

Greater Hume
 **Children**
Services

"leading innovative and inclusive early childhood services"



Handbook for Educators

Greater Hume Children Services is managed by Greater Hume Council.

Should you wish to learn more about our service visit www.ghchildren.com.au.

The service has a proud record of quality assurance and complies with the requirements of the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

Greater Hume Children Services is a member organisation with the following peak bodies:

- Family Day Care Australia
- NSW Family Day Care



The information contained in this publication has been prepared for general information only. The information contained herein is not intended to constitute or substitute for legal or professional advice appropriate to your specific circumstances. Greater Hume Children Services and its employees shall not be liable for any loss or damage incurred as a result of any reliance on the information contained herein.



Welcome

We welcome your enquiry about our service. Greater Hume Children Services is a flexible, professional home based child care service where children are provided with quality care and education in a warm, friendly environment.

Our flexible childcare options cater for full-time, part-time, casual, overnight care, weekend care, before and after school and vacation care.

Educators are registered, trained and supported by the experienced and highly qualified coordination unit staff.

Greater Hume Children Services includes the services of:

- **Family Day Care** where children are provided with education and care in a home environment with a registered educator
- **In Venue Family Day Care** where a venue or premises other than a home can be licensed. In Venue Family Day Care must be approved by the Department of Education and Training and can only be approved where there is a demonstrated unmet demand for childcare.

Greater Hume Children Services is auspiced by Greater Hume Council and has been operating since 1994. The service operates in Greater Hume Shire and also in Albury, Federation, Indigo, Snowy Valleys, Wodonga and Benalla council areas.

The service has a proud record of quality assurance and complies with the requirements of The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). Our service has been rated as exceeding the national quality standard.

You can find out more about our service at our website: www.ghchildren.com.au

Join us on facebook.



Philosophy

Our Children

We believe and respect each child as a capable, unique individual, who learn and develop through play. We know that children explore, discover, imagine, create, and challenge themselves and each other's thinking. We believe that the play environment should reflect this, by providing children with the opportunity to make their own choices, discover, take risks, explore, investigate, express their ideas, and solve problems. We believe the environment, should be unhurried, fun, enriching, supportive and a place where children can just "Be".

Our Families

We acknowledge that the most powerful influence in a child's life is their family. We aim to form trusting, supportive, inclusive and respectful partnerships with families, be accepting of their cultural diversity, and value their ideas and input into their child's learning.

Our Team

Our service celebrates the individuality, uniqueness and diversity of every educator. We respect and value their knowledge, originality, flexibility, and willingness to try new things. Our Educators are chosen because they share a genuine passion and interest for children and their wellbeing, with a commitment to high quality education and care.

Our team, including Greater Hume Shire, Coordination Unit staff and Educators believe in creating supportive, positive, respectful and fair relationships between team members, where all members are valued, nurtured and fostered.

We recognise the critical role we play in paving the child's future and providing them the best start in life, by ensuring high quality service. We are professionals who embrace current research, collaborate and reflect on our own development and have a commitment to continuous improvement.

Our Community

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and embrace the wide cultural diversity we have in our community, by respecting, celebrating and honouring all differences, to foster a "Sense of Belonging"

We believe community is an important part of our service; we serve both urban and rural children and families and believe strongly in giving rural children and families equal opportunities.

We believe that it is important for children to connect, to nature and the land, by providing them with opportunities to play, explore, and be challenged, in the natural environment. We encourage and develop lifelong respect for our environment by developing practices of recycling and reducing waste in daily life to promote a sustainable future.

Sources: Belonging Being and Becoming

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Revised July, 2009, May 2010, July 2010, January 2011, November 2011, May 2013, December 2015, August 2016



About Family Day Care

Family Day Care is a nationally accredited, registered child education and care service where children are provided with quality education and care in a warm, nurturing, friendly and safe home-like environment.

Family Day Care is most often operated from the educator's home but can be licensed in other premises.

In Venue Family Day Care can be approved where there is a demonstrated need allowing an educator to work from licensed premises such as a community hall.

Family Day Care is a very flexible services depending on the preferences of individual educators.

Individual preferences will determine:

- What hours are available - educators may choose to finish early on a particular day or may work evenings or have early starts. Some educators provide overnight care.
- Days available – educators can work part-time, week-ends, school holidays or have school holidays off.
- Ages of children cared for – educators can specify if they only want children over 12 months or if they do or do not want to provide care for school age children. choose the type of service provided, however three days minimum must be available.

Please go to our website to view our policies and more information about our service www.ghchildren.com.au

Professional educators

The primary focus when selecting educators is a genuine interest in children and a motivation to learn and strive to provide high quality education and care for young children. Educators must also have the skills to develop positive relationships with families as this will underpin quality education and care.

Educators are self-employed child care workers who must meet high professional standards and enjoy the recognition of being professional early childhood educators.

