



Payment of Fees Policy

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, an approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for the payment of fees and the provision of a statement of fees charged by the service and take reasonable steps to ensure policies and procedures are followed. (ACECQA, 2021).

Quality early education and care provides the foundation for children’s development and social engagement whilst supporting workforce participation of parents and carers. Our Service is committed to providing quality education and care to all children at an affordable fee for families.

As an approved childcare service, Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is available to reduce fees to eligible families. Our fee structure is based on our ability to provide the requirements of the Education and Care National Law and National Regulations, Family Assistance Law, the Australian Taxation Office and guidelines contained in the Child Care Provider Handbook.

National Quality Standard (NQS)

Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership		
7.1	Governance	Governance supports the operation of a quality service
7.1.2	Management Systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service
7.1.3	Roles and Responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defines, and understood and support effective decision making and operation of the service

Education and Care Services National Regulations	
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of change to policies and procedures



Related Legislation

Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017 A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999
Family Law Act 1975
Family Assistance Law – Incorporating all related legislation for Child Care Provider Handbook in Appendix G https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/resources/child-care-provider-handbook

Related Policies

Dealing with Complaints Policy

Governance Policy

Delivery of Children to, and Collection from

Orientation of Families Policy

Education and Care Service Premises

Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Enrolment Policy

PURPOSE

For parents to gain a clear understanding of the Service fee structure, payment requirements and Child Care Subsidy benefits prior to enrolment. This policy explains the process of fee payment and the necessity of ensuring children's fees are paid on time and consequences for failure to pay fees on time.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service aims to ensure families understand the fee schedule and payment process required for education and care to be provided for their child. We are committed to meet our obligations to maintain financial integrity and comply with all Child Care Subsidy legislative requirements. We have effective compliance systems in place to ensure childcare funding is administered appropriately. Our Service ensure the confidentiality and privacy of all personal information provided to the Service about the enrolled child and family.



Our fee structure includes:

Enrolment Fee Payment

- An enrolment fee of \$50 is charged upon confirmation of enrolment. This fee must be paid prior to commencement at the Service.

General Fees

- Fees are charged for each session of care and vary depending on the age of the child in care
- CCS is paid directly to the Service and this is used as a fee reduction (visible on a family's statement).
- Families are required to pay the difference between the fee charged and the subsidy amount – the 'gap' amount.
- Fees must be kept in advance of a child's attendance.
- A dated receipt will be provided for each payment (via email)
- Fees are preferred to be paid via direct debit through Xap. Families can pay fees on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis, it is a requirement that families pay in advance and are not in arrears.
- Fees are payable in advance for every session that a child is enrolled at the Service. This includes sick days, and family holidays, but excludes the two week period each year when the Service is closed. The Service may be directed to close due to periods of local emergency such as a bushfire or flood or a pandemic.
- If a session of care falls on a public holiday, families are required to pay normal fees. CCS may be paid for sessions that fall on public holidays.
- Fees are charged for full sessions only (regardless of the actual attendance hours any day).
- Casual days may be offered to families if available within the Service's license.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

- Parents/guardians are required to register for CCS through their myGov account linked to Centrelink and provide documentation to support to CCS payment
- Basic requirements that must be satisfied for an individual to be eligible to receive Child Care Subsidy. The child must:
 - Be a "Family Tax Benefit Child" or "Regular Care Child" and
 - Be 13 or under and not attending secondary school and
 - Meet immunisation requirements
- The person claiming the Child Care Subsidy, or their partner must:
 - Meet residency requirements and
 - Be liable to pay for care provided under a Complying Written Arrangement (their written agreement) with their childcare provider



- Childcare must be provided by an approved provider
- Families level of Child Care Subsidy will be determined by:
 - Combined family income
 - Activity test of parents
 - Type of early learning and childcare Service
- Child Care Subsidy will be provided directly to the Service and this amount deducted from the parent/family account.
- Families must regularly check their details are correct and report a change in circumstance to Centrelink – (family income, activity levels, relationship changes or any other changed to their circumstances)
- Any disputes with CCS payments is the responsibility of the family. The family will be referred to contact Centrelink directly for any enquiries regarding CCS payments.

