

**communities
atWork**

**FAMILY
DAY CARE**

HANDBOOK





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Acknowledgement of Country

Communities at Work acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live. We recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.



What is Family Day Care?

Family Day Care (FDC) is a form of early childhood education and care that takes place in the home of approved educators and operates under the National Quality Framework. FDC is available to children from birth to 12 years. Highly trained and professional educators provide curriculum-based learning tailored to each child's individual needs.

Throughout Australia, there are over 26,000 educators registered with 800 approved service providers, and over 220,900 children access Family Day Care each week.

Communities at Work's Family Day Care educators who operate a small business from their own home are required to hold or be working towards a minimum of a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care. Our educators work in partnership with families and the coordination unit to provide education and care in a small group setting, catering for infants to pre-teens. Educators offer a range of care types, including standard business hours, before and after school care, school holiday care, shift work or irregular hours. Family Day Care is a flexible form of care that supports families within the community.

Commitment to Quality

We are committed to pursuing excellence in all service delivery areas and are constantly improving and looking for new ways to support our families and educators.

We are proud to be Exceeding National Quality Standard and have also been awarded Family Day Care service of the year in 2015 and 2016.

What is the Coordination Unit?

The coordination unit is a team of early childhood professionals with support teams consisting of an educational leader and a support coordinator. Support teams regularly visit and work closely with educators to support the health and wellbeing, safety and developmental needs of children. Support teams guide educators with operating their own small business in accordance with the National Law and Regulations, National Quality Standards and the service's policy and procedures. In addition to this, the coordination unit has a client support team who assist families with enrolments, timesheets, payment enquiries and other Childcare Subsidy related issues.

The coordination unit is open Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm on 02 6293 6590 or fdc@commsatwork.org



Choosing Your Family Day Care

As a service, we are strongly committed to matching our families and educators to the same sets of values and philosophies on the education and care of children. Our dedicated placement officer speaks to families to determine their care needs and what they are looking for in an educator. Families are provided with a list of educators to visit; families are encouraged to contact the educators and make a convenient time to visit. We highly recommend that families attend together with their child/ren to meet and greet the educator at the visit/interview.

Things to consider or ask at interview with an educator:

- What to bring to care, hats, food, spare clothing, nappies etc.
- Routines and toileting
- Medical conditions
- Developmental goals
- Education and care expectations
- Your child's interests and the family's cultural background
- Fees and payments
- Excursions and Playgroups
- Nutritional Requirements

Fees

Our educators are self-employed and each charge a different rate per hour depending on the type of care required. Types of care include:

- Standard hours (8am – 6pm)
- Non-Standard hours
- Before and After School Care
- Casual Care
- Public Holidays

It is important during the interview process to discuss fees and hours of care required and for both parties to agree to the terms and complete a Complying Written Arrangement (CWA).

While there are no family administration levies to be paid to the coordination unit by families, educators are charged an administration levy. Educators may need to consider this when they set out their fee structure.

Each fortnight attendance records are processed by the Coordination Unit and submitted to Services Australia for the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) to be applied. These subsidy payments are received by the Coordination Unit and passed onto educators. Families will then be invoiced by educators the outstanding gap fee amount, and this is then paid directly to the educator.

Each fortnight, families are sent a parent/guardian payment advice with the total fee details, including CCS and the gap amount.

Families using care must pay their CCS gap fee using Electronic Funds Transfer, this includes bank transfer, direct deposit, bank or credit card payment, mobile wallets, BPAY and Centrepay. Cash will not be accepted under any circumstances.

Enrolment

Once you have found your educator and wish to enrol your child with our service, you will need to contact our placement officer, who will provide a link to our online enrolment form via your email address. We are happy to assist you if you require assistance during this process.

E: fdccst@commsatwork.org

P: 02 6293 6590

Registering for Child Care Subsidy

If you are eligible and wish to claim Child Care Subsidy, (CCS) you will be required to complete the following steps:

- Create a MyGov account and link it to Centrelink
- Make a claim for the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and complete all steps, including the Activity Test.
- Complete or confirm a Complying Written Arrangement (CWA) with your provider.
- Confirm the enrolment through your MyGov/ Centrelink account.

For more information, please refer to the following link:

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy>

Immunisations

As per ACT Public Health Regulations, all children enrolling in childcare must present a copy of their child/ren's immunisation records at the time of enrolment. Copies of any new or updated immunisation records must be supplied as soon as possible. We are obligated to notify the medical officer of the Health Department of any suspected cases of vaccine-preventable disease within the service.

Illness

Children should not be brought into an FDC setting if they are unwell and not able to participate in the educator's program. This includes:

Fever

Over 38 degrees

Diarrhoea/gastroenteritis

Children will be excluded from care after vomiting or two abnormal bowel motions. This exclusion will remain for a period of 24 hours from the last occurrence unless we are experiencing an outbreak, in which case the exclusion period will be 48 hours or as directed by ACT Health.

