

FEES – INCLUDING FREE KINDERGARTEN & LONG DAY CARE

QUALITY AREA 7



PURPOSE

This policy will provide clear guidelines for:

- How services comply with the Free Kinder initiative
- the setting, payment and collection of fees
- ensuring the viability of ECKA, by setting appropriate fees and charges
- the equitable and non-discriminatory application of fees across the programs provided by ECKA



POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

ECKA is committed to:

- supporting the Victorian Government's Free Kinder initiative
- increasing access to quality kindergarten programs for all Victorian children
- ensuring there are no financial barriers for families wishing to access an early childhood program for their child/children
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to the financial circumstances of parents/guardians.
- providing responsible financial management of the service, including establishing fees that will result in a financially viable service, while keeping user fees at the lowest possible level
- providing a fair and manageable system for dealing with non-payment and/or inability to pay fees/outstanding debts
- advising users of the service about program government funding and fees to be paid by parents/guardians
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SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, parents/guardians attending ECKA.

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with parents/guardians, the Nominated Supervisor and staff, and in line with the requirements of DE’s Free Kinder initiative and for LDC the Commonwealth Governments Child Care Package (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) current budget to determine fee income	R	√	√	√	
Ensuring that families are informed of the operating hours including term dates, planned closures and additional hours to account for closures	R	√			
Ensuring families are informed of the total annual fee amount, including anu applicable fees for e.g. excursions and any additional hours.					
Ensuring families are not charged any compulsory out-of-pocket levies or maintenance fees (voluntary fundraising and payments/donations are permitted)	R	√			
Ensuring families are only charged for optional kindergarten programs hours that are over and above the 15 funded hours per week (600 hours per year) and/or “wrap around” care (<i>refer to Definitions</i>)	R	√			
For LDC -Ensuring that children enrolled in a kindergarten program are not charged higher fees in comparison to children that are not attracting kindergarten funding.	R	√			
For LDC - Directly offsetting the full \$2,000 payment from the fees of parents/guardians with children receiving their funded kindergarten program at the centre (service providers are not required to separately calculate and record the cost of the kindergarten hours separately for integrated programs). Use any surplus funding on improving efforts for the funded kindergarten program, such as improving quality and supporting engagement of families for the minority of cases where parents are charged less than \$2,000 in out-of-pocket fees for the duration of the kindergarten year.	R	√			
For LDC - Applying the fee offset regularly (e.g., fortnightly or monthly) and clearly indicating the offset amount (labelled Victorian Government Free Kinder offset) on parent/guardian’s invoice statements.	R	√			
For LDC -Communicating with parents/guardians that the offsets will not impact their CCS payments	R	√			

For LDC - Reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures for late payment and support offered	R	√			
For LDC - Considering options for payment when affordability is an issue for families	R	√			
For LDC - Clearly communicating this policy and payment options to families in a culturally-sensitive way, and where possible in the family's first language	R	√			
For LDC - Ensuring that the <i>Fees Policy</i> is readily accessible at the service (<i>Regulation 171</i>)	R	√			
For LDC - Providing all parents/guardians with fee information (<i>refer to Attachment 2</i>)	R	√			
For LDC - Ensuring fees are collected and receipted	R	√			
For LDC - Collecting all relevant information and maintaining relevant documentation regarding those with entitlement to concessions, where applicable	R	√		√	
For LDC - Clearly communicating this policy and payment options to families in a culturally-sensitive way, and where possible in the family's first language	R	√			
Ensuring any non-funded positions are enrolled in accordance with the Kindergarten Funding Guidelines (<i>refer to Sources</i>)	R	√			
Ensuring families that attend both sessional kindergarten and a long day care service nominate and document which service the child will participate in the funded kindergarten program	R	√		√	
Ensuring that any surplus funding is used in line with acceptable uses of kindergarten funding, including to promote increased participation and/or enhanced program quality.	R	√			
Ensuring any voluntary parent payments/donations are explicitly agreed to in writing and receipted	R	√			
Charging families only for an occasional special event/ excursions that occur outside the normal program/curriculum	R	√	√		
Ensuring that any child that is eligible for Early Start Kindergarten is still enrolled at the service and recorded on the KIM system	R	√	√		
Collecting all relevant information regarding those with entitlement to concessions and recording it on the KIM system	R	√	√		
Ensuring that the Free Kinder Fee Policy is readily accessible at the service (<i>Regulation 171</i>)	R	√			
Providing all parents/guardians with information about Free Kinder (<i>refer to Attachment 1</i>)	R	√			
Providing all parents/guardians with a statement of additional hours fees and charges (<i>refer to Attachments 2</i>) upon enrolment of their child, <i>if applicable</i> . NOTE: Parents should also be advised that enrolling for hours over 15 is optional and families can choose to only enrol for the 15 hours kindergarten program and receive this program at no cost.	R	√			

