

Student and Volunteer Handbook



Newton Family Day Care

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Newton Family Day Care (FDC will be used to replace Family Day Care from here onwards) and thank you for volunteering or doing your student placement with us. Volunteers and students play a vital role in assisting Newton FDC team to provide an exciting and diverse pedagogical space for the children who attend. This handbook is designed to give you the information you will need to assist you while you are at the scheme and hopefully answer some questions you may have. Please talk to the director if you have any further questions that are unanswered by this handbook. We hope that this is the start of a rewarding association for us all.

When you arrive at the Newton FDC office each day, please let the director know you are here and sign the visitor timesheets. The Director will be able to inform you of your duties and responsibilities for the day. Please ensure you have a thorough understanding of the philosophical perspectives and vision of Newton family day care. The philosophy and vision are attached to this handbook. The Director will be able to point you to other sources of information within the office to help you enrich and deepen your understanding of the training of the family day care.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS

Both volunteers and students, and the organisations they work with have rights and responsibilities. Volunteers and students are engaged to perform a specific job and the scheme agrees to provide the volunteer or student with a worthwhile and rewarding experience. In return, each has the right to some basic expectations of the other. Students will also have expectations of their performance from their educational institution. The student's educational placement institution will have guidelines on student's rights, responsibilities, conduct and behaviour that need to be observed.

Volunteers and students have the right to:

- Be treated as co-workers. This includes job descriptions, Equal Employment Opportunity, Workplace Health and Safety, anti-discrimination legislation and organisational grievance processes.
- Be asked for their permission before any job-related reference, police or other checks are conducted.
- Know the purpose of the FDC.
- Appropriate orientation and training for the job.
- Be kept informed of organisational changes and the reasons for the changes.
- A place to work and suitable tools for the job.
- Reimbursement of agreed expenses.
- Be heard and make suggestions.
- Personal Accident Insurance
- A verbal reference or statement of service, if appropriate.

Organisations have the right to:

- Expect clear and open communication from the volunteer or student.
- Negotiate work assignments.
- Receive as much effort and service from a volunteer or student as a paid worker, even on a short-term basis.
- Expect volunteers and students to adhere to their job descriptions/outlines and the organisation's code of practice.
- Expect volunteers and students to undertake training provided for them and observe safety rules.
- Make the decision regarding the best placement of a volunteer or student.
- Express opinions about poor volunteer or student effort in a diplomatic way.
- Expect loyalty to the organisation and only accept constructive criticism.

Source: The NSW Centre for Volunteering (www.volunteering.com.au).

At Newton FDC, students and volunteers are considered to be vital members of the FDC team. We believe that:

- An education and care service operate most effectively when there is open communication and information is shared. Effective communication and problem solving between the adults in the service also models successful working relationships for children.
- Teamwork and collaboration, where others' viewpoints are respected and contributions are acknowledged, are fundamental to the development of trusting relationships.
- Diversity within the team in terms of skills, experiences and backgrounds enhances the team and ultimately leads to more effective and responsive programs for children.
- Nominated supervisors, educators, directors, staff members, students and volunteers develop and maintain relationships with each other that are based on the principles of mutual respect, equity and fairness.
- Educators, directors, staff members, students and volunteers respect and value the diverse contributions and perspectives of their colleagues and this is evident in their interactions with each other.

(Source: The NQS, QA 4).

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is treating, or proposing to treat, someone unfavourably because of a personal characteristic protected by the law. This includes bullying someone because of a protected characteristic.

Many people have fixed ideas about groups of people who are different from themselves. If we aren't careful, this can lead us to discriminate against people who belong to those groups.

The Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW is part of the NSW Department of Attorney General and Justice. It administers the anti-discrimination laws.

In NSW there is a law that says people must be fair to you:

- when you go for a job
- at your work
- at your school, college or university
- in shops, banks, hospitals, hotels, clubs, coffee shops and offices; when you rent a house, flat or room

This law is called the Anti-Discrimination Act. This law says people must not treat you unfairly, just because:

- you have a learning difficulty
- you have a disability
- you are black or from a different country
- you are going to have a baby
- you are breastfeeding your baby
- you work and look after a family member
- you are old or young
- you are a man or boy
- you are a woman or a girl
- you are single or married or defector
- you are gay or lesbian
- you have HIV or AIDS
- you are transgender (you are a man who has become a woman, or a woman who has become a man)

(Source: The NSW Department of Attorney General and Justice).

