

Factsheet

Child Care Options for Farming Families

It's not always easy for farming families with young children to access the child care they need to keep their children safe, meet the child's developmental needs and continue to run the farm. This is especially the case when both parents work or there is a single parent.

This resource describes the main types of child care available in Australia and links farm parents to child care resources and contacts. Use the summary table below to identify options, read more about them on subsequent pages, then follow up on availability using the contact details on the back page.

A second fact sheet is available from Farmsafe Australia for those communities who may be interested in setting up a local child care arrangement.

What kinds of child care might be available to farmers?

What funded child care services exist in my region?

What child care options might suit this region, now and into the future?

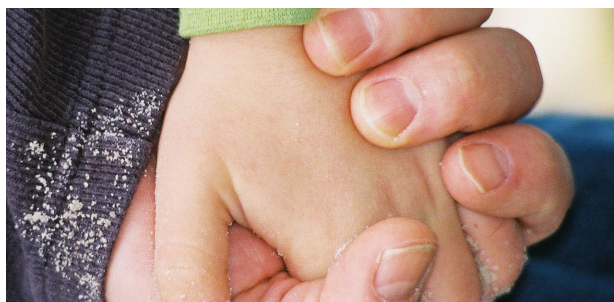
CHILD CARE OPTIONS - A BRIEF SUMMARY

In-Home/On-Farm Care	Centre/Facility-based Care
<ul style="list-style-type: none">* In-home Child Care (birth to 12yo but can cater for older children in emergencies)* On-farm or Farm-based Child Care (birth to 12yo)* Home-based Registered Carers (birth to 12yo)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Multi-functional Children's Services or Integrated Child Care Services (birth to 12 yo)* Long Day Care Centres (birth to 6yo)* Occasional Child Care (birth to school age)* Outside School Hours Service (primary school-aged children)
In Carer's Home	Itinerant Care/Multi-site
<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Family Day Care Schemes (birth to 12yo)* Home-based Registered Carers (birth to 12yo)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Mobile Child Care, Children's Services and Toy Libraries (birth to 12 yo)



HOME-BASED REGISTERED CARERS

- * Home based carers are individual operators that provide care in the home environment and are not linked to, or supervised by a family day care scheme or other services. For families to be eligible to receive Government fee assistance the carer is required to be licensed by the relevant regulatory frameworks in the state and be registered with the Australian Government's Families Assistance Office.



OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS SERVICES

- * Offer care for primary school aged children with an emphasis on creative and physical activities in a relaxed environment. Homework may also be part of the service program.
- * May provide year round care for children before and after school, on 'pupil free' days and in holiday times depending upon the location.
- * Operate out of a variety of buildings, generally in facilities on or near schools or through a mobile service.

FAMILY DAY CARE SCHEMES

- * Provide care and developmental activities for children in the homes of registered carers.
- * Recruit, support and provide training for the carers, monitor the care arrangements, ensure standards are maintained and provide information, advice and support to parents.
- * Care may be available for children of various ages from babies to before and after school care and holiday care for children to 12 years.
- * May provide flexible hours of care including options such as long day care, part time care, occasional care, relief, emergency, casual, overnight, weekend and on call care, before and after school care, holiday care, outside of normal work hours, 24 hour care and in-home care.
- * In some areas, schemes have access to funding for seasonal child care arrangements.

IN-HOME CHILD CARE

- * Provide care in the child's home by an approved carer, monitored and supported by an authorised agency.
- * Provide care for children from birth to 12 years within the family unit. Care for children older than 12 years can occur in special or emergency situations.

Families may be eligible for in-home care if they fit one or more categories and meet one of these criteria:

1. no other child care service is available (eg. remote location);
2. no child care service is available that can meet the child care needs (eg. non-standard working hours).

Examples of eligible families include:

- * Families in rural and remote areas;
- * Parents that work shift work or unusual hours;
- * Families who have had a multiple birth of more than two babies and/or have more than two children under school age;
- * Families where parent(s) or child has a disability or illness;
- * Breastfeeding mothers who are working from home.

In-home care is available through family day care schemes and other operators including other child care service types and agencies in the community.

LONG DAY CARE CENTRES

- * Provide developmental programs for children from birth to 6 years. Centres may be purpose built or modified buildings.
- * May offer care for small numbers of school aged children, before and after school and holiday care.
- * Offer care as a priority, on a full day or part time care basis, for parents that are working or studying.
- * Operate generally for at least twelve (12) hours a day, 48 weeks a year from Monday to Friday. In some areas, centres may operate for longer hours because of unique local needs, such as shift or seasonal workers.

Flexible long day care centres have been developed in some rural localities where the days/hours of care is determined by needs in the community. For example, child care offered on designated days of the week when families travel to a community for business or at peak seasonal times when both parents are working on the property.

