

**Childcare Accessibility & Support Forum
Tuesday 8th April, 2008
Trayning & Districts Sporting Club
MINUTES**

Opened: 10.40am

Present: Rebecca Watson – Bencubbin / Beacon, Tracy Tranter – Bencubbin, Elisha Criddle – Mukinbudin, Carly Inferrera – Mukinbudin, Krystal Roberts – Wyalkatchem, Fiona Castle – Wyalkatchem, Jan Trenorden – Wyalkatchem & Wheatbelt ACC, Tanya Nicholls – Tammin, Kim Holland – Merredin / Nungarin, Heather Giles – Brendon Grylls Electorate, Elisha Musca – Merredin, Kristy Ashwin – Merredin, Kerrin Sachse – Trayning, Lorraine Newman – Trayning, Amanda Hudson – Trayning, Pam McWha – Koorda, Sonya McCormack – Trayning, Nat Beard – Cunderdin, Di Darmody – Cunderdin, Sonia Reid – Kellerberrin, Melinda White – Kellerberrin, Debbie deMol – Wongan Hills, Kellie Anspach – Wongan Hills, Michelle Latham – Wongan Hills, Linda Acreman – DEEWR, Nicole Thompson – WOCS & Kulin Childcare Management Committee, Nola Polland – WOCS, Andrea Folkard – DFC, Christine Gorton – UGSFDCS, Shelley Lombardini – EWEYN & Wheatbelt ACC

Apologies: Megan Beagley – Beacon, Jo Fulwood - Cunderdin

Welcome and Introduction of Representatives by Shelley Lombardini – Project Coordinator, Eastern Wheatbelt Early Years Network (EWEYN), Wheatbelt ACC

Linda Acreman – Senior Regional Program Officer; Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)

Nicole Thompson – Chairperson, Wheatbelt Organisation for Children’s Services (WOCS) and Chairperson, Kulin Childcare Management Committee

Nola Poland – Project Officer, WOCS

Andrea Folkard – Children’s Services Officer, Department for Communities (DFC)

Christine Gorton – Coordinator, Upper Great Southern Family Day Care Scheme (UGSFDCS)

Representatives Overview

Andrea Folkard - Children's Services Officer; Department for Communities
Andrea is the first point of contact for new license application enquiries. The CSO is responsible for providing advice and support to child care service providers and potential service providers about licensing, childhood development and quality child care strategies.

Linda Acreman - Senior Regional Program Officer; Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations [DEEWR]
Linda is the Contract Manager, responsible for the negotiation and monitoring of funding agreements for approved child care services in the Wheatbelt Region and south Metropolitan area. Linda’s portfolio includes Long Day Care and JET Crèches.

Nicole Thompson – President; Kulin Child Care Centre and the Wheatbelt Organisation for Children’s Services [WOCS]

Nicole lives and works in Kulin and has a Local Government background. Her involvement in childcare came about in 2004 when Kulin was looking for a permanent child care service. She is an inaugural member of WOCS and has seen many changes to networking throughout the childcare industry in the Wheatbelt since the formation of WOCS.

Nola Poland - Project Officer; Wheatbelt Organisation for Children’s Services (WOCS)

Nola’s role involves the development of support strategies for volunteer management committees in their role of running child care centres, and to add value and build capacity in rural communities in the Wheatbelt.

Christine Gorton – Coordinator; Upper Great Southern Family Day Care Scheme [UGSFDCS]

Christine provides support and training for Family Day Care carers registered with the UGSFDCS. Christine is able to supply information regarding setting up and running a Family Day Care in your community.

Overview of Models of Childcare

Occasional Care

Andrea Folkard – Children’s Services Officer; Department for Communities

Andrea advised that generally Occasional Care centres are transitioning to Long Day Care, and therefore she would not be going into detail regarding this structure of childcare.

