

PAYMENT OF FEES POLICY - PRESTON

Under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, an approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for the payment of fees and the provision of a statement of fees charged by the service and take reasonable steps to ensure policies and procedures are followed. (ACECQA, 2021).

Quality early education and care provides the foundation for children's development and social engagement whilst supporting workforce participation of parents and carers. Our Service is committed to providing quality education and care to all children at an affordable fee for families.

As an approved childcare service, Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is available to reduce fees to eligible families. Our fee structure is based on our ability to provide the requirements of the Education and Care National Law and National Regulations, Family Assistance Law, the Australian Taxation Office and guidelines contained in the Child Care Provider Handbook.

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
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of change to policies and procedures

RELATED LEGISLATION

Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017
A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999
Family Law Act 1975

Family Assistance Law – Incorporating all related legislation for Child Care Provider Handbook in Appendix G
<https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/resources/child-care-provider-handbook>

RELATED POLICIES

CCS Accounts Policy	Enrolment Policy
Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Governance Policy	Fraud Prevention Policy
Dealing with Complaints Policy	Governance Policy
Delivery of Children to, and Collection from and Education and Care Service Premises	Orientation of Families Policy
	Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
	Termination of Enrolment Policy

PURPOSE

For parents to gain a clear understanding of the Service fee structure, payment requirements and Child Care Subsidy benefits prior to enrolment. This policy explains process of fee payment and the necessity of ensuring children's fees are paid on time and consequences for failure to pay fees on time.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service aims to ensure families understand the fee schedule and payment process required for education and care to be provided for their child. We are committed to meet our obligations to maintain financial integrity and comply with all Child Care Subsidy legislative requirements. We have effective compliance systems in place to ensure childcare funding is administered appropriately. Our Service ensures the confidentiality and privacy of all personal information provided to the Service about the enrolled child and family.

Our fee structure includes:

Enrolment Fee and Bond Payment

- An enrolment fee of \$100 is charged upon confirmation of enrolment. This fee must be paid prior to commencement at the Service.
- Two weeks of full fees are charged on commencement.

General Fees

- Fees are charged for each session of care
- CCS is paid directly to the Service and this is used as a fee reduction (visible on a family's statement).
- Families are required to pay the difference between the fee charged and the subsidy amount- the 'gap' amount.
- Fees must be kept in advance of a child's attendance.
- A dated receipt will be provided for each payment via the Xplor App.
- Fees are to be paid weekly through a direct debit system. If families wish to pay fees on a fortnightly or monthly basis, it is a requirement that the family pay in advance and are not in arrears.
- Fees are payable in advance for every session that a child is enrolled at the Service. This includes pupil free days, sick days, and family holidays but excludes periods when the Service is closed. The Service may be directed to close due to periods of local emergency such as bushfire or flood or a pandemic.
- If a session of care falls on a Monday public holiday gap fees will be waived.
- If a session of care falls on a public holiday (Tuesday–Friday) families are required to pay normal fees.
- Fees are charged for full sessions only (regardless of the actual attendance hours any day).
- Casual days may be offered to families if available within the Service's license.
- All casual bookings must be requested or cancelled in writing via email adminpreston@littlesunshine.com.au or the Xplor App.

Funded Kindergarten Fees

Funded Kindergarten will be provided for three-year-old and four-year old children at our Service. This fee includes excursions, art and sport programs, maintenance costs, etc.

DET will make Kinder payments to participating service providers, not directly to families. These payments will be made through the Kindergarten Information Management System (KIMS) as regular payments to ensure participating services can offer the program.

Services must apply standard fees across the service for all kindergarten age enrolments (three- and four-year-old) to ensure that children enrolled in a kindergarten program are not charged higher fees in comparison to children that are not attracting kindergarten funding.

For further information on fees and other charges please see our [Fee Policy](#).

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For further information on fees and other charges please see our [Fee Policy](#).