If you feel you have been treated unfairly at our scheme and internal grievance procedures have not satisfied you, you have the right to complain to the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

We engage, support, resource and inspire educators to work in collaboration with families ensuring each child reaches their full potential. In meeting our vision, the service will act in a professional and respectful manner, valuing partnerships and diversity. Our primary focus is always what is in the best interests of the child and in doing so we honor the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- Newton FDC aims to provide a high quality, flexible and professional children's service offering a range of education and care options and positive experiences for children and their families. This encompasses the ideals of Child Care and encourages all children to develop to their fullest potential.
- Newton FDC supports inclusive practices and rights of all children to feel safe, secure and that they belong. Children are recognized as individuals, regardless of their age, gender, ability, cultural background or experience. educators foster a warm and caring home and a responsive environment that nurtures children's health and happiness.
- Newton FDC provides positive relationships and working in collaboration with families, educators and staff are crucial to the wellbeing of children. Diversity is valued and mutual respect is essential between all partners promoting nonjudgmental and positive relationships within the care.
- Newton FDC embraces the Early Years Learning and Development outcomes for all children:
 - To have a strong sense of identity
 - To connect with and contribute to their world
 - To develop and have a sense of wellbeing
 - To be confident and involved learners
 - To be effective communicators

Newton FDC would like to promote good will, collaboration and trust between the government, parents and the wider community for maximum benefit of the children under our care. We are committed to simplifying processes, finding solutions and continuous improvement.

GOVERNANCE

It is important that you understand the way the FDC is governed and managed.

THE NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK (NQF)

All family day care office's in Australia operate under an Australian Governmental Quality Framework called the "*National Quality Framework*" (NQF). The foremost component of the NQF is the National Law called "*Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010*". This Law regulates education and care services for children.

THE NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS (NQS)

The NQS is a schedule to the National Regulations (The Guide to the National Quality Framework, ACECQA:9). The NQS is part of the Regulations. Amongst other things, the Regulations set out the minimum operational requirements organised around each of the seven Quality Areas of the NQS (Guide to the NQF, ACECQA, 2011:8).

THE LEARNING FRAMEWORK

NQS 1.1 states, “an approved learning framework informs the development of a curriculum that enhances each child’s learning and development”. The approved learning framework for preschools in NSW is the Early Years Learning Framework called “Belonging, Being & Becoming. This document is generally referred to as the “EYLF”.

The aim of the EYLF is to extend and enrich children’s learning from birth to 5 years and through the transition to school. It assists services to provide young children with opportunities to maximize their potential and develop a foundation for future success in learning (Guide to the NQF, ACECQA, 2011:10)

THE AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN’S EDUCATION AND CARE QUALITY AUTHORITY (ACECQA)

ACECQA is the new national body jointly governed by the Australian Government and state and territory governments to oversee the new system.

NSW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Under the NQF, each state and territory has its own *Regulatory Authority* that has primary responsibility for the approval, monitoring and quality assessment of services in their jurisdiction in accordance with the national legislative framework and in relation to the NQS (Guide to the NQF, ACECQA, 2011:4). In NSW, the Early Childhood Education Directorate, NSW Department of Education is the *Regulatory Authority*.

APPROVED PROVIDER

The *Approved Provider* is responsible for the overall performance of the organisation. They determine the service’s mission and purpose, set the strategic directions of the organisation, that is, develop the service’s strategic plan, appoint and monitor the performance of staff ensuring that they are complying with legal obligations, ensure the on-going financial viability of the service, monitor and evaluate the service’s performance against the strategic plan, enhance the profile of the service in the community and recruit and orient new staff and educators.

FDC DIRECTOR

The director forms an integral part of the management team. In children’s services, the director is employed to:

- manage the day to day operations of the service including supervising other staff;
- provide relevant and up-to-date information to the staff to assist with their decision-making;
- work in partnership with the committee to achieve the service’s mission and purpose; and
- report to the committee on progress against the service’s strategic plan.

RESPONSIBLE PERSON

The National Law requires service providers to ensure that at all times there is a responsible person present at the service, A responsible person is either:

- The Approved Provider
- The Nominated Supervisor
- A *Certified Supervisor* placed in day-to-day charge.

An approved provider does not have to appoint a person in day-to-day charge if a nominated supervisor/s or approved provider is to be the responsible person.

NOMINATED SUPERVISOR

Newton FDC nominates an educational staff member (usually the director) to be the Nominated Supervisor of the service. They are responsible for the operation of the service along with the approved provider and for ensuring it is following the Law and Regulations.

EDUCATIONAL LEADER

Under the National Law: Section 169 and the National Regulations: Regulations 118, 148 the approved provider of an education and care service must designate, in writing, a suitably qualified and experienced educator, coordinator or other individual as *educational leader* at the service, to lead the development and implementation of educational programs in the service.

According to Community Childcare Cooperatives Educational Leader fact sheet; an educational leader, through a collaborative process with educators, families and the community will guide the development of the program of learning and education for children. They will also assist with educator growth in reflection and the understanding of children's learning and development. This role is key to sound practice in the education and care of children – it is a role of great significance and importance.

EARLY CHILDHOOD AUSTRALIA ASSOCIATION (ECA) CODE OF ETHICS

A code of ethics is a set of statements about appropriate and expected behaviour of members of a professional group and, as such, reflects its values.

You will find a copy of the ECA Code of Ethics displayed in the FDC office. It is expected that at all times you will uphold the principles and values within it.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The director and staff write and review the policies and procedures that inform the way the FDC is operated annually. These policies are informed by all the legal documents that the centre is governed by, including the Education and Care Services Regulations, the National Law, WH&S legislation, Fair Work Australia, the NQF and other relevant sources. It is expected that all students and volunteers at the FDC adhere to the policies and procedures of the service and refer to them when needed.