Long Day Care

Linda Acreman - Senior Regional Program Officer; Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)

To be eligible for approval as Long Day Care a service must meet the following criteria:

- the service will operate on all normal working days in at least 48 weeks of the year;
- the service will be available to provide care for any particular child for at least 8 continuous hours on each normal working day it operates;
- the service must be licensed;
- be in an area of need; (i.e. there should be a demonstrated demand for child care)
- the service must participate in the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System; and
- the service will comply with relevant legislation and the Child Care Service Handbook

Opening hours:

Many metro services open from 6.30 am to 6.30 pm giving parents time to drop off and pick up children before and after their work day.

In rural areas, opening hours are often shorter – say 8.30am to 5.30pm, but all must meet the minimum of 8 hours per day.

Weeks of operation:

Many LDC services close over the Christmas New Year period for 2-4 weeks depending on the demand for care. Some operate 52 weeks per year. This is a decision for the operator, bearing in mind the need for staff to take leave and the generally lower demand for care over that period.

Days of operation:

Although the standard requirement is that services open 5 days per week, we now have quite a few that have successfully applied for approval to open on fewer days. As a guide, the department indicated that a service that was licensed for at least 13 places and was open for a minimum of 3 days per week, with a demonstrated capacity for growth would be considered for approval to operate non-standard hours (provided all other criteria are met).

However, a service was recently approved to open just 2 days a week. This service is licensed for 19 places and had a venue available for additional days. Within weeks of opening as a CCB approved centre, the demand for care was such that they have now been approved to open 3 days per week.

They also receive Sustainability Assistance funding on a pro-rata basis which will be increased with their increased days of operation.

Sustainability Assistance – Long Day Care

Sustainability Assistance is a payment to support Child Care Benefit (CCB) approved child care services in areas of need approved by the Department. It is designed to help communities retain access to child care where the operation of a child care service is not likely to be financially viable. The payment is time limited and subject to regular review of eligibility.

Sustainability Assistance is targeted towards small services in regional and remote areas which, because of low usage, are more likely to need assistance.

Sustainability Assistance is also targeted towards communities where a service is the sole provider of centre-based care, in regional and remote areas, areas of socio economic disadvantage, and which provide places for children 0 - 24 months.

Who is eligible for Sustainability Assistance?

In determining whether a service is eligible for Sustainability Assistance, a range of factors are taken into account. These factors may include:

- The service's number of occupied places
- Remoteness (as measured by the Australian Standard Geographical Classification)
- Socioeconomic status of the community (as measured by the Socio economic Index for Areas)
- Proportion of baby places for children 0-24 months included in the service
- Whether the service is the only provider of centre-based care in the area.

Rates for 2007/08

Utilised places	Funding per year - Metropolitan/Inner regional	Funding per year - Outer regional	Funding per year - Remote and Very Remote
0 - 20	\$36,997	\$44,396	\$48,096

21 - 40	\$31,711	\$38,054	\$41,225
More than 40	\$26,426	\$31,711	\$34,353

For example, an eligible Long Day Care service that provides 36 utilised places in an outer regional area would receive \$38,054 in 2007-08.

A 19 place centre opening 2 days a week = \$17,758 pa Outer regional. \$19,238pa Remote/Very Remote

A 19 place centre opening 3 days a week = \$26,638 pa Outer Regional \$28,858 Remote/Very remote

Parents using approved services are also eligible for the Child Care Tax Rebate, depending on their circumstances.

Approved services are also eligible for JET fee assistance, Long Day Care Capital assistance.

CCB

This is an example to compare fees say for a non-CCB approved service charging \$3.50 per hour for care. The parents must pay the full \$3.50 per hour. If the service is registered for the minimum CCB, then the parents would get \$0.564 cents per hour fee reduction and would still have to pay \$2.936 per hour.

If a service is approved for full CCB, the parents would receive CCB according to their income assessment and how many children in care. If the parent's income is assessed at \$50,000 with one child in care, their CCB percentage would be 83.43%.

The CCB percentage is applied to the standard (or rebateable) hourly fee which is currently \$3.37 per hour

So the calculation for a one hour fee of \$3.50 would be:

$\$3.37 \times 1 \text{ hour} \times 83.43\% = \2.81 .

