

ACT Family Day Care

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Conditions For Approvals in Principle and Licences

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The conditions contained within this handbook must be adhered to at all times.
The Department of Education and Community Services is responsible for
monitoring compliance during the approval in principle/licence period.

Children's Services
August 2000

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Australian Capital Territory

EDUCATION & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Children's Services
August 2000

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Introduction

Introduction

The ACT Family Day Care Conditions have been developed in consultation with representatives of the Family Day Care sector. The conditions incorporate the National Standards for Family Day Care and reflect current practice within schemes.

The National Standards for Family Day Care were endorsed by State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers responsible for child care in June 1995. Focusing on the child's experience in Family Day Care, these standards concentrate on the provision of child care within the family based child care worker's/carer's home. Acknowledging the important contribution made by the co-ordination units to the provision of Family Day Care, Ministers endorsed additional standards, concentrating on management and support, in July 1998.

National standards set out the minimum standard necessary to ensure the provision of child care that is safe, nurturing and developmentally appropriate. The ACT Family Day Care Conditions incorporate these national standards and set the basis for the licensing of Family Day Care.

The inclusion of Family Day Care as a Children's Service under the *Children and Young People Act 1999*, and the introduction of licensing as a result of this, recognises the professional status of Family Day Care and the importance of the work performed by the family based child care workers/carers and the co-ordination units.

Children and Young People Act 1999

The *Children and Young People Act 1999* provides an effective system for licensing child care services, including family day care schemes, and provides a basis for the imposition of standards to facilitate the provision of quality child care.

Our ACT Child Care Licensing System is underpinned by three basic principles which are fundamental to the interpretation of the Act. These three principles are:

1. the best interests of the child are the paramount consideration;
2. children's services should provide care that is safe, positive and nurturing; and
3. children's services should promote the educational, social and developmental well being of the child.

For the purposes of the *Children and Young People Act 1999*, a children's service is a service that provides, or by which it is proposed to provide, care at a child care centre or as part of a family day care scheme.

A child care centre is premises at which a service is operated that provides care for monetary or other consideration for more than-

- a) 4 children who are not yet attending primary school as students; or
- b) 7 children (which may include 4 or less children who are not yet attending primary school as students).

Office of Child Care

The legislation covering children's services is administered by the Office of Child Care, a section of the Children's Services Branch of the ACT Department of Education and Community Services.

The Office of Child Care is responsible for licensing and monitoring a diverse range of children's services in the ACT to ensure that they meet the requirements of the *Children and Young People Act 1999* and managing service purchasing contracts for a range of services.

The Office of Child Care provides:

- a regulatory role to ensure that services meet the requirements of the *Children and Young People Act 1999*;
- professional advice on the planning, design and establishment of new services;
- an advisory service for families, children's services and the community regarding child care; and
- funding to assist with the provision of :
 - support for children and adolescents with disabilities accessing children's services programs;
 - occasional care services;
 - training and support for children's services programs; and
- behaviour management support for families and child care services.

Licensing Framework

The *Children and Young People Act 1999* requires all child care services and family day care schemes in the ACT to be licensed. The framework for the licensing process is outlined below.

Approval in Principle

A proprietor intending to operate a children's service for the first time, must apply for an approval in principle. Where the proprietor currently operates an existing service, and is planning to commence a new service or take over the management of an existing service, an approval in principle must be applied for.

Initial Appointment

When considering applying for an approval in principle to operate a children's service, proprietors or their representative should make an appointment with the Director, Children's Services. During this meeting the Director Children's Services will discuss the proposed service and outline the requirements for applying for an approval in principle.

At this meeting, the applicant or their representative will be provided with an Application Kit containing:

- Approval in Principle Application Form;
- Approval in Principle Checklist;
- Staffing Plan;
- Consent to Obtain Personal Information;
- a copy of Chapter 9 of the *Children and Young People Act 1999*; and
- a copy of the relevant conditions.

Advertising Intention to Apply

All proprietors are required to advertise their intention to apply for an approval in principle in the Public Notices section of a newspaper distributed throughout all regions of Canberra.

Application

The completed Approval in Principle Application Form and all required documents should be forwarded to Office of Child Care at least 60 days prior to the date from which the approval is proposed.

Office of Child Care Visit

As a part of the assessment process, a Children's Services Adviser from the Office of Child Care will organise to meet the proprietor or their representative on the premises from which the children's service is to operate. During this visit, the adviser will check the premises for compliance with conditions.

A second visit will be arranged once the service is operational to assess service coordination and the program being provided for children.

Formal Interview

Following receipt of an Approval in Principle Application, the proprietor or their representative may be required to attend an interview to further discuss their application and the operations of the proposed service.

Assessment of Application

When assessing the suitability of applications for an approval in principle, all information available about the proposed service and proprietor will be taken into consideration. If the proprietor meets all requirements, an approval in principle will be issued. An approval in principle is granted for a period of two years and six months.

Assessment of Approval in Principle Period

A report based on information gathered through self-assessment and adviser's visits will be developed annually during the approval in principle period and forwarded to the service as part of the ongoing assessment process.

Applying for a Licence

After successfully operating a service for a continuous period of two years, a proprietor who has an approval in principle may apply for a licence to operate a children's service.

In determining whether a licence will be granted, all information about the operation of the service gathered whilst the applicant held an approval in principle will be considered.

Proprietors considered suitable will be granted a licence.

Licences may be issued for up to three years.

Applying for a Licence Renewal

The Office of Child Care will send a reminder to each proprietor approximately two months prior to the date when the licence expires.

The proprietor will be required to return the completed application at least thirty days prior to the licence expiring.

When granting a new licence, the Chief Executive must consider whether the proprietor has satisfactorily discharged their obligations under the existing licence. The Chief Executive retains the

right to treat applications for licence renewals on the same basis as first time applications. Where there have been concerns regarding the operation of a service, the proprietor may be asked to provide any of the information required of a first-time applicant.

Short term licences may be issued to give proprietors time to rectify problems identified during the previous licence period.

Documentation

When an application for an approval in principle or licence is successful the proprietor will receive the following documents.

- An approval in principle or licence with conditions attached. This must be kept in an easily accessible place at the service.
- An additional original copy of the approval in principle or licence to be displayed in a prominent position where parents and other interested people are able to read it.
- A copy of Chapter 9 of the *Children and Young People Act 1999*.

Visits by Children’s Services Advisers

Throughout the approval in principle / licence period, advisers from the Office of Child Care will visit on a scheduled and random basis to monitor compliance with the legislation. The process will be one of collaboration, which characterises licensing of children’s services in the ACT.

Scheduled visits will be organised with the service director. During the period of the licence, all aspects of the service’s operation in relation to the conditions will be reviewed.

Prior to the scheduled visits occurring, services will be required to complete a portion of the licence self–assessment report. The report and any concerns identified will be discussed during the visit. Where there are concerns in relation to compliance with conditions, services will be required to address them. This may involve the development of action plans. Advisers are available to provide advice if required. Where necessary, further visits will occur to monitor progress in complying with requirements.

Unannounced visits will also take place during the licence period. During these visits, advisers will check to ensure conditions are being complied with.

Additionally, service audits will take place during each year. These audits will be conducted on a random selection of services and will focus on various aspects of the conditions.

Non Compliance with the Act and/or Conditions

Where it has been identified that services are in breach of conditions, the breach will be brought to the attention of the service director or the proprietor, whichever is appropriate. The breach will be discussed with the director or the proprietor, who will ensure that a plan to address the breach is developed. Where breaches are able to be rectified immediately this will be required.

Where services are not able to rectify breaches immediately, they will be required to develop a plan that outlines the proposed action that will be taken to rectify the breach and identified time frames. Children’s Services Advisers will monitor the services progress in implementing the plan.

Where the breach or the number of breaches are considered to be significant and the licence is due for renewal, a short term licence may be issued to provide the proprietor with time to rectify to the breaches and comply fully with the conditions.

In situations where the breach is not rectified in the identified time frame, or is considered to be of a serious nature, the following steps will be taken.

- A notice in writing will be served on the proprietor to comply with the requirements forthwith. Parents may be notified that there has been an alleged breach.
- If the problem is not rectified, the proprietor may be requested to show cause as to why the licence should not be cancelled or suspended.
- The Chief Executive may prosecute the proprietor or cancel or suspend the licence.

In addition the Chief Executive may suspend a licence immediately for up to 14 days if satisfied that an emergency situation exists.

Responding To Public Concerns About Child Care

The Office of Child Care is obliged to respond to all concerns from the public about children's services. The primary concern at all times is the well-being of children in care.

