

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER for PARENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER

Dear Parents,

I would like to thank all our wonderful parents who use word of mouth to promote Family Day Care. This type of promotion is extremely powerful and it is often the case when new families come into our Scheme it is through the recommendation of families and friends who currently use or have used Family Day Care. For us it reinforces the high standard of care that Family Day Care provides.

Thank you, Kellie McNamara, Manager CC&FS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our AGM was held on Thursday 20th October 2011.

Our newly elected Board of Management for 2011/2012 comprises of :

Geoff Brazel; Kerry Harper; Lisa Philipsen; Julia Teale; and Leonie Thomas.

We congratulate our new Board members and recognise their commitment to Coastwide Child and Family Services. The board will be operating with two vacancies until these positions are suitably filled.

We are proud that our Board comprises of very skilled based members, if you feel you could contribute to our Organisation by being a Board member, please contact Kellie at the office.

POLICIES

Our coordinators are now working on reviewing our current policies, aligning new legislation and best practice with our existing policies and procedures. In reviewing policies, each one will need to be referenced to the new National Regulations, Educational Law, National Quality Standards and any relevant legislation. Draft policies will be available for you to peruse at your Educator's service. Alternatively, please contact the Co-ordination unit if you would like to discuss with staff during business hours. A folder with the draft policies will

also be available at all times in the foyer of the Co-ordination unit and an informal drop-in evening at the Co-ordination unit will be planned. It is essential and beneficial to our Scheme that all stakeholders have a chance to give suggestions to these changes.

INFORMATION FORMS

In line with the upcoming National Regulations, educators are required to have new parent and child information forms (enrolment forms) as well as educator/parent agreement forms completed for each family. Your educator will shortly be asking you to complete these forms so they can be forwarded to the office.

EMAIL CONTACT

We continually move toward reducing our carbon footprint by utilising email as much as we can. We have on this occasion mailed out our newsletter and CCB statements to all parents along with the 2012 calendars, however, we encourage you to have future newsletters and statements emailed to you. Please update your email address or send a request to the Co-ordination unit, admin@ccfdc.com.au. We have a number of emails bounce back with each mailout so please add us to your safe senders list to avoid rejections.

**November/
December 2011**

Coastwide Child & Family
Services
Sponsoring;

* Gosford Family Day Care
* Supported Playgroups Gosford

* Brighter Futures
* MyTime

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East Gosford 2250

Ph 4340 1111

Fax 4340 0888

admin@ccfdc.com.au

www.ccfdc.com.au

SUNSMART SERVICE



Gosford FDC is an accredited Sunsmart Service with the Cancer Council of New South Wales.

FACEBOOK

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Coastwide-Child-Family-Services/147823908614286>

WORDPRESS

<http://coastwidechildandfamily.wordpress.com/>

Direct links to both are available on our website

Enclosed with this Newsletter

• CCB Statement

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

This year's Christmas Party for the children will be on Wednesday 7th December 2011, at Kariong Park, Woy Woy Road Kariong, between 9:30am and 1pm. Educators will receive specific excursion forms which must be signed by parents prior to the party. We look forward to a morning of fun, celebrating this special time of year with your children.



BACKUP CARE

Mel is currently looking at backup care requirements over the Christmas period. If your educator is taking leave and you require care over the Christmas holiday period, please advise your educator so the details can be passed on to Mel who will assist you in finding a backup educator. Once an educator is found and you are calling, or time permitting meeting with, to confirm your details please ask the educator the arrangements of their fee schedules. Eg cost of care. If you find this care arrangement not to your satisfaction, do not hesitate to contact the Co-Ordination Unit. Please be mindful that each educator is self employed and therefore their fee schedules will also differ.



NEW EDUCATORS REQUIRED

Would you like to make a real difference as a child care educator, do you have a real passion to work with children? Family Day Care is a high quality child care service, which is provided in registered early childhood professionals, own home for children aged 0-12 years. Gosford Family Day Care are currently looking for motivated and dedicated people to register for their own regulated and accredited home based child care business.

This exciting opportunity will enable you to set your own fees, working hours and be responsible for your own direction and career. We assist you with support in establishing your service, training and mentoring.

Information sessions on becoming an educator are held each month (Tuesdays) at the coordination unit at Kariong. Upcoming dates for the remainder of 2011 and 2012 and an application form to become an educator are available on the news page of our website.

For more information or to book in to an information session please phone the co-ordination unit.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS AND PERSONAL CONTACT DETAILS

Just a reminder to please keep your educators and the Co-ordination Unit up to date with any changes to your family details i.e. phone numbers, emergency contacts, address and email

address. We have, on occasion had difficulty contacting parents and/or their emergency contacts because the office has not been kept up to date with current contact details. Please ask your educator for the appropriate form to advise us of any changes.