The parent would pay $\$3.50 - \$2.81 = \$0.69$ cents per hour.

If the fee increased to \$5.00 per hour the parents would only pay \$2.19 per hour.

Contact details:

Linda Acreman

Senior Regional Program Officer

WA State Office

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)

Phone: (08) 9229 1531

Fax: (08) 9229 1598

Linda.Acreman@deewr.gov.au

Nicole Thompson – Chairperson, Kulin Childcare Management Committee and Chairperson, Wheatbelt Organisation for Children’s Services (WOCS)

The Kulin Experience

Background Information

The Kulin Child Care Centre opened on 2 February 2005 running as a Long Day Care service, operating 3 days per week. The Centre is managed by the Kulin Childcare Management Committee which acts as a delegated authority of the Kulin Shire Council. The Kulin community has been very fortunate to have the support of the local Council which enabled the bulk of the preparation work to be undertaken during office hours. Accommodation has also been made available for our Centre co-ordinator. The establishment of a child care centre in town has been overwhelmingly supported by both families and the general community.

Centre Structure

The Centre runs from the “old kindy building” and is leased from the Department of Education and Training (5 year term). Renovations totalling over \$20,000 were spent on the building at the end of 2004 in preparation for operation and in line with licensing requirements.

Initial investigations into the establishment of a child care service began in October 2003 when it was realised the demand for child care was in excess of what the existing family day care service could provide.

Timeline

October 2003

- demand for childcare in excess of what existing family day care could provide
- met with CSO Christine Smythe to discuss community based childcare

November 2003

- survey’s sent to community and surrounds to ascertain if they would use a long day care service, and if so would they seek employment if it was available. 65% response to the survey with 95% saying they would utilise

December 2003

- shire agreed to administer the service through a management committee
- Lotterywest contacted
- spoke to Kondinin about where to start – license required

February 2004

- advertised for Expressions of Interest for staff (in hindsight too early)
- discussed with existing Family Day Carer to take over building
- equipment list for set up
- determined building modifications and getting access to the building to carry out work

March 2004

- met with FaCSIA and they advised that we needed a budget and a submission (business plan), also that there was no funding available at this time but we could be eligible for DAS (disadvantaged area funding) – now sustainability assistance
- identified main area’s to work on were:-

- building – modifications needed and lease rental agreement with Ed Dept required
- license – need to meet requirements in regulations and determine no. of places to apply for
- funding – Lotterywest grant for equipment, need costings for everything

April 2004

- complete submission which included:-
 - another survey of parents and community
 - rationale of service – letters of support
 - facilities available – building and lease agreement
 - commitment by Shire to actively encourage and promote community involvement
 - centre structure
 - staffing
 - financial and budget aspects

June 2004

- liaise with licensing to ensure safety of family day care service whilst carrying out building modifications
- lodged FACS application
- Council budget
- waiting for outcome of Lotteries funding
- reporting to Council and keeping community updated with progress
- register with NCAC
- will the Centre be viable???
- role of Council to include financial support/backing, new service available to community with benefits to Council and to community

September 2004

- visit to Kondinin Child Care Centre to assist with equipment list and idea's
- arrange telephone/internet access
- advised license date is no later than 28 November (6 months from lodgement)

October 2004

- advertised for Co-ordinator – rec'd interest from Jackie Murray who was then contracted to complete policies and procedures and assist with preparing Centre for licensing visit
- advertised for caregivers
- made decision to open in February in line with new school year
- notified that Lotterywest application successful
- replaced asbestos fence on one side with new colourbond
- rec'd approval for lease from Ed Dept
- advised FaCS application on hold due to cabinet changes

November 2004

- inspection due
- visit from CSO Penny Curry who advised we needed a handbook, policy and procedures, enrolment forms, programme etc
- look into pay rates, awards etc
- investigate CCB software

- agreed to open 3 full days (no half days)

