Natasha, Family Day Care Educator - Bondi

Can you give us a bit of background about yourself?
I have lived in the Waverley area for over 33 years and have worked in childcare for 16 years as an educator in the local long day care centres.

Why did you decide to become a Family Day Care Educator?
About 7 years ago a friend of mine who was working as an educator for Waverley Family Day Care suggested to me ‘why don’t you start your own business and work from home?’. She invited me to her house so that I could see what her day was like and she said it’s no different from working in a big childcare centre except that the work comes to you and you have more freedom to set your own hours, your own fees and you ultimately become the director of your own business. The last 6 years have resulted in me developing my own business from home 3 days per week, as well as working in the local childcare centre 2 days per week.

What was the process that you went through in order to become accredited, and was it relatively simple?
The process was relatively simple, once having children myself you pretty much child proof your home anyway, so that any necessary alterations that were needed was minor alterations like glass audits, first aid kit, audit of my own toys to suit the age group that I am working with, purchase of a fire extinguisher, public liability insurance purchase, toy purchases and necessary courses that enable you for qualify to working with children (Certificate 3 Childcare, first aid training, OHS and some other minor courses as well).

What qualities and skills do you think a Family Day Care Educator needs to have?
They need to have a love for their job working with kids, they need to have patience, they need to be fun and able to communicate with children on their level, they need to be caring and understanding of children’s needs and have some basic financial understanding in running a business.

What has been the most rewarding thing about doing this?
The most rewarding thing about working as a Family Day Care Educator is having an opportunity see children develop and grow in your care. As well as when parents see and acknowledge the difference that you have made in their child’s life and of course those wonderful cuddles that the children give you – just because… and say to you for no specific reason… “I love you”.

Has it been enjoyable working from home?
I have definitely enjoyed working from home and it’s great when ‘work’ comes to you.

Have you had to modify your home to make it Family Day Care compliant?
The modifications have been minor, but I feel that these modifications have made my home safe as well… and it would be a great idea if all homes with children were modified equally.

What has been the biggest challenge you have faced?
The biggest challenge has been not being able to ‘leave’ your place of work for lunch. This is a privilege that I have enjoyed in my past jobs, but you are working on your own and you are responsible for children in your home and there is no one who comes to relieve you. This does get a little challenging at times.

Has there been financial benefits as a result of operating as a Family Day Care Educator?
Of course there are financial benefits that can be gained from working for yourself, you can set your own fees and set your own hours as well as your own working conditions.

Do you feel like you have been able to help the community by providing this service?
I feel that I have helped my community by providing parents with a safe, educationally rich, home-like quality care for their children.

Would you recommend being a family day care educator to other moms, or dads?
Yes I would.

Can you describe a typical day?
Set up toys appropriate age group, safety check, prepare morning tea and lunch, meet and greet parents and children, indoor play, group time, nappy change, outside-morning tea, outside play, group-time/story, inside play, warm up and serve lunch, nappy change, setup beds for rest, rest time, prepare afternoon tea, paperwork/‘what we did today’ and children’s observations, children waking up/quiet play, afternoon tea served, nappy change, free play, home time liaise with parents about their child’s day.