CONTACTING THE CO-ORDINATION UNIT

Please feel free to contact the Co-ordination unit on the above number to discuss any matters concerning your child's care and development. If you would like to pass on feedback regarding any aspect of our service again, please phone us or alternatively email us.

You may also like to visit our website www.ccfdc.com.au to update yourself on all our programs.



"quote of the day"

"They err who thinks Santa Claus comes down through the chimney; he really enters through the heart."

~ Mrs. Paul M. Ell.

BELONGING, BEING & BECOMING

The Early Years Learning
Framework for Australia

Information for families



EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK

A new, national early learning framework for children from birth to five years



“I want my child
to have lots of
opportunities
for creative play”



WHAT IS THIS NEW LEARNING FRAMEWORK ABOUT?

We have developed the Early Years Learning Framework to ensure your child receives quality education programs in their early childhood setting. This is a vital time for them to learn and develop.

The Framework's vision is for all children to experience play-based learning that is engaging and builds success for life.

It is a guide for early childhood educators who work with children from birth to five years. They will use the Framework in partnership with families, children's first and most influential educators, to develop learning programs responsive to children's ideas, interests, strengths and abilities, and recognise that children learn through their play.

The Early Years Learning Framework describes childhood as a time of *belonging*, *being* and *becoming*.

- **Belonging** is the basis for living a fulfilling life. Children feel they *belong* because of the relationships they have with their family, community, culture and place.
- **Being** is about living here and now. Childhood is a special time in life and children need time to just 'be'—time to play, try new things and have fun.
- **Becoming** is about the learning and development that young children experience. Children start to form their sense of identity from an early age, which shapes the type of adult they will become.

PLAY IS LEARNING

Play is very important for children. Through play babies and young children explore and learn to understand the world around them as they come to communicate, discover, imagine and create.

When children play they are showing what they have learned and what they are trying to understand. This is why play is one of the foundations of the Early Years Learning Framework.

By using this Framework educators will guide your child's play by carefully designing learning activities and stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environments.

RELATIONSHIPS ARE KEY

It is well known that children learn best when they have secure relationships with caring adults. When children from a very early age develop trusting relationships they feel more confident and able to explore and learn.

In early childhood settings, when children feel emotionally secure they learn through play to develop the skills and understandings they need to interact positively with others and gradually learn to take responsibility.

“The learning outcomes are positive and help me to think about how my child is progressing”



HOW WILL IT WORK? WATCHING YOUR CHILD'S PROGRESS

Educators will use this new Framework in a range of early childhood settings, including long day care, preschools and family day care to ensure that your child receives a high quality experience. It has been created and trialled by experienced early childhood educators, academics, parents and carers.

The Framework focuses on your child's learning. Educators will work with you in order to get to know your child well. They will create a learning program that builds on your child's interests and abilities, and keep you in touch with your child's progress.

Through the Framework's five learning goals educators will assist your child to develop:

- a strong sense of their identity
- connections with their world
- a strong sense of wellbeing
- confidence and involvement in their learning; and
- effective communication skills.

“The Framework helps me to understand how skilled the staff at my centre are and what a great support they are to me and my family”

Using the Early Years Learning Framework educators will observe your child's learning so they can build on it and plan the next steps. They will do this by listening, watching and talking to your child.

They will keep in touch with you regularly to discuss your child's progress. They may use photos or keep a folder of your child's work to show what your child is learning, how they are developing and what particular learning interests them.

Before your child starts school educators will prepare information about your child's learning and development to share with their new teacher. This will help ensure that your child's new school is well prepared to continue your child's learning.

WORKING TOGETHER

By working together parents and educators can enhance a child's learning and wellbeing.

As the most important person in your child's life you can make a difference by talking regularly with your child's early childhood educator and asking about their learning.

Information you provide allows educators to link your child's experiences at home with the time they spend together in the early childhood setting.

FIND OUT MORE

This booklet is an introduction to the Early Years Learning Framework.

To find out more or to access translations visit

www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood or ask your child's early childhood educator.

Produced by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments.



NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

On 1 January 2012, the National Quality Framework will be established and will apply to most long day care, family day care, preschool (or kindergarten) and outside schools hours care services.

National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement and consistency in education and care services through:

- a national legislative framework
- a National Quality Standard
- a national quality rating and assessment process
- a new national body called the **Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority**.

