



Inner West Family Day Care
Early Learning Services



Family Day Care Handbook

2026

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Our commitment to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples

Inner West Council acknowledges the Gadigal and Wangal peoples of the Sydney Basin as the traditional owners and custodians of this land.

We acknowledge this is a country of which the members and Elders of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have been custodians for many centuries. We acknowledge their living culture and unique role in the life of this region.

Inner West Council is committed to Reconciliation, always ensuring that the process is based on respect, trust and a spirit of openness. Building relationships with the local Aboriginal community enhances the living experience of our residents, businesses and general community members, and promotes Reconciliation through better understanding.

We respect that our community is made up of many different people from all spheres of life who have made this area their home and bring with them their own uniqueness.



Guiding statement and commitment

Inner West Council is the Approved Provider of a number of Early and Middle Childhood Services and a Family Day Care Scheme. All of these approved services are regulated and monitored under the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations (2011).

Council's Children's Services are a gateway to inclusive, just and high-quality education, recreation and care, with a family-centred focus that respects and values the strength of our children and families.

Our services build and sustain a strong sense of belonging and connection between families, their community and cultural identity. We actively engage children in discovering the joys and wonders of learning about the world we live in so they can achieve their full potential and become active, valued and confident citizens of their local and wider community.

Council has a commitment to delivering licensed, high-quality programs which are underpinned by children's rights and social justice principles. Educators work as collaborators with children to foster their learning and development, establishing environments that build on the desire to investigate and explore our world.

We actively support all aspects of diversity through a range of proactive strategies, including individual child-based programs, to help build cohesive and peaceful communities.

Child Safety:

Inner West Council is committed to being a child safe organisation. We put children's safety and wellbeing at the centre of our practices. Child safety is a shared responsibility across the organisation. All IWC staff and Family Day Care educators contribute to maintaining our child-safe culture and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the children in our services and programs.

IWC has a zero tolerance of harm or abuse of children and educators work in accordance with child protection legislation. Educators and staff working with children and young people are mandatory notifiers. They are legally required to notify NSW Family and Community Services of any concerns they may have for a child's safety.

Welcome Message



Dear Families and Carers,

A very warm welcome to Inner West Family Day Care.

At the heart of everything we do is your child. We honour the way children have always thrived through safe, familiar and relationship-based environments where they feel secure, curious and free to grow at their own pace. Every child is unique – too precious for a one size fits all approach – and we remain committed to combining traditional care values with contemporary best practice.

We deeply value our educators and the important role they play each day. Through ongoing guidance, encouragement and professional learning, they are supported to provide thoughtful, high quality care and meaningful learning experiences.

We believe strong partnerships grow through open communication, so your feedback and collaborative input are always appreciated and encouraged. If you would like to share anything, ask a question or simply say hello, please feel free to contact me directly or reach out via fdc@innerwest.nsw.gov.au.

We look forward to partnering with your family and getting to know each other along the way.

Rosie Pupo
Inner West Family Day Care
Service Manager

What is Family Day Care?

Family Day Care (FDC) is a unique form of childcare that provides high-quality early learning in a professional educator's home. This small group, nurturing setting truly focuses on each individual child's development.

All Educators must have:

- minimum of Certificate III in Children's Services qualifications
- working with Children Checks
- national Police Criminal Checks
- compliance documents such as current Senior First Aid, Asthma and Anaphylaxis training
- public Liability Insurance
- a commitment to attend ongoing related training and professional development opportunities to ensure their skills and knowledge are kept up-to-date



How is FDC different from other forms of childcare?

- Your child's education and care is provided by an individual early childhood education and care professional, operating within their own home or venue.
- Educators work with small groups of no more than four children under school age at any one time (an educator may care for 3 additional school aged children, outside of school hours).
- Educators undergo a recruitment process and are selected and registered with Family Day Care.
- Child placements with educators are organised and supported by the Family Day Care Coordination Unit. The Coordination Unit also carries out regular visits to provide support and monitor children's individual development.

How is it like centre-based care?

- Family Day Care operates under the same National Quality Framework as other forms of childcare, incorporating National Regulations, National Quality Standards educational frameworks and an assessment and ratings process.
- Parents are eligible for the Child Care Subsidy.



