



# Family Day Care

## COVID-19

## Safe Plan

Continuity Management for the COVID-19 Phase

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## RISK ASSESSMENT



Country Children's Early Learning have undertaken a thorough risk assessment in consultation with our educators and identified possible risks and hazards to our learning environments and practices.

Where possible, we have eliminated or minimised all risks as is reasonably practicable. We will continue to review control measures and address those risks. We have kept all educators and families informed on the changing risk at our FDC services and the control measures being implemented to minimise risks.

We have Identified children and adults with compromised immunity or complex health care needs. We have Identified and established a suitable separate area for children who are displaying symptoms of cold and flu to wait pick up by parents/guardians.

## EDUCATOR PRE-SCREENING

- If an educator registers a temperature above 38°C and this is related to an illness they are not permitted to work.
- If an educator is feeling unwell and has cold or flu symptoms, (persistent cough, difficulty breathing, fever) they are not permitted to work.

## EDUCATOR SHIFT PROTOCOLS

Educator's working:

- Must maintain strict personal hygiene measures- hand washing, showering, physical distancing from others in public
- Must wash hands thoroughly upon arrival at the service with soap and water

Educators are reminded to:

- Avoid touching their mouth, nose and eyes
- Clean and disinfect objects that are touched often- mobile phones, keys, wallets
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitiser's if soap and water are not available
- Limit adult interactions where possible
- As far as reasonably practicable, ensure educators maintain a physical distance of 1.5 metres between each adult

## PARENT PRE-SCREENING

- Families are not permitted to enter the service unless this is prearranged with the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor (e.g. collection of a sick child, interview for enrolment)

## PARENT / CHILDREN ARRIVAL AND SIGN-IN PROTOCOLS

- A designated area for drop-off/pick-up is clearly indicated
- Signage clearly indicates drop off and pick up procedures for children and for parents not entering gate/home, no long communication/interaction with families or other adults (refer families to alternative methods of communication: mobile phone, software platform app, email)

- Consideration is given to families for whom English is their second language and written information translated
- Educators will sign children in and out using their preferred electronic device (or other method agreed upon between the Educator and Approved Provider) to reduce the amount of people using the device
- If families require additional assistance with multiple children, the educator to collect the child/ren from the gate
- Families who are front line workers (doctors, nurses) are requested to have changed from their work uniform after completing their shift before collecting their child
- End of the day communication with families is minimised, other methods of communication with families should be used, such as: communication books, phone message and emails
- if families require face to face communication ensure physical distancing measures are implemented and limit the time of the interaction/discussion where possible

## VISITOR / TRADESMAN ARRIVAL PROTOCOLS

- Visitors to the service are reduced to an absolute minimum
- Volunteers have been cancelled or postponed
- Vulnerable or high-risk people are excluded where practical, including the elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions
- Electronic paperwork used where possible  
Minimise interaction and alternatives to signatures of deliveries received- contactless methods or use own pen
- Alcohol-based hand sanitiser used before and after receiving any packages/deliveries
- Contractors who require entry to the service adhere to hygiene procedures
- Clear guidelines provided to contractors when visiting the service regarding physical distancing, hygiene protocols and child protection
- Handwashing facilities are provided to contractors to ensure they wash their hands thoroughly upon arrival, wipe any equipment with disinfectant wipes

## EXCLUSION GUIDELINE



Any educator, child, parent/guardian, or visitor to the service who presents with any of the following, will be excluded from the service. Any person who:

- registers a temperature above 38°C and this is related to an illness they are not permitted to enter the premises
- is feeling unwell and has cold or flu symptoms, (persistent cough, difficulty breathing, fever) they are not permitted to enter the premises
- Has recently travelled overseas or interstate where self-isolation measures are in place
- Has been in close contact with someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19
- Has been requested too self-isolate

