

Fee Information for Families

Community Kinders Plus 2018



Attachment 1

WHY FEES ARE NECESSARY

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) provides per capita funding as a contribution toward the costs of providing a four-year-old kindergarten program. Services meet the balance of costs through charging fees and fundraising activities.

DEECD provides a Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (see below) that enables children from eligible families to attend a four-year-old kindergarten program free of charge, or at a minimal cost.

DEECD also provides funding to assist eligible three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection, to access kindergarten programs.

Community Kinders Plus provides a range of support options to parents/guardians experiencing difficulty with payment of fees (see below).

HOW FEES ARE SET

As part of the budget development process, the Board of Management sets fees each year for the programs of the service, taking into consideration:

- the financial viability of the service
- the level of government funding provided for the program, including the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy
- the availability of other income sources, such as grants
- the fees charged by similar services in the area
- the capacity of parents/guardians to pay fees
- reasonable expenditure in meeting agreed program quality and standards
- requirements of the *Kindergarten Fee Subsidy – Fees Policy* (details in the *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria* document available at www.education.vic.gov.au/ecprofessionals/kindergarten/)
- Enrolment in a kindergarten program part way through a term attracts a pro rata rate. For further information please contact the Community Kinders Plus Office on 9783 3931

Fees set for the year are only reviewed in extraordinary circumstances, for example, if attendance rates fall below the budget 'break even' point.

OTHER CHARGES

Other charges levied by Community Kinders Plus include:

Kindergarten Fee Deposit: This payment secures a child's place at the service and is payable on acceptance of enrolment. The deposit is retained as part payment on term fees. Families eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (see below) are not required to pay the deposit. Families experiencing hardship should also discuss any difficulties with the service.

Cancellation Fee: Cancellation of enrolment will incur a non-refundable administration fee of \$25.00.

Late collection charge: The Board of Management reserves the right to implement a late collection charge when parents/guardians are frequently late in collecting a child from the service. This charge will be set at a level determined by the Board of Management.

Late payment charge: A charge that will be added when lodging debt with the Debt Collection Agency.

Admin Levy: A \$10 charge per term to ALL children to cover administration costs.

STATEMENT OF FEES AND CHARGES

A statement of fees and charges for four-year-old or three-year-old kindergarten will be provided to families on enrolment.

FUNDRAISING

Not all service costs are covered by DEECD per capita funding and the fees charged. Fundraising is undertaken to pay for additional items for the service. While participation in fundraising is voluntary, the support of every family is encouraged. Fundraising activities are also an opportunity for families and communities to come together.

SUBSIDIES

Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (four-year-old programs only)

The Kindergarten Fee Subsidy is provided by DEECD and enables eligible children to attend kindergarten at minimal cost. Eligibility conditions change from time-to-time – contact the service for further information.

Families who may be eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (four-year-old programs only) include those who are:

Health Care Card holders

Pensioner Concession Card holders

Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card holders

Temporary Protection/Humanitarian Visas 447, 451, 785 or 786

Asylum seekers on Bridging Visas A–F

Refugee and Special Humanitarian Visa 200–217

Resolution of Status (RoS) visa, Class CD, subclass 851

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children

Triplets or quadruplets attending a funded kindergarten program in the same year.

Supporting documentation must be sighted by the service on acceptance of a place or on commencement in the program. Families are eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy for the full term in which their concession is valid. Children can only receive funding for one service as identified on the Kindergarten Information Management System at time of enrolment. Funding will be recouped, which will attract additional fees if found to be receiving funding from another service.

Early Start Kindergarten Fee Subsidy

Three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children known to Child Protection are eligible to attend a funded early childhood program that is planned and delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher free of charge. The service receives funding for children who meet the eligibility criteria. Contact the service for further information.

Child Care Benefit (CCB)

Child Care Benefit (CCB) is an Australian Government payment that can assist eligible families with the costs of childcare at an approved or registered care provider. Community Kinders Plus is a registered care provider with the Family Assistance Office (FAO).

Registered care is childcare provided for work-related purposes, including training and studying, maternity leave, sick leave or voluntary work, and the work-related purpose must have occurred at some time during the week in which the registered care was used. Registered care is provided by individuals registered with the Family Assistance Office (FAO) and may include care given by kindergarten staff.

