

Konomi kindergarten Fee and Administration Policy & Procedures

QUALITY AREA 7 LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

Rationale

In order for our service to provide a high quality environment and an appropriate program for children we must remain financially viable at all times. Prompt payment of fees allows us to plan with certainty. However it is imperative all families pay their child care fees, to ensure Konomi kindergarten in return is able to continue providing child care to all families.

Required Legislations

New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999

A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999

Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

AIMS OF THIS POLICY

Konomi Kindergarten's financial health and access to its services will be maximised by:

1. Ensuring families are aware of all fees and fee payment requirements upon enrolment.
2. Keeping fee increases to a minimum including the cost of administering fee collection.
3. Following the appropriate priority of access requirements.
4. Following all legal procedures required for our access to government funding.
5. Managing fee collection to avoid bad debts.
6. Families are notified as far ahead as possible and no less than 4 weeks of any changes to fees or the way fees will be collected.
7. Ensuring we issue statements of fees on a regular basis.
8. To provide information to parents about what to expect when their child starts childcare to help alleviate any concerns that they may have.
9. To provide information to parents about the enrolment procedure, fees and Child Care Benefit (CCB) to help them understand how to take care of the financial side of childcare.
10. To ensure the enrolment and orientation process goes smoothly for the child, parents and centre staff.
11. Konomi Kindergarten will determine the required fee level to meet budget prediction for the following year. Parents will be given at least four week notice of any fee increase. **The same fee will be charged to all families for equivalent care arrangements.**
12. Child care places will be offered to families as they become available according to priority of access (*Child Care Service Handbook 2011, page 67, section 6.3*)
13. A deposit of 4 weeks fees is required at the time of enrolment. The deposit will be returned to the family when their child leaves the service. Returning the deposit will be calculated according to the CCB contribution and will be returned to parents account after the child/ren have left Konomi Kindergarten.

Implementation

Priority of Access / Fees

Konomi Kindergarten will:

- ✓ Ensure the service complies with the Family Assistance Law (Konomi is CCB approved)
- ✓ Ensure vacant places are filled under the appropriate priority of access policy for the service type. (NB – For CCB approved places: Priority 1—a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect Priority 2—a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work, training, study test under section 14 of the A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999 Priority 3—any other child.
- ✓ Within these main categories, priority should also be given to the following children: children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families; children in families which include a disabled person

children in families which include an individual whose adjusted taxable income does not exceed the lower income threshold for CCB or who or whose partner are on income support children in families with a non-English speaking Background, children in socially isolated families and children of single parents.

- ✓ Ensure adequate records of attendance are kept for each child as required;
- ✓ As required under family assistance law pass, all fee reductions to families as advised by DEEWR against an Attendance Record Report within 14 days of being advised of the amount
- ✓ Ensure the service submits online weekly Attendance Record Reports to DEEWR for each child
- ✓ Comply with Australian Government or NSW Government funding agreements as required
- ✓ Ensure the service remains financially viable and can meet its debts and other obligations as they fall due
- ✓ Review fees annually in line with market forces
- ✓ Issue statements for all children receiving fee reductions and provide families with a complete record of the CCB and/or CCR and or/ other fee reductions that have been provided by the service at least every three months
- ✓ Only collect and disclose personal information about children and families to DEEWR/ the Family Assistance Office (FAO)/ the Department of Education and Communities where the disclosure is legally required.

The Nominated Supervisor will

- Ensure all families are made aware of service fees and available subsidies on enrolment (CCB, CCR);
- Ensure statements of fees are given to all families on a monthly basis
- Submit attendance records to DEEWR on a regular basis and ensure subsequent fee reductions are passed on to families as soon as possible

Withdrawal from the Centre

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Provide all families with a statement of outstanding fees on receipt of notification of withdrawal of a child from the service.
- When parents enrol with us they are required to pay a security deposit. This deposit is held separately from fees to secure that position throughout their time in our care. The deposit is refunded to parents when their child is withdrawn from the centre. Twenty (20) billing days notice, in writing, is required when withdrawing a child from care. **For children who leave up on graduation, different arrangement applies.**

See the example below, please note that every year the dates will be changing according to the calendar, parents will be informed of the dates closer to the time.

