



Alice Springs
Family Day Care

FAMILY HANDBOOK

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book has been developed as an ongoing resource to assist families using our service.

It is not our intention that you should read this book in its entirety when you receive it. Rather, please use it as an ongoing resource that you refer to when you require information.

This book is intended as an addition to contact with the scheme office. Please do not hesitate to pick up the phone and call us, or drop in and see us, should you have any questions, concerns, or would just like to have a chat about your child.

Your feedback is vital to the ongoing quality of the service we provide. If you have any constructive comments that you wish to make in regards to this handbook, or any other aspects of our service, please let us know.

The scheme office is situated at:

Shop 8
Cinema Complex,
Leichhardt Terrace,
Alice Springs

Office Hours:

Monday – Friday, excepting public holidays
8.30am – 4.30pm

Contact Details:

Telephone: 89 52 3406
Fax: 89 52 3010
Website: www.asfdc.org.au
Email: office@asfdc.org.au

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Alice Springs Family Day Care Inc.

1.1 PHILOSOPHY

Alice Springs Family Day Care Inc., believe that quality Child Care options are an integral right of all families. We welcome the diversity of the community and respect the individual needs of families.

We support and encourage interest and involvement of families, educators and staff. Consultation and information sharing is of vital importance and we encourage all stakeholders to contribute to and feel part of the scheme.

We believe that each family, educator and staff member comes to the scheme with a wealth of knowledge and life experience and these experiences and differences are valued, welcomed and extended upon. We strive to work together to develop and build on this knowledge and experience through opportunities for training, professional development and progressive education.

We believe in providing opportunities for discovery, learning through self-selected experiences and encouraging the development of children's abilities to observe, perceive, explore, investigate, imagine and problem solve.

We aim to welcome the global community through the eyes of families, a service that reflects cultural diversity, social needs and worldly knowledge.

1.2 About the scheme

Operation in Alice Springs for over 30 years, Alice Springs Family Day Care is a respected, formal home-based childcare service that provides quality care for children from birth to 12 years of age in the homes of approved Family Day Care Educators.

Alice Springs Family Day Care Inc. is a community based not for profit organisation, supported and funded by the Department of Education Employment Workplace Relations (DEEWR) is governed by Northern Territory Legislation and the new Education and Care Services National Regulations and the National Quality Framework ensuring the very best standard of care.

Educators earn an income by providing care in their own homes for small groups of children and are supported by the coordination unit. The co-ordination unit assists families and educators with placement of children, provides training and resources to educators, and information to families who use the service.

Family Day Care combines the benefits of other childcare options with the warmth and intimacy of growing up at home. Children in Family Day Care develop a close relationship with one Educator while being encouraged to learn through a play based programs. Small groups of children in family day care mean children receive more individual attention as well as the social interaction they need and enjoy.

The Co-ordination unit supports home based child Educators registered with the scheme through:

- Placement of children
- Home visits from the Educator Support Coordinators
- Playgroups once per week
- Initial training and ongoing professional development
- Toy, resource and video library
- Equipment e.g. car seats, cots, strollers etc.
- Training regarding the calculation of government subsidies
- Administration of government subsidies
- Resources and referrals

The Co-ordination unit supports families of children in care by placing their children into care environments that suit the child's and family's needs, monitoring of care provided, administration of government subsidies, and ongoing support to the family if and when required.

Please note:

A Family Day Care scheme is the overall term to describe all the components of a Family Day Care operation- i.e. the Board of Governance, Co-ordination unit, Educators and Families. The **Scheme Office** is where the Coordination is based.

1.3 Membership

At a special general meeting held in September 2005 a new constitution for the organisation was passed. This constitution has since been approved for use by the Northern Territory Government, Department of Justice, and Business Affairs.

Under the new constitution individuals are required to register as ‘members’ of the organisation in order to have a voting right the Annual General Meeting, and to be able to nominate to be a member of the Board of Governance. Being a registered Educator or Family does not automatically provide membership.

Membership of the association is open to:

- i. All parents or guardians of children who, from time to time are receiving care under the Family Day Care scheme as operated by the association.
- ii. All active educators registered with the scheme.
- iii. Any person who is interested in furthering the objects of the association, subject to approval of the board of governance.

To apply to become a member of the association a person must:

- a) Complete an ‘Alice Springs Family Day Care Inc. Membership form’
- b) The form must be signed by the person applying and another member of the organisation.

The Board will then consider applications for membership at the next available board meeting and must accept or reject that application at that meeting or the next.

There is no cost involved in becoming a member.

If you would like to be registered as a member of Alice Springs Family Day Care Inc., you can either access a form via the member’s section of the website: www.asfdc.org.au or request one from the scheme office, 89523406.

If you do not have access to another member to propose your application, we will organise this for you.

1.4 Management

As Alice Springs Family Day Care Inc. is a community based organisation, the government of the organisation is performed by the board of governance, this board comprises:

- At least 1, but no more than 4, parent representatives
- At least 1, but no more than 4, educator representatives
- Interested person/s from the community

The Scheme Manager is responsible for the operational management of the scheme, with any major decisions regarding finances and policy being the Board’s responsibility.

The Operational Policy of the organisation is the document that details the manner in which the organisation operates, including standards and regulations. It is the responsibility of each Educator to ensure they are familiar with this document, and families have access either through the website, or by visiting the scheme office. Refer 4.1 operational policies.

Generally, any board vacancies are voted on and filled at the Annual General Meeting. If a vacancy should occur during the year, the board has the authority, under the constitution, to recruit and ratify and appointment.

If you are interested in being on the committee please give the scheme manager a call, or attend the next Annual General Meeting and nominate.

1.5 Funding body

Alice Springs Family Day Care Inc. receives operational funding from the Department of Education Employment Workplace Relation. The contact details are:

Department of Education Employment Workplace Relation
P.O Box 9880
Darwin N.T- 0870
Phone- 1- DEEWR (133397)

National Office
Department of Education Employment Workplace Relation
G.P.O Box 9850
Canberra ACT

Note: If you had a problem that you did not believe was satisfactorily dealt with by following the scheme's grievance procedures, then your next course of action would be to contact the funding body.