Payment of fees

- Families can pay fees using the Service’s direct debit system through Xap. The family is required to enter their banking details into Xap if they wish to pay via this option.
- A dishonour fee will apply for direct debit transactions where there are insufficient funds to cover the fees.
- Families will be issued with a fee statement on a weekly basis in accordance with the fee payment and Regulatory requirements.
- The fee statement will include details of the sessions of care provided and the resulting fee reduction amounts.
- The fee statement is generated using our CCS Software which meets all requirements as per Family Assistance Law legislation.

Absences from Service

- Families are requested to contact the Service if their child is unable to attend a particular session
- Families must still pay the ‘gap’ fee to the Service if their child is unable to attend.
- Under the Child Care Subsidy families are allowed 42 absence days per child, per financial year and may be entitled to additional absence days in certain circumstances (See Child Care Subsidy Handbook)
- Allowable absences can be taken for any reason, including public holidays and when children are sick.
- Additional absences can be claimed for the specified reasons as defined by the Family Assistant Law
- Records and evidence will be kept by the Service for each additional absence, where required.



- Families can view their absence count through their Centrelink online account via my.gov.au
- In a period of local emergency, such as a bushfire or pandemic, and our Service is temporarily shut down on public health advice, families may be provided with additional absence days as per Family Assistance Law legislation.

Financial Difficulties

- If a family is experiencing financial difficulties, a suitable payment plan may be arranged with authorisation of the Approved Provider.
- Families can apply for Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) through Centrelink for additional fee assistance.
- There are four different payments under Additional Child Care Subsidy:
 - Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) – to help children who are at risk of serious abuse or neglect. The approved provider is involved in determining children who may require additional support who are at risk of harm.
 - Additional Child Care Subsidy (grandparent) – to help grandparents on income support who are the principal caregiver of their grandchildren. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment.
 - Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship) – to help families experiencing financial hardship. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment.
 - Additional Child Care Subsidy (transition to work) – to help low-income families transitioning from income support to work. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment.

Debt Recovery Procedure

- If a family fails to pay the required fees on time, a reminder phone call will be made. If no response, the child will not be able to stay until fees are paid.
- If after two week's there are fees are still outstanding, and no response from family the child's position will be terminated, to which the family will receive a final letter terminating the child's position. At this time the Service will ask again for a payment plan to be agreed upon with the family. If still no response, the Service will initiate its debt collection procedure.
- All debt collection fees will be the responsibility of the family.

Late Fees



- It is unacceptable to pick children up late from the Service. A late fee will apply where children are not picked up prior to closing time.
- Currently, a fee of \$30.00 per the first 15 minutes block and part thereof. If the child is not picked up after 15 minutes, the late fee will occur an additional \$5 per minute or part thereof.
- A review of the child's enrolment will occur where families are consistently late, or late with fee payment.

Change of Fees

- Fees are subject to change at any time provided a minimum of four weeks written notice is given to all families
- Schedule of fees are available in the office
- CCS hourly rate caps may be increased by the CPI at the commencement of each financial year. Any CCS hourly rate increases are governed by CCS and are automatically adjusted through our CCS software.

Termination of Enrolment

- Parents are to provide two weeks written notice of their intention to withdraw a child from the centre.
- If termination from the Service is required without notification, families can lose their Child Care Subsidy resulting in the payment of full fees to be charged.
- In some circumstances CCS may not be paid for sessions if the child has not physically started care.
- Additionally, CCS may not be paid for absences submitted after a child's last physical day of care, unless conditions have been met as specified by Family Assistance Law.

Responsibility of Management

The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor/Assistant Director are responsible for:

- Ensuring all families are aware of our Payment of Fees Policy.
- Ensuring enrolments are submitted correctly with the appropriate enrolment information
- Providing families with regular statement of fees payable
- Notifying families of any overdue fees
- Providing families with reminder letters as required
- Terminating the enrolment of children should fees not be paid.
- Discussing fee payment with families if required



- Providing at least 4 weeks written notice to families of any fee increases or changes to the way fees are collected.
- Should families wish to discuss fees, they will need to speak to Jenny French or Kristy Hurley.

Responsibility of Families

- Provide the Service with the correct enrolment details to facilitate the CCS claim, if required, including:
 - Centrelink Reference Numbers for child and CCS claimant
 - Date of Birth for child and CCS claimant
- Ensure payment of fees as per policy
- Notify Centrelink of any changes that may affect their CCS entitlement
- Confirm their child's environment through the parents myGov account.