The National Quality Framework will take effect on 1 January 2012 with key requirements being phased in overtime. Requirements such as qualification, educator-to-child ratios and other key staffing arrangements will be phased in between 2012 and 2020.

National legislative framework

The national legislative framework is established through an applied laws system and consists of:

- the **Education and Care Services National Law**
- the **Education and Care Services National Regulations**.

It creates a jointly governed uniform national approach to the regulation and quality assessment of education and care services and replaces existing separate licensing and quality assurance processes. For many services this integrated approach means less red tape.

A Regulatory Authority in each state and territory will be primarily responsible for administering the National Quality Framework, including approving, monitoring and quality assessing services. It will be the first point of contact for services.

A new national body—the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority—will oversee the National Quality Framework and ensure the consistent and effective implementation of the new system.

National Quality Standard

The *National Quality Standard* sets a new national benchmark for the quality of education and care services. The National Quality Standard is divided into seven Quality Areas:

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

The National Quality Standard aims to promote:

- **the safety, health and wellbeing of children**
- **a focus on achieving outcomes for children through high-quality educational programs**
- **families' understanding of what distinguishes a quality service.**

National quality rating and assessment process

Approved Services will be assessed and rated against each of the seven Quality Areas of the National Quality Standard and the National Regulations. They will also be given an overall rating. The rating and assessment process aims to drive continuous quality improvement at services and provide families with better information for making choices about their children's education and care.

Assessments for existing services will commence from mid-2012.

The National Quality Framework will replace the National Childcare Accreditation Council.

Refer to the *Assessment and Rating Process Information Sheet* for further information.



NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK RATING SYSTEM

Under the National Law, education and care services will be assessed and rated against the National Quality Standard and National Regulations.

A new national quality rating and assessment system

The rating and assessment system will help drive improvements in the quality of education and care provided by services by highlighting areas of good performance as well as identifying areas for improvement.

The rating and assessment system will also provide families with greater information for making choices about their children's education and care.

National Law and National Regulations

Under the National Law, each state and territory Regulatory Authority has responsibility for assessing and rating education and care services in their jurisdiction. This assessment and rating will be against the National Quality Standard and the National Regulations. Services will receive a rating for each Quality Area and an overall rating.

The timeframe for future assessments will generally be based on the ratings outcome—that is, the higher the rating, the longer the time between assessment visits. However, a Regulatory Authority may re-assess a service at any time and Providers may apply for a re-assessment and re-rating once in every two year period.

Rating levels

The National Regulations explain how the overall rating is determined. There are five levels under the new system:

- **Excellent**
- **Exceeding National Quality Standard**
- **Meeting National Quality Standard**
- **Working towards National Quality Standard**
- **Significant improvement required.**

The Excellent rating is awarded by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, which will also determine and publish the criteria to determine if a service demonstrates excellent practice and sector leadership.

Overall rating

As well as a rating for each Quality Area, a service will receive an overall rating.

If a service is rated below the National Quality Standard in any Quality Area, the overall rating will reflect that lowest rating.

The National Regulations prescribe the requirements to achieve a rating of Exceeding National Quality Standard.

Rating a service

Under the National Regulations, the Regulatory Authority must consider a range of information when assessing and rating a service, including:

- **the Quality Improvement Plan for the service**
- **the service's history of compliance**
- **any rating assessment history of the service, including any records of previous rating assessments made under the National Law.**

The Regulatory Authority must arrange for a site visit and may consider any other relevant information disclosed by the service or available to the Regulatory Authority.

Newly opened and transitioning services

On being granted a service approval, an education and care service is rated as Provisional—Not Yet Assessed Under the National Quality Framework.

Services in existence before 1 January 2012 that are transitioning to the National Quality Framework will also receive an initial rating of Provisional—Not Yet Assessed Under the National Quality Framework.

This rating will be in place until their first assessment is completed and a rating awarded.

Review of rating

If the Approved Provider is not satisfied with the rating for a service, the provider can seek a review of the rating level for one or more Quality Areas. The National Law provides for an internal review by the Regulatory Authority and, if needed, a further review by a Ratings Review Panel established by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority.

Child Care Information for Families

Tips for getting your child care payments right

Parent Responsibilities



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Updated: November 2011

Tips for getting your child care payments right

Parent Responsibilities

1. Get the right family assistance

Make sure you have been assessed for CCB by the Family Assistance Office. It's not enough to have a Customer Reference Number (CRN), as this could be issued for your Parenting Payment or Family Tax Benefit claim and doesn't mean you are eligible for CCB and CCR. **You have to ask to be assessed for CCB.** The FAO will provide CRNs for you and your child/ren.

