

Payment of Fees Policy

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 defined, and understood and support effective decision making and operation of the service

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures

RATIONALE

KAZ Early Learning Centre prides itself on the quality service it provides, including above regulation staffing in both number and qualifications. Fees are charged based on the hours the Service is open.

Families with a child enrolling at KAZ Early Learning Centre are eligible to apply for Child Care Subsidy. The Child Care Subsidy is the main way the Government assists families with their child care fees. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to apply for Child Care Subsidy.

AIMS

To ensure families and staff understand the procedures to be followed in regard to the payment of fees.

To ensure the financial requirements of all families is met enabling the service to meet its budget requirements and to continue to provide a high quality service.

PROCEDURE

Deposit/Enrolment Fee

Prior to commencement of care a deposit comprising of two (2) weeks full fees is to be paid to the service. Children will not be permitted to commence at the service until the appropriate deposit has been paid.

The deposit is held as a bond until the child ceases to attend and will be refunded at this time after being offset against any outstanding or final fees owing. Two weeks written notice is required when a child ceases at the service. If notice is not given the deposit will be retained by the service to cover the fees incurred during this period.

The amount held as bond will need to be increased whenever the fee rate increase or child's attendance days increase.

Payment of Fees

Fees are to be paid at the beginning of the week for the current week's booked care; failure to pay by this time will be regarded as an outstanding fee account.

Where families are entitled to Child Care Subsidy full fees will need to be paid on enrolment until the service receives notification about their Child Care Subsidy entitlement.

Fees are payable when children are absent due to illness and or holidays taken during the services opening hours. Fees are not payable during Christmas shut down. Families are required to pay fees on public holidays if the holiday falls on their regular booked day (make up days are available). If children are absent due to family leave/holidays, fees are to be paid before the absence commences or the position will be considered vacant.

Outstanding Fee Accounts

Fee accounts that are 1 week in arrears will result in the issue of a *Notice of First Warning* being sent to families requesting the payment of outstanding fees. After the issuing of the *Notice of First Warning*, if fees are still unpaid and become 2 weeks in arrears; a *Notice of Final Warning* will be issued requesting immediate payment. Failure to pay this account within the date specified may result in the child's position being forfeited.

Families with overdue fees will be encouraged by the Approved Provider to discuss any difficulties they may have in meeting payments and make suitable arrangements to pay, including the option of a payment plan.

If this is not done, or the agreed arrangements are not kept, the matter may be referred to a debt collector and/or cancellation of the child's booking may occur.

Methods of Payment

Payment of fees may be made at the Service with cash, cheque, direct deposit or direct debit. Cheques should be made payable to *KAZ Early Learning Centre*.

All cash and cheque payments are to be made in separate envelopes giving details of child's name, amount enclosed and reason for payment (e.g. fees, excursion etc).

Cash payments for fees must be handed to a staff member who will count the cash and record the amount in a payment log, which will be signed by both the staff member and the parent/guardian. The money will be placed immediately into the envelope (labelled with the child's name and the amount enclosed) which will be sealed and placed in the fees box. Once the payment has been entered into the Services' Child Care Subsidy System, an official receipt will be issued in the usual manner.

Dishonoured Cheques

If a cheque for fees is dishonoured the outstanding fee account must be paid immediately as well as the dishonour fee. If two cheques are dishonoured within a two-month period, KAZ ELC will no

longer accept this method of payment for that account and the family will be required to pay future accounts by direct debit, direct deposit or cash.

Fee Relief

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS)

Our service will comply with the Australian Government requirements to be an approved education and care service for the purposes of Child Care Subsidy. The online Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS) reporting requirements and any other requirements for claiming and administering Child Care Subsidy will be maintained by the service.

Parents/Guardians of children who attend KAZ Early Learning Centre may be eligible to receive the Child Care Subsidy through the Department of Human Services. To claim this Subsidy, families must submit a claim for Child Care Subsidy, this can be done using your Centrelink online account through myGov. It is the enrolling family's responsibility to complete and lodge their activity test with Centrelink to outline their benefits prior to enrolment.

Once registered, an electronic notification will be sent to the families myGov inbox informing them of their CCS percentage and eligible hours. Families may be asked to bring a copy of the letter they receive to the service as confirmation. All fees charged are reported to the CCSS. The Child Care Subsidy will be paid directly to KAZ Early Learning Centre to be passed on to families as a fee reduction. Families will make a co-contribution to their child care fees and pay to KAZ Early Learning centre the difference between the fee charged and the subsidy amount.

Please note however, that weekly statements only calculate 'estimate fees' based on current information.

Any changes in a family financial circumstance may result in cancellation or reduction of their CCS. It is the family's responsibility to contact Centrelink if they wish to dispute this or discuss it further.

You must advise the Department of Human Services within 14 days, when changes happen that may affect your child care payments. These include when:

- your care arrangements change, for example, your child stops using child care
 - your child starts or leaves school
 - another child starts child care
 - you or your partner's income changes
 - your work, training or study changes
 - liability for child care costs changes to another person or agency
 - your personal circumstances change, for example, you change partnering arrangements (opposite or same-sex)—if you get married, registered, separated or divorced
 - your address or contact details change
 - you or your partner's residence status changes
 - you leave Australia
 - your bank account details change.
- Families will only be eligible for CCS if childcare attendance records are accurately completed and signed (electronically) by the family or other responsible adult, and other eligibility requirements are met.