Option1.	A Courses	18 th Dec 2012	B Course	21 st Dec 2012
Option2	A Course	8 th Jan 2013	B Course	11 Jan 2013
Option 3	A Course	22 nd Jan 2013	B Course	25 th Jan 2013

Families will:

Provide 4 weeks' notice of withdrawal from service. If child does not attend during this 2 week notice period full fees will be chargeable i.e. no CCB reductions are possible

Waiting List

Parents can place their child's name on our waiting list by completing a Waiting List Application Form. This form can be downloaded from our website or emailed/posted to parents. A \$50 non-refundable administration fee is payable for all families wishing to place their child's name on the list. *Please note that. this does not guarantee your child a position at the centre.*

Child Enrolment

Any special needs, medical condition or acute allergy must be detailed in the child's enrolment and passed on to our Centre Operations Supervisor who will endeavour to accommodate the child's specific needs within the centre. Once a place for the child has become available to parents at the centre, we will formally offer them a position. In accepting this position, parents are asked to sign the placement agreement and authorisation sheets and payment of a security deposit of four weeks of fees according to the course offered at the time to secure their child's position. As we require one month fees to be paid in advance, parents will be contacted to pay the advance fee

according to the child's start date. The payment of the security deposit and childcare fees will be accepted via EFT. Upon receiving the security deposit, and signed information, an enrolment package is forwarded or hand in at the information session to each family to the parents to complete before their child's first day of orientation.

Enrolment packages include:

Child Enrolment Form and Personal History Record • Parent Handbook • Child Personal Profile, food allergy information, fees and payment arrangement, information on CCB & CCR, Childcare Credit Reference (*information on NQF, NQS, EYLF and the Code of Ethics will be included in the parent handbook*).

Enrolment is accepted once all forms are fully completed and returned within the specified timeframe. Children's details are then passed on to the Centre Manager and room staff to ensure they are expecting the child on orientation days and their first day of care.

Change of attendance

If parents wish to change, increase or decrease the days their child attends care, they can fill out a form (change of course) and hand in to the director. Parents are required to provide 20 working day notice to decrease days. Any other changes can be made in a timeframe agreed by the administration staff subject to availability

Fee payment

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure families are aware of fee payment options: Direct Debit or payment by credit card. Fees will not be accepted in cash to ensure our staff's safety; and
- Implement an overdue fee process with any families whose fees are not 2 weeks in advance

Families will:

Ensure all fees are kept 2-3 weeks in advance at all times.

Late fees

Konomi Kindergarten will:

Levy a late fee for families who arrive after the service closing time. This fee is set at \$10 for first 5 minutes (please see our late collection procedures for more information).

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure families are made aware of late fees on enrolment and,
- Organise for separate invoicing of late fees.

Public holidays & fees

Families will:

- Pay for any booked day of education and care which falls on a public holiday.

Payments options and procedures:

- Direct Debit (Ezidebit) from a nominated Bank Account or Credit Card is the only payment option available for families using the Centre. **Note: from January 2013 No Cash, Cheque, EFTPOS, or Direct Deposit facilities are available for fee payments.**
- Option 1: Direct Debit from a nominated Bank Account, to be processed monthly, which will occur on the 13th day of each month. Direct Debit transactions fees will not be incurred by the family, as they will be paid by Konomi Kindergarten.
- Option 2: Direct Debit from a nominated Credit Card, to be processed monthly, which will occur on the 13th day of each month. Credit Card fees will incur additional charges and will be charged directly to the family. Visa and MasterCard will incur charges of 1.87% of debited amount and American Express and Diners will incur charge of 4.4% of debited amount. "Ezidebit" will appear as the merchant on Bank Statements for all Credit Card payments.