Complaints against a service or an individual will be investigated, where appropriate, and any problems addressed as quickly as possible. In many instances concerns can be resolved during the initial telephone call, or by the person being advised to make contact with the service directly or with another relevant authority.

In situations where concerns are assessed as possibly constituting a breach of the Act or the conditions, the service will be visited. On these occasions, two advisers will usually visit the service.

When investigating complaints the privacy of all parties will be respected.

When investigating a complaint, advisers will:

- carry ACT Government authorisation;
- identify themselves to the Director;
- explain the nature of the complaint;
- protect the privacy of the complainant;
- discuss the complaint with the Director; and
- collect as much information as is necessary

Following the visit, advisers will prepare a report about the visit noting the outcome of their investigation.

Where appropriate the complainant will be notified of the outcome.

In circumstances where a complaint has been substantiated, services will be required to take appropriate action to rectify the situation.

Definitions

Adult

Is a person who has attained the age of eighteen years.

Child

For the purposes of the Act a child is a person who is under 12 years old.

Controlling person

In relation to a children's service or proposed children's service, means a person who exercises control or may exercise control over the children's service (other than the proprietor).

The following is provided as a guide to determining controlling persons.

A person or persons nominated by the proprietor as having principal responsibility for managing and controlling the children's service in the proprietors absence or on behalf of the proprietor.

Co-family based child care worker/carer

Someone approved by the scheme to fill in for a family based child care worker/carer on an irregular basis.

Details of the co-family based child care worker/carer are to be recorded on the staffing list held by the proprietors. Note that a co-family based child care worker/carer may not be acceptable in some schemes.

Coordination unit staff

Staff employed in a scheme as part of the coordination unit including the director, coordinator, program manager, field worker, group activities leader, or playgroup coordinator.

Emergency family based child care worker/carer (in the case of life threatening or critical emergency)

An emergency family based child care worker/carer can be the closest adult available at the time of a medical emergency or other urgent short term incident, who can provide appropriate care for the children. The registered family based child care worker/carer is to contact the coordination unit as soon as possible to organise alternate arrangements for the children remaining in care. Use of emergency family based child care workers/carers is to be recorded by coordination unit staff.

Excursions

Excursions are out of the ordinary events usually involving travel out of the family based child care worker's/carer's local area. Excursions may be organised by the scheme for example, a trip to a farm, or by single or small groups of family based child care workers/carers.

Family based child care worker/carer

A family based child care worker/carer is a person who is employed by, or registered with, a family day care scheme to provide home based child care for monetary considerations, for not more than four children not yet enrolled at and attending primary school and not more than seven children under the age of twelve (including the family based child care worker's/carer's own children).

Family day care

A network of individuals who provide child care in their own homes for other people's children. Family day care services are supported by a co-ordination unit.

Maximum number of children

A family based child care worker/carer must not provide care at any one time for more than four children not yet enrolled at and attending primary school and not more than seven children under the age of twelve (including the family based child care worker's/carer's own children).

Outings

Outings are routine events, which are part of the program where the family based child care worker/carer does not travel out of their local area. These may include trips to the local park, playgroups, play session, or a walk.

Parent

Parent is inclusive of those with parental responsibility.

Parental responsibility

For a child or young person, means all the duties, powers, responsibilities and authority parents ordinarily have by law in relation to their children.

Premises

The place /residence where care is provided for the purposes of family day care. Premises include those premises for play or group sessions organised by coordination unit staff.

Proprietor

According to the *Children and Young People Act 1999*, a proprietor refers to the following:

- (a) for a children's service operated under an approval in principle-means the person who holds the approval; and
- (b) for a licensed children's service-means the proprietor; and
- (c) for an application for approval in principle or a licence to operate a children's service-means the person applying for the approval or licence.

1.

Operating Procedures

1. Operating procedures

The importance of effective and efficient operating procedures cannot be over emphasised. The way in which a service is administered will affect the interactions within the service and will therefore have a direct effect on the well being of staff and children and the quality of the care offered to the children. A well administered service is able to respond promptly to the needs of children, parents and staff. It also sets clear understandings and expectations of the rights and responsibilities of everyone involved with the scheme.

Adequate time must be allowed for effective administration.

Effective administration includes:

- accurate record-keeping;
- close attention to legal requirements such as insurance business and industrial matters and relevant legislation;
- well considered and developed policies; and
- good communication within the scheme and with the wider community.

Some of the benefits of effective administration include:

- smoother operation;
- easily accessible information for the family based child care worker/carer, coordination unit staff and parents;
- improved consumer confidence;
- improved staff morale;
- more stable staff and family based child care worker/carer arrangements; and
- legal protection.

Proprietors are entrusted with considerable personal information about children, their families and the family based child care workers/carers and their families. It is important that such information is treated confidentially and with respect. There should be policies in place, which clearly state those people who have access to personal information and in what circumstances.

Operating Procedures: Records

Records of Children in Care

Keeping records

- 1.1) Records must be retained for a minimum of 7 years.**

- 1.2) All records pertaining to children in care must be maintained accurately. These records are to be kept up to date and in a safe and secure area.**

Admission register

- 1.3) Families' records to be kept in relation to each child provided with care must include:**
 - a) the child's full name, date of birth, residential address and gender;**
 - b) the child's health, including details of allergies and immunisation particulars, or other relevant medical history or detail;**
 - c) the full name, residential address, place of employment and contact telephone number of a parent;**
 - d) the name, address and telephone number of at least one person who may be contacted in an emergency (if the parent is not available);**
 - e) the name, address and telephone number of a person authorised by a parent to collect the child;**
 - f) any care and protection order, or parenting agreement regarding the child;**
 - g) the primary language spoken by the child. If the child has not learnt to speak, the child's parent/s language;**
 - h) any special requirements notified by a parent including, for example, cultural or religious requirements;**
 - i) the needs of a child with a disability or with other additional needs;**
 - j) a statement indicating any parental permission for medication to be administered to the child whilst in care;**

The general requirement is for all records, including those for insurance and taxation purposes, to be kept for a minimum of 7 years. There may, however, be records that your insurance company requires you to keep for longer. It is recommended that services seek advice on this matter.

It is important that there is a procedure in place to frequently check the accuracy of the information collected to ensure that it is up to date.

This applies to both parents, if relevant.

This ensures that in the case of an emergency, if a parent is unable to be contacted, someone close to the family can be contacted and informed of the situation.

There must be a verification system to ensure that only a person authorised by a parent can collect a child.

Parents are encouraged but not required to disclose this information.

This refers to gathering information regarding the management of the disability or other additional needs given by the parents or other persons with the parent's permission.

Operating Procedures: Records

- k) a parent's permission for emergency medical, hospital and ambulance service;**
- l) the name, address and telephone number of the child's doctor or nearest public hospital;**
- m) the school or preschool that the child attends, including relevant transport arrangements to and from that place; and**
- n) a parent's permission for a child to be taken on outings.**

Medication record

- 1.4) Medication records must be maintained. This includes a record which details:**
- a) the name of the child;**
 - b) the name of the medication;**
 - c) the date, time and dosage administered including the last dosage given before the child is placed in care;**
 - d) the name of the person who administered the medication;**
 - e) the parent's written permission for, and any doctor's instruction relating to, its administration; and**
 - f) a record of any medical condition that impacts on care and the necessary medication required.**

Illness record

- 1.5) There must be an accurate record of a child's illness when this occurs while the child is attending the service which details:**
- a) child's name;**
 - b) date of illness;**
 - c) symptoms, but not a diagnosis,**

Parents may wish to nominate an alternate arrangement. Services need to be aware of, and have recorded, the parent's wishes in relation to illness and accident. Acceptance of responsibility for charges incurred can go on a blanket permission form.

Permission to participate in routine outings should be obtained in writing from parents when the child enters care. This written agreement must describe the nature of routine outings.

Specific authorisation is needed for excursions.

Also refer to excursion at clause 1.10.

Written permission is required for administering medications to a child, including proprietary medicines such as cough mixtures and homoeopathic medicines.

All doses of medication administered to a child whilst attending family day care must be recorded. This record can be kept by each family based child care worker/carer.

Where children have special requirements in relation to their medication, it is essential that staff are familiar with these requirements, and where necessary, with the method of administration of the medication and the equipment used.

Also refer to administering, clauses 4.38 and 4.39.

Also refer to infectious conditions, clause 4.37.

Operating Procedures: Records

- d) any action taken for the well-being and comfort of the child;
- e) how the parent was notified; and
- f) provision for the parents to sign that they have been advised of the child's illness.