- It is your responsibility as a parent/guardian to provide timely and correct information to your child care service.
- Always put your advice to the service in writing.
- Centrelink can give you access to an online service where you can track the submission of child care attendance details and payments under your CRN.

In rare circumstances, you or your child may be given more than one CRN by Centrelink.

Make sure you give the correct CRN to your child care service. Call Centrelink or the FAO on 136150 to check on this **and other details.**

2. Get the best payment methods for your family

You can choose from a range of payment options for CCB and CCR, to suit your family's financial situation. The payment method you choose for CCB may affect the way CCR can be paid.

To receive CCR you must first be assessed for CCB by the FAO. Where a family's income is too high for them to receive any CCB, they are assessed at zero rate.

Once you are eligible for CCB (even at a zero rate), your CCR can be paid automatically and you can choose how often you are paid. Otherwise, you will need to complete a Lump Sum claim at the end of each financial year. If you choose this method, it's a good idea to complete the FAO form: *Registration for Formal Enrolment* (form number FA022) and tell your service you have done this, so they can formalise the enrolment. You can check on the details during the year and if anything is wrong, you don't have to wait until the end of the year to fix it.

Visit the FAO website at www.familyassist.gov.au or call the FAO on 136150 for more information about your payment options.

If you want your CCB entitlement to be paid to the child care service, so that you can pay a lower fee each week, choose the "reduced fees" option.

If you want to get your CCR throughout the year, choose either the "reduced fees" or "zero rate" option. To do this, complete the FAO form: *Claim for Approved Child Care Payments* (form number FA002). This is the quickest and easiest claim option.



3. Get your Rebate sooner

If you have CCB paid as reduced fees (or you are assessed at zero rate), you can choose from four payment options for CCR:

- You can have CCR paid to your service as a fee reduction. This will reduce the gap fee you have to pay each week. If you choose this method, CCR will be paid to the service each week or fortnight, after they submit attendance records for your child/ren.
- You can have CCR paid to your family bank account after your service submits attendance records each week or fortnight.
- If you choose quarterly CCR payments, they are usually paid to CCB Fee Reduction customers about 5 weeks after the end of each quarter ending September, December and March. June quarters are paid after you lodge tax returns and have your CCB and CCR reconciled by the FAO.
- You can have CCR paid once a year to your family bank account after you have claimed your CCB as a lump sum.

Note: When you choose a payment option, this option will be applied for the entire financial year, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Please note that CCR will not be paid for any period of attendance for which Special CCB was applied. This is because SCCB covers the full fee and there is no gap fee for the family.

4. Get all your details right

When you enrol your child at a new service, you need to provide four unique pieces of information to identify your family. This allows the service to create a formal enrolment in the Child Care Management System and receive CCB on your behalf so they can reduce your weekly child care fees. The details you need to give are:

- Child's date of birth
- Child's CRN
- Parent's* date of birth
- Parent's* CRN

* Make sure you give the date of birth and CRN details for the parent who is claiming CCB.

The dates of birth and CRNs you give the service must be identical to the numbers on your FAO record. The CCMS uses numbers to match against the FAO record because this is more reliable than using names and addresses.



5. Get the bill in the right name

If one parent has been assessed for CCB, but the other parent enrolls the child at the child care centre and their details are put into the system, then you may not receive benefits as expected. Your payments may be delayed until the end of financial year and you may need to complete a Lump Sum claim. A service is under no obligation to backdate a change in CRN to allow a different parent or guardian to be paid retrospectively. It is your responsibility to provide timely and correct information to your child care service.

If you decide to change the account from one parent's name to the other, first make sure the "new" parent has been assessed for CCB and has their own CRN. Organise that with the FAO first and then give the details to your service so they can change the CCMS enrolment. See Tip #4.

Separated Parents

Make sure that all of the attendance that you are liable to pay for is placed under your own CRN, or you will not receive CCB or CCR for that period.

The service is under no obligation to backdate this information or mediate parental custody issues. It is important that each parent takes responsibility for this. Give your service written confirmation of your liability to pay child care fees and keep the proof that you do pay those fees. This will help if there is a dispute later.

6. Get your gap fee right after the end of financial year

The service may have to change your records after the end of the financial year, when your CCB has already been reconciled by the FAO. When this happens, any change to your CCB entitlement is managed between you and FAO.

If the new CCB calculation is less than before, your gap fee will be higher. It is your responsibility to pay any outstanding fees to your service.

To query any payment details, speak to your service first for details. If you disagree with any CCB or CCR information, contact FAO on 136150. You will need to provide the payment statements issued by your service so they can analyse your problem.

