

INTRODUCTION

Our service has a commitment to ensuring our fees are as affordable as possible and that all families have access to any subsidies that are available to reduce these fees. The setting and payment of fees takes into account all requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, Australian Tax Office, Privacy Act and the guidelines contained within the Child Care Provider Handbook. All records held at the service will be maintained in accordance with the service Confidentiality and Privacy Policy. Families will be provided with accurate fees statements and clear information regarding fee payment processes.

OVERALL GOALS – What are we going to do?

To enable our service to provide high quality early education and care for children we need to ensure we are financially viable at all times. Our service's financial health and access to our service will be maximised by ensuring families are aware of all fees and fee payment requirements upon enrolment.

OVERALL STRATEGIES – How will it be done?***Fee Payable/Accounts***

- The Approved Provider will determine the required fee level to meet budget prediction for the year.
- During the orientation and enrolment process an information booklet relevant to the particular BDCS service (Preschool, Mobile, Childcare or After School Care) is handed to the parent/carer. This contains information on the current fee structure, schedule, policy and the procedure for paying fees.
- Fees payable will be based on either daily or weekly amounts.
- Families will be given a minimum of 14 days' notice of any fee increase.
- The same fee will be charged to all families for equivalent care arrangements.
- Statements will be sent to parents/carers within a timely manner:
 - Preschool: Monthly on a Wednesday (current balances can be accessed by the parent/carer through the Xplor app)
 - Childcare: Fortnightly on a Wednesday (current balances can be accessed by the parent/carer through the Xplor app)
 - Mobile: Sent upon enrolment
 - After School Care: Permanent Bookings are sent monthly on a Wednesday, Casual bookings are sent the week after booking is attended.
- Statements will be issued to the parents/carers chosen method via email or mail.
- Families are required to pay fees fortnightly in advance. A dated receipt, in accordance with Australian Government Guidelines, will be provided for each payment.
- Families are required to pay fees on public holidays if the holiday falls on their regular booked day.
- Fee payment will be recorded according to Australian Government Guidelines. Families may also view details about their child care usage and total fees charged and the fee reductions calculated by the Centrelink office (FAO) on the View Child Care Attendance online statement available through the FAO website.
- Families should contact the service to advise of their child's inability to attend as soon as this is known. Fees will still be required on days the child would normally attend.

Child Care Subsidy System CCS

- Our service will comply with the Australian Government requirements to be an approved education and care service for the purposes of Child Care Subsidy (CCS), reporting requirements and any other requirements for claiming and administering CCS will be maintained by the service.
- It is the enrolling parent/guardian's responsibility to register for CCS through their myGOV account, provide their projected annual income, activity levels and the name of our service.
- All fees are charged at the full rate. Each family's eligibility for CCS is then calculated and the service is then forwarded these funds. Deductions may then be made to each individual family's accounts.
- Any changes in a family's financial circumstances may result in changes or cancellation of CCS. It is the family's responsibility to keep their details on myGov current and contact the Centrelink office if they wish to dispute assessments or discuss it further.
- Families will only be eligible for CCS if child care attendance records are accurately completed and signed by the parent/guardian or other responsible adult, and other eligibility requirements are met.
- Families are entitled to 42 absence days for each registered child in each financial year. CCS is paid for these days provided that the child would normally have attended on that day, and fees have been charged.
- Additional absences can be claimed when the first 42 days have been used. Supporting documentation may be required for approval of additional absences.
- All documentation pertaining to CCS will be kept for the specified period of time and made available to Australian Government Officers on request.

Payment of Fees

- Fees are payable from the agreed commencement date and must be paid two weeks in advance.
- Fees MUST be paid via Direct Deposit, to be set up on enrolment.

Overdue Fees

- Once a parent/carer fails to remain 2 weeks in advance with service fees the following will occur:
 - The parent/carer will be notified of the child's placement to be cancelled.
 - The parent/carer will then be required to bring the account up to date.
 - If a default payment occurs whilst on a Direct Debit Service Agreement the parent/carer will be given 14 days prior notice of the cancellation of their child's placement within the service.
- Parents/guardians with overdue fees will be encouraged by the Nominated Supervisor to discuss any difficulties they may have in meeting payments and make suitable arrangements to pay

Late Collection Charge

- Our service reserves the right to implement a late collection charge when parents/ guardians have not collected their child/ren from the service before closing time. This charge will be set at a level determined by the Committee of Management and based on the service's need to recoup expenses incurred in employee overtime wages.