FDC Coordination Unit

The Family Day Care Coordination Unit is responsible for:

- Recruiting and monitoring educators.
- Visiting educator's homes regularly to provide support, mentoring, resources and advice to promote quality practices that foster your child's development.
- Ensuring that childcare standards and regulations are met to support a safe and inclusive care environment.
- Providing regular professional development for educators, staff and families, including child protection, first aid, sustainability, behaviour guidance, music, inclusive practice, learning through play and more.
- Operating a community play session which provides a range of activities including visual arts, science, sand and water play, physical development and more. Play sessions provide an opportunity for children to socialise in a larger group and for educators and staff to exchange information and gain new ideas.
- Supporting educators to provide a Transition to School Program for pre-school age children. We believe that school readiness is developed daily through involvement in our program by building trusting, responsive relationships through open communication and authentic 1:1 interaction.



We are meeting the National Quality Standard



Inner West Family Day Care has been assessed and rated by the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) and has achieved a Meeting rating. This rating acknowledges the service's commitment to meeting the National Quality Standard in all areas of operation, including education, care, health and safety, and management.

We follow the national curriculum Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) that guides the education and care of young children from birth to five years of age in Australia. Belonging, being, and becoming are the three core components of the EYLF.

Belonging refers to the importance of children feeling connected and accepted in their families, communities, and early childhood settings. It involves building positive relationships with others, feeling a sense of security and trust, and having a sense of identity and place in the world.

Being focuses on the present moment and recognises the value of children's spontaneous play and exploration. It emphasizes the importance of children being allowed to be themselves and encourages educators to facilitate and extend on their interests and ideas.

Becoming refers to the ongoing process of growth and development that children experience as they move through early childhood and beyond. It recognizes that children are active learners who are constantly developing new skills, knowledge, and understandings of themselves and the world around them.

Working in collaboration with parents & educators

Building partnerships with parents, carers and families is crucial to the wellbeing and development of children in care. At times, we may ask you to provide insights into your child's development or behaviour. In these cases, we follow these guiding principles:

- Parents are offered mutually convenient times to meet and discuss issues with staff/educators.
- FDC policies and procedures guide any recommendations or possible solutions.
- Collaboration allows for consistent practice to occur between the home and care environment, resulting in better outcomes for the child.
- All staff/educators within the service will follow the agreed strategies consistently.
- Any strategies implemented will consider the children's individual stage of development and abilities, recognising that needs and behaviours change as a child grows and matures.
- Any behaviour management strategies that are adopted will assist the child to gain self-discipline, recognising that this is a lifelong process.



Child care subsidy

The Child Care Subsidy is a payment from the Australian Government that helps families with the cost of childcare. It has been designed to assist people who work, train or study while also supporting early learning opportunities for children.

Centrelink looks at a family's combined income and activity levels to determine how much subsidy a family is entitled to, as well as how many fortnightly hours of care the subsidy can be applied to.

Please note, the Government places an hourly cap on the subsidy (for Family Day Care that cap is \$13.24 an hour).

Family Day Care Educators are sole traders and have their own fee schedules. You are responsible for paying the difference between the provider's fees and the CCS amount. This is known as the Gap Fee. It is important to note that all CCS payments will be paid to the educator *after* the session of care, so the gap payment will be confirmed after the first week of processing timesheets. In some cases, educators may request a two-week holding fee to cover the charges until the CCS payment is received by the service.

It is recommended that you ask your educator directly for their fee schedule and to clarify any questions or concerns you may have about payment and subsidy arrangements. By doing so, you can ensure that you are well-informed and prepared for any financial obligations associated with your child's care.

For more information about Child Care Subsidy, please contact Services Australia:



131 272



www.servicesaustralia.gov.au

How to get a CRN

You only need a CRN if you want to claim Centrelink payments or services.

The quickest way to get a CRN is with myGov. To start, you need a myGov account. If you don't have one, you can find out how to create one on the myGov website. When you've created your myGov account, follow these steps to prove your identity online and get a CRN.

