

Fee Payment Policy

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Sources	Education and Care Services National Regulations, October 2017 Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations, October 2017 Guide to the National Quality Standard, October 2018 Child Care Provider Handbook Version 1.0, May 2018

Aim:

To ensure that the fees charged and collected are managed in accordance with Department of Education and Training Child Care Compliance Obligations.

To ensure that Educators receive payment for child care services provided in a timely manner, and that families are aware of their obligations.

Country Children's Early Learning's Fee Schedule

Under Family Assistance Law Family Day Care Services must set a Fee Schedule for Family Day Care Educators to follow when setting and charging Fees. Educators as self employed contractors are responsible to set their fees in accordance with the services schedule.

Fee Schedule from 2 July 2018

Hourly Session Type	Hourly Rate Range	Levy
Standard Hours Monday to Friday between 8am to 6pm	\$8.00 - \$13.00	Family - \$1.15 Educator- \$0.25
Non Standard Hours Monday to Friday 6pm to 8am	\$9.00 - \$15.00	
Overnight Care	\$8.00 - \$13.00	
Casual Care	\$9.00 - \$15.00	
Weekend Care	\$9.00 - \$15.00	
Public Holiday Care	\$9.00 - \$16.00	
Before and After School Care	\$8.00 - \$15.00	

- The Fees on the Fee Schedule are the rate before the Levy is applied.
- The rates on the Fee Schedule are set based upon market research in the areas that CCEL operate.

Responsibilities:

In relation to Co-ordination Unit Staff:

- Abide by their obligations under the current Education and Care Services National Regulations, the National Quality Standard and the Department of Human Services requirements) in relation to payment of fees
- Abide by the current Child Care Provider Handbook Version in relation to Fee Charging, collection of fees administration of Child Care Subsidy.

Procedure:

Enrolment:

- Upon enrolment families will be advised of their chosen Educators fee schedule and the Service Levies
- Educators must submit Enrolment Forms to the service prior to the child's commencement in care for CCEL's approval.
- Ensure that any new enrolments are submitted to CCSS prior to the child commencing care
- It is advised that families pay a two week fee deposit to secure their placement. It is at the discretion of the Educator whether to collect this 2 week fee deposit. This fee deposit can either be used as the fees for the final two weeks of care, or refunded when care is ended
- Parents/Guardians will be informed of the weekly fee processing process, CCEL and Educator's roles and their requirement to pay fees.
- Refer to the Enrolment and Orientation Policy and Procedure

Attendance Records and Fee Payments:

- Educators and families are required to sign the Daily Attendance Record as evidence of the mutual agreement of hours used and fees accrued over each week
- Educators are required to have the children signed in and out of care with the authorised persons PIN. If the authorised person does not have a PIN, the Educator may use their PIN and make comment on the timesheet for CCEL records.
- Educators are required to ensure any other children residing at the Family Day Care home or in the care for the Educator who are not eligible for CCS are also registered with CCEL and submit attendances for these children to CCEL.
- Educators are responsible to complete the Attendance record in full, check hours and calculations are correct, verify this with the Parent/Guardian esignature and submit to CCEL via Harmony Web by 4pm every Monday.
- Fees are collected by Educators on behalf of the Service. Educators are required to provide families with Invoices for care based upon the Service Payment Advice and Receipt for payments via Harmony Web
- Processing is done weekly and families are required to pay their fees to their Educator by the end of the week that they have received their Payment Advice
- The payment of childcare fees secures the child/rens position with the service. Payment is still required for any absences including the child being ill, public holidays and annual leave days
- Educators are only to provide care for and submit attendances for up to 7 children in total at anyone time, 4 under school aged children and 7 school aged children.
- Fees must be paid as a Direct Deposit into the Educators nominated Bank Account, Educators are not to accept Cash / cheque or enter into any other arrangements.

Public Holiday Charges:

- Fees will be charged for Public Holidays if the Public Holiday falls on a day that your child would normally attend care
- Fees **will not** be charged for Public Holidays if the Educator is closed the day before the Public Holiday
 - For example: If the Educator is closed the Thursday before Good Friday the Public Holiday cannot be charged
- Fees **will not** be charged for Public Holidays if the Educator is closed the day after the Public Holiday

- For example: If the Educator is closed the Tuesday after the Queens Birthday Public Holiday the Public Holiday cannot be charged
- Fees **will not** be charged for Public Holidays that fall during an Educators "Shutdown Period" – eg when they are taking holidays

Chargeable Hours For Public Holidays

Day/s Prior to Public Holiday	Public Holiday	Day/s After Public Holiday	Can I Charge for the Public Holiday?
Closed	Public Holiday	Closed	No
Open	Public Holiday	Closed	No
Closed	Public Holiday	Open	No
Open	Public Holiday	Open	Yes

- Fees will not be payable when the Educator is not available to provide care
- Educators will notify CCEL and families in writing by 1 October each year of their proposed Christmas Shutdown dates to enable families plenty of time to organise their own leave
- Educators need to maintain a record of parent payments for the services or the Department of Human Services verification for the purposes of an audit .
- Families will be made aware of what Government Assistance (e.g. Child Care Subsidy) is available for families via the Parent Handbook

Late Pick Up Fees

- Families are asked to be on time to collect their child from care, we do realise that sometimes running late is unavoidable, and out of courtesy that you call your Educator if you are going to be late
- If a family is continually late to collect their child from care, Educators may charge them a Late Pick Up Fee
- The Late Pick Up Fee charged to families is the same for every Educator
- Late Pick Up Fees will be charged at \$20 for the first 5 minutes, and \$2 per minute thereafter that a family is late to collect their child

Care Outside of Contracted Hours:

- When families use care outside of their normal Booked Hours an Educator may charge this time at their casual rate
- If the care outside of the families usual Booked Hours is due to a late pick up, Educators may charge the casual rate for the time over their contracted hours, as well as a late pick up fee at their discretion

Late Fee Payments:

- Educators will contact families initially if fee payments are not made within the required timeframe or as per the agreement between the Educator and family
- A reminder notice will be issued by the Educator if fees are not paid by the due date on the Payment Advice
- If fees continue to be outstanding into the next fortnight a notice with a payment timeframe will be issued by Country Children's Early Learning
- If a family is having difficulty paying their account they are encouraged to contact their Educator and/or Country Children's Early Learning so that suitable arrangements for payment and ongoing care can be discussed. Educators must inform CCEL of the need for any payment arrangements and these arrangements will be put in place by CCEL.
- If fee payments are continually made late or in arrears the child/children's position with the service may be jeopardised
- Where Fee Payments are not made within a two week timeframe, Educators are required to notify the CCEL Director.
- Debt collection services will be used to follow up unpaid fees from families by CCEL. Educators will be charged 5% of the fees collected from Fee collection plus any costs incurred by the Collection Agency.

Starting Care:

- If a child is absent from care on their first day/s of care with the service full fees may be charged. Under CCMS Rules a service is unable to apply CCB or CCR benefits for a child who does not attend care on their first day/s with that service

Changing or Ending Care:

- Families are required to provide two weeks notice when ending or reducing care arrangements, a CCEL, a Booking Change Request must be submitted via Harmony Web to CCEL by the Educator so that an updated Enrolment Confirmation can be submitted or the CCS Enrolment can be ended.
- Any Permanent Booked care change arrangement will be charged at the Educator Casual Care rate until an updated Enrolment Confirmation is 'accepted' by the guardian responsible for the child's care.
- If a child is absent from care on their last day/s of care with the service full fees will be charged. Under Family Assistance Law a service is unable to apply CCS benefits for a child who does not attend care on their last day/s with that service
- When a family ends their care, Educators need to complete and submit an 'End of Care' Form with their time sheets

Fee Increases:

- CCEL reviews its Levy Fees annually and any increases will occur from 1 July each year unless increases need to be made at other times due to unforeseen circumstances.
- Families will be given at least one months notice of any CCEL Levy increases
- Educators are required to provide CCEL with 6 weeks notice of any fee increases for families and one months notice to families
- All Families must be provided with a new Care Contract to sign prior to the implementation of a fee change.

In relation to Family Assistance Law:

- Educators are responsible for collecting the same fee from every family on behalf of the Service, this means that the same hourly rate is charged for every family in their care
- Educators are required to collect from families the amount that is indicated on the Payment Advice and Invoice produced via Harmony Web.
- Families are required to pay to Educators the amount that is indicated on the Payment Advice via Direct Deposit.
- Full fees will be charged if a child is absent from care on their first or last day/s of care with the service

In relation to Additional Child Care Subsidies:

There are four different payments under Additional Child Care Subsidy:

1. Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) — to help children who are at risk of serious abuse or neglect
 2. Additional Child Care Subsidy (grandparent) — to help grandparents on income support who are the principal caregiver of their grandchildren
 3. Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship) — to help families experiencing financial hardship
 4. Additional Child Care Subsidy (transition to work) — to help low-income families transitioning from income support to work.
- It is the families responsibility to talk with Centrelink about their eligibility for Additional Child Care Subsidy
 - CCEL will offer their assistance to families eligible for subsidies by providing them with information on how to claim and what documentation the family needs to provide the service with
 - Upon enrolment families are responsible for providing to the service any documentation required for subsidies to be applied to their account