Providing all parents/guardians with an additional fee payment fee agreement (<i>refer to Attachments 3</i>), if applicable.	R	√			
Inform parents/guardians of any action that will be taken if fees are not paid.	R	√			
Reading the ECKA Free Kinder information for families (<i>refer to Attachment 1</i>), Beaufort Early Childhood Centre (<i>refer to Attachments 2</i>), and Trentham After Kinder and Occasional Care(<i>refer to Attachments 3</i>) if applicable.				√	
Signing and complying with the Additional Hours Fee Payment Agreement (<i>refer to Attachments 3</i>), if applicable.				√	
Notifying the approved provider if experiencing difficulties with the payment of additional hours fees.				√	
Complying with the service's <i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> regarding financial and other information received, including in relation to the payment/non-payment of additional hours fees	R	√	√	√	
Notifying parents/guardians a minimum of 14 days of any proposed changes to the additional hours fees charged, or the way in which the fees are collected (<i>Regulation 172(2)</i>), ideally providing one term's notice.	R	√			
Implementing and reviewing this policy, in consultation with parents/guardians, the approved provider and staff, and in line with the requirements of DE's Free Kinder initiative (<i>refer to Sources</i>)	R	√	√	√	
Informing the approved provider of any complaints or concerns that have been raised regarding fees at the service		√	√		
Referring parents'/guardians' questions in relation to this policy to the approved provider.		√	√		

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION



BACKGROUND

The Best Start, Best Life reform will help all Victorian children dream even bigger through increased access to quality early childhood education and care. A critical part of the reform is Free Kinder, which will support access to two years of high-quality kindergarten programs for all Victorian children. All families with a child enrolled in a funded kindergarten program are eligible for Free Kindergarten, this includes both 3 and 4-year-old kindergarten programs.

Free Kinder supports families to access a funded kindergarten program by:

- providing a free 15-hour program to four-year-old children enrolled at a sessional service
- providing a free 5-to-15-hour program to three-year-old children enrolled at a sessional service (subject to the length of funded program offered)
- offsetting the funded kindergarten program component of parent fees for three and four-year-old children enrolled at a long day care service

Free kinder supports every Victorian child to get the best start in life no matter where they live. Research shows that play-based learning is a powerful way to support children's learning and development. Two years of early learning is a crucial part of their educational journey, these benefits last into the school years and beyond.

Regulation 168(2) (n) of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 requires that funded services have a comprehensive written fees policy, and the content of this policy must be communicated to families. Any voluntary parent donations and/or fundraising must comply with the Free Kindergarten subsidy guidelines and be responsive to the local community.

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulation 168(2)(n)
- Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic)
- National Quality Standard

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au

- *Regulation 168(2) (n) of Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* requires that Early Childhood Education and Care services have a comprehensive written fees policy, and the content of this policy must be communicated to families. The policy must include a written statement about the fees to be charged and the payment process. All families must be informed of applicable fees at the time of enrolment.
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- Australian families receive help with the cost of child care through the Child Care Subsidy (CCS). The Australian Government, through the Department of Education (DE) and Services Australia, administers the Child Care Subsidy (CCS). Providers must be approved by the department to receive CCS.
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- DE is responsible for the legislation that underpins CCS. This legislation is called Family Assistance Law (FAL). All providers that receive CCS must follow the rules under FAL. DE monitors providers' compliance with FAL.
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- The Australian Government considers that immunisation is an important health measure for children and their families, as it is the safest and most effective way of providing protection against harmful and often deadly diseases. To meet the CCS immunisation requirements, children must be immunised according to the standard vaccination schedule, be on an eligible catch-up vaccination schedule or have an approved exemption from being immunised.
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- CCS is paid directly to approved providers and passed on to families as a fee reduction.
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- Additional CCS provides additional fee assistance to support vulnerable or disadvantaged families and children. This support recognises the preventative and protective influence of quality child care on a child's health, wellbeing and development; and the importance of continuity of care.
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- There are four different payments under Additional Child Care Subsidy:
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) – to help children who are at risk of serious abuse or neglect.
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (grandparent) – to help grandparents on income support who are the principal caregiver of their grandchildren.
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship) – to help families experiencing financial hardship.
- Additional Child care Subsidy (transition to work) – to help low-income families transitioning from income support to work.
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- The Inclusion Support Program is designed to assist early childhood education and care services to include children with additional needs by providing support, in the form of practical and tailored advice and strategies on effective inclusive practice, from contracted Inclusion Agencies as well as funding to address more challenging inclusion barriers.
- The Community Child Care Fund is designed to help eligible child care providers address barriers to child care participation, particularly in disadvantaged communities, including Indigenous communities.



DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g. Approved provider, Nominated supervisor, Notifiable complaints, Serious incidents, Duty of care, etc. refer to the Definitions file of the ECKA Policy Catalogue.

Approved child care: Approved child care services are services that have Australian Government approval to receive the Child Care Subsidy (*refer to Definitions*) on behalf of eligible parents. Approved child care includes centre-based day care, including long day care and occasional care, family day care, outside school hours care and in-home care.

Child care subsidy (CCS): A Commonwealth Government means tested subsidy to assist eligible families with the cost of child care. Payments are paid directly to approved child care providers. Further information can be found at: www.education.gov.au/child-care-subsidy

Early Start Kindergarten: A funding program that provides eligible children 15 hours of free or low cost kindergarten program each week for two years before starting school. To be eligible a child must be 3 years old by 30 April in the year they start kindergarten and be from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or the family has had contact with child protection. Details are available at: www.vic.gov.au/early-start-kindergarten. If a child is eligible for ESK, they should be enrolled in ESK. This ensures eligible children have priority access to 15 hours of funded kindergarten provided by an early childhood teacher and that service providers receive additional funding and support. ESK enrolments contribute to School Readiness Funding (SRF) calculations for service providers. It also allows the Department to continue to monitor efforts to engage the most vulnerable children in kindergarten across Victoria and provide additional targeted support where required through SRF or Early Childhood LOOKOUT.

Excursion/service event charge: An additional charge required to meet the cost of special events or excursions that occur in response to emerging children's program needs. Events that are planned ahead and are included as an expenditure item in the service's budget do not incur this additional charge (*refer to Excursions and Service Events Policy*)

Fees: A charge for program hours over and above the 15 funded hours per week (600 per year) and/or wrap around care.

Free Kindergarten: A Victorian Government Best Start, Best Life initiative providing Free Kinder programs for four-year-old and three-year-old children in funded services, that have opted into the initiative.

Free Kinder supports families to access a funded kindergarten program by:

- Providing a free 5-hour program to 4-year-old children enrolled at a sessional service
- Providing a free 15-hour program to 3-year-old children enrolled at a sessional service (subject to the length of funded program offered)
- Offsetting the funded kindergarten program component of parent fees 3 and 4-year-old children enrolled at a long day care service.

Funded Kindergarten: The Victorian Government provides funding to support children to access a high-quality kindergarten program in the two years before they start school. The funding is a contribution towards meeting the cost of the kindergarten program. Funded kindergartens charge fees to help meet the cost of running kindergarten programs. Fees are set by individual kindergartens and depends on things like how many hours children attend and whether there are extra costs such as excursions.

Voluntary parent/guardian payment/donation: A voluntary payment/donation for items not directly related to the provision of the children's program. Explicit and written agreement from a parent is required for any voluntary payments. Attendance at the service is not conditional on this payment.

Wrap around care: care that is provided by a kindergarten service to kindergarten children outside of the 15 hours per week program. Wrap around care fees are not funded by the Victorian Government but may be covered by CCS (*refer to Definitions*).

Centrelink: The agency that delivers payments and services to parents/guardians on behalf of the Australian Government

Child Care Safety Net: Targeted assistance to vulnerable and at-risk children and their families, as well as supporting child care services in disadvantaged communities to address barriers in accessing child care.

The Child Care Safety Net has three components:

- Additional Child Care Subsidy
- Community Child Care Fund
- Inclusion Support Program

Child Care Subsidy (CCS): A Commonwealth Government means tested subsidy to assist eligible parents/guardians with the cost of child care. Payments are paid directly to approved child care providers.