1. Sign in to myGov
2. Select "Link Centrelink" from the "Link a Service" menu
3. Select "No" to the question "Do you have or know your CRN?", followed by "Next"
4. Select "Get Started" on either "Digital Identity" or "Centrelink Identity Verification"



Attendance records

Under National Law and Regulations, Services are required to provide accurate attendance data for any child enrolled in care. Family Day Care uses a Child Care Management Software called Harmony to record signing in/out during arrival/departure.

All families and authorised persons are issued with PINS that must be used to log attendance. To ensure accurate payments of CCS and to comply with legal requirements, families must accurately complete this sign in/out. It is also important to ensure that email addresses for guardians and authorised persons are provided on enrolment forms.

Families are entitled to 42 absences per financial year.

Any absence beyond that amount is not eligible for Child Care Subsidy payments unless appropriate documentation is provided (such as a Doctors Certificate).

Please note: no Child Care Subsidy will be paid on absences on the first and last days of care. This is a National Law & Regulation.

Parents and carers must sign their children in and out of care at the time of arrival and departure each day using the digital software Harmony. It is illegal under Family Assistance Law to sign in your children in advance. Attendance records must also be recorded for all full day absences that have an explanation (i.e. sick, holidays, away, RDO, public holiday, etc).

The Coordination Unit's Administration Officer's can help you with any questions you may have about Harmony and the sign in/sign out procedures.



Educator service closure

- Educators are required to provide families with at least four weeks' notice prior to taking holidays.
- Educators will also aim to provide as much notice as possible if they are unable to work due to illness.
- No fees are payable during educator holidays or service closure due to illness.

Alternate care can be arranged for your child, where possible, during the absence of your educator. Payment must be made to the alternate educator according to their fee schedule, and as educators can set their own fees, your alternate educator's fees may differ to what you normally pay.

Terminating care

A minimum of four weeks written notice is required to terminate the care agreement. Please email fdc@innerwest.nsw.gov.au.

Your child must attend the last day of care to receive Child Care Subsidy for that day (this is a Federal Government decision).

Holding Fees are arranged between families and educators. Please discuss the use of these fees directly with your educator.



Starting your child in care

Communication between you and your educator is one of the most important aspects of successful care.

A sense of belonging is fostered when families visit the educator's home prior to their child starting care. These orientation visits help to build relationships and familiarity with the surroundings, leading to a smoother transition. It is also a good way to connect with your educator and provide them with valuable information about your child's strengths, interests, needs and routines and how they can best support your child's transition into care.

Families' Responsibilities

- Provide the service with relevant documentation regarding the child's immunisation status upon enrolment.
- Ensure that their child's immunisation status is up to date.
- Notify the Service as soon as possible whenever your child has a confirmed vaccine preventable disease.
- Accept the NSW Department of Health exclusion period for children with communicable diseases and the Service conditions of re-entry if your child has been excluded.
- Ensure that your child is collected promptly from the Service should they exhibit signs or symptoms of a communicable disease.
- On enrolment, action plans must be completed in full for known health issues including asthma, epilepsy, anaphylaxis and any other medical conditions.
- Provide the service with any court ordered parenting plans.

Settling children into care

Starting childcare for the first time or transferring to a new care setting can be an anxious or overwhelming time for both children and their families. It is important to remember that this is a normal response to change. Developing rituals and strategies can ease these emotions.

- It is important to build a partnership and reciprocal relationship with your educator. Children are very in-tune and if they sense warm, friendly interactions between you and their educator they are more likely to feel at ease.
- Familiarise your child with the educator prior to care commencing through their orientation process.
- Be confident and positive yourself – your own anxiety can easily be transferred onto your child. Accept that your child may take some time to settle into care, however, they will soon learn that 'going' is followed by 'coming back'.
- Talk enthusiastically about your educator and the other children in care when getting your child ready in the morning – this can help prepare them for their day in a positive way.
- Try to keep the routine at care and home consistent so that not too many changes are happening at the same time. This is not a good time to introduce further changes such as weaning or toilet training, wait until your child has settled into care or plan ahead and make gradual changes in advance.
- Try not to delay your parting. Settle your child with your educator and when you're ready, tell your child that you are leaving and that you will be back to pick them up. Say goodbye and calmly go. Never sneak out of the door while your child is temporarily distracted. It may seem to work in the short term but will lead to long term trust issues where your child may become more dependant and clingy around you. Try to arrive a little before time when dropping off and collecting your child from care – the less rush and stress around drop off and pick up the better.
- A security item/toy may help your child feel more secure and will be a comfort when you are not there – a family photo in their bag works well too.

