

Alice Springs
Family Day Care



Parent Handbook

**Alice Springs Family Day Care is a member of
Family Day Care Australia**

Updated: 28 May 2020

WELCOME:

Welcome to Alice Springs Family Day Care Inc. The role of Alice Springs FDC Scheme is not limited to but includes licensing requirements are met, processing of CCS payments, suitability of Educators and Education and Care environments.

The role of Alice Springs Family Day Care Scheme is to offer support and to ensure our educators, children and families are mentored to provide an excellent Education and Care service for all educators, children and families.

We are committed to providing high quality customer service and welcome all feedback questions and suggestions for continuing improvement.

CONTACT US:

You can contact Alice Springs Family Day Care Scheme in the following ways:

ALICE SPRINGS FAMILY DAY CARE SCHEME (OFFICE)

**Suite 1A Helm House
40-42 Bath Street
Alice Springs NT 0870**

Office Phone: 08 8952 3406

Email: office@asfdc.org.au

www.asfdc.org.au

PHILOSOPHY:

Alice Springs Family Day Care Inc. acknowledges that we walk on lands of the Arrernte people and recognise our part within the close knit, unique and diverse community of Alice Springs. We value the cultural diversity of our desert town and understand the significance of our shared experiences within the history of central Australia.

We believe that each Family, Educator and staff member brings a wealth of knowledge and life experience to the work of family day care. We welcome and support this diversity as the building blocks of our community.

We view families as their child's first teacher and respect individual practices and diverse perspectives. We value the voice of children, families, educators and staff and act to promote strong collaborative partnerships based on mutual respect, support and communication in order to gain the best outcomes for the child.

We believe that children are strong, independent, capable individuals with a right to high quality education and care. We value each child's voice and abilities and support their eagerness to learn and grow. We hold high expectations for children's learning and support them through the process.

Alice Springs Family Day Care demonstrates learning through play within small, responsive and nurturing environments. We provide flexible, welcoming environments that promote and respect children's choices. We believe in providing challenges in order to enhance learning and development whilst recognising and supporting individualities. We believe in strong spiritual wellbeing for children

We believe we play a key part in strengthening the lives of children and help them become happy, confident people with a love of lifelong learning as well as possessing valuable life skills. Through our work we aim for children to have a strong sense of health and wellbeing.

Alice Springs Family Day Care Inc will be united as a community of culturally diverse learners, children, families and professionals, who provide highest quality education and care in Alice Springs and advocate for quality early childhood education.

WHAT IS FAMILY DAY CARE?

Family Day Care is a network of educators providing Education and Care in their own homes (residence) for children aged 6 weeks to 13 years of age. With the assistance of Alice Springs Family Day Care, educators will be supported in setting up their own business, individual plan and registering with the Family Day Care Scheme.

Alice Springs Family Day Care Scheme is licensed under the Education and Care Services National Regulations. We are required to comply with the National Quality Framework.

Funding is also available to families through Family Assistance Office in the form of Child Care Subsidy. For further information follow this link

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy>

Family Day Care is a friendly, inviting environment where we aim for you and your child to feel comfortable in an Educational and Care setting.

Communication with families is essential to Alice Springs Family Day Care. We encourage all families to maintain an open communication with your child's educator and Alice Springs Day Care Scheme. All families have access to the Alice Springs Family Day Care staff.

WHAT TYPE OF EDUCATION AND CARE CAN WE PROVIDE?

Full Time Booking:	For the children to use the same hours & days each week.
Part time/Shift Bookings:	Some educators may ask for a minimum booking each day or minimum booking of days per week.
Casual / Occasional Care:	On occasions casual bookings may arise and families can access these bookings with no permanent commitment.
Weekend/ Evening / Overnight Care:	Some educators may offer this service. Please talk to your educator and Alice Springs Family Day Care for more information.
Before / After School /	For children who are in care before school & after school hrs.
Vacation Care:	Is for school age children who use care during school holidays and pupil free days. Children can only be classed as school age if their status has been changed with Family Assistance Office from "Non School Age" to "School Age"
24 hour care:	Can be available with educators. Please contact the office for further details as this requires approval by the scheme.