Excursion/service event charge: An additional charge required to meet the cost of special events or excursions that occur in response to emerging children's program needs. Events that are planned ahead and are included as an expenditure item in the service's budget do not incur this additional charge (*refer to Excursions and Service Events Policy*).

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

SOURCES

- Best Start Best Life: <https://www.vic.gov.au/give-your-child-the-best-start-in-life>
The Kindergarten Funding Guide (Department of Education):
www.vic.gov.au/kindergarten-funding-guide
- Resources for Funded Kindergartens: www.vic.gov.au/kindergarten-funding-guide
- The constitution of ECKA

- Department of Education: Child Care Subsidy (CCS): www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/child-care-subsidy
- The Child Care Provider Handbook: www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/resources/chil-care-provider-handbook

RELATED POLICIES

- Compliments and Complaints
- Delivery and Collection of Children
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Excursions and Service Events
- Governance and Management of the Service
- Inclusion and Equity
- Privacy and Confidentiality

EVALUATION



In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the approved provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness, particularly in relation to affordability, flexibility of payment options and procedures for the collection of fees
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation and government policy, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk (*Regulation 172 (2)*).



ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Free Kindergarten information for families
- Attachment 2: Beaufort Early Childhood Centre – Long Day Care 2023
- Attachment 3: Trentham Occasional Care and After Kinder Care - 2023

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of ECKA on 1/12/2022

Last Reviewed: 31/7/2023

REVIEW DATE: 31/7/2024



ATTACHMENT 1. FREE KINDERGARTEN INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

ECKA 2023

1. General information

Kindergarten programs for four-year-old and eligible three-year-old children in Victorian Government funded services will be free as part of the Best Start, Best Life reform.

This investment will save families up to \$2,500 for each child enrolled in a participating funded kindergarten program.

DE 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.

2. What free kindergarten means at our service

ECKA has opted in to the Free Kindergarten initiative. Applicable parent fees are outlined below:

- Funded sessional kindergarten for 3-year-old children (up to 15 hours per week) – no parent fee
- Funded sessional kindergarten for 4-year-old children (15 hours per week) - no parent fee
- Kindergarten in long day care for 3 and 4 -year-old children – parent fee will be reduced by the Free Kindergarten Funding

3. Other charges

Other charges levied by ECKA are included on the Statement of Fees and Charges, that will be provided to families upon enrolment.

These include:

- **Excursion/service event charge (outside of the 15 hours per week program):** At times throughout the year an additional excursion(s) or event(s) may be arranged where it is considered relevant to the service's program and the children's interests. At this time any additional costs to families are taken into consideration before a decision is made (*refer to Excursions and Service Events Policy*).
- **Late collection charge:** ECKA 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 ECKA.
- **Long Day Care fees:** for services at Beaufort Early Childhood Centre (see Attachment 2) and
- **Occasional Care and After Kinder Care Fees:** at Trentham (see Attachment 3)

4. Additional hours and/or wrap around care fees – Beaufort Early Childhood Centre

ECKA offers wrap around care outside of the 15 hours per week (600 hours per year) sessional kindergarten program. This fee is applicable to all families that require care before and after the kindergarten session.

Families have the option of only enrolling for 5 hours and being charged no additional fees.

4.1 Integrated Services

ECKA will directly offset the full \$2,000 payment from the fees of parents/guardians with children receiving their funded kindergarten program at the centre. ECKA will use any surplus funding on improving efforts for the funded kindergarten program, such as improving quality and supporting engagement of families for the minority of cases where parents are charged less than \$2,000 in out-of-pocket fees for the duration of the kindergarten year.

The fee offset will be applied regularly (e.g. fortnightly or monthly) and clearly indicating the offset amount (labelled Victorian Government Free Kinder offset) on parent/guardian invoice statements)

The offsets will not impact their CCS payments.

5. Fundraising and voluntary parent payment/donations

While **participation in fundraising/donation is voluntary**, the support of every family is encouraged. Fundraising activities are also an opportunity for families and communities to come together.

6. Subsidies

6.1 Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

NB: Beaufort Early Childhood Centre (BECC) and Trentham Kindergarten are the only ECKA Services eligible for CCS

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is an Australian Government subsidy that can assist eligible families with the costs of childcare at an approved child care provider. ECKA is an approved care provider.

