



Educators Association of SA Inc

ECEC Royal Commission Submission

Our Family Day Care Educators Association supports FDC Educators from all Services in S.A.

Currently there are 2 services operating in S.A. -The Department of Education Family Day Care and Foundations Family Day Care.

What is Family Day Care?

Family day care is a quality, home-based childcare, and education service.

We are qualified educators trained in early childhood education and care and operates our own business in accordance with the National Regulations and Legislation - National Quality Standards based on the principles, practices and learning outcomes of the Ealy Years Learning Framework.

Educators work in partnership with a local Coordination Unit who provide regular visits to monitor compliance, children's progress and to provide support.

Children learn from a qualified educator and are always cared for in a small group of children. Sibling can often attend the same service. They will play, learn, and grow together and cared for in the educators' home.

Educators program for learning meet children's individual needs.

Family day care is a very flexible service and covers all hours, to meet family's needs.

Before and after school, during work time, school holidays, evenings ,overnight and weekend care.

Many Educators are available to drop off and pick up children from kindergarten and schools.

Our service certainly meets the needs of shift workers in many workplaces.

Some of our educators are also part of the Department of Education Respite Care Program, meeting the needs of children with disabilities along with NDIS support and DCP Family Day Care Program for caring for children in State care.

Educators are wanting the best outcomes possible for the children in their care and open to engage ideas that will benefit all children across our State.

Due to the low numbers of FDC educators at present it has been difficult to accommodate the needs of more families that would like to use family Day Care. We are optimistic that this will change in the near future.

We believe that we meet the needs very well for the first 3 years of a child's life in Family Day Care with the services available for early intervention which can be met within our service.

Benefits for Children for the first 1000 days in Family Day Care

Small ratio Numbers in Care- 1 Educator to 4 preschool children and 3 School age at any one time.

Children's Personal and Emotional Development – FDC support children to have a positive sense of themselves, respect for others, social skills, emotional wellbeing and a positive disposition to learning.

- Develop confidence and independence.
- Self-regulation of their emotions
- Understanding their own and others' feelings
- Developing respect for themselves and their own culture and beliefs and those of others
- Easier to make friends and learning how to have a good relationship with others (more difficult in larger settings).
- Being interested, motivated and excited about their play

Children's Agency

This is easier in Family Day Care due to the small numbers of children. This is not so easy in larger childcare setting.

The needs and interests which children themselves express in many different ways provide the foundation of how we shape the environment and plan

experiences. The children have real influence and working methods of their setting.

Children have a “voice “in Family Day Care which gives them some ownership over their interests and needs.

Advantages of Multi-age Groups in Family Day Care

Generally, there are very few childcare setting that offers this service.

Family Day Care plays key role in supporting the unique and diverse childcare needs of various cultural and linguistic communities.

Used as pedagogical motivation -Siblings and family members have an opportunity to participate in the same program and able to interact with other children of all ages as they might in a family or community setting.

By mixed ages we can support pro social behaviour and cognitive development.

Continuity of Care- Potential for children to go through fewer transition of educator to educator, staying with same educator for the full time till they are 5-6 years of age as well as many able to continue with before and after school care till age of 11-12 years including school holiday and vacation care. Unfortunately, care is unable to continue so readily as no CCS funding available once a child attends high school. There are still many children especially with additional needs require support before and after school with some families opting to pay full fees rather than children be alone at home.

Interaction with younger and older children -We offer more opportunities for older children to display empathy and nurturing towards younger children. The younger children are able to learn so much from their older peers as well as feeling supported.

There are many questions that our FDC educators are posing at present of how preschool for 3-year-olds will work effectively.

In this modern time of raising children with many lifestyle challenges in our community there is no doubt that we need to improve the Education and Care of our preschool children especially 0-3 years of age. The” One Stop” Education Model idea is likely to be a vision of the future. There will need to be adequate space made available to meet the opportunity of all children to a gain excellence

in their early years. There is no doubt that some children will struggle to fit the model especially with those that have may have behaviour or emotional disorders as well children with additional needs.

In Family Day Care we are able to apply measures to meet these needs within our program and engaging the support of their family and within a few weeks see much improvement in their wellbeing. The child then gain a sense of belonging.

Family Day Care support the at-risk families who need additional assistance in many directions. We embrace families, we support, guide and assist children in transition to preschool.

Family Day Care is an exceptional model and educators are dedicated in their profession capacity to meet the high demands in assisting our first nation children and some culturally diverse situations where children need additional support of all ages.

If families are sending 3-year-olds to kindergarten, we are likely to have a reduction in care of this age group as some families may stop using FDC. This will be seen as a cheaper option for families.

It is felt that Long Day Care Centres will attract this service as care is all in the one place and they can have a qualified teacher for the kindergarten age children. Having said that there are teachers attracted to Family Day Care and could also do this effectively in small groups.

Concern for 3-year-old children with English as Second Language

Brought to our attention from the Vietnamese Family Day Care Educators.

Some would not understand English as not spoken at home.

Difficulty communicating to the teacher and some still toilet training.

Vietnamese families use FDC to transition their children to learn English with their Educator.

FDC promote the cultural contribution in their cultural practice to foster children understanding and respect for diverse cultures, languages and identities.

For Consideration

What does this mean for Family Day Care?

Is it possible that Family Day Care Educators (Diploma) or more could implement the same program as in kindergartens for 3-year-olds?

Will FDC still be a viable service if many families accept the free 15 hours of kindergarten for 3-year-olds?

Will this change Family Day Care age requirement of infants to age 3 instead of many educators supporting the child and their family through to Junior Primary school rather than children using OSHC.

Is the 3-year kindergarten more for the wellbeing of the child that are not using any other service?

Would there be requirement of lower ratio for 3-year-olds in kindergarten according to the Regulation therefore needing more teachers?

Would First Nation and children with additional needs be starting sooner than 3 years of age as presently happening before they are ready for 4 year old kindergarten.

Out School Hours Care for 3-year-olds

OSHC is an amazing service that has challenges due to the already diverse age range of kindergarten to year 6. To add another group of 3-year-olds will be more challenging to meet the needs of this age group.

Ratios for preschool children would apply needing more Educators to cover the number of children.

OSHC would work reasonably well if the kindergarten is attached to schools, but logistics of transporting these children to another site may be more difficult.

FDC already backup the times of collecting children from OSHC beyond this time. FDC works well alongside of OSHC and respected equally.

Possibility that some Family Day Care Educators if not working full time with younger children could be Relief staff for OSHC. Kindergartens and childcare centres are able to have relief staff available but FDC in S.A. do not unlike other services in our neighbouring states. This tends to separate us from other

childhood settings. We desperately need a Relief Care model to support continuity of service for our families.

Very long day for a 3-year-old child in OSHC before and after kindergarten.

Family Day Care is well placed to care for 3-year-olds before and after kindergarten. This would be the same as what we do now for 4-year-old children.

Less intense and more relaxing at the end of the day. FDC is available to exceed the time of OSHC (after 6:00pm).

FDC is an amazing option for children to transition to school particularly up to their first year in reception. FDC certainly provide a less challenging pace and nurturing environment.

We feel Family Day Care effectively champion the needs of this age group in so many areas and would like to see this option for families to prosper for this very important time in a child's life.

"It takes a village to raise a child" and we need to take on this challenge to give every child in S.A. the opportunity of obtaining excellence in meeting their needs this age group.