1.6 Staff

There are six staff positions with Alice Springs Family Day Care. Their key responsibilities are the following:

SCHEME MANAGER

Key Responsibilities:

- Manage organisation including financial administration and budgeting
- Work with Board of Governance including policy development (implementation and review), strategic planning, legislative requirement, funding submissions etc.
- Facilitate National Quality Framework and the Early Learning Years Framework.
- Promotion and marketing of Alice Springs Family Day Care
- Recruitment of educators and delivery of educator inductions
- Co-ordination and provision of staff and educator training
- Edit newsletter
- Accessing of information technology
- Co-ordination of on-call support
- Community liaison
- Instigation of, and attendance at, relevant meetings, training sessions, and conferences

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

Key Responsibilities:

- Office administration
- Responsibility for educator/family/membership databases
- Oversee database maintenance for toy library, DVD library, book/resource library, equipment
- Compilation and distribution of newsletter
- Attendance to relevant meeting/training/conferences
- Assist in the delivery of educator inductions
- Assist and support all members of staff with administration duties
- Support and assist educators with the National Quality Framework and the Early Learning Years Framework

FINANCE ADMINISTRATION OFFICER

Key Responsibilities:

- Administration of Child Care Benefit
- Attendance at relevant meetings/training/conferences
- Assist in the delivery of educator inductions
- Participation in the National Quality Framework
- Support and assist Educators with National Quality Framework

EDUCATORS SUPPORT COORDINATOR (2 POSITIONS)

Key Responsibilities:

- Resource support and monitoring of educators
- Educator visits/child observations
- Attend play sessions
- Placement of children in conjunction with Placement Officer

- Family Liaison
- Maintenance of educator/family files
- Attendance at relevant meeting/trainings/conferences
- Deliver the Educators inductions
- Participation in the National Quality Framework and the Early Learning Years Framework

PLACEMENT OFFICER

Key Responsibilities:

- Educators Visits/child observations
- Attend Play session
- Placement of children with an educator and monitor the placement of children with educator
- Support and assist educators with National Quality Framework and the Early Learning Years Framework

1.7 Educators

Alice Springs Family Day Care provides quality care for small group of children in the homes of carefully selected educators. Our educators work in partnership with families and Family Day Care staff to ensure that children in care have positive experiences.

Before our home based educators commence providing care they must:

- Hold a senior First Aid Certificate
- Pass a Working with Children (Ochre Card) and
- National Criminal History Check (For any members of educators household 18 years and over) including the Educator and the co carer
- Pass a home safety inspection
- Complete an educator induction course
- Hold the appropriate insurance

Whilst they remain an educator they have to commit to the following

- To attend at least 4 professional development sessions per year (free choice)
- To attend Fire Awareness training on an annual basis
- To attend Food Handling training every three years.
- To attend Mandatory Reporting every second year
- To work co-operatively with the co-ordination unit to ensure the provision of ongoing quality care.

1.7.1 The Educators Family

Alice Springs Family Day Care Inc. has a contract for service with all educators and co-carers who are the persons responsible for the quality of the service provided to children and their families. Other members of the Educators household, although not responsible for the care of children may influence the provision of care.

As such educators are encouraged to negotiate in advance to specifics of areas of the home to be used for Family Day Care, the hours that the educator is prepared to work, and the participation of any members of the educator's household.

The scheme expects that members of the educator's household will:

- Respect the confidentiality/privacy of the families in care;
- Treat all families and children with respect;
- Keep personal items out of sight/reach of children and their families;
- Negotiate their space in advance so that families in care respect those areas;
- Consider and understand the responsibilities of the educators work;
- Be responsible about their behaviour when Family Day Care is being provided
- Only be responsible for the children in care, in the case of an emergency unless they are an authorised co-carer

Members of the educator's family have the right to expect that they will:

- Be treated with respect by the families accessing care and the coordination unit staff;
- Have access to their own space and belongings ; and
- Have their own privacy considered

If a family has any issues that arise regarding the educator's family's impact on the quality care, this should be discussed with the educator as soon as possible so that options/alternatives/actions can be considered.

If the issue cannot be resolved then the family should follow the 'Family Grievance Procedure' (refer 5.9 grievance procedure) in this handbook.

1.8 Quality Assurance

Quality childcare services provide more than just childcare- quality Family Day Care fosters the development of positive relationships between Educators and children and their families. It provides experience for children that expand their thinking and language, helping to foster and learning and development.

In late 2002, Alice Springs Family Day Care Inc. was among just 14 schemes that were the first to be accredited under the 'Family Day Care Quality Assurance' (FDCQA) system. Additionally, the Alice Springs scheme was the only Northern Territory service to be in this first group.

The New National Quality Framework (NQF) commences from the beginning of 2012. The National Quality Standards for Early Childhood Education and Care consists of 7 quality areas, 23 standards and 65 elements.

There are seven quality areas in the National Quality Standards.

The seven quality areas are:

1. Educational programs and practice
2. Children's health and safety
3. Physical environment
4. Staffing arrangements
5. Relationships with children
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
7. Leadership and service management

If you'd like to know more about the quality areas of the national quality framework for early childhood education, here are some links.

www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood/Policy_Agenda

www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood/Policy_Agenda/documents/GuideNationalQualityStandards/pdf

As an accredited Family Day Care scheme Alice Springs Family Day Inc.:

- Has a clear philosophy and goals, agreed between Educators, Staff, Management and the Families which guide all activities of the scheme.
- Appreciates, respects and fosters the individuality and the interdependence of all children, including children from diverse backgrounds and children who have additional needs;
- Considers the appropriateness of all experiences and activities affecting the children in relation to their development and
- Encourages families to become involved in the scheme and fosters the relationship between Educators, Staff and Families so that they can support one another in their complementary roles.

To achieve Accreditation status, the new assessment and rating process will involve the service undertaking a self-assessment using the draft National Quality Standards Assessment and Rating Instrument, in line with the seven quality areas in the NQS. The next step is to develop a Quality Improvement Plan, thinking about goals and outcomes that the service wants to achieve. Then this is submitted to the new regulatory authority, the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). They will review and analyse the plan, then they organize a site visit. Then a draft report with a provisional rating will be provided to the service.

