

Fees Policy

Rationale

As a community-based centre, we operate on a not-for-profit basis. Our objective is to make our centre as accessible as possible to everyone in the community by keeping our fees affordable, but always ensuring that the needs of our staff and children are catered for within our annual budget.

Policy Statement

Nought to Five Early Childhood Centre will act in accordance with requirements of the Australian Government's Department of Education and Training (DET) regarding administration of child care fees. In conjunction with these the Management Committee and office staff will ensure:

- The fee structure covers the operational costs of the centre and ensures the continued efficient running of the centre;
- Fees are reviewed on an annual basis, or more frequently if required;
- Families will be given a minimum of 1 months' notice of any fee increase.
- Communication with parents is effective and done in a timely manner with regard to changes to fees, fees owing, payments made, late collection fees and any additional fees such as excursions, fundraising, maintenance levy etc.

Strategies and practices

Fees

Fees schedules and payments will be fully explained to families on their Orientation days.

Fees are reviewed annually by the Management Committee. The current rates can be obtained from the office or on our website (www.noughttofive.com).

Fees must always be paid at least one week in advance, including Public Holidays and absences for sickness or family holidays. These can be paid weekly, fortnightly or monthly.

Fees for the first week in January must be paid in December, prior to centre closure.

Fees are to be paid by Direct Deposit into the centres nominated bank account. Parents must ensure their **child's surname** is included in the deposit description.

Direct deposit fee payments should be set up to come out of your account every Monday to ensure we receive your payment by Wednesday (fee processing day).

Any Cash/Cheque payments are to be placed in the Fees box slot which is just inside the office window.

A \$20.00 Late Payment fee will be charged if fees fall behind more than a week.

If fees are in arrears by two weeks or more without explanation then the place of the child within the centre will be in jeopardy.

Additional Fees

Any extra curricula activities eg: excursions, entertainers, etc are charged at an additional fee. This will be added to the relevant fee week and shown as a separate charge.

Payments for excursions, fundraising, shows, etc may be paid by Direct Deposit, cash or cheque. When notifying you of these various events, we will provide you with the relevant payment details.

We do ask all our families for help towards maintaining the centre, either through attending 2 Working Bees a year, or paying \$100 which will go towards having equipment repaired, lawns mowed, rubbish removal of faulty equipment, etc.

Fee Concessions

A concession for the payment of fees is granted for the two week period that the centre is closed over Christmas and New Year.

Circumstances which do not attract a fee concession are:

- Public Holidays (except Christmas and New Year)
- If siblings are enrolled
- Family holidays
- Sick leave up to and including two weeks

Late Collection Penalty Charges

Our license finishes at 6.00pm sharp. Any children and parents still on the premises after this time put the centre in breach of our license. Therefore, a flat rate late collection fee of \$30.00 is charged if a child has not been collected by 6.00pm. This fee is regardless of whether pickup is at 6.01pm or 6.10pm for example. If pickup is later than 6.30pm higher penalties may apply.

If a parent feels that lateness occurred due to exceptional circumstances, the reason should be put in writing to the Director. Each case will be individually assessed and a decision made by the Director within 7 days. Parents will be notified of the decision by telephone or email. If late collection occurs twice in a month, the child's placement at the centre could be reviewed.

If a child has not been collected by 6.00pm and the parent has not notified the centre, every effort will be made to communicate with the parent. If unsuccessful, emergency contacts listed on the child's enrolment form will be contacted.

If we are unsuccessful in contacting the parents/ emergency contact person, Eastwood Police Station will be contacted for assistance.

Late Payment/ Non Payment of Fees

It is important that a debt is not left to accrue.

If a family has outstanding fees the following procedure is adopted:

- EVERY family must pay fees at a minimum for the current week or one week in advance.
- Fees are processed each Wednesday afternoon. If a fee payment has not been received into our centre account by the time we print our bank statements, a Late Payment penalty of \$20.00 will be automatically charged to your account.
- The Invoice issued each week on a Thursday will reflect the following:
 - The penalty charge incurred
 - The outstanding fee owing and
 - The fee currently due to bring your account back to one week in advance.
- By the following Monday (10.00am at the latest) the total amount on your statement **must be paid in full**.

