

*A new year is a fresh page. let's fill it with kindness,
curiosity and joy!*

– Unknown

**Nambucca Valley
Family Day Care**

January 2026



ON *this* **MONTH**

AROUND THE COUNTRY

- 4th [World Braille Day](#)
- 5th [National Bird Day](#)
- 17th [Kid Inventors Day](#)
- 26th [Australia Day](#)
- 28th [International Lego Day](#)
- 29th [Puzzle Day](#)
- 30th [Parent Mental Health Day](#)



Welcome Jay and Soe Soe

We're thrilled to kick off this January by welcoming **Jay D'Souza** and **Soe Soe Vangaw** to the NVFDC team!

Jay has created something really special at Emerald Beach! She's offering care Monday to Wednesday for little ones aged 0-5 years, plus vacation care for children up to 12 years during school holidays. With over 9 years of family day care experience under her belt, Jay has lovingly renovated her home to include a wonderful indoor play space that's all ready for adventures and fun.

Meanwhile, Soe Soe has just settled into her beautiful new home in Coffs Harbour and is opening her doors for before and after school care. She brings an incredible 14 years of experience from working in local preschools and coordinating out-of-school-hours care programs. Now she's bringing all that expertise home, and she can't wait to welcome families when school starts back!

Know Someone Who'd Love to Start Their Own FDC?

We'd love to hear from them! We have some fantastic funding available right now to help aspiring educators get their family day care up and running in our area. If you or someone you know has been dreaming of starting their own FDC but aren't sure where to start, reach out to our [office](#) – we're here to help make it happen!

Wishing you all a very Happy New Year and fabulous 2026!



AUSTRALIA DAY – JANUARY 26

Australia Day is a day to reflect, respect and celebrate the Australian spirit and the best of this country – our mateship, our sense of community and our resilience. We find optimism and hope as we look to the future.

Reflect. Respect. Celebrate. We reflect on our nation’s past, which began more than 65,000 years ago, and the impact of European settlement on the First Nations Australians. Our national day is a time, above all, for inclusion and respect. **Find out more about Australia Day here.**

KID INVENTORS’ DAY – JANUARY 17

The television, water skis, earmuffs and the popsicle all have something in common. Do you know what it is? All were invented by kids! 500,000 children and teens invent gadgets and games each year. Celebrate the ingenuity and value of young brainstormers on KID INVENTORS’ DAY! **Find out more here.**



EASY ONE BOWL SAVOURY MUFFINS

PREP 12 mins | COOK 18 mins | SERVES 12

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups plain wholemeal flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- sea salt and pepper, to season
- 60 grams butter
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) milk
- 3 eggs
- 1 medium zucchini, grated
- 1 medium carrot, grated
- 1 cup (160 grams) canned corn kernels, drained
- 1 1/3 cups (150 grams) tasty cheese, grated

METHOD

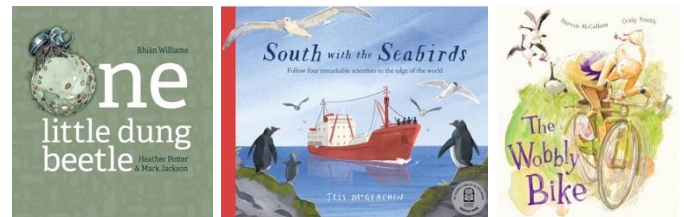
1. **Preheat** oven to 180 C and line a 12-hole muffin tin with papers. **Set aside.**
2. **Place the flour**, baking powder, salt and pepper into a large bowl. **Whisk** to combine creating a well in the centre.
3. **Place the butter**, milk and eggs into the well of the flour and whisk until just combined.
4. **Gently fold** through the zucchini, carrot, corn and cheese. If your batter looks a little dry (depending on the brand – wholemeal flours can vary slightly and require a tad more liquid) simply add a splash of milk.
5. **Evenly divide** the mixture in the prepared muffin tray.
6. **Bake for 15-18 minutes** or until golden and when a skewer inserted removes cleanly.

Allow the muffins to cool for 5-10 minutes before placing on a wire rack to cool completely. **Enjoy x**

Source: Image & recipe 'My lovely lunchbox'

Book reviews

Fresh stories for the food lovers!