2. Communication

2.1 Newsletter

The Co-ordination unit produces a monthly newsletter that is distributed to all members of our scheme. These newsletters are placed in the educators collection file in the office. Educators are required to ensure that copies are distributed to families immediately.

If you are not receiving your newsletter please contact the administration office for assistance. We can arrange to post or email the newsletter, whichever you would prefer.

If a member of the organisation would like to place an article, for sale notice, or other item in the newsletter, they should contact the office by phone: 89523406; by email: office@asfdc.org.au; or by fax: 89523010. The scheme calendar contains the dates that submission must be received by for inclusion in the next newsletter.

2.2 Website

The scheme has a website: www.asfdc.org.au

This website has been designed to accommodate both new and current educators and families. It features children's activities, upcoming events, and a members section that includes the scheme's operational policy, fee information, and a bulletin board (contains copies of scheme fliers) and copies of the most used forms (these are in PDF format and can be printed off and used).

Families are encouraged to use the site to keep current on what is happening in the scheme.

2.3 Keeping in touch

The monthly newsletter and this family handbook have a great deal of valuable information to assist families.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Co-coordinator unit if you have any concerns about your child, if any problems have arisen, or if you want to let us know how well your care arrangements are working out.

If you have some issues or concerns to be addressed it is a good idea to ring and make an appointment with the staff member concerned. This ensures that the staff member you wish to see is in the office when you come in and that they have allocated time for your needs.

2.4 Sharing information with your Educator

When you arrive at the educator's home with your child please take a few minutes to talk to the educator about the little things that may affect the child during the day. For example, if the child has had an unsettled night, is teething or is upset because the family pet has died, these should be made known so that the educator can make suitable adjustments to the days routine.

The educator will discuss with you at the end of each day anything that you need or want to know about your child's day. It is asked though, that you keep these discussions as brief as possible as the educators have their own families to attend to at this time.

It is essential that you keep your educator and the scheme office informed of any changes to your address, work and home telephone numbers. If possible as much notice should be given to your educator regarding changes in care hours, holidays etc.

3. THE CARE ARRANGEMENT

3.1 Registration

Alice Springs Family Day Inc. is committed to ensuring quality placements for children and their families. In order for this to occur, a procedure for both family and educator registrations should be followed. These procedures will assist the Co-ordination unit to assess educator's suitability, and to match families and educators according to their needs.

The procedure for family registration will be, except in extenuating circumstances, as follows:

1. Family is issued with a 'new family information pack' that supplies relevant information and paperwork to new families.
2. Parents are to complete the registration forms and return them to the coordination unit.
Coordination unit staff member will contact parents/guardians and ascertain more information if required.
3. Co-ordination unit staff member will contact parents /guardian with the relevant details of a prospective educator.
4. Family meets with prospective educator/s to discuss care needs. The family and the educator will decide the suitability of the placement. Meeting with potential educators can happen more than once. Educator will also at the interview give families their handbook. Please take the time to read it and discuss any matter with the educator.
5. If the placement is suitable the parent/guardian will have an interview with a member of the coordination unit and the enrolment process being. You may bring up any concerns at his interview.
6. A fee of \$50.00 is payable and a copy of the children immunisation records required.
7. Family commences care.

All child placements must be referred to, and conducted by the Co-ordination unit.

*** Families are now able to register on-line via the scheme's website: www.asfdc.org.au. If this occurs the family is still required to attend the scheme office for an interview and to pay the family registration fee.

3.2 Choosing your educator

Once you have registered with Alice Springs Family Day Care Inc. you will be given subject to availability, the names, phone numbers and addresses of suitable educators.

So what do you do now?

- Ring and make an appointment to see the educator/s at a time that is manually agreed upon.
- It is recommended that you take your child/ren along with you. This will enable you to see how the educator relates to your child and gives both the educator and yourself an opportunity to see how your child/ren fit in with the children already there in care.
- You may be wondering what topics to discuss with the educator in order to judge whether or not you think this placement will be suitable. Following are some ideas:
 - The service offered by the educator- the associated fees and conditions.
 - The types of experiences/activities your child enjoys.
 - The types of experiences/activities the educator provides.
 - Routines of the care home - how your child will fit into these routines.
 - Likes and dislikes of your child- any special requirements.
 - Techniques you use for behaviour management- what does the educator do?
 - Meals and snacks for your child. What expectations do you have? What expectations does the educator have?
 - Sleeping requirements / arrangements.
 - Nappy changing procedure, toilet training etc.
 - Comforters your child uses e.g. dummy, blanket etc.
 - Feeding routines for babies
 - How you comfort your child, get the child to sleep etc.
 - TV/video viewing
 - Days and hours of care
 - Childcare fees and loading etc.
 - General health of your child, discuss allergies etc.
 - Home work requirements for school children
 - What do you need to supply each day/week etc.
- Discussion with an educator enables you to make an informed decision on the suitability of that person to care for your child. If you do not find any of the educators you have visited suit your requirements, please contact the Co-ordination unit office so that your needs can be further assessed, and other educators names provided.
- **Please remember:** Just as you have a choice of educator, the educator also has a choice. If the educator does not believe your child will fit into the environment that is offered, the educator may decline to care for your child

3.3 Preparing your child for Family Day Care

Once you have met with, and selected an educator, you should prepare your child for attending care. Depending on the age of the child, this can be done by discussion, or 'settling in' visits. Arrangements for settling in visits need to be made with your educator, and the regular 'core' rate is payable for this service.

Your child may fret when you first leave him/her. This is expected and normal. Please do not fret; educators are resourceful and caring people who will do their utmost in settling your child into care.

If your child is between 6months – 2years they may forget for a while that you are not around, and will play happily. However, when you return they remember that they have missed you, and all the sad feelings return. This is why it is quite normal for your child to cry when you come to collect him/her.

Please do not leave your child without saying goodbye. It is important that children know that you have gone, and that you will be coming back. Slipping away when the child is not looking generally leads to a more fretful child.

