



**2025 Family Day
Care Week**

**Encouraging Curiosity
through Creativity**

**Family Day Care Election
Policy Commitments:**

**What members want from the
next Australian government**

Doris' Ruby Retirement

Meet your 2024 National Award Winners

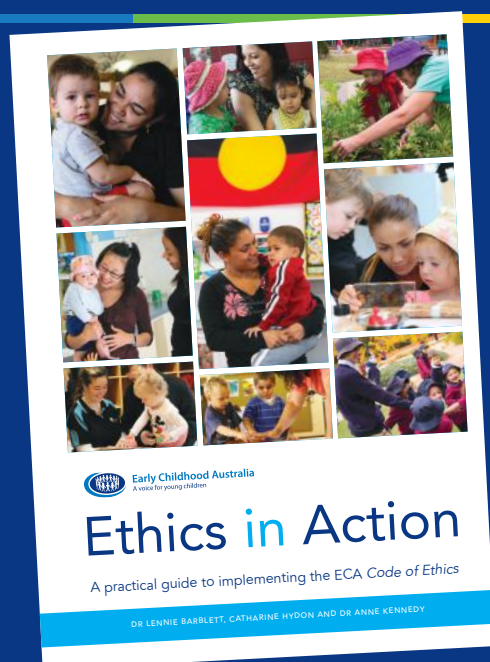
PLUS

- * FDCA 2025 National Conference
- * Dollars and Sense
- * ACECQA Update
- * Grab a Cuppa
- * Keeping baby cool with Red Nose
- * Business Insights
- * Scholastic Storytime
- * Win prizes for your family day care!



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Cover image: 2024 Excellence in Family Day Care National Award Winners (left to right): Service of the Year, Northside Family Day Care Scheme (Liz Whitbread and Demelza Squires, SA), Coordinator of the Year, April Eaton (QLD) and Educator of the Year, Roslyn Humbles (WA).

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A word from the CEO

Welcome to edition 107 of JiGSAW Magazine, our first for 2025. I am sure for many of you reading, it is hard to believe that we are already close to a quarter of the way through 2025, a year which could very well be a pivotal year for family day care and the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector.

Front and centre of 2025 will be the upcoming Federal Election and there is little doubt that ECEC policy will be a key topic for the major parties. It is with this in mind that in this edition of JiGSAW we share with you the results of our election commitments member survey, which supports the creation of FDCA's 2025 election commitments requests of the major parties leading into the election.

We believe that with innovative thinking and the right form of support, there are opportunities to better leverage the capacity and unique strengths of the family day care sector. Our 2025 election commitments requests address key priorities that will be pivotal in ensuring the long-term viability of the family day care sector.

We will continue to update members as we receive responses from the major parties about their commitments for family day care in the lead up to the election.

While looking forward to 2025 is where our work is focused, in this edition we also reflect on the success of our Excellence in Family Day Care Awards from 2024 and get to know more about our Educator, Coordinator and Service National Winners and Finalists and celebrate the amazing achievements of the family day care sector. The 2024 Awards was one of our most successful Awards campaigns to date, with over 5,000 nominations and over 169 positive media stories published to help raise awareness about family day care.

Inside we celebrate the amazing achievements of Toni Smith and Doris Rechter, who have dedicated themselves to family day care with 25 years and 40 years of service respectively.

We feature an article from Elena Shemet from Baulkham Hills Family Day Care that shares Elena's insights into creating a unique and warm environment that fosters growth and learning for children.

We also provide an update inside on the FDCA 2025 National Conference along with details on a range of practical supports and guidance resources that FDCA is developing to support the sector with the transition to the Mandatory Direct Gap Fee Collection process.

With all this, along with great content from regular contributors such as ACECQA, Red Nose and FDC Tax, I hope you enjoy the 107th edition of JiGSAW!

Andrew Paterson
Chief Executive Officer
Family Day Care Australia

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY:

We at Family Day Care Australia acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live and work, the Darkinjung People, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' continuous connection to Country, and celebrate their traditions and living cultures.

Associations

Family Day Care Educators' Associations

State family day care educators' associations represent educators and provide a range of member-based services, including advice, training, resources and assistance to Educator members. Executive committee representatives work in a voluntary capacity to support fellow Educators to provide quality home-based child care services.

Family Day Care Associations

State family day care associations provide a range of member-based services including advice, training, resources and assistance to members. This support strengthens services and assists staff in their vital role of providing effective support services to Educators and families. The association works actively to promote family day care within their respective states.

Each association operates independently of FDCA.

New South Wales

- Family Day Care Educators' Association NSW Inc
0490 776 339
www.fdceducatorsnsw.com.au
- NSW Family Day Care Association
02 9779 9999
www.nswfdc.org.au

Tasmania

- Family Day Care Council of Tasmania Inc.
0439 307 273

South Australia

- Family Day Care Educators' Association of South Australia
0418 831 433
www.fdcassocsa.com.au

Western Australia

- Family Day Care Educators' Association, Western Australia, Inc.
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- Family Day Care WA
08 9251 5777
www.familydaycarewa.com.au

Northern Territory

- Alice Springs Carers' Support Group
08 8952 2906

Queensland

- Family Day Care Association Queensland Inc.
07 3399 3737
www.fdcqlld.org



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THANK YOU

A special thank you to everyone who contributed to this edition of JiGSAW.

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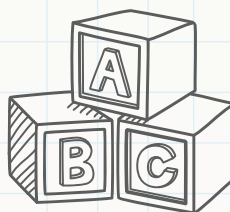
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SEPTEMBER 2024

Early Childhood Education and Care Summary update



To view the full report, visit the Australian Government Department of Education at www.education.gov.au



The Child Care Quarterly Report for September 2024 was recently released by the Australian Government Department of Education. The report shows¹ that:



14,937

approved childcare services* operated during that quarter, comprising:

- 9,472** centre-based day care (CBDC) services (63.4% of all services)
- 357** family day care (FDC) services (2.4%)
- 5,077** outside school hours care (OSHC) services (33.9%)



1,020,820

families nationally used approved care*. Of these:

- 693,700** or 67.9%, used CBDC
- 51,150** or 5.0%, used FDC
- 421,430** or 41.3%, used OSHC



1,453,780

children attended approved childcare*. Of these:

- 845,980** or 58.2%, attended CBDC
- 71,340** or 4.9%, attended FDC
- 566,600** or 38.9%, attended OSHC



43.7%

In the September 2024 quarter, a total of 156 (or 43.7%) family day care services charged above² the hourly fee cap of \$13.24. This compared to 29.7% of CBDC services charging above the cap of \$14.29 and 12% of OSHC services charging above the hourly fee cap of \$12.51.



\$13.05

The average hourly fee charged across CBDC, FDC and OSHC was \$13.05, with the average hourly fee for family day care sitting at \$13.20. This compares to an average hourly fee of \$13.70 for CBDC services and \$9.20 for OSHC services.

*Includes national IHC data

1 Please note: As families and children may use more than one service or services in more than one state or territory, and due to rounding, the sum of the component parts may not equal the total.

2 Note: The average hourly fee is calculated for each service to determine whether they are under or above the cap. This average hourly fee may differ from the actual fee charged by a service.

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Toni Smith Celebrates her Silver Jubilee

By Illawarra Family Day Care

Persevering with a career journey that spans a quarter of a century is no small feat and that's exactly what educator Toni Smith will shortly achieve. Registered with Illawarra Family Day Care in New South Wales, Toni has experienced a wealth of challenges and triumphs throughout her 25 years, enduring long hours, overcoming obstacles and making sacrifices to build the family day care practice that she has today. This journey is a testament to her unwavering dedication, passion, and remarkable persistence, which are essential qualities for enduring success in any career.

Initially working in long day care, Toni felt compelled to give the children and their families more of an intimate service, so the switch to family day care was made seamlessly, early in 2000.

Since opening her family day care, Toni has cared more than 120 children, holding both the past and present close to her heart. This is symbolised in the entrance to her practice where a beautifully

presented butterfly, featuring the names of all the children she has educated and cared for, greets children and families.

Toni's two children Jamie and Jay have both grown up in and around her family day care. Growing up they loved having extra friends at their house and these relationships played a role in shaping them into the people they are today. Toni now also has the pleasure of providing education and care to her grandson Addison, which she thoroughly enjoys.

Toni creates a sense of comfort and belonging for her families through traditions that have spanned her 25 years as a family day care educator. Without fail, Toni celebrates each child's first day and birthday, and an end of year celebration that brings children and families together to create lasting memories.

During Toni's time in family day care, she recalls the most significant changes being with programming and documentation, in addition to policies and procedures. Throughout her career she has expanded her

knowledge and skill set, increasing her engagement and job satisfaction.

Toni has also been involved as a volunteer on the Illawarra Family Day Care Committee as an educator representative for 15 years. She initially became involved in the committee to drive initiatives, solve problems and act as a representative for children, families, and educators.

Toni's meaningful contribution and support has been invaluable and is deeply appreciated by Illawarra Family Day Care, along with her thoughtfulness and generosity.



Celebrate NATIONAL FAMILY DAY CARE WEEK 2025



National Family Day Care Week 2025 is coming and we're calling on all family day care educators and services to join the celebrations from Monday 5 May through to Sunday 11 May 2025!

National Family Day Care Week provides the entire sector an opportunity to unite and promote the important role that family day care plays for Australian families and in the development and wellbeing of more than 70,000 children across Australia.

National Family Day Care Week is integral in raising the image and profile of family day care.

This annual celebration generates nationwide media coverage, highlighting family day care's unique, flexible and high-quality natural home learning environment that is vital for children and families. It also highlights local educators and services, shining the spotlight on

them as a child care option for local families.

HOST YOUR OWN NATIONAL FAMILY DAY CARE WEEK PICNIC!

In 2025 we're calling on all family day care educators and services to host a National Family Day Care Week Picnic during the week of 5 - 11 May 2025.

There is no right or wrong way to celebrate. Whether you're hosting a picnic at a local park or in your backyard, we want to know about it so we can share it with local media outlets and raise the profile of family day care in your community and across Australia.

To register your picnic with FDCA so that we can share it with local media, visit fdcweek.com.au. Best of all, the first 200 FDCA members to register their picnic will receive a free National Family Day Care Week pack!

Don't forget to share photos from your picnic on social media by using the hashtag #FDCWeek25.



To find out more about National Family Day Care Week, visit fdcweek.com.au.

Direct Gap Fee Collection set to commence 1 January 2026

As members are aware, a measure was announced in the 2024-25 Federal Budget requiring all family day care providers to directly collect Child Care Subsidy (CCS) gap fees from families.

