

EARLY YEARS POLICY

Early Years Services Payment of Fees	Policy No:	QA 7.8
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	Approved Date:	1 April 2014
	Approved By:	Manager Aged and Family
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Responsible Officer:		Coordinator Early Years
Authorising Officer:		Manager Community Strengthening

1. Purpose

To provide a clear process for the payment of fees for the Kindergarten, Occasional Care and Family Day Care services of the Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Unit.

2. Scope

Evidence of link to Education and Care Services National Law: Section 3(3)(c); 175
 Evidence of link to Education and Care Services National Regulations: 75; 158-159; r168 (n)
 Victorian Children's Services Regulations 2009

3. Application

All Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services and families accessing the services

4. Definitions

Not applicable

5. Policy

5.1 General

- Each Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years' Service will have a *Statement of Fees* charged by the service (r168 (n)).
- The fee schedule and fees payment policy is explained to families during the enrolment process.

5.2 Kindergartens

- Kindergarten families will be invoiced each term in advance
- Fees are not refundable in part however consideration may be given in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of Council. This request must be in writing.
- Term one fees are paid in the fourth term the year prior to commencement of the program and this is used as a deposit for the child's place at the kindergarten.
- Families eligible for fee subsidies are not required to pay any fees, but they must provide current details/supporting documentation, and updates as expiries occur, in order to be exempt (see Admission and Enrolment Policy and Procedure for more details).
- A statement and invoice is issued by Council's Finance department and overdue fees reminders are sent accordingly. Overdue fees accrue interest charges based on the Penalty Interest Rates Act 1983.
- If a family leaves the kindergarten program halfway through a term no refund is offered.

5.3 Occasional Care

- Surf Coast Shire Council issues families with a fortnightly invoice, two weeks in arrears.
- Council collects all fees.
- Families must have a zero balance of fees before accessing the program.
- Families are given a minimum of 14 days' notice of any fee increase.
- Parents/guardians should contact the service to advise of their child's inability to attend as soon as this is known. Fees will still be charged for the child's booked hours if the place cannot be filled by another child.

- The same fee will be charged to all families for equivalent education and care arrangements.
- A Statement of Care, in accordance with Australian Government Guidelines/Surf Coast Shire Council Guidelines, will be provided fortnightly.
- Fee payment will be recorded according to Australian Government Guidelines/Surf Coast Shire Council Guidelines.
- Public Holidays are not charged to families.
- Two weeks' notice must be given to terminate care arrangements.
- If a user is two weeks in arrears future care may be suspended until payment is made or a fee payment plan is organised through Surf Coast Shire Council.

5.4 Family Day Care

Absences and Cancellations - FDC

- The full daily fee applies for any absence from the service
- Two weeks written notice must be provided to the Family Day Care Coordination unit if a family wishes to terminate care arrangements.
- Where a user is two weeks in arrears the educator must inform the family day care coordination unit and care must be suspended until payment is made or a fee payment plan is organised through Surf Coast Shire Council.
- Council will not assume any liability for debt incurred for services provided during a period of suspension where the provision of the service has been at the discretion of the educator.

5.5 Child Care Subsidy (applicable for Family Day Care and Occasional Care services)

- Council complies with the Australian Government requirements to be an approved education and care service for the purposes of Child Care Subsidy
- The on-line Child Care Subsidy System reporting requirements and any other requirements for claiming and administering Child Care Subsidy is maintained by the council.
- It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to lodge a claim for Child Care Subsidy with Centrelink or through their myGov account.
- Parent/guardians must confirm their child's enrolment at a service through their myGov account (Centrelink) before Child Care Subsidy can commence.
- Child Care Subsidy cannot be claimed in bulk at the end of the financial year.
- Families with children under 7 years seeking Child Care Subsidy will be required to meet the Australian Government's immunisation requirements. To finalise enrolments for a child in, family day care or occasional care, parents/carers have to provide the service with a current copy of their immunisation history statement
- Families will only be eligible for Child Care Subsidy if child care attendance records are accurately completed and signed by the parents/guardians or other authorised person and all eligibility requirements are met.
- Families are entitled to 42 absence days for each registered child in each financial year. Child Care Subsidy is paid for these days provided the child would normally have attended on that day, and fees have been charged.
- Additional absences can be claimed after the first 42 absence days have been used and these are called 'additional absence days'. There is no limit on the number of days for which Child Care Subsidy may be paid, as long as they are for the reasons specified in the current Child Care Provider Handbook. Supporting documentation is required for approval of 'additional absence days'.
- All documentation pertaining to Child Care Subsidy will be kept for the specified period of time and made available to Australian Government Officers on request.

5.6 Child care subsidy (CCS) will not be paid for absences where:

- A child who has not yet received care or who has ceased receiving care.
- A provider charges a family to reserve a place for a child who has not physically started care.
- A child is booked in to start at a service on a particular date, and does not start on that day; no CCS will be paid until the child physically attends a session of care.
- A child is absent for more than eight consecutive weeks.
- A child care service is taken to have permanently ceased providing care for a child on the day the child last physically attends a session of care. This means that CCS will not be paid for absences submitted after a child last physically attends a session.

Further Child Care Subsidy information can be found at <https://www.education.gov.au/new-child-care-package-information-resources-families>

5.7 Late Collection of Child Charges

Refer to – *Early Years Delivery and Collection of Children Policy & Procedure*

5.8 Overdue Fees

Overdue fees for one Surf Coast Shire Early Years program may affect the user/families access into another Early Years program until all owing fees are paid.

Refer to the *Surf Coast Shire Council Collection of fees for the Early Years Services Programs Work Instructions*.

5.9 Maternal and Child Health Service

The Surf Coast Shire Council Maternal and Child Health Service is a free service for all infants (up to the age of 6 years) and their families.

6. Records

Records shall be retained for at least the period shown below.

Record	Retention/Disposal Responsibility	Retention Period	Location
Early Years Collection of Fees Letter	Council	7 years	Off site
Family Day Care Enrolment Agreement	Council	7 years	Off site
Fees and Charges Schedule	Council	7 years	Electronic file
Attendance records	Council	Until the child turns 25 years	Electronic file
Statement of Entitlement	IT	Until the child turns 25 years	Electronic file
Complying Written Arrangement	Council	7 years	Electronic file

7. Attachments

Not applicable

8. References

Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services Policies

D14/94973 Early Years Delivery and Collection of Children Policy
D15/54262 Early Years Governance and Management Policy
D15/16297 Early Years Enrolment Policy
D15/16306 Early Years Orientation of Children and Families Policy

Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Work Instructions and Forms

D14/28876 Early Years Services Collection of Fees Work Instructions
D14/59729 Early Years Collection of Fees Template

Other References

Education and Care Services National Law 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
Child Care Provider Handbook 2018 (Department of Education and Training)
A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 2000

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