Dealing with Separation Anxiety- Tips for families

“Like all development challenges, separation can be an experience of successful mastery of frustrating failure. Each successful separation strengthens children’s trust in themselves and the people significant in their lives child care provides special opportunities for children to master the challenge of separation”

You may experience an overwhelming sensation when walking out of the door. Remember it’s acceptable and expected that you feel sadness- it’s a new phase in both your lives.

- Don’t share too much of your emotions with your child as you may make them feel guilty for having fun.
- Make sure you tell the educator if your child is used to being carried and comforted on adults lap. Now is not the time to be making development changes to those routines and practices.
- Plan the first week of care with flexibility in mind so you can return to pick up your child if s/he is distressed on the first day.
- Gradually increase the hours of care if you can.
- Be specific and let your child know when you will be returning. ALWAYS SAY GOODBYE! Regardless of your child’s age – always say goodbye and arrive on time. This will build trust!
- Always be honest with children. Don’t ‘protect’ them by lying to them
- Adults know that separation hurts and often use it to control a child’s behaviour. For example “if you don’t do..... I will take you to childcare on your day at home with me”
- Use positive statement – instead of saying “I really missed you”, say “I’m really glad to see you”

3.4 Rights and responsibilities of Families

RIGHT	RESPONSIBILITY
To access an educator that suits your family's needs.	Willingness to meet with educator/s and discuss childcare needs prior to making a decision
Access to individualised, quality care.	To keep your educator informed if factors that may influence care provision e.g. child is teething, didn't sleep well, beginning to use toilet etc.
Access to affordable child care	To pay your child care fees on time and in the manner agreed upon with the educator
Respect for your family and their confidentiality	Respect for your educator's family and their right to privacy and confidentiality
To Access child care hours as contracted with the educator	To notify your educator if your child is not attending care, or if you are running late, will be early etc.
To be provided with an on-call service that will assist with a temporary care placement for your child/ren, when your usual educator is unwell or unavailable	To make contact with the temporary educator prior to your child/ren attending
For your child to be cared for in an environment that promotes wellness	To keep your child at home when s/he is unwell
To receive, when your usual educator is on leave, a temporary placement that suits your family's needs	To make contact with the temporary educator provided prior to the care commencing
To be provided with at least 1 weeks' notice of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to fees Changes to care conditions educator holidays termination of care provision 	To provide your educator with at least 1 weeks' notice of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking holidays Changing care arrangements Termination of care

RIGHT	RESPONSIBILITY
For your child's personal needs to be catered for e.g.: Nappy changed regularly Flexible meal times Hygiene maintained	To provide adequate nappies, food, wipes, lotions, clothing etc.
Right to know where your child is during the day and the ability to make contact with your educator when you require.	To keep the educator informed of your movements (e.g. if you are picking up early, dropping off late), contact details etc.
Access to your child, if you require, during the care day	To be mindful of the educators routines, children's sleep times etc.
To be informed of the 'program' developed for the children including notice given of any additional items your child and/or educator may require	To read the program developed by the educator and to provide what is required e.g.: play clothes
To receive current information regarding: Alice Springs Family Day Care Inc. Government guidelines Parenting ideas Child development	To read the information provided to you by the scheme including: The Family handbook Monthly newsletter Other correspondence

3.5 When your educator is sick or taking holidays

When your educator is sick she will ring you and confirm that you require care for the period of time she will have off work. The educator will then contact the scheme office or the on-call person and notify your requirements. Once alternative care arrangements have been made a staff member will contact you with the details.

If your educator is planning a holiday she will advise you of the details as early as possible. If you require care while she is on leave the scheme office will organise an alternative educator for you. Sometimes coordinating care around educators leave can be quite complicated, especially at times like Christmas when many educators take time off. Please be patient, staff will contact you in time for you to meet the alternative educator before your child/ren are due to commence.

3.6 What if I have a problem with my educator?

Our educators are all individuals, all with their own way of organising things, just as you have your way of organizing your family. It is possible that your educator may do something you are not happy with, simply because it is her way of doing things, and will not have realized you are not pleased. It is recommended that when issues arise concerning the provision of care that you address them with your educator immediately. This way any problem can be resolved quickly, with a minimum impact. If however, you do not believe that this placement is working for you, please contact the co-ordination office immediately. We will either act as mediator between yourself and your educator or, if need be, organise an alternative placement for you.

If you have concerns regarding your educator, coordinator unit staff member or management, you have a right to bring these issues to the attention of the Board of Governance. Refer 5.9 Grievance procedure.

3.7 What if I no longer need care?

If you no longer require child care with your educator, you will need to:

- Complete a 'Notice to Terminate Care' form and;
- Give the educator either 1 weeks' notice, or 1 week fees in lieu of notice.

The Notice of Terminate Care' form can be obtained from your educator, the co-ordination unit, or the 'members section' of the website.

Please note: CCB cannot be paid on fees in lieu of notice

4. ADMINISTRATION

4.1 Operational policy

The Operational Policy of the organisation is the document that details the manner in which the organisation operates, including standards and regulations. It is the responsibility of each educator to ensure they are familiar with this document.

The Operational Policy is available in the 'members section' of the website, and a copy is held at the co-ordination unit. Families are able to access this document via the website (www.asfdc.org.au) or by coming into the coordination unit. If there is a particular policy/s that a parent would like to view they should contact the coordination unit and arrange to have them forwarded.

Policies to be reviewed at each committee meeting are advised in the newsletter and copies are posted on the bulletin board of the members section of the website. Alternatively a copy of policies to be reviewed can be obtained by contacting the scheme office.

4.2 Contracts

Once you have chosen your educator you will need to complete a contract, the contract is between the educator and yourself and should be completed and signed as soon as possible once care has commencement. The contract serves to detail:

- The hours of care required
- Any additional service charges example; baby fees, escorts, meals etc.
- Fee charges, CCB and CCR entitlements

Contracts are important documents and serve to protect both the educator and the family. **Please ensure you read the conditions on the back of the contract before signing.**

4.2.1 Minimum booking contract

If one parent is on a rotating shift roster, and the care required will differ week to week, the family will be placed on a 'minimum booking contract'.