OUR ALICE SPRINGS FDC EDUCATORS:

Alice Springs Family Day Care believe in having Educators that are motivated, inspiring and have skills and knowledge in Early Childhood Education and Care to support children's development. All our educators have been carefully selected to provide a holistic approach in Education and Care for your child. Children's overall development will be documented and planned for.

Educators are mentored by Alice Springs Family Day Care Educator Support Officers who will encourage and support your child's Educator in providing a safe, secure and caring environment.

FAMILY SUPPORT:

Alice Springs Family Day Care Educator Support Officers are also available to support families and children.

If at any time you have a concern or wish to talk to us about your child, your child's educator or any other information you require please feel free to contact our experienced staff.

Newsletters are sent to families on a quarterly basis from Alice Springs Family Day Care. In these newsletters you will find plenty of helpful tips, articles, events and information for families.

FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS:

All complaints are handled in a confidential manner and are in accordance with our scheme policy (Dealing with Complaints). Feedback is encouraged and welcomed and can be done through the office by contacting our Scheme Manager or Educator Support Officers.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

WHAT IS PROVIDED? / WHAT DO I NEED TO PROVIDE?

Each individual educator will provide varying items for your child. Please see your child's educator handbook for what will be provided provide and what families need to provide.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I GO ON HOLIDAYS OR MY CHILD IS SICK?

If your child is absent due to them being sick or your family is going on holidays you will still be required to pay fees as per your normal rate. See your educator's hand book for vacation notice requirements and fees rates. Attendance records will need to be signed for absences as well.

If your educator is unavailable to care for your child and a replacement / relief educator is not available, fees will not be charged for that day(s). Parents / families have the right not to utilise a relief care educator and there will be no charge for this care.

Alternate educator and relief care can be made available depending on availability of care spaces.

WHAT HAPPENS ON A PUBLIC HOLIDAY?

Normal fees are payable if care is not used on a Public Holiday and the child's usual booked care is on that day. Parents can request care be provided on a public holiday if the child has a booked session on that day. A higher fee may be charged if care is used on a public holiday - see educator's Fee Schedule.

WHICH EDUCATOR SUITS MY CHILD / FAMILIES NEEDS BEST AND HOW DO I ENROL MY CHILD?

When you contact Alice Springs FDC to enquire for a place for your child we will aim to provide you with a choice of educators depending on availability. Families will have the opportunity to meet these educators in their learning environment to determine if the educator suits your child's and family's needs. When care has been confirmed with an educator you will be required to attend a Family Interview at the office to complete the enrolment forms & all other relevant documents as well as to pay your Family Registration fee. Part of the enrolment process is for you to contact the Family Assistance Office re eligibility for any child care subsidy (CCS).

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is money paid by the Australian Government to help families with the cost of child care. Families need to contact Department of Social Services via the myGov website, register for CCS prior to the commencement of care.

WHAT IF MY CHILD IS SCHOOL AGE? DO YOU OFFER BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE?

Many of our educators can offer before and after School Care and Vacation Care. Please check with your child's educator if they can provide this service for you. If this is not the case, please contact our office and we will assist you to find an educator who can help you.

HOW WILL MY CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT BE SUPPORTED?

All our Family Day Care educators are either actively working towards or have obtained their Diploma or Certificate III in Education and Care Services. Each educator in our scheme is mentored and supported by our experienced Educator Support Officers who are also there to support the children in each educator's residence.

Each educator will document learning and development of the children in their care. Please ensure that you talk to your child's educator who will be happy to show your child's individual developmental records and documentation.

Alice Springs Family Day Care Educators document child development and link this learning and development to “**Being, Belonging and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework Australia**”.

Each child's learning and development supports the following learning outcomes for children.

EYLF Learning Outcomes

- **EYLF Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity**
- **EYLF Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world**
- **EYLF Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing**
- **EYLF Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners**
- **EYLF Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators**

HOW MUCH DOES FAMILY DAY CARE COST AND HOW DO I PAY FEES?