Accident / injury record

- 1.6) There must be a record of a child's accident/injury when this occurs while the child is attending the service which details
- a) child's name;
 - b) date of accident/injury;
 - c) brief details of accident, if observed;
 - d) brief description of the injury sustained;
 - e) any action taken for the well-being and comfort of the child;
 - f) how the parent was notified; and
 - g) provision for the parent to sign that they have been advised of the accident/injury.
- 1.7) If a child has an accident that causes hospitalisation or death or dies from non accidental causes while attending family day care, the Director, Children's Services must be notified no later than the next working day of the fact and the circumstances of the injury or death.

Information available to Chief Executive

- 1.8) The details of each child being cared for by the service is to be provided to the chief executive when requested.

Records of family based child care workers/carers in a scheme

- 1.9) In relation to each family based child care worker/carer in a family day care scheme, the following records must be kept by the proprietor:

It is not necessary to inform parents immediately of minor injuries.

In situations where the accident/injury is related to a bump on the head, parents should be notified as soon as possible and the child closely monitored for signs of concussion.

Parents must be immediately advised of any accident causing an injury that requires or may require medical attention.

Also refer to illnesses and accidents, clause 4.40.

Details regarding each child at the centre may be requested by the Chief Executive in the following situations:

- when the service has been given notice to comply with a direction;
- when a licence has been suspended or cancelled; or
- when it is considered necessary to remove a child from care due to immediate danger to the health welfare and safety of the child.

It is the proprietor's responsibility to ensure the safety of children in care. Appropriate screening procedures must be in place to

Operating Procedures: Records

- a) a record relating to the fit and proper status of each family based child care worker/carer and those who come into contact with the child on a regular basis;
- b) the cultural background, if provided, by the family based child care worker/carer;
- c) the name, address and telephone number of each family based child care worker/carer;
- d) copies of qualifications and details of in-service training;
- e) a copy of a current first aid level 2 certificate;
- f) details of the assessment process undertaken in relation to the provision of care by the family based child care worker/carer;
- g) the names of the children cared for by the family based child care worker/carer;
- h) attendance records of children;
- i) arrangements that are to apply in an emergency or that are to apply in situations when co-care is required and the family based child care worker/carer is unable to care for the child;

Motor vehicle safety

- j) details of any vehicle used for the transport of children; and
- k) details of any requirements of the proprietors notified in writing to the family based child care worker/carer.

Excursions

- 1.10) Specific authorisation is needed for non routine excursions. The authorisation must include;**
- a) the date of the excursion;
 - b) approximate times of departure and return;
 - c) proposed destination and planned activity;
 - d) method and details of transport; and
 - e) number of adults to accompany and supervise the children.

ensure fit and proper status of the family based child care workers/carers and emergency and back up family based child care workers/carers.

Weekly/fortnightly time sheets signed by a parent are adequate.

Suitable arrangements for such care provision include recording names and addresses of back up workers/carers and the times such care is used.

Details about vehicles used for transport of children should include registration, insurance and car safety checks.

Also refer to motor vehicle safety, clause 4.9.

Excursion records must include all the names of children, the date, time, place, and nature of the excursion and the respective family based child care worker/carer participating in the excursion.

Note: This applies to excursions not outings as described in definitions.

Also refer to excursions and outings, clauses 5.7–5.11 and excursions, clause 3.11.

The proprietor must ensure that public liability

Operating Procedures: Records

Insurance

1.11) The proprietor must obtain and keep current the following policies of insurance in respect of the scheme and its operation:

- a) worker's compensation;**
- b) public liability; and**
- c) additional insurance to cover children and staff whilst on excursion.**

1.12) The proprietor must make available the insurance policy and current premium receipts if requested by a Children's Services Adviser.

1.13) The proprietor must immediately notify the Director, Children's Services if any of the above insurance lapses for any reason.

Approval in Principle/Licence

1.14) A copy of the current approval in principle/licence must be prominently displayed at the premises from which the co-ordination unit operates.

1.15) A further copy of the current approval in principle/licence with attached conditions must be kept on the premises from which the co-ordination unit operates.

Tenure of approval in principle/licence

1.16) The approval in principle/licence granted is not transferable by the proprietor.

Arrivals and Departures

1.17) The authorised family based child care worker/carer must receive the child.

1.18) The person who brings the child to the home is to record on the attendance record or time sheet the time of the child's arrival and sign the record.

1.19) The person who receives the child from family day care is to record on the attendance record or time sheet the time of the child's departure and sign the record.

policies cover children registered with the scheme, as well as those considered to be the general public.

Relevant business insurances should also be current.

Prominently displayed means a place convenient to parents and other interested people who may wish to read it.

The approval in principle/licence is granted to the proprietor as named in the approval in principle/licence.

Should this not be possible the family based child care worker/carer must ensure that

Operating Procedures: Records

1.20) When a child leaves family day care the family based child care worker/carer must ensure the person who receives the child is the child's parent or a person who is authorised in writing by the child's parent to receive the child.

1.21) Where school age children arrive or leave the home unaccompanied by a parent the arrival and/or departure shall be in accordance with procedures agreed to, in writing by the child's parent.

Policies

1.22) The proprietor must ensure that there are policies and implementation strategies to address the following areas:

- a) statement of philosophy including the aims of the family day care scheme;**
- b) parent, family based child care worker/carer and coordination unit participation in the development of programs;**
- c) developmental needs of individual children in care;**
- d) health hygiene and safety;**
- e) food;**
- f) cultural relevance for children in care;**
- g) children's self reliance and self esteem;**
- h) children with additional needs;**
- i) gender equity;**
- j) excursions;**
- k) arrival and departure;**
- l) grievance procedures for parents, the family based child care worker/carer and coordination unit staff;**
- m) infectious conditions; and**
- n) reporting child abuse.**

alternate arrangements that secure the safety and welfare of the child have been made before the child is permitted to leave.

In developing and reviewing policies, services may wish to involve representation from all stakeholders.

There do not need to be separate documents for each of these aspects. Services may wish to combine areas. Services may also choose to develop additional policies.

It is beneficial to develop written policies about how information on children and families is conveyed to the proprietor, the coordination unit, the parents of children with the same worker/carer and other agencies working with the family.

Family based child care workers/carers, coordinators and parents should be involved in developing these policies.

These policies would include any information collected about the family based child care worker/carer and their household. Information should not be conveyed to others without the family based child care worker's/carer's permission, other than to persons directly responsible for the scheme's service delivery.

Operating procedures: Information Sharing

Confidentiality

1.23) The proprietor must ensure that there exists family day care scheme policies and practices relating to maintaining confidential information about family based child care workers/carers and their families and families using the scheme.

It is beneficial to develop written policies about how information on children and families is conveyed to the proprietor, the coordination unit, the parents of children with the same family based child care worker/carer and other agencies working with the family.

Family based child care workers/carers, coordinators and parents should be involved in developing these policies.

These policies would include any information collected about the family based child care worker/carer and their household. Information should not be conveyed to others without the family based child care worker's/carer's permission, other than to persons directly responsible for the scheme's service delivery.

Information for Parents

1.24) The proprietor must provide information to parents on:

- a) the approval in principle /licence to operate the family day care service which must be displayed in a prominent place;**
- b) written policies and procedures including parents' rights and participation in an advisory capacity;**

- c) the role of coordinating staff, their communication with the proprietors, parents and other persons engaged by the proprietors;**
- d) staff discipline and management of inappropriate family based child care worker/carer behaviour;**
- e) the process for selecting family based child care workers/carers and monitoring the quality of care provided by them;**
- f) parental responsibility about delivery and collection of children;**

Parents have the right to be fully aware of aspects of the scheme that may affect their decision to enrol their child and must also understand the implication of the information. Information about the scheme may be provided in handbooks, as part of enrolment material or through clearly displayed signs. Information about the scheme should be thoroughly discussed with parents before and at enrolment and supported with written material.

Operating procedures: Information Sharing

- g) payment of fee; and if registered as a provider, the service provider number;**
- h) times of operation;**
- i) complaints policy and procedures;**
- j) emergency and evacuation procedures;**
- k) family based child care worker/carer, emergency and co-care arrangements;**
- l) injuries, illness and infectious conditions;**
- m) policies and practice in relation to hygiene and household safety;**
- n) excursions and outings;**

- o) notification of changes of information recorded about a child;**
- p) storage and administration of medication for children;**

- q) participation of students and volunteers in the scheme;**

- r) emergency evacuation procedures;**
- s) procedures for arrival and departure of children; and**
- t) location and contact number for Children's Services.**

Parental Access

- 1.25) A parent, or other person nominated in writing by the parent, must have reasonable access to their child at all times.**
- 1.26) A parent can exchange information about their child with the family based child care worker/carer on an ongoing basis.**

Proprietors must ensure that an annual home safety check is undertaken.