Three- and Four-Year-Old Free Kindergarten Payments

For integrated long day care programs, the service must pass the full Free Kinder payment on as a fee offset to families. This is because fees are charged for all hours of education and care, not just the kindergarten program hours, and the fees are dependent on a number of factors including the family's Commonwealth Child Care Subsidy entitlement. Free Kinder in sessional programs functions as a fee replacement for the service. The sessional rate has been set higher to enable participating sessional services to offer a free 15-hour program within their current fee structure.

Free Kinder payments for 2023 are as follows:

For the Three Year Old and Four Year Old integrated long day care programs (i.e. where enrolled children also attract Commonwealth Childcare Subsidy (CCS) payments) will attract \$2,000 per child enrolled.

Our service will apply the fee offset regularly (e.g., fortnightly or monthly) and clearly indicate the offset amount (labelled Victorian Government Free Kinder offset) on parent invoice statements

Our service also receives the standard rate of per capita funding for our four-year-old children. The service does not pass on these payments on to parents, this funding is for the service to deliver a funded kindergarten program/s.

In line with existing policies for per capita funding, children must only receive Free Kinder funding at one service. If a child attends more than one service that offers a funded kindergarten program and Free Kinder (e.g. a sessional service for some days and a long day care service on other days), the family must

nominate which service they will receive their funded kindergarten program and therefore their Free Kinder funding.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

- Parents/guardians are required to register for CCS through their [myGov](#) account linked to Centrelink and provide documentation to support the CCS payment
- Basic requirements that must be satisfied for an individual to be eligible to receive Child Care Subsidy. The child must:
 - be a 'Family Tax Benefit child' or 'regular care child' and
 - be 13 or under and not attending secondary school and
 - meet immunisation requirements
- The person claiming the Child Care Subsidy, or their partner must:
 - meet residency requirements and
 - be liable to pay for care provided under a Complying Written Arrangement (their written agreement) with their childcare provider
- Childcare must be provided by an approved provider
- Families level of Child Care Subsidy will be determined by:
 - combined family income
 - activity test of parents
 - type of early learning and childcare Service.
- Child Care Subsidy will be provided directly to the Service and this amount deducted from the parent/family account.
- Families must regularly check their details are correct and report a change in circumstance to Centrelink (family income, activity levels, relationship changes or any other changes to their circumstances).
- Any disputes with CCS payments is the responsibility of the family. The family will be referred to contact Centrelink directly for any enquiries regarding CCS payments.
- Discounts will only be offered as outlined in the CCS Handbook.

Payment of fees

- Families are required to pay fees using the Service's **direct debit system**. The family is required to provide banking details to facilitate set up of the direct debit account.
- Fees and charges associated with **direct debit system** are outlined upon enrolment.

- A dishonour fee will apply for direct debit transactions where there are insufficient funds to cover the fees.
- Families will be issued with a *Statement of Entitlement* on a fortnightly basis in accordance with the fee payment and Regulatory requirements via the Xplor App.
- The *Statement of Entitlement* will include details of the sessions of care provided and the resulting fee reduction amounts.
- The *Statement of Entitlement* is generated using our CCS Software which meets all requirements as per Family Assistance Law legislation.

Absences from Service

- Families are requested to contact the Service if their child is unable to attend a particular session.
- Families must still pay the 'gap' fee to the Service if their child is unable to attend.
- Under the Child Care Subsidy families are allowed 42 absence days per child, per financial year and may be entitled to additional absence days in certain circumstances. (See Child Care Subsidy Handbook)
- Additional absences can be claimed for the specified reasons as defined by the Family Assistance Law
- Records and evidence will be kept by the Service for each additional absence, where required
- Families can view their absence count through their Centrelink online account via myGov.
- In a period of local emergency, such as bushfire or pandemic, and our Service is temporarily shut down on public health advice, families *may* be provided with additional absence days as per Family Assistance Law legislation.
- If our Service is forced to close as a result of a public health directive, due to COVID-19, we may waive gap fees in line with Family Assistance Law legislation.