The following criteria must be met to be placed on a 'minimum booking contract'

- At least one parent is on a rotating shift roster
- Family requires a full time flexible place for the child (30 hour minimum)

OR

Family requires a part time flexible place for the child (15 hour minimum)

- Care contracted is on differing days each week

A rotating shift does not cover situations where a parent works:

- . One week on, one week off
- . Alternating weeks of two or three days (that is, two days one week, then three days the next week, and so on);
- . Casual or 'on-call' types of employment

Depending on the type of shift you are working you will be required to contract for a full time flexible place, a part time flexible place or a school age flexible place. For more information please discuss with your educator or the scheme office.

4.3 Fees

Educators under the Alice Springs Family Day scheme have a deregulated fee system, educators are free to set their own fees and loading in accordance with the service they provide.

It is the educator's responsibility to ensure families are informed of the fee associated with the service they provide.

4.4 Childcare Benefit and Childcare Rebate

Child care benefit (CCB) and Childcare rebate (CCR) are payments made to families to assist with the costs of childcare. Australian residents using childcare provided by approved childcare services are eligible to receive CCB and CCR.

The childcare benefit AND Childcare rebate helps create a more affordable system of childcare. It supports workforce participation and respite and developmental care for children whose parents are not in the workforce.

Alice Springs Family Day Care is an approved service and as such can provide parents with reduced fees in line with their CCB and CCR entitlements. It is very important that you lodge your CCB forms with the family assistance office (FAO), as soon as possible (preferably before care commences). **Alice Springs Family Day Care cannot offer the fee reductions until they have been notified of your entitlement by the FAO.**

Please note:

- The percentage allocated to you by centrelink is calculated on a rate set by the commonwealth government. Educators fees are usually higher than that rate and so a 'gap fee' is payable.
- As per commonwealth government stipulations, the fee reduction for school age children is 85% of the percentage allocated to you.

The FAO is located in the same offices as centrelink and it is recommended that you book an appointment to lodge your CCB application.

4.4.1 Allowable and approved absences

When you book care with a Family Day Care educator that care must be paid for even if the child is absent. CCB will be paid as normal on those days, provided that the absence is either an 'allowable' or 'approved' absence.

DEFINITION OF AN 'ALLOWABLE' ABSENCE.

An allowable absence is a day when the child does not attend care for any reason, and CCB is still paid to the parent. CCB is paid for up to 42 allowable absences per financial year across all approved childcare services.

DEFINITION OF AN 'APPROVED' ABSENCE.

Approved absences are days taken for any of the reasons listed here. There is no limit on the number of approved absences that a family may claim provided they are supported by evidence.

Type of Approved Absence

Type of Evidence required

Rotating roster/shift work	A letter from the employer at the commencement of care
Illness- can be the child's, parents or siblings	Copy of medical certificate
Non-immunisation (child is forced to miss care if not immunized and there is an outbreak of an infectious disease)	Scheme will document
Rostered day off	A letter from your employer stating that you have a regular RDO
Public holidays, periods of local emergency	No evidence required
Temporary closure of school/pupil free days	Copy of newsletter from school
Court order shared custody	Copy of court order
Attendance at preschool	No evidence required

4.5 Priority of Access

The Australian Government fund childcare with a major purpose of meeting the childcare needs of Australian families. However, the demand of childcare sometimes exceeds supply in some locations. When this happens, it is required that services allocate places to those families with the greatest need for childcare support.

The Australian Government has determined guidelines for allocated places in these circumstances. These guidelines apply to family day care, center- based care, in-home care and outside school hours care services. They set out the following three levels of priority, which childcare services must follow when filling vacant places:

- Priority 1 – A child at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- Priority 2 – A child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy the family assistance office work/training/study test
- Priority 3 – Any other child

4.6 Payment of fees

All fees owing must be paid as agreed with the educator.

We ask that you remember that your fees are the educator's income, and that educators have the right to be paid on time just as you expect to be paid on time.

If fees are not paid on the agreed day, the educator may charge a daily penalty of the amount due. Child care benefit cannot be paid on penalty amounts. If you cannot pay your fees for a reason beyond your control, please discuss this issue with your educator and make alternative arrangements.

Overdue fees may result in denial of care

4.7 Scheme Levy

In recognition that operational funding is not adequate to provide the quality of service for which Alice Springs Family Day Care Inc strives, a scheme levy will be charged to families to cover additional costs.

The scheme levy assists Alice Springs Family Day Care Inc to:

- Supply educator's with the necessary equipment to provide care for children e.g. Car seats, cots, high chairs, beds etc.
- Provide a toy library that has a variety of toys and DVD's suitable to the children's ages and stages of development (0-12 years)
- Provide a resource library that has a variety of books /DVD's that cover information relevant to families and child rearing
- Perform the administrative tasks necessary for the provision of a quality child care service.

Your educator will collect the scheme levy owing at the same time as you pay your fees. This amount will be receipted separately by the educator on an Alice Springs Family Day Care Inc receipt.

4.8 Arrival and Collection of Children

4.8.1 Signing in and out

In order to ensure that your child is covered by the educator's insurance, it is very important that you sign your child in and out on a daily basis. If your educator is responsible for escorting your child to and from pre-school, the educator will sign the child in and out on these occasions. However, it is important that you initial these attendance records as soon as possible.

4.8.2 Arrival

You must notify, either on the family registration form, or in writing, of all persons authorised to be responsible for your child/ren. Only your educator, your educator's co-educator, or Alice Springs Family Day Care staff members may accept your child into care. If none of these people are present when you arrive at your educator's home, you must wait with your child/ren until one of the appropriate people arrives.

4.8.2 Collection

You must notify, either on the Family Registration Form, or in writing, of all persons authorised to collect your child/ren from care. When a child is leaving care the educator will ensure that the person who receives the child is either the child's parent or a person who is authorised to do so. The educator will ensure that all possible measures are taken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of your child. Photo identification will be requested if the educator believes it's necessary.

