Nature Alliance’s family day care educators in Perth offer overnight care and extended hours care for families including shift-workers.

Nature Alliance Family Day Care operates from Perth and Busselton, with educators providing ECEC throughout WA.

Family Day Care Educator, Lorraine, provides care for four children under school age in Ellenbrook in Perth’s South Eastern outskirts.

Many of the families using the educator service are shift workers and single parents. Lorraine works with families around their care needs, including police, nurses and hospitality and ‘fly in fly out’ (FIFO) workers.

‘I do have quite a few shift workers that are in the position that they don’t have anyone to provide care,’ Lorraine says.

Lorraine not only provides care for children during the day, but also provides an overnight session for another cohort of children.

‘At the moment [the day care] children go home anywhere between 3.30 and 5.45 pm. And the evening care children come in basically whenever the parents need for shift work, as long as I’m not over my numbers I can cater for them,’ she says.

Rather than charging more for families using overnight care, Lorraine actually charges less.

‘They’re asleep, they’re not using resources. Generally the person needing care is in a much more desperate situation so there’s no point in going to work and earning $20 and paying me $28,’ Lorraine says.

The evening care environment provided for the children is the same that Lorraine provides for her own children.

When the children are placed in care with her until late at night they are picked up by their parents the next day by 6.30 am, rather than waking them up.

‘... I don’t see it just as day care because in child care you become part of the family.’

Lorraine has found the work life balance difficult to manage but she works with her daughter (also an educator) to manage both cohorts of children coming through.

‘[One parent] does his shift and then comes straight here and then I’ve got the kids ready for school. He usually does the lunches but if he hasn’t then I make them. So I don’t see it just as day care because in child care you become part of the family.’
One of the children attends kindergarten two or three times a week so Lorraine provides care on the ‘off’ days. Lorraine also picks two children from school in the afternoons.

The family day care coordination unit at Nature Alliance provides support, especially during any emergencies. Lorraine sees their role as critical to the ability to provide flexible care.