Approved child care are providers that meet certain standards and requirements, and are approved by the Australian Government. Approved child care providers must:

- hold the required approvals or licences to provide child care in the state or territory that the service/s operate in
- ensure the provider and any individual who is or will be a Person with Management or Control of the Provider is fit and a proper person to administer the CCS (requirements set out in Section 194E of A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999.
- be financially viable and is likely to remain so
- ensure that required fit and proper checks are carried out for each Person with Management or Control of the Provider, Persons with Responsibility for Day-to-Day Operation of the Service and In-Home Care and Family Day Care Educators

The amount of subsidy received is determined by the circumstances of the applicant's including the family income, the hourly rate cap and the hours of activity undertaken by the parents. Further information for parents can be found here: <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/child-care-subsidy>

Long day care providers that offer funded kindergarten as part of the long day care program are required to directly offset the full payment of the Free Kindergarten initiative from parents' out of pocket fees (after CCS is applied). Fee reductions will be made proportionally across the year to families' bills, i.e. fortnightly or monthly. Only children receiving a funded kindergarten place at [service name], led by a qualified teacher, are eligible under this initiative.

Exclusions and exceptions: Not available for providers that primarily provide an early educational program to children in the year that is two years before grade one of school (preschool or kindergarten).

7. Payment of fees for extended hours/wrap around care

Fees are payable for hours over and above 15 hours per week (600 hours per year) and/or wrap around care.

The approved provider 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 by the due date on the invoice. 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 ECKA 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.

8. Unpaid fees for extended hours/wrap around care

If fees are not paid by the due date, the following steps will be taken.

- An initial reminder letter will be sent to parents/guardians with a specified payment date, and will include information on a range of support options available for the family.
- Where payment is still not received, families will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the range of support options available and establish a payment plan.
- Failure to attend the meeting and continued non-payment may result in a second and final letter notifying parents/guardians that the child's place at the service may be withdrawn unless payment is made or a payment plan is entered into within a specified period of time. This letter will also include information on a range of support options available for the family.
- ECKA will continue to offer support and will reserve the right to employ the services of a debt collector.
- If a decision is made to withdraw the child's place at the service, the parents/guardians will be provided with 14 days' notice in writing.

- No further enrolments of children from the parents/guardians will be accepted until all outstanding fees have been paid or an acceptable payment arrangement put in place.

9. Refund of fees

Additional hours are non-refundable (exceptional circumstances may apply – these are at the discretion of ECKA. There will be no refund of these 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.

10. Support services

Families experiencing financial hardship often require access to family support services. Information on these services may be available from the kindergarten service provider or alternatively families may contact the local council.

11. Notification of fee changes during the year for extended hours/wrap around care

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.

ATTACHMENT 2. BEAUFORT EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE – LONG DAY CARE - 2023

KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

In 2023 kindergarten programs for three- and four-year-old children will be subsidised by the Victorian government for all families receiving Childcare Subsidy. **The amount of \$2000 will be applied as a discount to families' childcare invoices over 20 fortnights.**

Kindergarten programs will consist of 15 hours of kindergarten per week for both 3yo and 4/5yo children. The kindergarten program for children booked into childcare will run from 8.30am to 4pm during the normal childcare hours of 8am to 5.30pm on specified days. The kindergarten staff will inform parents which days kindergarten programs are running to make sure all children can access the 15 hours. The following table shows how the childcare fees combined with kindergarten programs.

PROGRAM	FEE
Child is booked for childcare for the full day and attends the 7.5hrs of funded 3yo or 4yo Kindergarten within the childcare session.	Full day childcare fee is charged. Childcare subsidy and Victorian Government kindergarten subsidy is applied to the invoice and parents pay gap. Eg: Full fee \$110 minus 70% CCS (Estimate \$77) = \$33 minus kindergarten subsidy (\$25) = \$8 parent gap fee to be paid for the day.
Child only attends the kindergarten program 8.30 to 4pm on two days (15 hours) and also attends childcare on other days.	Full day childcare fee is charged each day. Childcare subsidy and Victorian Government kindergarten subsidy is applied to the invoice and parents pay gap. Eg: Full fee for 3 days \$330 minus 70% rebate (Estimate \$231) = \$99 minus kindergarten subsidy (\$50) = \$49 total gap fee for three days.

BILLING

Families will be emailed their invoice on a fortnightly basis. Families are expected to pay the gap fee shown on the invoice within 14 days of receiving the invoice and not allow fees to fall more than two weeks into arrears. Invoices will show all subsidies you receive, and the weekly gap amount due to be paid. *You will need to assess your ability to pay this gap amount each week for you to take up a place in Childcare.* The invoice will detail the days and times of attendance in childcare, the childcare subsidy paid by the government and any parent payments.

