

Establishing an adjunct care service in Queensland

What is adjunct care?

Adjunct care is care provided to a child, for not more than 3 hours, in conjunction with a meeting, function or activity involving a parent/guardian of the child. These services may be provided at venues such as shopping centres and gyms and require at least one parent/guardian to remain on the premises.

Although adjunct care services are not required to be licensed, they will be monitored by the Department of Communities on a complaint basis.

Check with your Local Government Authority to see whether an adjunct care service is permitted to be established in the area.

Things to consider

Duty of care:

Insurance

If you are going to provide adjunct care, you will need to organise:

- public liability insurance (check that your current policy also covers the caring of children);
- worker's compensation insurance for paid staff; and
- insurance for volunteers.

Health and safety

To ensure that the building is suitable for child care, it is best to hold discussions with your Local Government Authority in order to resolve any issues or problems that may need to be addressed eg. food preparation areas, space and ventilation. The service should be away from heavy traffic, pollution, harmful chemicals, gases and offensive odours.

Staffing:

Criminal history

The *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000* requires people seeking to work with children up to the age of 18 years, in a paid, voluntary or self employed capacity, to

undergo a criminal history check (the working with children. check) and imposes penalties on those deemed "not suitable" who apply for, engage in or continue to work in, child related employment.

People required to consent to the "working with children check" (blue card) include prospective paid employees and volunteers (who work with children).

In order to commence or continue working with children up to the age of 18 years, a person must have a current blue card stating that they are suitable for child related employment.

It is the responsibility of the employer to apply to the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian for a blue card for a prospective employee. Contact the Commission on 3247 5525 or 1800 688 275.

Qualifications

There is no requirement for staff to be formally qualified, but it is in the best interest of an organisation to have qualified staff, or at least someone who is very experienced. Staff with child related training are better able to understand the needs and behaviours of children, especially in short care situations where there is little time to get to know them.

It is also important to have more than one person looking after the children to ensure an adult is on hand to care for the others if another child needs specific attention.

To find qualified staff, consider contacting child care employment agencies or colleges and universities which offer child care or early education courses. Students may be willing to work on a part-time or casual basis.

When interviewing, seek people who are trustworthy, mature and responsible.

It is recommended that prospective carers/staff be at least 18 years of age, and be interviewed, and have their references checked prior to employment at the service.

Staff contact levels

The Department of Communities recommends contact staff levels for adjunct care that are consistent with mixed age group sizes for centre based services (that is a ratio of 1 staff member to every 7 children). The requirements are included in Schedule 1 of the Child Care Regulation 2003. This legislation can be viewed at www.communities.qld.gov.au.

Policies and procedures

Before offering an adjunct care service it is necessary to document your organisation's policies and procedures on all aspects of the service. Consideration should be given, for instance, to what steps must be taken in the event of sickness, accidents and emergency evacuations.

Information from parents/guardians

Information should be kept on each child being cared for. This should include:

- name, age and address;
- contact details in case of emergency. This should include the name, address and telephone number of another responsible adult who could be contacted in the case of an emergency. It is essential that a written

authorisation note be provided by the parent/guardian;

- details on any medical or health concerns, food allergies or other special requirements; and
- permission to allow medical treatment in an emergency (if this is necessary, always document the nature of the emergency and action taken by staff as it may be needed for insurance purposes).

Basic requirements

The *Child Care Regulation 2003* outlines the minimum requirement for licensing child care services. The Regulation is also a useful guide for the establishment of adjunct care and is available on the department's website.

This fact sheet has been prepared by the Department of Communities to assist users of the *Child Care Act 2002* and the *Child Care Regulation 2003* in understanding the requirements of important provisions. If there are any inconsistencies between this document and the legislation, the legislation must be followed. You should refer to the legislation to properly understand its requirements.

For a list of Department of Communities regional office contacts please call the Child Care Information Service on 3224 4225 or freecall outside of Brisbane 1800 637 711.

Department of Communities
Office for Children
GPO Box 806
BRISBANE QLD 4001
Telephone: 3224 4225
Freecall outside of Brisbane: 1800 637 711
Email: ccis@communities.qld.gov.au
Website: www.communities.qld.gov.au/childcare

If you intend providing adjunct care it is recommended that you consider the following:

Attendance Records	You will need some form of register for parents/guardians to sign their children in and out of the program.
Adhesive Labels	Useful as name tags so staff can identify children.
Cushions	Useful if children want to sit quietly or have a rest.
Equipment	Cots, sleeping mats and child sized tables and chairs should be supplied. You may also need to provide stable portable dividers to separate play areas for younger and older children.
Facilities	Refrigerators, sinks and heating equipment (for babies. bottles) should be available. Hot taps, hot water pipes, hot water and heating equipment (such as microwave ovens) must be inaccessible to children.
Fire Extinguishers	Fire extinguishers should be handy within the area and in perfect working condition. All staff should know how to use the extinguishers and be aware of emergency evacuation procedures.
First Aid Kit	A well stocked first aid kit must be kept on hand in the child care area. The kit should be locked and the key inaccessible to children.
Nappy Change	Arrange an area specifically for nappy changing, which includes a bench and easy access to a hand basin and toilet. This should be well away from food preparation areas.
Quiet Areas	Quiet areas should be available for children to rest or read quietly, or for mothers to breastfeed in private.
Refreshments	Drinking water must be available with separate cups for each child. Provide light refreshments or ask parents/guardians to bring supplies for their own children.
Telephones	Telephones should be easily accessible with a list of emergency contact numbers and evacuation procedures close by.
Toilets	Toilets should be easily accessible for children and staff.
Toys and Books	Toys and books need to be safe, clean and suitable for children - no rust, splinters, sharp edges, toxic materials or parts that can be swallowed or inhaled. They should also be age appropriate.