



Background

Early childhood education and care services must comply with the Early Education and Care National Regulations 2011 and the National Quality Standard 2011 in the way they manage the collection of fees, and inform parents about this process including any pending changes to the fees.

Policy statement

This Policy details the Service's procedures in relation to fees, methods of payment and associated provisions.

Strategies and practices

- The Service's *Fee Policy* is explained to parents at enrolment, and the necessary paperwork relating to fees is discussed and completed.
- The Service notifies (in writing) parents of children enrolled at the Service, at least 14 days in advance, of any change that will affect the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected.
- Prior to enrolling your child at the Service, you need to contact the Department of Human Services (Centrelink) on 136 150 to arrange your Child Care Subsidy (CCS). You can also submit your CCS claim online at: <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy/how-claim>
- You will need to register a parent (only one parent needs to apply) and child with Centrelink in order to obtain a Customer Reference Number ('CRN') specific to the Parent and also to the Child (the CRN numbers will be 2 different numbers NOT the same numbers).
- Once you have given your details to the Service, they will put your details into the Child Care Management System and it will automatically calculate your subsidy. If your CRN has not been sorted through Centrelink – the Service can backdate up to 28 days. Until then, you are required to pay full fees.
- In order to receive the Child Care Subsidy, your child will need to be up to date with their immunisations.
- Before your child commences at the Service, parents are required to pay a \$50 enrolment fee.
- Two (2) weeks' written notice of intention to withdraw the child is required. The two weeks' notice begins from the close of business on the day the Service receives the written advice.

Payment of Fees

- Fees are to be paid on a weekly basis by direct debit the week after each child's attendance, when booked in for permanent bookings. Casual bookings are to be paid prior to attendance. These fees can be paid by Electronic Transfers .
 - Normal fees apply to, sick days, family holidays and any other absence. Fees are not charged for days when the Service is closed. Child Care Subsidy is paid for a child's absences up to 42 days per child each financial year. The Service does not exchange days of care and does not arrange make up days.
 - Once every fortnight, parents eligible for Child Care Subsidy are provided with a Statement of Entitlement. This statement includes details of the sessions of care provided and the resulting fee reduction amounts, and is based on information about entitlements and payments for each child received in their payment advice generated through the Services CCMS software program.
 - Receipts are issued for all fee payments. The system-generated receipt will show the child's name, the period for which the receipt is issued, the amount paid, and all other details required by regulations. If an overpayment is made, no refund will be given but the excess will be credited to the family's account.
 - Fee reminders are sent to any family one or more weeks' late in the payment of fees. If the fees are not paid within the following week or no arrangement for payment entered into, the child's place at the Service will be at risk.
 - The Service requires a full two (2) weeks' written notice of an intention to change the days of attendance or the number of days required.
 - A late fee (as per the Fee Schedule) is charged for any child collected later than the Service's closing time (by the Service's clock). Parents are asked to complete and sign a Late Fee Notice when they collect their child/children.
 - There is assistance for families who need practical help to support their child's safety and wellbeing which assists with the cost of childcare. This financial assistance is to support the child in attending childcare. This support is for families with children of serious risk of abuse or neglect.
 - There is assistance for families who need financial support during financial hardship for reasons such as things such as death of a partner, loss of income and cases of domestic violence. This financial assistance helps relieve the strain of paying for childcare only temporarily.
 - There is assistance for grandparents who are the primary carer of their grandchild. This assists them with the cost of childcare. The grandparent needs to have at least 65% care of the child and make the decisions about the care, welfare and development of the child.
 - There is assistance for families who are transitioning from income to support to work, study or training activities.
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Payment of Fees

Responsibilities of parents

- To ensure fees are kept up to date
- To keep the Service informed of any changes in attendance (e.g. family holidays, other absences)
- To respond promptly to communications from the Department of Human Services (Centrelink) to maintain CCS eligibility.

Procedure and forms

- Fee Schedule
- Late fee notice via text

Links to other policies

- Attendance Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Interactions with Families Policy

Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2011

Regulation	168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Regulation	172	Notification of change to policies or procedures

NQS	QA6.2.2	Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program
NQS	QA7.1.2	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service

Family Assistance Legislation

- *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*
- *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999*
- Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017 (Minister's Rules)
- Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017 (Secretary's Rules)
- Any other instruments (including regulations) made under the *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999* and the *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999*
- Schedules 5 and 6 to the *A New Tax System (Family Assistance and Related Measures) Act 2000*

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Department of Education and Training (Australian Government).
- Guide to the National Quality Framework 2018 (September 2020 Update): Section 4 – Operational Requirements <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-09/Guide-to-the-NQF-September-2020.pdf>
- Department of Education Skills and Employment ACCS Child Wellbeing- <https://www.dese.gov.au/additional-child-care-subsidy/child-wellbeing>
- DESE Financial Hardship -<https://www.dese.gov.au/additional-child-care-subsidy/temporary-financial-hardship>

Payment of Fees

- [DESE Transition to Work](https://www.dese.gov.au/additional-child-care-subsidy/transition-work) - <https://www.dese.gov.au/additional-child-care-subsidy/transition-work>
- [DESE Grandparents](https://www.dese.gov.au/additional-child-care-subsidy/grandparents) - <https://www.dese.gov.au/additional-child-care-subsidy/grandparents>

Further reading and useful websites *(Consistent with the approach of the National Quality Framework, the following references have prioritised efficacy and appropriateness to inform best practice, and legislative compliance over state or territory preferences.)*

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011

Policy review

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part the Service's commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

Version Control

Version	Date Reviewed	Approved By	Comments/Amendments	Next Review Date
1	8 January 2018	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated to changed NQF requirements 1 February 2018. Service to modify policies to its specific needs.	
2	10 January 2019	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated to changed NQF and CCS requirements.	
3	6 September 2019	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated references.	
4	13 May 2020	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated references, particularly those related to Department of Education, Skills and Employment	
5	2 August 2020	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated to include Family Assistance Law requirements. Included relevant Family Assistance Law in Sources and referenced Child Care Provider Handbook.	
6	30 December 2020	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated references.	
7	May 2022	ACA NSW	Updated References Updated Child Care Subsidy Information Update assistance available from centrelink.	December 2023