

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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National Regulations

Regs	168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
	172	Notification of change to policies or procedures

Aim

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

Related Policies

Enrolment Policy

Governance Policy

Orientation for Children Policy

Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Implementation

Our fee requirements are discussed below, with specific information and costs outlined at the end of the Policy.

We will advise eligible families if we can access any Government funding which may reduce the fees they're required to pay. This may include, for example, fee free or reduced cost kindergarten or preschool programs funded by the State Government.

Please note our fees may change from time to time. We will provide families with at least 14 days' notice before making any changes to the fees charged or the way they're collected. Fees must be paid on time for every day that your child is enrolled at the service *and* the service is open, including public holidays, pupil free days, days child is sick or injured and family holidays.

Fees may 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).

We offer the following kindergarten programs which are funded and subsidised by the State Government, so the fees are free or low cost. The Victorian government is making kindergarten programs subsidised for three- and four-year-old children who attend a long day care integrated kindergarten program, saving you and your family up to \$2000 per year. Funding for your child's kindergarten is provided to our service directly from the Victorian

government so you only required to make a partial payment depending on your childcare subsidy to any gap fee payments for three- and four-year-old kindergarten program.

Four-year-old Kindergarten

We offer children 15 hours of kindergarten per week in the year before they start school, who turn four years old by 30th April in the year they're enrolled in the program.

Three- year- old Kindergarten

We provide three-year-old Kindergarten programs of 15 hours per week to children who turn three years old by 30 April in the year they're enrolled in the program.

There is a Kindergarten Fee Subsidy available which enables eligible children to attend a government funded kindergarten program for 15 hours per week free of charge. Eligible children include those who:

- identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- are a triplet or quadruplet or more
- hold (or have a parent/guardian who holds) an eligible concession card or refugee, humanitarian, or asylum seeker visa.

We also offer Early Start Kindergarten which gives eligible children 15 hours of free or low-cost kindergarten a week for two years before starting school. Children can also access free or low cost Four-Year-Old Kindergarten. A child must be three by 30 April in the year they'll start kindergarten and:

- be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or
- be a refugee or asylum seeker or
- their family has had contact with Child Protection (or been referred to Child FIRST).

Our service can enrol eligible children and apply for kindergarten fee subsidies or early start kindergarten grants/extension grants on families' behalf. The payment is made directly to our service. Applications can be made for the fee subsidy or extension grant at any time during the year.

More information is available from the Victorian education department or local councils.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children can also access free kindergarten through the Koorie Kids Shine program.

Childcare Subsidy

Childcare 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 Childcare 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 Childcare 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 Childcare Subsidy or Additional Childcare 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 Childcare Subsidy details are available, families will need to pay full fees.

Childcare 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

Fees are still payable for all public holidays throughout the year except over the closing period at the end of the year. Fees are still payable if your child is sick or away for unknown reasons. Families are entitled to receive Childcare 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 after the 42 days may be available if they meet the situations outlined in the Family Assistance Law and there is evidence to support these. A discount of 50% of the gap fee is applied to fees that give the centre at least two weeks written notice of holidays or planned days off and it must be for a minimum of one full week (Monday-Friday)

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 Childcare Subsidy) and total reduction amount. (Parents' My Gov accounts will also have how much care families have received and how much Childcare Subsidy has been paid.)

Invoices

Invoices for the amount of fees payable. 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 invoices have been paid via the OWNA application.

Late Fees

Families who do not collect their child before we close for the day will be charged a late fee if they arrive past our closing time of 6:30pm. 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 due to the situation.

Termination

Should families wish to end a permanent booking at the service, they must provide the required period of notice. If families do not provide this notice, they will be charged for the notice period. 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.

Families must provide the required notice if a child no longer requires a place in the booked session. **If this notice is not provided, families will be charged for the session.**

There may be instances where cancellation occurs as a result of an emergency or other special circumstance. The Nominated Supervisor has the discretion to waive the termination fee in these situations.

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** 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:

- 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.

Our fees, detailed below, are also available from our foyer area in the policy and procedure folder area and our website.

Booking/enrolment fee	No booking/enrolment fee
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Bond/security deposit	No bond or security deposit
Fees	\$150 per day Fees are also available from office and website. Fees must be paid: • weekly direct deposit. Payments which are dishonoured will incur an additional \$10 administration charge. • No fees charged for orientation day
Out of pocket costs	• We will provide families with statement details of out of pocket.
Invoices	Issued Weekly
Dishonour fee	\$10
Late fee	A late fee of \$2 per minute for the first ten minutes, then \$4 per minute thereafter will be charged after 6:30pm, this fee will not be covered by Childcare subsidy
Termination of permanent booking	2 weeks' written notice
Waitlist fee	No fee
Add any fees for bedding, nappies, food	none
Add any standard excursion/incursion fees	none
Add any deposit fees eg for USB, entry cards etc	none

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

Kindergarten Funding Guide: Department of Education and Training VIC

Review

The policy will be reviewed annually by:

- Management
- Employees
- Family Members
- Interested parties.
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Reviewed: 20/2/2025

Date for next review: 20/2/26