

Opening a Child Care Centre



The following information sheet has been developed by the City of Casey in response to many enquiries from the community about opening child care centres.

With any potential developments, City of Casey will remain committed to:

- Supporting the development of quality children's services for families and children across the municipality;
- Supporting local business development;
- Developing local employment opportunities;
- Planning for the needs of all residents.

Background

The decision to build a child care centre, like every business decision, requires careful planning and research. The City of Casey is not able to provide potential businesses with advice on specific proposals or on individual business plans. However the following information is provided to assist potential child care providers with information that may assist their decision making.

A children's service (including a child care centre) is defined as a service providing care or education for five or more children under the age of six years in the absence of their parents or guardians:

- For fee or reward
- Or while the parents or guardians of the children use services or facilities provided by the proprietor of the service.

If potential child care providers are considering caring for a small number of children in their own home or in the home of another family information can be found on the following websites:

www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Programs/ChildCare/referServices/SupportforChildCareServices/Pages/InHomeCare.aspx

www.familydaycare.com.au

www.familydaycare.org.au

The City of Casey is the local provider of Family Day Care. For more information on the local service please contact the Coordination Unit on 9705 5200.

Opening a child care centre requires liaison with three tiers of Government services.

- Local Government (City of Casey) oversees planning and local development as well as providing a number of services and strategies for children and their families in the community.
- State Government through Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations monitors standards of child care facilities and provide licensing for children's services.
- The Australian Government provides Child Care Benefit and Child Care Support programs through the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and are responsible for child care policy, research and data collection.

Community Considerations

Some City of Casey localities are experiencing (or are expected to experience) rapid growth while other communities are experiencing more stable population trajectories. Each community has different needs and different demographic profiles and potential child care centre operators are encouraged to consider the following issues:

- Current level of child care provision within the proposed area. This may include a mapping exercise of local community based and private child care centres in the surrounding areas. The level of Family Day Care provision and Outside School Hours Care programs may also be considered.
- The demographics of the area and whether they reflect a need for increased numbers of child care

centres. The City of Casey website provides a vast amount of information regarding Casey's demographics. The City of Casey does not provide a centralised waiting list or enrolment numbers for child care services.

- Type of child care service proposed including hours of operation, age of children and size of facility and how these match to local needs. Potential providers should also consider the requirements of children and families with special needs. Services need to consider their legal responsibilities in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act and also their professional responsibility in relation to providing services to all children and families within the community.
- Demographics including major cultural groups living in the area of the proposed child care centre need to be considered when planning staff recruitment, advertising and developmental programs.
- Other considerations may include proposed housing developments, transport access, popular commuter routes and residential support.

Business Planning Considerations

The City of Casey is supportive of broad, diverse and sustainable businesses that enhance the economic prosperity of the City of Casey.

Business planning for opening a child care centre may include the following:

- Utilising appropriate personnel who can assist with financial advice, marketing, business plans and legal requirements.
- Deciding on property issues such as leasing, building or purchasing an already built structure.
- Finding an architect with experience in the design of Children's Services and an understanding of the Children's Services Regulations.
- Finding someone with an Early Childhood qualification or experience to assist you with issues of running a child care centre including the capacity to attract and manage suitably qualified and experienced staff and the type and quality of indoor and outdoor equipment needed.

New businesses can refer to the City of Casey website on www.casey.vic.gov.au/business/ or contact the Business Development team at the City of Casey on 9705 5200 for:

- An information pack for new businesses
- General business development enquiries
- Assisting with locating business development resources

- Details of local business networks
- Calendar of events including training and information sessions.

The City of Casey also offers Casey businesses an opportunity to be listed on the website directory. This listing enables businesses to receive City of Casey's quarterly Bulletin and notification of local business events.

Planning, Permit and Regulatory Considerations

Different government authorities are involved in the development, licensing and approval of child care centres. Local Government undertakes the planning approval for the venue while the State Department Human Services issues the operational licence. The requirements for planning approval are different to the requirements for child care centre licensing and therefore potential providers are encouraged to liaise simultaneously with the different government authorities.

Planning considerations include assessing the appropriateness of a child care centre in its use and development, having regard to the provisions of the planning scheme. Provisions of the planning scheme include zoning, overlays and local policy that guide car parking design, vehicles access, hours of operation, numbers of children, location, advertising signs, landscaping etc. When considering planning, potential child care developers are encouraged to:

- Contact a Planning Officer at the City of Casey to discuss the proposal.
- Apply for a Planning Permit for a child care centre following an understanding of the issues as discussed with the Planning Officer.

When plans for the building are ready an application for Approval in Principle needs to be collected from Department Human Services. An Approval in Principle to operate a children's service is necessary to obtain a child care centre licence.

Obtaining a Child Care Centre Licence

Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations in Victoria is responsible for licensing in accordance with national standards. Details of national standards can be obtained from state and territory offices of Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

The state of Victoria's licensing factors include service operations such as size of rooms, numbers of places, size of playgrounds, numbers and qualifications of staff,

Occupational Health & Safety requirements and soil assessment results from an environmental consultant. Information on licensing can be discussed with the

Children's Services Advisor at the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations regional office (Dandenong) or more information can be found at www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/

Child Care Benefit and Child Care Support Programs

Child Care Benefit (CCB) is a payment made to families to assist with the costs of child care. Families using child care by an approved child care services or registered carers may receive CCB. To be eligible for the Child Care Benefit Scheme child care businesses must be approved under the family assistance legislation and meet eligibility requirements. These requirements include providing care for at least 8 continuous hours on each normal working day and registering to participate in the Quality Improvements and Accreditation System. Potential developers of child care services should consider viability issues if they choose not to apply to be an approved CCB provider.

For more information child care providers can contact the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) office or visit www.facsia.gov.au

FaHCSIA can also assist with information on finance grants including Long day Care Incentive Schemes and Set-up assistance grants.

For information on Quality Assurance systems contact the National Childcare Accreditation Council or visit their website at www.ncac.gov.au

FACSIA can also assist with information on finance grants including Long day Care Incentive Schemes and Set-up assistance grants.

Useful Contacts and Resources

City of Casey Family and Children's Services Strategy found at www.casey.vic.gov.au

For business development information contact City of Casey Strategic and Economic Development Unit or visit the City of Casey website on

www.casey.vic.gov.au/business/

Small business Victoria website is

www.business.vic.gov.au

For planning information contact City of Casey Planning Unit or Department of Sustainability and Environment

www.dse.vic.gov.au

Child Care Centres Association of Victoria Inc.

www.cccav.org.au

Community Child Care

www.cccinc.org.au

Early Childhood Australia Inc.

www.earlychildhood.org.au

FKA-Free Kindergarten Association

www.fka.com.au

Human Rights and Equal opportunity Commission

www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/dda_guide/dda_guide.htm

Lady Gowrie Child Centre Melbourne

www.gowrie-melbourne.com.au

Playground and Recreation Association of Victoria

www.prav.asn.au

Victorian Private Child Care Association Inc. (VPCCA)

Email: vpcca@bigpond.com

KU Children's Services

www.ku.com.au/

Victoria's Largest and Most Vibrant Municipality



Cranbourne Centro Cranbourne
Narre Warren Magid Drive
Narre Warren South Amberly
Park Shopping Centre

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Facsimile: 03 9704 9544
TTY: 03 9705 5568
TIS: 131 450 (Translating and Interpreting Service)

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Narre Warren Vic 3805
Email: caseycc@casey.vic.gov.au
Website: www.casey.vic.gov.au