

Fees and Debt Recovery



Policy

Fees and other charges are the prerogative of the Board who each year considers the fees and makes any necessary adjustments.

- Final adjustments may be required at the end of June after the Government announces the benefits payable
- Parents/Caregivers will be given two weeks written notice of any fee increase
- Generally annual fee increases will take effect from the beginning of August

Aim

Parents fully understand fee payment procedures and requirements and pay their childcare fees on time.

Implementation

Enrolment

- A booking fee/bond of \$100.00 is required when lodging an enrolment form. This is non-refundable if your child does not take a place at our centre within 4 weeks. This booking fee/bond will be taken as part of your security deposit once your child takes a place at our Service. This will be refunded if you give the required two weeks' notice to leave and their fees are paid in full.
- Upon enrolment families must pay a security deposit of one week's full fees less any Child Care Subsidy to which families are entitled. Any bond or fees owing when a child leaves the service will be refunded within eight weeks of the child's last week of attendance being submitted to CCS.

Fees

Our childcare fees are outlined in our fee schedule/policy which is available on our website. Please note our fees may change from time to time. Fees must be paid on time and:

- **one week in advance**
- weekly, fortnightly, or monthly in advance by direct deposit, eftpos, Centrepay or Ezidebit. No cash accepted.
- in advance for every day that your child is enrolled at the service. This includes pupil free days, sick days, family holidays and public holidays but excludes periods when the service is closed including over the Christmas and New Year break period.

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 on the servicessaustralia.gov.au/ website. See 'Activity Level and Subsidised Care.'

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 in the year before they attend a School, 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 Child Care Subsidy 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.

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, and parental leave. Evidence to support these absences is not required but is recommended. Additional absence days may be available if they meet the situations outlined in the Family Assistance Law and there is evidence to support these.

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/notice period after a child last physically attends the service.

Statements of Entitlement

We will email (printed if requested, weekly 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 (e.g., 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 every week. 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

Families will be provided with receipts once a week (usually Friday's).

Late Fees

Families who do not collect their child before we normally close for the day may be charged a late fee if 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 you wish to end your child's place at the centre, or should management make the decision to terminate your child's place, 2 weeks written notice is required from the ending/terminating party. If you do not provide this

notice, you will be charged 2 weeks fees. Children must also 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 two weeks late paying their fees. **If families are having difficulty making fee payments, they should immediately speak with the approved provider or 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:

- bond payments will be applied to outstanding debt amounts and
- 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.

If families are two weeks or more behind in their fees, they will not be eligible for an extra day at the centre until the fees are paid one week in advance. This will be at the discretion of Office Management and Responsible person.

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 www.acacqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations (accessed May 8, 2023)

Family Assistance Law www.education.gov.au/child-care-package/provider-obligations/family-assistance-law (accessed May 8, 2023)

Adopted: March 14, 2018 (combining and replacing *Fees* and previous *Fees and Debt Recovery* policies)

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