



Fee and Credit Policy

Document No:

Issue Date:
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Next Review Date:
March 2022

Education and Care Services National Regulation 168 – Services must have policies and procedures

Policy statement:

The Board of Management sets fees for all education and care services provided by Lipscombe Child Care Services Inc (**the Service**). The Board and Service Management are committed to the guidelines and procedures below, in order to ensure there is a transparent and consistent approach to charging and receiving fees that support delivery of quality, affordable services.

Target Audience:

Board, Management and Families.

Guidelines / Procedures:

The Service will:

- Establish fee levels and credit provisions which ensure the sustainability of the Service as a business enterprise.
- Maintain fees at a level that provides resources to deliver high quality care.
- Maintain fees that are affordable to families.
- Regularly review fee and credit policy, operational guidelines and fee levels and structures in order to address the changing needs of the parent body and of the organisation.
- Limit fee increases to annual calendar increase, with new fee schedules implemented in January each year.
- Establish a fee structure which is equitable among different groups of users.
- Ensure that fee structures, credit provisions and operational procedures are consistent with the requirements of State and Commonwealth legislation and procedures.
- Ensure that parents are made aware of operational procedures and that these procedures are reasonable and fair, and that they are administratively simple and as inexpensive as possible.
- As an approved Child Care Provider, ensure parents utilising the Service are aware they may be eligible to apply for Child Care Subsidy.
- Fees are charged daily. Out of pocket expense to parents will vary depending on the Child Care Subsidy. The Child Care Subsidy will be paid directly to the Service.
- Basic requirements that must be satisfied for an individual to be eligible to receive Child Care Subsidy for a child include:
 - The age of the child (must be 13 years or under and not attending secondary school unless an exemption applies)
 - The child meeting immunisation requirements
 - The individual, or their partner, meeting the residency requirements
- Families level of Child Care Subsidy will be determined by:
 - Combined family income
 - Activity level of parents

- Type of child care service being used
- Communicate to families that it is their responsibility to have their eligibility for Child Care Subsidy assessed by Centrelink through MyGov.
- Ensure families are made aware they will only be eligible for Child Care Subsidy if attendance records are accurately completed and signed for each attendance.
- Make families aware that Child Care Subsidy is paid for up to 42 absences days for each child per financial year, but not if an absent day is the first or last day of expected attendance.
- Advise and assist families in respect to the Additional Child Care Subsidy in the categories of Child Wellbeing, Grandparent, Transition to Work and Temporary Financial Hardship if they appear relevant to a family.

The Service will keep parents informed about Child Care Subsidy by:

- Providing information about Child Care Subsidy in the orientation pack
- Advising new families to apply for assessment if Child Care Subsidy prior to commencement.
- Reminding families of the need and encouraging them to reapply for reassessment when required and when it becomes known to the Service.
- Charging full fees when a parent does not have a current Child Care Subsidy entitlement.

Explanation of Fees:

- A fee of \$40.00 per half hour or part thereof applies for the late collection of a child after the permanent booked time.
- There is no charge for public holidays.
- Permanently booked places may be held for a maximum of 8 weeks, at the allowable absence cost. Families may apply to the Service to negotiate this cost.
- Bookings that remain unused without cancellation will be charged at the full rate to cover business costs, for up to 4 weeks, when the place will be considered cancelled by the Service.
- Excursion costs will be at the discretion of the service and will be advised on each occasion there is an excursion.
- Families are welcome to spend time settling children into care. There will be no charge for settling visits under 2 hours duration, regardless of their frequency, during the 2 weeks which precede commencement of the booking.
- Cancellation of booking by 9am results in 75% of the normal fee being charged.
- Non-cancellation of any booking by 9am results in full fees being applied.
- A holding fee or absence fee will be charged from the first day of Service operation each calendar year, for any confirmed Long Day Care booking.
- A holding fee of 75% of the full fee will be charged from the date a place is available to any new family, if they do not attend.
- Overdue accounting fee of 2% of overdue or a minimum of \$15 will be charged on accounts not paid by the due date.

- Users with an account that remains outstanding for 30 days must enter into an arrangement with the Director or Finance Officer to ensure prompt payment. Ongoing care arrangements for the family may be reviewed by the Service at this time.
- If payment arrangements are not met, the account holder will be given a 5 working day notice of referral to a debt collection agency. In this circumstance the Director may withdraw a child's place in the Service and terminate the Child Care Agreement.
- Accounts are issued fortnightly in arrears and can be paid by cash, cheque, EFTPOS transaction, credit card or direct deposit to the services bank account.
- Two weeks' notice in writing must be given when a child is withdrawn from care permanently.
- Any change in booked times must be requested of and approved by the Director/Assistant Director with at least 1 weeks' notice or an absence fee will apply.
- Details of a family's fees and accounts will be kept confidential and stored securely. Families can access their own account records at any time, or particulars of fees will be available in writing to parents/guardians upon request.
- The Service will provide all details related to attendance to the Commonwealth Government to meet compliance and reporting requirements.

Program Variations:

N/A

Links to other Policies:

Arrival and Departure Policy
 Enrolment Policy
 Governance Policy
 Orientation of New Families Policy
 Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Links to NQF:

Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations
 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

References:

Service Australia <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy>
 Department of Education <https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-subsidy-system>

Policy Review:

Lipscombe Child Care Services Inc. will review this policy and related documents, every 2 years, or more often as required when new information becomes available
 Families are encouraged to collaborate with the Service to review the policy and procedures.

It is essential for all staff to be involved in the policy review process and familiarise and acknowledge in writing any changes to policy made at review.

Changes made at review:

New format, Added reference to Regulations,

September 2015 – annual update

September 2017 – review, no changes

June 2018 – update to reflect NQS changes