Written information given to parents should outline the policy on parents' permission for individual excursions and the usual transport arrangements.

Parents can sign a blanket permission form at enrolment time to cover routine outings but must be given information about all outings with their children.

Also refer to excursions, clause 1.10 and excursions and outings, clauses 5.7–5.11.

Parents need to be informed about the worker's/carer's provision of storage for medications and the administration of medication. Parents also need to give their written permission for any medication to be administered.

A policy on participation by volunteers should be developed and parents should be informed about the policy.

Where children are the subject of a care and protection order, services should request a copy of this order.

Operating Procedures: Information Sharing

Other Laws and Regulations

1.27) Family day care schemes must operate in accordance with other Australian Capital Territory and Commonwealth laws and regulations.

Authority for treatment

1.28) A procedure must be in place, which ensures that no child is enrolled in family day care unless the parent has authorised the scheme to seek medical, hospital and ambulance services or the parent's chosen alternative.

This authorisation is usually part of the enrolment procedure.

Parents may wish to nominate an alternate arrangement. Services need to be aware of, and have recorded, the parent's wishes in relation to illness and accident.

Accident and Illness.

1.29) The proprietor must ensure that if a child attending family day care has an accident or becomes ill while in care, all reasonable steps are taken to:

- a) provide immediate medical aid, if necessary to the child; and**

- b) to notify the child's parent or emergency contact of:**
 - i) the nature of the accident or illness;**
 - ii) any medication administered to the child;**
 - iii) any ambulance attention or transport and**
 - iv) any other matter concerning the child's health that comes to the notice of the proprietor while the child is in family day care.**

Immediate medical attention, may include the administration of first aid, calling an ambulance or doctor, seeking hospital or parent's choice in treatment.

Schemes should ask parents to acknowledge that they have been advised of treatment or medication being given to their child by signing the accident or medication record.

Where children have special requirements in relation to their medication, it is essential that family based child care workers/carers are familiar with these requirements, and where necessary, with the method of administration of the medication and the equipment used.

1.30) If a child has an accident that causes hospitalisation or death or dies from non accidental causes at the Service, the Director, Children's Services must be notified no later than the next working day of the fact and the circumstances of the injury or death.

The Director, Children's Services must be informed in writing of the circumstances of such injury or death.

Reporting of suspected child abuse

1.31) If the proprietor has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child in family day care has suffered non accidental physical injury or sexual abuse, the proprietor must notify Family Services.

Operating procedures: Information Sharing

Information for Coordination Unit Staff

1.32) The proprietor must ensure that each coordination unit staff member has access to:

- a) a copy of Chapter 9 of the *Children And Young People Act 1999* and a copy of the current conditions;
- b) a list of information that a parent is entitled to receive; and
- c) other written material relevant to the performance of their duties.

The proprietor must make available to each coordinator, a copy of the Act and the family day care conditions, and all policies in relation to the operation of the scheme.

Information for family based child care worker/carer

1.33) The proprietor must ensure that each family based child care worker/carer is provided with:

- a) a copy of Chapter 9 of the *Children And Young People Act 1999* and a copy of the current conditions;
- b) a list of information that a parent is entitled to receive; and
- c) other written material relevant to the family based child care worker's/carer's duties.

2.

Physical Environment

2. Physical Environment

The physical environment that is created for children is an important element in children's services. How the environment is set up for children's care will have an impact upon the level of child participation in the routines and experiences offered. The environment can also affect the quality of interactions between family based child care workers/carers and children.

The provision of adequate space both indoors and outdoors is necessary to:

- provide for a flexible environment which fosters opportunity to explore and learn; and
- ensure that a safe and uncluttered space is available to minimise the dangers of accidents and to reduce the stress and health risks associated with cramped or confined spaces.

The home must have sleeping and toileting facilities that will accommodate the varying ages and individual needs of the children in care.

An understanding of child development and the needs of children in small group care and in mixed age care is helpful when planning the use of indoor and outdoor home environments.

Physical Environment: Indoors

Laundry

- 2.1) **The family day care home must include laundry facilities provided on the premises or alternate laundry arrangements can be made through another facility or service.**
- 2.2) **The family day care home must include provision for safe and sanitary facilities for the storage of soiled clothes, linen and nappies, pending their laundering or disposal.**

Food Preparation Facilities

- 2.3) **The family day care home must have safe hygienic facilities for the preparation storage and cooking of food for children including a sink, refrigerator, suitable disposal facilities and hot water supply.**

Toilets and Handbasins

- 2.4) **A family day care home must have toilet and handwashing facilities, which are safe and appropriate to the ages of the children in care and facilities for cleaning between usage.**
- 2.5) **There must be individual hand washing and hand wiping facilities for children and family based child care workers/carers.**

To maintain the health and well being of children in care and to minimise the risk of cross infection, the indoor laundry facilities must be adequate and hygienic.

Provision of a bucket with a tightly fitting lid for nappies and a plastic bag for clothes and linen is an hygienic method of storing soiled laundry.

Toilet facilities should:

- ensure the health and well being of children;
- ensure minimal delay for children requiring the use of a toilet; and
- enable independent access.

The provision of toilet facilities and hand basins at a suitable height for children can be achieved by providing a potty or junior seat and/or a firm non-slip step.

To minimise the risk of children being scalded, an adult should supervise use of hot water at all times.

It would be appropriate for parents to provide individual towels for hand wiping. Between use, towels should be stored separately from one another on hooks or a towel rail. Another hygienic way to provide for individual hand wiping is to provide paper towel which can be easily disposed of.

Proper hand washing routines are an integral part of the strategies used to minimise the risk of cross infection.

Physical Environment: Indoors

Nappy Change

2.6) Where children who wear nappies are cared for, the following must be provided:

- a) a changing bench or mat with an impervious washable surface that is cleaned after each use;**
- b) a bath/washtub; and**
- c) covered storage for soiled and wet nappies.**

To maintain the health and safety of children who are not toilet trained there must be a facility for nappy change that:

- is sufficient to meet the number of children in care;
- is of a type that are easily cleaned to prevent cross infection; and
- will minimise occupational health and safety implications.

The material used for the change bench and/or mat must be maintained in good order. Cracks or splits in vinyl or laminates are difficult to clean and may harbour bacteria.

Storage

2.7) The family day care home must have storage facilities which are secure and inaccessible to children for cleaning materials, disinfectants, poisons, tools, toiletries, first aid equipment and other dangerous flammable and hazardous substances.

Safe storage of harmful substances guards against accidental poisoning.

2.8) Children must have independent access to toys, books and equipment suitable to their development and needs and which are culturally appropriate.

Independence in selection of toys books and equipment can be fostered through provision of open storage of an appropriate height.

2.9) Each child must have access to space for storage of their personal belongings.

Providing space for personal belongings helps children foster a sense of caring for their belongings and acknowledges the right of individuals for privacy and personal space. Having a familiar place to put belongings helps children foster this sense.

Physical Environment: Outdoors

Play Areas

2.10) A safe outdoor playing area must be available.

Outdoor play is an integral part of learning for children and the provision of a safe yet stimulating environment will enhance this learning.

A safe outdoor play space is considered to be one that can be viewed from inside and is readily accessible from the house. Such an environment provides least disruption to children's play and enhances supervision.

Vehicles should not be manoeuvred within the designated outdoor play area whilst children are in care.

Outdoor Storage

2.11) Storage must be provided for backyard implements, gardening and maintenance equipment. Doors to the storage area must be child resistant and/or be locked.

Children's Outdoor Play Equipment

2.12) Children's outdoor play equipment must minimise the risk to children's safety.

Risks to children's safety include:

- inappropriate surfaces under or around the equipment;
- inappropriate height of the equipment;
- lack of stability of equipment;
- the likelihood that a child can be trapped, pinched, crushed or struck; and
- sharp or rough edges and projections or rust.

Swings should be located away from any traffic areas, installed over a soft surface if possible, and the seat should be of light weight and impact absorbing material. Family based child care workers/carers need to adopt a risk assessment approach to their outdoor play areas and minimise the risks as much as possible.

3. Staffing

3. Staffing

Much research has been undertaken in an endeavour to pinpoint the factors which indicate quality care for children. Two aspects which are widely considered to be major indicators of quality care are the family based child care worker/carer:child ratio and the training and relevant experience of the family based child care worker/carer and staff involved in the provision of family day care.

