

Risk Management Tips for Family Day Care



The Child Safe Standards provide a framework so organisations can be safer for children.

Child harm or abuse can occur in any child-related organisation. To effectively embed the Standards to help prevent or reduce child harm and abuse, you must identify the unique risks in your organisation, to help understand which areas may need to be improved.

Risks can be related to the service type, location, service and educator profile, and the children that access each service. Harm and abuse of children in organisations is

not always intentional and can be the result of a lack of training and support when implementing child safe policies and procedures.

Read on to learn more about what you can do to identify and manage common risks in Family Day Care (FDC). In addition to identifying and managing these common risks, it is important to assess and manage any further risks that are unique to your service.

Common risks that may increase the likelihood of child harm and abuse

- **Single educator supporting children** – research shows that adults being alone with children is a risk factor for abuse because there are no other adults supervising them.
- **Conflicts of interest** – it is unlikely an educator would self report if they have harmed or abused a child. They also have a significant conflict of interest if a household member harmed a child in their care.
- **Staff training** – some staff are less qualified and experienced. This can increase the risk of abuse if they are not adequately supported and supervised.
- **Household members** – when abuse has occurred in FDC settings, it is generally not the educator but a household member.

Tips for service providers

Establish and conduct **rigorous child safe recruitment** practices. Service providers are not present every day when educators are supporting children so careful recruitment is especially important for FDC. Consider the following strategies:

- complete reference checks and, if possible, police checks
- verify WWCC clearances and educators' qualifications
- include behavioural questions in your interview that will help you understand the child safe knowledge and practices of the educator
- meet household members, verify WWCC clearances for household members over 18 years of age, conduct reference checks, provide child protection training and offer information on what impact a FDC would have on them (for example, during service hours parts of the home may not be accessible and they may not be able to conduct certain activities while children are there).

Ensure your **coordinators support and visit educators regularly**. This enables you to target training and direct your coordinator's time to educators that need more supervision.

Conduct **regular risk assessments** of educator homes to capture any changes that could present a risk to children.

Be aware of the children who are more vulnerable to abuse and support your coordinators and educators to manage and reduce these additional risks.

Know how to respond appropriately to an allegation. Understand the reporting process and know what support services exist, and that the safety of the child is paramount.

Tips for service coordinators

Visit your educators on a regular basis and include 'drop ins' (unscheduled visits).

Get to know your educators well so you understand what their support needs are. Base your training and frequency of contact on their needs and circumstances, and your observations of them interacting with children.

Be **responsive to educator requests** for more support and visits.

Be **sensitive to your educators' wellbeing** so you understand their support needs. Be open to suggesting they need a break if you see signs of stress, excessive tiredness or burn out.

Communicate potential child safety risks to educators and the service provider so you can manage them (for example, changes to the home or new household members).

Make use of technology (such as Zoom) to make virtual visits in addition to face-to-face visits, particularly if you need to travel long distances to support your educators.

Make sure you are **actively accessing all NSW based child protection and child safe training opportunities** and sharing them with your educators.

Tips for educators

Make sure you are up-to-date with all of your **child protection training, including child safe practices**. Take advantage of any training opportunities.

Follow FDC requirements for supervision, use only the spaces in your home that have been approved for service delivery, and maintain a log of visitors.

Inform your coordinator about any changes to your home (physical or household members).

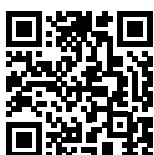
Take care of yourself physically and emotionally so you are in the best place to educate and support the children in your care.

Use the support network of your coordinator and other FDC educators.

The Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) has resources to support you on a range of topics, including risk management, the Child Safe Standards, empowering children and more: ocg.nsw.gov.au/training-and-resources



The eSafety Commissioner also has resources that support educators, children and young people: esafety.gov.au/educators



Other resources to support you can be found on the NSW Family Day Care Association website: nswfdc.org.au