## EDUCATORS, HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS OR CHILD TESTS POSITIVE TO COVID-19

- The Approved Provider will be contacted by the Public Health Unit (PHU) if an educator, household member or enrolled child tests positive to COVID-19
  - Should a parent contact the FDC service directly to report that their child or a parent has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, the FDC Educator is to advise the Approved Provider promptly
  - Should a parent or FDC Educator contact the Approved Provider directly to report that their child or a parent has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, the Approved Provider must contact the PHU immediately
  - Direction to close the service will be made by the PHU
  - Notify all families and educators immediately via email/ and or phone
    - Children in attendance at the service at the time of the positive test will need to be collected by their families straight away
  - Ensure the person who tested positive to COVID-19 self-quarantines at home for a minimum of 14 days
  - Notify the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of any closure through the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA ITS)
    - An investigation will be undertaken by the PHU to identify all potential contact traces including other educators members, children, visitors and families to prevent further transmission of COVID-19
    - All persons who are identified as a close contact will be directed by the PHU to self-isolate for 14 days and closely monitor their symptoms
  - Ensure an industrial environmental clean of the service under the direction of the PHU
  - Advice regarding re-opening of the service will be provided by the PHU to the Nominated Supervisor
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- Notify the re-opening of the service through the NQA ITS
- Notify the Work Health and Safety regulatory authority for your state or territory

**NSW Department of Education Early Childhood Education Directorate**

1800 619 113

**ACECQA (for Service closures)**

1300 422 327

**CCS Helpdesk (for Service Closures)**

1300 667 276

**National Coronavirus Helpline**

1800 020 080

**PROCEDURE FOR A CONFIRMED CASE OF COVID-19 IN YOUR SERVICE**

In the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19, the *Public Health Unit (PHU)* will conduct contact tracing to identify other people and places the person may have had contact with. The PHU will consider each unique context and provide specific requirements for the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor to follow.

If a possible contact is from an Early Childhood Education and Care Service, the PHU will contact the Nominated Supervisor and provide support and guidelines of the required procedures that will need to be explicitly followed. These may include advice and rules for continued operation, deep environmental cleaning and/or potential closure.

No personal information will be shared with the Nominated Supervisor as per Privacy laws.

The service will be provided with information about what day the person would have been in the service, the time frame and the age of the child if applicable.

Should a parent contact the service directly to report that their child or a parent has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, the Approved Provider must contact the PHU immediately. In order to comply with privacy laws, health information should only be shared by employers on a 'need-to-know' basis. This may be due to assist in identifying close contacts within the Service. The PHU will provide advice and action.

**THE PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT WILL:**

- Investigate all persons who receive a confirmed COVID-19 test result
  - Determine time frames of contamination and identify all possible places and people where cross contamination could have occurred
  - Conduct detailed contact tracing to identify any people who could have been in contact with the person and determine if this was 'close contact' or 'casual contact'
- Provide information on the time period where the person would most likely have been contagious
- Adhere to privacy and confidentiality laws and not identify the person who has been diagnosed with the virus
- Request information of all persons who would have been in the workplace (service) during this period
- Determine the next steps for action which could include:
  - o Closure of the service
    - o Short term closure of the entire service
    - o Notification to regulatory authority, SafeWork Australia
    - o The requirement of a deep clean of the service (Infection Protection Team will assist)
  - o COVID-19 testing of employees, children and parents
  - o Self-isolation periods of 14 days will be required
  - o Expected date of return to service

## HYGIENE AND PREVENTATIVE PRACTICES

- The number of visitors entering the service has been limited (controlled)
  - Anyone who is sick may not enter the service
    - If a child or educators member becomes ill whilst at the service, they will be sent home as soon as possible (as a precaution, they will be separated from other children whilst waiting to be collected to help prevent the spread of a virus)
    - We have enhanced hygiene practices for all educators, children and visitors - washing hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand sanitiser
    - Health and hygiene signs and posters are displayed to remind all educators and visitors of the measures necessary to help stop the spread of the virus- hand washing, cough and sneeze etiquette
  - Tissues are disposed of in closed bins and followed by washing hands
  - All educators are reminded to avoid touching their face, eyes, nose and mouth
  - Promotion of the annual influenza vaccination for educators, children and their families
  - Facilitation of robust infection control and cleaning
  - Reminders to refrain from intentional physical contact- shaking hands, kissing on cheeks, hugging
  - The service has adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and additional hygiene supplies including:
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- o Soap
- o Hand sanitiser
- o Toilet paper
- o Paper hand towel
- o Tissues
- o Disposable gloves
- o Masks (if required)
- o Thermometers
- o Rubbish bins with lids/bin liners
- o Detergent and Water
- o Cleaning detergent/ disinfectant/ cloths

