

1.9 Fees

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. QA 7.3.5
- The Service ensures that, wherever possible, parents of children enrolled at the Service are notified at least 1 month in advance of any change that will affect the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected. Such notice will be prominently displayed at receptions and parents will be notified in writing. QA 7.3.5
- A one off administration fee of \$ 40 per family is required when enrolling at Acorn. This fee is non-refundable. QA 7.3.5
- The Service requires full two weeks written notice of an intention to change the days or the number of days required or to withdraw a child from the Service. The two weeks' notice begins from the close of business on the day the Service receives the written advice. QA 7.3.5

A late fee of \$1 per minute for each minute per child will be charged for any child collected later than the Service's closing time. QA 7.3.5

Fee Schedule - The current fee schedule is as follows: QA 7.3.5

Session Hours	Session Cost	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.
9am-3pm 6 hour session	\$90 per session					
	*Kindy age \$84 per session					
Kindergarten children must be 3 + days per week to qualify						
8am-5pm 9 hour session	\$95 per session					
	*Kindy age \$89 per session					
Kindergarten children must attend 2 + days per week to qualify						
7:30-5:30 10 hours or more	\$99 per session					
	*Kindy age \$93 per session					
Kindergarten children must attend 2+ days per week to qualify						
Before school care 6:30am – 9:00am	\$32 per session					
After school Care 2:30pm-6:30pm	\$37 per session					
Vacation Care 10 hour session	\$92 per session					

Payment of Child Care Fees

- All families at Acorn Child Care Centres, facility pay fees using the integrated direct debit method. A direct debit authority will be signed by all families at enrolment. Fees for the current week and the next week will be charged on Monday and this will appear on emailed statements delivered to families on Monday afternoon. Direct debit will go to Acorns bank for deduction on Tuesday mid-morning and deduct fees from parent's bank account on Wednesday or Thursday depending on the Parent's bank. Parents can choose to have the direct debit amounts deducted from their bank or credit card accounts.
- Fees are to be kept up to date at all times. Q7.3.2, 7.3.5
- Fees are collected fortnightly to coincide with
- Parents/guardians should check their statements carefully each week and refer any problems immediately to the Director. If something is wrong, it is an indication that data has been incorrectly entered into the computer and the error will therefore continue until corrected. Parents are responsible for checking the CCS and JET which appears on their statement.
- If an overpayment is made, no change will be given but the excess will be credited to the family's account. QA 7.3.5
- Please note that all bookings must be paid for regardless of attendance. Q7.3.2
- When you decide to leave Acorn Child Care Centres, you are required to give two weeks written notice. You must attend your last day of care or cessation care fees are applied to your account. Cessation of care fees are the full daily rate with no Centrelink benefits. These fees will be applied from the last day of attendance to your last day of booked care.

Overdue Fees

- Fee reminders are communicated to any family one or more weeks late in the payment of fees. If the fees are not paid within the following week or an arrangement not entered into, the child's place at the Service is at risk. QA 7.3.5
- If fees are continually dishonoured then Acorn reserves the right to terminate care.
- Debt collection fees will be charged to the defaulters account.
- If you have exited the centre with an overdue account. Acorn will endeavour to recover fees using an external party. Collection fees charged by the external party (Bundaberg Dept Collectors)
- The Dishonour fee will increase from \$2.50 to \$10 for families who have more than 4 dishonoured payments within a 6-month period. The fee will return to \$2.50 where there are no dishonours for a period of 6 months.

Child Care Management System (CCMS)

- The Centres applies the guidelines of the Commonwealth Government in the administration of Child Care Benefit.

- The Centres requires the following information for each child who attends and the parent/guardian under whose name Child Care Benefit is registered – Date of Birth and CRN
- Parents are advised to contact the Family Assistance Office directly to determine their eligibility for CCB before the child commences at the Service. QA 6.3.1
- Parents/guardians must understand that the Centres do not control or administer the amount of CCB which each child receives. Any discussion on this matter should be directed to the Centrelink Office.
- Absences allowed by CCMS include 42 days per financial year comprising of 12 public holidays and 30 days of absence. Families exceeding the allowable 42 days will not be entitled to CCB reductions unless a doctor's certificate is provided following an absence.
- The Director can assist with advising parents/guardians about CCMS but further information may be found at Centrelink on the corner of Tantitha and Woongarra Streets, Bundaberg. The Family Assistance Office can be contacted by phone on 13 61 50. Q 6.3.1

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 Family Assistance Office to maintain CCB eligibility.
- To ensure the centre has a current email address.

Links to other policies

- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Interactions with Families Policy
- Direct Debit Form

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. (2013). http://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/child_care_service_handbook_2012-13_final.pdf accessed 23 November 2013
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011.

Further reading and useful websites

- Department of Education – <http://education.gov.au/>
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. *Information for families using child care - fact sheet kit for 2012-2013.* <http://www.mychild.gov.au/pages/CCFactSheets.aspx> accessed 23 November 2013
- <http://www.saasso.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/What-is-the-Child-Care-Rebate.pdf>

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