



Newton Family Day Care

Educator Handbook



Table of Contents

WELCOME TO NEWTON FAMILY DAY CARE	1
SERVICE PHILOSOPHY	1
SERVICE GOALS.....	2
CODE OF ETHICS.....	3
PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY	5
SAFE USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AND ONLINE ENVIRONMENTS.....	7
WHAT IS FAMILY DAY CARE?	8
PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE OFFERING FAMILY DAY CARE IN YOUR HOME	8
SETTING UP YOUR ENVIRONMENT.....	8
JOB ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS AN EDUCATOR.....	9
BECOMING AN EDUCATOR.....	9
COORDINATION UNIT	10
MAINTAINING QUALITY CARE	10
HOME VISITS	11
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EDUCATOR'S FAMILY	11
LEGAL AND BUSINESS MATTERS.....	12
INSURANCE.....	12
FEE POLICY.....	12
YOUR COSTS	14
GENERAL COSTS.....	14
INSURANCE	14
REGISTRATION	14
PAPERWORK.....	14
TAX REQUIREMENTS	15
THE LEGAL SIDE OF THINGS	15
QUALITY PRACTICES	15
COMMUNICATION	15
TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT.....	15
GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS.....	16
POLICY.....	16
PROCEDURE	17
PROCEDURE FOR ENROLLING NEW FAMILIES	20
FIRST CONTACT: PHONE CALL.....	20
THE INTERVIEW/VISIT	20
REFERRALS	21
CHILD HOLIDAY PERIOD.....	21
CHILD TERMINATION OF CARE	21
TERMINATION OF EDUCATOR SERVICE AGREEMENT.....	21
NON-COMPLIANCE	21
CHILD SWAPPING LEGISLATION	22
NON-COMPLIANCE PROCEDURE.....	23
SUBSTANTIATED BREACHES.....	23
RELATIVE CARE ARRANGEMENT	24
IMMEDIATE TERMINATION OF THE AGREEMENT.....	24
LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF	24
NETWORK SUPPORT SERVICES	25

WELCOME TO NEWTON FAMILY DAY CARE

Newton Family Day Care hopes that the following information is helpful in establishing and developing your family day care service. It is hoped that your experience of working with us is positive and rewarding. This handbook contains information to assist you in this process and support and answer many of the questions you may have.

Newton family day care Scheme was established in 2016. Our business will operate under the trading name Newton Family Day Care. We created the family day care Scheme to provide parents with a wonderful, safe secure service which allows children to obtain quality childcare in small groups in the home-based environment.

Newton FDC maintains high quality care; we provide developmentally appropriate activities and experiences to enhance every area of development, all within a small group, home environment. Family Day Care Educators provide quality Home Based Childcare in accordance with the National Law, National Standards and National Quality Framework.

SERVICE 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 honour 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.

SERVICE GOALS

We aim to accomplish goals which provide a curriculum that:

- Experiential learning with hands-on projects
- Critical thinking skills developed with problem solving
- Real understanding rather than rote learning
- Collaborative and cooperative learning projects
- Subject content considers what skills will be future relevant in society
- Varied learning resources instead of textbooks
- The focus on Lifelong learning and social skills
- Offer enriching experiences that are developmentally appropriate
- Educators should be aware of child's current interests, needs, and strengths

Programs should:

- Allow for independent exploration
- Enhance all development areas
- Learning through play
- Offer opportunities for discovery
- Allow children to be able to make choices and have liberal doses of freedom
- Individualised learning (interests, and needs)
- Offer choices and challenges
- Encourage Children to be active learners
- Encourage children to develop opportunities to explore the natural world and develop an appreciation and an environmental understanding
- To incorporate all of the senses in a learning environment
- Provide real life experiences (children should be involved in daily chores) and home like experiences to assist children to understand their world
- For Educators to positively role model responsible and committed attitudes for children over all development satisfaction and wellbeing by playing alongside children not simply to manage and teach (Being on the child's level, listening and conversing, etc.)
- That each child experiences a relaxed and happy day
- To provide routine times that are interesting and fun learning experiences
- Rotation of a variety of learning materials that provide a range of play materials that offer multicultural, anti-bias, non-sexist, challenging curriculum
- The whole child approach is the best approach
- A multicultural, anti-bias, non-sexist, challenging curriculum for a child to grow to their optimum potential
- For children to have a love of life and learning
- Each child's contribution should be respected to assist all children in believing they are a person of worth
- Be flexible and foster independence
- Involve families, and our local community, catering for the diversity of each children

CODE OF ETHICS

I. IN RELATION TO CHILDREN, I WILL:

1. Acknowledge the uniqueness and potential of each child,
2. Recognise early childhood as a unique and valuable stage of life and accept that each phase within early childhood is important in its own right.
3. Honour the child's right to play, in acknowledgment of the major contribution of play to development.
4. Enhance each child's strengths, competence, and self-esteem.
5. Ensure that my work with children is based on their interests and needs and let them know they have a contribution to make.
6. Recognise that young children are vulnerable and use my influence and power in their best interests.
7. Create and maintain safe healthy settings that enhance children's autonomy, initiative and self-worth and respect their dignity.
8. Help children learn to interact effectively, and in doing so to learn to balance their own rights, needs, and feelings with those of others.
9. Base my work with children on the best theoretical and practical knowledge about early childhood as well as on particular knowledge of each child's development.
10. Respect the special relationship between children and their families and incorporate this perspective in all my interactions with children.
11. Work to ensure that young children are not discriminated against on the basis of gender, age, race, religion, language, ability, culture, or national origin.
12. Acknowledge the worth of the cultural and linguistic diversity that children bring to the environment.
13. Engage only in practices that are respectful of and provide security for children and in no way degrade, endanger, exploit, intimidate, or harm them psychologically or physically.
14. Ensure that my practices reflect consideration of the child's perspective.

