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SPECIAL EDITION

In the upcoming months, there are several reviews, changes and additions to the National Regulations, National Quality Standard, and Family Assistance Law.

We were hoping that the Department would have had all final changes detailed so we could incorporate them into our Home Safety process and information pack, however we are still waiting on some the information to come through to us.

We have put together as much information as we currently have and will update Educators as soon as the new information comes through.

Below we have added each area and the information that we have at present.

Approved Provider is responsible for accessing the whole residence where FDC is being provided.

As the Approved Provider, it is the Service's responsibility to ensure the residence is safe and secured and has been checked adequately for any risks.

What does this mean for Educators?

In the re registration process and moving forward, your entire premises (including land and outbuildings) will need to be checked and deemed safe for you to conduct childcare within the approved areas and that the safety measures match the risks.

How will this look at Registration time?

Our aim is to make this process as unobtrusive as possible. We do not need to look at these areas as thoroughly as those where Family Day Care is conducted. It is expected that there will be risks in these areas. Our aim is to simply ensure your safety measures (baby gates, door handles, guard etc) are suitable for the risks. We will not be going into cupboards or looking for issues.

Where will this be recorded?

The front of the Home Safety Checklist will record areas that have been FDC approved and those deemed out of bounds but safe to be within the FDC premises.

Changes to sleep and rest regulations including the use of portable cots.

The Department is looking closely into the use of portable cots in FDC and whether this practice will be allowed to continue. There are strong indications that the use of Portable cots will not be allowed to continue, no formal announcement has been made as yet. We understand the implications for all Educators and are working closely with FDCAQ and the Department on the guidelines.

Other areas that are likely to change include risk assessments needing to be completed for sleep and rest periods and a sleep checking chart to be completed.

We will keep you all informed of any changes as soon as we have the information.

Changes to Gap Fee Payments from July 2023

The Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Cheaper Child Care) Bill 2022 was passed in November 2022. This legislative change introduced important measures to strengthen payment integrity and ensure that services are meeting their obligation to ensure that a gap fee is being paid and therefore that every session of care claimed has a genuine liability.

A key measure in the Bill to achieve this outcome is the **requirement for Educators to collect Child Care Subsidy (CCS) gap fee payments using an electronic funds transfer system from 1 July 2023. Services must have in place adequate systems of oversight to ensure the gap fee is being paid.**

What does this mean for Educators?

- Begin conversations with your families about the upcoming changes and begin to prepare those families who pay with cash.
- We encourage Educators to consider opening a business-only bank account if you haven't already done so. This will allow Educators to keep personal and business bank records separate.
- Ensure your invoicing and receipting process is up to date and your system can be viewed at any time.

What does this look like for the Service?

- We will need to ensure Educators are using EFT and will need to implement appropriate audit processes on how this is occurring. This may include:
 - Conducting regular checks and/or requiring Educators to report gap fee payments.

Again, our aim is to be to make this new requirement as unobtrusive as possible. It will NOT be our aim to look through your personal banking but as always, we will ensure the Service and Educators are meeting all Government requirements.

To start the process, we will be requiring all Parents and Educators to complete a Declaration, stating that they are paying the gap fee and that Educators are collecting the gap fee electronically.

We will start the audit process with ensuring all Educators have their systems in place. This will include how you invoice and receipt.

What is expected from the audit process is still unclear, but we will ensure that we meet the requirements without making this harder on all stakeholders.

Other Areas under Review:

Greater control surrounding pool safety preventions. What this means for Educators and Services is unknown at the moment.

Policy & Procedure Review:

We are continuing with the ongoing review of our Policies and Procedures. Once an area has been reviewed and ratified, we will inform you and post them on the website.

Re Registration Process:

Our aim is to have re registration packs out by the end of next week.

Appointments will then be made in the coming weeks with your Coordinators. Again, this year we will try to have two Coordinators on those visits, but it may not always be possible.

Please take the time to read the Agreement and fill in the Schedule prior to your appointment. There have been some minor changes to both.

We are also introducing a Prescribed Information Poster which will replace several our posters that we will have in place before the Home Safety process.