The measure was initially scheduled to be introduced mid-2025. However, following consultations undertaken with members, FDCA provided targeted feedback to the Department of Education on an exposure draft of the proposed legislation. As part of this process, FDCA advocated for the commencement date to be delayed by at least six months to allow providers additional time to implement any necessary administrative changes and ensure a smoother transition.

Mandatory Direct Gap Fee Collection (DGFC) is now set to commence on **1 January 2026**.

To assist the sector to be prepared for this change, FDCA is partnering with the Australian Government Department of Education to develop a range of practical supports and guidance resources.

Why is this change happening?

The measure aims to strengthen the sector by:

- Improving providers ability to correctly administer CCS by ensuring gap fees are being paid.
- Freeing educators up from collecting fees from families, reducing administrative burden, potential tensions around debt collection from families and allowing them to focus on their core role of providing education and care.
- Increasing confidence in the sector's payment integrity status, which will allow for higher levels of sector investment into the future.

Supporting the transition

FDCA has been consulting with approved services to understand their needs and ensure the developed resources address key challenges.

Throughout 2025, FDCA will develop:

- Information tailored for services, educators, and families to increase awareness and understanding of the DGFC requirement.

- Good practice guidance resources on efficient business practices in areas such as accounting, record keeping, debt collection and use of relevant IT systems, as well as guidance on governance frameworks and relevant policies and procedures.
- Expert debt collection guidance through best practice models and policies, resources and tools, including how to be proactive in avoiding debt and reactive when pursuing debt.
- Direct support from FDCA's sector support team to respond to questions, resolve concerns and address challenges as they arise.

All resources will be accessible on a dedicated DGFC section on FDCA's website.

Stay informed

We encourage all services and educators to stay informed and engage with the support available. For more information, contact FDCA's sector support team on 1800 658 699 or enquiries@fdca.com.au.

Encouraging Curiosity

Elena Shemet, Baulkham Hills Family Day Care

Running my own family day care allows me to create a unique environment that fosters growth and learning.

There is no greater reward than seeing children's faces light up when they engage with the activities and provocations I design, witnessing their curiosity and excitement as they explore and discover.

But what sparks that initial idea? For me, inspiration comes from

the children themselves. By observing, listening, and following their interests, I enhance their learning experiences. Children's curiosity and wonder are contagious, fuelling my passion for creating engaging and meaningful activities. Nature's beauty also sparks my creativity, inspiring me to bring the outdoors in and create

sensory experiences that connect children with the world around them. Cultural celebrations offer another rich source of inspiration. Sharing stories, traditions, and customs from diverse backgrounds, engage children in learning about the wider world and promoting empathy and understanding.



One day we received an unexpected visit from a turtle, which inspired a turtle themed sensory play activity. The children discovered the turtle, likely from a nearby pond, during afternoon outdoor play. This experience inspired me to create a sensory play area in a tuff tray featuring a cardboard turtle puzzle, dyed chickpeas, loose parts, playdough, and turtle life cycle figures, further fostering the children's curiosity and interest in turtles.

When planning activities, I set clear learning objectives aligned with the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) outcomes, consider children's ages, abilities, and interests, and choose materials and resources that encourage exploration and creativity. I also plan for flexibility

and spontaneity, allowing children to guide the learning process. For example, when setting up my turtle sensory play, I was focusing on building on the children's interest in turtles and their understanding of the different environments they live in, building the children's

connections to the environment. When gathering resources for this activity, I thought about the children in care and their individual learning goals as well as building upon their sensory development, encouraging them to dive in hands first to explore.

through Creativity



Resourcefulness and imagination are key to bringing ideas to life. I believe in repurposing everyday materials to create unique experiences. Recycled materials, natural elements, and open-ended resources become the building blocks of imagination. When creating my turtle, the focus of the sensory play, I utilised recycled cardboard and tubes to pull this together. To cater to diverse age groups, I adapt activities to suit individual developmental stages, encouraging peer-to-peer learning



and mentorship. I offer choices and opportunities for self-directed exploration, allowing children to learn at their own pace. To further embed the turtle learning into the program, I also set up a range of turtle resources throughout the environment, encourage children to learn and explore at their own pace and draw on each other's interests and ideas to build learning.

I love setting up small world sensory plays based on storybooks. Reading books with the children always sparks my imagination and creativity, and encourages me to bring them to life. I enjoyed watching the children playing and recreating the stories.

For educators seeking inspiration, I recommend observing and listening to children's interests, collaborating with families, and staying inspired through professional development



and networking. Embracing spontaneity and flexibility is also crucial, as inspiration can strike from everyday moments and natural environments. By unlocking creativity in family day care, we create engaging experiences that nurture the whole child. Remember, inspiration is everywhere – observe, listen, and let creativity thrive!



FDCA 2025

MELB2025

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

23-25 October 2025

Payment plans are back for 2025!

With the FDCA 2025 National Conference drawing closer, we're pleased to announce that payment plans are back for FDCA members in 2025!

Payment plans are exclusively available to FDCA members and provide the flexibility of paying for a conference ticket in simple monthly instalments. Not only will the payment plan provide you with the flexibility of instalments, but with limited tickets available, you secure your conference ticket in advance, removing any risk of you missing out!

Conference Schedule Available

We are also please to advise that a conference schedule is now available to view via the FDCA website. To view the schedule, simply visit familydaycare.com.au/2025conference.

Having received a wide range of high-quality abstracts we are in the process of putting together what will be an amazing program, with content that will appeal to everyone with the family day care sector.

All-Star Keynote Lineup!

If you're looking to be inspired and have a thirst for knowledge, the FDCA 2025 National Conference will be the place to be, with an all-star keynote speaker lineup that promises to deliver on both fronts!

You're thirst for knowledge will be well and truly quenched on Conference Friday with Internationally acclaimed New Zealand neuroscience educator Nathan Wallis delivering a morning keynote and afternoon plenary workshop. Nathan's presentations will then be followed by keynote

addresses from two women who will leave you walking away from the conference feeling uplifted and inspired.

On Saturday morning, dual Olympian, four-time Commonwealth Champion and two-time World Champion, Dr Jana Pittman will share her amazing story of perseverance which will then be followed in the afternoon by National Children's Commissioner Anne Hollonds, who will deliver the closing keynote address.

Tickets are strictly limited, so to secure your ticket for the FDCA 2025 National Conference visit the conference website or scan the QR code.

SECURE YOUR TICKET AT

www.familydaycare.com.au/2025conference



KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Nathan Wallis

Neuroscience
Educator



Dr Jana Pittman

Dual Olympian
and two-time
World Champion



Anne Hollonds

National Children's
Commissioner



EXCELLENCE IN FAMILY DAY CARE AWARDS 2024

Winners Announced



F DCA was proud to announce the 2024 Educator, Coordinator and Service of the Year on Saturday night, after a fantastic Awards Season, that saw more than 5,000 nominations placed!



The announcement of the 2024 National Winners took place at the Excellence in Family Day Care Awards Gala Dinner at the Parkroyal Parramatta in front of more than 120 guests.

These awards made history, with the following firsts achieved this year:

- Roslyn Humbles is the first West Australian educator to win Educator of the Year.
- April Eaton is the first person to have won both Coordinator and Educator of the Year.
- Northside Family Day Care Scheme is the first South Australian service to win Service of the Year.
- Kids at Home Family Day Care is the first service to have won in all three categories, Service, Coordinator and Educator of the Year.



FDCA Chief Executive Officer, Andrew Paterson, spoke about the incredible achievements of this year's Award winners and the importance of the Awards program.

“Each of our National Winners has demonstrated excellence, passion and dedication that makes them all worthy winners of this year's Awards. The quality of early childhood professionals reflected in our National Finalists was amazing and our National Winners should be incredibly proud of their achievement.”

“This year's Awards continue to play a key role in recognising the achievements of those working in the family day care sector on a national level and provide an opportunity to promote the unique benefits of family day care to Australian families.”

THANK YOU

FDCA would like to thank all the families, coordinators, educators, services and staff who got involved in the 2024 Excellence in Family Day Care Awards. We congratulate everyone that was nominated or won an award. We would also like to thank our sponsors, The NSW Department of Education and Early Childhood Australia. Without the generous support of these organisations the awards program would not be possible.

Profiles of our National Finalists and a full listing of all Award Winners can be viewed on pages 11-16.

2024 NATIONAL WINNERS



COORDINATOR OF THE YEAR

April Eaton – NT/QLD

Kids at Home Family Day Care (QLD)

After moving from the role of educator to coordinator, April's focus is on establishing open lines of communication and ensuring educators feel comfortable seeking assistance or sharing concerns.

Whether it's offering coaching sessions, problem-solving discussions, or simply lending a supportive ear, April is dedicated to addressing educator needs and there to lend a hand.

April is committed to fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Sharing ideas on critical reflection with her team helps to empower educators to critically reflect on their practice, celebrate their successes, and embrace opportunities for growth.

Integral to April's approach is engaging meaningfully with families and the wider community. Working with community groups in her local area, April initiated a project collecting used eyeglasses, which are then refurbished, repacked and distributed to developing communities both in Australia and overseas, significantly impacting lives within those communities.

To date, over 3,400 pairs of eyeglasses have been collected and donated.

Described as someone with contagious enthusiasm, who motivates educators to strive for excellence, April's mission is to provide the highest quality outcomes for children.



EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

Roslyn Humbles – SA/WA

Wanslea Regional Family Day Care (WA)

Roslyn, who has been a family day care educator for 25 years, is passionate about family day care and promoting the value of small group care. Based in Esperance Western Australia Roslyn's impact within the community and multiple generations of children is well known.

Striving to create an environment that is engaging, relevant and child friendly, Roslyn has created different 'rooms' in her outdoor environment for the children in her care. With spaces that combine free-play and intentional experiences, these shaded themed environments allow flexibility and create a safe, secure and supported setting. The children have embraced their little world and have a sense of real belonging and ownership, the dinosaur farm being a favourite.

To support the children in her care, Roslyn has worked to increase her knowledge and skills around emotional regulation. Introducing mindful breathing to the group as a whole, aims to develop the children's capacity to calm themselves during moments of stress, anxiety or frustration and sharing strategies with families on how to introduce emotional and feelings literacy to their children, continues their learning at home.

Active within her community, Roslyn is involved with her local school and mentors and supports families outside of her care.



SERVICE OF THE YEAR

Northside Family Day Care Scheme (SA)

SA/WA Representative

At Northside Family Day Care Scheme, their clear and simple philosophy is that children and young people are at the centre of everything they do.

Creating a culture of collaboration and partnership, the focus is on the wellbeing of educators, children and families. Working with a range of families, many with complex needs, the diversity of families, children and educators is celebrated and respected within the service.