ONE LITTLE DUNG BEETLE | RHIÂN WILLIAMS

One Little Dung is a playful, rhyming counting book that invites children into the tiny, fascinating world of beetles. As we follow one hardworking dung beetle and meet a whole host of other beetles. Children explore numbers, rhythm and rich new vocabulary. Detailed, jewel-like illustrations reward close looking, with little visual surprises to spot on each page. Shortlisted for the 2025 CBCA Book of the Year (Early Childhood), this is a joyful way to spark curiosity about mini beasts, caring for our environment and noticing the wonders right outside our doors.

SOUTH WITH THE SEABIRDS | JESS MCGEACHIN

South with the Seabirds tells the remarkable true story of four female scientists who in 1959 undertook a daring expedition to the remote Macquarie Island in the sub-Antarctic. Their journey, aboard an ice-breaking ship, led them to giant seabirds, penguins, seals and a wild, windswept island teeming with life. Through vivid watercolour illustrations and carefully researched storytelling, the book brings alive their discoveries and the wonders of a fragile ecosystem. It’s a stirring tribute to scientific curiosity, gender equality in STEM and environmental conservation, perfect to inspire young readers and families.

THE WOBBLY BIKE | DARREN MCCALLUM

The Wobbly Bike is a warm, gently humorous picture book about learning to ride a bike, even when it feels wobbly and out of control. Set in Darwin and rich with snapshots of life in Australia’s “top end,” the story celebrates the love and encouragement of grandparents, the importance of patience and practise, and the joy of mastering something for the first time. The lilting rhyme and lively illustrations make the mishaps and perseverance feel real and familiar. A wonderful read-aloud for preschoolers and families that gently encourages resilience and kindness.

FOCUS: Understanding Quality and Safety in Early Childhood Services: What Families Should Know



When families choose an early childhood service, one of the first questions—spoken or unspoken—is always the same: “Will my child be safe, supported and cared for here?” It’s a big decision to entrust your baby, toddler or preschooler to someone else’s care, and it’s natural to want confidence that the environment your child enters each day is warm, predictable and protective.

Across Australia, all early childhood education and care services operate under the National Quality Framework (NQF). The NQF is the national system for regulating and improving the quality of early education and care. It is made up of several key, stable components including- the National Law and National Regulations which are the legal requirements all services must meet including staffing, health and safety, educational programs, physical environment and operational procedures. The NQF also includes the National Quality Standard (NQS) which defines what high-quality education and care looks like and feels like. This means that every service, regardless of type or location, follows a nationally consistent approach to quality. Recent legislative changes, have strengthened the National Law by making the safety, rights and best interests of children the paramount consideration for daily practices, policies and procedures in education and care services.

A Safe, Calm and Predictable Environment

Creating a child-safe environment involves more than child-proof locks or soft flooring. Guided by the NQF, services design spaces where children feel physically secure and emotionally supported. This includes thoughtful room layouts, active supervision, predictable routines and warm, trusting relationships. Educators conduct regular safety checks, maintain equipment and ensure children can move freely and comfortably. You may notice furniture changes or outdoor updates such as improved shade, fencing or soft-fall surfaces—visible signs of the ongoing safety checks and continuous improvement processes required under the NQF.

Safe Sleep and Rest Practices

For babies and toddlers, safe sleep is essential. Services follow recognised safe-sleep guidelines and monitor children closely throughout rest times. The NQF requires educators to stay up to date with training and current recommendations so families can feel confident that sleep routines are carried out safely, consistently and with children’s safety, health and wellbeing at the centre of all decisions and practices.

Hygiene and Everyday Health Practices

Good hygiene is a cornerstone of quality care. Under the NQF, services must maintain high standards of cleanliness and infection control. This may include daily cleaning schedules, sanitising frequently used equipment, wearing gloves for nappy changes, practising correct handwashing and following safe food-handling procedures. You may also see improvements that reflect current health guidance, such as enhanced ventilation or updated illness policies. While the specifics vary between services, the aim remains the same: to maintain a healthy environment for all children.

