

1.4 FEES MANAGEMENT

Policy No: 1.4

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Education and Care Services National Law

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PURPOSE To ensure accountability of fees/remuneration paid to educators on behalf of families and ensure effective operation of the service by maintaining sound, consistent, transparent administrative processes.

POLICY Appropriate information is provided to educators and parents/guardians in relation to payment of fees and maintaining accurate records

PROCEDURES

1. Setting of Service Fee Parameter

- 1.1 the service sets a fee parameter that will determine the remuneration that the educator shall receive. The service fee parameter is set in line with legislation set out in 'Family Assistance Law' and Federal Funding Guidelines for Childcare.
- 1.2 the service informs all educators / families the information in relation to service fee schedule and associated rules, Child Care Benefit, Special Child Care Benefit, service fee charges and documentation used
- 1.3 the service will notify educators and families of any proposed amendments to the service fee schedule and service fee charges providing a minimum of two weeks notice prior to implementation
- 1.4 the educator will be required to complete a new family contract with each family (one per child) on behalf of the service when and if a new service fee schedule is adopted; the completed contract will be required to accompany the child's record of attendance to reflect the new service fee schedule implementation date
- 1.5 the service will provide a copy of the service fee schedule during enrolment procedure
- 1.6 the service and educators discuss with parents the terms and conditions of payment for care; all parents/guardians using the same educator are treated equally in regards to terms and conditions;
- 1.7 payment is due to educators based on the contracted hours:
 - 1.7.1 in the event that the parents are unable to meet that contract i.e. illness or holidays, fees are still applicable
 - 1.7.2 no fees apply when an educator cannot meet those contracted hours e.g. leave from providing education and care services
 - 1.7.3 when an educator has provided notice that they are temporarily unavailable for part of a day, no fee will be charged
 - 1.7.4 when the educator is unable to provide part of the days care without notice e.g. own child has become ill, parents/guardians will only be charged for the hours used

- 1.8 educators are responsible for collecting and receipting money owing from parents/guardians; it is a requirement as part of the educators business practice, to provide parents/guardians with written notice of overdue fees within (7) days of becoming overdue
- 1.9 educators must inform the coordination unit in writing if a family has terminated care with an outstanding fee for care provided; parents/guardians who do not pay for outstanding child care fee for care provided will not be permitted further care with the service
- 1.10 the service has the obligation to ensure that subsidies are applied in accordance with the funding guidelines, and therefore are not obligated to collect penalty fees on behalf of educators; administration fees do not apply to penalty fees

2. Administration Fees

- 2.1 Child Care Services Taree & Districts Inc will annually determine the level of Administration Levies payable by educators and families to assist in the costs associated with administering the service such as, but not limited to:
 - 2.1.1 administration and monitoring compliance of government subsidies
 - 2.1.2 access to professional knowledge by educators
 - 2.1.3 access to qualified child development information by families
 - 2.1.4 monitoring educators service provision
 - 2.1.5 provision of professional development opportunities for educators
 - 2.1.6 referral of families to appropriate educators
 - 2.1.7 supply of required documents to educators
 - 2.1.8 support services provided to educators
- 2.2 The administration fees will be included in Child Care Services Taree & Districts Inc annual budget; the coordination unit will notify educators and families of adopted fees and charges relating to family day care
- 2.3 the parent administration levy is charged by the coordination unit and collected by the educator in addition to the service hourly fee on behalf of the coordination unit
- 2.4 the educator administration levy will be collected from the educator during weeks that care has been provided

3. Attendance Records

- 3.1 the service has Weekly Attendance & Receipt Record Pads printed in triplicate for educators to purchase use to record / receipt child care usage for families; the pads have top copy (original) that is submitted to coordination unit, second copy is provide to parent and third copy educator keeps; these are available at coordination unit, can be delivered on home visits or posted
- 3.2 educators make each child's attendance records readily available to their parents/guardians daily and check completion of attendance records; all records must be kept confidential
- 3.3 parents/guardians (or persons delivering/collecting child) complete attendance records daily upon arrival and departure recording and signing actual hours of care used and completing all parent/guardian only information required on the document

- 3.4 educators record contract hours and fee calculations (including parent administration levy) on attendance records
- 3.5 coordination unit provide educators with detailed information regarding the completion of attendance records during induction/orientation with the service
- 3.6 educators must send all attendance records to the coordination unit by Monday 12 midday following the end of the week (unless prior notice is given by the coordination unit of a change to those normal arrangements; for outlying educators these can be faxed / scanned and email; originals must be received at the office no later than the end of each week
- 3.7 coordination unit process attendance records and submits the data to DEEWR to receive the actual subsidy entitlements on behalf of families
- 3.8 attendance records are filed in a secure manner for the longest time-period required by local/state/federal authorities
- 3.9 the coordination unit will conduct regular attendance record audits by contacting the parents and asking questions in relation to the completing and accuracy of attendance records

4. Subsidies

- 4.1 parents/guardians are informed that they are required to notify FAO to claim subsidies such as CCB, CCR and JET and follow commonwealth guidelines for claiming subsidies
- 4.2 parents/guardians are required to supply the coordination unit with both the CRN and birthdates of the parents/guardians claiming subsidies and of each child in care; JET approval letters if eligible must be provided to the coordination unit
- 4.3 the coordination unit creates a formal enrolment for all families who have provided CRN's and birthdates and informal enrolments for families who have not provided this information; an informal enrolment can be made formal when correct information is provided
- 4.4 the amount of subsidy payable on behalf of families cannot be determined until after the first week of care attendance record has been processed by Child Care Management System (CCMS) and a payment advice for family is generated; educators are advised to charge family full fee for first week of care until payment advice is received; adjustment can then be made
- 4.5 educators and parents/guardians can contact the coordination unit if any problems arise
- 4.6 parents/guardians experiencing hardship under exceptional circumstances can apply for special child care benefit
- 4.7 coordination unit processes subsidy payments to educators (on behalf of parents/guardians), subject to appropriate documentation provided if required and accurate completion of attendance records with the specified time frame and payment information from Child Care Management System (CCMS) . Educators ensures that families can access the record of their account balance on receipts or ledgers
- 4.8 coordination unit processes educator monies via on line direct banking by close of business each Friday (unless otherwise specified)
- 4.9 coordination unit sends a payment advice to educators itemising subsidy payments which must be passed on to families as reduced fees

- 4.10 educators transfers the details from the payment advice to the receipt section on Weekly Attendance & Receipt Record Pads and record if parents are in credit or debit
- 4.11 to ensure that the subsidies are passed onto parents/guardians accurately, educators must check the payment advice weekly and if necessary adjust the families account balance
- 4.12 coordination unit staff will conduct regular receipt audits to ensure that parents/guardians have had their fees reduced by their subsidies
- 4.13 coordination unit notifies educators in advance of any change in processes and supplies training and support either upon educator request or if the changes are substantial and wide reaching

Source:

- Education and Care Services Regulation—172
- Childcare management handbook
- New Tax System (Family Assistance) and the New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999, collectively known as 'family assistance law'

Associated Forms:

- Weekly Attendance & Receipt Record Pads
- Timesheets printed from Harmony Light software
- Fee Schedule
- Template—guide for fees and conditions
- Termination of care