- Families are entitled to 42 absence days for each registered child in each financial year. CCS is paid for these days provided that the child would normally attend on that day, and fees have been charged.
- Additional absence can be claimed when the first 42 days have been used. Supporting documentation may be required for approval of additional absences.
- All documentation pertaining to CCS will be kept for the specified period of time and made available to the Australian Government on request.

Commencing Care /New Enrolment - As a requirement of CCS payments, a fee reduction can only be claimed for care if the child attends the service from the initial booked date. If a child does not attend on their first booked day of care full fees will be payable for absences leading up to actual attendance.

Complying Written Arrangement

A Complying Written Arrangement (CWA) is an ongoing agreement between an ECEC service provider and a Parent/Guardian, to provide care in return for fees. The CWA must contain a minimum amount of information as defined by the Government.

Service providers are required to have a CWA in place for each child in their care, as set out in subsection 200B (3) of the Family Assistance Administration Act.

A CWA is required for both of the following:

- *Transitioning families:* For the purpose of the transition, a family deemed to be a “transitioning family” must have been enrolled at your ECEC service prior to 29th March 2018.
- *New families:* For all families who have started attending ECEC services 30 March 2018 onwards, the service provider must ensure that they have all the information as specified in the Secretary’s Rules regarding CWAs.
 - Names and Contact details of the parties to the arrangement
 - The date the arrangement was entered into
 - The name and date of birth of the child to whom the session of care is proposed to be provided
 - Whether the care will be provided on a routine basis under the arrangement
 - Details about days on which sessions of care will usually be provided
 - Usual start and end times for these sessions of care
 - Whether care may be provided casual basis
 - Details about fees proposed to be charged to the individual for the sessions of care provided under the arrangement.

CCS and Withdrawal of Care- Withdrawal from care requires two weeks written notice (that being 10 operational days inclusive of the day notice is given) or four weeks during the December January period, (*refer to Withdrawal of Care*). As a requirement of CCS payments, a fee reduction can only be claimed for care if the child attends these days. If a child does not attend on their final agreed booked day, full fees will be charged.

For families claiming CCS payments, to ensure correct payment of accounts, KAZ Early Learning Centre will withhold the 2 week deposit until the child's last day of care. Any deposit reimbursements will be sent by cheque or direct credit to the parent/guardians nominated address or bank account. If a child is absent from a service for one week without written notice the Manager will contact the parents/guardians and if notified that the child is not returning the deposit will be forfeited to cover fees in lieu of notice.

Additional Child Care Subsidy- This may be available to families who have particular financial difficulties. Please speak to the Approved Provider for more information regarding eligibility.

Eligibility basics

- meet the eligibility requirements for Child Care Subsidy, and
- be an eligible grandparent getting an income support payment
- be transitioning from certain income support payments to work, or
- be experiencing temporary financial hardship

Late Collection Fee

Parents/Guardians must adhere to the closing times of KAZ Early Learning Centre.

A late fee will be charged when a child is picked up after centre closing time. A *Late Collection* fee will be charged at a rate of \$20.00 for the first 10 minutes and \$1.00 per minute after that. This amount will be charged separately from child care fees. **Late fees do not attract the CCS.**

Parents/guardians are asked to contact the service if unforeseen circumstances or emergencies have occurred that prevent them from picking up their child by the service's closing time. If for any circumstance they are unable to collect their child from the service by the closing time, and fail to contact the service; educators/staff will follow the *Late Collection of Children* policy, implementing the following policies:

- Educators/Staff will verbally advise the parent/guardian that the child must be collected by the stated closing time due to licensing regulations and insurance conditions;
- Educators/Staff will register late arrival in *Late Collection Register*.
- Educators/Staff will advise the Manager/Approved Provider;
- Parents/Guardians will be required to sign *the Late Collection* register and give reason for lateness;
- Parents/Guardians will be required to pay a late fee as set out above

Statements

Statements are issued every three months. Invoices are issued weekly. (National Regulation 168, National Law 219(e)). Entitlement statements are issued fortnightly.

Fee Increase

Families will be given a minimum of 14 days' notice of any fee increase or any change to the Fees Policy (**National Regulation 172**).

KAZ Early Learning Centre Related Policies and Procedures:

Enrolment and Orientation Policy
Child Protection Policy
Late Collection of Children Policy

Appendices:

Late Collection Register

Related Statutory Obligations & Considerations

Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)

www.acecqa.gov.au

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW) No 104a

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/2010/104a/full>

Child Care Subsidy Secretary’s Rules 2017

Education and Care Services National Regulations

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2017L01463>

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653/full>

Department Human Services

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy/claiming>

Australian Government, my child.gov.au www.mychild.gov.au

Related Telephone Numbers

- Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate - 1800 619 113
- ACECQA - 1300 422 327
- Department of Human Services - 136 150
- CCSS Helpdesk - 1300 667 276

REVIEW

This policy will be updated to ensure compliance with all relevant legal requirements every year. Appropriate consultation of all stakeholders (including staff and families) will be conducted on a timely basis. In accordance with Regulation 172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulation*, families of children enrolled will be notified at least 14 days and their input considered prior to any amendment of policies and procedures that have any impact on their children or family.

Date Issued:

Review Date:

Amendment

Format, NQS added, updated weblinks

Family, Educator and Staff Comments: