Children's Services Fee Policy

Policy Statement

The Y Canberra Region Children's Services provides education and care to children and young people of the ACT and Queanbeyan Region. We are a not-for-profit organisation. We aim to support families through providing appropriate, equitable and non-discriminatory practices in addition to providing a framework that protects the financial viability of our Education and Care programs (OSHC / OOSH and ELC) by ensuring the prompt payment and successful collection of family fees.

Objective

- To ensure The Y Canberra Region provides a financially viable service to the ACT and Queanbeyan Region.
- To provide a fee arrangement assessed by management based on the financial requirements of Children's Services.
- To provide support to families by outlining an efficient fee policy and procedure.
- To provide the relevant information and communication strategies for fee and Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payments.

Policy / Procedure

Fee Allocation
Fees are charged per day, per child and invoiced fortnightly in advance.

Xplor / Debit Success
Xplor is our software system that manages enrolments, bookings, fees and CCS.
Debit Success processes fees owed by collecting funds from a family's bank account.
The Home app enables parents and guardians to securely upload their billing details for the direct debit of their account.

Child Care Subsidy - CCS
The Child Care Subsidy is a payment from the Australian Government to assist with the cost of care.
It is the enrolling parent / guardian's responsibility to ensure any allocated subsidy remains current. If you are informed by Centrelink that your subsidy has ceased, full fees will be charged until a new assessment is processed. The Australian Government requires a formal agreement (Complying Written Agreement CWA) between the family and the child care provider (YMCA) before CCS payments can be approved and paid.
Parents must confirm that the details in their Services Australia account match the CWA submitted by the YMCA's software, Xplor.

Without a signed CWA, we cannot process or link your Subsidy. In this instance full fees will be charged

https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/child-care-subsidy

Additional Child Care Subsidy – ACCS

Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) provides additional fee assistance to support vulnerable or disadvantaged families and children. To receive the ACCS, families must be eligible for the CCS and meet one of the following criteria

- An eligible grandparent getting an income support payment or
- Transitioning from certain income support payments to work or
- Experiencing temporary financial hardship or
- Caring for a child who is vulnerable or at risk of harm, abuse or neglect.

Until the ACCS is approved, the gap fee must be paid for by either the parent/guardian or by a third party. If a third party is to pay, a letter must be provided by the third party prior to the commencement of care.
https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/additional-child-care-subsidy

Allowable Absences

Families can get up to 42 allowable absence days per child each financial year, whereby any eligible CCS will be paid. A reason does not need to be provided. When after 42 allowable absences, CCS will no longer be applied to the days your child is absent.
If you reach your allowable absence limit, you may be able to get additional absences -
https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/child-care-subsidy-if-your-child-absent-from-child-care?context=41186

Supporting documentation (medical certificate / employer letter) to the Centre Director (ELC) or the Customer Care Team (CCT) must be provided for consideration of additional absences.

Children's Services Fee Framework

Upon confirmation of a booking, families are advised of the sessional hours and fee schedule.
Families will have access to the family handbook, safeguarding policy, and e-commitment statement.
OSHC/OOSH families will receive a welcome email confirming their child's booked days and contact details for the service.

Sessional hours are:

ELC –10 hours or 11 hours (10 hours or 10.5 hours Strathnairn)
OSHC / OOSH –
Before School Care (BSC) 7:00am - 9:00am (7:00am -9.30am Sutton), (7:30am - 9:00am Strathnairn).
After School Care (ASC) 3:00pm - 6:00pm.
Vacation Care (VAC) 8:00 am - 6:00pm.

Families' invoices are accessed via the Home app.
Fees are withdrawn via direct debit on Friday (of the Commonwealth Government pay fortnight cycle). If the Friday is a Public Holiday, the direct debit will be withdrawn on the Thursday prior.
Any credit on an account may only be refunded after the CCS has been confirmed and care has ended.

Your invoice can state:

- 5 weeks' fees in total (2 weeks' prior fees, the current week, 2 weeks in advance)
- The Y Canberra Region daily fee amount, CCS, the gap fee and total amount due
- Total allowable absences used over the current financial year.

