



Frontier Services
serving remote Australia

Frontier Services In Home Care

Educator Information Booklet



Child care at home

Welcome

Please read through this booklet carefully.

Thank you for your interest in becoming an In Home Care "Educator".

We have put together this information booklet to give you a better idea on what is involved in becoming an Educator.

We are not going to swamp you with technical terminology and information, just the basics. Being a child Educator for In Home Care can be very rewarding, if you take advantages of the opportunities that will be available to you.

What Is In Home Care?

A flexible form of child care where care is provided in the children's home by an approved Educator. In home care is aimed at families whose child care needs cannot be met by an existing service. Most of the Educators registered with our service work on stations.

Frontier Services In Home Care's aim is to support Educators with the Service to enable them to provide care for children in **a safe, secure, caring and** stimulating environment. The Service will be flexible and endeavour to meet the needs of the families regardless of geographical distance within the Service's boundaries, while at all times being sensitive to the values and responsibilities of parents. Our service is sponsored by Uniting Church Frontier Services with funding from the Australian Government under the Child Care Support Program.

Our Service Staff

The National Coordinator of our service is based in Brisbane, Queensland. The National Coordinator is responsible for the management of the overall service and provides support to the regional coordinators.

The Regional Coordinators have a vital liaison role in the provision of quality home based child care services.

Responsibilities include:

- Matching families requiring care with the most appropriate available Educator
- Recruiting, assessing and inducting appropriate Educators
- Visiting and supporting Educators in their role of caring for children
- Establishing effective liaison with parents, Educators, staff and community agencies
- Implementing effective administration procedures including reporting to various government departments

Please feel free to contact the regional coordinator if you have any concerns regarding any aspect of care provision or the service.

The Resource Officers of our service are often the first point of contact for families and educators.

Responsibilities include:

- First point of contact for new families and Educators.
- Liaison with Educators, parents and coordinators
- Processing of Educator Attendance Records and Educator payment advices
- Assisting with reports for various departments.

Educator Role

The term "Educator" in the In Home Care context refers to people who are approved and registered by an In Home Care service to provide childcare in the children's own home.

Educators are expected to provide a high standard of childcare and to adhere to the guidelines of the In Home Care service. They are warm, energetic and sensitive to the needs of families. Part of the Educator's role is to provide the children with a variety of age appropriate activities that encourage the development of life skills. Educators are also responsible for record keeping e.g. Medication forms/Attendance records/Excursion forms/Incident and Accident forms.

At the commencement of care every day, a safety check must be done to ensure that the child care environment is free from hazards. If an Educator encounters any hazards that they cannot manage then the parent and In Home Care regional coordinator must be notified.

Specific Objectives: in relation to children

- 1** To provide secure nurturing environments that foster trust and acceptance of self and others and support and strengthen family ties.
- 2** To provide safe, hygienic, challenging and positive environments which meet the needs, interests and developmental levels of the children in care.
- 3** To respect children as individuals and foster their unique abilities and cultural identities.
- 4** To respond to children's behaviour positively, setting reasonable limits appropriate for their age and developmental level.
- 5** To offer a well balanced range of experiences in the home environment that encourage self sufficiency and stimulate interests and development.
- 6** To be flexible to meet the needs of individual children.

Educators are not Housekeepers!

The Educator's role is primarily to provide child care and does not encompass household responsibilities such as being a domestic. However the Educator may undertake some household duties associated with meeting the needs of children in their care, such as preparing lunches, clearing up afterwards and putting toys away. As a rule of thumb if the task would be done in a child care centre than you can be expected to do it as an In Home Care Educator. In addition Educators on station placements can expect to be responsible for cleaning their own rooms/lodgings.

However

There are times of the year when you may be asked to take on more household duties than normal. Examples include mustering or shearing times, events of flood or fire, or in the event of a family emergency.

Please discuss this with your In Home Care family. What would be expected of you and how you feel about this are just two of the things to discuss.

Role Statement

QUALIFICATIONS

- Current training in first aid and resuscitation, for example completion of an Australian First Aid Certificate with CPR for children.
- Current Working with Children Card for the State.

EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- Previous experience with children.
- Knowledge of children's growth and learning development, hygiene procedures, nutrition, appropriate behaviour management strategies, first aid and safety, including knowledge of potential hazards.
- The ability to communicate with children and adults.
- The ability to respond appropriately in an emergency.
- Adequate organisational skills including the ability to plan age appropriate activities.
- Experience in working in rural and remote areas and an understanding of the needs of families in these areas.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Acceptance of the need for a range of childcare choices.
- A positive attitude to childcare and a strong commitment to quality care.
- Acceptance of and sensitivity to, the individual needs and differences of young children and their families, especially children of different cultures and religions and children with disabilities.
- Commitment to the need for confidentiality.
- Commitment to in-service training/workshops.
- Recognition of the need to communicate effectively and regularly with the coordination unit.
- Flexible and receptive to new ideas.
- Recognition of own physical and emotional needs and limitations.