Financial Difficulties

- If a family is experiencing financial difficulties, a suitable payment plan may be arranged with authorisation of the Approved Provider.
- Families can apply for Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) through Centrelink for additional fee assistance.
- There are four different payments under Additional Child Care Subsidy:
 - **Additional Child Care Subsidy** (child wellbeing)—to help children who are at risk of serious abuse or neglect. The approved provider is involved in determining children who may require additional support who are at risk of harm

- **Additional Child Care Subsidy** (grandparent)—to help grandparents on income support who are the principal caregiver of their grandchildren. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment
- **Additional Child Care Subsidy** (temporary financial hardship)—to help families experiencing financial hardship. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment
- **Additional Child Care Subsidy** (transition to work)—to help low-income families transitioning from income support to work. Families are required to contact Centrelink directly regarding this payment

Debt Recovery Procedure

- If a family fails to pay the required fees on time, a reminder letter will be issued after **one week** and then again, after **two weeks** if the fees are still outstanding.
- At any time of the debt recovery process the family will be encouraged to enter a debt agreement with the service to repay outstanding fees. A written contract will be provided for the family to sign outlining repayment plan details. The repayment plan will provide information as to the duration and amount of the repayments as well as steps that will be taken if the repayment plan is not adhered to.
- A child's position will be terminated if payment has not been made after **three weeks**, for which the family will receive a final letter terminating the child's position. At this time the Service will initiate its debt collection process, following privacy and conditional requirements.

Holiday Discount

Holiday Leave is offered to all enrolled families as a "50% Discount" only. For example: a Family who have a full week booking at the time of application & request Holiday Leave – would be entitled to 20 days @ 50% discount. These 20 days can be spread over the Financial Year. Families need to have been enrolled with a Centre for a minimum of one Calendar month before Holiday Leave entitlement is applicable (waiting period). Holidays must be requested or cancelled two weeks in advance in writing via email adminpreston@littlesunshine.com.au or the Xplor App. This Holiday Leave discount offer is to commence from 1-May-22 and is not retrospective. Please refer to Appendix 2.

Staff Discount

Little Sunshine ELC & Kindergarten is pleased to offer a 22% discount off childcare fees for the children of current employees attending a Little Sunshine ELC & Kindergarten service. This policy applies to all staff (full time, part time and casual employees). Daily fees are discounted by 22%, however employees must still pay at least five per cent of the gap fee. Please refer to Appendix 3.

Late Fees

- It is unacceptable to pick children up late from the Service. A late fee will apply where children are not picked up prior to closing time.
- Currently, a fee of \$15.00 per 10 minutes block or part thereof will be incurred by the family.
- A review of the child's enrolment will occur where families are consistently late with fee payment.

Change of Fees

- Fees are subject to change at any time provided a minimum of two weeks written notice is given to all families.
- CCS hourly rate caps may be increased by the [CPI](#) at the commencement of each financial year, Any CCS hourly rate increases are governed by CCS and are automatically adjusted through our CCS Software.

Termination of Enrolment

- Parents are to provide two weeks written notice of their intention to withdraw a child from the centre.
- If termination from the Service is required without notification, families may lose their Child Care Subsidy, resulting in the payment of requirement for full fees to be charged.
- In some circumstances CCS may not be paid for sessions if the child has not physically started care.
- Additionally, CCS may not be paid for absences submitted after a child's last physical day of care, unless conditions have been met as specified by Family Assistance Law.