II. IN RELATION TO FAMILIES, I WILL:

1. Encourage families to share their knowledge of their child with me and reciprocate by sharing my knowledge of children in general with parents so that there is mutual growth and understanding in ways that benefit the child.
2. Strive to develop positive relationships with families that are based on mutual trust and open communication.
3. Engage in shared decision making with families.
4. Acknowledge families' existing strengths and competence as a basis for supporting them in their task of nurturing their child.
5. Acknowledge the uniqueness of each family and the significance of its culture, culture, customs and beliefs.
6. Maintain confidentiality.
7. Respect the right of the family to privacy.
8. Consider situations from each family's perspective, especially if differences or tensions arise.
9. Assist each family to develop a sense of belonging to the services in which their child participates.
10. Acknowledge that each family is affected by the community context in which it operates.

III. IN RELATION TO COLLEAGUES, I WILL:

1. Support and assist colleges in their professional development.
2. Work with my colleges to maintain and improve the standard of service provided in my work place.
3. Promote policies and working conditions that are non-discriminatory and that foster competence, well-being and positive self-esteem.
4. Acknowledge and support the use of the personal and professional strengths which my colleges bring to the work place.
5. Work to build an atmosphere of trust, respect and candour by:
6. Encouraging openness and tolerance between colleges
7. Accepting their right to hold different points of view
8. Using constructive methods of conflict resolution, and
9. Maintaining appropriate confidentiality
10. Acknowledge the worth of the culture and linguistic diversity which my colleagues bring to work place.
11. Encourage my colleagues to accept and adhere to this Code.
12. Provide programs which are responsive to community needs.
13. Support the development and implementation of laws and policies that promote the well-being of children and families and that are responsive to community needs.
14. Be familiar with and abide by laws and policies that relate to my work.
15. Work to change laws and policies that interfere with the well-being of children.
16. Promote co-operation among all agencies and professions working in the best interests of young children and families.
17. Promote children's best interests through community and advocacy.

IV. IN RELATION TO MYSELF AS A PROFESSIONAL, I WILL:

1. Update and improve my expertise, and practice in the early childhood field continually through formal and informal professional development.
2. Engage in critical self-reflection and seek input from colleges.
3. Communicate with and consider the views of my colleagues in the early childhood profession and other professions.
4. Support Research to strengthen and expand the knowledge base of early childhood, and, where possible, initiate, contribute to and facilitate such research.
5. Work within the limits of my professional role and avoid misrepresentation of my professional competence and qualifications.
6. Work to complement and support the child rearing function of the family.
7. Be an advocate for young children, early childhood services, and my profession.
8. Recognise the particular importance of formal qualifications in early childhood studies, along with personal characteristics and experience, for those who work in the early childhood profession.
9. Act in the community in ways that enhance the standing of the profession.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Purpose

Newton Family Day Care (FDC) is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of children, families, educators, staff, students, and visitors. This policy ensures that 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).

Scope

This policy applies to all children, families, staff, educators, educator assistants, management, students, volunteers, contractors, and visitors associated with Newton FDC.

Policy Statement

Newton FDC recognises the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of personal information and respects the privacy of individuals at all times. We will:

- 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.
- Provide families and staff access to their personal information upon request.
- Ensure secure destruction of records in line with record retention requirements.

Procedures

1. Collection of Information
 - Personal information (including enrolment forms, health, medical, educational, cultural, and family details) will only be collected with informed consent.
 - Families will be informed of why the information is collected and how it will be used.
2. Use and Disclosure of Information
 - Information will be used only for its intended purpose, e.g., ensuring the safety, wellbeing, and education of children, managing enrolments, and meeting legal obligations.
 - Information will not be disclosed to third parties without consent, except when required by law (e.g., mandatory reporting, regulatory authority investigations, subpoenas).
3. Storage and Security
 - All paper records will be stored in locked cabinets with restricted access.
 - Digital records will be stored securely with password protection, encryption where possible, and regular backups.
 - Access is restricted to authorised staff and educators on a need-to-know basis.
4. Access and Correction
 - Families and staff may request access to their personal information at any time by contacting the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor.
 - Corrections to inaccurate information will be made promptly.

5. Confidentiality of Staff and Families

- Staff and educators must not discuss personal information about children, families, or colleagues outside of the service, unless required for professional purposes.
- Confidentiality agreements will be signed by all staff, students, and volunteers.

6. Record Retention and Disposal

- Records will be retained in accordance with National Regulations (Regs 181–184).
- Children’s records will be kept for at least 3 years after their last day of attendance.
- Records will be securely destroyed (shredded or digitally erased) when no longer required.

7. Breaches of Privacy

- Any suspected or actual data breach must be reported immediately to the Approved Provider.
- The Approved Provider will notify affected families and the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) where required under the Notifiable Data Breach scheme.

Roles and Responsibilities

Approved Provider – Ensure compliance with National Law, Regulations, and the Privacy Act; maintain secure storage systems and risk management strategies; respond to privacy requests and breaches in a timely manner.

Nominated Supervisor/Coordinators – Implement privacy procedures; ensure staff understand and follow confidentiality obligations.

Educators and Staff – Collect, store, and use information only as required; maintain confidentiality of all information; report any privacy concerns.

Families – Provide accurate and updated information to support children’s wellbeing; respect the confidentiality of other families, educators, and staff.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier if required by changes in law, regulations, or best practice.

SAFE USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AND ONLINE ENVIRONMENTS

Newton FDC is committed to providing a safe, secure, and supportive environment for children, educators, staff, and families when using digital technologies and engaging with online environments. This policy ensures compliance with updated National Regulations (effective September 2025). For full details, please refer to Newton FDC Policies and Procedure document.

