

## Family Day Care 2011

- Family day care offers families the unique opportunity to engage their child in an early childhood education and care program, in a small group within a home based setting.
  - Children are nurtured and cared for in the homes of approved family day care educators who are resourced, supported and monitored by a central coordination unit. This network of educators, coordination unit and families is collectively referred to as a family day care 'scheme'. Family day care schemes operate within a framework of local government, community-based services or privately.
  - Family day care's core business is caring for young children but it also provides care through to school age offering families the flexibility of having all their children cared for in one home. Care is offered during standard hours, before and after school, during school holidays, overnight and weekends.
  - Throughout Australia there are over 12,500 educators who are registered with 343 schemes across all states and territories. Over 102,900 children are currently enrolled in family day care services Australia-wide.
    - 61.9%\* of family day care is provided in regional, rural and remote areas of Australia
    - 35.5%\* of children using family day care are school aged
- (\*Source: FDCA National Scheme Survey November 2008 (85% response rate))
- Family day care has been operating in Australia for over 30 years.
  - The family day care service complies with Australian government guidelines, national standards, state and territory regulations, the Family Day Care Quality Assurance system through the National Childcare Accreditation Council and individual scheme policies to ensure a quality learning environment for children.
  - In the natural learning environment of the home, children in family day care learn through play and exploration within a small group setting. Educators see children's learning as integrated and interconnected and are responsive to this.
  - The family day care home environment focuses on the connection to the natural world and the interconnection between people, places, animals and the community. Homes are places to explore, interact, discuss, express, involve, relax, connect, engage and be safe.
  - Current early year's brain research confirms that the single most important element in stimulating a child's learning is strong relationships with significant adults – family day care's small group care enables children to build those bonds that are so critical to their early learning and social development.
  - Family day care's child centred approach puts the child's wellbeing first. The service respects the key role of parents and works within a collaborative partnership model that helps children to thrive.
  - All family day care early childhood educators are required to have a current senior first aid certificate.
  - All adults over the age of 18 in the family day care home undergo background checks to ensure their suitability for working with children
  - Family day care coordination unit staff works collaboratively with early childhood educators to identify their professional development needs.

- Children in family day care participate in a play based program that enables children to learn as they discover, create, improvise, expand thinking and enhance their desire to know and learn.
- Family day care educators value and build onto children's strengths and knowledge, encouraging the child's continued motivation and engagement in learning.
- All educators are skilled, experienced and highly trained; many hold formal qualifications ranging from Certificate III in Children's Services to university degrees. Educators work in partnership with professionally qualified family day care staff, and both staff and educators attend ongoing in-service training in contemporary child care practice to ensure continued positive outcomes for children.
- Educators are required to undergo rigorous pre-service training prior to starting in family day and this training is led and supported by early childhood professionals.
- Family day care is an affordable child care option where care is charged on an hourly basis. Fees are generally set by individual educators, depending on the services they provide. The Australian Government's Child Care Benefit (CCB) is available for families, as is the 50% Child Care Rebate (CCR).
- Family day care is a viable career choice offering the flexibility of working from home and the ability for educators to set their own hours and fees for service. Depending on the number of children in care and the hours worked, educators can earn anywhere from \$20,000 to over \$100,000 a year. Many expenses relating to the operation of a family day care business are tax deductible.

### **Why choose family day care?**

'Family day care is a professional and regulated home-based child care service offering care for children from birth to 12 years and beyond. Highly trained educators utilise their understanding of children's strengths, skills and knowledge and an important basis for program decision making. The consistency of having one educator enables strong relationships to develop which is so important for early learning and social development. Family day care is the preferred child care choice of the families of 102,900 children across Australia.'

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