



## P7-08: Fees Policy

Under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, an approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for the payment of fees and the provision of a statement of fees charged by the service and take reasonable steps to ensure policies and procedures are followed. (ACECQA, 2021).

Quality early education and care provides the foundation for children’s development and social engagement whilst supporting workforce participation of parents and carers. Our Service is committed to providing quality education and care to all children at an affordable fee for families.

Our fee structure is based on our ability to provide the requirements of the Education and Care National Law and National Regulations, and compliance with the NSW Affordable Preschool initiative and Start Strong funding agreements.

### NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP		
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

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of change to policies and procedures



## RELATED LEGISLATION

<https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/resources/child-care-provider-handbook>

## RELATED POLICIES

Dealing with Complaints Policy Delivery of Children to, and Collection from and Education and Care Service Premises Termination of Enrolment Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy	Enrolment Policy Fraud Prevention Policy Governance Policy Orientation of Families Policy
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## PURPOSE

For families to gain a clear understanding of the Service fee structure, payment requirements and funding benefits prior to enrolment. This policy explains process of fee payment and the necessity of ensuring children’s fees are paid on time and consequences for failure to pay fees on time.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, and visitors of the Service.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service aims to ensure families understand the fee schedule and payment process required for education and care to be provided for their child. We are committed to meet our obligations to maintain financial integrity and comply with all applicable funding conditions. We have effective compliance systems in place to ensure funding is administered appropriately. Our Service ensures the confidentiality and privacy of all personal information provided to the Service about the enrolled child and family.

Our fee structure includes:

### Enrolment Levy

- To secure a child’s position families are required to pay a non-refundable Enrolment Levy of \$160.00. A payment plan can be arranged to secure an enrolment for families facing financial difficulty.
- If more than one child from the same family (sibling) is attending in the same year, the fee shall be \$160 for the first child and \$120 for the second child and any subsequent children.



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- The Enrolment Levy covers cost of enrolment processing and funds all excursions, maintenance contributions for the Preschools and the Association Membership fee.
- For children who attend for a second year of Preschool, payment of a new Enrolment Levy will be required.

### General Fees

- QDPA is a not-for-profit community organisation. The Association strives to keep fees as low as possible to make preschool accessible for all families in the community.
- Fees are reviewed by the Management Committee in Term 4 for the following year.
- Preschool fees are charged per child at either:
  - a 'non-Equity' rate - a standard Program Session fee rate,
  - or a lower 'Equity' rate - for Indigenous or Health Care Card holders (health care or pension cards must be provided and show the name of the child enrolling on the card for this to apply for health care card holders). Further information regarding Equity Rate is available under section heading "Equity Subsidy" within this policy.
- Current fees and levies are outlined upon enrolment and advised to families via email parent communication.
- Fees are charged for each enrolled session of Preschool, regardless of whether the child attends or not.
- Fees are not charged for public holidays or school holidays.
- Families are required to pay the difference between the fee charged and the fee relief amount, where applicable in 2024 (based on the NSW Department of Education "Affordable Preschool" initiative).
- Fees must be kept in advance of a child's attendance.
- Invoices and transaction summaries are available in your OWNA app.
- Fees are to be paid fortnightly through a direct debit system through OWNA.

### Payment of fees

- It is our preference that families pay fees using the Service's direct debit system within OWNA. The family is required to provide banking details to facilitate set up of the direct debit account within their app.
- Fees and charges associated with direct debit system are outlined as follows:
  - Direct Debit from Bank Accounts - \$0.75 per Direct Debit (QDPA will absorb these fees)
  - Credit Card payments from Parents - 1.75% of the transaction (payable by the family and charged at the time of the transaction)
  - Failed payments on Direct Debit - \$2.50 per transaction (payable by the family and debited on the subsequent transaction run)



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- Program session fees are required in order to pay preschool operating costs; therefore, fees need to be paid during any absences including sickness and holidays which are taken during school terms.
- All fees are charged and payable on a fortnightly basis (one week in arrears + one week in advance).
- Payments can be made at the Association Office via EFTPOS or cash, or via a direct deposit to QDPA's bank account for fees.
- It is possible to pay for a whole term/year of fees upfront, via direct debit, direct deposit, over the phone or at the Association office, if payment is made in the first two weeks of each term.

### Absences from Service

- Families are requested to contact their Preschool if their child is unable to attend a particular session. Alternatively, families can mark their child's absence in the OWNA app as another form of communicating attendance.

### Financial Difficulties

- Fees are required in order to pay preschool operating costs and are therefore due as invoiced.
- In cases of financial hardship, family crisis or where there is a concern over the wellbeing of a child, the QDPA Executive Officer, may at their discretion, reduce fees from the Fee Assistance/Relief Fund where available within the Association's budget.
- These matters will be kept highly confidential and discussed only with the persons concerned.

### Debt Recovery Procedure

- If payments are declined during direct debit bank transaction and no payment is received by the due date each fortnight, a reminder notice will be issued via email to the address on record and/or placed in children's pigeonholes at their preschool.
- If payment is declined on a second or subsequent occasion and/or the account falls 4 weeks behind in payments, and no contact is made to arrange a suitable alternate solution, the child's place will automatically be withdrawn and given to another child on the QDPA waiting list.
- Failure to pay the outstanding account within 30 days after the child's place is withdrawn; the account will be forwarded to our solicitor for further debt collection and appropriate legal action will commence where practicable. Any legal and debt collection fees will be payable by the family.
- If application is made for a child or subsequent child from the same family to continue the following year, their enrolment will not be confirmed until all outstanding fees are paid in full.



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- In addition, if a parent attempts to enrol a child in the future, that enrolment will not be accepted until all outstanding QDPA amounts are paid.