Objectives

- Promote the safe and responsible use of digital technologies within the service.
- Protect children from harm, inappropriate content, and cyber risks.
- Support educators and families in teaching children safe online behaviours.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, educators, educator assistants, children, families, students, volunteers, and visitors using digital technologies in connection with Newton FDC.

Procedures

1. Safe Use by Children

- Children's use of digital technologies will be supervised at all times.
- Access will be restricted to age-appropriate, educational, and safe content.
- Screen time limits will align with Australia's Physical Activity & Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Children.
- Educators will promote digital literacy and safe online practices in age-appropriate ways.

2. Safe Use by Educators and Staff

- All digital devices used in the service must be password-protected and, where possible, encrypted.
- Educators must only use approved devices and platforms for communication with families.
- Photos and recordings of children must only be taken with prior parental/guardian consent, in line with Newton FDC's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.
- Personal devices (phones, tablets) must not be used to store or share children's information.

3. Online Communication

- Communication with families via digital platforms (e.g., Harmony Web, email) must remain professional, secure, and confidential.
- Families will be informed about the platforms used and their purposes.
- Families must not share photos or personal details of other children without consent.

4. Cyber Safety and Security

- The service will maintain secure Wi-Fi networks and digital systems.
- Any suspected cyber incident or breach must be reported immediately.

5. Education and Support

- Families and children will be provided with resources on safe use of digital technologies.
- Educators will undertake professional development on cyber safety and digital literacy.

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

WHAT IS FAMILY DAY CARE?

Family day care is a unique, home-based childcare service providing quality care for children in the own home of experienced and registered family day care educators, supported by The Newton FDC coordination team. Educators will or have been carefully selected and supervised, and operate under the National Law, National Standards and National Quality Framework for Family Day Care. Educators are registered with Newton FDC to care for a maximum of 4 children under school age or 7 children in total including school age children (less than 12 years of age). Child placements with educators are organised and supported by the Family Day Care Co-ordination Unit. Children aged between the age of 6 weeks and 12 years are nurtured in a small group setting and through the educator's individualised programming are encouraged to further develop their skills and knowledge.

Becoming an educator with Newton FDC Providers means that whilst you're part of a national, leading, progressive team of professionals, you're also building your own business and experiencing a degree of autonomy, flexibility and support. While you will receive training, support and guidance in setting up and maintaining a successful business, you are ultimately responsible for its running and ongoing administration, – similar to any other small business operator. However, flexibility, convenience and independence are your greatest rewards in running your own business from home.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE OFFERING FAMILY DAY CARE IN YOUR HOME

There are many reasons people decide to become Family Day Care educators. Some find that caring for other children is a good way to provide playmates and companionship for their own children. Others simply enjoy the laughter and excitement that children bring to their homes. Some need to add to their income without having to work outside of the home, others may have started by offering to care for the child of a neighbour.

Before you decide to care for children in your home, you should consider some practical things very seriously. If you are aware of these factors before you begin to offer day care, the chances that you will enjoy your venture will be greater.

SETTING UP YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Your home should be set up so children can play happily with each other and by themselves. There should be access for children to have self-selection and storage for their belongings. To facilitate good play, toys and materials should be attractively arranged and presented.

Basic equipment and materials you will need for family day care:

- Child sized table and chairs
- Individual beds for children to sleep on and cots for preschool children
- A nappy change area or table
- An outdoor area
- Art and craft materials
- Props and dress up for pretend play
- Music
- Storage containers for equipment
- Books
- Assorted toys and equipment

TIPS FOR EDUCATORS - Organising your time

Care providers need to manage time effectively. Time management means setting goals for yourself. Consider these 3 rules for setting goals:

1. Choose realistic goals that you can achieve
2. Have only a few goals
3. Have a list of goals and prioritise it.

JOB ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS AN EDUCATOR

To coordinate the learning activities of children in your care, including adequate supervision. Ensure the care and development of each child in the group in accordance with government regulations and monitor the achievements of education objectives.

Position title: Family day care educator

Status: Registered with Newton FDC as self-employed.

Primary responsibilities:

- Abide by the National Law, National Standards, National Quality Framework and follow the Schemes Policies and Procedures and Code of Conduct.
- Ensure that a developmentally appropriate program is planned and implemented for each child; ensuring children are treated with dignity and respect.
- Assess the needs of each child and monitor their progress.
- Report to parents/guardians on the progress of their child/ren in a confidential manner.
- Ensure that all information is dealt with confidentially.
- To ensure nutritional food, clothing, sleeping and toileting requirements of each child is met including nappy changing.
- Create a friendly, secure, stimulating and an interactive learning environment for children.
- Ensure health and safety standards are maintained at a high level at all times.
- Maintain suitable developmental records on each child as per regulations and accreditation.
- Report any concerns of suspected harm to coordinator.
- Maintain effective communication with parents/guardians and families of each child.
- Use applicable forms to report incidents, excursions, medication, etc.
- Ensure that children are always supervised as per the regulations and to ensure their safety at all times.

BECOMING AN EDUCATOR

Being a Family Day Educator is a responsible job. Before deciding to offer day care for children in your home, you should ask yourself a number of questions which will help you determine if family day care is really for you. Ask yourself

- Do I like and know enough about children?
- Can I stay with children for long periods of time?
- Can I give each child the affection, security and protection he or she needs?
- Do I understand and respect the children and their families?
- Do I have the physical strength and stamina that will be needed?
- Can I handle accidents and emergencies calmly and efficiently?
- Am I able to give children the continuity of care they need?
- How do I feel about parents leaving the care of their child to someone else?