December 2004

- advised that licensing requirements all met!
- still nothing heard from FaCS

February 2005

- contacted Kay Patterson's Office, Federal Member for FaCS and advised of continued delays and non-response from Perth office regarding our request for CCB and funding
- CCB and DAS funding approved one week after above phone call
- open for business 2 February 2005 – 3 days per week with 6 children

Where Are We Now

- open 5 full days
- receiving CCB and sustainability assistance
- investigating purchase of building from Ed Dept
- average 12 – 15 children most days
- full time coordinator
- 2 caregivers, one 4 days per week and the other 3 days plus relief staff
- dedicated management committee
- full Shire backing

The Kulin Child Care Centre provides a high quality, well utilised, flexible service to members of the Kulin Community which has in turn allowed mothers to return to the workforce, offered respite to parents with no family close by and generally contributed to the improvement of lifestyle in Kulin and surrounds.

Questions

Q: Cunderdin queried if Kulin had experienced any problems obtaining insurance?

A: Nicole Thompson advised that they had not had any problems.

Q: Wongan Hills stated that they occasionally look at their Policies & Procedures, and questioned if changes to these have to be passed by the Child Care Committee.

A: Nicole Thompson advised that Kulin Child Care Committee try to assess 5 policies per meeting e.g. drunken parent picking up children from the centre.

A: Andrea Folkard added that centre Policies are a living document. The NCA Council website <http://www.ncac.gov.au> has a whole section on policies and why they are needed. Committees must read them and make them applicable to their individual circumstances.

Andrea Folkard added that Committees should ring and approach people for help in whatever area they need additional support or information.

Nicole Thompson added that Kulin has not really had any problems with accreditation.

Q: Wongan Hills asked if more paperwork was required for licensing for a Long Day Care service.

A: Andrea Folkard advised that there is no more paperwork than Occasional Care Centres are currently completing. There is paperwork regardless, it is just different.

Family Day Care & In Venue Care

Linda Acreman - Senior Regional Program Officer; Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)

Overview

Linda advised that this type of flexible care and inclusive care is responsive to needs in a community. The Family Day Care Scheme administers CCB on behalf of the individual centre. These types of care are more suited to shift workers etc. 7am – 6.30pm are the standard hours for these services.

Christine Gorton – Upper Great Southern Family Day Care Scheme (UGSFDCS) Family Day Care

- Family Day Care Scheme is part of a Multi Functional Child Care Service (Centre, Mobile Child Care, Family Day Care & In Home Care) that is based in Narrogin.
- Has been the co-ordinator of the scheme for 14 years and was previously a FDC Carer for 10 years.
- Have 20 carers in the scheme. One in Kununurra, another in Derby, and the others are based in the Central Wheatbelt (they came to the scheme when the scheme that was based in Northam closed down) and carers in the Upper Great Southern.
- FDC Scheme has been accredited twice.
- Have carers on farms as well as in a town.
- All carers are licensed by the Childcare Licensing and Standards Unit.
- Carers must be over the age of 21.
- The scheme is registered with FACSIA so carers can offer Child Care Benefit (CCB) to parents.
- Most carers license 7 days a week 24 hour a day, but generally work 4-5 days a week between 8am-5pm.
- Carers can have a total of 7 children in care. 4 children under kindy age, 1 kindy age child & 2 school age children.
- Carer's own children under 12 years are counted in these numbers. CCB is not payable to carers or partners' children, relatives are OK.
- Carers do not have to have formal qualifications but must hold First Aid.
- The Federal Government has \$1500 grants available to help people wanting to set up FDC.
- The scheme offers support to carers in the process of licensing with policies and the required documentation required to operate a FDC service.
- Have a toy library service that they take out to the carer's home.
- Offer training on a wide range of topics to carers.

Q: Trayning asked if these hours are restricting for the person operating the service.

A: Christine answered no. Each operator sets own hours.

Christine advised that all fees charged are deregulated, although are all in a close range.