Responsibility of Management

The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor are responsible for:

- ensuring all families are aware of our *Payment of Fees Policy*
- ensuring enrolments are submitted correctly with the appropriate enrolment information
- providing families with regular statement of fees payable
- notifying families of any overdue fees
- providing families with reminder letters as required
- terminating enrolment of children should fees not be paid
- discussing fee payment with families if required
- providing at least two weeks written notice to families of any fee increases or changes to the way fees are collected

[Please note: Reg. 172 states a minimum of at least 14 days must be provided to families]

Responsibility of Families

- Provide the Service with the correct enrolment details to facilitate the CCS claim, if required, including:
 - Centrelink Reference Numbers for child and CCS claimant
 - Date of Birth for child and CCS claimant
- Ensure payment of fees as per policy
- Notify Centrelink of any changes that may affect their CCS entitlement
- Confirm their child's enrolment through the parents myGov account.

Third Party Payments

Parents are generally liable to pay the co-contribution for childcare fees. Only state and territory governments (and their agencies) can contribute to the cost, in part or full, of childcare fees for families. Where an agreement has been made between an employer or charity to assist in the contribution of fees the fees must be reduced accordingly before CCS has been applied.

Our Service will record all documentation regarding any third party payments.

Complaints relating to the administration of Child Care Subsidy

Families who wish to raise concerns regarding the management of Child Care Subsidy should speak with the Nominated Supervisor in the first instance. The Nominated Supervisor will follow the steps as outlined in this policy, including advising the Approved Provider of all grievances.

Families can raise concerns regarding management of the Child Care Subsidy to the dedicated Child Care

Tip-Off Line either via phone or email:

Phone: 1800 664 231

Email: tipoffline@education.gov.au

Resources and information for families

[Child Care Subsidy](#)

[Centrelink Customer Reference Number](#)

[Absences from childcare- Australian Government](#)

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our Payment of Fees Policy will be updated and reviewed annually in consultation with families, staff, educators and management.

CHILDCARE CENTRE DESKTOP- RELATED RESOURCES

Fee Increase Letter – General	Overdue Fee Payment Procedure
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SOURCE

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2021). Policy and procedure guidelines. *Payment of Service Fees and Provision of a Statement of Fees Charged by the Service*.

Australian Government Department of Education Child Care Provider Handbook

<https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/resources/child-care-provider-handbook>

Australian Government Department of Education *Early Childhood and Care* <https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood>

Australian Government Department of Education *Information for child care providers when a period of local emergency occurs*

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018).

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (2011).

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Amended 2020).

Kearns, K. (2017). *The Business of Childcare* (4th Ed.).

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018)

[Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	TRACEY DAVEY	CCOMP	1.3.2024
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APPENDIX 1: STATEMENT OF FEES

Quality early education and care provides the foundation for children's development and social engagement whilst supporting workforce participation of parents and carers. Our Service is committed to providing quality education and care to all children at an affordable fee for families.

As an approved childcare service, Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is available to reduce fees to eligible families. Our fee structure is based on our ability to provide the requirements of the Education and Care National Law and National Regulations, Family Assistance Law, the Australian Taxation Office and guidelines contained in the Child Care Provider Handbook.

- Fees are charged for each session of care and vary depending on the age of the child in care and the family's eligibility for Child Care Subsidy (CCS).
- CCS is paid directly to the Service and this is used as a fee reduction (visible on a family's statement).
- Families are required to pay the difference between the fee charged and the subsidy amount- the 'gap' amount
- Fees must be kept in advance of a child's attendance.
- A dated receipt will be provided for each payment, via the Xplor App.
- Fees are to be paid weekly through a direct debit system. If families wish to pay fees on a fortnightly or monthly basis, it is a requirement that the family pay in advance and are not in arrears.
- Fees are payable in advance for every session that a child is enrolled at the Service. This includes pupil free days, sick days, and family holidays but excludes periods when the Service is closed. The Service may be directed to close due to periods of local emergency such as bushfire or flood or a pandemic.
- Fees are payable in advance for every session that a child is enrolled at the Service. This includes pupil free days, sick days, and family holidays but excludes periods when the Service is closed such as periods of local emergency such as bushfire or flood or a pandemic.
- If a session of care falls on a Monday public holiday gap fees will be waived.
- If a session of care falls on a public holiday (Tuesday–Friday) families are required to pay normal fees.
- Fees are charged for full sessions only (regardless of the actual attendance hours any day).
- Casual days may be offered to families if available within the Service's license.
- All casual bookings must be requested or cancelled in writing via email adminpreston@littlesunshine.com.au or the Xplor App.
- Direct debits against a nominated Australian bank account are processed free of charge.
- For credit card payments, a surcharge applies (VISA/Mastercard: 2.35%; Amex/Diners: 4.4%, charged by Debit success, not LITTLE SUNSHINE).