### Late Fees

- QDPA is not licensed or insured to have children on the premises after hours. This is a breach in the Education and Care Regulations.
- A late fee will apply where children are not picked up promptly at the conclusion of their class.
- Currently, a fee of \$15.00 per 5 minutes block or part thereof may be incurred by the family.
- A review of the child's enrolment will occur where families are consistently late with fee payment or with the collection of their child.

### Change of Fees

- Fees are subject to change at any time provided a minimum of **four weeks** written notice is given to all families.

### Termination of Enrolment

- Families are to provide **two weeks** written notice of their intention to withdraw a child from their Preschool.
- **Four weeks'** notice is required during the months of December and January due to our closure period over this time, to allow sufficient time to offer another family a place.
- Written notice must be provided directly to [admin@qdpa.com.au](mailto:admin@qdpa.com.au) to be processed accurately. Notice periods will commence from the date QDPA Administration has received the written notice.
- Families of children who are returning for their second year of preschool may request a change of Preschool within the Association or classroom within their current Preschool prior to the commencement of the enrolments season however there is no guarantee of acquisition to this request.
- Families of children who are returning for a second year, will be required to advise their intention for the child to return for a second year in writing to the Administration Team to [admin@qdpa.com.au](mailto:admin@qdpa.com.au) who will endeavour to assist with preferences. This notice must be provided to the Association office by 30<sup>th</sup> July in the first year of attendance.
- Once the child's place for second year is confirmed payment of a new Enrolment Levy will be required.
- Any remaining enrolment levy charges for families engaged in a payment plan, will be payable within the notice period if still outstanding.



### Equity Subsidy

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island (ATSI) families, families who hold a current Health Care Card or equivalent from Centre Link or families that have 785 and 786 visas (humanitarian or protection visas) and have a gross income of less than \$60,000 per annum may be eligible for reduced equity fees or fee support.
- Proof will be required by providing a copy of a current Health Care/Pension Concession Card, visas, or documentation on annual income with a pay slip or Australian Taxation Office Notice of Assessment.
- Copies of the parent/guardian Health Care/Pension Concession Cards and proof of annual income are to be kept on record at the Association's office. This is a requirement of our funding body, and no subsidy can be made available unless these requirements are adhered to.
- Children with identified Early Intervention needs when enrolling will be eligible for Equity Rates.
- This information is confidential, and details are not to be discussed.
- Economic subsidy relief cannot be backdated to previous school terms.

### Responsibility of Management

The Executive Officer is responsible for:

- ensuring all families are aware of our *Fees Policy*
- ensuring enrolments are submitted correctly with the appropriate enrolment information
- terminating enrolment of children should fees not be paid.
- providing at least 4 weeks written notice to families of any fee increases or changes to the way fees are collected.

The Administration Officer is responsible for:

- providing families with regular statement of fees payable
- notifying families of any overdue fees
- providing families with reminder letters as required
- discussing fee payment with families if required

### Responsibility of Families

- Provide the Service with the correct and accurate enrolment information.
- Ensure payment of fees as per policy.
- Ensure termination of care processes are followed as per policy.



## Third Party Payments

- Where an agreement has been made between an employer or charity to assist in the contribution of fees, the family is responsible for ensuring that all documentation regarding the arrangement is provided to the Association to facilitate the payment of fees.
- The Association will record all documentation regarding any third-party payments.
- If payment is not made by the third party in line with the policy for payment of fees, the family will be responsible for the payment of fees.

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our Fees Policy will be updated and reviewed annually in consultation with families, staff, educators, and management.

## SOURCE

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).  
 Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2021). Policy and procedure guidelines. *Payment of Service Fees and Provision of a Statement of Fees Charged by the Service*.  
 Australian Government Department of Education *Early Childhood and Care*  
<https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood>  
 Australian Government Department of Education *Information for childcare providers when a period of local emergency occurs*.  
 Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018).  
[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (2011).  
 Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).  
 Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Amended 2020).  
 Kearns, K. (2017). *The Business of Childcare* (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.).  
 Revised National Quality Standard. (2018)

## REVIEW

Version Control	Date	Author	Description of Change
1.0	2018	QDPA	Original document
2.0	2019	QDPA	Scheduled Policy Review and update
3.0	2020	QDPA	Scheduled Policy Review and update
4.0	Feb 2021	QDPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document reviewed with change in leadership team in 2021. Additional related regulations &amp; NQS references added.</li> <li>• Version control and description box added to clarify reviewed items/new inclusions.</li> <li>• Format change to include policy statement, purpose, scope and implementation, addition of footers and page numbering and general layout changes.</li> <li>• Clarification of information regarding Advanced Fee Payments added.</li> <li>• Clarification of notice period requirements added.</li> <li>• Re-ordering of information to ensure clarity.</li> </ul>



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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Additional detail added to all sections for clarity.</li><li>• Amended reference of KidXap to Xap to reflect name change with upgrade.</li></ul>
5.0	July 2022	QDPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Amended to reflect changes to enrolment levy.</li><li>• Reference to NSW Government COVID based fee subsidy arrangements added to General Fees section.</li><li>• Correction of reference to childcare management system software used.</li></ul>
6.0	February 2023	QDPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inclusion of OWNA direct debiting</li><li>• Clarification of notice of termination processes</li><li>• Removal of COVID fee subsidy arrangements</li><li>• Checked sources</li></ul>
7.0	December 2023	QDPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Late fee amended with increased fee.</li><li>• Transaction fees amended with increased fees from OWNA/Fat Zebra</li><li>• Enrolment levy amended to non-refundable.</li><li>• Four weeks' notice required in Dec/Jan for cancellation of enrolment</li></ul>