Better family based child care worker/carer:child ratios result in more positive and frequent interactions between family based child care worker/carer and individual children, greater engagement in children's play, lower levels of distress in children and more positive nurturing behaviour from the family based child care worker/carer.

The agreed national standard for the maximum number of children in family day care has been incorporated into these conditions for this reason.

The agreed national standard for qualified family day care coordination unit staff has also been incorporated into these conditions. While obtaining professional qualifications is desirable for all coordinators, proprietors will not require a coordinator who is currently engaged in a scheme to hold the specific minimum qualifications while he or she remains at that scheme.

Staffing

Staff Qualities

3.1) There must be a procedure in place which ensures that all persons involved in the provision of family day care are fit and proper.

A person is 'fit and proper' if the person:

- is capable of providing an adequate standard of child care in the family day care setting;
- understands the needs of children, families and the family based child care worker/carer and is capable of performing the professional duties of the position; and
- the person is of good character and is suitable to be entrusted with the care of children.

The test of good character includes *taking into account*:

- convictions in Australia or overseas of any offence involving children. Offences against children include child abuse, assault and neglect; and
- *any action* taken in Australia or overseas in respect of the protection of children who were under the guardianship or custody of the person.

The process for the selection of family based child care workers/carers, co-ordination unit staff and others should be designed so that applicants are required to demonstrate the above qualities.

The process for the selection of staff should be designed to ensure applicants are required to demonstrate the above qualities.

As part of their employment practices, proprietors are advised to request police clearance and personal references, which should be checked with the referee/s.

Forms for police character checks are available from:

The Criminal History Branch
Locked Bag No 1
Weston ACT 2611
phone 6256 7777.

The form required is the **'Part Exclusion'** form.

Employers should request the information directly from the police, after obtaining the applicant's permission, thus ensuring the information they receive is up-to-date and accurate.

It is considered insufficient for the applicant to supply a police check as there is no guarantee

Staffing

Controlling Person

- 3.2) When there is a change in controlling person, the proprietor must ensure that the appointed controlling person is suitable, as outlined in Section 332, Chapter 9 of the *Children and Young People Act 1999*.**
- 3.3) The Director of Children’s Services must be advised of the change of a controlling person within 30 days of the change occurring.**

that it is up to date and that it has not been tampered with. The information from the police will go directly to the proprietor. It is extremely important that such information is sensitively and confidentially handled with access only to those who must see it.

Upon Children’s Services being notified of the change, the controlling person will be required to complete a Disclosure Declaration and Statutory Declaration.

Evidence of a satisfactory Police Records Check will also be required.

Staffing- Family based child care worker/carer

Family based child care worker/carer competencies

- 3.4) A family based child care worker/carer must have an appropriate understanding of children's needs and development, including:
- a) the individual differences between children;
 - b) activities that stimulate a child's growth and development;
 - c) nutrition, health, hygiene and safety; and
 - d) behaviour management.
- 3.5) A family based child care worker/carer must:
- a) be responsive to children;
 - b) be physically and emotionally able to care for children especially young children;
 - c) be able to respond appropriately in a medical or other emergency;
 - d) be able to communicate with adults effectively;
 - e) be aware of and sensitive to the needs of children from a range of cultures and religions and children with additional needs; and
 - f) be at least eighteen (18) years of age.

Family based child care worker/carer health

- 3.6) There must be procedures in place which:
- a) ensure that all coordination unit staff and others observe strict health and hygiene practices, which take into account current community standards and relevant government guidelines, to minimise risks to children;
 - b) encourage children to observe these practices;

For the general health and well being of children, family based child care workers/carers, coordination unit staff and others, it is necessary to minimise the risk of cross infection between children and between adults and children through adherence to strict hygiene practices.

It is well accepted that children are influenced by the behaviours of others around them. Modelling of sound hygiene practices by family based child care workers/carers, coordination unit staff and others and encouraging their use by children will prompt the child to adopt personal hygiene practices beneficial to their long term health.

Staffing- Family based child care worker/carer

- c) ensure that family based child care workers/carers, coordination unit staff and others have access to current information provided by relevant government departments;**
- d) ensure that no person who is adversely affected by drugs or alcohol shall supervise or remain in the presence of a child in care;**
- e) ensure family based child care workers/carers provide a smoke free environment while children are in care;**
- f) ensure family based child care workers/carers are of good health and free from any medical conditions or dependency on any medication and/or substance that may affect their ability to care for children;**
- g) ensure family based child care workers/carers requiring regular medication hold a medical certificate confirming their ability to care for children; and**
- h) ensure all staff hold a current driver's licence and current registration if the motor vehicle is being used for care purposes.**

It is necessary that family based child care workers/carers have up to date information from health authorities in relation to procedures to minimise cross infection, as new research becomes available.

Agencies, which may provide current information at any time, include Children's Services, Environment and Public Health, ACT Department of Health and Community Care.

Supervision and Staffing Levels

- 3.7) Family based child care workers/carers are to take responsibility for the effective supervision of children at all times while they are attending family day care.**
- 3.8) Co-family based child care worker/carer arrangements must be documented and made available to parents.**
- 3.9) Family based child care workers/carers may provide care for a maximum of seven children (including the family based child care worker's/carer's own children) at any one time, four of whom are not yet enrolled at and attending primary school.**

The proprietor has a responsibility to ensure supervision indoors, outdoors, in vehicles and other transport, and on outings and excursions.

One of the most important determinants of quality care in family day care is the number of children cared for by an individual family based child care worker/carer working alone. This affects the quality of the interactions between the family based child care worker/carer and the children and the interactions between the children.

Staffing- Family based child care worker/carer

First Aid Qualification

3.10) A family based child care worker/carer must have a current First Aid Level 2 certificate.

Excursions

3.11) Where the excursion is to a place where children are to swim or there is a significant hazard there must be:

- a) one adult for each child under the age of three years; and**
- b) one adult for each two children over three years.**

The proprietor may limit the family based child care worker/carer to a lower number of children than the maximum allowed under this condition.

Family based child care workers/carers must assess the potential for danger of any venue proposed for excursions but extra care needs to be taken when venues involve water or extremely busy traffic conditions.

At least one person on the excursion must have a current First Aid Level 2 Certificate.

Also refer to excursion, clause 1.10.

Staffing - Coordination unit

Minimum Qualifications

- 3.12) The proprietor must employ a minimum of one qualified staff as per Clause 3.13 for each family day care scheme.**
- 3.13) Positions requiring a qualified person must be filled with an adult holding:**
- a) a Diploma in Community Services (Children's Services) or equivalent conducted by a registered training organisation; or**
 - b) a qualification or demonstrated level of competence that is approved by the Director, Children's Services.**

First Aid Qualification

- 3.14) In the instance where a family day care scheme coordinator has direct contact with children, the proprietor must ensure that the coordinator has a current First Aid Level 2 certificate.**

Staff occupying a qualified position at the time of the approval in principle being granted, will be 'grandfathered' while he/she remains at that service.

This condition applies to all new positions being filled. Where a coordination unit comprises of more than one coordinator, a balance of professional qualifications, training and experience should be sought.

Schemes may request the Director, Children's Services to grant a variation to the qualification requirement based on a 'demonstrated level of competence', or other qualification the person may hold to meet requirements of a qualified position.

4.

Safety, Health and Hygiene Practices

4. Safety, health and hygiene practices

When caring for young children, the standard of care must ensure maximum personal safety. It is the responsibility of the proprietor to ensure that every precaution is taken to protect children in the family day care environment from any hazard likely to cause harm or injury.

Maintaining furniture and outdoor play equipment is crucial in providing a physically safe home. Environments which are not regularly maintained, cleaned and kept in a hygienic condition encourage vermin, bacteria and fungal outbreak which can have serious consequences for the health of children and the family based child care worker/carer.

The risk of cross infection is high when a group of children is cared for in the family home. In the interest of general good health and well being of children and family based child care workers/carers, and for the convenience of parents it is necessary to minimise the risk of cross infection through the observance of strict hygiene practices and the isolation of children from the home when infection does occur.