COORDINATION UNIT

The key role of the coordination unit is to support and resource the highest standard of Family Day Care for children. The coordination unit will work in partnership with educators to uphold organisational values, meet required legislation, National Standards and the formal Family Day Care Quality Assurance system.

What can an Educator expect from the coordination unit?

- We provide subsidised fees for families (CCS - Child Care Subsidy)
- Professional workshops and in-service training.
- Regular visits and contacts (spot checks)
- Play ideas and resources
- Planned (upon request) meetings to discuss issues regarding the providing of quality care

MAINTAINING QUALITY CARE

Family Day Care Educators are required to provide and maintain a quality childcare service in a safe, healthy, nurturing, friendly home environment. This includes adhering to:

- Current State Regulations,
- Occupational Health and Safety Legislation,
- Scheme policies & procedures

It also involves:

- Participating in National Framework requirements
- Participating in ongoing professional development often outside the hours of their service operation (the hours an educator chooses to work) and
- Providing parents with ongoing information about their child's daily activities.

Educators must fulfil all the administrative and business requirements of a self-employed person and ensure that records are retained in accordance with the time frames and requirements set out in the National Regulations.

Educators are also required to maintain a safe workplace at all times. This will include completing a daily hazard check before children come into care and tending to any safety issues around the home promptly.

The support and assistance of the educator's family members in meeting these requirements and providing a professional service is also required.

Having other people's children in your home also means:

- Providing an environment that recognises and operates in a safe & respectful manner.
- Considering the needs of your family and of the families and children in care.
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Recognising that it is more than 'just babysitting'. Educators need to plan a programme to meet the individual child's needs and interests.
- The Educator is solely responsible for the children at all times and cannot delegate this responsibility to any other household members.

HOME VISITS

Coordinators provide support to Educators. Home visits enable Coordinators to develop professional working relationships with educators and their families. Home visits are unscheduled and scheduled and occur at different times and days to observe care in progress, educator's interaction with the children and monitor children's development. Home visits also ensure that regular assistance and support is offered to the Educator in their day to day work. Clear, open and honest communication is encouraged between educators and Coordinators to ensure that the home visit is productive. All home visits are documented and signed by both the educator and coordinator. Home visits comprise the following elements:

- Monitoring the quality of care and safety standards
- Supporting the educator
- Observation of children in care
- Discussion of service issues
- Maintenance of administrative records

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EDUCATOR'S FAMILY

As the words 'Family Day Care' indicate, caring for children in your home involves the whole family. If you have a partner, children, or other family members living in your house, you should, as a family, talk over your plans before starting, because members of the Educator's family play an important role in the children's experience.

While your family members play an important role in the provision of your service it is important to remember that you are the registered Educator. This means that you are responsible for making decisions about the provision of care, the day to day caring duties such as toileting, administering medication, accepting fees and physically receiving children into care and returning them back to their parents in the afternoon. Your family members may wish to become involved by participating in craft, reading stories, playing games etc For Family Day Care services to be successful, it is important that the family is supportive.

Families and relatives should:

- Assist with the maintenance of the home, to ensure compliance with WH&S Legislation and Scheme policy requirements.
- Adhere to all State Regulations and Scheme policies such as non-smoking at all times and alcohol/drug free home whilst children are in care.
- Interact in a positive manner with children and their families.
- Ensure that any family member, other than the Educator, is never left alone with a child.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.
- Ensure that only child appropriate TV programs, videos, games and books are accessible to FDC children.
- Recognise the need for privacy if the Educator is discussing issues with staff and/or parents.
- Ensure the use of non-offensive language and tone of voice at all times.
- Recognise that caring for children is not 'just playing' and that the Educator needs time to plan and program
- Treat staff, parents and children with respect.
- Assist the Educator to provide and maintain quality childcare in a safe, nurturing, and friendly environment.
- Support the Educator to attend ongoing professional development

- The provision of FDC will impact on all family members. It is important to note that if family members / residents are not able to comply with the guidelines, it may have a negative impact on the Educator's registration.

LEGAL AND BUSINESS MATTERS

While family day care is not as complex as running a large business, you should be considering some legal matters carefully. These involve insurance, taxes, budgeting and licensing. All, when taken care of properly, are for your direct benefit, and serve to protect you from unnecessary expense and liability. All childcare in this state is subject to licensing with the State Government. The Office of Early Childhood Education and Care employs advisory personnel who are able to advise and assist with all regulation matters.

INSURANCE

One of the first things you may have to think about is insurance coverage of your home. Children are subject to a wide range of injuries, and while this type of insurance can be expensive, it may serve to protect you and the children.

You can speak to the coordination unit to assist you in Family Day Care insurance.

FEE POLICY

Newton FDC is approved to offer Child Care Subsidy (CCS). Newton FDC will endeavour to keep fees affordable whilst ensuring quality standards are maintained.

Fees are charged according to the permanent days booked for the child at each service regardless of attendance.

Families will be referred to Services Australia website about a variety of subsidies available for income and special needs of families and children upon request.

Full fees will be charged for all absences including sickness, holidays and any other leave that requires the family day care place to be kept open for that child.

Gap fees

Parents must pay the gap fee between the full child care fees less the Child Care Subsidy to the approved provider (FDC Scheme) fortnightly through RedPay which will then be passed on to the care provider (educator). It's the educator's discretion to cease care if the parent is not settling the account.

Service Fee including FDC Levy

Newton FDC implements a FDC service fee and levy for all families using its FDC service.

- This levy contributes to the administration and support of quality services provided.
- Newton FDC fee's are charged per hour per child basis.
- The levy shall be deducted from the Child Care Subsidy payment, which is paid to the care provider on a fortnightly basis.
- Care providers receive a fortnightly payment advice that states the amount the FDC administration levy deducted from their pay for the previous fortnight.
- Families will be receiving a fortnightly Statement of Entitlement every fortnight.