Third Party Payments

Parents are generally liable to pay the co-contribution for childcare fees. Only state and territory governments (and their agencies) can contribute to the cost, in part or full, of child care fees for families. Where an agreement has been made between an employer or charity to assist in the contribution of fees the fees must be reduced accordingly before CCS has been applied. Our Service will record all documentation regarding third party payments.

Resources and information for families

[Child Care Subsidy](#)

[Centrelink Customer Reference Number](#)

[Absences from childcare- Australian Government](#)

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our Payment of Fees Policy will be updated and reviewed annually in consultation with families, staff, educators and management.



Source

- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2021). Policy and procedure guidelines. *Payment of Service Fees and Provision of a Statement of Fees Charged by the Service.*
- Australian Government Department of Education Child Care Provider Handbook
- <https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/resources/child-care-provider-handbook>
- Australian Government Department of Education *Early Childhood and Care*
<https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood>
- Australian Government Department of Education *Information for child care providers when a period of local emergency occurs*
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018).
- [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (2011).
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).
- Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Amended 2020).
- Kearns, K. (2017). *The Business of Childcare* (4th Ed.).
- Revised National Quality Standard. (2018)

Review

Policy Reviewed	Modifications	Next Review Date
March 2017	Minor changes made to ensure compliance with regulations and government requirements.	March 2018
October 2017	Updated references to comply with the revised National Quality Standard	March 2018
March 2018	Changes made to comply with Regulations and changes to Child Care Subsidy DELETE FROM LAST PAGE: If a child does not attend the service on their last night, this will result in cessation of care in accordance with Centrelink. Centrelink will forfeit your Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate and families will be required to pay the full fee to the service.	March 2019
March 2019	Revised and no changes	March 2020
March 2020	Policy statement added Implementation information added CCS section included Absences section added Responsibility for Management section expanded	March 2021



September 2021	Additional information added – ACCS, responsibility of families Update of related legislation Updated related policies Policy content and sources current	June 2022
September 2022	Update of Department name from Department of Education, Skills and Employment to Department of Education Minor formatting edits within text Hyperlinks checked and repaired as required Links within sources updated to education.gov.au Continuous Improvement / Reflection section added	June 2023

Signature of Director: _____

Busy Kids Child Care



Outstanding Fee – First Reminder

<Insert date>

<Insert name>

<Insert address>

RE: OUTSTANDING ACCOUNT

Dear <Insert name>

This is a reminder that your account balance of \$<Insert Amount> was overdue as of <Insert Date>. Enclosed is a statement of account for your reference.

Please arrange payment of this account today or, if you cannot make full payment at this time, please contact us to make a payment arrangement that is mutually acceptable.

Your prompt attention to this matter would be greatly appreciated. If you have any queries regarding this account, please contact our office as soon as possible.

If payment has recently been made, please accept our thanks and ignore this reminder.

Regards,

<Insert name>

<Insert position>



Outstanding Fee – Second Reminder

<Insert date>

<Insert name>

<Insert address>

RE: SECOND REMINDER - OUTSTANDING ACCOUNT

Dear <Insert name>

We wrote to you recently reminding you of the outstanding amount of \$<Insert amount> for Invoice number/s <Insert invoice number/s>, but it appears to remain unpaid.

If you have any queries regarding its payment or if we can help you in any way please call. If not, please organise for settlement of this account immediately.

If payment has recently been made, please accept our thanks and ignore this reminder.

Regards

<Insert name>

<Insert position>



Outstanding Fee – Final Reminder

<Insert date>

<Insert name>

<Insert address>

RE: FINAL REMINDER - OUTSTANDING ACCOUNT

Dear <Insert name>

We have recently sent you a number of letters to remind you that the balance of \$<Insert amount> was overdue.

We ask again that if you have any queries or are not able to make full payment immediately, please contact us.

If neither of the above applies to your situation please organise for the settlement of the remaining balance by <Insert due date>.

Payment of your account has now well exceeded our normal credit facility, should your fees remain unpaid by the advised date your position at our Service will be terminated and your account transferred to our Debt Collection Agency, who will implement strategies to recover the debt owed to the Service.

Regards

<Insert name>

<Insert position>