Responding to Emerging Issues

As the world changes, so do the risks children may encounter. The NQF requires services to regularly review and update their policies to stay informed, prepared and responsive. Our policies support safe and consistent practice in areas such as:

- Digital safety and the responsible use of technology
- Smoke-free and vape-free environments
- Sun safety and monitoring UV levels
- Safe collection procedures and clear communication with families
- Allergy and asthma management with the need for current medical management plans for children with medical conditions
- Emergency preparedness, including evacuation and lockdown procedures

These policies provide clear guidance for educators and ensure we respond to safety matters calmly and confidently. All policies are available for families to view at any time—they are displayed within the service, and copies can be requested whenever needed.

Child Protection and Wellbeing

Child protection is a major focus of the NQF. All persons working in education and care must have a valid Working With Children Check or Vulnerable Persons Check. Educators and staff understand child protection law and comprehend their mandatory reporting obligations and responsibilities in recognising concerns, responding appropriately and reporting to relevant authorities. From February 2026, all staff and educators will need to complete mandatory national child safety and protection training.

Equally important are the everyday interactions that help children feel emotionally secure—warm greetings, comfort when they’re upset, listening to their ideas and supporting them to manage emotions. Safety is not only physical; it also includes feeling valued, respected and understood.

Partnerships With Families

The NQF emphasises the importance of strong partnerships with families. Quality and safety are strengthened when educators and families work together, share information and communicate openly. This may happen through daily conversations, family events, online platforms or policy updates.

If you have questions about any aspect of child safety or practice, our team welcomes the opportunity to talk with you. Transparent communication helps us support children in the best possible way.

Continued on following page...

What This Means for You

For families, the NQF provides a consistent and reliable foundation for quality care. It means:

- Your child's service is monitored and assessed against the National Quality Standard and their quality rating must be clearly on display
- Children's safety, rights and best interests inform every decision, from room set-up to daily routines and interactions to financial decisions in the service
- Educators participate in ongoing professional learning
- Policies are reviewed and updated regularly to reflect mandatory law and regulations and current best practice
- Families can access, read and provide suggestions and feedback to policies at any time.

Most of all, it means your child spends their day in an environment purpose-built to support safety, wellbeing, learning and belonging.

Early childhood is a precious time, and families deserve to feel confident in the care their children receive. With the NQF guiding best practice and with policies kept open and accessible to families, services can provide warm, secure and nurturing experiences that help children thrive now and well into the future.



For more information on the National Quality Framework (NQF) follow this QR code.

Source: startingblocks.gov.au



For more information on the National Quality Standard follow this QR code.

Source: startingblocks.gov.au



LET'S PLAY HOPSCOTCH

Hopscotch is a simple, classic outdoor game that builds both physical skills and early maths understanding. Draw a hopscotch grid with chalk and number each square. As children hop along, encourage them to call out the numbers they land on. For extra excitement, children can toss a small stone or beanbag onto a square and collect it as they move through the course.

This playful activity helps children practise counting in sequence, recognise numerals and notice which numbers come before or after others. Seeing the numbers arranged on the ground also strengthens their sense of number relationships—such as understanding that seven is closer to nine than to one. It's an easy way to combine movement, learning and fun.



LUNCHBOX LOW WASTE – SIMPLE SWAPS FOR EVERYDAY MEALS



Creating a low-waste lunchbox doesn't have to be complicated. Small, consistent changes can significantly reduce single-use plastics while also saving families money over time. One of the easiest places to start is by replacing disposable items, cling wrap, sandwich bags and single-serve packets—with long-lasting alternatives.