Continual Monitoring and Improvement:

Continual improvement and monitoring will occur in the following ways:

- Incidental and planned consultation with families
- Co-ordination Staff accessing current relevant information
- Co-ordination Staff and Educators accessing current and relevant training
- Internal evaluation of incidences and the improvement of system

Policy Review

Date Revised	Comments
4 November 2011	Renamed, added changing and ending care and fee increases
May 2012	Added relevant regulations and quality standards in relation to the new Education and Care Services National Regulations and National Quality Standard
January 2013	Added information for In Home Care
March 2013	Added end of care form submission, enrolment form submission, records of payment
November 2013	Added submission of new enrolments to CCMS within 7 days of care commencing
March 2014	Added Late Pick Up Fee
May 2014	Scheduled Policy Review – Added information about Public Holiday Charges
November 2014	Added Tip Sheets – Fee Collection & Setting Fees , In relation to Subsidies section, In relation to CCMS Law section, Care Outside of Contracted Hours
May 2015	Updated 2 week Fee deposit information, Notice period and attendance
November 2015	Scheduled Policy Review – No changes made

May 2017	Scheduled Policy Review – No changes made
March 2018	CCEL Debt Collection, Payment Record/Receipt requirement, Harmony Web Invoicing and receipting
July 2018	Family Assistance law Changes for CCS
April 2019	Submission of Attendances for children not eligible for CCS

Harmony and Harmony Web Processing Procedures

Service Role	Educator Role
<p>Daily Attendance Record Monitor children's signature data via Harmony on a Daily Basis</p>	<p>Daily Attendance Record Ensure that all children in attendance each day are signed in and out of Care via the Harmony Web signature with an approved Guardian's PIN. If an Educator signs on behalf of a Parent with their Educator PIN, a reason must be stated in the comment box</p>
<p>Weekly Attendance Submission Check each Attendance record as it comes in and submit to CCS when correct or return to Educator for correction. Attendance records checked for compliance in accordance with the Child Care Provider Handbook Version 1.0, May 2018</p>	<p>Weekly Attendance Submission Via the Processing Tab in Harmony Web check and complete each Child's Timesheet(including children not eligible for CCS), ensuring Booked Hours, Charged Hours, Fees Absences and Closures have been recorded accurately. Ensure the parent signs the timesheet with their PIN upon collection on their last day of care or via Remote Signature Access Submit Timesheets to CCEL by 4pm every Monday.</p>
<p>Payment Advices Once CCS processing is complete, produce Payment Advices to distribute to Educators and Guardians</p>	<p>Payment Advices Produce and distribute Invoices to Families for payment of fees. Invoicing can be done at any time in accordance with Harmony Web Tip Sheets Collect and receipt fees from families based upon the Payment Advice.</p>
<p>Bank Deposit Advice Produce the bank Deposit Advice and distribute CCS money to Educators minus the service Levy</p>	
<p>Receipts Monitor Educator Receipts via Harmony</p>	
<p>Finalise Finalise the period in Harmony and make any adjustments as required.</p>	

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Tip Sheet Fee Collection

Suggested Practices:

Before a family starts:

- Read over the Fee Policy so you are familiar with how and when the family is required to pay their fees
- Confirm with the family their Book Care details:
 - Payment frequency and payment day
- At the initial interview with the family explain:
 - How often Payment Advices and Invoices come out
 - How Payment Advices are given to families – handed to them, in child's bag, near attendance records, emailed
 - When payment is expected – following Friday etc
 - How to pay – provide your bank account details
 - Payment Options – direct deposit only
- Confirm they have read CCEL's Fee Policy and understand it

Once a family has started:

- Let a starting family know when their first Payment Advice has been issued and when payment is expected
- To inform families each week that Payment Advices have been issued and when payment is due you could:
 - Put a notice near the Attendance Records, write a reminder on your noticeboard, verbally let families know
- It is your responsibility to collect from families **the whole amount** stated on the Payment Advice, regardless of whether or not they are waiting for benefits
- If a families' benefits have not been applied to their account yet, they still need to pay the exact amount on the Payment Advice until they do come through, otherwise you might be the one who ends up out of pocket
- If a family is late making their fee payment, give them a gentle verbal reminder of when fees were due and that payment would be appreciated
- If you find it hard to ask parents to pay their fees you could write them a note requesting payment, letting them know when fees were due and that prompt payment would be appreciated (having a typed letter that you print off when needed may help)
- Be gentle and patient as sometimes families have simply forgotten or may be having trouble paying and are too embarrassed to let you know
- If payment has not occurred by the time the next Payment Advice is issued talk to CCEL

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Tip Sheet Setting Fees

Setting fees is an important part of your Family Day Care Business. There are a few factors you will need to consider in order to help you determine how much to charge per hour for your services.