Strong partnerships are vital to deliver quality outcomes for children and collectively, with other family day care services, support agencies and community services, the wider team works together to assist families who experience challenges.

Focusing on critical reflection, the team work closely with educators to identify their strengths, to be self-reflective and shape their ongoing individual professional development. To build educators' confidence and abilities, the team work to identify peer mentors for educators, to expand their ideas, network and to support each other.

Described as approachable and always ready with help and assistance, Northside Family Day Care Scheme provide support and resources so that educators and parents can strive to provide the best environment for children to grow and learn.

2024 COORDINATOR



NATIONAL FINALISTS

**Juli Aslin – ACT/NSW**

Northern Rivers Family Day Care (NSW)

Juli works with Northern Rivers Family Day Care in Lismore New South Wales and is described as a positive, caring and cheerful person who is always willing to help. Supporting new and existing educators within her service, Julie is always willing to take the time to listen to educators share their experiences.

Empowering educators to build meaningful, professional relationships with their families is something Juli sees as fundamental. Juli encourages and supports educators to form these bonds by visiting at drop off and pick-ups so that she can also get to know families, which gives her the understanding to offer support, such as tools educators may need for discussions, being present during difficult conversations or suggesting specialised services that may be required. She also takes the time to get to know the children in her educator's care and they're always excited when she visits.

Being connected with the community is one of Juli's strengths and she takes an active role in facilitating educators to engage with their local community.

With educator wellbeing front of mind, Juli acknowledges that educators work alone and need a cheer squad, trying to use positive affirmations and offer a gentle approach to ensure educators always feel valued.

**Joanne Georgiou – SA/WA**

Nature Alliance Family Day Care (WA)

Joanne's wealth of knowledge is invaluable to her educators. She can see a need, source information or professional development opportunity and support her educators through any issues or learnings they require. She is passionate and empathetic, and has the ability to make educators feel lighter, empowered and recharged!

In supporting educators, Joanne tries to engage directly with families during visits and offer assistance when needed. After some of her visits, she shares heart-warming experiences about each child in care that day, directly with the families, receiving photos and videos back from parents showing their child's achievements.

She also encourages educators to actively seek feedback from families through surveys and informal conversations and is pleased to see the bonds between educators and families thriving.

With a genuine passion for family day care and an understanding of the frustrations and demanding nature of an educator role, Joanne reminds her educators that their role is crucial.

Joanne believes that making a difference in even one child's life is a testament to the dedication of her educators and a reward worth every challenge they face. She strives to empower educators, ensuring they feel valued, supported, and motivated in their roles. Their incredible service and unwavering commitment continue to inspire her every day.

**Maxine Burr – TAS/VIC**

Family Day Care Tasmania (TAS)

A former family day care educator, Maxine Burr believes her role is to encourage and inspire educators and those within her team to work with their strengths, to support their goals and then share and celebrate their growth together. With an understanding of issues educators face, Maxine uses that experience to support and encourage educators within her service.

Mentoring educators and enhancing their pedagogical practice is very important to Maxine. She strives for all educators to deliver a learning program that is balanced with intentional teaching and child led, spontaneous activities, showcasing individual and group interests.

Based in Newstead Tasmania, with Family Day Care Tasmania, Maxine is heavily involved with her community and encourages educators to do the same.

Organising a playgroup that ignites the children's curiosity is a role that she enjoys, noting that her highlight was having the Camp Quality Puppet Show visit and help the children gain understanding and empathy.

She is described as gentle, kind, caring and someone who inspires educators to be the best they can be.

2024 EDUCATOR

NATIONAL FINALISTS

**Kirsty Thomas – ACT/NSW**

Intereach Family Day Care (NSW)

Kirsty runs Kirsty's Family Day Care in Deniliquin New South Wales. She is committed to empowering the children in her care to actively participate in their own learning and development through a range of engaging and meaningful approaches and activities.

With a focus on community involvement, Kirsty has created a culture of gratitude and appreciation where the children work together on creating cards and gifts, which they deliver to community members such as emergency services personnel, their garbage truck driver, postman and neighbours.

Celebrating family diversity and connections is also an important part of Kirsty's practice, with projects like their 'family shared recipes' book to deepen the children's understanding of one another and embrace each other's differences.

Creating an enriching and nurturing environment for the children in her care, Kirsty shares her innovative and thoughtfully designed monthly setups with the wider family day care community and hopes to provide exceptional learning experiences that are creative, fun and designed to foster each child's interests.

Kirsty has been a family day care educator for two years and is described as an educator who consistently demonstrates her dedication, creativity and deep commitment to the families she serves.

**Amanda Anthony – NT/QLD**

Southern Cross Family Day Care (QLD)

At her farm-based family day care in Adelaide Park, outside of Rockhampton in Queensland, Amanda deeply values the strengths of children, families, and the wider community, integrating them into her educational approach to create a rich, supportive, and empowering learning environment.

Amanda has been a family day care educator for three years and is described as being exceptionally skilled in her role. The children who attend Amanda's "farm school" enjoy a safe, nurturing and unique environment.

Integrating hands-on experiences into her practice, the children in Amanda's care benefit from daily interactions with farm animals, allowing them to learn about empathy, responsibility, and the needs of different animals and plants, making the learning experience both dynamic and personal.

Learning by doing is a key part of Amanda's educational philosophy with practical skills, that foster creativity, an important part of each day. Nature-based projects such as building birds' nests, pruning trees or exploring water conservation methods, combined with activities that celebrate each child's interests, mean learning is always engaging, and children thrive.

**Janina Sharer – TAS/VIC**

Golden Plains Shire Family Day Care (VIC)

Situated on a 26-acre bush property in Meredith Victoria Janina offers a distinct child care experience that immerses children in hands-on, nature-based activities.

By utilising a predominantly outdoor program, Janina provides a rich, natural environment where children can explore, experiment, and learn at their own pace.

Children are encouraged to take the lead in their activities, whether building cubbies from sticks, exploring native flora and fauna, or engaging in unstructured play. The activities the children engage in are personalised to suit their strengths, yet they also encourage them to learn new skills and face their challenges.

Currently completing her Bachelor of Early Childhood Education, Janina engages in ongoing professional development and reflective practice, and her lifelong learning ensures that her teaching methods are effective and up to date.

Janina has fostered a close relationship with the local kindergarten that facilitates a smooth transition for children by familiarising them with the environment and staff, thereby reducing anxiety and promoting a positive attitude towards learning.

2024 SERVICE



NATIONAL FINALISTS



All Areas Family Day Care (NSW)

ACT/NSW Finalist

All Areas Family Day Care, believe that if they can empower the children, families and the wider community to read, sing, talk and rhyme together it will give every child a solid foundation for their journey onto school. That's why they are champions of Paint The Town Read, an early literacy initiative from birth to 5 years which motivates whole communities to share the joys of reading.

Believing that all children, deserve the opportunity to be surrounded by an intergenerational community that celebrates and values literacy, All Areas Family Day Care run Paint The Town Read throughout their service and extend it into the wider community.

Using up-cycled resources to make their event attendances memorable and engaging, All Areas Family Day Care have excelled at partnering with other organisations to share their vision. They even have their own Paint The Town Read mascot – a reading bug – that is recognised by the children in their community.

Educators within their service explain that the All Areas Family Day Care team are kind, dedicated, helpful and supportive to both educators and families, and that they trust and give their educators the space to run their own businesses.



Whitsunday Shire Family Day Care (QLD)

NT/QLD Finalist

Operating for forty years, Whitsunday Shire Family Day Care fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility within their service. A small team, their core values are centred around supporting local families and educators, ensuring they maintain a strong, cohesive and well-supported network within their region and connecting with the local community so that both educators and families feel valued and empowered.

Described by their educators as absolutely amazing and the reason working within the industry is an enjoyable experience, Whitsunday Shire Family Day Care are constantly striving for best practice, making sure educators are happy and informed.

A recent collaboration project involved the writing of the book *The Whitsundays, Our Home, Your Adventure*. The book celebrates the local area and showcases the locations where the Whitsunday Shire Family Day Care educators, children and families live, learn and play. The landscapes within the book were created in collaboration with the local high school, while the illustrations of animals were crafted by the children, educators and their families.

This project brought together the entire community, fostering a sense of unity and pride.



Bendigo Family Day Care (VIC)

TAS/VIC Finalist

At Bendigo Family Day Care, communication and connections with families start as early as the intake process. By building a relationship from the beginning, getting to know children in the service's care and having open conversations with families, families feel comfortable to reach out and share feedback with the team on a daily basis.

Embracing feedback and using it to improve the service is a key strength of Bendigo Family Day Care. The team are continually communicating and reflecting with educators to brainstorm ideas, share information and gather feedback, regarding practices or initiatives.

Families and educators play an active part in reviewing policies.

Throughout routine home visits, coordinators will engage and interact with the children, gather ideas and feedback from all children and critically reflect with educators to gain a deeper insight into their programs and to better understand the child's voice.

During the past year, Bendigo Family Day Care have placed a huge focus on community engagement. One initiative was to successfully organise and host several community events bringing together educators, families and children. These events have had great feedback from families and have supported the local community.