## Handwashing

- We implement strict hand washing procedures for all educators, children and visitors
- All educators have read and acknowledge understanding of the Hand Washing Policy
- Hand sanitiser stations are provided at front entry of the service and in locations around the workplace
- Bathrooms are well stocked with soap, hand wash and paper towel
- Posters with clear instructions on how to wash hands and/or use hand sanitiser are displayed
- Photos of children demonstrating each step of hand washing near the sinks are displayed as visual prompts
- Cough/sneeze etiquette
  - o Posters demonstrating correct techniques for coughing/sneezing into a flexed elbow are displayed
  - o Educators model correct procedures to children
  - o Attempts by children are positively reinforced
  - o Reminders to wash hands after sneeze, blowing/wiping nose is displayed
  - o Reminders to dispose of used tissues in the bins provided are displayed

## Physical Distancing

- Where possible, we remain conscious of physical distancing requirements in each enclosed space and limit the number of adults in a space at any one time
- Educators are reminded to maintain a physical distance of 1.5 metres between other adults
- Markers to indicate 1.5 metres for parents to comply to physical distancing requirements upon arrival to service
  - Where possible, educators are requested to use other methods of communication with colleagues rather than congregate together
- Workstations, desks and tables are spread out
- Educators will comply to physical distancing requirements when
  - o Discussing children’s development
  - o Gathering resources
  - o Cleaning

*Children do not have to be counted in implementing physical distancing measures in an Early Childhood Education and Care service. However, it is best practice to limit the size of groups and interactions to assist educators implement physical distancing measures. (Safe Work Australia May 2020)*

**Considerations include:**

- Stagger play times for children
- Organise small groups for indoor and outdoor learning program
- Utilise the outdoor area as much as possible
  - Rearrange resources in rooms to provide a larger range of small group activities- books in several locations rather than one bookshelf; several stations for paint, playdough, craft
- Limit number of chairs at a table
- Set up activities at the end of tables
- Limit number of adults sitting at tables with children during mealtimes
- Maximise the space between children at mealtimes
- Introduction of progressive afternoon tea
- Clean tables and chairs thoroughly between each sitting

***Food Handling and Preparation***

- Educators have relevant and appropriate training to support safe hygiene practices
- Educators maintain physical distancing requirements in food preparation areas

- The kitchen area is only accessed by specific educators during hours of operation
- Effective hygiene procedures are increased including-
  - o Regular handwashing when preparing foods, after going to the bathroom and after touching face or hair
  - o Cleaning and sanitising food preparation areas and equipment
  - o Sanitising all eating and drinking utensils and food contact surfaces
- Current practices are used regarding provision of reusable utensils
- Disposable gloves are used when handling food
- Introduction of progressive afternoon tea

## Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedures

- A combination of cleaning and disinfection is used on a daily basis
- Adherence to National Health and Medical Research Council (HMRC) childcare cleaning guidelines
  - High touch surfaces are cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily or more frequently if required (door handles, light switches, tables, chairs, iPads, tablets, keyboards, touch screens, puzzles)
- Wash and launder toys using the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely
- Surfaces cleaned every day
- Educators wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for cleaning as a precaution
- Hands washed with soap and water before and after wearing protective equipment
- Gloves disposed of in leak-proof bag
- Personal belongings stored in locked cupboard to avoid cross contamination

## Bathroom Facilities

- All bathrooms for educators and children have adequate supplies of soap, liquid hand wash, paper towels and warm running water
- Effective personal hygiene practices are reinforced through posters and fact sheets in prominent positions in the service
- Educators model correct handwashing procedures with children

- The number of children and adults using washroom facilities is limited at any one time
- Situations where children are required to queue to use bathroom or wash their hands are avoided
- All facilities are cleaned and disinfected effectively

## PHYSICAL SPACE REQUIREMENTS

- Where possible, children are separated into smaller groups than normal throughout the service to promote physical distancing for adults
- Ventilation within the service is increased by opening windows and doors when weather permits
- A reduction in cross over of educators is controlled where possible
- Where possible, children are seated at opposite ends of a table when playing and eating
- Use small tables spaced apart rather than groups of tables positioned together for activities and eating
- Where practical consider moving some table activities outside
  - Consideration given to limiting numbers of children accessing particular equipment to ensure adequate supervision and adhering to physical distancing for adults as much as possible e.g.: sandpit, climbing equipment
- All outdoor equipment is regularly cleaned and disinfected

## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

- Positive interactions and relationships with children and their families are maintained
- We provide reliable sources of information to share with families during this pandemic
- We use trusted sources of information only
  - We use a range of communication methods to ensure all families receive and understand key messages- emails, phone calls, newsletter, service website and Facebook page
  - Signage around the service for parents and families has been increased providing directions, procedures and reassurance
  - Information about a child that would normally be done face to face with a Parent/Guardian is done by phone, text or email where Educators and Families are unable to talk face to face and social distance.
  - Displays are positioned at the front foyer area to ensure families who are no longer entering the service can be informed about the fun that has happened in the service that day
- Families are regularly informed about payment of fees- Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package
- Information is provided to families about their responsibilities for updating information to Centrelink
- Support is provided to families to assist in their child's well-being
  - Remain consciously aware of families and children who may be more vulnerable or at risk due to the COVID-19 environment

- Information provided to children is age appropriate and sensitive to their emotional wellbeing

## CONTINUITY OF EDUCATORS

- We maintain open communication with educators about continuity of employment opportunities at our workplace
- One-on-one meetings with educators to discuss rosters and availabilities is regular and ongoing (via zoom)
- government financial support options of JobKeeper and ECEC relief package are utilised if applicable to support continuity of employment for educators and educators
- Where possible, we have returned to similar rosters and placement of educators provide continuity of care for children
- Educators rosters meet or exceed educator to child ratios

## COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION WITH EDUCATORS

- Regularly consult with educators on health and safety matters relating to COVID-19 on a regular basis by revisiting the CKC risk assessment
- Routinely discuss the current control measures in place to eliminate or minimise the risk of exposure and review as required
- As enrolment numbers of children increase, control measures are adjusted to manage the change. For instance, how and when families may be permitted to enter the Service in the coming weeks/months, when will our Service be able to begin incursions
- Routinely communicate and consult with all educators about any modifications or updates to current policies or procedures that are in place to account for the pandemic conditions
- Assessment of the adequacy of resources/facilities in the workplace for the welfare of all educators is routinely applied
  - We maintain regular consultation with educators about current work, health and safety measures implemented and any changes or additions that may need to be made to ensure the safety for all educators
  - If and when required we consult with educators about changes to work arrangements, rosters, duties including additional cleaning, meet and greet roles, educators meetings, training, assessment and rating
- Limitations are placed on non-essential meetings, gatherings or training
- Non-face-to-face methods of communication is used when practical – phone calls, emails & Zoom

## EDUCATOR WELLBEING

- A conscious effort to maintain strong and supportive relationships with all educators members is made
- Up to date information from reliable sources is provided, including:
  - o COVID-19
  - o Safe Work Australia recommendations for Work Health and Safety
  - o Department of Health
  - o Employment support through Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE)
  - o Support agencies including counselling services (Beyond Blue, Head Space)
- Sensitivity and empathy to the feelings of individual educators members is paramount, in particular educators who may be concerned about returning to the workplace
- We offer opportunities for discussions about the support that is available such as Beyond Blue to help cope with trauma and anxiety
- Constant reassurance is provided to educators indicating that we are always working to eliminate or minimise risks to their health and safety in the workplace to help ease their concerns
- Immediate response is applied to any workplace bullying by following relevant policies and procedures
- Confidentiality and privacy laws are maintained at all times
  - We foster wellbeing initiatives as suggested by educators members and professionals within the Early Childhood Education and Care Sector (Mindfulness, Yoga, dance, music)
- Opportunities are provided to educators to engage in online professional development courses and workshops
- Time is set aside for programming, mentoring sessions and capacity building

## EDUCATOR TRAINING

- Options for the delivery of refresher training for First Aid and CPR through the [Australian Skills Quality Authority](#) as recommended by ACECQA is made available
- The range of interactive and online courses offered through professional learning providers is consistently investigated (webinars, e-learning modules)
  - We encourage and support educators to gain professional learning hours

## VULNERABLE EDUCATORS AND CHILDREN

- Children and educators with compromised immunity or complex health care needs are identified
  - We request educators with underlying health conditions to seek medical advice from their health practitioner regarding additional measures required to protect themselves whilst at work (PPE, additional handwashing)
- Educators who are more vulnerable to COVID-19 may include:

- O Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples aged 50 years and older with one or more chronic medical condition
  - o People aged 65 years and older with chronic medical conditions
  - o People with compromised immune systems
- Families have been requested to update their child's medical management, risk minimisation and communication plans in consultation with their child's health practitioner- including Asthma Management Plans
- All educators and children are encouraged to have the annual influenza vaccine