

# Family Services Program

## Family Support Worker Handbook

Family Support Worker Handbook		
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# FAMILY SUPPORT WORKER HANDBOOK

## 1. SCOPE

This handbook is for all Family Support Workers (FSWs).

The **purpose** of the Family Support Worker (FSW) position is:

- to provide support and assistance to families
- ensure the safety and wellbeing of children
- promote family independence
- work alongside parents/caregivers to provide protection for children while engaging with all the children in their care.

Work involves meeting **family support goals**. These are determined by the referring partner and may include:

- Parenting support in establishing routines. These may include bedtime routines, getting ready for school routines and after school routines
- Meal planning and cooking
- Mothercraft and newborn support and routines
- Assisting parents in implementing age-appropriate activities
- Establishing age-appropriate boundaries and supporting parents in behaviour management strategies.

There are other programs under the Casework Support Scheme (CSS), such as:

- Mentoring
- Supervised contact
- Supervised transport
- Respite

Support duties include:

- **Attending shifts on time and for the full shift.** If you are not able to attend, you must notify Zest Care no less than 24 hours before the shift. If there it is under 24 hours, you must call and speak to a CC.
- **Doing things with the client/family rather than for them.** This means you will be supporting someone to develop skills rather than taking over.
- **Submitting Progress Summaries and send Contact Reports** to Zest Care within 24 hrs of your shift
- **Attending planned meetings** to provide feedback on a family/child
- **Attending planned training** sessions as advised
- Following all Zest Care **policies and procedures**
- **Maintaining complete confidentiality** with all client information, including not sharing any confidential information with the family or anyone outside of Zest Care.
- **Maintaining professional boundaries** – not sharing your personal information with families, including phone numbers or befriending/connecting through social media.
- **Communicating with the Zest Care office** if you are unsure of any instructions
- **Providing quality service** that meets the needs of individuals, families, children, and young people which align with their goals and outcomes.

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## 2. DEFINITIONS

**Business Support Officer (BSO)** – A rostering team member who works in the Zest Care 'Hub'

**Carelink Go** – The client information management system you will use to access and record information about clients

**Case Coordinator (CC)** - Family Services staff who are allocated to support families

**FS** – Family Services Department

**FSW** – Family Support Worker

**Mothercraft** – Effective newborn parenting skills

**Referring Partner** – Organisation that refers clients to us. At times they may hold case management for a child/young person

## 3. APPLICATION

### 3.1 *Child Safe Statement*

Zest Care is committed to delivering services where children are protected, respected, nurtured, empowered and valued. We will ensure that children who use our service feel safe and are supported to achieve their potential. We have zero tolerance for child abuse, are committed to identifying risks early and will aim to reduce and remove these risks to prevent child abuse.

### 3.2 *The Importance of Privacy and Confidentiality*

Client information is collected to ensure we provide effective services to our clients. Access to this personal information is a **privilege**. With this privilege comes the **responsibility** of keeping this information private and confidential. This means we cannot discuss any information about clients/families with anyone outside of work, even when we are no longer employed by Zest Care. Breaching this may lead to a legal report to the Office of the Information Commissioner.

More information about privacy can be found at [Team Resources - Zest Care](#)

### 3.3 *Scope of Family Services Program*

Family Services provides support to families who may need assistance within the home, provides respite for families under duress and facilitates family time for children who do not live with their parents. Activities may include:

- Supporting families in establishing family routines
- Role modelling positive behaviour strategies
- Observations of parenting capacity
- Respite
- Assistance with daily living skills
- Promoting health, hygiene, and wellbeing

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- Assisting with meal planning and meal preparation
- Ensuring children’s safety
- Educational experiences and developmental activities
- Supporting parents with bathing routines
- Assisting parents to implement routines with household duties like washing dishes, kitchen hygiene, washing, folding clothes
- Support with newborn and mothercraft skills

### 3.4 **Outside the scope of Family Services**

- Wound care or injections.
- Attending to clients with High Medical Needs Care **without** training. This includes tube or PEG feeding, tracheostomy care, stoma care.
- Attending other people’s homes e.g. Neighbours or family (without authorisation from Zest Care).
- Caring for people other than the clients detailed in your booking.
- Imposing judgement, criticism or an individual’s own personal or cultural beliefs onto the family

### 3.5 **24 Hour Support Arrangements**

In 24hr support arrangements, please arrive at the assigned location prior to the commencement of the scheduled shift to ensure a handover takes place. You must wait for the other staff member to arrive even if they are running late. The Office will advise if the relieving Worker is running late.