Educators are self-employed (individual contractors). Alice Springs Family Day Care allows Educators to set their own fees, however Alice Springs Family Day Care sets a Charging Fee Guide each financial year and each Educator's fee schedule is reviewed to ensure that it meet the requirements.

Fees are calculated by the educator by adding the cost of educators care, plus any loadings and scheme levy, minus the CCS, families pay the difference to the educator.

Alice Springs FDC will claim each families CCS, each week in arrears and pay this to the educator.

Alice Springs Family Day Care charges a scheme levy to parents. These fees are in addition to your child care fee and are collected by Alice Springs FDC educators on behalf of Alice Springs Family Day Care Scheme.

The amounts are indicated in the table below:

Family Day Care Scheme Levy:	\$6.00 per under school child. \$3.00 per day school age child
Agency Care Scheme Levy	\$7.50 per per under school child. \$5.00 per day school age child

If you are having difficulty paying your child care fees, please ensure that you discuss this with your educator as soon as possible and also contact Alice Springs Family Day Care to discuss your individual circumstances and for options that may be available to you.

All payments to educators are to be receipted.

Alice Springs Family Day Care issues a Statement of Entitlement to Parent/Guardian each fortnight. This statement indicates the amount of CCS paid and the hours of care used each fortnight.

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY (Absences):

CCS and additional CCS are payable for up to 42 absence days for each child in a financial year, in relation to sessions of care where an individual still incurs a genuine fee liability to pay for care. A reason does not need to be provided for a child's initial 42 days of absence.

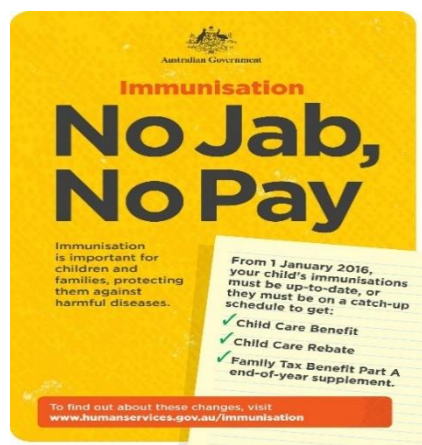
ATTENDANCE RECORD TIME SHEETS:

You will be required to sign in and out using your electronic PIN at the Educator's home each day that your child attends care. You must sign the actual time your child arrives in care and the actual time your child is collected from care each day. It is against the law for educators to submit timesheets that haven't been filled in correctly.

Educators are responsible to record drop off and pick up times from school or preschool as applicable.

IMMUNISATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CHILD:

To be eligible for the CCS a child must meet immunisation requirements. To meet the CCS immunisation requirements, children must be immunised according to the standard vaccination schedule, be on an eligible catch-up schedule, or have approved exemption from the immunisation requirements.



TERMINATION OF CARE:

All families must give notice to your Educator in writing by completing a Termination of Care form, when withdraw your child from care. The notice requirements will be advised in each educators handbook. If notice is not given in writing you will have to pay the week's full fees in lieu of notice. If absent on the last day of care your fees are not covered by CCS, full fees will be charged.

All outstanding fees must be paid before we can refer families to another Educator.

SMOKE FREE POLICY:

You are required to abide by our Smoke Free Policy when in a registered Family Day Care premises and at scheme or Educator/s organised activities and outings.

CHILD PROTECTION STATEMENT:

Alice Springs FDC educators have a duty of care to protect children & young persons from risk of harm. The service has policies and procedures in place to ensure legislation is followed and children are protected. The Care and Protection Act 2007 (NT) requires that all Educators, Educator Assistants and Educator Support Officers have a Duty of Care to report any child protection issues.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY:

Educators and Alice Springs Family Day Care are required to keep records of all the children in Education and Care. We treat all information in a confidential manner. All these records are filed at Alice Springs Family Day Care Office.

Records will include information on the child's development, progress, attendance and other matters relating to the day to day Education and Care of each child and their families.

Regulatory Authority can also access records as required and requested.

