

Family Day Care 2009

- Family day care is a quality home-based early childhood education and care service that blends child care, development and early learning within a small group setting.
- Children are nurtured and cared for in the homes of approved family day care carers who are resourced, supported, monitored and trained by early childhood professionals from a central coordination unit. This network of carers, coordination unit and families is collectively referred to as a family day care 'scheme'. Family day care schemes operate within a framework of local government, community-based services or privately.
- Family day care caters for young babies through to pre-teens and beyond. Care is offered during standard hours, before and after school, during school holidays and in some circumstances overnight and weekends.
- Throughout Australia there are over 12,000 carers who are registered with 307 schemes across all states and territories. Over 102,900 children are currently enrolled in family day care services Australia-wide.
 - 61.9%* of family day care is provided in regional, rural and remote areas of Australia
 - 35.5%* of children using family day care are school aged

(*Source: FDCA National Scheme Survey November 2008 (85% response rate))

- Family day care has been operating in Australia for over 30 years.
- The service complies with Australian government guidelines, national standards, state and territory regulations, the Family Day Care Quality Assurance system through the National Childcare Accreditation Council and individual scheme policies.
- In the natural learning environment of the home, children in family day care learn through play and exploration within a small group setting. Children receive individual care and attention, and experiences are planned by the carer with the developmental needs of each child in mind.
- Current early years brain research confirms that the single most important element in stimulating a child's learning is strong relationships with significant adults – family day care's small group care enables children to build those bonds that are so critical to their early learning and social development.
- Family day care's child centred approach puts the child's wellbeing first. The service respects the key role of parents and works within a collaborative partnership model that helps children to thrive.
- Family day care has in common with centre-based care: qualifications, quality assurance and health and safety/OHS requirements
 - as in centre-based care, the authorised supervisor of a family day care service is required to hold formal qualifications under licensing regulations
 - a key role of tertiary qualified staff is to lead the continuous training of service workers
 - all workers with direct contact with children are required to hold a current first aid certificate
 - carers and their immediate family undergo background checks to ensure working with children suitability

- All carers are skilled, experienced and highly trained; many hold formal qualifications ranging from Certificate III in Children's Services to university degrees. Carers work in partnership with professionally qualified family day care staff, and both staff and carers attend ongoing in-service training in contemporary child care practice to ensure continued positive outcomes for children.
- Carers are required to undergo rigorous pre-service training prior to starting in family day and this training is led and supported by early childhood professionals
- Family day care is an affordable child care option where care is charged on an hourly basis. Fees are generally set by individual carers, depending on the services they provide. The Australian Government's Child Care Benefit (CCB) is available for families, as is the 50% Child Care Rebate (CCR).
- Family day care is a viable career choice offering the flexibility of working from home and the ability for carers to set their own hours and fees for service. Depending on the number of children in care and the hours worked, carers can earn anywhere from \$20,000 to over \$100,000 a year. Many expenses relating to the operation of a family day care business are tax deductible.

Why choose family day care?

"Family day care is a professional and regulated home-based child care service offering care for children from birth to 12 years. Highly trained carers develop and plan individual experiences to suit your child and form close relationships, necessary for early learning and social development. Family day care is the preferred child care choice of the families of 102,900 children across Australia." (Rhonda Bignell, Chief Executive Officer, Family Day Care Australia).

Key points:

- Warm, home-like environment
- Individual attention to children in small groups
- Care for children is provided from a very young age and can continue right through to early teens
- Child care can be offered during standard hours, overnight, weekends, school holidays, before/after school and occasional care
- Family day care is flexible and can support parents in shift working employment, such as nursing or hospitality, or roles which require travel
- Family day care can also assist families in crisis or as a respite care option

"Family day care is a fast-growing quality child care service with places now available in a suburb near you. If you are a parent interested in quality, individual care and learning experiences for your child, contact your local family day care scheme now. Log on to www.familydaycareaustralia.com.au to find a service near you." (Rhonda Bignell, Chief Executive Officer, Family Day Care Australia).

"If you are interested in children and want to earn a healthy income working in your own home-based business, then family day care could be the career choice for you. Opportunities currently exist for suitable people to join their local family day care scheme where full training and ongoing support is provided." (Rhonda Bignell, Chief Executive Officer, Family Day Care Australia).

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