NATIONAL FINALISTS

EDUCATORS

ACT/NSW - Kirsty Thomas, Intereach Family Day Care, NSW

NT/QLD - Amanda Anthony, Southern Cross Family Day Care, QLD

SA/WA - Roslyn Humbles, Wanslea Regional Family Day Care, WA

TAS/VIC - Janina Sharer, Golden Plains Shire Family Day Care, VIC

COORDINATORS

ACT/NSW - Juli Aslin, Northern Rivers Family Day Care, NSW

NT/QLD - April Eaton, Kids At Home Family Day Care, QLD

SA/WA - Joanne Georgiou, Nature Alliance Family Day Care, WA

TAS/VIC - Maxine Burr, Family Day Care Tasmania, TAS

SERVICES

ACT/NSW - All Areas Family Day Care, NSW

NT/QLD - Whitsunday Shire Family Day Care, QLD

SA/WA - Northside Family Day Care Scheme, SA

TAS/VIC - Bendigo Family Day Care, VIC

STAR AWARD WINNERS

EMERGING STARS

Educator Holly Hamel, Empowered Family Day Care, QLD

Coordinator Mugdha Thapar, Elite Family Day Care, WA

Service Bindarra Family Day Care, QLD

PERPETUAL STARS

Educator Cheryl McQuillan, Rainbow Bridge Family Day Care, NSW

Coordinator Theresa Roberts, Communities at Work Family Day Care, ACT

Service Dandenong Family Day Care, VIC

EDUCATOR REGIONAL WINNERS

NAME	REGION	SERVICE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY		
SONJA RADONJIC	NORTH CANBERRA	COMMUNITIES@WORK FAMILY DAY CARE
RUPA SIVALINGAM	SOUTH CANBERRA	GENESIS FAMILY DAY CARE
NEW SOUTH WALES		
KRISTEN TOBIAS	ALBURY WODONGA & MURRAY	GREATER HUME CHILDREN SERVICES
KATHLEEN BOLT	BLUE MOUNTAINS & CENTRAL WEST	BATHURST FAMILY DAY CARE
GABRIELA GASINSKA	CBD, INNER WEST & EASTERN SUBURBS	FAMILY DAY CARE SYDNEY WIDE
JANE AITKEN	COFFS HARBOUR & NORTH COAST	MID COAST FAMILY DAY CARE
SARAH THOMAS	DUBBO & CENTRAL	CABONNE FAMILY DAY CARE
JO-ANNE WARHURST	FAR WEST & CENTRAL NORTH	FAR WEST FAMILY DAY CARE
JAMIE THOMAS	GOSFORD & CENTRAL COAST	COASTWIDE FAMILY DAY CARE
NICOLE ALBURY	GOULBURN & SOUTHERN TABLELANDS	GOULBURN FAMILY DAY CARE
NICOLE HODGINS	LISMORE & FAR NORTH COAST	BALLINA-BYRON FAMILY DAY CARE
NADINE STATHAM	NEWCASTLE, MAITLAND & HUNTER	MAITLAND FAMILY DAY CARE
SHOKO WARK	NORTH SHORE & NORTHERN BEACHES	ARTARMON FAMILY DAY CARE
ELENA SHEMET	NORTH WEST & HILLS DISTRICT	BAULKHAM HILLS FAMILY DAY CARE
SREEVIDYA YADATISAISTRULA	PARRAMATTA & WESTERN SUBURBS	TWINKLE FAMILY DAY CARE
ANNETTE JOHNSON	PORT MACQUARIE & MID NORTH COAST	KEMPSEY FAMILY DAY CARE & IN HOME CARE
SONIA JASWAL	RICHMOND & HAWKESBURY	LITTLE STAR FAMILY DAY CARE
NAVIT KOUR SACHDEV	RYDE & MACQUARIE PARK	CCA FAMILY DAY CARE
JAMIE WATT	SOUTH WEST & M5 CORRIDOR	CAMDEN FAMILY DAY CARE
MAGDA SANCHEZ	SOUTHERN SUBURBS & SUTHERLAND SHIRE	INNER WEST FAMILY DAY CARE
CARRIE LEADER	TAMWORTH & NORTH WEST	GUNNDAH FAMILY DAY CARE
SAMANTHA KING	TUMUT, SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS & SNOWY	NATURAL CHOICE FAMILY DAY CARE
KIRSTY THOMAS	WAGGA WAGGA & RIVERINA	INTEREACH FAMILY DAY CARE
MENCE MANEVA	WOLLONGONG, ILLAWARRA & SOUTH COAST	EARLY YEARS CARE



NAME	REGION	SERVICE
NORTHERN TERRITORY		
PAMELA TIMIRE	ALICE SPRINGS	KENTISH FAMILY DAY CARE
TARA KASPAR	DARWIN	KENTISH FAMILY DAY CARE
QUEENSLAND		
MAHMUDA CHOWDHURY	BRISBANE NORTH/SUNSHINE COAST	UNITING FAMILY DAY CARE BRAMBLE BAY
ASHTON POSCH	BRISBANE SOUTH	BUSY BUTTERFLIES EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICE
JULIE CONWAY	BRISBANE WEST/IPSWICH/BOONAH	BINDARRA FAMILY DAY CARE
FELICA BURRIDGE	CAIRNS & FAR NORTH	NORTH QLD FAMILY DAY CARE
KATIE TAYLOR	LOGAN/REDLANDS/GOLD COAST	BEAUCARE FAMILY DAY CARE
KATHERINE BEIL	MOUNT ISA/WESTERN QLD	HOLISTIC APPROACH FAMILY DAY CARE
AMANDA ANTHONY	ROCKHAMPTON/CENTRAL QLD	SOUTHERN CROSS FAMILY DAY CARE
MANDY POLZIN	TOOWOOMBA/DARLING DOWNS/SOMERSET/LOCKYER	KATH DICKSON FAMILY DAY CARE METROPOLITAN HBS
ALYSHA MCNEILL	TOWNSVILLE/NORTHERN QLD	ENHANCE FAMILY DAY CARE
REBECCA DENNIS	WIDE BAY/HERVEY BAY/MARYBOROUGH	KIDS AT HOME FAMILY DAY CARE
SOUTH AUSTRALIA		
ALI FLEMING	ADELAIDE	NORTH METRO FAMILY DAY CARE SCHEME
PAM SIMS	ADELAIDE HILLS & BAROSSA	COUNTRY CENTRAL FAMILY DAY CARE SCHEME
DONNA RICHTER	RIVERLAND & MURRAY MALLEE	FOUNDATIONS FAMILY DAY CARE
TARA UTTING	WHYALLA & EYRE PENINSULA	EASTERN EYRE FAMILY DAY CARE SCHEME
TASMANIA		
ERIN SPOLJARIC	DEVONPORT & NORTH WEST	COASTAL FAMILY DAY CARE
ANNA HARVIE	HOBART & SOUTH	ADVENTURE PATCH FAMILY DAY CARE
LYDIA BURR	LAUNCESTON & NORTH	FAMILY DAY CARE TASMANIA
VICTORIA		
KYLIE WILLOX	BAIRNSDALE & GIPPSLAND	UNITING FAMILY DAY CARE – GIPPSLAND
JANINA SHARER	BALLARAT & CENTRAL HIGHLANDS	GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE FAMILY DAY CARE
YATTOWITA NILANTHI WITHANA	BAYSIDE & SOUTH EASTERN SUBURBS	DANDENONG FAMILY DAY CARE
REBECCA PAINE	BENDIGO, GOLDFIELDS & MACEDON RANGES	FOUNDATIONS FAMILY DAY CARE
DINA HAMEED	CBD & INNER SUBURBS	FOUNDATIONS FAMILY DAY CARE
MEIER LI	EASTERN SUBURBS	KIDS INDIVIDUAL DAYCARE SOLUTIONS
UDITHA DASSANAYAKE	GEELONG & GREAT OCEAN ROAD	CITY OF GREATER GEELONG FAMILY DAY CARE
CATHERINE SOSTHEIM	HORSHAM & GRAMPYANS	UNITING FAMILY DAY CARE - WIMMERA
MICHELLE OELLERMANN	MILDURA & MURRAY	INTEREACH FAMILY DAY CARE
BEATRIZ PLEITER	MORNINGTON PENINSULA & BASS COAST	BAMBINI CHILD CARE SERVICES
KALUTOTA SILVA	NORTHERN SUBURBS	SAND CHILD CARE SERVICES
AMY ISBISTER	SHEPPARTON & GOULBURN VALLEY	MURRINDINDI FAMILY DAY CARE
MEGAN DUNKS	TRARALGON & LA TROBE VALLEY	BAW BAW SHIRE FAMILY DAY CARE
RATNISH BAJWA	WESTERN SUBURBS	BRIGHT SUN FAMILY DAY CARE
GISELLE MAASSEN	YARRA VALLEY & HIGH COUNTRY	FOUNDATIONS FAMILY DAY CARE
WESTERN AUSTRALIA		
JONENE HARRAP	ALBANY & GREAT SOUTHERN	YMCA FAMILY DAY CARE SERVICE
PERRINE BREHERET	BROOME & KIMBERLEY	WILLI WAG TAILS FAMILY DAY CARE
KELLY DE MEILLON	BUNBURY & SOUTH WEST	KOOLANGA FAMILY DAY CARE
MOIRA ROMINA INSAURRALDE	CBD, INNER & WESTERN SUBURBS	KOOLANGA FAMILY DAY CARE
TANZIA ZAMAN	EASTERN SUBURBS	CONNECTIONS FAMILY DAY CARE
BHAVJIT KAUR	FREMANTLE & SOUTHERN SUBURBS	CONNECTIONS FAMILY DAY CARE
MARGARET YOKWE	GERALDTON, GASCOYNE & MIDWEST	ELITE FAMILY DAY CARE
ROSLYN HUMBLE	KALGOORLIE, GOLDFIELDS & ESPERANCE	WANSLEA REGIONAL FAMILY DAY CARE
CLARE LONEY	MANDURAH & PEEL	WHITE GUM FAMILY DAY CARE SERVICE
HALLIKI AASMAE	NORTHAM & WHEATBELT	WILLI WAG TAILS FAMILY DAY CARE
PAULA-MARIE DAWSON	NORTHERN SUBURBS & JOONDALUP	ELITE FAMILY DAY CARE
SHELBY MCKERNAN	PORT HEDLAND, KARRATHA & PILBARA	WHITE GUM FAMILY DAY CARE SERVICE
EMMA FOX	ROCKINGHAM & KWINANA	GARDEN PLAY FAMILY DAY CARE

Doris' Ruby

By Bendigo Family Day Care

For four decades the laughter, chatter and busyness of children filled Doris Rechter's home. Here she tells us how she stayed passionate about early childhood education for so long and what's next.

There is nothing quite like seeing the world through the eyes of a child and for 40 years that's what Doris Rechter has done as an early childhood educator with Bendigo Family Day Care.

In that time she's forged lifelong friendships and seen many children come and go. At the end of 2024 the noise in Doris' house quieted to a hum as she welcomed retirement. We sat down with her to talk about her remarkable 40 years of service.

How did you first get started with Bendigo Family Day Care?

My children were both young and

I wanted to find a way to be able to contribute to my family. I found Bendigo Family Day Care was the perfect balance of "work" along with the flexibility of being able to work from home while my children were so young still. family day care soon became my passion as I was contributing to the local community and helping care for so many families.

What was the most important thing you wanted children and families to feel after being in your care?

I really wanted children and families to feel safe first and foremost. I also wanted them to feel supported and loved.

What is it about working with children that you loved?

There is nothing better than a child's honesty, resilience, creativity and energy. Children are very eager to learn new things and it's nice to watch them grow and develop into confident, self-sufficient learners.

How did you manage to stay passionate about working in early childhood education for 40 years?

I have always been passionate about children's development. Watching them and guiding them to learn and grow through play and creativity is what motivated me through my 40 years. Caring for children through all different stages of growth and development was always so lovely to be a part of.



Retirement



What has changed in early childhood education, if anything, over the last 40 years?