Daily fees depend on the family's individual eligibility to claim the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) as a reduction of fees. Please speak to Centrelink about your CCS entitlements. Please note that you will be asked to pay full fees until CCS approval has been granted and until CCS confirmation is received by the Centre. The CCS is estimated for current and future weeks and may be adjusted by Centrelink. Upon termination of your enrolment, you may be liable for any residual fee if the CCS rebates have been overestimated.

1 March 2024

DAILY FEES		DAYS BOOKED				
		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Under 3	\$165.00	\$165.00	\$165.00	\$165.00	\$165.00
	Over 3	\$165.00	\$165.00	\$165.00	\$165.00	\$165.00
	Staff Discount Under 3	\$128.70	\$128.70	\$128.70	\$128.70	\$128.70
	Staff Discount Over 3	\$128.70	\$128.70	\$128.70	\$128.70	\$128.70

Free Kinder payments for 2024 are as follows:

For the Three-Year-Old and Four-Year-Old integrated long day care programs (i.e. where enrolled children also attract Commonwealth Childcare Subsidy (CCS) payments) will attract \$2,050 per child enrolled.

Our service will apply the fee offset regularly (e.g., fortnightly or monthly) and clearly indicate the offset amount (labelled Victorian Government Free Kinder offset) on parent invoice statements

Our service also receives the standard rate of per capita funding for our four-year-old children. The service does not pass on these payments on to parents, this funding is for the service to deliver a funded kindergarten program/s.

In line with existing policies for per capita funding, children must only receive Free Kinder funding at one service. If a child attends more than one service that offers a funded kindergarten program and Free Kinder (e.g. a sessional service for some days and a long day care service on other days), the family must nominate which service they will receive their funded kindergarten program and therefore their Free Kinder funding.

OTHER FEES	
Non-refundable Enrolment Fee	\$100
Two week's full fee is to be paid on commencement	
A late fee will apply where children are not picked up prior to closing time. 6.30pm	A fee of \$15.00 per 10 minutes block or part thereof will be incurred by the family.
Direct Debit Dishonour Fee	\$19.95 for each unsuccessful transaction.
Credit Card Surcharge Fee	VISA/Mastercard: 2.35%; Amex/Diners: 4.4%, charged by Debit success, not Little Sunshine ELC & Kindergarten.

APPENDIX 2: HOLIDAY DISCOUNT PROCEDURE

Parent needs to provide 2 weeks' written notice for request to take Holiday Leave and fees need to be in line with Fee Payment Policy before Holiday Leave can be approved (i.e. minimum of 1 week in advance). The expected "discount" cannot be a factor in this calculation (i.e. fees must be a week in advance based on normal fees, not discounted fees).

