Family day care programming, physical environment and relationships policy

This is a mandated policy under the operational policy framework. Any edits to this policy must follow the process outlined on the [creating, updating and deleting operational policies](#) page.

Overview

The South Australian Department for Education (the department) operates a family day care (FDC) Program (the program). FDC services are provided through a network of self-employed FDC educators who are registered with one of the department's 12 FDC services (schemes) to deliver education and care to children in their own home and/or an approved premises.

Scope

This policy applies to all department FDC staff, registered FDC educators and approved FDC educator assistants.

Contents

Detail

The legislative base

As an approved provider of FDC, the department services are governed by the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care (NQF). The NQF incorporates and is established by the **Education and Early Childhood Services** (**Registration and Standards) Act 2011**, **Schedule 1, Education and Care Services National Law, (South Australia)** (the **National Law**) and the **Education and Care Services National Regulations** (the National Regulations) with which the department must comply.

The NQF also includes a **National Quality Standard** (NQS) against which our services are assessed and rated. The NQS comprises 7 quality areas: educational program and practice; children's health and safety; physical environment; staffing arrangements; relationships with children; collaborative partnerships with families and communities and governance and leadership. Educational programs must be based on two approved learning frameworks: **Being, Belonging and Becoming: Early Years Learning Framework** (the **Early Years Learning Framework**) and **My Time Our Place: Framework for School Age Care** (**Framework for School Age Care**).

The NQF is administered by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). In addition, the state based regulatory authority, the Education Standards Board (ESB) monitors services for compliance with the National Law and National Regulations and assesses them for quality against the NQS.

A series of statutory objectives underpin all aspects of the NQF. Those that particularly apply to individuals and entities involved in the provision of services whether as providers, staff, educators, educator assistants and students, are described in

- x [Family day care health and safety policy (PDF 295KB)](#)
- x Family day care programming, physical environment and relationships policy

In addition, the department has two procedures comprising:

- x [Management of complaints, incidents and non-compliance in family day care and Respite Care program procedure (PDF 726KB)](#)
- x [Family day care fee and levy charging procedure (PDF 422KB)](#).

Together, these policies and procedures address the key operating requirements of the NQF making clear how those requirements must be met, the responsibilities of all educators and department

outcomes for each child is available and provided to parents.

A copy of the educational program for children must be available at the family day care premises or venue.

Physical environments

The way that the environment is designed, equipped and organised determines the way that the space and resources are used and has the potential to maximise children's engagement and level of positive experience and inclusive relationships. We are committed to providing physical environments that are safe, suitable and provide a rich and diverse range of experiences that promote children's learning and development[1].

This policy focusses on the design and use of the spaces in an educator's premises or other approved venue for the FDC program service which they provide consistent with National Regulations. We recognise that FDC is very different from education and care provided in a purpose-built facility. This is a strength which we seek to optimise for the benefit of children's learning and development. For preschool and school aged children, a family day care premises offers the familiarity and comfort of a family home which they share with an educator's family and a small group of children of mixed ages. To ensure adequacy, appropriateness, safety and the use of sustainable practices, the National Law, National Regulations, National Quality Standard and department policy and operational guides have a number of requirements that educators must meet.

Design for inclusive play-based learning

The way in which the service environment is designed, equipped and arranged determines how children use space and resources. The environment also impacts on the behaviours and interactions of children and adults [2]. The design, equipment and arrangement of the physical environment must facilitate a range of experiences, including quiet, solitary, active and group-based experiences, the inclusion of all children, be developmentally appropriate and enable easy movement between indoors and outdoors. There must be space and opportunity for all children to create, explore, engage with natural materials and collaborate with others as well as rest and sleep. Good ventilation, natural light and a comfortable temperature indoors, shade from the sun and adequate supervision of children at all times must be met. Collectively, these all contribute to safe, play-based learning and recreation. A well created physical environment that responds to and anticipates children's competence, interests and needs, enables the educator to engage with children to support their learning and development.

Indoor and outdoor requirements

The principal basis on which the department assesses and re-assesses premises and venues for educator registration is their capacity to provide physical environments suitable for early childhood education and care and/or school age care, depending on the ages, number and individual requirements of the children

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[1] https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard accessed 13 Feb 2022)
[2] Guide to the National Quality Framework p182

who attend.

To support children's health and safety in the physical environment our family day care service's practices and procedures must follow:

- x [Kidsafe SA](#) advice
- x [Australian Standards](#) to support building, furniture, materials and equipment
- x [Red Nose Australia](#), [SIDS and Kids SA](#)
- x [Cancer Council SunSmart](#)
- x [Royal Life Saving Australian Water Safety Council](#).

This policy aligns closely with the [family day care health and safety policy (PDF 230KB)](#) as it relates to the safety and suitability of the physical environment.