All **overnight shifts** are **awake** shifts unless stated otherwise and you **must not** sleep whilst on shift.

### 3.6 **Progress Summaries**

Please complete a progress summary after every shift. Progress Summaries should include shift observations such as what you **saw, heard, smelled, felt** during shift as well as when. If something is your opinion, please say ‘in my opinion....’.

For e.g. Jane was wearing a jumper when I arrived. Her face was red. In my opinion she looked hot. It was about 35 degrees so I encouraged her to take her jumper off. We went to the park at 2pm.

Progress Summaries are due within 24 hours after the end of the shift. Progress summaries are to be written in the first person.

### 3.7 **Administration**

#### 3.7.1 **Client/family not Present**

If you arrive and the Family are not home or answering the front door, please call **the office** to advise. Unless you feel unsafe, you cannot leave unless directed by the Family Services team member or On Call.

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### 3.7.2 Location of Care

Approval is only granted for the service to be provided at the address recorded in shift information in Carelink Go.

### 3.7.3 Clocking in and out

You **MUST** clock in at the start of shift and out at the end of the shift. This is done through the Carelink Go application. Map locations are assigned to shifts and clocking in and out can only occur at the specified location. This includes the Progress Summary report writing shift.

If there is no valid record of attendance for a scheduled shift, you may not be paid. All time and attendance records must be consistent with the scheduled arrangements. If the shift goes over for a genuine reason, notify the Office and detail the reason in your shift notes.

### 3.7.4 Breaks

Rest and meal breaks are applied as per the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010, SACS level 2. This will be discussed at the shift briefing.

### 3.7.5 Shift Briefing

This is a conversation where the CC will make contact and explain the requirements of the shift.

### 3.7.6 Client Transport and Expenses

As part of the shift briefing, you will be advised if the shift requires driving or if there will be client related expenses.

**Kms and expenses MUST be approved by the CC prior to shift.** If this is not approved prior, you may not be refunded.

If **travel** is approved, you will be advised during the Shift Briefing and Kms approved will be detailed in the Carelink Go app. You will need to enter the kms driven in the app e.g.

- To
- From
- Total Kms
- Reason

If **client related expenses** are approved, you will be briefed by the CC on the approved amount and process for reimbursement. You **must stay within budget** and submit a Reimbursement Form and tax invoices (till receipts) to claim back.

- Receipts **MUST** detail the purchase. EFTPOS receipts are not accepted.
- Reimbursements are processed weekly, separate to the pay.

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### 3.7.7 Car Travel

This will be confirmed at the shift briefing and will be detailed as a pinned alert in Carelink Go.

- Babies up to 6 months of age must be restrained in rear facing restraints.
- Children from 6 months to 4 years of age must be restrained in a rear facing or forward-facing restraint with an inbuilt harness
- From 4 years to 7 years of age a forward-facing restraint or booster seat must be used. This must have an inbuilt harness
- Children 12 and under cannot travel in the front seat of a vehicle
- Children must be properly restraint in the car seat, with the harness fitted on the body
- Manufacturing expiry date is 10 years

### 3.7.8 Reporting Lines

You will liaise directly with CCs regarding your role, queries or questions, incidents, and general operational information.

Anything related to rostering (calling in sick, running late), please call the Office on **9683 3400**

Families you support are allocated to a Family Services CC.