GENERAL TASKS

- Provide an environment that is conducive to the health, safety, development and quality care of children and is capable of meeting the individual needs of children, including children of different cultures and religions, and children with disabilities and other special needs.
- Provide a range of activities and experiences that are designed to promote the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of each child.
- Use positive behaviour management techniques with children.
- Ensure close supervision of children at all times.
- Ensure food and drink provided to a child by the Educator is nutritious, sufficient, served at regular intervals, and has regard to the child's health, allergies, cultural and religious requirements and preferences.
- Provide information to parents about the child's day.
- Maintain accurate records as required.

Additional things to think about for station placements:

- You will be living with a family that you may never have met before
- Accommodation available (this may be a room in the family home or may be accommodation in another building on the property)
- Family routines—awakening and sleep times, use of shower and washing machine, meal times
- Will you be included in family outings, like race days, field days etc?
- Telephone—appropriate usage and frequency of personal calls
- Water, Power — usage, restrictions, location etc
- Use of TV (limited TV stations) etc
- How often will you be able to get to a town and how long will it take to travel there?
- Shopping is done weekly or fortnightly—some properties longer.
- Being away from your friends and family and your animals

- Vehicle—access and usage, fuel, spare tyres, 4X4 operation.
- What will you do with your spare time, your hobbies and interests?
- What would you have to bring with you, to be comfortable?
- Educators are not permitted to smoke, drink alcohol or ingest any substance that may suppress awareness during working hours
- What resources would you bring with you for the children?

Duty of Care

Your duty of care to a child should be the equivalent as that exercised by a reasonable careful parent.

If you fail to exercise reasonable care towards a child and the child is harmed or injured due to your negligence, then you have not complied with your duty of care. If you were proven to be negligent in your "Duty of Care", then you would have to compensate the child for the damaged caused.

The legal definition of negligence required that there be:

- (1) duty of care owed
- (2) breach of that duty
- (3) damage

In order for compensation to be awarded by the court, there must be proof of some harm or injury to the child. It is difficult to find the balance between "meticulous supervision of children every moment of the day" and "trying to encourage the sturdy independence of children as they grow up". As a registered Educator your level of supervision is to be of the highest standard. As a professional child Educator your duty of care to children will entail protecting them from harm or injury.

Confidentiality

All information relevant to children, their parents, and the Educator, is regarded as completely confidential. We trust all parties will treat each other with the utmost respect. You will need to discuss arrangements for secure storage of documentation/records at the family home.

The Coordination Unit takes reasonable steps to ensure all personal information it holds is stored securely. If you have any issues you wish to discuss, please contact the office or approach your In Home Care family directly.

Current Information

It is important that the service has correct information **at all times**. Please ensure that you notify the regional coordinator should any changes occur to your telephone numbers, emergency contacts, children's medical history and custody orders. Educators need to ensure they hold current details for all children and emergency contacts for parents as well, so you can respond quickly when a child becomes ill, has an accident or parents need to be contacted for any other reason.

Set Up Costs

- Public liability insurance
- First Aid training
- First aid kit – Educators should have a basic kit for outings/transportation
- Working with Children Card
- Federal police check

Likely Ongoing Costs

- Transport
- Childcare resources
- Maintaining First Aid kit
- Administration (phone calls, fax, photocopying, postage, stationary)
- Bookkeeping/accounting fees, receipt books
- Domestic workers compensation (optional)
- Income protection insurance (optional)

Educators become very special people in the lives of the children as well as the family. The most appropriate Educator available will be allocated to a family requiring care. This is subject to the mutual agreement of the service, the parent and the Educator.

Educator's requirements

- Must be 18 years of age
- **Must be willing to undertake induction training prior to commencing care with the family.** (this may require travel to the regional coordinator's office)
- Have some knowledge and understanding of children's developmental needs, hygiene procedures, nutrition, behaviour management, first aid and safety
- Have a commitment to the children they care for and to the In Home Care service
- Be prepared to undergo a comprehensive assessment process to be registered with our service and provide all the requisite paperwork
- Be able to develop small business practices such as paying their own tax, superannuation and income protection cover, issuing receipts and keeping records for tax purposes and budgeting for their own holiday pay and sick pay
- Obtain an ABN and are advised to seek information from an accountant about whether to register for GST and what record keeping is necessary for business deductions.

Educators are 'establishing an enterprise' and are therefore self employed

How Do I Register as an Educator?

The following paper work must be submitted for processing to the Coordination Unit before registration can be finalised.

