



Fees Policy

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| QA7 | 7.1.2 | Management systems - Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service. |
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Aim

Parents fully understand fee payment procedures and requirements, and pay their child care fees on time.

Related Policies

Enrolment Policy

Orientation for Children Policy

Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Implementation

Enrolment

A booking fee of \$50.00 is required when lodging an enrolment form. This is non-refundable if your child does not take a place at our service. This booking fee will be taken as part of your fees once your child takes a place at our Service.

Fees

Our childcare fees are outlined in our fee schedule which is available from the administration area and also displayed on our website. We will advise eligible families if we can access any Government funding which may reduce the fees they're required to pay.

Please note our fees may change from time to time. We will notify families in writing at least 14 days before we change our fees or the way in which we collect them.

Fees must be paid on time and:

- **Two weeks in advance**
- Weekly, fortnightly or monthly in advance by direct deposit
- On the first morning your child attends the service for the week

- In advance for every day that your child is enrolled at the service. This includes, sick days, family holidays and public holidays but excludes the period when the service is closed over the Christmas and New Year break period.

Fees may also be payable during any period when the service closes in response to a local emergency eg fire, flood. Potential emergencies which may affect our service are considered in our service risk assessment for potential emergencies and covered in our emergency response procedures (refer Emergency Management and Evacuation Policy.)

Child Care Subsidy

Child Care Subsidy is available to all families who are Australian Residents if the child meets immunisation requirements and parents meet eligibility requirements. Entitlement is determined by an activity test which determines the number of hours of subsidised care to which families are entitled. Combined family income is used to determine the subsidy percentage. Income thresholds change each financial year. Current thresholds are available from the Department of Human Services website. See servicesaustralia.gov.au/ . See 'Activity Level and Subsidised Care.'

| <i>Hours of activity per fortnight</i> | <i>Maximum number of hours of subsidy per fortnight</i> |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8 hours to 16 hours | 36 hours |
| More than 16 hours to 48 hours | 72 hours |
| More than 48 hours | 100 hours |

A broad range of activities meet the activity test requirements, including paid work, self-employment, unpaid work in a family business, active job hunting, volunteering, or studying. You can also include reasonable travel time to and from a place of activity to the centre. In two parent families, both parents must meet the activity test, and subsidy hours are calculated on the lower number where parents have different levels of activity.

There are exemptions for parents who legitimately cannot meet the activity test requirements.

Low-income families who do not meet the activity test can access 24 hours of subsidised care per fortnight under the Child Care Safety Net. Families who do not meet the activity test but have a preschool-age child attending preschool are eligible for 36 hours of subsidised care per fortnight.

People with disability or impairment, including those who receive Disability Support Pension or an invalidity service pension or who have been diagnosed by a registered medical practitioner or clinical psychologist as impaired to a significant degree may be exempt from the activity test.

Families who need more than their available hours of subsidised care per fortnight due to exceptional circumstances can also apply to Centrelink for additional hours.

The Additional Child Care Subsidy may be available to help support:

- Families needing help to support their children's safety and wellbeing
- Grandparents on income support who are primary child-carers
- Families in temporary financial hardship
- Families moving to work from income support

Families can claim Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy online by signing into their myGov and completing a claim. If eligible, the Subsidy will be paid directly to the service on families' behalf and we will reduce the fees owed. This can occur after our service enters families' enrolment information online, and families confirm their enrolment information through their myGov account. Until Child Care Subsidy details are available, families will need to pay full fees.

Child Care Subsidy may not be paid by the Government in certain situations and families will be required to pay full fees for the period involved. These include:

- Non-attendance for 14 weeks in a row
- For any days before a child attends the service for the first time.
- For any days in the final attendance period after a child last physically attends the service.

Absences

Families are entitled to receive Child Care Subsidy for up to 42 days where their child is absent, for example due to illness, public holidays, local emergencies, and parental leave. Evidence to support these absences is not required. Additional absence days may be available if they meet the situations outlined in the Family Assistance Law and there is evidence to support these.

Statements of Entitlement

We will issue fortnightly Statements which include child/children's full name/s, date of care, date of payment, daily and weekly hours of care, absences, hourly fees and hourly and daily fee totals and the number of hours fees were reduced (eg by Child Care Subsidy) and total reduction amount. (Parents' My Gov accounts will also have how much care families have received and how much Child Care Subsidy has been paid.)

Invoices

Invoices for the amount of fees payable in a period will be issued weekly. If families pay more than the fee amount required at the time, change will not be given but will be credited to the family's account.

Receipts

Receipt of payment will be provided on the next statement issued.

Late Fees

Families who do not collect their child before we normally close for the day may be charged a late fee of \$20 for the first 5 minutes and \$15 for every 5 or part thereof, they arrive past our closing time. This fee covers the cost of employing the staff required to supervise a child outside our operating hours. It may be waived at the discretion of the Nominated Supervisor.

Termination

Should families wish to end a permanent booking at the service, 2 weeks written notice is required. If families do not provide this notice, they will be charged 2 weeks' fees. The Nominated Supervisor may also suspend or terminate a child's enrolment after providing 2 weeks' notice, unless they believe the child's behaviour poses an unacceptable risk to the welfare and safety of other children

and educators, in which case no notice period is required. Please note children must be signed in and out by parents/guardians on the last scheduled day of their attendance for the Child Care Subsidy to apply. If this does not occur families are required to pay full fees.

Overdue Fees

The Nominated Supervisor will issue a **Friendly Fee Reminder** letter to any family who is one week late paying their fees. **If families are having difficulty making fee payments they should immediately speak with the** Nominated Supervisor to discuss fee payment arrangements. Information provided by families will be treated as strictly private and confidential.

In cases of non-payment of fees, where the service is unable to contact families about the debt, or families do not meet agreed arrangements for repayment of the debt and ongoing payment of fees:

- The Nominated Supervisor may immediately suspend or terminate the child's place at the service. Families will be advised of this action in writing.

Where families do not meet agreed payment plans, and an outstanding debt remains, the Nominated Supervisor may use their discretion to engage a third-party agency to recover the outstanding amount. The cost of this action may be added to the debt owed.

Sources

Bryant, L. (2009). Managing a Child Care Service : A Hands-On Guide for Service Providers. Sydney: Community Child Care Co-Operative.
Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations
Family Assistance Law

Review

The policy will be reviewed annually by:

- Management
- Employees
- Family Members
- Interested parties

Reviewed: May 2023

Date for next review: May 2024