OSHC/OOSH - Families are advised if your child requires nappies or personal hygiene products that these are not included in the OSHC/OOSH fees and will be required to be supplied to the service.

Your fortnightly fees are payable for the days your child is enrolled, including absences, personal holidays and public holidays.
Public Holidays are not charged in OSHC/OOSH.
Before and After School Care is charged during the school term only.
Vacation Care is charged for school holiday bookings only.

The Y Canberra Region is closed during Christmas and New Year, no fees are charged for these closure days.
Normal Fees apply for Public Holidays.
On occasion, The Y Canberra Region allocates a Staff Professional Development Day. Families will be provided with a minimum of 2 weeks' notice and will not be charged.
In the case of emergency closures, you will be contacted immediately to collect your child. Fees will not be charged/be reduced, to reflect hours of actual opening or fee relief may be provided by official government direction or advice.

The Y Canberra Region conducts a fee structure review twice per financial year in January and June.

The Y Canberra Region Financial Support Options

Direct debit declines:

- If a direct debit is declined, a second direct debit will automatically be actioned.
- If the second direct debit declines, the child's booking will be cancelled effective 6pm on the date of the second decline.
- Debit success retains the right to charge a decline fee. which will be direct debited on the next payment cycle

Financial Support:
The Y Canberra Region is understanding of individual financial circumstances and acknowledges that, at times, additional support may be needed. Families experiencing a substantially reduced capacity to pay child care fees must submit a written application for Financial Hardship Assistance.
Please contact the Customer Care Team Manager on cs.canberra@ymca.org.au to lodge an application for Financial Hardship Assistance.
All payment plans must be finalised within 28 days (2 direct debit cycles). The payment plan will include your ongoing fees plus an amount to clear the debt.

Additional Fees
If your child is not collected prior to the closing time of 6pm, a $5.00 per minute, per child, late fee is charged.
Late fees are not eligible for CCS.

Definitions:

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)
Child Care Subsidy is the main payment to assist eligible families with the cost of child care. It is, with some exceptions, paid directly to the service.
Families make a co-contribution for their child care fees and pay the difference between the fee charged and the subsidy amount (gap fee).

Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS)
The Additional Child Care Subsidy provides extra help with the cost of early childhood education and care to families facing difficult or challenging circumstances.

Customer Reference Number (CRN)
An individual reference number allocated by Centrelink for each child and each parent or guardian who is claiming the Child Care Subsidy.

Early Learning Centres (ELC)
Provide early education and care for children aged between 6 weeks and 5 years

Outside school Hours care (OSHC /OOSH)
Provides before, after school hour and vacation care for school aged children.

Scope
This Policy relates to The Y Canberra Region Children's Services.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review
The Y Canberra Region Fee Policy is reviewed annually or as required

Roles and Responsibilities

Department/Area	Role/Responsibility
Centre Director (ELC) **OSHC / OOSH Bookings Officer**	- will ensure upon enrolment parent / guardians understand financial responsibilities, processes and expectations - will audit enrolment form to ensure all direct debit details are submitted and compliant. - will allocate enrolled sessional hours
Customer Care Team (CCT)	- will support parent / guardians to maintain accounts and fees - will manage the fortnightly fees – OSHC / OOSH and ELC - will audit debt collection on a fortnightly basis and activate any debt collection

Parent / Guardians	- will ensure they provide their direct debit details via Xplor prior to the enrolled start date. - will ensure fees are paid two weeks in advance. - will acknowledge Centre Director, Coordinator or Area Manager are not responsible for accounts / debt collection - will supply CCS details including Customer Reference Numbers (CRN) on their enrolment form. - will sign their CWA (if relevant) prior to enrolment start date - will collect their child by the closure time

Supporting Documents

Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011 SI 653)
https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2011-0653

Education and Care National Law Act 2010
https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2011-42/
https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2011-0653

Child Care Subsidy Services Australia
https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/child-care-subsidy

The Y Canberra Region Family Handbook
The Y Canberra Region Children Services Enrolment, Induction and Orientation Policy