4.8.4 Custody arrangements

You must notify, either on the Family registration Form or in writing, of any custody arrangements. In case of court order custody, a copy of the court order will be requested and kept under secure file in the coordination unit. If a parent who is not authorised to collect a child attempts to do so, the educator must consider the safety of all parties concerned and her/his duty of care to the other children in the care environment. In some cases it will be safer to allow the child to go with the unauthorized person, notifying the police immediately upon their departure. (If the unauthorized person is aggressive/violent we recommend that educators do not do anything that may incite the person further, and so the police would not be contacted while they are present)

4.8.5 Children walking, riding or catching the bus.

School age children may walk, ride their bike or catch the bus to the educator's home at the end of the school day, provided:

- You give permission, in writing, for this to occur
- The educator will be home at the time of the child/ran's arrival.

5. PRACTICALITIES PARENTS NEED TO KNOW.

5.1 Animals

Alice Springs family Day Care believes that animals can provide children with positive experiences. The caring for animals promotes in children a caring and responsible attitude. However, if you do not wish your child to be exposed to animals please let the co-ordination unit know so that this may be taken into account when placing your child.

Under the Operational Policy of Alice Springs family day Care, all dogs must be secured in a safe and clean enclosure. Children may have access to the animals if used in the program example dog washing and grooming and this is done under close supervision.

5.2 Behaviour Management

Alice Springs Family Day Care Inc. believe children have a right to be cared for in an environment that reflects the qualities of consistency, harmony, affection, fairness warmth and sensitivity. Children should be encouraged to develop self- control in their social interaction both with adults and other children. Children should be encouraged in their pursuit of independence, and guided in making choices and resolving problems. Encouragement and appreciation should be freely given as recognition of appropriate behaviour.

Alice Springs family day care Inc. basis behaviour guidance policy on current behavior guidance theory as provided from expert sources, and believe:

- Children's behavior should be seen as an expression of feelings or an attempt to meet immediate or underlying needs. Adults should be aware of what the child is trying to communicate, validate the child's feeling, and deal with the underlying problem as well as guiding the child towards more appropriate ways of communicating and of interacting pro –socially with others.
- Adult responses to strategies for guiding and managing behavior should take into account of the child's whole life situation.
- Strategies used by staff and educators should acknowledge family and cultural attitudes towards behavior within the boundaries of the safety and wellbeing of children, but not be stereotyped , as reactions vary from child to child as well as from culture to culture.
- Adult responses should include consideration of possible assessment for the physiological and psychological conditions that could be affecting behaviour.
- Educators and staff should seek to develop partnerships with families which supports addressing children's needs both at home and in the Family Day Care setting. Educators, staff and families should work together and share information to try to identify stresses that might affect the child's behaviour. Educators and staff need to be culturally aware so they can understand why some families might find it difficult to approach them or cooperate.

- It is critical that behaviour guidance strategies used by educators and staff do not include any form of isolation, withdrawal of affection and actions which may belittle, humiliate or coerce children
- Behaviour guidance strategies should be framed in positive language and enhance the child's self-esteem.
- Strategies should include the guiding of children towards appropriate ways of getting needs met and expressing feeling.
- Adults focus should be on the behavior, not the child, and positive behaviors and strengths of the child should be encouraged. Children should believe that acceptance does not depend on behaviour.
- Adult responses to behaviour should be appropriate to the developmental level and emotional and cultural understanding of each individual child.
- In meeting the needs of the individual child, consideration should also be given to the needs of all other children in the group.
- Expectations should be clearly articulated and consistent. These should be oriented towards authorisation ends. Children should be involved in the formulation of group's expectations as far as they are able.
- Opportunities for guiding behaviour should be seen as opportunities for new learning.
- Strategies used reflect the importance of continuity and predictability in the building of a sense of trust in children's primary relationships.
- Educators and staff should be aware of the importance of supporting families who are experiencing stress through family-friendly practices and by linking families into relevant support networks.
- Adults working with children should model the positive behaviour which they desire children to emulate or achieve.

Educators will be provided, during the induction process, with information regarding child development and the behaviours children exhibit at each stage of development. Information relating to child behaviour guidance techniques will also be provided. The professional development program for each year will incorporate some behaviour guidance related topics.

The coordination unit will provide ongoing support for educators in dealing with children's behaviour. If educators are experiencing difficulties in dealing with a particular child's behaviour, staff may offer advice, ideas, and appropriate resources. In the case of extreme problems staff will work with the educator and the family and refer to appropriate agencies if necessary.

Educators are not able to discipline any child by smacking them or with any other kind of physical action.

If you are concerned with your child's behaviour, please discuss with your educator and/or a staff member. We are able to offer referrals to professionals that can assist you, should you so require.

5.3 Child Ratios

Alice Springs Family Day Care Inc. has formulated Educator; Child ratios that meet the requirements of both the new National Quality Standards and the Northern Territory Legislation as of 1 January 2012 (the ratio to children will not be implemented into Alice Springs Family Day Care Inc until 2014).

The educator may still care for, at any one time 5 children under school age, including their own. In addition to this the educator may provide care for 2 school age children. This means the educator may provide care for up to seven children, provided two are school age.

Ratios in 2014 as of January 2014 the educator may care for 4 children under school age including their own with 2 children being under the age of three and two over 3 and three being of school age.

5.4 Child Protection

The scheme has a child protection policy in place and educators and coordination unit staff receive information and training on this subject. The policy states:

Under the Care and Protection of Children (20 May 2011), any person who believes, on reasonable grounds, that a child has suffered, or is suffering maltreatment, shall as soon as practicable, report the same to either the Department of Children and Families(DCF) or to a member of the police Force. Under the Act a penalty will be bought against any person who suspected child abuse and did not report it. This is referred to as ‘mandatory reporting of child maltreatment’.

Coordination staff shall support, should they require it, any educator who makes a report. Reporting suspected child abuse does not breach any requirements of confidentiality or professional ethic.

Please do not hesitate to contact the scheme office if you require further information in regards to child protection.