You are encouraged in the first instance to discuss any concerns/queries you may have concerning your child's care directly with your Educator, Educator Support Officer or Scheme Manager.

Your input is valued, it is important that all of your needs are met. If we aren't aware of the issue then we are unable to effectively offer you a solution.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE:

In the event that you wish to make a formal complaint regarding your child's educator please contact the Scheme Manager at the office.

All replies to your emails will be returned at our earliest convenience. Please respect the need for professionalism & confidentiality by addressing such

concerns in the appropriate way to avoid any third-party interpretation or misunderstanding.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES:

Routines

For most of us, our lives are a series of patterns; rituals and routines we perform almost every day. This is also true for babies and toddlers. Children thrive in a predictable environment, where mealtimes, nap times, separating from a parent and toileting are dealt with consistently. It is important to communicate with the educator. Let them know of any changes in routine at home and become familiar with the educator's daily program and provide information that will contribute to the achievement of Learning Outcomes.

Meals

Each day remember to pack a nutritious morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. Discuss mealtime routines and any likes and dislikes your child has with the educator. Formula/milk needs to be supplied for babies by the parent.

Clothing

Depending on the educator's program, children will be involved in a range of activities and Learning Experiences, including: climbing, running, messy play (paint/glue/clay), water play and excursions; therefore children will need changes of clothes (often multiple), appropriate footwear and a hat.

Sleeping

It is important to discuss your child's pre-sleep and sleep routine with the educator to provide continuity between the home and care. Also communicate with the educator any changes in your child's sleeping patterns; if he or she has an unsettled night or woken particularly early.

Toileting

Pack enough disposable nappies and creams/lotion that your child will require each day. When your child is ready for toilet training (usually between 2 and 3 years of age) discuss a coordinated approach with your educator.

Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety is a normal phase of child development and usually begins between the ages of 8 months and 1 year and is most predominant between the ages of 1 and 2 years. However, children of any age can display separation anxiety; events such as starting child care, changing educators, moving house, a new brother or sister can all trigger separation anxiety. Separation anxiety is usually short term and often has a greater impact on the parent than the child. In most cases the distress can usually be overcome and the child settles after the parent has left, and those feelings will not re-emerge until the parent returns and the child remembers that the parent left. Remember separation anxiety is normal and won't last long.

There are some simple steps that can assist in reducing the stress of separation anxiety on the parent, child and educator:

- **Never sneak away**

It may be tempting to sneak away when your child isn't looking but experts agree that this often causes anxiety and is scary for a child.

- **Be calm and consistent**

Create a goodbye ritual during which you say a pleasant, loving, and firm goodbye. Stay calm and show confidence in your child. Reassure him or her that you will be back – and explain how long it will be until you return using concepts your child will understand (such as after lunch) because your child can't yet understand time. Give him or her your full attention when you say goodbye, and when you say you're leaving, mean it; coming back will only make things worse.

- **Bring something familiar**

A favourite toy or blanket can provide comfort for your child and ease the separation.

- **Practice separations**

Babies and toddlers are progressively developing a new skill of 'object permanence', when they remember people and objects and notice when they are missing. With practise separations, tell your child that you will be going to another room and that you'll be back soon. If there's crying, repeat the reassurance that you'll be back soon. Then return back, smiling and speaking comfortingly to your child. Gradually make these practice separations longer and longer. The child will learn that you'll come back and that it is okay when you are gone for a short time.

Families can negotiate with their educator to place their child in care for a few hours at a time before they start regular care, to help ease the transition.

Biting

One undesirable, but unfortunately normal behaviour that some children engage in is biting. Having a biter in a group of young children causes stress and tension, and being the parent of a child who has been bitten is very distressing. Of course, so is being bitten.

In fact, if you think about it, biting is a way of hurting that does not depend on size and physical strength. The most likely cause of biting is tiredness, communication frustrations, teething.

While there is no foolproof way of stopping biting, once the cause of the biting is established, provisions can be put in place to reduce or eliminate future biting.

Play Sessions

Alice Springs Family Day Care Inc. holds Play session during school terms. Play session, times, days and venues vary depending on the activity.