From time to time you will receive emails or calls from Zest Care Corporate departments such as Payroll/Accounts, Marketing, Quality & Compliance and People Experience (HR). You are responsible for responding to both Zest Care Corporate departments as well as the Family Services Manager.

Please refer to the Organisation Chart for reporting lines.

### 3.7.9 Important Procedures and Information

Important policies, procedures and information are summarised at:

[Team Resources - Zest Care.](#)

### 3.7.10 Outings

To meet client needs you will sometimes be required to leave the family home.

The CC/BSO will advise you if driving is required and only Zest Care approved drivers are able to drive on shift. If this is the case, you will have forwarded your licence, comprehensive insurance and registration details to [compliance@zestcare.com.au](mailto:compliance@zestcare.com.au). You will need to make sure these items are current.

For further information refer to the [Transport Criteria and Agreement](#)

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Outings such as the park, shops, activity centres, playgroup etc are only permitted if it is a part of the support that is required. These notes will be in the Carelink Go p and in your briefing. CC will assess risks and give this information to you. If these outings are part of the support, they must be included in your progress summary for the day.

If the family requests a FSW attend an activity which is in a highly populated area or involves water e.g. the beach, water parks or the zoo, you must seek approval from the office first and a Risk Assessment will be completed prior to the outing or activity.

Please have your Zest Care ID with you on all shifts. This is particularly important if you are completing supervised transport shifts where you may pick up a child from school.

### 3.7.11 Medication

If you are required to administer medication, you will be briefed on this by the CC. If 2 staff are on shift, one must witness the process. Please be sure to:

1. Thoroughly wash your hands before and after the process.
2. Follow the directions on the back of the Webster Pack.
3. Provide medication directly to the client and observe ingestion by the client.
4. Complete the Medication Administration Form at [Medication Administration Form \(jotform.com\)](http://jotform.com)

Please follow the "Four Rights":

1. Right patient
2. Right time and frequency of administration
3. Right number of tablets
4. Right route of administration

### 3.7.12 Over the Counter Medication

You **are not to** administer a child with over-the-counter medication without approval from the CC. You will be advised of this at your briefing.

### 3.7.13 Pets

The care of domestic pet or farm animals are the family's responsibility.

### 3.7.14 Smoking

Service provision must occur in a space that is safe from passive smoking. This may involve negotiating with clients for smoking to occur away from the FSWs working space. If this occurs, please enter an incident report.

FSWs **must** not smoke during shift. Zest Care has a no smoking policy in all premises, including client homes, company vehicles and personal vehicles whilst transporting clients

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### 3.7.15 Illegal Drugs and Alcohol

Some clients may engage in the use of illegal substances. Where drug misuse is known, strategies to manage this will be included in the Client Support Plan. If illicit substances are seen or used on shift, **Do not touch/remove substances or discuss them with the Client. Call the Office.** They will advise if a Helpline report is needed. Then complete an incident report [report.zestcare.com.au](http://report.zestcare.com.au).

### 3.7.16 Emergencies and Incidents

**Emergencies** are when a person is at immediate risk of harm. If this happens, contact emergency services (000) immediately. When you are safe, contact the CC then lodge an incident at [report.zestcare.com.au](http://report.zestcare.com.au).

If someone is injured but not at risk of immediate harm, provide First Aid, contact the CC then lodge an incident report at [report.zestcare.com.au](http://report.zestcare.com.au) by the end of shift.

If anything else unusual happens, please complete an incident report. This could involve feedback, hazards (things that could cause an incident), near misses or simply anything out of the ordinary. This will help us identify issues before an incident happens.

### 3.7.17 Workplace Health and Safety

We are all responsible for our own safety. If you ever feel unsafe, please go somewhere safe **immediately** and contact the office. If you see something that could lead to an incident, an incident almost happened or something unusual occurred, please contact the Family Services team, include it in the Progress Summary for the shift FS - Progress Summary (jotform.co) and log it in an incident at [report.zestcare.com.au](http://report.zestcare.com.au)

Zest encourages all workers to access the Access Employee Assistance Program which is free and confidential counselling service for all Zest Care staff.

