

## Fees

Policy/Procedure Number: QA7 - 7

Policy/Procedure Requirement: National Quality Standards 7; Regulations 168

### Policy Statement

The Service enters into care arrangements with parents. However, the Service may authorise Educators to act as its agents to enter into care arrangements with parents and validate all such arrangements by counter signing the Parent Agreement. All Educators are required to have a written schedule of fees that complies with the Service's "Fee Schedule" and meets the Service's Fee Policy and Procedures. Families are responsible for paying their fees fully and promptly. The Service may allow Educator(s) acting as its agents to receive fees on its behalf.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Service **Conditions of Care**.

### Rationale

The Family Assistance Law requires the Service to set the "Fee Schedule". This Policy provides guidance for families to ensure that there is a clear and transparent process in relation to the charging of fees for children in care.

The Service will do its best to ensure that the fees and levies charged by the Service provides families with high quality, accessible and affordable early childhood education and care.

### Strategies and Practices

The Service's standard care hours are 8.00 am to 6.00 pm Monday to Friday **for all families** using FDC. Any care provided outside these hours or on weekends or public holidays will classified as non-standard hours of care.

Before and after school care booking covers the school terms only. If vacation care is required, then families have to book the care hours/days needed before starting vacation care. **Once the booking is confirmed the care is paid for whether used or not.**

**Public holidays during vacation care are not claimable for school age children unless care is actually provided on the day.**

An Educator and parent may agree to a trial period (maximum 4 weeks) of care for a child. One (1) week notice is required for the termination of care during this period by either the Educator or the family.

Termination of education and care after the trial period requires a minimum of four (4) weeks notice in writing by either the Educator or the family.

### The Service will:

- Set the Fee Schedule that will include all categories of education and care offered
- Review the Fee Schedule annually but not necessarily make changes
- Retain the flexibility to authorise an **Educator to collect the parent portion of the fees** on behalf of the Service. An Educator acting as an agent of the Service will then have responsibility to collect the parent portion of the fee, as well as any debt incurred by the non-collection of fees
- Pay the fees due to the Educator for the care provided, as and when the parent's subsidy payments are received
- Set the 'administration fee' for each child per hour every financial year and keep all stakeholders informed of any changes to this fee and the reasons for change
- Require Educators to charge all families the same fee for the same type of care. An Educator may provide a discount to a family on a compassionate or similar grounds, but **cannot offer any discounts of the gap fee**
- Support Educators with record keeping
- Actively work with Educators to minimise bad debts incurred by parents
- Ensure outstanding fees due to the Service (or Educator) are paid in full before the family can be placed with another Educator
- Process all Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Claims for Educators
- Monitor accuracy of claims for CCS
- Provide weekly Statements to Educators
- Provide online system access for all families to view invoices and generate/print their own statements and receipts through the parent portal. Irrespective of this, **the Service will provide parents a summary statement with a complete record of the CCS and or/CCR fee reductions every month**
- Provide printed statements, invoices and receipts on a monthly basis if requested by parents
- Pass on the full amount of fee reductions as soon as practicable but in any event not later than 7 days of being notified of the amount by the Department

### Educators will:

- Submit a schedule of their fees to the Service in June/July each year to ensure accurate reimbursement of CCS. Must submit the schedule of fees using the Service's fee schedule template stating the Educator's name, address and, if applicable, trading name
- Provide the Educators hourly fee schedule to families prior to commencement of care (e.g. at the interview)
- Provide four (4) week's written notice to families prior to increasing fees
- Agree with the Service for any changes to the fees four (4) weeks prior to giving written notice to families of fees or changes
- Notify the Service prior to (preferably 24 hours notice) providing care outside of standard hours or on public holidays

- Ensure parents sign in and out each child using the electronic sign in (ESI) when dropping off and picking up their child/ren
- Not make changes to the fees more than once in any 12-month period
- If acting as an agent for the Service, keep and maintain a record of all fees received as well as any fees that are reimbursed to the parent and will regularly provide a receipt for fees paid for child care by the parent. Full name of the person paying for the care and each child's name must be included along with the dates of care and the total amount charged
- Only provide care for children registered with the Service
- **Only sign children in and out of care when dropping off or picking up from school, kindergarten etc, or upon failure by a parent /guardian to do so** (*Delivery and Collection of Children policy*)

