#)
- [ACECQA](#)
- Child Care Provider Handbook

Revision History

Date	Revision No.	Revision Section	Revision Description
December 2016	1.0	All	Initial Policy Release (creation date)
December 2021	2.0	All	Updated from old Policy to new format and current information.
December 2023	3.0	3.2, 3.3, 3.8	Updated to reflect the councils name change and changes to the registration process.
December 2025	Next Review Date		