Cold/Flu

Children will be sent home to avoid cross-infection if they exhibit any cold or flu symptoms.

Head lice

Children can attend the service once an effective treatment has been administered.

Conjunctivitis

Children will be excluded until there is no discharge evident.

Unexplained rashes

Children will be excluded until the rash is no longer evident or when a doctor provides a medical certificate stating that the rash is not contagious.

COVID

If your child is displaying COVID-19 symptoms, please keep your child at home until they are well and seek testing. If your child or a family member who resides in your home tests positive to COVID-19, please advise your educator and await further advice from the coordination unit.

If your child becomes ill upon arrival at an educator's home, you or your emergency contacts will be notified, and arrangements made for your child to be collected as soon as possible.

Educators will ensure that every effort is made to make your child comfortable until they are collected from the educators' home. We are not permitted to administer medication (including Panadol) as it can mask symptoms.

Medications

Families will need to provide written approval before an educator can administer any medication. All medications must be provided in their original container bearing the original label and the following information:

- The name of the child
- The name of the medication
- The issue date of the medicine
- The dosage
- How often to administer the dose
- How to administer the medicine
- Expiry date
- Storage requirements

Medications must be handed to an educator and stored in a container out of the child's reach (not in the child's bag).

Families are to advise the educator if their child has asthma or a severe medical condition during the initial interview. A medical action plan completed by a doctor is to be provided at enrolment where possible. Together, the educator and family are to complete a medical condition risk minimisation and communication plan before the child commences in care.

Accidents

When a minor accident occurs, first aid will be administered, parents/guardians will be notified, and an Incident, Injury, Trauma Report will be completed explaining the incident and action taken. The family member collecting the child will need to read and sign the form.

If a major accident occurs, including any head injury, you will be contacted immediately. If an ambulance is necessary, the ambulance will be called before the family. Please note families are responsible for the ambulance fee.

Signing Children In and Out of Care

Our educators use an electronic sign in and out system called Harmony Web. Once enrolment is completed, family members who have provided an email address will be sent a pin code to use. This pin should be kept private and used to sign your child/ren in and out of care each day they attend.

Please note family members under the age of 18 years are not permitted to collect children from care.

Curriculum

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and My Time Our Place (MTOF) are the national frameworks that guide educators in their pedagogy and practice. Educators' curriculums are based on children's interests, family input and the child's developmental needs and educator's personal philosophy. Educators provide a play-based curriculum that is inclusive, engaging and provides children with critical thinking opportunities, support, and encouragement.

Community engagement, sustainability, and cultural awareness are embedded in the service philosophy.

Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework

https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-02/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf

My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia

https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-05/my_time_our_place_framework_for_school_age_care_in_australia_0.pdf

Playgroups

To support our educators and provide additional social opportunities for children, the Coordination Unit conducts playgroups each week in various locations. The playgroups provide a different theme such as a kitchen garden, indoor and outdoor playgroup, and community connections.

To find out more about playgroups, please speak to your educator.

Meals

During the initial interview, a discussion about meals should take place. Families will provide the educator with their child's dietary requirements and the educator will discuss providing nutritious food options for their child each day. Educators may provide morning and afternoon tea options such as fruit, yoghurt, cheese etc (please check with your educator prior to care commencing).

Unfortunately, due to health regulations, educators are unable to provide a full meal menu, and families are required to bring lunch for their child/ren.

If you are breastfeeding, please speak to your educators, who will assist you with your individual requirements.

What to Bring and Checklist for Starting in Care

Please speak to your educator directly about what you will need to bring to care. However, the following items are listed for you to consider:

- Hat
- Water bottle
- Appropriate clothing for the weather
- Change of clothes
- Nappies
- Bottles
- Comforter

Unfortunately, educators cannot accept responsibility for any lost or damaged items.

Being SunSmart

Educators monitor Ultraviolet radiation (UVR) each day. Whenever the levels reach 3 or above, sun protection is recommended. All children should be dressed for maximum protection against UVR, including appropriate footwear and clothing.

Administration

Policies and procedures

All families have access to the National Law and Regulations services, policies and procedures through our Harmony software system.

Please ask your educator for more details or contact the coordination unit on 02 6293 6590

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

This link is to the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 enacted in Victoria and then adopted by the other states and territories.

<https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/education-and-care-services-national-law-act-2010/012>

Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011

This link is to the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) legislation adopting the Victoria law.

<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2011-42/default.asp>

Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011 SI 653)

This is a link to the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 published by New South Wales (NSW). The regulations are the same in all states and territories. This will also include any amendments since publication.

