



PAYMENT OF FEES

Links

Education and Care Services National Regulations: 168
National Quality Standard: 7.1.2

Policy Statement

Tropics Early Learning Inc strives to provide affordable, quality education and care, with a belief that all children, regardless of economic status, should have access to high quality care. Quality early education and care provides the foundation for children's development and social engagement whilst supporting workforce participation of parents and carers. We are therefore committed to keeping fees as low as possible, while still covering the running costs of the service. These costs include, but are not limited to, wages, staff professional development, resources and equipment, office expenses, utilities, cleaning and maintenance and repairs.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework under which the financial viability of Tropics Early Learning can be protected, by ensuring the prompt payment of fees, and the successful collection of any outstanding monies.

It is a condition of enrolment in the service that families accept the services *Payment of Fees Policy*.

Purpose

For parents to gain a clear understanding of the Service fee structure, payment requirements and Child Care Subsidy prior to enrolment. This policy explains process of fee payment, 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 families, staff, and management of the Service.

Implementation

Fees payable upon enrolment

- A registration fee of \$75 for each child, which must be made prior to commencement at the Service. Upon payment of the registration fee, the child enrolling will be provided with a Centre shirt and wet bag.
- 2 weeks' worth of fees in advance will be debited in addition to the first fee payment made when a child begins their enrolment. This initial payment is made on the Friday of the first week of attendance.

Setting of Fees

- Fees are set by the Management Committee. and charged to all families whose children are booked to attend the service.
- Fees are payable for full day sessions only, we do not provide part day, or hourly rates.
- Fees are payable on a child's booked day regardless of whether the child is sick or absent, or if their booking falls on a public holiday.

- Fee amounts will be reviewed by the Management Committee. at the end of each financial year, or as required throughout the year, with a minimum of 14 days' notice given to families in the case of any fee increase.
- Fees will not be charged for periods of time that Management has decided to cease operation of the service due to shut down periods, such as the Christmas/New Year period.

Invoicing and Payment Options

- Invoices are distributed on a fortnightly basis, on a Wednesday, via email, it is the responsibility of the family to ensure that an active email address has been provided to the service, through which invoices can be received.
- All payments are processed by direct debit from a credit card (Visa or Mastercard), or personal bank account, using the Debit Success system. All families are required to provide their payment information at the time of enrolment.
- Payments through Debit Success are processed fortnightly, on the Friday, in the week the statements are issued.
- It is the responsibility of each family to ensure that sufficient funds are available for deduction, and that payment details are updated with us as required. Any fees accrued for failed transactions due to insufficient funds or expired payment details, will be passed on to the relevant family, and debited from their nominated account.
- Statements of usage and fee payments will be available to families at all times, via the Xplor portal.
- When ceasing care, or changing bookings, families are required to give at least two weeks' (14 days) notice. In the case of casual bookings, 5 days' notice is required for cancellation.
- The child's and family's profile will remain active in our system for a period of 60 days after the child's final booked day, to allow for any CCS adjustments and final payments to be processed accordingly.

Late Fees

- All children must be collected from the service by 6pm, which is the time the service is closed.
- A late fee of \$50 for the first 15 minutes, and then \$1/minute per educator (2) applies for each child who is not picked up by the Centre's closing time.

Due dates and non-payment of fees

- Accounts must be kept a minimum of two weeks in advance.
- Families should advise the Director if, for any reason, their account cannot be kept up to date and a payment arrangement may be negotiated.
- In the event an account is not in credit (other than by prior arrangement) the following process will be implemented:
 - families will be notified that payment is required within one week to bring the account up to date (two weeks in advance).
 - If the account falls two weeks in arrears, seven days' notice will be given to bring the account up to date.
 - If payment is not made within the seven-day period, the child's enrolment will be suspended for 14 days, pending payment being made.
 - Failure to make payment throughout the suspension period will result in the child's enrolment being cancelled.
 - Children will not be re-enrolled if the account is not paid up to date.

- In the event that a child/s enrolment is cancelled, and the account is not paid in full within 30 days of the cancellation, the debt will be forwarded to our debt collection agency, and further legal action may be taken.
- If a family is experiencing financial difficulties, a suitable payment plan may be arranged with authorisation of the Director.
- Families can apply for Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) through Centrelink for additional fee assistance, under differing circumstances.
- A review of the child's enrolment will occur where families are consistently late with fee payment.

Child Care Subsidy

- Families, who are Australian residents, may be eligible to receive Child Care Subsidy, this is paid directly to the Service to reduce the amount of fees payable.
- It is each family's responsibility to ensure that they have registered their child for Child Care Subsidy, and to provide the Service with both their and their child's CRN numbers and dates of birth, to allow us to submit the child's enrolment with us to the FAO.
- Full fees will be payable by the family until their CCS is approved and linked to our service.
- 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.
- For further information visit:
<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy>

Sources: Bryant, L. (2009). *Managing a Child Care Service: A Hands-On Guide for Service Providers; Community Childcare Co-operative; Education and Care Services National Law and regulations; Family Assistance Law; Australian Government - Services Australia.*

Policy Redeveloped May 2022 (see archived Policies for previous versions)

| Date of review | Modifications made | Approved |
|----------------|---|---------------|
| July 2022 | Redeveloped policy | August 2022 |
| December 2022 | Addition of not charging fees for shut down periods | December 2022 |
| February 2023 | Addition of profile remain active for 60 days | April 2023 |