



# Keeping children safe in Family Day Care

**Great spaces,  
Safe spaces**



# Keeping children safe

## Everybody wants to keep children safe in Family Day Care (FDC).

- Parents must be able to go to work knowing their child will be safe at their FDC educator's home.
- Educators must ensure children are safe while in their care.
- FDC services require that educators are careful of children's safety at all times.
- The government requires that children in educator's care are safe from harm.
- And above all, children themselves, want and need to be safe. They have a fundamental right to be protected and kept safe when they attend Family Day Care.

But as we all know, children cannot protect themselves from all harm and hazards. That is the role of the adults that look after them.

While you have children in your home as a Family Day Care educator, that is your role.

Family Day Care Educators have responsibility for:

- checking their home to make sure it is safe
- supervising children at all times to make sure they do not hurt themselves
- thinking about what they are doing with children, what they are doing in home and what the possible dangers of this could be
- understanding the laws they need to follow as an educator that the government has put in place to help keep children safe

# Supervision

Supervising (keeping watch over) children is the main way children are safe. You need to be able to respond immediately if a child is upset or if a child is doing something that may hurt them or another child.

When an educator is supervising all children at all times, you can stop accidents from happening by anticipating them. You need to know where all the children in your care are at all times and make sure you know what they are doing.

Supervising does not necessarily mean directly playing with or being with the children all of the time.

You can supervise by:

- putting yourself in the right position near a child or children to act quickly if you need to
- listening carefully to the sounds of the children in your care. Children are fairly good at letting adults know when they are needed!

- being with one child while keeping an eye on another across the room

Children generally need more supervision when they are younger – and of course babies need the most supervision as they start to learn how to crawl, walk or pull up and when they are eating and sleeping.

You need to think about how you will supervise **all** children in your care.

- You need to supervise the other children when you are changing a baby's nappy. You need to supervise the other children if you are helping a child that has hurt themselves.
- You need to supervise children when a family member comes to pick up or drop off a child. Do you need to invite the family member inside or is the area around the door safe if the door is open?
- You need to still adequately supervise when you are reheating food.

- You need to supervise all children adequately if some children are indoors and some children are outdoors. Where will you stand?
- You need to adequately supervise even if all the children you are caring for are not always be in the same room as you. What if older children are playing in a different room?
- You need to supervise a child that is asleep in another room. Is the room they are sleeping in safe when the child is awake as well as asleep? Is it too dark for you to see the child?
- You need to supervise even when you need to go to the toilet.
- You need to closely supervise during an excursion (any time you leave your home or garden). How will you supervise children in a park or the library or at shops or at your service's playgroup?
- You need to be alert to the sounds of children. What does sudden silence or a loud cry mean?



# Harm and Hazards

As a Family Day Care educator you need to make sure children are safe from harm and hazards.

A hazard is something that could cause harm to children.

Generally you will do this by:

## Making sure your house, yard and everything in them are safe

- Do a daily checklist to make sure your house or apartment and yard is still safe for children.
- Make sure poisons, chemicals, medicines are where children cannot get them.
- Check toys, furniture and play equipment such as highchairs. Are they all safe and unbroken?
- Put safety plugs in all power points.
- Have a fire extinguisher and blanket.
- Can children be kept out of the kitchen? Or is it safe for them to be there?
- Lock doors to shut off parts of the home that could contain hazards such as the laundry or garage.

## Making sure children are safe from people

- All educators need a Working With Children Check.
- All adults who live in the house also need a Working with Children Check.
- You need to keep a record of who comes to the house when children are there.
- Children can never be left alone with other adults in our house.
- You only let children leave your house with a family member who we know.
- It is against the law to punish a child physically. You cannot slap, spank or hit a child.
- You have to report if a child in your care is being hurt at their home, or you think they might be being hurt.

## Making sure what you do is safe to do around children

- Some things you do normally at home, you don't do when caring for children in your home. Things like having a cup of hot coffee or tea where a child might get it or where you might spill it.
- You may have to clean more regularly when you have children in your care to make sure the house is safe.

## You need to particularly take care when you leave the house

- Whenever you leave your house or apartment with children as a Family Day Care educator this is called an excursion.
- You need to think about all the ways a child could be hurt on an excursion and work out how to make sure it doesn't happen. This is called a risk assessment.





# Safety Checks

Every day you need to do a safety check of your home and yard. Your Family Day Care Provider will give you a list to tick as you check the various parts of your home before the children arrive or you can download one from the internet at –

[www.nswfdc.org.au/dailychecklist](http://www.nswfdc.org.au/dailychecklist)

Doing it every day may sound like too much, but it reminds you to look at the things that might cause an accident or harm to the children in your care.