Educators are encouraged to attend Play Session not only to interact with other educators, but also to gain new ideas for play learning experiences for all children.

The play session is programmed to cover all areas of child development including:

- Language and literacy
- Social and emotional
- Gross motor
- Fine motor
- Creativity
- Numeracy

Outings and Excursions

When educators take children on outings, written permission is needed by the parent and a risk assessment must be done prior to the outing. The transportation of all children in care will be properly and safely undertaken. Educators are encouraged to take children out on a regular basis within reason i.e. shopping, to the park, play sessions, morning tea with friends.

Transport Policy

The transportation of all children in care will be properly and safely undertaken. All private vehicles used for the transportation of children undergo an annual safety check. Permission from the parent/guardian for routine trips such as Play session and school escorts, will be obtained when the child commences care with their educator.

Child Safe Organisation

ASFDC is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people accessing our service. We support the rights of the child and will act without hesitation to ensure a child – safe environment is maintained at all times. We also support the rights and wellbeing of our staff and volunteers and encourage their active participation in building and maintaining a secure environment for all participants. All Educators and family members over the age 18 years residing permanently in the home are required to hold a Working with Children's cards and undergo a Criminal Clearance check.

Behaviour Policy

Children will be guided towards positive and responsible behaviour by the use of a broad, flexible approach according to the individual child's needs, using techniques that encourage positive behaviour, support, autonomy and demonstrate respect. This approach acknowledges behaviour as a form of communication which is linked to the child's stage of development and family background. In no way will physical, verbal or emotional punishment that humiliates, frightens or threatens children be tolerated.

Home Safety and Hygiene Policy

ASFDC believes that high standards of safety and hygiene are contributing factors in the provision of quality education and care that enhances the wellbeing of children. An educator's home will offer an environment that has high standards of cleanliness and safety especially in relation to the consumption of food, toileting and the use of toys and contact with pets.

A Home Safety Inspection will be undertaken prior to an educator becoming registered with the scheme and annually in accordance with the Educator Agreement. Checks will also be taking place during regular coordination unit visits.

Nutrition

Food that is provided to children in care shall be fresh and include a range of food groups which reflect variety and nutrition in accordance with the recommended daily intake from the food pyramid. Eating is also an enjoyable social experience for children that provides opportunities for children to learn about different types of food. Children will be encouraged to participate in the preparation and presentation of food as a valuable learning experience.

Food is not to be used as a behaviour management technique either by provision or denial. i.e. if you do not eat all your lunch you won't get dessert, or if you are good you can have a lolly.

Medication

If a child requires medication, a written authorisation must be supplied by the parent as well as directions on how to administer the medication. Any medication supplied must be labelled with the child's name and only be supplied to that specific child. Please discuss this with your educator. A Medication Record must be completed by the Educator and signed by the parent.

Medical Conditions (Asthma, Allergies and Diabetes etc)

The management of chronic medical conditions should be viewed as a shared responsibility and ensures that all reasonable measures are taken to provide high levels of protection. It is the family's responsibility to inform the educator upon enrolment of any medical conditions/diagnosis and to provide the child's **Medical Management Plan**.

Failure to provide a Medical Management Plan will result in non-acceptance of your child into care.

SunSmart

It is the policy of ASFDC that all children attending care are protected from skin damage caused by the harmful UV rays of the sun.

It is mandatory that educators implement the following procedures:

- ASFDC requires children to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears whenever they are outside.
- Children who do not have hats with them will be asked to play in an area protected from the sun
- Children will be encouraged to use available areas of shade for outdoor play activities between the hours of 10am – 3pm.
- Adults should act as role models by wearing appropriate hats and clothing outdoors, using SPF 30+ sunscreen for skin protection and seeking shade whenever possible.
- SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen, provided by the parent, will be applied to the child as necessary.
- Learning about skin and ways to protect skin from the sun will be incorporated into programmed activities e.g. games or songs.
- The SunSmart Policy will be reinforced in a positive way through parent newsletters, educator newsletters, notice boards and meetings.