- This Holiday Leave discount offer is to commence from 1-May-22 and is not retrospective. Families eligible for any type of ACCS or who have their fees paid in full by a Third Party are not eligible for Holiday Leave whilst receiving this funding.
- The reduction for the "discount" will be applied automatically to the account using the Fee Codes on Xplor and following the step-by-step instructions that form part of this policy.
- Eligibility is pro-rata based on enrolment date (and presumes enrolment will continue to the end of the Financial Year):
 - enrolment between Jun-Aug = 4 weeks = 20 Days
 - enrolment between Sep-Nov = 3 weeks = 15 Days
 - enrolment between Jan-Feb = 2 weeks = 10 Days
 - enrolment between Mar-May = 1 week = 5 Days
- NB: families that enrol in June do not become eligible until the following financial year due to the one month waiting period.
- NB: pro-rata is also effective if withdrawal date is notified earlier than the end of the financial year (i.e. if family notify child will finish in December, eligibility is limited to up to 2 weeks depending on enrolment date). NB: Above presumes a weekly enrolment.
- Centre Manager or Finance Officer to review the family's attendance record to ensure that they have eligibility for the current Financial Year & then advise family of the success (or issues preventing the success) of the application.
- Once approved, the Finance Officer should enter the Holiday Leave period per the Step-by-Step instructions.
- Holiday Leave is offered to all enrolled families as a "50% Discount" only. For example: a Family who have a full week booking at the time of application & request Holiday Leave – would be entitled to 20 days @ 50% discount. These 20 days can be spread over the financial Year. Families need to have been enrolled with a Centre for a minimum of one Calendar month before Holiday Leave entitlement is applicable (waiting period). Holidays must be requested or cancelled two weeks in advance in writing via email adminpreston@littlesunshine.com.au or the Xplor App.
- Holiday Leave discount cannot be used as a debtor-management tool and cannot be applied to full-week attended weeks. Holiday Leave periods can be cancelled providing adequate notice is provided and the period should be deleted from the Discount tab accordingly.
- Unutilised Holiday Leave does not roll-over from one Financial year to another. Any unused week blocks are lost if not utilised by the end of each Financial year.
- If a child withdraws from care prior to the end of the Financial year, utilised Holiday Leave may be radd if the child would not have accrued the amount of leave taken.
- Holiday Leave cannot be taken at the end of an enrolment. A child must return to care after a Holiday Leave period.

APPENDIX 3: STAFF DISCOUNT PROCEDURE

Little Sunshine ELC & Kindergarten offers a discount to employees who are:

- Employed, contracted or engaged as an employee, and;
- who are working at a centre based or outside school hours care service, and;
- who have a child enrolled in an ECEC service where they work or which is owned by their provider
- A centre director or OSHC coordinator who has an ECEC qualification and is working at a service is also eligible for the discount.
- Daily fees are discounted by 22%, however employees must still pay at least five per cent of the gap fee.
- Failure to maintain up to date fees will result in cancellation of the discount followed by suspension of bookings until the account is brought into line with policy.
- Holiday discounts will apply.
- All other discounts like Monday public holiday, refer a friend and Friday discounts will no longer apply.
- Discounts will only be effective from the employee's commencement date.

How to apply

- The Fee Discount form is to be completed by the employee and emailed to the Finance Officer.
- Families eligible for any type of ACCS or who have their fees paid in full by a Third Party are not eligible for the Staff Discount whilst receiving this funding.
- The reduction for the "discount" will be applied automatically to the account using the Fee Codes on Xplor and following the step-by-step instructions that form part of this policy.

During Maternity Leave and other periods of unpaid leave

- During Maternity Leave, the Fee discount will be reduced to 10% for a maximum period of 12 months. Maternity Leave is only recognised if:
 - the employee intends on returning to the business no later than 12 months after the start of their Maternity Leave, and/or
 - does not have paid employment elsewhere during their absence, and/or o does not study outside the childcare industry during their absence.
- During unpaid leave periods other than Maternity Leave the Fee Discount will require prior approval from the Approved Provider.
- On termination of Employment Once the parent or guardian provides notice of termination, or is provided with notice of termination, the Childcare Fee Discount will be cancelled from the date the employment ends. Should the ex-employee's children remain in care with Little Sunshine ELC & Kindergarten, the fees will revert to normal fees and normal discounts will apply. On termination of care If the employee ends care for all children, this agreement will cease from the end of care date. Should you wish to return to care, a new application for Childcare Fee Discount must be submitted. The Approved Provider of Little Sunshine ELC & Kindergarten reserves the right to alter or withdraw the Childcare Fee Discount policy at their discretion at any time.