It is well accepted that children are influenced by the behaviour of others around them. When family based child care workers/carers model good hygiene practices and encourage children's efforts, the children are more likely to adopt personal hygiene practices which are beneficial for their immediate and long-term health

Safety, health and hygiene practices

Safety of premises

- 4.1) **The proprietor must ensure that premises and facilities used for the operation of the playgroup activities are maintained in a safe, clean and hygienic condition at all times.**
- 4.2) **The proprietor must ensure that a family based child care worker's/carer's premises and grounds, all equipment and furnishings used including bedding used are maintained in a thoroughly safe, clean, hygienic condition and good repair at all times.**
- 4.3) **The premises and grounds must be kept free of rubbish and any accumulated hazardous materials and every effort made to maintain a vermin free environment.**

Animals and Birds

- 4.4) **Any animal or bird kept on the premises must not constitute a health or safety risk to children.**
- 4.5) **Animals kept on or about the premises must be kept in a clean and healthy condition.**
- 4.6) **All animals must be made inaccessible to children unless under the supervision of a family based child care worker/carer.**
- 4.7) **Family based child care workers/carers must keep animal feeding and water containers in a separate area from the child's regular play area.**

It is the proprietor's responsibility to ensure that the premises used for these purposes provide for children's safety at all times.

The provision of an environment that is safe, clean and in an hygienic condition is necessary for the general health of children. Environments must be regularly cleaned and kept in an hygienic state to protect against vermin, bacteria and fungal outbreaks that can have serious consequences to a child's health. In addition to the general health of children, it is necessary for the family based child care worker/carer to set an example to children that will promote sound long-term behaviour.

Regular home safety checks undertaken by coordination unit staff should include:

- floor and furnishing maintenance, including flyscreens;
- regular maintenance of the garden and play equipment; and
- regular and thorough cleaning of tables, bench tops, chairs, cots and toys.

Dangerous chemicals should not be used to remove vermin in a manner that will create residue, dangerous to children. Pest control information is available from the Poisons Information Centre and from the Child Accident and Prevention Foundation (Kidsafe).

Animal feeding containers are a potential safety hazard as children can drown in as little as 5 cm of water.

Safety, health and hygiene practices

Smoking

4.8) Children are to be cared for in a smoke free environment.

Motor vehicle safety

4.9) The proprietors must ensure that the children in their care are transported safely by:

- a) using a child restraint appropriate to the child's weight and size;**
- b) using a restraint that is legal and safe;**
- c) using a restraint that has been correctly fitted and is suitable to the vehicle;**
- d) complying with the Australian Road Rules when transporting children in motor vehicles.**

Sandpits

4.10) If a sandpit is provided, the sandpit must be covered to prevent access by animals and vermin when it is not in use.

Fencing

4.11) Outdoor home play areas must be fenced securely.

Gates in Fences

4.12) Gates in fences must be secured with a latch, which is inaccessible to children.

Access to Hazards

4.13) Premises adjacent to or providing access to any hazards including water hazards (such as dams, swimming pools, spas, fish ponds or roads) must be isolated from such hazards by an effective barrier or fence.

Children must not be subjected to tobacco smoke inhalation while in care.

Where it is necessary to transport a child under the age of eight years in a front seat the following guidelines are recommended:

- the largest child should sit in the front;
- if the child weighs between 14–26 kg the child should use a booster seat in conjunction with a sash guide / Safefit seat; or
- if the child weighs between 18–32 kg the child should use a Safefit seat.

Registered fitters and Kidsafe provide vehicle and restraint safety checks.

Refer also to motor vehicle safety, clause 1.9.

Sandpits should be regularly checked and topped up.

Children should not play in unfenced home play areas unless appropriate supervision can be guaranteed. The recommended minimum height for fences is 120 cm. They should be constructed without footholds to discourage climbing. Gaps in fencing should be no more than 85 mm.

The provision of barriers around hazards is necessary to ensure that children cannot impulsively run into dangerous situations. The barrier should prevent children from scaling or crawling under it.

The provision of barriers is not a substitute for constant supervision in play areas. The term 'premises' refers to play areas either indoor or outdoor.

Safety, health and hygiene practices

4.14) Procedures must be in place to ensure that the sides of any ramp, stairway or balcony accessible to children in care does not present a hazard.

4.15) Age appropriate barriers are required at the top and bottom of stairs.

Plants

4.16) Any poisonous vegetation found on the premises must be identified and made inaccessible to children.

Telephone

4.17) An operating telephone must be on the premises where care is provided.

4.18) In situations where telephone services are not available, an effective emergency communication plan must be in place.

Pools/Water

4.19) All paddling pools must be emptied after use and must be stored to prevent the collection of water.

4.20) Isolation swimming pool fencing and gates which comply with ASA Standards 1926 and 2820 must be provided.

4.21) Effective barriers should be in place to prevent access by any child in care to any area that opens directly into a fenced pool area

The current Building Code of Australia should be used as a guide.

For advice on height and design of barriers proprietors are advised to contact the Child Accident Prevention Foundation for up to date information. The publication '**Family Day Care Guidelines**' is available for purchase through this organisation.

Many common plants pose a health risk if consumed. Some plants cause skin irritation on contact. As with other hazardous items it is necessary that children are protected from the risks associated with poisonous vegetation.

Family based child care workers/carers should be made aware of those plants in the ACT deemed noxious.

The provision of a telephone and associated telephone number is necessary for emergency calls and notification of parents in the case of illness or accidents.

Emergency situations can include telephone service breakdown or excursions.

Children can drown in as little as 5 centimetres of water. Particular attention must be paid to children and their accessibility to water generally.

The national standard on adult:child ratio in relation to excursions applies to the use of isolation swimming pools:

- one adult for each child under the age of three years; and
- one adult for every two children over three years.

Having effective barriers to swimming pools (above and below ground pools and wading pools), and sound safety practices in place in relation to other water receptacles, does not reduce the need for close supervision of children when these hazards are present. The

Safety, health and hygiene practices

4.22) Water containers must be safely covered or inaccessible to children.

4.23) Pool filters must be inaccessible to children in care.

Heating and Cooling

4.24) All heating and cooling units must be adequately secured and guarded to prevent injury to children through contact with hot surfaces or moving parts, and the emission of any sparks or flames.

Hazardous Equipment/Possessions

4.25) Any equipment that is a hazard must have the controls guarded to prevent children's access.

4.26) Fans in rooms must be inaccessible to children.

4.27) All electrical outlets must be of the safety type or be covered with safety plugs.

4.28) All electrical cords must be in good repair and kept out of reach of children.

proprietor must have in place appropriate procedures to ensure all children have close adult supervision near water, especially at times when a swimming or wading pool is in use.

Water containers, including fish ponds and water features are to be covered securely.

The provision of safety mechanisms around heating and cooling units is necessary to ensure the safety of children. One of the most common household accidents involves children coming into contact with household appliances, such as stoves, irons and hot liquids, causing burns and scalds. Proprietors should also bring to the attention of family based child care workers/carers the hazards associated with hot appliances and hot liquids and the need for close adult supervision when they are in use.

Proprietors must ensure family based child care workers/carers provide a comfortable and safe environment for children in their care.

Household electrical equipment such as hairdryers and blow heaters can prove hazardous to children and should be made inaccessible to children.

Information about safe electrical outlets and safety plugs is available from Kidsafe Australia.

Installation of a 'residual current device' or 'safety switch', at the main fuse box provides additional protection from electrocution. Where a leakage of electricity occurs from the circuit, which usually occurs during an electrocution, this device stops the flow of electricity.

Electrical cords should be placed in such a way as to minimise risk and be kept in good repair. Retractable cords are a good precaution.

Safety, health and hygiene practices

4.29) Household possessions which can cause children to be put at physical or emotional risk are to be stored out of children's view or reach.

Possessions such as alcohol, exercise equipment, adult videos and firearms can put children's safety and welfare at risk. Firearms, for example should be stored in compliance with the ACT Weapons Act.

Shade

4.30) There must be safe shaded outdoor play areas with fences and gates (where necessary) that provide an effective barrier to children.

Some shaded outdoor play spaces may include trees, verandah, balcony, patio or other shade structures.

First Aid Kit

4.31) A first aid kit must be maintained in effective order and be kept on the premises in a position that is inaccessible to children but readily accessible to the family based child care worker/carer in an emergency.

All family based child care workers /carers are required to have a first aid kit. For the purposes of this clause, an approved first aid kit is a small household /personal kit.

If not included the first aid kit should also contain :

- at least one cold pack; and
- an emergency blanket.

The first aid kit must be replenished regularly and medicines kept up to date.

Schemes and carers may wish to contact first aid training providers for the most up-to-date information about first aid supplies and practice.

4.32) An appropriate selection of first aid equipment must be carried on all excursions and local walks.

Sleeping Arrangements

4.33) The premises must have adequate sleeping arrangements for each child.

There must be one bed/mattress or other age and culturally appropriate bedding for each child requiring a sleep.