Direct Debit Procedures:

- When a child enrolls at Konomi Kindergarten Centre it is a requirement that a Direct Debit Request Form must be completed and returned to the Centre prior to the commencement of a child's enrolment at the Centre or a child ceases in care at the Centre – providing termination notice periods have been met.
- Konomi kindergarten will debit each family's nominated Bank Account or Credit Card as monthly.
- Fees are payable for Public Holidays and absences - just like any school fees, fees must be paid for every day that a child is enrolled, including public holidays, and when a child is sick or on holidays.
- A full day's fee is charged regardless of the number of hours your child attends. Fees are required to be paid by Direct Debit. Parents will be informed of any changes to the arrangement of fees payment at least 4 weeks before policy is implemented.
- Invoiced fees are issued at the beginning of every month via email, plus any outstanding balance including additional casual days taken, and CCB adjustments. Parents are asked to keep the centre updated with current details including email address to allow fees to be processed. The centre reserves the right to terminate a child's position at the centre if parents fail to pay childcare fees. Parents are asked to contact the administration team if they have any enquiries or queries about their account
- Any queries in relation to billing are to be directed to the Centre Admin.
- **There may be delay in processing if:**
 1. There is a Public or Bank Holiday on the day of the debit, or any day after the direct debit date is not a banking business day in NSW
 2. Natural Disaster.

Any direct debits that are due on either of the above will be processed on the next business day. Konomi Kindergarten Centre and Ezidebit will not be held responsible for any fees and charges that may be charged by your financial institution, for further advice or clarification discuss with your financial institution.

Priority of Access & Fees

We follow the priority of access guidelines defined by the Family Assistance Office. Refer: Department of Community Services Private Operators Long Day Care Handbook.

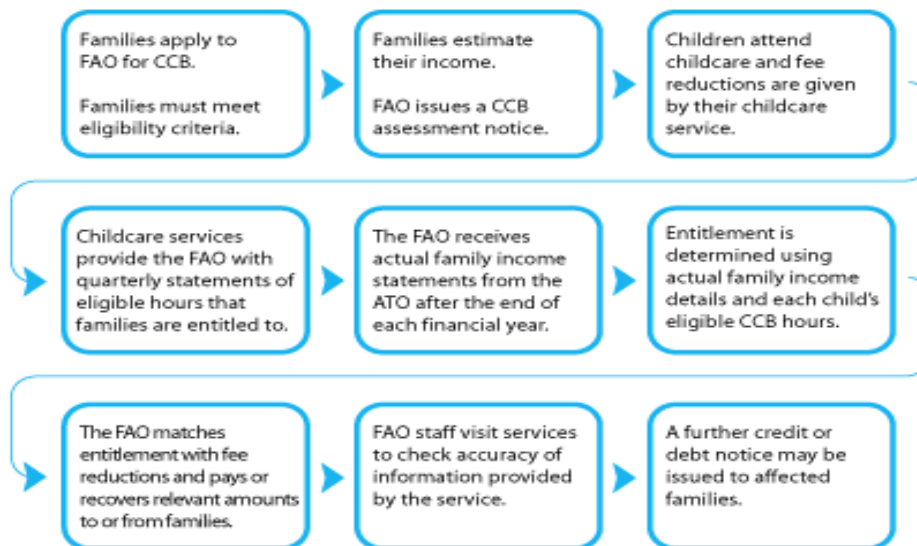
Child Care Benefit as part of on-going fees (CCB)

Child Care Benefit (CCB) will be available to all families as part of fees. Please note: all parents are entitled to some type of childcare benefit. On your child's first day, you will be provided with the centre's Childcare Provider Number (555 000 435T) to allow you to claim CCB as a fee reduction or as a lump sum claim at the end of the financial year.

If parents choose to claim their entitlement from the Government at the end of the financial year in lieu of an ongoing fee reduction, they must apply for a Customer Reference Number (CRN) from the FAO. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure our administration office has the details of their FAO reference number. This CRN uniquely identifies each child and will allow reconciliation of each child's usage of care when parents complete income tax returns at the end of the year.

The centre submits quarterly reports to the FAO for the centre, detailing every child's usage details. Invoices issued by the centre detail the days for which parents are entitled to funding and the amount of CCB funding being provided. Parents are advised to keep invoices/receipts for tax purposes.

Child Care Benefit Overview



Parents' Obligations when Claiming CCB

Parents must inform the FAO as their circumstances change to ensure the funding they receive (either as a fee reduction or as a lump sum) is correct. If for any reason a parent receives more than they are entitled to, the FAO will require repayment of the excess. Conversely, if parents do not receive everything they are entitled to during the year, they will be paid any owed amounts.

Absences & CCB

The Nominated Supervisor will:

Ensure families are regularly reminded of the current numbers of allowable absences allowed under CCB legislation and procedures for claiming additional absence days.