Christine's role is to support carers through the accreditation process. Home training is available, as is a Toy Library Loan Service.

In Venue Care

UGSFDCS has one Carer in Corrigin who operates out of a Child Health Clinic and a person licensing in Bencubbin in the old pre-primary building. In Wickepin there is a pre primary building available to some one who would like to set up a service. All of these services are supported by their local shire. Called In Venue Care (IVC) because it is not the carer's primary dwelling. They have to be licensed as Long Day Care (LDC) with exemptions to fit into the Family Day Care (FDC) model. Hoping to soon have separate regulations for this type of model so single operator child care services can be set up in rural WA.

Carer holds the license for the building under the In Venue Care model, and sets the hours of operation.

There is no funding available for the group modifying the building.

Q Mount Marshall advised that from their shire's perspective, they are unable to access any funding to upgrade their building. Where can they look for funding?

A: Christine Gorton suggested the Playgroup could apply for funding on their behalf.

A: Wongan Hills suggested a money run in the community, stating that they raised \$60,000 from this method.

Christine Gorton also suggested that in kind contributions from service groups e.g. the Corrigin Apex Club erected fencing for the In Venue premises in Corrigin.

In Home Care

Linda Acreman also advised that people can have a Carer come to their own home – this is called In Home Care (IHC).

Christine Gorton advised the UGSFDCS has 2 places available with this type of care. It is an expensive form of care, and possibly only viable as short term support due to the expense. The child care is provided in the child's own home. If this type of care is registered with UGSFDCS scheme the Carer can offer the parent CCB.

Is not licensed by the Standard Licensing Unit.

No qualifications are necessary for the carer. The carer must complete a Working with Children Check and a Federal Police Clearance. The house is checked for safety.

People requiring this form of care are required to find their own carer. The UGSFDCS will complete a process to determine if the carer is suitable, which will then enable the CCB rebate to be accessed.

Q. Trayning asked if this form of care is new?

A. Christine replied that In Home Care has been available for 3 – 4 years.

Downfall of Family Day Care and In Venue Care is if the Carer is sick, child care is unavailable on this day. Some carers are also located on farms out of town.

Contact details:

Christine Gorton

Co-ordinator

Upper Great Southern FDC Scheme

Phone 98812991

Email ugsfdcs@westnet.com.au

**Linda Acreman - Senior Regional Program Officer; Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)
In Venue Care**

Department will approve In Venue Care application if it can be demonstrated that it can't secure a Carer in the family home.

In Venue Family Day care is a flexible form of child care which is provided in a community venue rather than the carer's home. Care is monitored and supported by an approved Family Day care service. This form of care is available in regional and remote areas where mainstream services are not available.

The Scheme i.e. UGSFDCS, must make the application for the In Venue Care. The application can not come through the shire. Licensing is subject to an annual review.

There is no ongoing funding available.

Family Day Care Scheme

Linda Acreman - Senior Regional Program Officer; Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)

Overview

Family Day Care Scheme originally limited in geographic boundaries. The Government's 2006 Budget removed the boundaries on the basis to not restrict the business of Family Day Care.

Schemes can now be operated by profit makers, and can be run by Local Government.

Q: Trayning asked if a relative is caring for sister's children or grandparent caring for a grandchild, whether the parent is eligible for Child Care Benefit (CCB)?

A: Christine Gorton advised that in these cases the parent would be eligible for the CCB.

Lunch at 11.50pm – 12.30pm

**Nola Poland – Project Officer; Wheatbelt Organisation for Children’s Services (WOCS)
Funding and Support**

Funding and Support Available

1.1 Funding

Lotterywest, FRRR, VSEG, Sponsorship

There are various options for accessing funding and support to run a child care service.

- Grants are one option – **Lotterywest, Foundation for Rural Regional Renewal, Volunteer Small Equipment Grant, Sponsorship, Variety Club**

Note: always contact the funding body and discuss your application before submitting – this can save time and provide you with additional information.

Be innovative – don’t just look at child care.