The amount payable is set by the Australian Government. Further details are available at www.familyassist.gov.au or telephone the FAO on 136 150.

PAYMENT OF FEES

The Board of Management will regularly review payment options and procedures to ensure that they are inclusive and sensitive to families' cultural and financial situations.

Fees will be invoiced to parents/guardians directly and must be paid by the date indicated on the invoice. Each invoice will be accompanied by payment instructions. The first term's fees must be received in full prior to the child commencing at the service. For children enrolled after the commencement of a term, a pro rata invoice will be issued and must be paid in full within 14 days of the child's commencement at the service. Receipts will be provided for all fee payments.

Parents/guardians experiencing difficulty in paying fees are requested to contact the Administration Officer at Community Kinders Plus on 9783 3931 to arrange a suitable alternative payment plan. The *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* of the service will be complied with at all times in relation to a family's financial/personal circumstances.

UNPAID FEES

Fees not paid by the due date will be followed up by:

7 days after fees are due a statement will be sent stating fees are overdue, and giving ten working days for payment. The statement will include information on a range of support options available for the family.

Where payment is still not received the parent/guardian will receive a phone call from Community Kinders Plus to discuss a payment plan or a range of support options available.

Continued non-payment will result letter notifying parents/guardians that, unless payment is made within five working days or a payment plan entered into, the outstanding debt will be transferred to a Debt Collector and a \$25.00 Late Fee will be added to the debt to cover Debt Collection costs.

REFUND OF FEES

Fees will be refunded in the following circumstances:

- Up to the commencement of term 1, a cancellation fee will be applied, and a refund of any remaining fees paid may be refunded upon notification from the family/s that their child is no longer attending the relevant (3 and 4 year old) kinder program.
- A full refund of any fees paid will be given to families eligible for the kindergarten fee subsidy on providing a copy of the supporting documentation.
- A pro-rata refund will apply if a child leaves the kinder program throughout any term of the kinder year.

If a family becomes eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy during a term, a full refund of the applicable term fees (and fee deposit, where appropriate) will be provided. Fees may still apply for programs offering more than the required minimum hours per week.

In any other case, fees are non-refundable (exceptional circumstances may apply – these are at the discretion of the Board of Management. There will be no refund of fees in the following circumstances:

- a child's short-term illness
- public holidays
- family holiday during operational times
- closure of the service for one or more days when a qualified educator is absent and a qualified reliever is not available
- closure of the service for staff training days
- closure of the service due to extreme and unavoidable circumstances.

In addition, there will be no refund where a family chooses not to send their child to the program for the maximum number of hours for which they are enrolled.

LATE COLLECTION CHARGE

Community Kinders Plus reserves the right to implement a late collection of children charge when parents/guardians are frequently late in collecting a child/ren. In these situations the following procedures will apply:

- The qualified staff member will inform the parents/guardians/carer that if it continues the committee will be notified and the family will be charged a late fee.
- If after the reminder, the parents/guardians/carer is between 10 and 30 minutes late, a fee of \$10.00 for every 10 minutes, or part thereof, from the conclusion of the session/day will be invoiced by the Community Kinders Plus.
- If the parent/guardian is over 30 minutes late in collecting their child. The fee will be \$10.00 for every 10 minutes, or part thereof, for the first 30 minutes from the conclusion of the session and then \$15.00 for every 10 minutes or part thereof.

CHILDREN TURNING THREE DURING THE YEAR OF ENROLMENT

Full payment from the first day of Term 1 is required if a place is to be reserved for a child in the three-year-old kindergarten program. Children can only commence the program when they have turned three.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Families experiencing financial hardship often require access to family support services. Information on these services is available from Community Kinders Plus and a list can be supplied to those families who require it.

NOTIFICATION OF FEE CHANGES DURING THE YEAR

Fees set for the year would only be reviewed in extraordinary circumstances, for example, if attendance rates fall below the budget 'break even' point. Parents/guardians will be notified one term in advance of any required fee increase and will be offered the option to request a payment plan.