Early on in my career, I remember, we had weekly playgroups where I would meet up with fellow educators and the children in their care. We would all bring a plate of food, play different activities, teach each other a new skill to include in our day-to-day programs with our children. We would catch up at someone's house, a playground, park or even a local centre. The children would all play together and it was such a fun, carefree time. By the end of my working time, with allergies in particular we were not able to provide food and snacks like we

once used to. We had to be very mindful of dietary requirements, allergies and the like.

The focus on keeping up to date on the most current studies, courses, literature, safety standards for the educators also became quite different compared to the early years of my career. Every year there was more to learn so we could provide a more modern approach to educating our children.

What has been some memorable moments for you over the last 40 years as an educator?

Caring for children with special needs, learning disabilities, and health issues like diabetes were always memorable. Looking after these children taught me so much throughout the years. The skills and information they taught me made me grow into a more understanding and passionate person. The children and families dealing with these things, at times, were quite challenging and often confronting but also the most rewarding and memorable because of all the lessons they taught me.

Do you have any particular funny stories or moments you can share from the children you've cared for over the years?

I can't think of any one particular funny story. I can however say that all the



children in my care have brought me so much laughter through their honesty, pure imagination and joy. Kids have the innate ability to come out with the funniest sayings at the perfect time when you could be feeling a little stressed or frustrated that day.

Will you keep in touch with any of the families / children that you've cared for over the years?

Yes! I am very fortunate to be able to call many of the families and children I have cared for, lifelong friends. I have also been fortunate to care for the children of previous children I have cared for.

What do you plan to do with your time now?

I am looking forward to spending more quality time with my grandchildren along with having the ability to travel more.



2025 ELECTION POLICY COMMITMENTS

FOR THE FAMILY DAY CARE SECTOR:

What FDCA members want from the next Australian Government

In January 2025, FDCA surveyed members on their views about issues relating to the family day care sector and what they want from the next Australian Government.

Based on the feedback of members, and taking into account the important findings of recent national reviews and inquiries into the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector,¹ FDCA has developed a set of election commitment requests to send to each of the major parties. Once their responses have been received and collated, FDCA will share the results with members, summarising what the major parties are willing, or unwilling, to commit to, which will assist in informing members' decisions at the upcoming federal election.

What are we asking for?

With innovative thinking and the right form of support, FDCA maintains there are opportunities to better leverage the capacity and unique strengths of the family day care sector. Our 2025 election commitment requests address key priorities that will be pivotal in ensuring the long-term viability of the family day care sector. These priorities include (but are not limited to):

- Arresting the decline in numbers of family day care educators and approved services through strategies to support service viability, reducing administrative

burden (at both service and educator level) and supporting sustainable growth in educator numbers.

- Strengthening the financial viability of providing family day care by improving remuneration opportunities (e.g. through higher CCS hourly cap rates) and through targeted supply-side initiatives for services.
- Exploring innovative models of family day care to expand capacity and delivery in areas of need, and for particular cohorts, in partnership with governments, industry, FDCA, approved services and educators.

FDCA has requested that the major parties make the following election policy commitments.

1. Commitment to Remuneration Boost for Family Day Care Staff and Educators

2. Tech Solutions to Administrative Burden for Family Day Care

3. Improve Inclusion Support Measures for Family Day Care

4. Supply Side "Operational" Funding for Approved Family Day Care Services

5. An Appropriate and Equitable CCS Hourly Rate Cap

6. Non-Standard Hours Loading for CCS Hourly Rate Cap

7. ECEC Commission and Family Day Care Strategy

8. Start-up Support for New Family Day Care Educators

9. New Educator Engagement Support for Approved Services

10. Funded National Recruitment Program

11. Family Day Care Traineeship Program

12. Venue Expansion and Dual Educator Model Scoping

¹ For example: Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), December 2023: Childcare Inquiry, Final Report; Productivity Commission, 28 June 2024: A path to universal early childhood education and care, Inquiry Report, Report No.106.

1.

Commitment to Remuneration Boost for Family Day Care Staff and Educators

Work with FDCA and the sector to establish an equitable remuneration boost program for both family day care educators and approved service staff equivalent to the “Worker Retention Payment” wage increase program developed for centre-based day care (CBDC) and outside school hours care (OSHC) services.

The Australian Government’s announced wage increase for the centre-based and outside school hours care ECEC workforce does not currently apply to the family day care sector.

Through our advocacy efforts FDCA has secured a clear commitment from the current Government to consider the family day care model in any wage increases for ECEC employees that fall under awards, and to explore how a remuneration boost program, similar to the “Worker Retention Payment” can be extended to the family day care workforce. It is vital this commitment is ongoing.

2.

Tech Solutions to Administrative Burden for Family Day Care

Work with FDCA and the sector to develop targeted tech solutions to administrative burden at both the educator and approved service level, across both National Quality Framework (NQF) and Family Assistance Law (FAL) obligations, with the objective of reducing occupational burden and simultaneously increasing compliance assurance.

According to independent research commissioned by FDCA in 2023² the primary factors driving educators to exit the sector are a combination of “occupational burden” factors and considerations around inadequate remuneration.

It is critical that ongoing investment is made, either by government directly or in compelling third-party providers, to fundamentally develop or redesign technologies that simplify and systematise ECEC administration in the family day care context.

3.

Improve Inclusion Support Measures for Family Day Care

Work with FDCA and the family day care sector to consult on and tailor effective support measures for the family day care sector to improve its inclusion of children with additional needs.

Recent ECEC reviews³ acknowledge that family day care has a significant role to play in terms of facilitating greater inclusion of children from a variety of vulnerable cohorts (including children with diverse and additional needs, those from CALD backgrounds and refugee or special humanitarian program background). However, they also note that the current Inclusion Support Program (ISP) is not adequately supporting the sector to undertake increased levels of this type of care. Recommendations by the Productivity Commission include enhancing the Inclusion Support Program as an immediate priority (Recommendation 2.2) and adopting an enhanced and expanded needs-based inclusion funding instrument (Recommendation 2.3).

4.

Supply Side “Operational” Funding for Approved Family Day Care Services

Work with FDCA and the family day care sector to explore options to increase viability and incentivise family day care service growth (with a particular emphasis on “thin” or under-served markets) though targeted supply-side funding.

Family day care can be an effective solution to improving access to ECEC in “thin” markets,⁴ however this requires an ongoing targeted supply-side funding mechanism, enshrined in Family Assistance Law, that takes the family day care model into account. As noted in the Productivity Commission’s research, the current Community Child Care Fund (CCCCF) is inadequate, time-limited, too administratively complex and eligibility conditions can be overly restrictive.



MEMBERS

91%
support

80%
rate vital/very important



MEMBERS

90%
support

77%
rate vital/very important



MEMBERS

96%
support

80%
rate vital/very important



MEMBERS

95%
support

79%
rate vital/very important

2 Family Day Care Australia, December 2023: Understanding Educators’ Reasons for Exiting Family Day Care, prepared by Survey Matters.

3 In addition to the inquiries led by the ACCC and the Productivity Commission, also see Deloitte [2023] Review of the Inclusion Support Program – Final report.

4 Ibid: Productivity Commission, Finding 5.5.

5.

An Appropriate and Equitable CCS Hourly Rate Cap

Raise the hourly CCS cap rate for family day care (to be at a minimum) in line with the calculation afforded to centre-based care services so that it more accurately reflects the cost of providing family day care.

FDCA has long maintained that the lower fee cap for family day care is an inequitable market intervention that puts family day care at a competitive disadvantage and affects educators' ability to be appropriately remunerated, which has flow on effects to educator attraction, retention and hence viability of approved services. The Productivity Commission also notes that the family day care hourly fee cap should be reviewed (Finding 6.1) and recommends that the approach taken to indexing the hourly rate cap changed (Recommendation 6.3).



MEMBERS

99%
support

95%
rate vital/very important

6.

Non-Standard Hours Loading for CCS Hourly Rate Cap

Apply an additional loading of 20% to the recalculated CCS fee cap for nonstandard hours family day care to adequately reflect the cost of this type of care.

The CCS fee cap for family day care, currently \$13.24, does not recognise the increased costs associated with non-standard hours care, including weekend and overnight care. This fact was substantiated by the Productivity Commission's research, which also noted that families working non-standard hours may find it harder to access ECEC that meets their needs as a result (Finding 7.1). Further, it recommends that a review of CCS rates for family day care should also consider the need for an hourly rate cap for non-standard hours and should also review the extent to which planning regulations restrict ECEC services from operating in nonstandard hours (Recommendation 6.3).



MEMBERS

99%
support

88%
rate vital/very important

7.

ECEC Commission and Family Day Care Strategy

Work with FDCA and the sector to secure a strong and viable future for family day care through the development and execution of a sector-led strategic plan supported by a resourced family day care reform team within the federal government and overseen by a dedicated entity, with the capacity to apply a specific care-type focus, such as an independent ECEC Commission.

Despite some small Government funded targeted initiatives in recent years, expansion of family day care has been limited and the sector continues to decline. FDCA maintains that no single change or isolated response will fix the issues of declining educator numbers and reduced approved service viability as these issues (and thus, associated potential solutions) sit across levels of government and across Departmental portfolios within governments. As such it is imperative to develop and implement a sector-led coordinated and resourced strategic reform agenda for the family day care sector.



MEMBERS

97%
support

82%
rate vital/very important

8.

Start-up Support for New Family Day Care Educators

Commit to the provision of a direct funding support program for new family day care educators to assist in overcoming some of the financial barriers to entry into the sector in establishing their micro-business.

Prospective family day care educators can face considerable costs in the establishment of their businesses in order to comply with regulatory standards and be appropriately equipped to run a family day care business. These costs create significant barriers to entering the sector.

An "Educator Start-up Payment" mechanism (i.e. a discrete and targeted supply-side funding structure designed to incentivise family day care educators to enter the sector) is being trialled through the Family Day Care Capability Trial. Pending the efficacy of this component of the Trial, FDCA advocates an expansion of this program.



MEMBERS

89%
support

68%
rate vital/very important

9.

New Educator Engagement Support for Approved Services

Commit to the provision of a direct funding support program for family day care approved services to assist in the recruitment, induction and training of new family day care educators.

Support for approved services in the engagement, training, support and monitoring of new educator small businesses is a key lever in supporting growth in the family day care sector. Current Government programs and initiatives that provide financial incentives and other support to assist with attraction and retention of ECEC educators are not generally suited to the family day care context.

An “Approved Service Engagement Payment” mechanism (i.e. a discrete and targeted supply-side funding structure designed to support family day care approved services to recruit, induct and train of new family day care educators) is being trialled through the Family Day Care Capability Trial. FDCA advocates an expansion of this program (pending the efficacy of this component of the Trial).