In Greater Hume Children Services educators are respected and valued as individuals and encouraged to participate wholly in the operation of the scheme. Support is provided by the experienced team in the schemes coordination unit whose collective expertise is comprehensive in the areas of child development and quality education and care and also business management and administration.

Educators are registered to provide education and care for a maximum of four children under school age and three additional school age children or up to seven school age children in their home. Small groups of children allow the educator to deliver personal service that covers all aspects of a child's development and will further increase the personal experience of Family Day Care or In Venue for families.

Families are matched to potential educators by the coordination unit. Where possible families are referred to two educators to allow them to choose who is most suitable. All families are able to apply for fee subsidies from the Department of Human Services.

Please look for the educator testimonials we have on our website that encapsulate the experiences of educators in our service, visit www.ghchildren.com.au.

Positive things about being an educator

Things educators tell us they love:

- You can earn an income from home
- You can stay home with your own children while earning an income
- You can earn a base rate of between \$25 to \$40 per hour or more* (*based on average non compulsory fee with four children in care)
- You can realise a passion for helping children to grow learn and develop
- You can run your own business
- You can set your own hours and days (minimum 3 days)
- You can extend your childcare knowledge through scheme training and workshops with other early childhood professionals
- You can join a team and form new bonds and lasting friendships
- You can make a real difference for your community and help shape the next generation.





Things to consider

Things educators tell us can sometimes be challenging:

- The impact on your family members if you are using your home for Family Day Care
- Family, work/life balance
- Programming for children's development and keeping professional documentation and records for children
- Positively managing the challenging behaviours of children when they occur
- Working in partnerships with parents and family members
- Managing accountability and professional business practices
- Maintaining a consistent and high standard of personal presentation and professional image for your home/premises

The primary responsibility of the coordination unit staff is to support educators in all aspects their work. Educators receive training prior to starting and are highly supported particularly when first starting in the service. You will have our support.





Essential Criteria for Educator Registration

All applicants need to demonstrate their suitability through the following process:

1. Contact the service manager who will arrange a time to meet you in your home
2. Spend time with other educators and learn from their experience
3. Complete and return the Educator Application Form with current referees, previous employer details and provide 100 point ID check
4. Attend an orientation visit with an experienced educator who will observe your skills
5. Attend an interview where coordination unit staff are able to assess your knowledge, skills and enthusiasm
6. Complete approved First Aid Certificate,
7. Complete a Working With Children Check, either NSW or Victoria for the state/s you are working in for all adults of 18 years or over residing in the home (not required for other household members for In Venue)
8. Complete a Criminal Records Check if you are working in Victoria
9. Attend compulsory scheme training
10. Complete Modules and provide current CV and Training Certificates
11. Complete Home/Premises Safety Audit.



Costs to establish your business

For most educators there are a number of expenses as part of setting up a Family Day Care business:

1. Safety requirements that need to be met in your home/premises which may include safety film applied to low glass or windows, a safe fence for outdoor area, fire extinguisher and fire blanket and locks for cupboards
2. Public liability insurance (about \$580 per annum, can be monthly instalments)
3. First Aid training (approximately \$220)
4. Working with Children Check for the State/s you will be working in and A Criminal History Check if in Victoria (NSW: approximately \$85 or Victoria: \$100 for WWCC check and up to \$50 for Criminal History Check). Other household members/volunteers are free
5. Reliable internet access
6. Work Cover Insurance is paid by the Service for Victorian educators and the cost passed on to the educator (approximately \$25 per week if you earn \$50,000 pa). NSW educators must provide their own.

An interest free loan of up to \$2,000 is available for approved applicants to help cover the costs of setting up.

Setting up a Business

It is recommended that careful consideration is given to planning your business. A number of tools and resources exist to assist educators including resources recommended by Family Day Care Australia.

The coordination unit will in every circumstance endeavour to take a responsible attitude to recruiting educators in the numbers required per location. However no guarantee can be made about providing referrals to educators.

A proactive approach to marketing your business is encouraged as it may take some time for educators to reach the desirable number of children in their service.

Educators are to be subscribed to a software program called Harmony Web, this is small weekly cost.



Role of coordination unit staff

The role of the coordination unit staff is to support educators in all aspects of their work. The staff have a diverse and extensive range of qualifications and experience in early childhood and administrative settings. All staff model the philosophy of the scheme and recognise their role to act as advocates for the service, educators, children, and families. Please find out more about our staff on our website www.ghchildren.com.au.

Home Visits and Support to Educators

Educators are organised into groups or 'pods' and have a primary support coordinator. The support coordinator gets to know you and the children at your service, their families and the community in which you work. Support coordinators are highly experienced and knowledgeable early childhood professionals who support educators to program for the education and care needs of each individual child in their service. Visits to the educators home are integral to provide on the job training and to monitor the standard of care.