ON FARM OR FARM-BASED CHILD CARE

- * On-farm care can be available through child care/ children's services such as a mobile service, family day care, child care centres as well as other agencies in the community.
- * A carer travels to the property and looks after the children while the adults are busy with farming activities. Care is offered for children from birth to 12 years depending upon funding and carer availability.
- * Child care may be full or part time ranging from several hours a day to several weeks. The care is for busy times including seasonal activities such as mustering, shearing and harvesting. Care may also be provided for special events such as field days.
- * Emergency on-farm child care may also be available.



MOBILE CHILD CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES & TOY LIBRARIES

- * Operate out of community buildings, schools and other facilities including property homesteads, gardens and verandahs. A suitable vehicle with a range of materials and equipment is used to support the programs offered.
- * Mobiles offer a range of services on a scheduled basis for children from birth to 12 years, including:
 1. Play sessions and preschool programs;
 2. Occasional child care for peak pastoral activities such as shearing or mustering and field days;
 3. Holiday vacation programs;
 4. Child and adult educational activities;
 5. Early intervention;
 6. Parent libraries and information;
 7. One off community event support such as gymkhanas and mini-schools.
- * Not all mobiles provide a child care arrangement. Hours of service vary depending on the locality, the distances required to travel and family need.
- * Mobile child care services in some areas offer child care arrangements for farming and small communities on a scheduled basis using community facilities. It may include on farm care and care for special events such as field days.

MULTIFUNCTIONAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES OR INTEGRATED CHILD CARE SERVICES

- * These services offer a mix of child care options for children (birth to 12 years) depending on locality and need including long day care, occasional care, family day care, preschool/kindergarten services, outside school hours and holiday programs. Programs are offered in the one facility or administered by the service with care offered in different venues.
- * Generally, multifunctional children's services operate in communities that may not have a population size to sustain all of these service types individually.
- * In some services, other programs such as parenting and health initiatives may also be provided.
- * In some rural areas, existing children's services such as a preschool, crèche or kindergarten have extended the hours of operation or integrated child care options alongside the service to offer additional services. This has required building modifications and extensions in some situations.

OCCASIONAL CHILD CARE

- * Occasional child care offers care for short periods for children from birth until school age. This service type provides children with the opportunity to socialise and participate in an environment which is stimulating and friendly.
- * Families access occasional child care for a range of reasons such as casual work, respite and appointments. Farming families may use these services to enable them to travel into town to carry out farm business.
- * Occasional child care centres may be located in community halls, shopping centres or specialised centres. It is a unique service model which is flexible and enables families to access child care as required.
- * The hours of the service operations will depend upon funding, the locality and community need.



JOBS EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS (JET) CRÈCHES

- * These crèches have been set up in some remote areas where standard childcare may not be an option. This program targets sole parents, carers and low income or widowed people wishing to re enter the workforce.



This factsheet has been prepared by CONTACT INC. for Farmsafe Australia's child safety on farms project funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

For more information on child safety on farms including the Factsheet "Establishing Child Care Services for Farmers in your Region" visit www.farmsafe.org.au or phone 02 67528218.

References

- * Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services
- Website: www.facs.gov.au
- "Flexible Child Care in Rural and Remote Australia 2001"
- * National Child Care Peak Agency reference materials.



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing



FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Australian Government assists with some child care costs through the Child Care Benefit and Families Assistance.

Families are only able to access the Child Care Benefit directly if they are using an approved child care service (e.g. long day care, family day care, outside school hour services, vacation and occasional care services) or a registered carer.

Carers and services that are registered to provide child care by the Families Assistance Office (situated within Centrelink, Medicare and Australian Taxation Office access and enquiry sites) are called "registered" carers. Families pay fees to the registered carer and then apply for reimbursement from the Family Assistance Office.

Alternatively, families may pay the full fee to the approved child care service during the year and then claim the Child Care Benefit after lodging their tax return.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

To find out if there are any child care options in your area you should start with the Child Care Access Hotline.

THE CHILD CARE ACCESS HOTLINE

A national hotline that operates 8.00 am – 9.00 pm, Monday to Friday.
This service gives details of child care services in your area.
Telephone: 1800 670 305

For people with hearing or speech impairment a teletype writer option is available. Telephone: 1800 639 327

YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL

Some Councils sponsor child care services or have a community directory of services for the area.

TELEPHONE DIRECTORY OR IN THE YELLOW PAGES.

Look in the regional directory under "child care" – not a full listing

THE DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Callers should identify the state or territory office of the Australian Government's Department of Family and Community Services that they wish to contact and then ask for the Child Care Support Program.
Telephone: 1300 653 227

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S SERVICE PEAKS

A range of National Children's Service Peaks or umbrella agencies operate in Australia. These groups represent the various types of child care sectors in Australia. They may provide you with further insights about their child care service type, ideas as to how other services might be operating in rural areas of Australia and contacts. National Child Care Service Peaks are listed on the Department of Family and Community Services website – www.facs.gov.au.