MEMBERS

91%
support

80%
rate vital/very important

10.

Funded National Recruitment Program

Work with FDCA and the sector to develop a funded National Recruitment Program for family day care.

FDCA’s ‘Your Business, Their Future’ family day care educator recruitment program aims to enhance the recruitment pipeline for family day care educators through a nationally consistent and centralised recruitment function. The program promotes family day care as a career of choice, supports approved services to connect with prospective educators, provides ongoing support to applicants in their recruitment journey and builds capacity at local level through good practice guidance for service members.

Given the success of the program to date, FDCA advocates for an expansion of this program to remain a viable, sustainable program and actively grow educator numbers.



MEMBERS

91%
support

68%
rate vital/very important

11.

Family Day Care Traineeship Program

Work with FDCA and the family day care sector to trial and implement specific workforce strategies tailored to the family day care context to support sustainable growth in the sector nationally, including (but not limited to) the development of a bespoke family day care traineeship program.

Supply-side Government programs which stimulate attraction and retention of the ECEC workforce are generally not designed with the family day care context in mind and are therefore often inappropriate for the sector. Innovative service delivery models for supporting family day care workforce attraction and retention must be considered to arrest the decline of the sector e.g. traineeships in family day care, “start-up grants” for new educators, and models where educators could work in pairs at a venue.



MEMBERS

93%
support

71%
rate vital/very important

12.

Venue Expansion and Dual Educator Model Scoping

Support FDCA to lead the development of nationally consistent guidelines around family day care venue establishment and approvals processes, with the objective of expansion of the model, including exploration of a dual educator venue model.

In response to the challenges of ECEC supply across regional, rural and remote communities, a venue-based dual educator model of family day care has been recommended by the Productivity Commission (Recommendation 5.3).

Currently there are many examples across Australia of family day care venues being successfully used to deliver innovative, high quality, community-led solutions to create ECEC supply where it otherwise would be limited or unavailable. However, there are currently many variations in guidelines for venue establishment and use across states and territories.



MEMBERS

94%
support

76%
rate vital/very important

We will continue to update members as we receive responses from the major parties about their commitments for family day care in the lead up to the election.



BUSINESS INSIGHTS

Incident reporting protocol for FDCA

Did you know that FDCA has an Incident Reporting protocol for when incidents occur in your family day care business? Did you also know that FDCA's Member Zone allows you to lodge an incident report online with the click of a button?

In this edition of Business Insights we will provide some examples of the types of incidents and the timeframes in which you are required to notify FDCA, as well as how you can use your Member Zone to lodge them.

Category A

These are severe incidents where a claim is likely to occur. These types of incidents must be reported to FDCA within 48 hours of the incident.

Some examples of a Category A incident are:

- Death / spinal injury / burns / loss of consciousness / fractures or breaks to major limbs
- Any incident that requires admission to hospital
- Where a parent threatens legal action or withdraws the child from care because of the incident

Category B

These incidents are less severe but a claim may still occur from the incident. These types of incidents must be reported to FDCA within 30 days of the incident.

Some examples of a Category B incident are:

- Fractures or breaks to minor limbs (fingers and toes)
- Injuries to teeth
- Lacerations requiring first aid
- Convulsions / seizure / fit where medical assistance was required

Category C

These incidents are not severe and can be managed and dealt with straight away. There is no need to report a Category C incident to FDCA.

Some examples of a Category C incident are:

- A child has hurt themselves and just needs to be comforted
- A band-aid is required
- All other minor injuries and illnesses

Why do I need to report these incidents?

These timeframes must be followed to ensure protection under your insurance policy, in the event that the incident leads to a claim in the future. Sometimes claims may take years to be advised of and if we have no incident report on file then we are just relying on our memory of the incident, which may make it harder to protect you in the future.

An incident report form that is completed and sent to FDCA straight after an incident occurs helps protect all involved, should a valid claim ever be made in the future. Delaying notification of an incident may also affect your benefits under the policy so it is important that an incident report is provided as soon as possible.

How to report an incident?

You can either complete FDCA's incident report form which is

available on our website at www.fdca.com.au OR you can complete an online incident report from which is located in the Insurance section of your FDCA Member Zone.

Remember that there is no harm in reporting an incident to FDCA. If you are unsure whether or not an incident needs to be reported, it is always best to play it safe and report the incident.

Hard copy incident report forms, once completed, can be emailed to memberservices@fdca.com.au.

What happens after an incident is reported?

Once you notify FDCA of the incident we may appoint an investigator, depending on the nature and severity of the incident. The investigator will provide a report to the insurer while the incident is still fresh in everyone's mind. They may take statements

from you or anyone who observed the incident to ensure that the correct facts are disclosed straight after the incident. It's important to remember that FDCA insurers act on your behalf and these steps may need to be taken in order to ensure your rights are protected.

Your family day care service have their own incident reporting timeframes which need to be followed, as some serious incidents may need to be reported straight away to the Regulatory Authority. It is important to understand what your service's timeframes are so you are not in breach of their policies. When sending an incident report form to your service, always remember to forward a copy to FDCA to ensure we have a copy on file also.

If you have any questions relating to incidents or claims, please contact the FDCA Insurance Services team on 1800 658 699.

Dollars and Sense

with Ben Mueller

PET EXPENSES

A common question we are asked, and is often being discussed online and between educators, is whether the costs associated with the purchase, ongoing care, and maintenance of a dog, cat, or other family pet can be claimed as a tax deduction. This question arises particularly when a pet is used directly as part of a planned learning program or activity, or indirectly due to their service requiring worming or certain vaccinations for a pet kept at home, even if the pet does not interact with the children.

As with many family day care tax claims, the answer is not always straightforward. Each educator's circumstances are unique and so the advice that they have received from their accountants and shared with each other can differ.

Given the differing advice, as well as the number of educators incurring these types of expenses without any specific guidance from the tax office, FDC Tax contacted the ATO directly on this issue.

To support an educator's entitlement to claim these expenses, we referenced Taxation Ruling 95/14, which relates to employee teachers. This ruling states:

"Expenditure on items or teaching aids used in the everyday duties of a teacher would be allowable as a deduction. Examples of this type of expenditure would include... costs of maintaining class pets".

The tax office's response to this question and reference can be summarised as follows:

1. They inherently consider a dog to be a pet and therefore a personal and non-deductible expense unless it could be considered a 'working beast', such as a cattle mustering, guard, or police dog.
2. A dog, cat, fish, or other pet purchased by a family day care educator, which resides and is cared for at home, is different from a classroom pet maintained

at the school or occasionally at the teacher's home.

3. While having a pet in a family day care setting may benefit the children in care, there is an insufficient connection between the expenses incurred to purchase, train, and/or maintain a pet and the educator's income-producing activities.
4. As such, pet expenses are not deductible.

While the above guidance from the ATO seems to be fairly conclusive, you should keep in mind there are always exceptions and arguments where there are genuine learning activities, or other circumstances where a deduction may be available in full or at least in part.

Consequently, it is a good idea to consult with a tax agent or the tax office directly if you wish to claim any pet expenses as a tax deduction.

FAMILY DAY CARE

LEGAL SERVICES

TURN YOUR PROBLEMS INTO SOLUTIONS

12 months of support from legal experts

All from as little as **\$3.15** a week*

Access legal advice valued at **\$1,500** per enquiry**



Telephone legal advice and debt recovery services available

One of the biggest distractions when running a successful family day care business is debt recovery, with a growing number of services and educators often seeking assistance with managing cash flow and other legal matters.

As your national peak body, FDCA is committed to helping you deal with the stress of any issues related to your family day care business requiring legal assistance.

For more information about Family Day Care Legal Services, visit fdca.com.au/legal or phone **1800 658 699**.

*Based on upfront payment for an educator Legal Services package. **Based on a limit of 4 hours billable time per enquiry.

Family Day Care Australia ABN 93 094 436 021 AFSL 329 616 receives a fee for referring this service. Because we don't know your legal needs, we can't advise if this service will suit you. The legal advice scheme is delivered by Wotton + Kearney Pty Ltd ABN 94 632 932 131.





Key ACECQA resources for sun safety

Family day care (FDC) educators and services play a pivotal role in the development of children across Australia.

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) website, www.acecqa.gov.au contains resources to support FDC providers and educators in delivering quality outcomes for children.

Latest sun safety guidelines for infants and children

During sunny weather, services are encouraged to reflect on how sun protection and sun safety is embedded in their policies, practices and procedures.

A recent ACECQA *We hear you* blog guest article from the Cancer Council provided guidance around sun protection. It explains why it matters and how you can support infants and children to be sun safe, and also contains reflective questions for educators. You can read the full article on the latest news page of the ACECQA website.

Family day care materials

On the family day care materials page of the ACECQA website,

www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/supporting-materials/family-day-care, you'll find guidance material for family day care providers, nominated supervisors, coordinators and educators. These resources include information sheets on subjects such as record keeping, assessments of family day care residences, and family day care enrolment and orientation. For example:

Information sheets

- Legislative Requirements for family day care educators from 2023
- Legislative Requirements for family day care providers from 2023
- Record keeping in family day care services
- Assessments of family day care residences and venues
- Family day care – Enrolment and orientation

FDC compliance guides

- Family day care educator

compliance responsibilities

- Family day care nominated supervisor compliance responsibilities
- Family day care approved provider compliance responsibilities

ACECQA Resource Finder

This tool on the ACECQA website makes it easy to search through our library for early childhood education and care services. Head to the ACECQA Resource Finder at www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/resource-finder and type 'family day care' in the search bar.

Latest news

The ACECQA Newsletter contains articles that offer the latest practical advice for providers and services. Check the Latest news page on the ACECQA website regularly for updates or to subscribe. Our We Hear You blog features unique perspectives from the children's education and care sector.



Updating your information on StartingBlocks.gov.au

StartingBlocks.gov.au is ACECQA's family focused website, and we encourage families to visit it to find out about quality education and care. It's Australia's free government website for families and communities to find and compare

services by quality ratings, fees, vacancies and inclusions.

When services enter vacancy, fee and inclusion information into the CCS Provider Entry Point (PEP) using their PRODA account, or via their preferred software provider, this

data flows through to display on StartingBlocks.gov.au.

To keep service fee and vacancy information up to date on StartingBlocks.gov.au, services need to ensure these details are entered into the PEP correctly.

How to update fees in PEP

- Select 'Fee and Inclusion Details'.
- Select the 'Session Type'.
- Select any relevant inclusions for each age group age, or 'No Inclusions' if they are not offered.
- Enter the 'Usual Fee' for each selected age group.
- Select 'Submit'.