Families will:

- Provide documentation for additional absence days as required. In certain circumstances parents are entitled to the CCB on days when their child is absent from care.

These circumstances are:

- the child would normally have attended on that day, and parents were billed for that day and paid the childcare fee for that day.
- Each child is entitled to 42 Allowable Absence days (referred to by the FAO as Allowable Absences) each financial year and still claim CCB for these days. Once a child has been absent for more than 42 Allowable Absences (across all childcare centres you may use) parents will no longer be entitled to CCB for any additional absences without providing a documented reason. Allowable Absence days can be taken for any reason.

In addition to the 42 Allowable Absence days CCB is also payable for absences taken for the following reasons:

- illness (with a medical certificate)
- non-immunisation
- rostered days off
- rotating shift work
- temporary closure of a school or pupil free days
- public holidays
- periods of local emergency
- court-ordered shared custody
- attendance at preschool

These absence days are called 'Approved Absence Days'. Supporting documentation must be provided if parents wish to claim CCB for an approved absent day

Parents' Responsibilities

Whether claiming CCB as a fee reduction or a lump sum, it is each parent's responsibility to ensure that:

- they only receive the CCB they are entitled to
- they have provided appropriate supporting documentation for Approved Absence Days
- they only receive the CCB when they have correctly signed in and out of the centre each day

Any CCB received by the centre that has been applied to a child's fees and was more than the parent was entitled to will be recovered from parents. Should an FAO audit of Centre records reveal that parents have not signed in and out of the Centre correctly on days when the child attended parents will be required to repay any funding received for these days. It is strongly recommended that parents maintain a diary or some other record of their child's attendance at the centre and any other form of childcare used.

Receipts & CCB

The invoice that parents receive from the Centre details payments made during the previous month and therefore also acts as a receipt. This invoice/receipt will itemise the child's attendance for the period, the amount of Child Care Benefit (CCB) that the parent has claimed and the number of Allowable Absences used for the financial year to date.

It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that the CCB they claim is correct and that the child has not been absent from care for more than the allowable number of days.

Fee declines will be followed up immediately. If fees are not paid before the holding deposit is used to cover fees, the child's position at the centre will be withdrawn. Fees are payable for public holidays which fall on days a child is enrolled as well as days in which your child is unwell or not attending the centre.

Parents must give 20 working days written notice of their intention to withdraw their child from the centre or otherwise alter the child's days of attendance (not including the Christmas closure period). Should families give less than 20 working days written notice, parents are still obliged to pay an amount equivalent to 20 working days of childcare fees.

Dishonoured Payments

Any dishonoured payment transactions will incur a fee of \$11.90 which will be charged directly to the Parent by Ezidebit after 7 days. The transaction fee of \$0.88 (bank account absorbed by Konomi Kindergarten) or 1.87% (Visa/ Master Card) and 4.4% (American Express and Diners) is payable whether the transaction is successful or not also will be charged directly to the parents.

The outstanding balance will be collected prior to the date of next payment manually through direct contact with the family by Centre admin staff. If the family fail to make the payment within the negotiated timeframe, a warning notice detailing the condition will be issued to the family last opportunity to make the outstanding payment within 7 days or the child's enrolment will be cancelled. The deposit is to cover the payment and extra charges.

Debit Resolution Processes

If in the event a Parent/Guardian believes Konomi Kindergarten has debited an amount without authorisation or in error:

1. Parent is to contact the Centre Director immediately.
2. Centre Director is to inform Finance Office immediately.
3. Finance Office is to investigate Direct Debit amount or failed authorisation.
4. Findings to be discussed with Centre Director and Finance Office to discuss findings with Parent/Guardian.
5. If liability is accepted by Konomi Kindergarten for an incorrect Direct Debit amount or failed authorisation, as instructed by the Parent/Guardian the funds will either remain as a credit on the Parent/Guardian account or a refund will be issued by Direct Deposit into a nominated Bank Account within three (3) business days of the completed investigation.

Evaluation of the Policy

Families pay fees on time, and collect children on time. Fees are kept as low as possible whilst ensuring the service's financial health

Sources

Child Care Service Handbook 2011–2012 DEEWR

Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Community Childcare Cooperative Website and model policies

Review of the Policy

Date policy Reviewed: October 2013

Date for next Review: October 2014, earlier if information changes or there is a need for change