- Newton FDC charges a set fee of \$12.60 per hour for all families for all types of care arrangements including standard, non-standard, public holiday or casual care.
- Additionally, Newton FDC charges a fee levy of \$7.00 per child per week (This cost covers materials supplied to care providers for support)
- The FDC levy is reviewed every 12 months.

Steps if the gap fees are not paid

Families must notify the service if they have trouble paying. Newton FDC manages unpaid fees in line with the ACCC/ASIC Debt Collection Guidelines and NSW Fair Trading requirements. Families experiencing financial hardship are encouraged to contact the service to discuss a payment plan before further action is taken.

If parents do not pay the gap fee after reminders and reasonable opportunities to arrange a payment plan, the service reserves the right to refer the outstanding payments to a debt collection agency. In such cases, families may also be liable for any reasonable recovery costs charged by the agency.

The steps for managing unpaid fees are as follows:

- Reminder notice – Families will receive a written reminder of the overdue fee.
- Second reminder/final notice – If the account remains unpaid, a second reminder or final notice will be issued, setting a clear deadline for payment.
- Offer of payment plan – Families will be given the opportunity to contact the service to arrange a payment plan if experiencing financial hardship.
- Termination of care – If fees remain unpaid and no payment plan is agreed, the service may terminate care.
- Debt collection referral – If the account remains unpaid after termination of care, the matter may be referred to a debt collection agency in line with Fair Trading and ACCC/ASIC guidelines.

Change of care arrangements, including cancellation of care

Where a family is changing childcare arrangements, the family must first consult with the care provider and the FDC Coordination unit to ascertain if the care provider is available to accommodate the change/s

Two weeks' notice is generally required if the educator wishes to change any care arrangements, including reducing or increasing hours or days of care changing care requirements from permanent to casual or to cancel the booking completely. If notice is not received, two weeks full fee in lieu of notice is payable.

Newton FDC's fees schedule is as follows:

Booked Care (Standard, non-standard, public holiday and casual care)

YOUR COSTS

GENERAL COSTS

Safety and well-being is an absolute priority for the children in our care. All homes must comply with health and safety standards, National Law, National Standards and National Quality Framework. Therefore, there will be costs associated with ensuring a safe home and environment and every day running costs of a family day care service and you will also need first aid equipment and training.

INSURANCE

Each Educator must take out Liability Insurance (including Public Liability and Professional Indemnity). This insurance is available to Educators by the Scheme and can also refer the educator to other insurance providers. Public Liability Insurance is compulsory.

Educators must also notify their home insurance companies that Family Day Care is being conducted in the insured premises. The National Family Day Care Council also offers Landlord Insurance for educators who live in rented premises.

REGISTRATION

To complete registration with Newton FDC each applicant must meet the following criteria:

- Applicants must be over 18 years
- The coordination unit will visit the applicants home (initial and final) to access the premises suitability, using a safety checklist
- Applicant must provide a letter from a medical practitioner stating they are of good health and free from any medical condition or dependency on medication or substance that could affect their ability to care for children
- A current WWCC and any household member over 18 years old must have one as well (Volunteer WWCC)
- The applicant must have a current first aid, CPR, Asthma and Anaphylaxis certificate.
- Provide a vehicle and child restraints safety inspection,
- Sign the Family Day Care agreement.
- Pay \$200 for a one-off registration fee payment is to be made on the day of registration (Induction material).

Once all the above processes are completed, the care provider will be registered with Newton FDC Scheme. A certificate of registration from the Scheme is provided to the Educator. The certificate of registration is valid for one year and care providers are required to meet the Schemes requirements stated above each year to reregister.

PAPERWORK

A certain amount of paperwork is required in every business - family day care is no different. Newton FDC Scheme will help you with this side of your business, for example programming and observation requirements, timesheets and government subsidies.

TAX REQUIREMENTS

Family Day Educators are regarded as being Self-Employed by the Australian Taxation Office. You will need an Australian Business Number (ABN), a business Tax File Number it is the responsibility of the educator to lodge a tax return, if a Taxable income is earned, and to keep all records for Taxation purposes. Your home is your principle place of business. This means that you run your business from home and an area of the home is set aside exclusively for these business activities. Further information is available on the Australian Government Australian Tax Office website: www.ato.gov.au.

THE LEGAL SIDE OF THINGS

Your business is required to abide by relevant legislation, regulation, acts and national standards. More information on the Child Care Regulations and Act is available on the ACECQA website. Under the Regulations, an Educator can look after a maximum of seven (7) children, of whom a maximum of four (4) children can be under school age. This maximum number of children includes the educator's own children (if applicable).

QUALITY PRACTICES

COMMUNICATION

Parents/guardians and educators are encouraged to work together to ensure children are receiving the best possible care in Family Day Care. One of the most important aspects is open, honest and sensitive communication between both parties. Each has a responsibility to respect the other, which can be achieved by regular informal exchanges of information. It is both the educator's and parent's/guardian's responsibility to keep each other "up to date" with information relating to the children, eg, the children's health, whether the children have slept well or are unhappy for a particular reason.

To assist in making the child care placement a positive experience, educators need to be aware of children's daily routines and any issues relating to their care. Parents/guardians also need to know of their children's day in Family Day Care. Caring for children is both satisfying and extremely demanding. A sharing of satisfaction in children's progress and a word of praise or appreciation is valued and can lighten the day.

Some specifics about communicating with parents

1. Make yourself available to parents when possible. Quick exchanges at arrival and departure times can be profitable communication periods.
2. Make parents feel comfortable about exchanging information with you. Be open and available and be aware that the environment affects communication
3. Keep records so you can report specifics to parents. A great tool for this is the Daily Record or a Communication Book
4. Develop your listening skills.
5. Regard communication as a two-way street.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Newton FDC Scheme offers many opportunities for training and professional development throughout your career in family day care. The Scheme strives to continually improve its service to provide a family day care service that is one of the highest quality.

GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS

POLICY

Newton FDC provides a transparent, respectful mechanism for feedback, complaints and grievances. The Policy is designed to be accessible and provide certainty about the process that is aimed at achieving an improvement in services and relationships. As a Scheme we are committed to effectively managing grievances and complaints in a fair and timely manner.

A 'grievance' shall be defined as a wrong, real or imagined, considered as grounds for complaint which can potentially be resolved.

A 'complaint' shall be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction to an authority of or about an offender or offence.

Objectives

- To ensure the Scheme's grievance/complaint procedures are accessible to all participants including, families, educators and staff.
- To acknowledge the right of all parties to confidentiality and respect.
- The Policy is based on the values held by the Scheme. Complaints, grievances and feedback are seen as opportunities for the organisation and its employees to learn and to improve its services. The learning that has occurred through any use of this Policy and Procedure should be documented and shared to encourage an open approach to continuous improvement of services.
- To ensure all stakeholders at Newton FDC have the right to raise grievances/complaints without fear of revenge or jeopardy to their position within the service.
- To enable parents to raise concerns about the conduct of the Scheme that affects them.
- All grievances and complaints should be made to the coordination unit in writing and all approved requests will be responded to in a timely manner up to and including 14 working days.
- To enable educators to raise concerns about the Scheme that affects them.
- To enable coordination unit staff to monitor the quality of educators and adequately raise concerns about that care.
- To enable staff to raise concerns regarding working conditions and staff relations.
- To enable all stakeholders the opportunity to respond to concerns raised and be provided with follow up procedures.
- To enable the distressed to have a support person or interpreter present during any consultations.

PROCEDURE

Newton FDC staff and educators manage issues of concern or complaint in a professional and ethical manner, taking into account principles of natural justice and equal opportunity.

Outcomes for children in care are given priority, and not compromised, in situations where conflict occurs. The raising of concerns and complaints is regarded as an opportunity to improve outcomes for children and to remedy any systemic problems.

Where possible, matters are initially raised informally with the person concerned. All concerns or complaints raised are handled as quickly and fairly as possible. There is a definite completion of the process so that the issue cannot be reasonably perceived to be unresolved.

Appropriate confidentiality is exercised during investigations in order to protect the reputation of all parties concerned. The nature and frequency of complaints is maintained and reviewed as a means of quality improvement.

Relevant legislation

- Education and Care Services National Law 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 Clause 168

Procedure

Step 1

It is expected the grievance should initially be discussed with the person concerned. Every effort should be made to resolve the grievance at this level before moving on to the following steps for the given scenario.

Step 2

If the grievance is not resolved satisfactorily either party can bring the matter to the attention of the senior coordinator to assist in the resolution of the matter.

Step 3

Any grievance, which has been fully discussed between the senior coordinator and the parties involved and is still unresolved, can be referred for further mediation to the Licensee or a representative of the sponsoring body.

Step 4

If still unresolved the matter can be referred to:

- i. NSW Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate
Locked Bag 5107
Parramatta NSW 2124
Phone: 1800 619 113
Email: ececd@det.nsw.edu.au
- ii. Department of Education and training
GPO Box 9880
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Phone: 1300 555 727
- iii. The N.S.W. FDC Association: 1800 157 818
- iv. NSW Ombudsman: 1800 451 524

BETWEEN THE EDUCATOR AND COORDINATION UNIT STAFF

Step 1

The educator has the right to approach the staff member concerned and to expect to have the grievance addressed in an understanding and sensitive manner.

Step 2

If unresolved, the educator can contact Newton FDC senior coordinator or approved provider who will attempt to find a resolution or an acceptable compromise by both parties.

Step 3

If still unresolved the educator may refer the matter to the representative of the Licensee, Newton FDC, the NSW FDC Association or NSW educators' Association for further mediation.

BETWEEN THE SERVICE AND EDUCATOR

1. In the event the service is dissatisfied with an educator, or if a complaint is made by a family, staff member or community member, the complaint must be notified to the educator verbally by the senior coordinator or a delegated representative.
2. If the complaint relates to a breach of the Law or Regulations or of special conditions of the service, the Senior Coordinator will investigate the circumstances and organise the issue to be discussed with the educator.
3. An action plan will be developed with the educator to offer training to ensure future compliance
4. The educator will be warned of future non-compliance with the Law and /or Regulations and/or conditions of the service, may result in de-registration proceedings.
5. If the educator contravenes the Law or Regulations or conditions again, the senior coordinator, or delegated representative of the service will report to the approved provider and de-registration may be recommended.
6. The approved provider will advise the educator if s/he has been removed from the FDC register and the reasons for this course of action.

The Education and Care Services National Law 2010 (Section 174) states:

An approved Provider must notify the Regulatory Authority of the following information in relation to an approved education and care service operated by the approved provider -

- a) Any serious incident at the approved education and care service;
- b) Complaints alleging-
 - i. that the safety, health and wellbeing of a child or children was or is being compromised while that child or children is or are being educated and cared for by the approved education and care service; or
 - ii. That the Law has been contravened
- c) The contact number for questions on FDC educator's rights to appeal to the NSW civil & Administrative Tribunal is [1300 006 228](tel:1300006228). Website:
http://www.ncat.nsw.gov.au/Pages/administrative_equal_opp/administrative_equal_opp.aspx

BETWEEN EDUCATOR AND EDUCATOR

Step 1

Discuss with the person concerned and attempt to resolve the grievance.

Step 2

If unresolved the educator can contact the senior coordinator or another Coordination unit staff member who will attempt to find a resolution or an acceptable compromise by both parties.