- How much income do you wish to earn each year?
- Will the income you have set for yourself allow for superannuation payments and income protection insurance?
- How much are your personal expenses?
- How much will your business related expenses be?
- Are you charging a competitive rate?
- What do you offer as a part of your service?

Ensure your Fees are Competitive

- While making an income is a very important part of determining how much to set your fees at, so too is making sure that your fees are competitive and comparable with other Family Day Care Educators around your area
- There will be many price differences between Family Day Care Educators (as there are between Child Care Centres) and it is good to have healthy competition between Educators and Services
- When setting your fees initially talk with CCEL to get an idea of what is a reasonable market rate at the moment
- Family Day Care does not necessarily need to be a cheaper option to Child Care Centres, just a different option
- If you know other Educators ask what they charge per hour so that you have some comparisons
- Do some research to find out what other FDC Schemes or Child Care Centres in your area are charging and what they include in their fees
- Utilise the government website www.mychild.gov.au to assist you with your research of FDC Fees
- Remember when you set your fees that your hourly rate includes:
 - Parent Levy
 - Educator Levy
 - **The hourly rate that you set needs to take into account that the Parent and Educator Levies are deducted from this amount**
- The amount that you charge will depend on the service that you provide but also the amount that the customers are prepared to pay
- Do you offer extra things at your service that other Family Day Care Educators may not – do you take the children to Playgroup, Library Visits, Do School Drop Offs and Pick Ups, Music Groups

- Do you charge a "Transport Fee" for when you need to take children to School or Pre-School, or is this included in your hourly rate
- Do you adapt your service to families' needs? For example, do you offer breakfast for early bookings
- What are your qualifications
- Be realistic about what income you would like to earn – after all if families won't pay your hourly rate because you are too expensive then you will have no income at all
- Be guided by the advice that is offered to you from CCEL about what rate to set your fees at

Fee Increases

- Best practice is to only have fee increases once a year, 1 January or 1 July are the usual times for fee increases and reviews
- Before you increase your hourly rate it is a good idea to look at whether a fee rise is needed and to discuss any increases you are thinking of making with CCEL
- If you do decide to raise your fees you need to make sure that you give families plenty of notice so that they too can budget for the change. 1 month's notice is generally the norm
- When you give parents notice be firm, and assertive – "This is my new fee schedule that will take effect from (give a date)"

How to work out how much you can/will earn

You can work out roughly how much to charge per hour by using a simple formula of dividing the following:

- Annual Income you would like
- Weeks of work per year
- Number of children (do not count your own)
- Hours per week that you work
- = Hourly Rate

Attached are 2 tables that can help you work out your yearly budget and total income needed, and from this you can gain an indication of what your hourly fee may need to be

A Guide for Educators to Calculate an Hourly Fee

Either type in monthly figures in the yellow boxes OR the total income required in the blue box

Category	Monthly Amount	Annual Amount
Mortgage or Rent (if applicable)		
Utilities: (Gas/Water/Electricity)		
Motor Vehicle (e.g. fuel, registration, maintenance)		
Home Repairs/Maintenance		
Telephone		
Other Transportation (tolls, bus, train, etc)		
Insurance (e.g. Public Liability, Motor Vehicle, Home and Contents, Income Protection etc)		
Administration (Computer Expenses, Stationery, Office Supplies, Photocopying, etc)		
Excursion and Transport		
Training		
Magazines/Newspapers related to care		
Craft Supplies		
Toys and Equipment (Toys, DVDs, Books, etc)		
Interest Expense (Credit Cards, Fees)		
Subscriptions and Memberships (e.g. FDCA Membership, Journal Subscriptions, Union Membership, Educator Registration)		
Groceries used for care (food, cleaning products, toilet paper)		
Miscellaneous Expenses		
Superannuation, sick leave, annual leave		
GST (if applicable)		
Total Expenses	\$	\$
Additional amount you wish to earn per year		
TOTAL INCOME REQUIRED (add up Annual Column)		\$

Change figures in green to suit your situation		
Total income required divided by weeks working It is a good idea to ensure that you take off 4 Weeks Annual Leave and 2 Weeks Sick Leave from the total for the year	46	
Divided by how many children per hour (do not include your own)	4	
Divided by hours per week	50	
FEE TO CHARGE PER HOUR FOR STANDARD HOURS		\$