- Sponsorship is the provision of funds or product in exchange for something - usually advertising. Businesses can provide sponsorship of a child care centre through discounting or donating supplies or money, some community organisations such as Lions, Narrogin Rev Heads and Quairading B&S Ball donate profits to community organisations.
- Local Government may be willing to support child care services in their communities, although the provision of child care is not a responsibility of local government. Levels of support differ however can include providing premises at a nominal rental, maintenance of premises, assistance with administration and funding.
- Collocating with an existing organisation can benefit both organisations with shared premises, overheads and some resources. Examples include playgroups, CWA.

Lotterywest www.lotterywest.wa.gov.au

Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) www.frrr.org.au

WA Grants Directory www.grantsdirectory.dlgrd.wa.gov.au/

Grantslink www.grantslink.gov.au

Easygrants is a newsletter which provides a list of all current grants. Subscription of \$30 - \$40 is payable. A number of shires subscribe to this newsletter.

1.2 Support

WOCS Project Officer

Role as Project Officer involves working with volunteer management committees and child care centres to identify and implement supports. These include

- Development of a resource manual
- Encouraging networking and developing communication links between committees and centres
- Updating and further development of the WOCS website
- Newsletters

- Contact list of Wheatbelt Child Care Centres
- Linking services and providing sources for information

Contact Information

Nola Polland

WOCS Project Officer

Email: WOCSProjectOfficer@westnet.com.au

Phone: (08) 9883 6561

Address: PO Box 41
Cuballing WA 6311

Outline of Additional support available

Inclusion and Professional Support

Through this program, eligible child care services have access to affordable support, advice, resources and training.

Professional Support Coordinators

- Professional Support Coordinator of WA (PSCWA)
To promote and maintain high quality care for all children including those with additional needs. Resources are able to be accessed from this site.
www.pscwa.org.au

Inclusion Support Agencies (ISA)

- RUCSN (Resource Unit for Children with Special Needs Inc)
Offers services to central Western Australia. Membership to access the RUCSN Resource Centre is also available.
www.rucsn.org.au
- Shire of Mundaring
Available to services in the East Metro - Perth/Midlands area.
www.mundaring.wa.gov.au/community/community_childreasureservices.asp

Note: Nicole Thompson and Andrea Folkard advised that the \$100 fee for RUCSON membership is money very well spent.

Government Departments – contact for clarification or information

- Department for Communities – Application forms, checklists and information regarding licensing and regulations are available from this site. Also includes contact details for Community Services Officers (CSO) and Child Care Licensing and Standards Unit.
www.childcare.wa.gov.au
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)
Information for Long Day Care Centres, Outside School Hours Care, Family Day Care and In Home Care is provided on this site. Additional information includes funding, Child Care Management System and forms.
www.deewr.gov.au/deewr/EarlyChildhoodYouth
- National Childcare Accreditation Council
Quality Improvement & Accreditation System - Family Day Care and Long Day Care. An advisor can be contacted for clarification of issues.
<http://www.ncac.gov.au>

Supports for Volunteer Management Committees

Department for Communities www.community.wa.gov.au/DFC/Communities/volunteers/VolunteeringWA www.volunteer.org.au/

Community

The main support a child care service will have is their community.

- Community partnerships can reduce the burden on volunteers “many hands make light work”. Examples include joint fundraisers, exchange of skills such as the football club members doing a busy bee or maintenance for the child care centre in exchange for a pre season clean up of their clubrooms.
- There are many skilled people in your community. They can provide training, expertise in writing grants and policies, knowledge of human resources and staff recruitment and these are just some of the areas. Use the knowledge, support and networks in your community.

2. Structure of centre

Structure of the Organisation

Consideration needs to be given to the structure of a child care organisation.