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/si-2011-0653>





Mandatory Reporting

Under the provision of the Children and Young People Act 1999, educators caring for children in an Education and Care Centre, School Age

Care program, Family Day Care or In Home Care program are legally required to report to Care and Protection Services when they have formed a reasonable suspicion that a child or young person has suffered or is suffering sexual abuse, neglect, or non-accidental physical injury.

Get In Touch

We love hearing from families, and we encourage feedback. In addition to speaking to the educators and coordination unit, you are also able to get in touch via our website:

<https://www.commsatwork.org/family-day-care>

Handy Links

Please check out these handy websites for more information:

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)

For information on the National Quality Framework:
<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/>

Australian Government: Services Australia

For information on child care subsidy system:
<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/>

MyGov

For confirming a child's child care subsidy:
<https://my.gov.au/>

Family Day Care Australia

For information and resources from Family Day Care's peak body in Australia:
<https://www.familydaycare.com.au/>

Terms, Conditions and Definitions

Below are the terms, conditions, and definitions of the service. Please take the time to read these carefully and refer back to when required.

Agreed Hours

- The hours of care are agreed between the educator and family.
- The weekly fee will be charged according to these hours unless the educator is on leave.
- The family and educator must complete a Complying Written Arrangement (CWA)/care agreement form prior to the commencement of care.
- A copy of this form must be forwarded to the Coordination unit and must be within the fee payment policy.
- Families must also confirm their enrolment and CWA with MyGov/ Centrelink and the service, before commencing in care to be eligible to receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

Electronic Signature (pin)

- Children will be signed in and out of care via Harmony software with an electronic pin.
- Families are required to sign each child in and out of care using this pin that is considered a digital signature. In addition, families are also required to sign off each week of care with this pin, to ensure CCS payments can be made.
- Each pin is unique to each individual. Under no circumstances should pins be shared with the educator or another person.

Allowable Absences from Care

- Families can get Child Care Subsidy (CCS) when their child is unable to attend up to 42 days a year (financial year).
- These absences can be used for any reason and include public holidays. However, you will be required to electronically sign the attendance record acknowledging the absence from care.
- Families cannot claim CCS before a child's first attendance at the service (inclusive of their first day) or after their last physical attendance at the service (inclusive of their last day). eg. If the child is absent for the first 2 days and has not physically started at the service CCS will not be paid for the 2 days and full fees apply, or if the child is absent for the last 5 days before their cease date, CCS will not be paid for the 5 days and full fees will apply.
- If the child is absent for one or more than one session of care on the same day, such as both before and after school care, it is counted as one absent day.
- There are occasions where CCS can be paid for absences where the 42 days have been exceeded. The most common occasion is an absence due to illness. A medical certificate will need to be emailed to the client support team – fdccst@commsatwork.org

Timesheets

- It is the family's responsibility to record the time of arrival and departure of the child in care. An absence from care is to be acknowledged by the parent/guardian by signing the timesheet. Failure to do so will attract full payment.
- It is the educator's responsibility to use their pin and sign children in and out when leaving and/or collecting at preschool and/or school age child to/from sessions when the child is not physically in their care.
- Failure to complete the timesheet may result in non-payment of CCS.

Completion of Timesheets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total Hours: Refers to the total hours of payment including extra hours used in that week. • Total Cost: Refers to the total fee, including extra hours of care used in that week.
Back-Up Care	When an educator is unavailable for care and the family requires an alternate educator, the family must notify the coordination unit as soon as possible. Payment is to be discussed at the time backup care is arranged, as each educator has their own fee schedule.
Care Beyond Agreed Hours	If care extends beyond agreed hours the parent/guardian must sign the electronic attendance record to acknowledge the altered hours, to receive entitled benefits to the cost of care. An educator may charge a higher rate for the extra care provided.
Casual On-Call Notice	Where care is booked and later cancelled without suitable notice, the educator may still charge for the care. Suitable notice is determined by the educator.
Cessation of Care 2 Weeks	<p>The family and educator are required to complete a ceasing in care form if they wish to cease care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family – Two weeks notice must be given to the educator and the coordination unit, prior to cessation of care. • Educator – Two weeks notice must be given to both family and coordination unit prior to cessation of care. • Self employed educators may choose to reduce the notice period at their own discretion • Children need to physically attend their last care day for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) to be paid. All outstanding payments must be settled prior to cessation of care. Please refer to Communities at Work Family Day Care Policies and Procedures for details.
Changing the Complying Written Arrangement (CWA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any permanent change of hours must be negotiated between the educator and family. These agreed hours are confirmed via an electronic booking change request and submitted to the Coordination Unit. • A CWA must be completed for new families and school holiday care, this allows the family to agree to the fees and hours of care in the agreement. A copy of the CWA for a new family or school holiday care must be forwarded to the Coordination Unit prior to care commencing. • One week notice must be given prior to change agreed hours.
Child/Young Person Protection	Communities at Work Family Day Care and In Home Care have a responsibility to maximise the safety and wellbeing of children and/young people and ensure that the right of everyone involved are protected and respected. Both the Coordination Unit and Educators are mandated by law to report suspected child abuse to the relevant state and territory authorities.
Child Care Subsidy (CCS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is funded by the Australian Government to support families with the costs of early education and care, by reducing the out of pocket costs for families. Families are required to meet eligibility criteria to access Child Care Subsidy. <p>For further information on your eligibility for CCS please contact Services Australia.</p> <p>https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/who-can-get-child-care-subsidy?context=41186</p>