CHILDCARE – ADDITIONAL GOALS

- Fourteen days, 2 weeks, prior notice in writing must be given to Administration for any changes to a child's placement or cancellation of placement in the centre. If fourteen days written notice is not given fees will be charged and payable by parent/carer.

- Additional days of care/placement require 24-hour notice.
- Parents/carers of children attending the centre on a casual basis must give notice of cancellation of their booking by 2:00pm on the day prior to the booking. If booking cancellation is not received by the stipulated time the parent/carer will be charged fees for that booking.
- The centre is approved to offer the Child Care Subsidy to eligible families. Families must apply through Centrelink to receive the Child Care Subsidy. Families must also use MyGov to accept the child's enrolment once enrolling into the Childcare service to have the Child Care Subsidy applied.
- Families will not receive Child Care Subsidy fee reductions until they provide a relevant CRN, Compliance Written Agreement (MyGov) and acceptance of enrolment through MyGov.
- Any bank charges relating to dishonoured cheques will be added to fees.
- Even if the child is absent due to illness, fees are payable for every day on which a child is enrolled to maintain their placement in the centre.
- Written notice of at least fourteen days (2 weeks) of an absence for any reason will result in half fees being charged for that absence. Child Care Subsidy allows up to 42 days of absence before the Child Care Subsidy relevant to the child is affected.

PRESCHOOL – ADDITIONAL GOALS

- Concessions are available for low income families who hold a current Health Care Card. The Health Care Card must display the parent/carer name and the child's name who the booking is relevant to. Health Care Cards can be applied for through Centrelink. Families must provide updated cards when their current card expires to continue receiving the concession.

XPLOR

- Current fees and balances can be accessed by parents/carers through their Xplor account.
- The child's relevant Health Care Card will be attached to their Xplor profile.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Approved Provider will:

- Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011.
- Review the current budget to determine fee income requirements.
- Develop a fee policy that balances the parent's/guardian's capacity to pay, with providing a high-quality program and maintaining service viability.
- Consider any issues regarding fees that may be a barrier to families enrolling at the service and removing those barriers wherever possible.
- Provide parents/guardians with a regular statement of fees and charges.
- Ensure that the Fees Policy is readily accessible at the service.
- Notify parents/guardians within 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected.
- Ensure a notice outlining the fees charged by the service is displayed prominently in the main entrance to the service.

- Enter into a CWA with a parent or guardian, to provide childcare in exchange for fees. A CWA is an agreement between the Early Learning Childcare Centre service provider and a parent or guardian, to provide childcare in exchange for fees. It will include:
 - The provider and parents contact names and details
 - The date the arrangement is effective from
 - The child or children's full name and date of birth
 - Session days and start/end times
 - Details of the fees to be charged
- Update any changes to the CWA as required.

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Provide parents/guardians with a regular statement of fees and charges.
- Collect all relevant information and maintaining relevant documents regarding those with entitlement to concessions, where applicable.
- Notify parents/guardians within 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected.
- Ensure a notice outlining the fees charged by the service is displayed prominently in the main entrance to the service.

Early Childhood Educators will:

- Refer parents'/guardians' questions in relation to this policy to the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisors.

Families will:

- Read this policy and referring any questions, queries or concerns to the nominated supervisor.
- Obtain a Customer Reference Number from Centrelink as soon as practical before enrolment at the service.
- Record the arrival and departure times of their child or children attending care.
- Pay for any booked day of education and care which falls on a public holiday.
- Ensure all fees are kept two weeks in advance at all times.
- Provide documentation for additional absence days as required.
- Provide 2 weeks' notice of withdrawal from service. If child does not attend during this 2-week notice period full fees will be chargeable.
- Notifying the Approved Provider if experiencing difficulties with the payment of fees.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every 18 months. Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to

a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family’s ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

RELATED LEGISLATION

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 99, 102, 160, 161, 168(2)(m)
- Family Law Act 1975 (Cth), as amended 2011

LINKS TO:

- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7.1
- Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 168(2)(n)

SOURCES

- Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – www.acecqa.gov.au
- CCS Information - <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy>

Policy Revision History

<i>Date</i>	<i>Authorised By</i>	<i>Description of Amendments</i>	<i>Sections affected</i>
Jan 2021	P. Ritchie – GM		

- **Review Date: Jan 2022**