If the debt remains the Director or Office Administrator will contact you by phone to organise a specific day and time for this payment to be made. Until this payment is made your child will be unable to attend the centre. You will still be charged for your child's normal attendance days during this time.

If this situation occurs with a family on more than one occasion you will be required to attend a meeting with a Management Committee Representative and/or the Director to decide on the viability of your child remaining at the centre.

Should the unfortunate incident of a dishonoured cheque occur, any penalty charges issued to us by our bank will be charged to your child's account for immediate payment.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

Government assistance with fees can be obtained by applying to Centrelink or Family Assistance Office for eligible families (ie. Australian residents/citizens).

CCS will be applied as a reduction from each week's fees. Eligibility for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is based on and subject to a standardised income test. Once a claim is lodged and processed (approximately 2-3 weeks) the government department will notify parents of the percentage of fees to

be subsidised. This percentage is then applied to the weekly fees and parents pay the outstanding balance. Parents must provide all relevant CRN numbers to the centre to enable CCS to be applied to their account.

PLEASE NOTE:- Once we enrol your child at the centre you will need to accept the enrolment online through your MyGov Centrelink account. Full weekly fees will need to be paid until we start to receive your CCS payments.

It is a government requirement that all persons receiving CCS, notify the government of any changes in their financial circumstances. It is also a requirement to notify the government of any situational care arrangements, for subsequent children, that attracts the CCS subsidy eg: before & after school care, family day care, etc.

CCS Absences - the CCS subsidy is applied for allowable absences up to a total of 42 days per financial year. After this time full fees apply to retain a place.

Withdrawal/ Termination of a Child

The centre requires a minimum four (4) weeks' notice of intention to withdraw a child from being enrolled (excluding any periods of centre closure eg: Christmas closure). This allows time to reallocate the place and calculate fees owed and any refunds due. A form is available on the Nought to Five Skoolbag APP, under eForms.

You will need to pay your usual fees up to and including your child's last day. The week after you have left the centre attendance will be sent to the Government. Assuming there are no changes to your CCS payment, the following week we will refund your full Security Deposit into your nominated bank account.

Absences from the Centre

Parents are required to inform the centre whenever their child is going to be absent from the centre. This is a mandatory government and centre requirement. Absentee forms are available on the Nought to Five Skoolbag APP, under eForms.

In the case of illness, parents must notify the centre of their child's condition as the centre is obliged to inform the Health Department of any infectious diseases existing in the centre.

Fees are payable during these periods of absence from the centre.

Fee related Administrative Tools

- **Fee Statements** – CCS requires these be supplied to parents every month. Our office will also provide a weekly Invoice to keep parents updated on the status of their payments.
- **Initial Fee Payments** – Security Deposit and first week's fee details are provided in the letter of offer. These amounts need to be paid prior to the child's start date to guarantee their enrolment.
- **Amended Fee Advice** form – details changes to a child's account when changes to fees are made usually at the beginning of July.

Links to other policies

Waitlist; Enrolment

Related Guidelions, Standards, Frameworks

National Quality Standard: Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership – Standard 7.1

National Regulation 168 Policies and Procedures – Payment of fees and provision of a statement of fees

Sources and further reading

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

Revision History

April 03 - accreditation committee general revision of entire policy; **January 04** - updated with new CCB information; **May 10** - adjustments made with updated information; **December 12** - updated with changes to length of notice for Termination of a position; **March 15** - reviewed by Director to include electronic forms for notification of absence; **November 17** – amend late collection penalty charges to reflect actual time on the premises after closing; **July 18** – update in line with CCS subsidy and in accordance with Department of Education and Training and changes to National Quality Standard. **Oct 19**- Reviewed by Director and Office Administrator to Amend fee processing day, CCS and change to Late Collection charges