Educator Fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The educator fee is the hourly fee charged by the educator to the family. • As the educator is self-employed, they are to determine their own fees. • The educator is required to give each family four weeks' notice prior to any fee change. • The educator may increase the fee no more than twice per financial year. A CWA must be completed, and a copy of the new arrangement must be forwarded to the Coordination Unit two weeks prior to date of effect of new fees. • The Australian Government requires educators to charge families the same fee for each child using the same type of care. • Families using care must pay their CCS gap fee using Electronic Funds Transfer, this includes bank transfer, direct deposit, bank or credit card payment, mobile wallets, BPAY and Centrepay. Cash will not be accepted under any circumstances.
Educator Leave	When the educator is unavailable fees cannot be charged.
Family Leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-school aged child: When a family takes leave full cost of care will apply. • School age child: When a family takes leave during school term full cost of the care will apply. • Absences will apply.
Late Fee	An additional fee maybe payable to the educator by the family for late payment. The educator will set the rate for this policy. Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is not payable for this payment.
Notice of Absences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The educator should discuss with the family the requirements for giving notice of a child's non arrival. • The following guidelines are usual practice: Family Leave at least 2 weeks' notice Occasional absences at least 24 hours' notice • The educator is required to advise the family if they are unavailable to provide care using the above guideline. Please note that should an educator be unable to provide care payment will not apply. • Public Holiday absences attract normal payment. If care is required on a public holiday discuss with the educator care options and the applicable hourly rate. It is up to the Educators discretion if Public Holiday care is provided.
Pre-school Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preschool children are NOT classified as school age children. For this reason, the educator needs to negotiate a Complying Written Arrangement/care agreement, with the family of preschool children. • It is usual practice that unless a family takes a child to and from preschool, the educator will be paid for the full day, for the contracted hours, even while the child is at preschool.
Rotating/Rostered Shifts/Casual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The family is required to give their educator a roster at least one week in advance for standard care rates to apply (to be negotiated with the educator). Shifts which cannot be advised one week in advance, attract the casual on call rate. • Payments for leave for rostered care will be calculated, by taking an average of preceding 12 weeks of care.

School Aged Children

- Family and educator are required to complete a CWA from the commencement of each school year.

A school term is defined as:

- **For Government schools** – the days a child is required to attend as specified by the ACT Department of Education and Training.
- **For Non-Government schools** – the days a child is required to attend as specified by the school.

School Holiday Care

- If care is required during school holidays the family is to complete, sign and date a Complying Written Arrangement, at least two weeks prior to the commencement of care.
- If a public holiday falls within the school holiday period, families will not be charged for the public holiday if care is not required and agreed for that day.
- It should be noted that the CWA are to be completed with the days and hours of care required.
- Families must also confirm their enrolment and CWA with MyGov/ Centrelink before commencing in care to be eligible to receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS).



About Us

Communities at Work is the largest provider of children's services and the largest not-for-profit community organisation in the ACT region, with a proud 43-year history.

We provide a wide range of early education and care services and community services in the ACT and Capital region. We pride ourselves on the positive contribution we make to the lives of members of our community. At Communities at Work, people are at the heart of everything we do. We go above and beyond in delivering high-quality services that support positive educational outcomes, assist in alleviating hardship, enhance quality of life, and lead to positive social change.

Communities at Work is a public company limited by guarantee and is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. We employ over 600 employees, engage 90 self-employed Family Day Care and In Home Care educators and harness the passionate commitment of over 100 volunteers to help us carry out our mission of enriching the lives of people in our community in life-changing ways.

As a people-focused organisation, Communities at Work is committed to creating a sustainable future for the Canberra community. Our surplus-for-purpose philosophy enables us to invest every dollar we earn right back into the Canberra community, including the provision of much-needed essential support such as food, clothing and accommodation assistance to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of our community.

We operate across six program areas delivering high-quality services across Canberra and the ACT region.



To enrich the lives of people in our community in life changing ways



Integrity | Respect for all | Progressive Quality and Innovation | Sustainability



To be responsive to the needs of the community by delivering high quality services that support positive educational outcomes, assist in alleviating hardships, enhance the quality of life and lead to positive and social change.

communities atwork

Family Day Care and In Home Care

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