

Resource Sheet

SUPPORTING EDUCATORS IN FAMILY DAY CARE AND IN HOME CARE

Designed for Family Day Care (FDC) and In Home Care (IHC)

Acknowledgement



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As of 1 January 2013, Gowrie Victoria commenced as the Professional Support Coordinator (PSC) for Victoria. Gowrie Victoria is committed to ensuring continuity of quality support to services and has commenced a planned transition to ensure this occurs. As part of this transition, and in partnership CCC, services can access a number of resources as developed by CCC.

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National Quality Standards Quality Areas 1, 4, 7

Interim Standards for In Home Care Standard 3, 4, 5, 5, 8 and 12

Educators are an essential part of any education and care service. In home-based settings, they have many responsibilities beyond the care and education of children. It is the goal of every professional educator to provide high quality early childhood education and care, which requires support. It is a requirement of the funding agreements for both Family Day Care (FDC) and In Home Care (IHC) that educators are supported by their co-ordination unit. This resource sheet explores what 'support for educators' means and why it is important, particularly in a home based setting.

What are the challenges?

It is common for educators in FDC and IHC to feel isolated. They spend most of their time with the children and, with the exception of their family and the family members at drop-off and pick-up time, may not see another adult for weeks on end. They have limited opportunities to converse with other professionals and often have the added pressure of running their own business. Access to training and other professional development opportunities can be limited by time, distance and costs.

The isolation, pressure, limited opportunities and access difficulties can result in the educator having limited opportunities for sharing information with peers and gaining perspectives on what quality education and care can look like in the home environment. As well as potentially reduced standards of quality, this can also result in a reduction in job satisfaction and increased levels of stress for the educator, affecting the retention of experienced educators for services.

All of these challenges can be overcome by providing timely and tailored support for educators through a balance of scheduled and spontaneous home visits, training sessions, phone calls, chats during play groups, etc.

Methods of supporting educators

There are likely to be as many ways of supporting educators as there are educators. It is important to get to know each educator in your service and negotiate the methods of support, which appeal to, and are effective for, each person, while also ensuring the service's needs are met. Some ideas for support may include:

- organising educator meetings and training that meets their needs
- holding playgroups at a variety of times and locations
- arranging social outings
- including educators in the development and review of policies and procedures
- providing information and resources to educators
- encouraging educators to develop peer networks
- loaning expensive items, such as cots, car seats and reference material
- having two field workers do home visits so one can be with the child while the other assists the educator with programming
- providing assistance with completing forms
- encouraging educators to attend reference groups and training with organisations other than their service
- providing transport assistance
- sending reminders when insurance, training, safety checks, etc, are due
- considering alternate ways to be in touch with educators, such as social media, telephone calls or Skype
- encouraging educators to set their own fees (independent fee setting) at a level that's high enough to earn a decent wage
- ensuring educators are always called educators, because it is the term that recognises their professional standing.

References and further reading

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) and Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (VCAA) 2009, *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework for all Children from Birth to Eight Years*, State of Victoria, Melbourne.

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), 2009, *Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*, Commonwealth of Australia, ACT.

Department Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), 2011, *Child Care Service Handbook 2011-2012*, Commonwealth of Australia, ACT.

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), 2010, *Family Day Care Funding: Program Guidelines 2010-2011*, viewed 14 February 2012,
http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Resources/Documents/FDCFunding_201011.pdf

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), 2010, *In Home Care Funding: Program Guidelines 2010-2011*, viewed 14 February 2012,
http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Resources/Documents/IHCFunding_201011.pdf

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), 2008, *Interim Standards for In Home Care: Funding Agreement Requirements*, viewed 14 February 2012,
<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Programs/ChildCareforServices/SupportforChildCareServices/Documents/IHCInterimStandards.pdf>

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (No. 653, 2011).