Examples of some options for community run centre based care include,

- Establishing a not for profit incorporated organisation
This service is usually managed by a volunteer management committee.
- Establishing the child care service under an existing not for profit
[For example, Telecentres]
A sub committee may be established to oversee the child care service. The advantage of this model is that the existing service may already have the infrastructure in place to carry out administrative functions. This model also reduces the burden on community members to commit to an additional volunteer role. This model may offer savings on some overheads for example insurances.
- Establishing the child care service under Local Government
A committee of council with delegated authority may be appointed to oversee the operations of the child care service.
As with the previous model infrastructure is in place for administration and there is the possibility of savings on some overheads.

3. Process to establish a service

Establishing a child care service

The process to establish a child care centre is dependant upon the model of child care the community requires. Communities who would like to establish a child care service in should contact the CSO at the Department for Communities for guidance and assistance.

The following is an outline of how to commence the process,

1. Establish need for child care
2. Which model of child care meets the identified need
3. Venue – is there a suitable venue? If not is it possible to establish a venue? The venue will also impact on model of child care.
4. If Family Day Care is the model that is best suited the CSO will be able to provide details of schemes available.
5. If a centre based child care is the model then at this point the CSO will be able to offer advice in regard to the suitability of venue and licensing requirements.
6. Organisational structure will need to be established – not for profit, LGA etc
7. Commence working toward obtaining a license. The license will take up to 90 days from the lodgement of the application.
8. For centre based services the following are examples of **some** of the steps required before lodging an application for a child care service license.
 - Establishing the venue and funding / fundraising for upgrades or maintenance required to meet regulations
 - Establishing policies;
 - Insurances;
 - Funding / fundraising for resources, play equipment, consumables etc;
 - Staffing the centre
 - Obtaining Working With Children checks and police clearances;

This is a guide to getting started on the process of establishing a child care service. Further information can be obtained from the Department for Communities, DEEWR and NCAC websites.

Ensure you contact the CSO and / or your family day care scheme coordinator for further information.

A Duty Officer is available at licensing Monday to Friday. Don't be scared to enquire as staff are very approachable. There is a dedicated person to your service, so you will have contact with the same person all the time.

Andrea Folkard stressed that every service is unique, so phone through and speak with a Duty Officer. In a licensing application, if one small detail is not complete, the entire application will be returned.

Nola Polland advised that enquiries can also be made to the National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc.

Telephone: (02) 8260 1900 or 1300 136 554 (for callers outside Sydney)

Facsimile: (02) 8260 1901

E-mail: qualitycare@ncac.gov.au

Website: <http://www.ncac.gov.au>

Andrea Folkard added that the NCAC website is very good to access free policy samples.

Open Forum for Questions

Operating under the auspices of the shire has the advantages of computers, pays and general administration including photocopying. Often shire Community Development Officer can write grant applications.

Wongan Hills child care is not run through the shire and has been very successful. Service has been running for 11 years, and now has 2 administration girls in the office. Committee has found that finding qualified staff has been more of a headache than filling committee members positions.

The structure of the child care service body will depend on each community. Incorporation can be beneficial as the governing body is autonomous and can therefore make own choices to apply for funding etc.

Q. Koorda asked at what point can Family Day Care be operated under the In Venue Care model i.e. at a public building rather than own home?

A. Christine answered In Venue Care can only have one person licensed to operate the service, and the licensing is just like any other licensing. The person applying for the license must approach Christine (or a registered scheme). The license must be done through the scheme, who will then approach Linda Acreman. Maximum capacity is always 7 children.

Mt Marshall clarified that the service has a physical maximum number of 7 children on the premises, but these can be different children throughout the day.

Q. Koorda asked how hard is it to get qualified carers?

A. Andrea Folkard answered that there is a statewide child care worker shortage.

General statements regarding poor pay conditions of child care workers.

Nicole Thompson and Wongan Hills advised that wages are now improving.

Andrea Folkard added that Traineeships are now available, and there are many agencies that can facilitate this.

Nicole Thompson stated that for Kulin Child Care Centre, staffing was the most difficult part all along.

Nola Polland added that some towns have just advertised and a qualified person has come forward from the community.

General thank you to representatives.

Closed at 1.40pm