7. Get all the family details right

Your CCB can be affected if you have other children in care or if one child attends more than one service. It's important to tell the service about your child's attendance at other child care services during the same period, so they can put the right details into the system.

Why is this important?

- If you advise the service when you have more than one child in care, the service can report the correct **multiple child count** for your family each week. This way, you can receive the correct CCB amount. There is no obligation on the service to backdate this information, so keep them informed of all changes. Otherwise, you may need to wait until the end of financial year for an adjustment.
- Make sure all attendance for the same period is placed on the **same parental CRN**. Otherwise, FAO will treat the children on different parental CRNs as individuals. When your payments are reconciled at the end of the financial year, the multiple child CCB percentage may not be applied.
- Make sure you tell the FAO **when your child starts school** because CCB is then paid at a lower rate. If you don't inform the FAO, you may receive too much CCB and be asked to pay it back.
- If you exceed your **42 day absence limit** any further absences must be for approved reasons (e.g. ill with a medical certificate) or CCB and CCR will not be paid for those absence days. (see Tip # 11 for more about absences)

8. Get your child immunised or get an exemption

To get CCB and CCR for children under seven, you must comply with these immunisation requirements:

- be fully immunised or up-to-date according to the Australian Standard Vaccination Schedule, or
- on a catch up vaccination schedule, or
- have an approved exemption.

The FAO will send letters to you, giving plenty of notice before it stops your CCB so that you can comply with the immunisation schedule or apply for an exemption. If you do nothing and your CCB is stopped, then your service will stop getting fee reduction payments on your behalf and you will have to pay the full fees for your child care. Even when you know your child's immunisation is up to date, if you get a letter from the FAO about it, you must contact them to make sure your record is correct. You will not get any CCR for the period when not eligible for CCB.



9. Get the right JET payments

- The FAO has to approve JET before the service can reduce your child care fees. The sooner you complete all JET plan and reporting requirements, the sooner you can start receiving the JET subsidy.
- Always provide your JET letters to the service as soon as you get them. This is equally important for approval and reassessments. The service is under no obligation to reduce your fees before you provide the JET letter.
- You may lose JET because your income support payments change, by not fulfilling your reporting requirements or if your CCB rate changes.
- To keep your JET, you must be receiving a CCB rate of 100%. Do not have continuous adjustment of the CCB percentage.
- JET is approved for a maximum of 12 hours for each day. Divide the hours shown on the FAO letter by 12 to find how many days JET is approved for.
- You can only have JET coverage for the hours of care you use, up to a daily total of 12 hours. You cannot use any 'leftover' hours on another day (if JET is approved for 36 hours, this is 3 days).

10. Get GCCB if you're a Grandparent

If you have taken over the care of a grandchild, you are not automatically eligible for Grandparent CCB. If you think you may qualify for GCCB, contact the Family Assistance Office for more information.



11. Get to know the absence rules

Government assistance is intended to help with the cost of child care. In certain circumstances, it can also be paid for the times your child is absent from a booked session of care and you are charged for it. There are some complex rules about absences, but the most important points to know are:

- Each child can use up to 42 absence days in a financial year for any reason, without giving the service any supporting evidence.
- After the initial 42 absence days have been used, CCB and CCR can only be paid for additional absences in specified circumstances and supporting evidence is usually required (e.g. a medical certificate if you or your child is ill).
- CCB and CCR are not paid for absences before the first day of care or after the last day of actual attendance at the service. You may be charged fees if you don't give a certain amount of notice, but these fees do not attract CCB or CCR, unless the next dot-point applies.
- If your child has already used the initial 42 absence days, CCB and CCR may be paid for additional absences that occur after the last day of care. NB: if the child is absent for an additional absence reason (such as illness) but has not already used all 42 initial absences, then the absence is still considered to be an initial absence and CCB/CCR is not paid.
- Your service may charge for public holidays that fall on a day you usually send your child to care. If so, you can use an initial absence to have CCB and CCR paid for that day. A public holiday is not an additional absence reason. You cannot use additional absences for a public holiday unless the initial absences have all been used and your child satisfies one of the additional absence reasons.
- Be clear about telling the service when you take your child out of care. If they don't know you have left, they may report absences for several weeks and receive CCB for you incorrectly. This will have to be repaid and the service will have to bill you for the full fees that you owe them.

FAO = Family Assistance Office
CCB = Child Care Benefit
GCCB = Grandparent CCB

CRN = Customer Reference Number (issued by FAO/Centrelink)
SCCB = Special Child Care Benefit
CCR = Child Care Rebate

CCMS = Child Care Management System
JET = Jobs, Education & Training Child Care Fee Assistance