Operational guides that outline the requirements of the physical environment must be followed by educators at all times. These relate to:

- x assessments of the family day care premises and venues and their reassessment
- x furniture, building, equipment and learning resources for children
- x fencing
- x glass
- x sleep, rest and relaxation (including beds and bedding)
- x water hazards and water safety (incat.8 (t)3.6 (y)1.5 (y)1.5 (y)d6e 1 Tf(e)-5.7 (d)-6.1.5 (()-.525 0 Tdn55o/42 (r)1.

hygiene and laundry facilities, ventilation and natural light, nappy change arrangements, bedding, water hazards, water features and swimming pools and the management of animals and glass.

Operational guides will reflect current expert advice in relation to the assessment, safety and suitability of the physical environment in a family day care setting. The operational guides are published on the [family day care educator portal](#) (staff login required).

Risk benefit assessments

Risk is a factor in (d)-4.1 aty0g63 (w)-1.9 (o)-4 (f)-2.1 ((o)-4 (g01 Tc 0.001 Tw ƒ 4 0 Td(b)-0.6 (l)-1.5 k (i)-0.6 a)-2.ma)-2.9 (

resolve conflict by communication and to self-regulate. It is a requirement of the National Law that no child in an education and care service may be subjected to any form of corporal punishment; or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances (s166). Responsibility for this provision applies to the department as Approved Provider, nominated supervisors of our services and FDC educators. Failure to ensure this requirement is an offence under the National Law which carries a significant fine.

Similarly, collaborative relationships with families are fundamental to achieving quality outcomes for children along with community partnerships based on active communication, consultation and collaboration[5].

The continuity of educators for children is a strength of the FDC service model which we value, support and build on. Consistent with our agreed philosophy, positive and constructive relationships are the bedrock of our service. In addition to the requirements of legislation, policy and operational guides , these are promoted through our code of conduct, [protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people guidelines for staff working or volunteering in education or care settings (PDF 3.2MB)](#)

Assistant Director, Child Care Services

Line manage scheme managers.

Oversee service quality and compliance.

Senior Policy Officer (FDC Programs)

Develop FDC policy, procedures and standards in accordance with the Department for Education policy framework requirements.

Implement appropriate controls to minimise risks in accordance with the Department for Education risk management policy and procedures.

Scheme Manager

Monitor compliance with this policy with all scheme staff.

Ensure that non-compliance with this policy and associated guides is effectively managed through training, support and disciplinary action if necessary.

Team Leader

Provide educational leadership to influence, mentor and build capacity of each educator's knowledge, skills, understanding and delivery of the educational program that reflects on practice.

Work with coordination staff to focus on continuous quality improvement and identify training needs.

Provide educational leadership to influence, mentor and build capacity of each educator's knowledge, skills, understanding and delivery of the educational program that maximises use and design of the physical environment and incorporates health and safety considerations.

Work with coordinators to focus on continuous quality improvement and identify training needs in relation to the use of risk benefit assessments.

Coordinator

Provide mentoring support and information to department FDC educators about:

x   children's learning and development

x   safety and design for education and learning in their physical environment.

Seek guidance and support from the educati

determine its appropriateness for the provision of education and care.

Educator

Deliver care and education to children and young people in line with the national approved learning frameworks.

Document, assess, evaluate and plan for children's learning and development.

Undertake professional development to attain and maintain an understanding of current research and pedagogy relating to children's learning.

Comply with the National Law and the National Regulations.

Undertake ongoing risk benefit assessments of the physical environment and implementing actions to maintain a safe education and care environment.

Report a reasonable suspicion/concern of harm and/or risk to CARL (131478) as per RRHAN-EC training and mandated notifier obligations.

Monitoring, reviewing and reflecting on each child's development and continually adapt the physical environment to their evolving capabilities, interests and ability.

Definitions

governance

The systems in place to support the effective management and operation of the service, consistent with the service's statement of philosophy.

service philosophy

A statement from the approve provider that outlines the purpose and principles under which the service operates.

Supporting information

[Being, Belonging and Becoming: Early Years Learning Framework (PDF 24.9MB)](#)

[Guide to the NQF](#)

[My Time Our Place: Framework for School Age Care (PDF 27.1MB)](#)

[National Quality Standard](#)

[Care Services National Law (SA)](#)

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

[Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017](#)

[Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016](#)

Related policies

[Family day care fee and levy charging procedure (PDF 422KB)](#)

[Family day care health and safety policy (PDF 230KB)](#)

[Family day care governance, leadership and staffing policy (PDF 230KB)](#)

[Management of complaints, incidents and non-compliance in family day care and respite care program procedure (PDF 726KB)](#)

[Safeguarding children and young people policy (PDF 826KB)](#)

[Financial management and compliance framework (PDF 357KB)](#) (staff login required)

[SA Treasurer's Instructions](#)

Related operational guides

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