#### **Families will:**

- Be liable for the full cost of contracted childcare and keep weekly/fortnightly payments current
- Ensure all children being provided with care are registered with the Service
- Sign their child in and out daily on the attendance register
- Verify hours used on the online parent portal
- Pay fees due to the Service at the time agreed to by the family
- Contact the Coordinators if experiencing difficulty in paying fees

#### **Care Arrangements with a Family**

- Family Assistance Law requires the Service to make a care arrangement with each family using the service
- Educators cannot independently enter into a care arrangement for CCS approved care. However, the Service may authorise its Educators, acting as agents for the Service, to enter into care arrangements on its behalf. The Service will still countersign the Parent Agreement to validate it.
- The Parent Agreement, invoices and receipts will all make clear that the Service is the care provider and that the fees are being paid to the service

#### **Enrolments**

- Parents can enrol their child via the online enrolment form available on the Service website [www.genesisfdc.com.au/forms](http://www.genesisfdc.com.au/forms)
- In order for an enrolment to be processed and for the enrolment notice to be submitted to the Department of Human Services, parents have to complete the Parent Agreement Form (CWA) available on the Service website
- Once the enrolment is processed, parents are sent system generated login details for the HubWorks system. Parents can use the login to access their child/ren's enrolment records, fees, CCS, attendances, absences etc, and make changes to enrolment records if necessary

## Attendances

- Parents are required to electronically sign in and out their child/ren when they drop off and pick up the child/ren at FDC residence
- Where a child is not signed in/out, the parent needs to provide manual sign in/out to the Educator

## Absences

- The Service will ensure that no claims are made for CCS before a child start attending care or after a child has physically ceased care at the Service
- The Service will be submitting attendance data at the end of each week the care is provided including absences (and the type of absence)
- The Service will ensure the parent provides supporting documentation for all additional absences, which will be kept as records

## Charging Fees:

- Under Family Assistance Law, parents must be charged fees by the Service and not by the Educator in order to be eligible for CCS
- The Service will only charge a family the fee that it is actually liable to pay
- The Service will verify the accuracy of all attendance records prior to submitting through Hubworks
- The Service is committed to providing high quality, affordable child care for parents and will ensure the fees are reasonable considering the Educator's qualifications and experience, the type of service offered (e.g. range of learning activities, and quality and range of indoor/outdoor equipment, toys, books), the range of regular activities undertaken (e.g. music, playgroups, library visits, excursions), and any modifications made to the education and care to meet needs of families before approving the Educator's fees
- For full information on fees, please refer to the Service Conditions of Care
- If fees remain unpaid for an absent child for more than 3 weeks after the date on which the fees must have been paid, the child will be deemed to have ceased care and the Service will notify the parents and the Department (through CCMS) accordingly
- The Service will cancel all the absences for a child after the last day of attendance, including for a child expected to return to care but did not come back

## Fee reductions

- The Service will pass on the full amount of fee reductions as soon as practicable but in any event not later than 7 days of being notified of the amount by the Department
- The Service charges fees in arrears after the care has been provided

## Statements

- The Hubworks system allows parents full access to their child's details held by the Service. Parents are able to view invoices, and generate/print their own fee statements and receipts

through the parent portal

- The Service will send out child care statements on a monthly basis
- If a person other than a parent pays a child's fees and requests a copy of the statements, the Service will provide them the statements

## Privacy

- The Service recognises that the information collected by the Service or the Educators through the delivery of education and care may be considered protected information under the *Family Assistance Law* and/or personal information under the *Commonwealth's Privacy Act 1988*. As such, the Service will ensure that such information is handled sensitively and confidentially, and protected from unauthorised access to comply with the relevant obligations of these laws

## Resources and Further Readings

- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999
- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999
- Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017
- Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017
- Child Care Subsidy Secretary's Rules 2017
- Child Care Subsidy (What Constitutes a Session of Care) Determination 2018
- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- ACECQA National; Quality Framework Resource Kit [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)

## Related FDC Policies, Procedures & Documents

- Service's Fee Schedule
- Delivery and Collection of Children

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