These policies will aid you, should you need to find information on the grievance procedures, resolution of formal complaints, responding to a complaint, appeals, work-place health and safety (WH&S), staff conduct, leave, child protection, mandatory reporting procedures and policies relating to working with children.

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY (WH&S)

The NSW Government WorkCover Authority classifies students and volunteers as “workers” within the act. Therefore, it is important that you understand your workplace healthy and safety rights and responsibilities. In relation to WH&S you have the same rights and responsibilities as that of any employee at Newton FDC.

You have the right to a safe working environment that ensures you are not exposed to any risk to your health or safety. Your responsibilities are to take reasonable care of yourself and others in the environment and comply with reasonable instructions from the management team and scheme policies and procedures.

NEWTON FDC PRIMARY DUTY OF CARE

Newton FDC has a primary duty of care to ensure workers and others are not exposed to a risk to their health and safety.

Newton FDC must meet its obligations, so far as is reasonably practicable, to provide a safe and healthy workplace for workers of other persons by ensuring:

- Safe use of plant, structures and substances
- Facilities for the welfare of workers are adequate
- Notification and recording of workplace incidents
- Safe systems of work
- A safe work environment
- Adequate information, training, instruction and supervision is given
- Compliance with the requirements under the work health and safety regulation

EMPLOYEES

DUTIES OF AN EMPLOYEE

An employee must, while at work:

- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety
- Take reasonable care for the health and safety of others
- Comply with any reasonable instruction by the director or responsible person.

HAZARD REPORTING

It is important that you report any hazards in the environment as soon as possible to a *responsible person* for them to address. This will ensure that our FDC continues to be a safe place.

ADMINISTRATION

SIGN IN AND OUT

You are required to sign in and out **each day** on our visitor's timesheets when you attend the service. You will be shown the procedure for this during your orientation visit.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

It is important that you understand and comply with any emergency procedures that our FDC has in place. The primary emergency procedure is that of the fire evacuation. At your orientation visit you will be guided through the procedure of the FDC in relation to this.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Your conduct within the family day care is very important. Please ensure you are familiar with Newton FDC Code of Conduct Policy. Ethical conduct guides our behaviour and decisions within the FDC setting and is founded in respect for, and the valuing of children, families, educators and staff, and the community.

RECRUITING APPROPRIATE STAFF AND EDUCATORS

At Newton FDC we aim to have consistent and committed staff and educators who support good quality standards and continuity of care for children. We value effective, transparent and equitable recruitment processes that ensure the FDC attracts and retains educators, directors and other staff members who can best meet the needs of children and their families.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK (WWCC)

In keeping with the laws under which the scheme operates, all students and volunteers are required to have a valid Working with Children Check complete.

We are very excited to welcome you to Newton Family Day Care and to have the opportunity to begin a professional relationship with you. We hope you will find this to be a rewarding experience.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Newton Family Day Care (FDC) is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of children, families, educators, staff, students, volunteers, and visitors. All personal and sensitive information is collected, stored, used, and shared responsibly, in compliance with the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, the Privacy Act 1988, and the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs).

You must:

- Only collect information necessary for the effective operation of the service.
- Use information solely for the purpose for which it was collected.
- Protect records against loss, unauthorised access, misuse, or disclosure.
- Maintain confidentiality and not discuss personal information outside the service, unless required for professional reasons.
- Immediately report any suspected breach of privacy to the Approved Provider.

Records will be retained in accordance with regulations and securely destroyed when no longer required. All staff, students and volunteers must sign a confidentiality agreement before commencing.

SAFE USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AND ONLINE ENVIRONMENTS

Newton FDC is committed to ensuring that children, families, educators, students, volunteers and staff use digital technologies safely and responsibly. This policy supports children's safety and wellbeing and aligns with the Education and Care Services National Regulations (effective September 2025). For full details, please refer to Newton FDC Policies and Procedure document.

- Children's use of digital devices while in care will always be supervised and limited to age-appropriate, educational content.
- Students and volunteers must never use personal devices to photograph, record or communicate with children or families.
- All service digital communications are professional, secure and confidential.
- Any suspected cyber incident or data breach must be reported immediately to the Approved Provider.

This policy is reviewed annually, or earlier if changes in technology, regulations or risks arise.

STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS

Newton FDC supports the training needs of students and volunteers and recognises the value they bring.

To ensure safe and positive experiences:

- All students and volunteers must hold a current Working With Children Check.
- Placements must be arranged and authorised by a recognised school or training organisation, which confirms suitability and provides written authorisation.
- Students and volunteers receive an induction including policies, service philosophy, Work Health & Safety, and child protection responsibilities.
- Confidentiality must be maintained at all times.
- Students and volunteers must always be supervised by an educator or staff member; they are not to be left alone with children.
- Feedback and assessment will be constructive, fair and in consultation with the student's learning institution.

Hosting a student or volunteer is an opportunity for professional learning and is to be approached with respect and support.