

## Comprehensive Fee Policy (QKFS)

Category	Administration	Policy No	
Effective Date	January 2012		
Date(s) of Revision	May 2011; October 2011; January 2014; March 2016; October 2017; June 2018		
Next Review Due	June 2019		
Relevant Legislation, Guidelines and References	Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme: Funding Requirements 2017		
Related Policies/Procedures/Templates	Fee Payment Policy Enrolment Policy Enrolment Agreement Immunisation Policy Enrolment Interview Template		
NQS	7.1.2 Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.		

### **Purpose:**

To ensure compliance with the requirements of the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme (QKFS) in relation to the application of fees.

### **Definition/s:**

Enrolment is the act or process of enrolling a child in the Centre.

Approved kindergarten program provider refers to early childhood education and care services approved and funded by the Office for Early Childhood Education and Care to deliver a kindergarten program.

For the purpose of the Queensland Government Approved Kindergarten Program, eligible children enrolled means children who are 4 years old by 30 June in the year they participate in kindergarten and whose parent/carer has completed all enrolment procedures required by the service.

### **Position Statement:**

Habitat Early Learning is a Queensland Government Approved Kindergarten provider and as such agrees to comply with the requirements of the scheme. The Queensland Government Approved Kindergarten scheme established parameters around fees charged for service.

### **Principles:**

Regulation 168 2(n) states that the approved provider of an education and care service must have in place policies and procedures relating to the payment of fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the education and care service. Additionally, regulation 172 states that the approved provider of an education and care service must ensure that parents of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change that will affect the fees charged or the way in

which fees are collected. The Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme also requires a comprehensive fee policy which contains the information specified in this policy.

Under the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme, the standard rate per child funding is provided to Approved Providers to assist with the costs of delivering an approved kindergarten program and to ensure that cost is not a barrier to access for families. The subsidy is paid quarterly to Approved Providers for each eligible child. The fee for the kindergarten program will not exceed the daily fee charged for 3 to 5 year old children who access long day care.

The current fee for Queensland Kindergarten Funded Program is **\$122.00** (emergent curriculum) and **\$127.50** (Montessori Kindergarten) per each enrolled day. Fees are subject to review at any time by management however, any change to fees will be provided with 14 days written notice.

Additional funding is provided to eligible services to reduce fees for disadvantaged families and to assist with the costs of attracting and retaining teachers in remote locations.

#### Wait List & Acceptance Fees

Habitat Early Learning implements a waiting list system in all age group, including Queensland Kindergarten Funded Programs, where demand exceeds supply to ensure equitable access to the service in accordance with relevant legislation. A **\$30.00** fee is applicable. Further information can be obtained from the relevant policy.

A booking fee of **\$75.00** is payable at the time of enrolment acceptance. This fee is nonrefundable. A nonrefundable charge for security fobs of **\$30** is payable on enrolment.

#### QKFS Plus Kindy Support

QKFS Plus Kindy Support Subsidy is provided to services to reduce out-of-pocket expenses for eligible families by providing access to low or no-cost kindergarten programs.

#### **Health Care Cards**

This is a by-exception subsidy per child for Health Care Card (HCC) holders attending services not eligible for low socio-economic subsidy, to ensure that cost is not a barrier to access. The subsidy will be provided directly to the service to offset net out-of-pocket fees for eligible parents/carers. Approved kindergarten program providers are eligible to receive the Health Care Card subsidy for each child who meets the following criteria:

- The child is in the eligible age cohort to attend the approved kindergarten program
- The parent/carer/guardian of the child holds a current Commonwealth Health Care Card

The family (including foster families) must present one of the following:

- a current Australian Government Health Care Card (HCC). The HCC must name the enrolled child, whether it is the child's own card or a card belonging to their parent/guardian;
- a current Australian Government Pensioner Concession Card (automatic HCC entitlements);  
OR
- Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card or White Card; OR
- formal communication, such as a letter, from the relevant agency stating the intent to issue a HCC.

Approved kindergarten program providers must ensure that the fee charged to families eligible for the Health Care Card (HCC) subsidy is not higher than the fee charged to other children enrolled in the kindergarten program. For families eligible for the HCC subsidy, Habitat Early Learning will provide the annual cost per child and demonstrate the reduction of this fee by the subsidy amount for families eligible for the HCC subsidy (i.e. annual fee – subsidy = lower annual kindergarten fee for HCC holders).

Fees will be reduced per billing cycle and the HCC subsidy amount will be individually recorded on the parent's/carer's account.

### **Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Identification**

The child identifies as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and the family chooses to identify them as such on their enrolment form. Families have the opportunity to identify a child as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander on the enrolment form.

### **Multiple Births**

Families with three or more children, of the same age, enrolled in the same year. QKFS Plus Kindy Support is available for each child enrolled in a program. Proof of date of birth for these children is required to claim QKFS Plus Kindy Support.

### Fee Payment Information

Habitat Early Learning issues invoices each Monday, including public holidays for 1 week in advance. Invoices are distributed electronically on a weekly basis. Parent statements are distributed periodically.

Payment options – Direct Debit from a nominated bank account or credit card is the only payment option available for families using the service. Your nominated account will be debited each Tuesday.

Fees are to be paid for all days booked, regardless of attendance.

Failure to pay fees on time and in accordance with this policy may lead to suspension or cancellation of enrolment. Any family experiencing issues with the payment of fees in line with Centre policy should consult with the fee department to arrange a suitable payment plan. Accounts which are one week in arrears, and where no attempt has been made to pay the outstanding fees or discuss the matter with Centre management, will result in the security fob associated with the overdue account being deactivated and the enrolment cancelled. All overdue accounts will be referred to a Debt Collection Agency.

All overdue fees will be managed in accordance with the Fee Payment Policy.

Families attending Habitat Early Learning may be eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS). Families seeking Child Care Subsidy for the first time will be required to meet the Commonwealth Government's eligibility requirements which include immunisation obligations.

### **Policy Implementation:**

### **Management will:**

- maintain the daily fee for the Queensland Kindergarten Funded Programs at a rate that is equivalent to or less than the fee charged for 3 to 5 year old children who access long day care.
- provide eligible families with access to a kindergarten program for at least 15 hours per week and 40 weeks per year
- sight and copy the eligible child's birth certificate prior to attendance
- provide parents and/or guardians with information on the fee payment policy and process during enrolment, including the process for fees incurred for late collection of children
- provide a written statement about the fees to be charged and the payment process
- notify parents and carers in advance of any changes to fee structures
- issue families with an invoice on a weekly basis outlining the care being provided for the forthcoming week
- advise eligible families of the QKFS Plus Kindy Support subsidy arrangement
- reduce fees per billing cycle and individually record the QKFS Plus Kindy Support amount on the parent's/carer's account
- sight/photocopy support documentation (HCC or birth certificate) and record the card number and expiry date which are to be kept on an up-to-date file in a secure place and available for audit if required
- provide a written statement defining how the QKFS Plus Kindy Support subsidy is applied
- provide equitable access to the kindergarten program for families eligible for the QKFS Plus Kindy Support subsidy
- issue receipts for payment

**It is the Responsibility of the Parent Body to:**

- register for Child Care Subsidy and provide a customer reference number (CRN) number to the Centre if CCS is to be claimed
- ensure that fees are paid weekly in accordance with the Fee Payment Policy
- provide a copy of the eligible child's birth certificate on enrolment
- provide a relevant documentation to support QKFS Plus Kindy Support subsidy application