FEE SUBSIDY ENTITLEMENTS AND CRN

Australian families will need to satisfy the Australian Governments Activity test to be eligible for childcare subsidy. More information about eligibility can be found at: <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/childcare-subsidy>. A calculator on your MyGov page can estimate your entitlements or you can ring the MyGov hotline on 132 307 if you have any subsidy queries.

Before your child starts, you will be required to lodge a Child Care Subsidy claim through Centrelink and confirm your child's enrolment details. Centrelink will notify us when your claim is confirmed. We will also require you to sign a Complying Written Arrangement confirming your childcare days and fees.

The CRN is a 10-digit number allocated individually to you and your child/ren from the Family Assistance office (Centrelink). This number is required for both you and your child on this form if you wish to claim the Child Care Subsidy.

PAYMENT METHODS:

ECKA prefers NO CASH due to security, therefore several methods are available for fee payments:

1. Credit/debit card is accepted over the phone (Phone ECKA: 5339 5055)
2. You can also pay via our secure portal on our website (www.ecka.org.au)
3. Direct deposit into the ECKA account via internet to: **Account Name:** ECKA

BSB: 063-507

Account No: 10415235

Put your child's Surname, Initial and the Centre's Number 18 as a reference (e.g., Smith B 18)

PUBLIC/CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Fees are not charged when the service is closed for public holidays and the Christmas holiday closure period.

ECKA believes that ongoing professional development and training is vital for our staff to remain at the forefront of their profession and continue to provide quality early childhood education and care. ECKA may close the service one day per year to allow all educators to attend a professional development day. On this day all ECKA Services will be closed. Families will need to arrange alternative care for their children on this day and will be notified of the day in advance. Families will not be charged for services on this day.

ABSENTEEISM AND FAMILY HOLIDAYS

When a child does not attend the service for reasons such as illness or holidays, families will continue to be charged for services according to the child's regular booking. Families who take extended holiday periods but wish to hold their child's place at the centre will be expected to pay the regular fees for the place at the centre.

If a child is to be absent for the day, parents are requested to telephone the service as soon as possible to inform educators. If the child is sick, it is important to inform the service of the nature of the illness, symptoms and any diagnosis is helpful in containing the spread of illness. Parents are still expected to pay for these sessions. If you receive the Childcare Subsidy (CCS) you will receive a subsidy for a limited number of days per year. For more information please visit:

<http://www.dese.gov.au/child-care-package/child-care-subsidy/absences>

CANCELLATION OF BOOKING

Families are asked to provide 2 weeks' notice of the cancellation of a booking. Fees will continue to apply for the two weeks' notice period unless cancellation of booking is due to an illness and a medical certificate is provided.

ATTACHMENT 3. TRENTHAM OCCASIONAL CARE AND AFTER KINDER CARE - 2023

COST & BILLING

After Kinder Care

- Non-CCS - \$28 per session per child.
- CCS – approx. estimate * \$6 - \$7 per session per child (*depending on CCS) percentage.

Occasional Care

- Part day sessions until 1:45pm only (5hrs) \$55 per session per child.
- Full day sessions (7.5hrs) \$83 per session per child.

Invoices will be sent via email on a fortnightly basis. Payment is due within 7 days of receiving your invoice.

BOOKINGS

- Once your child is registered with Trentham Early Learning you can book them in for an AKC or OCC session by calling 5339 5055.
- Bookings can only be made on a casual basis.
- Parents are only able to book a maximum of two sessions in advance, to allow all families to have access to the service.

CANCELLATION OF BOOKING

- To cancel your session, please phone the ECKA office so that we can fill your place with someone from the waiting list.
- Cancellation of enrolments must be given in writing two weeks in advance.

PAYMENT METHODS

ECKA prefers NO CASH due to security, therefore several methods are available for fee payments:

1. Credit/Debit card via the secure portals: www.ecka.org.au/make-a-payment
www.bpoint.com.au/Payments/eureka
2. Direct deposit into the ECKA account via internet to: **Account Name:** ECKA **BSB:** 063-507

Account No: 10415235

Put your child's Surname, Initial and the Centre's Number 22 as a reference (e.g., Smith B 22)

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any questions regarding Occasional Care or After Kinder Care, please contact the ECKA office on 5339 5055 or via email at info@ecka.org.au