Meals

- Check with your educator if they provide meals for children. If your educator provides meals, they are required to display a weekly menu on their noticeboard for your information and to note any changes to the menu.
- If you are packing your child's food, remember to pack a nutritious morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. Please note that we are a nut free service. Please consider children with allergies in your child's service. Some food allergies are life threatening.
- Family Day Care has a Nutrition Policy and can provide information and ideas for what to include as healthy options for your child's diet. Family Day Care participates in the NSW Health initiative Munch & Move, a program that supports the healthy development of children from birth to 5 years, promoting physical activity, healthy eating and reduced screen time. For further information, visit www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au.



Clothing

- When dressing your child for their day in care, consider clothing and footwear that allows freedom of movement for physical activities, visual arts, play and toilet training where appropriate.
- A sunhat and sunscreen are essential all year.
- Pack an additional set of clothing for your child in case they need to change during the day due to accidents or a change of weather.
- Pack weather appropriate clothing. Allow for layers in winter that can be removed or added to for movement between indoor and outdoor play. Ensure shoulders are covered in Summer for sun protection.
- Avoid open shoes such as thongs or crocs and poorly fitting shoes that can be a hazard when in engaged in physical activity.

Sleep & Rest

- A risk assessment is conducted in relation to sleep and rest for children, please consult with your educators to accommodate (regulation 84C).

Routines and learning

- Routines are an important part of a developing a child's sense of belonging and feelings of trust and security.
- Routines that are integrated with the learning program support meaningful interaction and responsive relationships.
- Routines can include: meals, nappy change/toileting, rest/sleep, drop off and pick up, hand washing, outings, etc.
- As your child grows and develops their needs change and evolve. Families should regularly discuss your child's home routine and interests with your educator.
- Ask your educator about how they use daily routines for learning and development.
- Look for ways to support routines between home and care by following similar routines between both environments.
- At FDC, we encourage family input into our program. By understanding what your educator does during the day, you will find a way to contribute to their program.
- We encourage educators to regularly connect with community by taking children on outings to the park, library, play sessions, community garden and more. These interactions support children's learning and development.

Learning through play

- At Family Day Care, we believe that play is the foundation to a child's learning and development. Learning through play supports the holistic development of the child from wellbeing and creativity to intellect.
- Providing children time to be involved in purposeful play enables them to develop their interests, understandings and ideas. Th learn about the world, how to relate to others through social interactions, develop self-regulation, manage their emotions and to see the world from other perspectives.
- Play provides children opportunities to explore, negotiate, problem solve, imitate, be creative and develop knowledge and values.

Excursions

Excursions provide an opportunity for children to engage with their communities and allow both adults and children to take part in meaningful experiences.. Risk assessments are completed before permission is sought for any excursions.

During their day, educators may use a vehicle to transport children. When planning excursions, the educator must ensure supervision, safety and the wellbeing of all children in their care.

Written permission will always be obtained from parents or carers before children are taken on any excursion. Permission slips will include:

- date
- time
- venue
- method of transport (private cars or on public transport)

If using a vehicle to transport children, educators will ensure:

- compliance with the child restraint laws
- a First Aid Kit is taken on all excursions
- emergency contact numbers are taken on all excursions
- all car seats meet the required safety standards (checked annually at an RTA authorised fitting station)
- all vehicles are currently registered and appropriately insured

For more information on choosing the safest child restraint and how to use it correctly visit www.rta.nsw.gov.au.

Kidsafe NSW provides useful information and resources on a range of child restraint issues. Contact Kidsafe's Road Safety Unit on (02) 9845 0890 or visit their website www.kidsafensw.org



Ask your educator if they offer excursions as part of their program

Regular outings

Routine

Typical outings include trips to local parks, other educators' homes, libraries, schools or playgroups.