- ☐ Educator Application including ABN
- ☐ A copy of your resume
- ☐ Copy of Senior First Aid certificate
- ☐ Medical certificate
- ☐ Copy of Working with Children Card
- ☐ Federal Police Check
- ☐ Referees/Written references (x2)
- ☐ Public Liability Insurance certificate
- ☐ Copy of your driver's licence

Assessment of understanding of children's needs and quality care

Once you have been approved you will be sent an Educator agreement to sign in which you agree to abide by the service's guidelines and recommendations and a registration certificate will be issued. Once you have been selected by a family, a Provision of Care agreement will be signed by all parties which outline the child care arrangements.

Please note the registration process takes time and the child care subsidy is not able to be processed until the Regional Coordinator advises everything is in order for care provision to commence. If you arrange to start work before this advice it will be a private arrangement not covered by this Service.

*NB Working with Children Card applications in Queensland take 40 working days ie an average of 8 weeks to be issued and it is a legislative requirement that self employed people seeking child related work hold a Working with Children Card **before** they commence.*

Should you have any further queries please contact the Coordinator who sent you the information.

Parent Interviews

Prepare well for first interviews as this might determine whether or not you are chosen for the position! Be prepared to do a face to face or telephone interview. Have a pleasant phone manner and get clear instructions as to the house location. The interview is done in your own time, the same as any other job interview.

Be well prepared, punctual and take care with your own personal appearance so as to present yourself in the best possible light. The parents will want to hear a little about your personal background and childcare experiences.

You may like to prepare a portfolio containing any certificates or references you have relating to childcare. Confirm with the parents the hours they require care (weekends and overnights may attract different rates). Discuss the children's routine; clarify what the parents will be expecting you to do when you are caring for them.

The following are some of the things that need to be discussed with your In Home Care family:

- What are their children's normal routines including schooling and sleeping
- Medical history, health issues that you may need to know about
- Children's meal preparation—kitchen routines, types of meals and any allergies
- Toileting—nappy changing, toilet training, bed wetting.
- Clothing—day/night and play clothing, hats and sunscreen
- Children's interest—indoor/ outdoor play, favourites games, toys etc.
- Outings that the Educator may take the children on regularly
- Dangerous items—location and identification eg chemicals, guns
- Outdoor safety eg pools, spas etc
- Issues to do with First Aid—location of medical kit, emergency phone contacts
- The parents idea's about behaviour management
- Fees and payment

In addition station placements need to discuss:

- General farm safety, dams, bores, drains, swimming holes or pools, machinery etc.
- Family routines—meals times, sleep times, family only times, TV times, etc
- Issues to do with accommodation arrangements including type of accommodation and usage, locations, restrictions of telephone, water and power.

Support

In Home Care service staff will support you at least fortnightly via telephone - you will need to advise if certain days/times are more suitable than others. For support to be successful, clear, open and honest communication is required between the Educator and regional coordinators. If you are having difficulties staff can help to identify and discuss possible solutions.

Parents have given prior permission for service staff to access family homes whilst In Home Care is being provided. As a matter of courtesy we encourage you to inform parents when a home visit is to be conducted.

During support calls or visits, the following areas will be considered and discussed:

Monitoring the quality of care

- The state of hygiene and potential safety risks.
- The quality of adult/child interactions and behavior management techniques, and the availability of stimulating experiences for children.

Supporting the Educator

- Ideas and resources for meeting the children's needs
- Educator's weekly planners including future planning and programming
- Support of the Educator's professional development
- Toys and equipment

Observing the children

- The children's development needs, and activities to extend learning will be discussed
- Behavioural issues and management techniques may be discussed

Maintaining Records

- Accident/incidents forms, medication authorisation forms, excursion forms, emergency drills and secure storage of these forms.
- In Home Care staff will write reports of each home visit/contact relating to the children in care, activities provided, safety and issues discussed.

Fee Schedule and Working Conditions

Fees for care provision are negotiated between the Educator and the family. Issues such as number of children in care, hours of care, qualifications and experience of Educator need to be taken into account. Agreement needs to be reached whether differential rates will apply for 'overtime', weekends, overnights and public holidays. Station placements will need to also take into consideration accommodation and board. The agreed fee structure is documented in the Provision of Care Agreement and is entered in the software we use to interface with the Family Assistance Office (FAO).

Educators are considered to be 'establishing an enterprise' and thus are self-employed. Because of this you are required to have an ABN, manage your own tax, holiday pay, sick pay, superannuation and income protection cover. It is recommended that you seek advice from an accountant before commencing to ensure you are aware of what records you need to keep for business deductions.

To assist with the cost of child care, the Australian Government provides families with assistance through the Child Care Benefit (CCB) which is processed by the FAO. For CCB purposes standard hours are between 8am and 6pm for 10 continuous hours each day from Monday to Friday (hours worked outside of these hours attract a slightly higher rate of CCB). Our Service believes it is not acceptable for Educators to work more than 6 days in a row, but as it is a self-employed role, Educators may elect to work 7 days.