Step 3

If still unresolved the educator may refer the matter to Newton FDC, Divisional Manager for Community and Development Services, the NSW FDC Association or NSW educators Association for further mediation.

BETWEEN CO-ORDINATION UNIT STAFF

Step 1

In the first instance the employees shall attempt to resolve the grievance between them.

Step 2

If the grievance is still unresolved the complaint can be referred to the senior coordinator or authorised supervisor of the service for mediation.

Step 3

If still unresolved, the senior coordinator or delegate, in consultation with the parties involved, will determine the next course of action. This may necessitate the involvement of Director of the approved provider.

PROCEDURE FOR ENROLLING NEW FAMILIES

When you are talking with parents looking for child care it is important to have an interview. Firstly, the parent must decide whether you and your home are right for the child. Secondly you must decide whether this parent is someone you can work with and whether your home would be a good place and a suitable match. It is important to take the time to discuss any concerns on either side.

FIRST CONTACT: PHONE CALL

Some basic information should be discussed in the first phone call. Information you will need from the parent includes:

- Age/s of child/ren
- Hours and days when care is needed
- Contact details
- Any special requirements: allergies, disabilities & language. Information parents will need from you:
- A brief description of the kind of program you have to offer.
- A little about your self
- Your location, fees and hours of operation

First impressions have a strong influence. Be well organised and confident. It may help you to teach your family members to take phone messages in a confident pleasant business-like manner. Care provider who answer their phone calls with promptness, respect and willingness and in a pleasant and professional manner are more likely to give a great first impression.

THE INTERVIEW/VISIT

The visit should be scheduled at a time of day when you will be able to take some time to talk with parents and allow parents to see what you normally do with the children. The success of the educator starts at the time of the interview by the way you market yourself and your service. For some parents it will be the first time they have sought care for their child/ren. They may not know what they want or perhaps don't know how to ask you for what they want.

When parents meet you for the first time you can put them at ease with your manners. It's also a chance for you to see how the new child/ren fit into your group. All parents will want to see different things for example toys and equipment. Educator child interactions, style of programming, cleanliness and safety precautions and most important they will want to know about your values, discipline style and other personal information about yourself and your family. You can make them feel comfortable by showing them examples of photos, references, registration certificate and more. Show parents around your premises and explain where children will sleep and eat and the safety features of the house.

The best way to put parents at ease is to listen to them and asking them open ended questions like why, how, who and what so that the questions to those questions are more than just yes or no. This visit is a great time to discuss fees and payment procedures, paperwork for parents, policies and procedures regarding illness, fees, nutrition, etc. You need to make your expectations clear to parents before they enrol. The visit is also time for you to get to know and learn about the child/ren like eating, sleeping, home routine, and any other important information about the child/ren.

REFERRALS

Families from the waiting list, according to the educator's availability (Referrals are made from the Waiting List by Family Day Care staff, in accordance with the Priority of Access (governed by Families and Community Services)).

CHILD HOLIDAY PERIOD

- When a child is to go on holiday, please advise the office via written notification (Child Holiday Form).
- On the written notification of the Child Holiday Form – the parent must advise the last day of care for the child/ren and when the child/ren will be returning to care.
- Two weeks' notice is required to be given or two weeks full fees in lieu of notice may apply.

CHILD TERMINATION OF CARE

- When a child terminates care, please advise the office via written notification.
- On the written notification of Permanent Termination – you must advise the date when the child/ren will cease care and the reason for termination.
- Two weeks' notice is required to be given or two weeks full fees in lieu of notice may apply. If a child is to cease care and gives an educator the required notice and then does not attend their last session of care during that last week CCS is not payable on termination of care unless care is actually used.

Scheme Termination of Care (Children)

- CCS is not claimable for absences in regards to termination of care unless a medical certificate is produced.
- We will give families two weeks' notice for termination of care.

Educator Termination of Care (Children)

When ceasing care, the educator must ensure that:

- Written notice for termination (Child termination form) provided to the Coordination and family two weeks prior to termination of care, including the last date care that is to be provided, date and reason of notice.

TERMINATION OF EDUCATOR SERVICE AGREEMENT

Non-Compliance with the Family day care educator Scheme agreement, standards, policies and procedures. When managing a complaint of non-compliance Newton FDC will act fairly, in good faith and without bias and give the care provider the opportunity to adequately state their case and assist in the identification of methods to rectify the breach if possible.

NON-COMPLIANCE

Non-compliance is not abiding by the Family Day Care National Standards, including the policies and practices which support the National Standards or not actively participate and collaborate with the coordination unit to achieve a high rating assessment for the Scheme within The National Quality Standard and Regulations. Not complying with the Scheme's policies and procedures or not complying with all requirements of The National Quality Framework. Any non-compliance is seen as a breach of the agreement

CHILD SWAPPING LEGISLATION

What is 'child swapping'?

Child swapping is a practice where an FDC educator, or their partner, receives child care fee assistance for a session of FDC provided to their child on the same day that they themselves provide FDC.

Key changes to the Family Assistance Law

Eligibility - FDC educators and their partners are not entitled to receive child care fee assistance for their own child's session of FDC if, on that same day, the FDC educator provides FDC for an approved FDC service, unless specified circumstances apply.

Check FDC educator status - FDC services will be required to ask eligible individuals if they, or their partner, are an FDC educator.

Specified circumstances - the specified circumstances allow eligible individuals to claim child care for their own child's FDC care on the same day they or their partner work as an FDC educator in an approved FDC service. If an eligible individual who is, or is the partner of, an FDC educator informs the approved FDC service that specified circumstances apply, the approved FDC service must request particular information and documents to substantiate the specified circumstances. Specified circumstances do not apply unless documentary evidence has been provided to the approved FDC service.