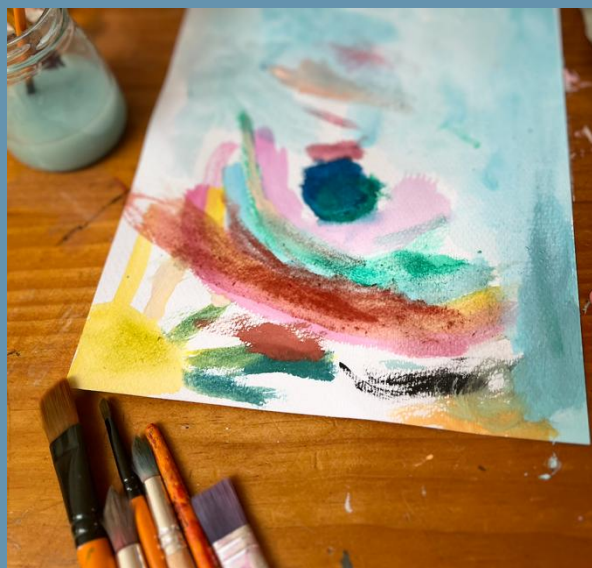
Reusable containers in a mix of sizes make packing lunches simple and keep food fresher for longer. Beeswax wraps or silicone covers are great for sandwiches, muffins and cut fruit, offering a washable, eco-friendly option.

Buying snacks in bulk is another simple swap that reduces waste. Instead of single-serve yoghurt pouches, chips or crackers, consider filling small containers from larger tubs or packets. This approach cuts down on unnecessary packaging and gives you greater control over portion sizes and ingredients. Families can also plan ahead by prepping lunches the night before, which reduces the temptation to rely on grab-and-go packaged foods.

Adding low-waste items such as whole fruit, homemade muffins, veggie sticks or leftovers helps create a nutritious lunch while keeping waste to a minimum. Over time, children learn the value of caring for the environment through everyday habits. A low-waste lunchbox isn't about perfection, it's about simple, sustainable choices that make a big difference.

Find some delicious lunch batch recipes here:

- boobtofood.com/category/recipe/
- healthymadetasty.com.au
- healthymummy.com
- Woolworths.com.au



WATER COLOUR PAINTING

Watercolour painting is a gentle, expressive art activity that invites children to slow down, observe and explore. Watercolours behave differently from other paints, encouraging children to experiment and discover what happens when colours blend, dilute or layer. The soft edges and flowing textures make every attempt feel successful, even for beginners.

You will need:

Water colour palette
(Find Micador pallets at Big W)
Water colour paper (Kmart is really affordable)

Set up a simple painting space and offer prompts to spark curiosity. You might place leaves, flowers, pinecones or favourite household objects nearby for children to observe and paint. Alternatively, let their imagination lead, many children enjoy making rainbows, landscapes, or abstract patterns as they notice how the colours move across the page. Older children may enjoy trying wet-on-wet techniques, salt textures or adding details once the paint has dried.

Watercolour painting supports fine-motor development, hand-eye coordination and early artistic confidence. It also creates a moment of mindfulness, helping children unwind while focusing on gentle brush movements and colour changes.

This activity is easy to set up and pack up, soothing to engage in, and offers a beautiful opportunity for families to slow the pace and create something together.

Policies Under Review

Each month we will have several policies for our educators and families to review. These are available to view on our webpage, and we welcome feedback, ideas and suggestions! Feedback or queries can be sent directly to fdcadmin@lifetimeconnect.org.au

In January 2026, we will be reviewing:

- Children's Belongings Policy
- Cyclone Management Policy
- Delivery of Children to- and Collection From FDC Service Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Record Keeping and Retention Policy
- Writing, Reviewing, and Maintaining Policies Policy

It's all about YOU!

Our Family Day Care community is full of wonderful stories, proud moments, and everyday accomplishments—and we want to celebrate them!

If you have something to share—whether it's a child's milestone, a creative activity, a professional achievement, or just a feel-good story from your day—we'd love to include it in our upcoming newsletters. These stories inspire others and remind us all of the incredible work being done across our service.

If you're including any photos, please make sure media permission forms have been signed by families before sending them through.

To share your stories, achievements, or suggestions – please email fdcadmin@lifetimeconnect.org.au

We can't wait to hear from you!



Short simple activities to get some active minutes in the day.

This quick, high-energy game works for one child or the whole family. All you need is a single balloon.

The goal is simple: keep the balloon in the air for as long as possible without letting it touch the ground.

Add fun challenges to suit different ages: use only elbows, only knees, or one hand behind your back. Older children can try gentle taps or set a family record for longest time in the air. Try putting the sprinkler on for a really 'cool' challenge.

This game builds **coordination, balance** and **teamwork**, and always ends in laughter. Perfect for indoors, outdoors or days when you need a fast movement break.