At the Registration/Parent Interview, parent will be:

- Informed of the SunSmart Policy
- Asked to provide a suitable hat for their child's use.
- Asked to provide SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen for their child's use.

Water Safety

Educators may provide activities involving water play in the form of sprinklers, hoses and shallow paddling pools, provided that the children are under the educator's constant supervision. The water level of a paddling pool must be no higher than the smallest child's knee.

Your educator cannot take your child swimming without your permission, and s/he must meet all policy requirements including an educator: child ratio of 1:1. If you require your educator to accompany your child to swimming lessons and s/he is able to do so, you must provide written advice stating that while the child is in the lesson s/he is under the swimming instructors care.

Water safety also applies to nappy buckets, ponds, outside areas, bathing and bath play, and messy play.

Exclusion of Sick Children

Infection, with or without signs of illness, are common in young children. When children spend time in Family Day Care they are in contact with other children and therefore may be exposed to a wide range of infections such as diarrhoea or vomiting.

It is the responsibility of parents to keep unwell children at home and to report to their child's educator any suspected or confirmed sickness in their child. Educators do not have the resources to adequately care for children who are sick.

If a parent is unsure about whether to take their child to Family Day Care, they should telephone their educator and discuss the child's illness.

- If a child becomes sick whilst in care the parent will be notified and expected to collect their child promptly.
- All incidents of a child being unwell should be noted by the educator and an Incident, Injury Trauma and Illness Record be completed.
- A child may return to care when the risk of infection to other children has ceased.
- The decision to exclude or re-admit a child who has been sick will be the responsibility of the educator. This decision will be made in the interest of the other children in care and to prevent the spread of infection as much as possible.

Custody Issues

In the event of custody issues it is the parent's responsibility to inform and supply documentation to the scheme of the legal requirements as stated in the court order. The Scheme will advise the educator.

In the absence of information and legal documentation relating to custody or restraining orders, educators are not to legally deny access to either parent as per the enrolment form.

Quality Childcare Checklist

All families want their children to be in care in a place that is safe, happy and loving, where children can learn and have fun. At the same time, the care must also meet your needs. Child care should be convenient, affordable, and available when you need it.

The following gives a checklist for what to look for to indicate quality education and childcare:

Look for evidence of a safe and healthy environment:

- Clean and comfortable
- Toys and furniture in good condition
- Medicines and household chemicals out of reach
- Safety gates; plugs in power points; smoke detectors
- Emergency numbers by telephone
- Parents details on file indicating what to do in an emergency when the parent cannot be contacted.
- Emergency Evacuation Plan displayed
- Consistent handwashing by the educator and children
- Proper food preparation and storage
- Regular washing of linen and toys

Look for evidence of a learning environment:

- Interesting age-appropriate toys, material and equipment
- Books to read
- Environment includes plenty of softness, some seclusion, provisions for high mobility
- Free play valued above adult-directed play activities and group times
- Outdoor play
- Educator's ability to explain how the program promotes the development of fine and gross motor skills, cognitive skills including problem solving and communication skills
- Using the Early Years Learning Framework/My Time Our Place as a guide for planning and programming

Look for evidence that the program supports social and emotional development and that the educator provides positive guidance:

- Educator recognises and accepts children's feelings and encourages appropriate expressions.
- Educator guides behaviour in a positive age/stage appropriate manner.
- Educator encourages creative social problem solving when children conflict
- Educator teaches respect by showing respect
- Educator encourages children to develop a sense of themselves through body awareness, using their name; through promoting cultural identification

Look for evidence of consistent daily routine:

- Greeted warmly upon arrival
- Lunch and snack times are relaxed and pleasant
- Nap times are relaxed and not stressful
- Consistent, predictable schedule

- Times and places to play quietly or actively

Look for evidence that the program strives to establish positive and productive relationships with families:

- Regular and ongoing communication with parents at pickup times and drop off times
- Friendly atmosphere
- Mutual problem-solving approach to conflicts

Look for evidence that the educator is professional:

- Sound record keeping
- Knowledgeable
- Respects confidentially
- Well documented educational program
- Evidence of Coordination Unit visits