Play Groups

Play sessions are held regularly in venues throughout the service. Playgroup offers a wide range of model opportunities, excursions and experiences for children that coincides with our Philosophy. Educators benefit from the networking and sharing of ideas with other scheme members. Families registered with the scheme are welcome and encouraged to attend playgroup with their children.

Excursions

Our service believes that well thought out excursions expand and compliment an educator's programs to ensure children are offered a wide range of experiences and allow children to be connected and make contributions to their world.

Educators in many instances also provide drop-off and pick-up services to facilitate the inclusion of children and meet the needs of families. Educators must ensure families are consulted when deciding whether to go on excursions and will consider all aspects of safety.

The service has a stringent procedure to assist educators when planning excursions and requires that all excursions be authorised by a parent/guardian or another person authorised by the family. All routine excursions will need approval at the beginning of the year. Please read the Excursion Policy on our website: www.ghchildren.com.au

The Resource Library

A Resource Library is available for the use of all parents, educators and staff of Greater Hume Children Services. This includes up to date references and publications from a large variety of sources.

The Scheme has some play equipment, puzzles, toys, books etc that may be borrowed on application.



The Educational Programs and National Quality Standards (NQS)

Our service has been assessed as **Exceeding the National Quality Standards**.

From 1 January 2012, the National Quality Standards set a new benchmark of quality for all mainstream child education and care services across Australia. A national body oversees the quality assurance and rating: Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority. More information is available at their website: www.acecqa.gov.au

Each service must undergo assessment and compliance visits on a regular basis to measure their proficiency. The assessors spend time visiting educators chosen at random and appraising the coordination unit.

Services are assessed on the educational programs they provide for children, the relationships they form throughout the organization and within their communities, the standards of health and safety and the governance of the service.

Programs are based on the Early Years Learning Framework - the national early childhood curriculum for children prior to starting school (and My Time Our Place for school age children).

Each educator must offer a professional, planned program for each individual child and the groups of children in their care. The Early Years Learning Framework curriculum is based on early childhood educational theory and research and is specific to the needs of under school age children. It is reflective of the basic needs of belonging, being and becoming and an understanding that once a child feels supported, their 'play' is fundamental to learning and growing.

Our service is excited about the greater emphasis on educational programs for young children and wish to emphasize this is not to be confused with a more structured school-like environment.

The framework is based on the following five outcomes for children:

- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Children are confident and involved learners
- Children are effective communicators.

The My Time Our Place curriculum is based on the needs of school age children in their leisure time away from school.

We recognize our service is part of a much wider community where many services exist to support families and children and we encourage educators to build relationships with additional services to support children and families.

The National Quality Standards set high professional requirements of educators. Our service will select educators not only based on their current understanding of children and how they grow and learn, but their motivation to learn and improve their skills. Educators are required to have a minimum of a Certificate III in Children's Services or other qualification that the Service Manager deems adequate.

In June 2012 our service was assessed as exceeding the National Quality Standard and is due to be reassessed.

Safety Requirements

Family Day and In Venue educators have very stringent requirements outlined in the service Home/Premises Safety Audit which must be consistent at all times while providing care. Educators must provide a strictly smoke free environment.

Family Members in Family Day Care

If considering Family Day Care from your home it is essential to discuss your application to become an educator with your family or those who live at home. We encourage active participation of family members as it adds to the warm 'family' experience of the service.

Family members have responsibilities to ensure safety standards and principles of the scheme are upheld and respected.

Further Information and Support Agencies

Family Day Care Australia is a national peak body which supports, enhances and resources family day care services. Its role is to resource and promote family day care services to ensure the strength and continued growth of the sector in Australia. They are a member-based not-for-profit organisation that works on behalf of the members. Visit their website at:

www.familydaycare.com.au/index.php/main/Home#M55.



NSW Family Day Care is the NSW peak body for Family Day Care with the aim to promote and support all aspects of family day care. Visit their website at: <http://nswfdc.org.au/nsw-fdc-association/contact-us>.



Acecqa (Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority)

is the National Quality Framework raises quality and drives continuous improvement and consistency in Australian education and care services. Visit their website at: www.acecqa.gov.au





What to expect in the educator interview

Inviting you to attend an interview provides us with an opportunity to get to know all applicants and assess their knowledge, skills and suitability to work in our service. We encourage applicants to find out as much as possible about our service and our beliefs prior to coming.

The interview questions will cover:

- why you are interested in working in children's services
- your understanding of the Early Years Learning Framework and National Quality Standards
- the relationships you will build with parents in your service
- nutrition for young children
- safety for children
- your attitude to training and continuous improvement
- your ability to use technology
- your ability to work as part of a team
- marketing your service
- your experience with policies and procedures.

Where to from here

Please contact Greater Hume Children Services.

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