Change of circumstances - approved FDC services must request to be informed if an eligible individual or their partner becomes an FDC educator. If an eligible individual or their partner is an FDC educator and specified circumstances apply, approved FDC services must also request to be informed of any change in those circumstances.

Record keeping - approved FDC services will be required to retain evidence of specified circumstances. They must also create and maintain a register of relevant information.

Online compliance - if an FDC educator has a Customer Reference Number (CRN) allocated by the Department of Human Services, the approved FDC service will be required to enter it into the Child Care Management System (CCMS).

Specified circumstances

FDC educators and their partners are not entitled to receive child care fee assistance for their own child's session of FDC if, on that same day, the FDC educator provides FDC for an approved FDC service, unless one or more of the specified circumstances apply. The specified circumstances are where:

- the child has been diagnosed with a particular disability or medical condition, or the FDC service is receiving payment of Inclusion Support Subsidy because the child is undergoing continuous assessment of disability
- the child lives in an area designated as 'remote Australia' or 'very remote Australia'
- the child requires FDC because the eligible individual (or their partner) who is an FDC educator is required on the same day to work for a minimum of two hours (but not for an approved FDC service)
- the child requires FDC because the eligible individual (or their partner) who is an FDC educator is required on the same day to undertake education or training towards a recognised qualification (at Certificate III or above).

If the FDC service becomes aware that the eligible individual or their partner is an FDC carer and one or more of the specified circumstances exists, the FDC service must request relevant information.

Except where the FDC service is receiving Inclusion Support Subsidy (ISS) because the child is undergoing continuous assessment of disability, the FDC service must request documentary evidence of the specified circumstance. The service will have the documentary evidence of receipt of ISS.

For any of the specified circumstances to apply, documentary evidence must have been provided to the approved FDC service.

Legislative reference – section 10A of the Eligibility Determination and section 8 of the No One Eligible Determination

NON-COMPLIANCE PROCEDURE

When managing an alleged breach, the coordination unit will:

- Document the breach identified or complaint reported
- Confirm the sections of the agreement, The National Quality Standards, the national law and national regulations as well as the policies and procedures the care provider may have breached and the implications this may have on the children and families in care.
- Raise the allegation/s promptly with the care provider and give them an opportunity to respond.
- Document the alleged breach identified or complaint reported (if applicable on the visit sheet and have coordination unit and care provider sign the document).
- Investigate the breach further if required. If the allegation is not substantiated the coordination unit will finalise the process and document the outcomes.

SUBSTANTIATED BREACHES

- Establish the level of risk or severity and develop an action plan to resolve the breach if possible.
- The educator will receive a letter that outlines the severity and details of the breach, confirm the action required and the consequences of the failure to comply or resolve the breach.
- Action plan will include a time line to resolve the breach by and the consequences of the failure to comply or resolve the breach.
- If the breach is extreme or severe the action plan may include suspension of the care provider, relocating children to another care provider, termination of agreement, informing the department of Education.(suspension of educator- the educator will be immediately suspended in the event of reported or investigated for allegations of or charged with offences against children, offences including violence, drugs or other substances, drink driving or sexual offences and if the breach is referred to the police). Note: no child care subsidy will be paid while an educator is suspended.
- The educator must rectify the breach immediately. If the educator is suspended the educator must comply before being reinstated.
- If failure to comply with resolving the breach a letter of termination of agreement will be sent.

RELATIVE CARE ARRANGEMENT

There are restrictions under the Family Assistance Law about Family Day Care educators providing care for children who are related to them. The Family Assistance Law specifies care that is not eligible for Child Care Subsidy, but does allow for some care to be provided to related children.

Section 47 of the Minister's Rules provides that within each Child Care Subsidy fortnight, the Family Day Care educator must make sure that less than 50% of children in care are related to them, and that more than 50% of children in care are not related to them.

The ratio is applied across all of the children cared for across the whole fortnight, and not to just one particular session.

IMMEDIATE TERMINATION OF THE AGREEMENT

The agreement can be terminated immediately if Newton FDC are satisfied that the breach is confirmed.

E.g.:

- The Educator will be immediately terminated in the event of being charged with offences against children, offences including violence, drugs or other substances, drink driving or sexual offences and if the breach is referred to the police.
- Any risk of harm to children.
- Under the influence of drugs or alcohol or other harmful substances.
- Fraud or theft by the care provider in relation to the delivery of the service.
- Any harassment or abuse of an authorised adult involved in the Scheme.

Educators must return all documentation pertaining to the children and families in care, resources and equipment borrowed from or belonging to the Scheme within one week of the termination of this agreement.

LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

Caring for children can drain your reserves of energy and your patience. Children are constantly on the move. They chatter without stopping, ask question and make mess. Frustration and extreme fatigue may occur when one is constantly interrupted and drained of physical and mental energy.

Some tips to distress

- Take a Break (even for 10 min) at the end of the day before throwing yourself into making meals and starting family time.
- Be satisfied with your job- have realistic expectations of the job and yourself
- Don't change parent's attitudes, they have a right to their own beliefs
- Balancing the activity times during the day with quiet times
- Pace yourself so that you will have energy for the children in care and your own family
- Make the day fun for yourself and the children (plan fun outings for you and the children)
- Take regular leave/time off

NETWORK SUPPORT SERVICES

There are a few services that educators are able to tap into for support. Family Day Care Australia: is family day care's national professional association.

Their role is to support, enhance and resource family day care services, and lead the way for family day care in the Australian childcare industry. They work on behalf of the family day care community – Educators, coordination unit staff, families and operators/sponsors – to ensure the strength and continued growth of family day care in Australia

Phone No: 1800 658 699

Website: www.familydaycareaustralia.com.au