5.5 Co-Educator

Alice Springs Family Day Care allows educators to nominate a person to become their co-educator. Generally this is their spouse, or a close friend. Co-Educators must be registered with the scheme and they must meet the following requirements:

- Pass a national criminal history check
- Working with Children card (ochre card)
- Hold a senior first aid certificate
- Complete registration papers, and have an interview with the scheme manager.
- Attend one in-service (free choice) relating to children

Once the co-carer has been approved by the scheme manager, your educator must have you sign a letter of approval before that person can care for your child.

Co-Educator can provide care for a maximum of 3 hours, and where possible you will be notified prior. Generally co-educators are used for the following reasons:

- A child is unwell or sleeping and the educator is required to collect other children from school or pre-school.
- Although the educator is within correct ratios, she does not have adequate space in her care to do a school or pre-school pickup.
- The educator has an appointment that will take no more than 3 hours e.g. doctor, accountant or bank.

With family permission, the co-educator may do the school and pre-school pick-ups and drop-offs on the educators behalf.

5.6 Educators Support Visit

The Educator Support Manager member will visit each educator on a regular basis for the following purpose:

- To offer support and advice as required
- For the purpose of ongoing evaluation of the educator and the quality of care provided.
- To observe and assess the safety, security, happiness and the development of the child in the home environment under The Early Years Learning Framework of Australia.
- Listen and encourage discussion to help resolve issues raised by the educators in relation to Family Day Care.

The Educator Support Manager has a duty to:

- Keep appropriate records of any concerns and refer any unresolved concerns to the Scheme Manager, ensuring families and educators confidentiality is maintained where possible.
- Take appropriate action in consultation with the Scheme Manager, to rectify a loss of standards or a breach of policy and/or educator contract, to ensure that the quality of care provided is maintained.

Please note: Educator Support Managers are required to visit educators by both pre-booked appointments, and by drop –in unplanned visits.

5.7 Emergency procedures

To ensure that the educator and children are well prepared in the case of an emergency, the educator shall have written emergency plan for fire and other emergencies. Educators are encouraged to practice emergency procedures with the children on a regular basis, and they are required to have a fire extinguisher and smoke detectors in the home.

5.8 Food and Nutrition

Parents are encouraged to provide their own child's food as this ensures that any special dietary needs are addressed. We suggest you discuss the provision of food with your educator so as to ensure that the child has adequate meals and snacks throughout the day. The list and example below is a guide that will assist you to provide enough food for a morning snack, lunch and an afternoon snack. If your child needs breakfast and/or a late afternoon snack, more food will needed to be supplied.

A SAMPLE LUNCH BOX

Morning Tea	Fruit Yoghurt Water
Lunch	Sandwich with ham and tomato Custard Water
Afternoon Tea	Grated carrot and cheese on crackers Milk

Checklist that the lunchbox has:

- 3 serves of milk, cheese, yoghurt or custard
- 2 serves of fruit
- 1 serve of vegetables or salad
- 1 serve of meat, chicken, fish, legumes (e.g. baked beans), cheese or egg
- 2 serves of bread, cereal, rice or pasta
- Enough drink for the day
- 1 food with iron e.g. meat, chicken, fish, legumes, nut pasta, egg, dried fruit, whole meal bread.

5.9 Grievance Procedure

Alice Springs Family Day Care Inc. acknowledges that from time to time issues of dispute and disagreement may arise between members of the scheme. Grievance procedures are necessary to ensure that such disputes and disagreements are dealt with, and resolved, and an amicable, professional and positive manner.

If a family has grievance the following procedure should be followed:

Step 1

- If the grievance is with the educator, the family should approach the educator for discussion on the issue.
- If the issue is not resolved to the family's satisfaction they should approach the educator for further discussion.
- If the grievance cannot be resolved with the educator, then the family should contact the coordinator unit, speaking with either their educator support coordinator or the scheme manager.
- If the grievance is not resolved to the family's satisfaction, then they should approach the scheme manager for further discussion and action. The scheme will raise the issues with the chairperson or the whole board of governance if deemed necessary.
- The discussion in any of this instance should remain confidential, unless it relates to a matter of child protection.

Step 2

- If the grievance is not resolved to the family's satisfaction in step 1, the family should put the issue in writing to the chairperson of the board of governance.
- The chairperson will discuss the grievance with the scheme manager, and inform the board at the next meeting or sooner if necessary.
- A response to the parent will be made within 14 days.

Step 3

- If the grievance is not resolved to the parent's satisfaction in step 2, the family may request to have the issue raised with the board of governance at the next board meeting. If this occurs the issue will be placed on the next meeting agenda and all board members given notice of its inclusion.
- If the board wishes they may invite the family concerned to address a meeting in person. The family may be accompanied by a representative of their choice.
- A response to the family will be made within 14 days.

5.10 Head Lice

The Alice Springs climate makes the control of head lice quite difficult. In an attempt to limit the spread of head lice we request that families do the following:

- Check your child/ran's heads regularly for head lice
- Treat any outbreak of head lice immediately
- Do not send your child to care unless the head lice have been treated
- Report any case of head lice to your educator so that she can have the other parents check their children

If the educator discovers that your child has head lice she will ask you to collect your child immediately and treat the problem. If you require further information regarding head lice, your pharmacy can usually provide this.

5.11 Healthy environment

For the health of all children it is essential that no person smokes on the care premises during the hours when care is provided. This includes visitors to the home, and families collecting children.

5.12 Holidays/Holding fees

When you take annual leave or other leave, you will need to pay a holding fee. This holding fee ensures your child's place is held with your educator when you return. Holding fees are calculated on your hours and do not include loadings. Child Care Benefit is still paid in full provided you are within your allowable absences for the year, this also applies with the Child Care Rebate Please give your educator as much notice as you can of your intended leave, 2 weeks being the minimum required.

5.13 Immunisation

When you register your child/ren for care a copy of immunisation records is requested. If a child is not immunised s/he will not be denied care, however if there should be an outbreak of an infectious illness that children are immunised against, any unimmunised children will be excluded from care until the outbreak has passed.

