

Lake Macquarie Family Day Care Submission Summary

Key Area	Issues/ Comments	Response and Recommended Action(s)
Funding	<p>Concern regarding any change/reduction to operational funding for existing family day care services</p> <p>The current ratio change in NSW from 1:5 to 1:4 for children under school age means a reduction of potential income to educators of 20% and loss of income to services of 20%. This is a significant loss resulting in fee increases to families to enable the service to remain viable and sustainable.</p> <p>To recover the 20% loss of income, the remaining families have incurred up to a 25% increase in fees.</p> <p>In 2006, Lake Macquarie FDC had the equivalent of 6 full time early childhood trained coordinators providing direct home visit support to educators. In 2013, this has reduced 3 full time equivalents (FTE). Administrative hours have reduced by 2 FTE since 2006. Additional workloads place significant pressure on existing support staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase operational funding to family day care services • Approve FDC services in NSW to operate with ratio of 1:5 (under school age). Link this directly to the outcomes of the assessment and rating process. The decision to educate and care for five children under school age needs to be determined for each individual situation with consideration for educator qualifications and experience, coordination unit support and the developmental needs of each child in care. On occasion educators may care for less than five children, and this has always been an option for our educators, with decisions based on the best interests of each child. • Provide a set up payment (or loan) for prospective educators to assist with the costs of establishing a safe care environment that meets regulatory requirements. This is particularly important for educators who are required to obtain development applications in accordance with the State Environmental Planning Policy 2008 (Exempt and Complying development) due their premise/venue being located on bush fire prone land. This is a significant

	<p>The changing work patterns of families result in majority of children attending our service part time. Therefore, 1 EFT maybe shared by several children, therefore administrative requirements is increased, yet support staff decreased.</p>	<p>deterrent for prospective educators in the Lake Macquarie LGA. More than 50% of the land parcels in Lake Macquarie are mapped Bushfire Prone. Since 2010, 60% of prospective educators in our area have resided on bush fire prone land. Of the 60%, only 20% proceed due to the costs and conditions applied.</p>
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Quality, NQF and Impacts	<p>LMFDC supports the National Quality Framework including the Early Years Learning Framework, My Time Our Place and the Assessment and Rating System</p> <p>The change to ratio has resulted in 20 children losing their position with their existing educator and needing to obtain alternate education and care with another FDC, educator and/or education and care service provider. How do children and their family feel about this decision and outcome? This is not promoting 'Belonging Being and Becoming' and does not demonstrate respect or value the individual child. Our service has consistently apologised, and attempted to explain to families why this has</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the 1:5 ratios to provide more places for children in care. • Our service was assessed and rated whilst operating with the 1:5 ratios and received Exceeding National Quality Standards across all seven areas. Please explain to parents and educators why a service that has already proven quality, and assessed loses places. • Reduce the regulatory burden on services and the assessment and compliance officers by introducing an annual 'day visit' to any service who has received a rating of Exceeding or Excellence to review current practice and validate the service is continuing to operate at the same level for a period of 5 years. • Recognise and fund educators own children (this could be a form of incentive funding)

	<p>occurred, however it is not satisfactory.</p> <p>Additionally, the impacts are significant for those families on the waitlist. With 20% less positions available, the wait will be significantly longer- this becomes a workforce issue for parents wanting to return to work. Staff consistently responds to parents frustration on a daily basis.</p> <p>The increase in new family day care service providers is a concern as educators who may not adhere to quality standards are able to 'service hop' to avoid the assessment and rating process. Some new service providers are located in areas significantly removed from the educators- including out of State. How are these services accountable?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a registration system that requires educators who move from one service to another to provide their new service provider with a record of their history and performance- e.g. professional development plan. Ensure references from previous providers are mandatory
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Affordability/Access and Equity	<p>Lake Macquarie FDC currently has 300 babies and young children on the wait list. The majority are aged less than 2 years.</p> <p>LMFDC fees currently range from \$7.00 per hour to \$11.00 per hour. Our service increased the parent levy in 13/14 budget by 30 cents per hour (an outcome of the ratio</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve a 1:5 ratio- this will enable more children to access care Maintain the current funding support to families through CCB and CCR, but simplify by combining to a single payment Provide incentive payment- set up payment to prospective educators as this will assist services to meet the demand

	<p>change)</p> <p>Lake Macquarie FDC operates in accordance with the Priority of Access Guidelines</p> <p>Families may not quite meet the criteria for current early intervention programs but still require financial support to enable their child to attend care</p>	<p>for care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider expanding in –home (child’s home), to be managed and supported by existing family day care services and ensure consistency with the NQF. • Expand salary sacrificing to include family day care –i.e. approved education and care (off the business premise) • Maintain employer sponsored funding • Continue to provide funds for Inclusion Support programs but reduce the amount of paperwork required, as this is a disincentive for service providers and educators • Maintain the JET assistance program and SCCB • Continue to fund the cost of care for children deemed to be at risk but improve the application process for services
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Flexibility	<p>Recognise the value of existing family day care services and their ability and willingness to be flexible. It is interesting to note the current ‘Flexibility Trial’ is reported an initiative. Flexibility is not new for family day care. Family Day Care has always been a service providing overnight, weekend, emergency care, irregular and regular hour care to meet the changing needs of families in the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge the resource costs (including cost of staff supporting educators) to services that provide flexible care and fund appropriately. – weekend/night support visits • Consider an incentive payment for services and educators operating irregular hours • Consider expanding in –home (child’s home), to be managed and supported by existing family day care services and ensure consistency with the National Quality Framework.

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Workforce Participation	<p>Family Day Care educators are participating actively in the workforce.</p> <p>The service they provide enables parents to participate in the workforce or study.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support and fund family day care services • Provide a set up/incentive payment for prospective educators to enable more educators to provide the service- thus reducing the wait time for education and care • Continue to support education and training programs that deliver flexible programs for educators and families