- parents/carers will be notified of the educator's regular outings
- parents/carers will be advised and written permission obtained for any excursions, including those that are part of an educator's regular outings
- educators will always carry a current list of parent contact and coordination unit telephone numbers
- educators will take adequate and appropriate food, drink, clothing and equipment for all children

Non-routine

In the event of a non-routine outing or excursion e.g. a visit to the zoo or museum, written authorisation will be obtained from a parent or guardian of the child. You will be shown the Risk Assessment that has been completed by the educator and reviewed by the coordination unit before the excursion. All excursions will reflect the current educational program and meet the Early Years Learning Framework outcomes.



Health

Illness – Exclusion Period

Children and/or educators with infectious diseases must be excluded for the period recommended by the NSW Department of Health. Under the Public Health (Amendment) Act, the Authorised Supervisor will contact the Public Health Unit:

- when any case of the following occurs in the Service – diphtheria, measles, mumps, poliomyelitis, rubella, whooping cough, tetanus and Hib
- any single case of meningitis
- foodborne illness in two or more persons
- gastroenteritis, chicken pox, cold sores, conjunctivitis, or influenza in three or more persons

A medical certificate is required for any child or adult having diphtheria, hepatitis A, polio, pertussis, tuberculosis, typhoid or paratyphoid before re-entry to the program.

All families will be notified when other children have confirmed infectious diseases although the child's name and details will be kept confidential. Where serious infectious or major outbreaks occur, the Family Day Care team will seek the advice of the Public Health Unit and issue families with a letter advising them of prevention and action to be taken.

Family Day Care follows the guidelines for exclusion period set out by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Staying Healthy 5th Edition publication. For more information about exclusion periods, please visit www.nhmrc.gov.au

Immunisation

Effective 1 January 2018 and as required by NSW Health, parents must provide a copy of one or more of the following documents to enrol in a childcare centre: An AIR Immunisation History Statement which shows that the child is up to date with their scheduled vaccinations OR an AIR Immunisation History Form on which the immunisation provider has certified that the child is on a recognised catch-up schedule (temporary for 6 months only) OR an AIR Immunisation Medical Exemption Form which has been certified by a GP.

No other form of documentation is acceptable (i.e. the Interim Vaccination Objection Form or Blue Book).

Service policies

The practice of teaching and caring for children in services is guided by several policies and procedures. These policies and procedures have been developed to ensure the best outcomes for young children. The documents reflect the ever-changing nature of education based on research and practice.

Policies are available to view on the Harmony Web Portal.

Child Protection and Wellbeing

Family Day Care believes the health, safety and wellbeing of children is of the highest importance. We acknowledge the rights of children and fulfil our duty of care by providing a child-focused learning environment where children are safe and protected.

The Family Day Care Child Protection Protocol is available on request.

Residency and court orders

If restricted or no access has been specified in a residency order regarding a parent or carer, a copy of the court order must be given to the educator. A copy will also be kept on file with the Family Day Care Coordination Unit.

Confidentiality

Family Day Care values families' privacy and has several initiatives in place to ensure the protection of your data. For more information on our commitment to confidentiality, please contact the Coordination Unit.

Sharing feedback

Inner West Council welcomes feedback from both families and community members regarding our services. Should you wish to provide feedback we request that you follow these procedures:

- If you have a concern or feedback, please discuss it first with your educator.
- If the matter is not able to be settled, please discuss it with the Family Day Care Coordinator who will work in collaboration with you and the educator to resolve the issue.
- If you feel the matter has not been resolved, the Family Day Care Coordinator will escalate the issue to the Operations Manager of Children's Services, Inner West Council.
- All options to resolve the concern will be discussed with you and all parties will work together to reach a resolution.
- If you have any feedback or concerns relating to your experience with the service, a specific policy/procedure, or you would like to share positive feedback about one of our services, please put this in writing to the Family Day Care Coordinator.



Contact Inner West Family Day Care:

22 Foster Street, Leichhardt, 2040

E: fdc@innerwest.nsw.gov.au

T: (02) 9392 5604