Your FDC Provider will ask to see these lists to make sure you are doing them.







# Excursions

You do not always have to stay at home with the children in your care. You can go to parks, the shops, museums, libraries with the children.

Before you go on an excursion you have to do a written risk assessment of that excursion, to make sure you think about how to keep the children you are minding safe while they are outside your home. You also need to get parents' written permission.

For regular outings (such as the local park or library) you get permission once a year and do the risk assessment once a year. For other excursions you need to do a risk assessment **every time** and get parents' permission **every time**. A special risk assessment form and parent permission form will be given to you by your service. You must use these forms.

There are many things you have to think about for a risk assessment.

- How you are going to get there safely?
- Will you drive, walk or catch a bus or train?
- What will you do when you are there?
- How long will it take?
- What do you need to take to make sure children are safe?
- What harm could children face on the excursion and how will you make sure it doesn't happen?

# Sleeping

Children are not always safe when they are asleep or when you think they are. Children can die in their sleep (cot death) if they are not put to sleep in the safest way.

When you are putting babies to sleep:

- they need to be placed on their backs (if under 4 months)
- make sure their heads or faces can't get covered up while they are sleeping
- tuck in sheets and blankets
- don't have toys or pillows in their cot
- don't put them to sleep on a couch
- don't dress a sleeping baby in too many clothes or they will get too hot while they sleep
- place them with their feet at the bottom of the cot
- only use cots that comply with the Australian Standard for household cots – talk to your Approved Provider about this.

Check all sleeping children regularly.

Think about things that a child could find in the bedroom when they wake up. Are there things that could hurt them there?



# Child protection

As an educator you may be the adult a child sees most other than members of their family. That puts you in a special position to notice if that child is being looked after properly. Some families don't or can't look after their children well.

Some children are:

- physically abused
- sexually abused
- emotionally abused
- neglected
- exposed to violence in the home

It is against the law to punish a child physically. You cannot slap, spank or hit a child.

We have to report if a child in our care is being hurt at their home, or we think they might be being hurt.

As an educator you have a special role as a mandatory reporter. A mandatory reporter has to report to the government when they think a child is at risk of significant harm. If you see anything that makes you think a child is being abused, neglected or hurt, you

should contact your approved provider to find out who you can report it to.



## First aid

All FDC educators must have done a First Aid course and a course in managing allergies (anaphylaxis) and asthma. These courses need to be renewed when the qualification expires. You also need to have a first aid kit in your home so you can give first aid to a child if they are injured. Remember to call 000 and ask for an Ambulance if a child is seriously hurt or ill. You also need to carry a small first aid kit on excursions.

## Evacuation

You also need to practice leaving your home with the children in case there was a fire there or some other reason where you and the children wouldn't be safe if you stayed. (Such as a flood or a snake in the house or someone coming into your house that scared you.) You need to develop an evacuation plan with your FDC Provider for your home – to ensure you can get all the

children out safely at the one time.

You need to practice your plan 4 times a year.

## Fire Protection

You need to have a fire extinguisher, a fire blanket and smoke detectors in your house.



# What are the main ways children can be hurt?

We know the main ways children can be hurt. These are the things we need to take extra care around.

## Drowning

This is the main way children under 4 accidentally die in Australia. You have to watch children around water constantly. Make sure you remain with a child in a bath and let the water out immediately they are out. Make sure children can't get to ponds or pools – have fences if you are near a dam, river or lake. Make sure all nappy buckets or other containers with water are out of children's reach.

## Cuts

Children can get cuts from sharp things like knives and broken glass and by falling on jagged edges.

## Falls

Children fall on slippery floors, rugs, from furniture they can climb up on, stairs, change tables, cots, beds, high chairs and from windows and balconies. Falls from play equipment are also common. Supervise children at all times.

## Burns

Children can be burnt from smoke, hot surfaces, hot water, hot drinks and the sun. Make sure children cannot get near your stove or kettle or near a hot tap. Use sunscreen.



## Poisoning

Lots of things like tablets and medicine and cleaning liquids and alcohol are poisonous to children. Don't leave these things anywhere a child can get them. Some plants are also poisonous to children. Think also about spiders and snakes.

## Abuse

Children can be hurt by adults or even by older children in many ways. This can include sexual or physical abuse.