4.34) There must be individual clean bed linen for each child.

Bedding should not be shared for reasons of hygiene and risk of cross infection.

4.35) Sleeping apparatus must be stored in an hygienic way.

Sleeping apparatus must be stored to allow ventilation. Mattresses, mats or stretchers should not be stacked on top of one another without air space between.

When beds are stored with linen intact, the linen should be folded up onto the bed so that it does not drape or touch other beds. If stretchers mats or mattresses become wet or soiled they should be cleaned thoroughly and dried before storage to stop the possible spread of infection.

4.36) There must be in place a written policy and procedures which ensure that:

Proprietors should have written policies and procedures available to parents and family

Safety, health and hygiene practices

a) family based child care workers/carers observe strict health and hygiene practices that have regard to current community standards and are in accordance with relevant government guidelines; and

b) children are encouraged to follow such practices.

Infectious Conditions

4.37) There must be in place:

a) a policy which outlines the exclusion practices and conditions for return to care for children who have an infectious condition or who have been exposed to an infectious condition. This policy must cover all members of the family day care home; and

b) a procedure which ensures that parents of children enrolled in schemes are advised of the occurrence of an infectious condition in a manner that is not

based child care workers/carers that clearly state the scheme's approach to infection control.

Elements addressed should include:

- handwashing;
- cleaning of nappy change areas;
- response to injuries;
- general cleaning;
- sanitation of toys and other equipment;
- safe food preparation and storage; and
- disposal of waste material.

When involved in toileting children, family based child care workers/carers should pay particular attention to broken skin or cuts on their hands and arms, and protect such broken skin or cuts from direct contact with body fluids by wearing disposable gloves.

All cases of external bleeding should be dealt with carefully.

Procedures should include:

- the use of disposable gloves to cover hands and lower arms; and
- washing of any other parts of the body that come in contact with blood.

Contaminated waste, including bloodied tissues should be sealed in plastic bags before disposal.

It is important that the family based child care worker/carer provides a role model for children at all times. The ongoing teaching of health and hygiene practices should be evident in programming.

The minimum requirement for exclusion is detailed in the 'Exclusion Periods for Infectious Conditions' poster and brochure, developed by the Department of Health and Community Care.

For copies of the poster please contact the Communicable Disease Control Section on 6205 2155.

Also refer to illness record, clause 1.5.

Diseases such as HIV/AIDS dealt with by the Commonwealth Privacy Act or ACT Health Acts are not covered by this requirement.

Safety, health and hygiene practices

prejudicial to the rights of any child or family based child care worker/carer or members of the household.

Administering medications

4.38) Medications must only be administered to a child:

- a) on the written authorisation of the parent and/or doctor/health professional and administered in accordance with the written instructions; and**
- b) from its original packaging. In the case of prescription medication this should only be administered to the child for whom it has been prescribed from a container bearing the child's name and with a current use by date.**

4.39) A record must be kept of the date, time and dosage of medication administered and the record signed by the family based child care worker/carer.

Also refer to medication record, clause 1.4.

Illness and Accidents

4.40) In respect of medical records if a child has an accident or becomes ill whilst attending family day care:

- a) the child must be kept under adult supervision until he/she recovers, or parents or emergency contact takes charge of the child;**
- b) all reasonable attempts must be made to contact and notify the parent as soon as practically possible, of the accident or illness;**
- c) every attempt must be made to secure the consent of the parent to any immediate medical aid;**
- d) where the parents prior consent to emergency medication is not available, every attempt must be made to secure the consent of a registered medical practitioner or scheme coordination unit;**
- e) if ambulance attention, transport or medical attention is provided, a**

It is suggested that staff note attempts they make to contact parents. The importance of maintaining up to date information about parents and emergency contacts is emphasised. It would be appropriate to include up to date information about parents and emergency contacts on daily sign-in sheets.

The proprietor is responsible for developing adequate procedures to be in place when emergencies arise.

Safety, health and hygiene practices

parent must be notified; and

- f) a procedure which ensures that a parent or emergency contact is advised of any matter concerning the child's health that comes to the notice of the family based child care worker/carer.

First Aid

- 4.41) Parents must be notified of any first aid treatment or medication administered to a child.

Fire Safety Requirements

- 4.42) Procedures must be in place to ensure family based child care workers/carers put the safety of children before dealing with fire.

Smoke Alarms

- 4.43) Smoke alarms are to be fitted in accordance with the Fire Brigade's recommendations and maintained according to the manufacturer's specifications.

Emergency Evacuations

- 4.44) There must be a written emergency procedure and copy of floor plan for the evacuation of the home in the case of a fire or other emergency.

- 4.45) Emergency procedures are to be practiced at least twice a year or when a new child enters care.

Family based child care workers/carers have a responsibility to share with parents any concerns they have about a child's health.

Parents must be aware that their children have received first aid treatment or medication.

It is desirable that a fire blanket be installed in each family based child care worker's/carer's home. The proprietor must ensure that blankets and extinguishers are maintained according to manufacturers' specifications. Family based child care workers/carers should know how to use any fire safety equipment installed in their home. Option 'BE' type dry powder fire extinguisher of approximately 11 kg weight that meet the Australian standards is recommended.

The proprietor must ensure that an inspection of installed smoke alarms is conducted during the annual home inspection. Batteries should be replaced when needed.

The proprietor must ensure that an emergency evacuation procedure is in place in each family based child care worker's/carer's home. The plan should consider reasons for evacuation and where the children might be at different times of the day.

All interested parties should be made aware of the plan. It should be reviewed and practiced on a regular basis and when a new child enters care. This procedure must be available to parents. Parents must be aware of the procedure and where they should go to collect their children in case of emergency evacuation.

Safety, health and hygiene practices

Food and Drinks

4.46) Drinking water must be available at all times.

4.47) The proprietor must ensure that food provided for children by family based child care workers/carers is nutritious, adequate in quantity, varied and offered at frequent intervals and is appropriate to the developmental and cultural needs of the child.

4.48) In homes where food is provided, a 'menu' outlining the daily food provision must be made available to parents to read.

4.49) There must be a food policy in place that is available to parents.

Family based child care workers/carers have an important role to play in ensuring that children are properly nourished because of the length of time they may be in care. Where family based child care workers/carers do not provide food they may encourage parents (with great sensitivity) if appropriate, to provide nutritious food for their child. Whilst encouraging good nutrition family based child care workers/carers also need to respect the wishes and capability of the parent in providing food for their children.

ACT Department of Health and Community Care recommends that children receive at least half of their daily requirement for both iron and calcium from the food they eat whilst in child care. This recommendation should be considered when preparing food for children.

Nutritionists from the ACT Department of Health and Community Care are available to give advice.

Parents should be given detailed information about food being offered to their children, including the snacks offered during the day.

The food policy must outline the scheme's approach to accommodating individual dietary, cultural, religious and health needs of children in the provision of food.

5. Programming for Children

5. Planning for children

The family day care setting provides a unique child care experience for children, in which they are engaged in the real life of the home.

The effective use of appropriate and flexible programming in a family day care setting is regarded as an important indicator of quality. A range of experiences for young children, based on their needs and individual abilities, can be planned and offered to children regularly.

A home environment that provides opportunities for children to learn and develop their skills requires suitable materials and equipment and should be culturally appropriate, culturally diverse and provide for a variety of experiences that appeal to individual interests. Appropriate toys and other materials assist and further extend children in a play situation. Equipment and toys need to be available for children. The learning needs of children vary according to their age and level of development. These differing needs should be recognised in the equipment available for their use.

Planning for Children

Children's Experiences

- 5.1) The family based child care worker/carer shall endeavour to stimulate and develop each child's social, physical, emotional, intellectual, language and creative potential and shall provide activities that are appropriate to the development of the children.**
- 5.2) The family based child care worker/carer shall provide a balance of indoor and outdoor activities, active and quiet activities and include activities that can be freely chosen by the child.**
- 5.3) Adequate equipment to meet the development needs of children must be provided.**

Communication with Parents

- 5.4) The family based child care worker/carer should communicate regularly with parents about the experiences their child has been involved in.**

The family day care environment provides a unique learning experience for children. The appropriate application of a flexible program is an important indicator of quality.

It is important for family based child care workers/carers to plan to ensure that children's needs are met. A range of experiences for children based on their needs and individual abilities should be offered regularly to children.

The development and use of a programming model as well as maintaining written notes ensures that:

- the perceptions of all involved in the care of children, particularly family based child care workers/carers are taken into account;
- the care and education needs of children are taken into account;
- the family based child care worker/carer is aware of the program aims and objectives; and
- parents are aware that a program is taking place and are aware of the learning experiences their children are offered by the family based child care worker/carer.