How to update vacancies in PEP (this must be done by age group)

- Select the date using the calendar icon. The current week or next week can be updated.
- Select 'Yes' or 'No' for each day of the week to indicate their vacancy status.
- Select 'Advanced' to provide additional details for vacancies on that date by age group and session type.
- Select 'Submit'.

Service updates may take between 24 and 48 hours to appear on the StartingBlocks.gov.au website.

Further information and screenshots are available on page 8 of the PEP user guide available on the resources page of the ACECQA website.

If you've entered your service fees and vacancies using third party software and they aren't displaying correctly on StartingBlocks.gov.au

Please ensure service fees and vacancies are reflected accurately in PEP by logging into PRODA/PEP. If they are still displaying incorrectly, please contact the CCS Provider Helpdesk.



Keeping baby cool, safe and comfortable for the warmer months

The warmer months are in full swing and most families will be enjoying the sun, sea and sand while on holidays or relaxing indoors away from the heat. Regardless of where you are, it's important to keep baby safe and comfortable during the warmer months.

Red Nose explores what dressing baby looks like from the eyes of a baby and what tips they can give parents and family day care educators to ensure warmer months are a cool, safe and comfortable experience for babies and infants.

On trend: lightweight natural fibres

Whenever The Wiggles' Dressing Up in Style is playing, I know I'm in for a treat as I know my parents or carers are getting ready to dress me up.

To prevent overheating, dress me in weather-appropriate clothing, especially during sleep.

Opt for lightweight bedding made from natural fibres like cotton, muslin or bamboo. When using a sleeping bag, ensure it has a low TOG (thermal overall grade) rating, fits well at the neckline and underarms, and is paired with suitable clothing.

Regularly monitor my core temperature too by feeling the skin on my chest - I should be warm to touch, not hot and not cold. Adjust my layers as needed to prevent overheating.

Peekaboo! How to best keep my head and face uncovered

A simple way to ensure my head and face are uncovered is to use a sleeping bag in my correct size, with a fitted neck, armholes (or sleeves) and no hood.

If using a light sheet or blanket, make sure my feet are at the foot of the cot, the blanket is tucked in firmly on all sides and up to nipple level to prevent it from covering my nose and mouth. This will ensure the blanket can only rise as far as my chest.

Remove any head coverings such as beanies and hoods at sleep times. Keep my sleep space simple with no loose or soft items that could cover my nose or mouth.

Keep me hydrated

In hot weather, I may need extra hydration. Whether breastfeeding or formula feeding, be attentive to my cues for more frequent feeds, which may serve to rehydrate and quench my thirst. My infant friends under six months will rely on milk or formula for hydration. Water isn't suitable for infants under six months and milk remains the main way for a baby to hydrate up to the age of 12 months. Water and other items like water-rich fruits (watermelon, grapes and oranges) can be introduced once solids have started.

Be mindful of heat during travel

When we go for a road trip, bear in mind that temperatures rise

inside cars, with or without window shades. Car restraints, while essential for safety, can contribute to overheating. Be sure to take breaks from driving regularly, offering me additional drinks and monitor my core temperature. Adjust my clothing when transitioning me into the car and if I've fallen asleep, supervise me whenever possible, so I do not end up with my chin on my chest. This position reduces my air flow.

Upon reaching our destination, transfer me to a safe sleep space with a firm, flat surface.

Pram coverings are a no-no

Because covering a pram on a hot day in Australia can elevate the internal temperature by nearly four degrees Celsius or more (my friends at the Journal of Ergonomics did a study on this), it is best to avoid covering my pram. Wraps, blankets, or plastic covers are a no-no because they hinder airflow and can lead to a significant increase in temperature. Also best to steer away from mesh covers as these have not been tested for increases in temperature and reduces the parent's ability to observe me sleeping.

To mitigate the risk of overheating, consider scheduling my outings earlier or later in the day when temperatures and UV exposure are lower. Keep to shaded areas, use umbrellas, or position the pram under a tree to keep me out of direct sunlight. Additionally, ensure good airflow and offer me a refreshing drink to help cool me down.



Keeping me comfortable in my room

A common thought bubble we can see from parents' and family day educators' minds just before lullaby and story time is: 'What temperature should baby's room be?'

My friend Loren Rushton, Red Nose's National Education and Health Promotion Manager can tell you more about this one.

"Red Nose does not recommend a specific room temperature for baby's sleep. It's not necessary to monitor the room temperature or to leave the heating or cooling on all night.

What is important is a smoke free, well-ventilated room with baby dressed appropriately for their environment.

Dress baby appropriately for the room temperature. Think what you

would wear in this temperature. It's ok to dress baby just in a nappy on really hot days or wear lightweight, natural fibre fabrics to allow excess body heat to escape.

Research has linked overheating to an increased risk of sudden unexpected death in infancy, so this is not just a matter of baby's comfort.

Babies control their temperature predominantly through their head and face. For this reason, sleeping baby on the back with head and face uncovered is the best way to protect your baby from overheating."

How to check my temperature

You can feel my back or tummy, which should feel warm. Don't worry if my hands and feet feel cool - this is normal. If I show signs of heat stress, such as flushed and clammy skin, remove some bedding,

reduce clothing layers and offer me fluids such as breast milk for young babies or water for older infants. Check on me again in a few minutes to make sure I am cooling down. If you're worried, check my temperature with a thermometer and contact a health professional for guidance.

Have a question about safe sleeping or keeping your baby safe?

Ask our Safe Sleep Educators a question today at <https://rednose.org.au/question/ask>.

Grab a Cuppa

The “Grab a Cuppa” Concept

To develop this series, members from across the country reached out to share their unique stories and perspectives with us, outline their journey in the sector and tell us a little bit about what a day in their shoes is like.

GET TO KNOW

Kylie Graetz

Wimmera Regional Family Day Care
Horsham, VIC

1. How long have you worked in family day care for and where are you located?

I've been with Wimmera Regional Family Day Care for three and a half years in Horsham, but my life in family day care started in Great Western, Victoria in 1997.

2. Can you tell us a little bit about your background in the early childhood sector?

Leaving home at 18 I went to Nanny school in Melbourne and worked for several years in a live-in position and then a live-out position. After marrying I worked with Northern Grampians Shire Family Day Care while my children were pre-schoolers, continuing through their school years. At one point I was making eleven breakfasts every morning in a production style for three school-aged after hours family day care children, four two-year-olds, my own three school

aged children, one Chinese exchange student and a husband! Back then I worked eleven hours a day, five days a week. Fortunately, I am a magician at getting children to sleep, so they would sleep at the same time for two hours. Enough time to get the housework done!

After a significant break running my café, I returned to my primary passion – children.





3. If you could provide only one answer to the question – why choose family day care? – what would it be?

This is easy to answer. We are more than educators. We are an extension of the child's family. We don't just educate; we love the children and share a special bond with them and support the families in ways a large centre can't.

4. What has your family day care been up to lately?

We've been celebrating Children's Week with a lot of water activities and excursions. Our water activities have included the slip 'n slide, making 'garden soup', scoop and splash in the sensory tray and making edible fingerprint. Our excursions have been to the gardens for a picnic, the playground and the café.

5. What would you say your family day care is best known for?

My family day care would be best known for providing loving, nurturing care in a 'second home' where the children feel a sense of belonging.

6. What do you like to do when you're not working?

I don't see family day care as 'work'. I have the privilege to spend time

with these amazing little humans every day! When I don't have children in my care, we travel to see our kids, grandkids and friends or spend time with our parents in Horsham.

7. What is the best piece of advice you would give a new educator?

Use your strengths within your family day care service. You and your service are unique. If you're an outdoors person, base your program and activities outside. Or if you're a crafty person, the children's learning can be based around craft activities. Your strengths and passions will shine through your pedagogy and will attract families looking for that kind of education or setting for their child.

8. What is the biggest change you have seen during your time working in the sector?

The biggest change I have seen is moving from a family day care 'mum' to an 'educator'. With the introduction of National Quality Standards, EYLF and assessment and ratings to family day care, the standards of care have been lifted and family day care has become equal to large centres in terms of the quality of education we provide.

9. What is the best advice you have received yourself?

The best advice I've received is to give your children as many opportunities as you can afford. Children discover their talents and passions through trying new things. This also allows them to decide what they don't like! I use this piece of advice in my family day care service by providing a range of activities and taking frequent excursions.

10. What has been the highlight of your career so far?

The highlight is always watching the children's personality and skills develop and blossom. I love being part of their lives and hopefully I've been a positive influence and role-model for them.



GET TO KNOW

Communities@Work Family Day Care and In-Home Care

Greenway, ACT

1. How long has your service been in operation and where are you located?

Communities@Work Family Day Care and In-Home Care is located in the ACT. Our service has been operating for over 40 years

2. What is your role at the service and your background in the early childhood sector?

Our team consists of two Support Coordinators, an Educational Leader, two Client Support Officers, and a Service Manager. Collectively, we bring over twenty years of experience in early education and care, spanning school-age care, early education and care centres, and family day care.

Several team members have a deep-rooted background with our service:

Service Manager: With Communities at Work since 2004, I began as a family day care educator when my son was three months old. In 2012, I transitioned to the coordination unit as a Support Coordinator, then became the Educational Leader, Assistant Manager, and am now the Service Manager.

Educational Leader: I started as a family day care educator 12 years ago, and I have experience across both family day care and centre-based care environments. My focus is on empowering educators to excel and foster environments that support children's growth into confident learners with a global identity.

Support Coordinator: I was a family day care educator before becoming a Support Coordinator, with a background in vocational care, long day childcare centres, and before & after school care.

Client Support Officers: We provide essential administrative support to the family day care team and educators, ensuring smooth operations and a high level of service.

Together, we are committed to supporting and guiding family day care educators in providing high-quality education and care.

3. If you could provide one answer to the question – why choose family day care? – what would it be?

Family day care offers flexible, home-based care in a small family

setting, where children can build strong bonds with their educator and peers. It provides a nurturing, play-based learning environment, enriched by community outings and playgroups. The relationships formed in family day care feel like family, allowing children to thrive in a warm, supportive environment while fostering their growth and discoveries.

4. Could you tell us a bit about what your service has been up to recently?

Recently, our service has been actively engaging with both educators and families through various enriching experiences. These include Cultural Evenings, Awards Nights, Children's Week, as well as regular and outdoor playgroups, where we emphasize the importance of outdoor learning and connection with nature.