As an indication only, Educators who are not provided with accommodation and board can earn between \$16 and \$25 per hour. The value of the accommodation and board will depend on whether it is shared accommodation, under the family home roof, what arrangements are

negotiated for food, utilities, amenities, and so on.

Educators are entitled to take annual leave each year at a time mutually suitable to the Educator and the In Home Care family. Advance notice of at least 4 weeks should be given, so families can make alternative care arrangements in need. If the Educator is sick, they should ring and advise the family and give as much notice as possible. As a general rule of thumb, 20 working days for annual leave and 10 working days for illness/personal leave per year is considered a reasonable entitlement.

There is a service levy charged of \$3 per week per child. This is reviewed annually and deducted as part of the payment process.

Please note that this Service and Agreements signed only relate to the provision of In Home child care. If you are willing and agree to undertake extra duties that are outside the scope of this Service and the Agreement, we recommend you sign a separate contract as it is likely that you would be an employee of the family/station for these extra duties. Any extra duties that you agree to take on must not take place during the hours of care provision as this is a condition of accessing the child care benefit subsidy/tax rebate. Our Coordination Unit staff will not be able to assist you with any issues relating to the extra duties that you agree to take on.

How Do I Get Paid?

Correctly completed Attendance Records are required as part of the CCB claim process and are to be faxed to the Coordination Unit every Monday by 12 noon. Originals will be sighted during Home Support Visits as per the legislation for CCB Compliance purposes.

The data from the attendance records are remitted electronically through to the FAO who calculate the CCB entitlement and remit the total monies owing to our Service.

The Coordination Unit passes on the CCB component of the family fee fortnightly, direct into the Educator's designated bank account. The families pay the remainder of the negotiated fee. Educators are faxed payment advice forms each fortnight detailing the amount of CCB component and the amounts to be paid to them by the families.

Families are to make arrangements with the Educators about how they will pay them the difference between the total fee and the CCB component.

It is the Educator's responsibility to follow up any outstanding 'balance of payment' directly with the families.

Under Family Assistance law, services must submit their attendance records no later than 2 weeks after the end of the week in which the care was provided. If attendance records are not received no data is remitted to the Family Assistance Office and no CCB is received.

A delay in lodging attendance records is likely to mean no 'pay' for that fortnight as pays are processed fortnightly on a Monday. It is the Educators responsibility to ensure the Resource officer has received the attendance sheets for the previous fortnight.

CCB is not paid when the Educator is not available with the exception of public holidays. Therefore if an Educator is unavailable for care due to sickness themselves or holidays, the parents would not pay any fee. However if an Educator is available and a parent indicates they do not require

care, then fees will apply. Parents are to be advised where possible the night before by the Educator.

Recommended Services IHC Fees Schedule for Station Placements

Base Fee:

For families with 2 children or less:
\$650/week

For families with 3 children or more:
\$750/week

This fee applies where some care is given each week day (Monday to Friday between the hours of 8am and 6pm) and board and lodging are supplied. The fee includes care up to 50 hours per week only.

Base Overnight Care: \$120.00/night

Base Weekend Care: \$20/hour

Educators who are experienced and/or qualified can expect to earn more than these base fees.

Under this schedule, an overtime hourly rate for any time in excess of 10 hours per day or over 50 hours per week (Monday – Friday) should be agreed to before care commences and be documented in the Care Provision Agreement.

(Last reviewed July 12)

Cancellation of Care

At least 2 weeks' notice must be given. Fees are charged for all contract hours and any time in excess of contracted hours. Please also ensure that you advise your regional coordinator of the cessation of care date as soon as it is known and whether you wish to be considered for another placement.

Government Department Contacts

State offices for Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Office of Early Childhood (DEEWR)

Darwin (Territory Office)

2nd and 3rd Floor Jacana House, 39-41 Woods Street, DARWIN NT 0800
PO Box 9880 Darwin NT 0801
Phone: 1-DEEWR (133 397)

Brisbane (State Office)

9th Floor, 215 Adelaide St, BRISBANE QLD 4000
Phone 1-DEEWR (133 397)

Perth (State Office)

12th Floor, QV1 Building, 250 St. Georges Terrace, PERTH WA 6000
Phone: 1-DEEWR (133 397)

State and Territory Departments and Contact Numbers

NT Department of Health and Community Services	1800 700 250
QLD Department of Child Safety	1800 811 810
After Hours	1800 177 135
WA Department for Child Protection	1800 622 258
After Hours	1800 199 000

Frontier Services In Home Care Contact Details

Frontier Services CRN – 406 971 726 V

Coordination Units

Charleville and Districts In Home Care

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