A home environment that provides opportunities for children to learn and develop their skills requires creativity, enthusiasm and access to suitable materials and equipment.

Quality in presentation of the program is enhanced when materials reflect cultural diversity, provide for a variety of interests, and are challenging in their composition.

Appropriate toys and supplementary equipment including dress ups and props, assist and extend children in their play and learning. It is important to provide enough equipment and materials for children to avoid excessive competition.

Just as the need for parents to know how their children's physical needs are met is important to children's well being, so is the need to communicate to parents the intellectual, social and emotional progress their children are making in the family day care environment.

Planning for Children

Family based child care worker/carer Interactions

- 5.5) Family based child care worker/carer interactions with children should ensure that:**
- a) children are guided toward positive and responsible behaviour;**
 - b) children have the opportunity to freely choose activities and problem solve and have access to learning experiences; and**
 - c) children are encouraged and supported toward self reliance and the development of positive self esteem.**
- 5.6) The dignity and rights of the child must be maintained at all times. This includes:**
- a) child management techniques that do not include physical, verbal or emotional punishment, including for example punishment that humiliates, frightens or threatens the child;**
 - b) guidance towards acceptable behaviour with encouragement freely given; and**
 - c) respect for the child's family values.**

Excursions and Outings

- 5.7) No child should leave the premises without a parent's written permission.**
- 5.8) A family based child care worker/carer must notify the coordination unit and the parent prior to an excursion taking place.**
- 5.9) All outings must be conducted in a safe manner. Seating and appropriate child restraints must be available according to Territory law and used at all times for travel in cars.**

Positive supportive and individualised relationships with adults enhance and integrate social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of children. The way in which adults interact with children is significant to the child's development and growth.

Of particular importance are behaviour management practices. It is well accepted that a warm attentive atmosphere enhances children's ability to be responsible for their actions and builds their self esteem, sense of confidence and self worth. Humiliation and physical punishment have negative consequences for children.

Children learn from a broad range of experiences and environments. Family day care provides children with regular opportunities to explore their local community through excursions and outings.

Also refer to excursions, clause 1.10.

Parents have a right to expect that their children will be supervised and cared for appropriately on any excursion or outing. Child safety and family based child care worker/carer liability must be the primary consideration.

Planning for Children

- 5.10) The family based child care worker/carer must carry with them during an excursion:**
- a) a list of current contact phone numbers of parents of children on the excursion; and**
 - b) a basic first aid kit.**
- 5.11) There must be sufficient family based child care workers/carers and parents on an excursion to ensure that no child is left without adequate supervision.**

Parents may need to be contacted quickly if there is an emergency when children are on an excursion. The family based child care worker/carer should have a means of confirming their contact numbers with parents on the morning of the excursion to ensure they have the most up to date information.

6. Management of the Scheme

6. Management of the Scheme

Family day care schemes function best with a strong coordination unit providing support to the proprietors and family based child care workers/carers in meeting their obligations and the parents in meeting theirs. Family day care is most effective when it is viewed as a partnership between the proprietors, coordination unit staff, family based child care workers/carers and parents.

These conditions recognise this partnership by providing family based child care workers/carers, parents and coordination unit staff with information about the scheme and the role each has to play in communicating with others in the partnership.

While not generally engaged in the provision of direct care to children, coordination unit staff have a direct impact on the quality of family day care experienced by children and their families. The primary function of the coordination unit is to support the provision of quality family day care. To ensure effective support there is a need to identify clearly the role and particular functions of the coordination unit. While some aspects of work will differ from scheme to scheme due to variables such as size and family needs, core functions common to all schemes can be identified in the pursuit of quality.

Management of the Scheme

Management of the Scheme

6.1) The proprietor of a family day care scheme must ensure that the following management procedures are in place:

- a) clearly stated procedures, channels of communication and reporting between proprietors, parents, family based child care workers/carers, coordination unit staff and others;**
- b) selection criteria and role statements for all persons engaged in the operation of the scheme;**
- c) position descriptions, pre-service and in-service training, employment conditions and grievance procedures for coordination unit staff;**
- d) provision for the support and supervision of coordination unit staff, and the support and monitoring of the family based child care worker/carer;**

- e) policies and procedures that ensure coordination unit staff support and monitor the quality of care provided including:**
 - i) the conduct of regular visits to family based child care worker's/carer's home, sufficient in number and frequency to support the family based child care worker/carer and to ensure effective monitoring of the quality of care;**
 - ii) the role of coordinators in identifying and assisting to meet the pre-service and in-service training needs of the family based child care worker/carer;**

A quality service is dependent upon clear channels of communication and dissemination of information and reporting between management at all levels, coordination unit staff, family based child care workers/carers and parents.

All family based child care worker/carer and coordinating staff must be given support and supervision in their roles by a person with the relevant knowledge and experience. This may include:

- regular times for both individual and team discussion and review;
- relevant in-service training;
- opportunities for self-evaluation and feedback; and
- a process to address any work performance issues.

Proprietors should ensure there are policies and procedures in place to address situations where these conditions are breached or where the quality of care and facilities are not meeting the minimum standards.

Management of the Scheme

- iii) **the role of coordinators and the family based child care worker/carer in identifying their own in-service training needs and facilitating their professional development; and**
- iv) **clear processes to adequately address concerns that may arise about the quality of care and concerns about policies and practices to support and monitor the quality of care.**

- f) **documented procedures that enable the family based child care worker/carer and parents to raise concerns about the conduct of the scheme that affect them;**

- g) **policies and practices that respect individual privacy and maintain confidentiality about:**

- i) **children and families using the scheme;**
- ii) **the family based child care worker/carer and families; and**
- iii) **coordination unit staff; and**

- h) **effective mechanisms which facilitate the participation of:**

- i) **parents and children using the scheme;**
- ii) **coordination unit staff;**
- iii) **family based child care worker/carer;**
- iv) **community representatives;**
- v) **any individual and/or organisations that may be able to assist in the management and operation of the scheme; and**
- vi) **policies and practices that support the effective and efficient management of the family day care scheme.**

- 6.2) **The proprietor must ensure that coordination unit staff perform the specified functions which include:**

There must be policies and procedure in place to monitor the quality of care provided by the family based child care worker/carer.

There must be mechanisms in place to address situations where the Act is breached or the quality of care and facilities are not meeting the minimum standards.

There must be procedures to ensure that the family based child care worker/carer, coordination unit staff, other staff and parents have access to the proprietor to:

- raise any concerns about the service delivery of the scheme;
- clarify any of the policies or procedures of the scheme; and
- determine where to refer the issue if unresolved.

The Commonwealth Family Day Care Handbook (Nov 1999) describes the functions of coordination units to include supporting the

Management of the Scheme

- a) to develop, document and implement procedures for the recruitment and assessment of family based child care workers/carers and their homes;**
- b) to develop, document and implement procedures for the assessment of the members of the family based child care worker's/carer's households;**
- c) to conduct regular visits to family based child care workers/carers homes, sufficient in number and frequency to ensure that the quality of care is being maintained and to support family based child care workers/carers to enhance the quality of care;**
- d) to provide relevant support and assistance to family based child care workers/carers, including helping to identify the individual needs of each child in care, plan relevant experiences and monitor development;**
- e) to identify and assist in meeting family based child care workers/carers needs including pre-service and in-service training, professional development, networking and equipment needs;**
- f) to develop effective procedures to meet the needs of all children being cared for in the scheme, having regard to:
 - i) the development, best interest and well being of the individual child;**
 - ii) views of the child's parents; and**
 - iii) advice provided by specialist advisers assisting families using their scheme;****
- g) to develop, document and implement procedures to assist parents to make informed decisions about the placement of their child with a family based child care worker/carer;**
- h) to disseminate information to family based child care workers/carers and parents on behalf of the scheme;**

family based child care worker/carer, arranging the placement of children according to the needs of the children, families and family based child care worker/carer, to monitor the care provided and to undertake the necessary administrative responsibilities.

Management of the Scheme

- i) to maintain required records on behalf of the scheme;**
- j) to develop, document and implement effective administration procedures for the scheme;**
- k) to facilitate community access to the scheme, including promoting awareness of family day care and responding promptly and positively to enquiries;**
- l) to develop document and implement effective referral procedures to assist in meeting the comprehensive needs of children and their families; and**
- m) to establish effective liaison between parents, family based child care workers/carers, community agencies and government bodies.**