5.14 Medication

Alice Springs Family Day Care recognises the need to ensure that children using our service are protected from inappropriate practices where the administration of medication is concerned. Therefore, the following guidelines are in place:

- Educators may only administer medication when it is in its original packaging. Please do not place some of the medication in another container for taking to care.
- In case of prescription medication, educators may only administer the medication to the child whose name appears on the label.
- Educators may only administer medication when written permission is obtained from the family. This can be in the form of a letter, by the family completed a 'Medication Administration Report' or, in the case of Paracetamol, the family completing an 'Authority to Administer Paracetamol' form.
- In the case of on-going medication the educator will require written instructions from a medical practitioner.
- If your child suffers with Asthma you will be asked to complete, in consultation with a medical practitioner, an 'Asthma Record Card' detailing the management strategies for your child.

5.15 Plan/Program

Educators provide experiences, both planned and spontaneous according to the strengths and interest, which assist the learning and development of each child in a safe environment. Educators will encourage your child to experience with the ‘processes’ of making and doing things, and to express their creativity in a number of ways that will not necessarily have a ‘finished product’.

Educators provide play based experiences both planned and spontaneous. They will create a learning program that builds on your child’s interest and abilities. They will keep you in touch with you regularly to discuss your child’s progress .They will also be keeping a portfolio using learning stories, letters, newsletters and photos of your child’s work and how they are developing and what particular learning interests them. By working in partnership together with the family educator and child can only enhance the child’s learning and wellbeing.

5.16 Play sessions

Family Day Care provides playgroups once a week during school terms. These play sessions can held in a variety of locations that provide children with variety of new experiences. The scheme has a ‘playhouse’, located at the rear of Diarama Village that is used for many playgroup sessions.

The playgroups include fun and developmentally appropriate activities/experiences for the children, and this exposure to a large group of children is an important aspect of their social development. This is also a great opportunity for children to meet other educators, so if they need to go to another educator should their educator be sick or taking leave, the experience will be less daunting.

Educators also have the option of participating in ‘educator run’ playgroups. These are smaller playgroups, usually held in one of the educator’s homes, organised by the educators themselves.

Educators with the scheme are encouraged to attend play session.

Families are welcome to attend scheme playgroups with your children- please check your monthly scheme calendar for venues and times.

5.17 Pre-school and School Collections and Drop-offs

You have the choice of having an educator that is able to deliver and collect your child from school or pre-school. Check with your educator regarding associated charges.

Children in pre-school will be delivered to and collected from their classroom and the educator will ensure that the teacher is aware of the child’s arrival/departure. Children in grades from transition up, will be dropped to or collected from either the classroom or a point inside the school grounds, as agreed between the educator and yourself.

5.18 Sick children

Sick children should not come into care. If your child has:

- A high fever
- Gastro/vomiting
- Conjunctivitis
- Or symptoms of other infectious illnesses

They definitely should not come into care. If you are unsure on whether or not to send your child to care, please contact your educator and discuss the symptoms with her.

If your child becomes ill while in care, your educator has the right to ask you to collect your child. She will ring you if your child exhibits any of the symptoms listed above.

Children who have infectious illnesses must be excluded from care with other children, and will only be allowed to return to care on the advice of qualified practitioner or when symptoms have disappeared.

Please remember to call your educator prior to the normal starting time if your child will not be in care.

5.19 Sun Protection and Hydration

Educators are required to ensure that all children wear hats outside at all times. Please provide a hat for your child. It is preferable that one be left at the educators permanently

Educators are required to ensure that children are dressed appropriately in sun smart clothing for outdoor play. Please ensure that your child is dressed for Family Day Care in a t-shirt with sleeves and collar if possible and please bring along spare T-shirts in your child's bag.

Educators will ensure that water is always available for your child/ren. It is helpful if you provide a drink bottle for your child.

Educators will ensure that sun block will be applied for outdoor play. You may supply your own if you wish to accommodate for your child's special needs, otherwise your educator will supply it.

5.20 Transport

It is a requirement of Alice Springs Family Day Care that educators maintain their vehicles to a roadworthy standard at all times. All vehicles transporting Family Day Care children must be NT registered and the driver must have a current NT driver's license.

Children being transported, including the educators own children, must be safely restrained in the appropriate child restraints that meet Australian Safety Standards.

Children less than 32 kilograms, traveling in an adult seatbelt without a harness can only do so if family permission in writing has been obtained. .

In order to ensure that all vehicles remain safe and that anchorage points are effective, all educators of the scheme are required to have their anchorage point's safety inspected by a recognized authority, in line with the annual date when first inspected by the recognised authority.

Anchorage points that are not factory fitted will be subject to annual inspections.

If a car has been involved in a motor vehicle accident, all seatbelts and anchorage points must be inspected before the car can be used for Family Day Care purposes and the vehicle will from that time on be subject to annual inspections regardless of registration inspection requirements.

Vehicles used by staff to transport children, including the scheme bus, will be subject to annual anchorage point's inspection.

5.21 Water/swimming

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 she 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.

For school aged children in extended hours care, swimming arrangements may be made provided the educator, scheme manager and child's family all approve.

6. RESOURCES

6.1 Other Services

Alice Springs Family Day Care is committed to providing support to families regarding all aspects of their child/ren's development, behaviour and growth. When a parent has a concern or need that is outside of our expertise, we endeavor to refer to the appropriate agency. See below a list of organisations that may be able to assist you and your family or refer you on to the appropriate service.

Children's Services Support Program (CSSP)	89534059
Women's Information Centre	89515382
Catholic Care (Family Support and Counseling)	89529730
Community Health Centre	89511611
Dental Clinic (Flynn Drive)	89516713
Holyoake	89525899

6.2 Resource Library

Alice Springs Family Day Care has a resource library for the use of both educators and families. We have a wide range of books covering a variety of child and parenting related topics. If you are interested in a particular topic please contact the scheme office and we will advise whether or not we can assist. We also subscribe to a number of childcare orientated magazines including jigsaw (Family Day Care magazine) and every child.

6.3 Website

The scheme has a website: www.asfdc.org.au

This website has been designed to accommodate both new and current educators and families. It features upcoming events and a members sections that includes the scheme's Operational Policy, fee information, a bulletin board (contains copies of coordination unit fliers), and copies of the most used forms (these are in PDF format and can be printed off and used).

Families are encouraged to use the site and keep current on what happening in the scheme.