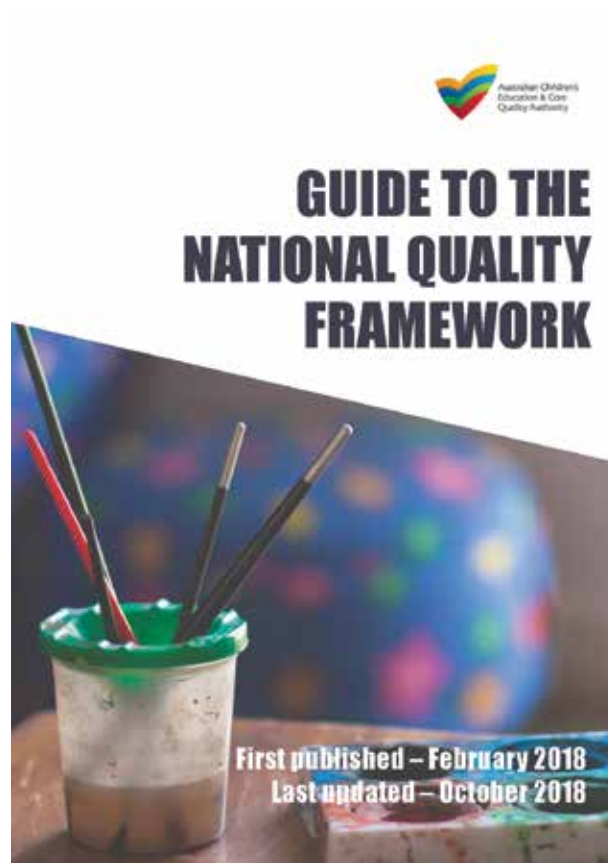


# Don't Break The Law

As a Family Day Care educator you have to follow special laws to ensure children are safe at Family Day Care. The main laws are the *Education and Care Services Law*, and the *Education and Care Services Regulations*.

The best way to get an understanding of the law and regulations is to talk to your FDC Service Provider. They will help you to understand the law.

The other way is to read the *Guide to the NQF*. You can find it at [www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide)



The most important parts of the law and regulations in regards to children's safety require a FDC educator to:

- take every reasonable precaution to protect a child from harm and from any hazard that might hurt them (*Section 167 of the Law*)
- make sure nobody uses tobacco, illicit drugs or alcohol while children are in the home (*Regulation 82*). You also can't drink or have drugs that may make it hard for you to care for children (*Regulation 83*)
- keep a record of any incident, injury, trauma and illness that happens to a child (*Regulation 87*). (Your FDC Provider will give you the forms to do this on)
- keep a first aid kit that has first aid supplies, is easily to recognise and easy to get to (*Regulation 89*)

- not let children leave your home unless they are with a parent or someone given permission by a parent in writing to take them or when they are going on an excursion (*Regulation 99*)
- only take a child on an excursion when you have done a proper written risk assessment (*Regulation 100 and 101*) and have written permission from the parent (*Regulation 102*). (Your FDC Provider will give you the forms for these.)
- report if you see anything that makes you think a child is being abused, neglected or hurt, (you should contact your approved provider to find out who you can report it to)

If you break these laws and you are charged and found guilty by a court you can face fines. Not knowing or understanding the law is not an excuse. The laws and regulations are designed to keep children safe while in your care.

# Where to find out more

Want to know more about keeping children safe in Family Day Care?



## Ask

The NSW Department of Education Information and Enquiries Line. The Department is the Regulatory Authority for FDC services. Call 1800 619 113 or email [ececd@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:ececd@det.nsw.edu.au)



## Read

The other booklets in these series  
[www.nswfdc.org.au/greatspaces](http://www.nswfdc.org.au/greatspaces)  
Guide to the National Quality Framework  
[www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide)



## Watch videos

[www.nswfdc.org.au/greatspaces](http://www.nswfdc.org.au/greatspaces)



## Look at websites

[www.fdcsupport.org.au](http://www.fdcsupport.org.au)  
[www.familydaycare.com.au](http://www.familydaycare.com.au)  
[www.nswfdc.org.au](http://www.nswfdc.org.au)  
[www.kidsafensw.org](http://www.kidsafensw.org)

## Read the curriculum

The *Early Years Learning Framework* (the curriculum for FDC and other early education and care services) has been translated into 11 different languages.

[www.nswfdc.org.au/EYLF](http://www.nswfdc.org.au/EYLF)

The Framework for School Aged Care (the curriculum for FDC for school aged children) is available in English only.

[www.nswfdc.org.au/MTOP](http://www.nswfdc.org.au/MTOP)





NSW FAMILY DAY CARE  
ASSOCIATION INC.



*This booklet has been funded through the Early Childhood Education Directorate, NSW Department of Education's Sector Development project, 2019.*

© NSWFDCA