### 3.7.18 Child Protection

The Family Support Worker is a **Mandatory Reporter** under the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* legislation.

Indicators of harm can include:

- Unusual behaviour eg. Fear, flinching, overly compliant, withdrawn
- Unexplained injuries e.g burns, scalds, grazes, bruises, breaks
- Neglect such as child alone or unsupervised, intoxicated parent, insufficient food or inappropriate clothing to the season
- Sexualised behaviour
- Exposure to illegal drugs
- Disclosure by a child
- Witnessing abuse or a parent being unresponsive to a child's needs

If you are at all concerned:

- That a child is at risk of physical or emotional harm, neglect, or abuse, or
- About the welfare, safety, or well-being of any child or young person.

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Notify the Office or CC immediately. The team will provide guidance on, if and/or how to lodge a Child Protection Helpline Report. Please include the information in your Progress Summary then lodge an incident report by the end of shift.

### 3.7.19 Professional Boundaries

Professional boundaries are put in place to keep both workers and clients safe in the working relationship. Our aim as paid workers is to support clients to follow their own goals and develop independence. Keeping professional boundaries in place makes sure support workers do their role well, there is no power imbalance, and our clients will continue to develop independence, no matter which worker is available to support them.

#### IMPORTANT DON'TS

Never connect with clients/family over **social media**

Never possess family **keys**

Never share **private phone numbers**

Never **child mind** for the family outside of work or take the child to your home.

Never **socialise** with the child/family outside of shift or bring the family to your home

Never take **photos** without consent from the CC or Family Services Manager

During **communication**, never probe a family for information or tell them about your personal issues

Never **buy or accept gifts** or other items for/from a family. This includes food, money, or any types of products.

### 3.7.20 Conflict of Interest

If you know the client or family personally, this may be considered a conflict of interest. If this happens, contact the Office immediately.

### 3.7.21 Respiratory Illnesses and Infection Control

If you or a client you are supporting have any viral symptoms (sore throat, funny nose, coughing, aches and pains), contact the Office immediately.

If a client has Covid 19 and requires essential support, we will contact the workers scheduled to support them. You will be asked if you wish to continue supporting this client while they are sick. If you say yes, we will make sure you have the protective equipment available to stay safe.

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If you are not comfortable working with the client, this is ok. We will remove you from supporting them while they are sick.

### 3.7.22 Sun Protection

Please encourage children, young people and their family to apply sunscreen and wear a hat when leaving the home. You are encouraged to do the same.

### 3.7.23 Feedback and Complaints

Complaints and feedback are **ALWAYS** welcome. If a family is not happy with the service or their FSW, please take down as much information as you can, contact the CC then enter an incident report. If they do not feel confident with this approach, they can contact the Family Services Manager on **(02) 9683 3400**.

If a Family Support Worker would like to provide feedback, please contact the Family Services Manager on (02) 9683 3400 then fill out the form located at [report.zestcare.com.au](http://report.zestcare.com.au).

For further information, refer to the [Complaints Handling Procedure.pdf](#)

### 3.7.24 Important Numbers

Family Services Manager	0401 549 651
Case Coordinators during office hours	0478 001871 or 0411 435 211
Office	9683 3400 (all hours)

## 3.8 References (Legislation)

Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 Medication Form

**Chapter 16A** – the chapter in Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 that details the sharing of information between agencies concerned with the welfare and safety of children or young people.

**Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)**- Was 'An Act to provide for the care and protection of, and the provision of services to, children and young persons'. This is the Act that created the contemporary system of child protection in New South Wales.

## 3.9 Associated Documents

Child Safe Organisation Policy  
Code of Conduct  
Complaints Management Policy  
Drug and Alcohol Procedure  
Incident, Hazard and Emergency Management Procedure  
Medication Management Procedure  
Motor Vehicle and Transportation Procedure  
Privacy Policy  
Privacy Breach Procedure

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