



# Service Fee Policy

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## Policy Statement

Child Australia’s Early Learning and Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) Services are committed to providing high-quality education and care at an affordable cost, aligned with the Australian Government’s Priority of Access Guidelines. Fee structures are determined by the Approved Provider, Children’s Integrated Management Services (CIMS), and reviewed regularly to ensure the financial sustainability of our services.

## Rationale

This policy is informed by the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the Australian Tax Office, the Privacy Act, and the Australian Government Child Care Subsidy (CCS) guidelines. It ensures transparency in fee charging, supports accurate financial management, and provides families with clear expectations regarding fee payment obligations.

## Responsibility

### Approved Provider:

Ensures appropriate policies and procedures are developed, maintained, and regularly reviewed.

### Nominated Supervisor and Responsible Persons:

Ensure staff are informed of and comply with this policy and that families receive accurate and timely information regarding fees.

### Staff:

Must be familiar with and adhere to all relevant policies and procedures regarding fee management and family communication.

### Parents/Guardians:

Are responsible for ensuring their fees are paid in accordance with this policy and acknowledging changes when notified. See the section below specifically for CCS.



## Procedures

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### Fee Payment Terms

- Fees are payable **two weeks** in advance to secure a child's ongoing place in the service.
- Fees are payable for all booked days, including:
  - Public holidays (when the service is closed)
  - Absences, whether for permanent or casual bookings
- Staff rosters are based on booked attendance numbers to ensure compliance with educator-to-child ratios as required by law. As such, fees for booked sessions are not waived due to absence.
- Parents must sign the appropriate Complying written Agreement in the bookings and Enrolment process or when there are changes of bookings in a permanent pattern.

### Parents' Responsibilities – Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

#### Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Applying for the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) through Centrelink via MyGov before care commences.
- Providing accurate and up-to-date information to Centrelink, including income estimates, activity hours, and family details.
- Confirming their child's enrolment with Child Australia through their MyGov account to activate CCS payments.
- Monitoring their CCS entitlements, usage, and balance (e.g. 42 allowable absence days per financial year).
- Paying any gap fees not covered by CCS on time and in accordance with this Fee Policy.
- Notifying Centrelink promptly of any changes in circumstances that may affect their eligibility or subsidy level.
- Signing their complying written agreements.



- Providing documentation if applying for Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) due to hardship or child wellbeing reasons.

*Failure to meet these responsibilities may result in full fees being charged until CCS is activated or reinstated.*

### **Service Closures**

- The service will close for a two-week period over the Christmas/New Year break, during which no fees are payable.

### **Annual Fee Increases**

CIMS will determine the required fee level to meet budget prediction for the year. Parents will be informed with 10 business days' notice of any fee increase.

### **Late Fees**

A late fee applies for children collected after the advertised closing time (e.g. 6:00 PM):

- \$15.00 for the first 15 minutes
- \$3.00 per minute thereafter

This fee applies per child and is not CCS-reducible.

Frequent late pickups will result in a formal discussion with the Nominated Supervisor regarding the suitability of care arrangements.

### **Payment Methods and Processing**

- All fees must be paid via direct debit using either a bank account or credit card.
- Payments are processed through Fat Zebra, managed by Kangaroo time.
- Families must create and maintain an active direct debit agreement through Kangaroo time and accept all related terms and conditions.

### **Current Payment Surcharges (Subject to Change):**

- **Credit Card / Debit Card (Visa/Mastercard): 2%**
- **Direct Entry: 80 cents**
- **Dishonour Fee: \$7.70 (charged by the third-party provider)**



**The service does not accept Direct Deposit unless part of an external agency program please do not pay directly to the service bank account as this may be missed in payments.**

*Please note: These fees will not appear on your standard service statement but will be charged directly by the processing platform.*

### **Financial Hardship and Subsidy Support**

Families experiencing financial hardship may apply for additional support through the **Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS)**.

#### **1. ACCS – Temporary Financial Hardship**

- To qualify, families must meet Centrelink's criteria under ACCS (Temporary Financial Hardship). This cannot be applied for via the service and must be done directly with Centrelink.
- Evidence must be provided to Centrelink in line with government guidelines.
- Support is subject to approval and time limits as set by Centrelink.

#### **2. ACCS – Child Wellbeing**

- Child Australia can support applications under ACCS (Child Wellbeing) for children at risk of serious abuse or neglect.
- Families must provide supporting documentation (e.g., child protection reports, family support service involvement).
- The determination is made by the ACCS team within the CCS Assessment Unit.

#### **3. Child Australia Financial Hardship**

In exceptional and extenuating circumstances where families are experiencing significant financial hardship and do not qualify for the Australian Government's Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS), Child Australia may, at its discretion, offer temporary support through a Financial Hardship Fee Payment Scheme.

- **This internal scheme is:**
  - Discretionary and assessed case-by-case.
  - Available only where ACCS has been applied for and declined, or where ACCS eligibility does not extend to the specific hardship situation.



- Intended to provide short-term, temporary relief to ensure continuity of care for the child.

**Support under this scheme may include:**

- Deferred fee payments
- Discounted fees
- Structured payment plans

**To apply, families must:**

- Submit a written request outlining their financial situation and reason for hardship
- Provide relevant supporting documentation (e.g. medical, legal, employment-related)
- Demonstrate they have explored and/or been declined ACCS through Centrelink

All applications will be assessed confidentially by the Senior Leadership Team and final approval will rest with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

This scheme is guided by our commitment to supporting vulnerable families and maintaining children's access to safe, stable early education and care environments.

Families are encouraged to speak with the Nominated Supervisor or Service Manager to explore eligibility and support pathways.

## Related Documents and Forms

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Displayed Fee Schedule

## References

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**Education and Care Services National Regulations:** Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, Federal Register of Legislation, <https://www.legislation.gov.au>.

**Australian Taxation Office (ATO)** <https://www.ato.gov.au>.

**Privacy Act 1988**, Federal Register of Legislation, viewed [insert date], <https://www.legislation.gov.au>.

**Australian Government Department of Education** Child Care Provider Handbook, Australian Government, <https://www.dese.gov.au>.