On the administrative side, we've been adapting to new compliance measures and reimagining innovative ways of doing things. Additionally, we are passionate about embedding First Nations' perspectives into our curriculum,

as we believe it is crucial for young Australians to understand and appreciate the world's most ancient cultures. We are honored to be a part of the Early Adopters program, hosted by the NSW Department of Education, where we are engaging in a 10-week program to deepen our knowledge in embedding First Nations' perspectives across the service.

Our community involvement is also thriving. Children and educators participated in creating scarecrows for the Erindale Community Garden/Uniting Church Scarecrow Festival, inspired by the Dreaming story, "How the Birds Got Their Colours." We've also taken our outdoor playgroups to places like Lanyon Homestead and Tulip Top Gardens, where children learned about Australian heritage, colonial life, kitchen gardens, and Indigenous culture while connecting with the local community.

5. What would you say your service is known for?

Our service is known for offering high-quality, home-based education and care. We take pride in our diverse range of educators who are dedicated to providing exceptional experiences for children.

We are recognised for our strong connection to the community, particularly through our playgroups and our commitment to fostering nature play, curiosity, and extending children's learning based on their interests. Our educators also prioritise building strong, ongoing relationships with families and children, ensuring a seamless integration of children's home routines into their daily care. Our service is driven by a commitment to quality education and care that enriches the lives of the children and families we support.

6. How does your team like to have fun outside of work?

Outside of work, our team enjoys a variety of activities, with a strong appreciation for nature and the outdoors. Many of us love going for

bushwalks, exploring the beach, and spending time with family. We also like to enjoy what Canberra, and the surrounding areas have to offer, from local events to trying out new cooking experiences.

As a team, we love celebrating together, whether it's through birthdays, end-of-year lunches, or cultural evenings. We often enjoy lunches, morning teas, and the occasional dinner.

7. What is the best piece of advice you would give to a new educator?

The best advice for a new educator would be to enjoy the experience and be authentic in your approach. Open and honest communication with families, children, and staff is essential in building strong, professional relationships.

Remember to stay organised and focus on supporting children's lifelong learning and development. Bring your personal strengths into your service and take the time to get to know your community. Learn from the experiences and knowledge within your community, as these connections will enrich both your professional journey and the children's growth.

8. What is the best piece of advice you would give to a new coordinator or educational leader?

The best advice for a new coordinator or educational leader is to focus on building strong relationships with educators, families, and all stakeholders. Take the time to understand the diversity that each educator and family brings to the service and be patient with everyone's unique needs and styles.

It's important to invest time in getting to know the learning styles and communication preferences of educators, while also allowing them to get to know you personally. By fostering mutual respect and open communication, you can create a solid foundation for healthy, productive relationships across the service.

9. What is the best piece of advice you have ever been given?

Be genuine. Remember that there's nothing that cannot be fixed, so approach challenges with a solution-oriented mindset.

Own up to your mistakes and focus on moving forward, while also making time for regular self-reflection and self-improvement. Building genuine relationships is crucial: get to know the educators, families, and children personally, take an interest in what they share with you, and follow up on those conversations to show you care.

10. Is there any other information you would like to share about your team, your families, your career, or your service?

We are a close-knit, dedicated team that values respect, care, and collaboration. Many of us have been working together for a long time, and we support each other like family, always ready to lend a hand when needed. Every day brings something new and exciting in the world of family day care.

Our team is committed to diversity, inclusivity, and utilising each member's unique talents and strengths to deliver high-quality education and care. We work together to provide a transparent service for families and a strong learning environment for children. This collaborative spirit is extended to our educators, helping them build their professional family day care businesses and apply best practices in their work with children.

We continuously engage in training and professional development, which enhances our skills and allows us to share new knowledge with our educators, empowering them to reflect on and improve their daily practice. Our commitment to ongoing learning helps ensure we provide the best possible care and education for children.

FUN WITH FDCA



Red Star House

Find the Red Star House and you can win a Jamanga Tower.

Jamanga is a massive coloured tower game with a giant dice. The unique Jamanga tower blocks are solid shapes, but are constructed with a soft foam outer surface layer. Compared to traditional block towers, these have the advantage of being softer and safer, plus when the tower crashes it is not as noisy as when a wooden block tower collapses. Suitable for ages 3+ years.

The game is valued at \$169.95.

Play is an important part of early childhood. Play encourages children to learn, develop and grow whilst they have fun. Through play with Jamanga, children can develop important cognitive and physical skills. Play encourages creativity, imagination, perseverance and the development of language and social skills. Children become more confident and develop a stronger sense of identity through play.

Competition closes 28 March 2025.



Sudoku

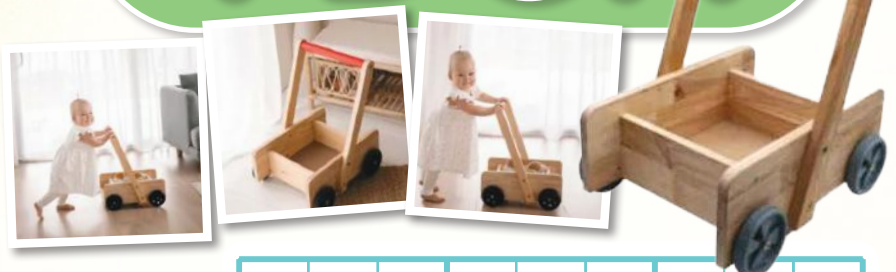
Classic Wooden Baby Walker

This classic wooden baby walker features a host of safety features designed to support first steps including a wide base, sturdy structure, good angle and anti-tip system.

The Classic Wooden Baby Walker is valued at \$94.95.

Perfectly tailored to support those initial steps, our baby walker is not only a walking companion but also serves as an excellent pusher for tots exploring the world around them. Made from premium Australian Timber and suitable for children aged 12+ months.

Competition closes 28 March 2025.



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2	1	5			8		6	
7		1		8			5	
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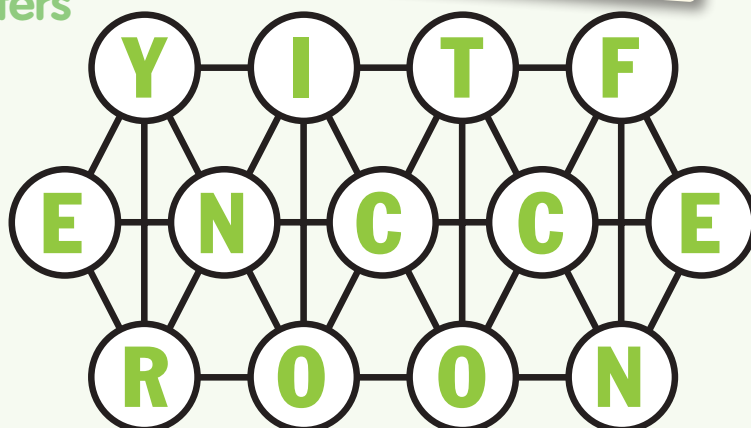
Gift
VOUCHER
Booktopia

50\$
VALUE

Chain Letters

Can you find the 13-letter word hiding in the chain? You must use all 13 letters once only and can move from circle to circle only where they are connected by lines.

Competition closes 28 March 2025.

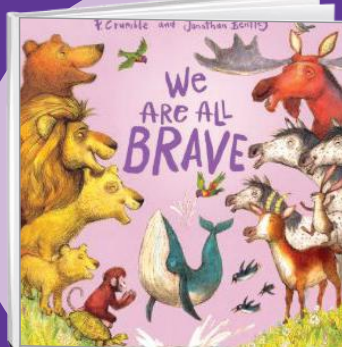




SCHOLASTIC Storytime

BRUNOCORN by Rory H Mather & Chris Kennett

A beautiful story that highlights that we are all unique in our own special way. Bruno the unicorn feels forlorn, he seems to think he's not very good at anything. In fact his self-worth has hit rock bottom, until the day he hears the cries from above. Bruno's friends are in a hot air balloon that's lost control. Bruno comes to the rescue by busting out an almighty rainbow glitter fart (which the children thought was hilarious of course). The rainbow fart forms a slide for the troubled friends to come back down to safety. This experience empowers Bruno, enabling him to see his uniqueness as a gift and not something to be sad about. Bruno feels somewhat reborn, and from that day onwards was known as BRUNOCORN!!

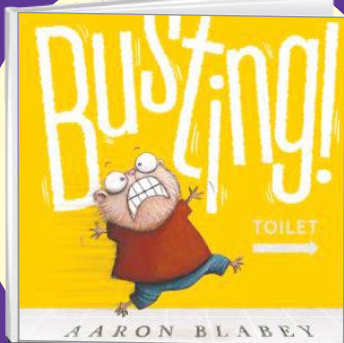
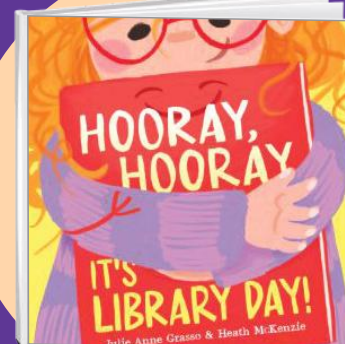


WE ARE ALL BRAVE BY P CRUMBLE AND JONATHAN BENTLEY

A beautiful book about feelings and how sometimes we face failure or need to try new things. Sometimes we need to show our feelings or we have self doubt. This book celebrates resilience and shows the many different ways that....we are all BRAVE. The words 'We are all brave' is repeated on every page, allowing for the children to join in together in chorus.

HOORAY, HOORAY, IT'S LIBRARY DAY! By Julie Anne Grasso & Heath McKenzie

The children enjoyed this book very much. So very relatable to our group, who visit the library weekly. A lonely library book sits on the shelf, hoping for small hands to choose it..... Will today be the day it's whisked away for a reading adventure? The excitement builds as the book adventures at home begin, highlighting the importance of taking special care of our library books.



BUSTING BY AARON BLABEY

Last but not least our very favourite story of the four. The children asked me to read this one again and again. A story that rhymes is always a fun story to read. It's an easy read and quite appropriate to add lots of expression as Lou is busting for the loo, taking the reader on an interesting journey of the various places he tries to wee in before finding a loo. A great book for toilet trainers, a reminder that the best place to wee is in the loo.

ABOUT SCHOLASTIC

Scholastic has been the market leader of Australian children's publishing for over 50 years, bringing the joy of reading to multiple generations of Australian families.

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BOOK REVIEWER:

At Renata's Family Day Care, we value community connections, strong partnerships, and mutual respect. Our environment fosters curiosity and learning for all ages. We truly enjoyed contributing to this book review and hope that you all find it inspiring. Happy reading everyone!

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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Nathan Wallis

Neuroscience
Educator



Dr Jana Pittman

Dual Olympian and two-
time World Champion



Anne Hollonds

National Children's
Commissioner

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