



FEE POLICY

POLICY STATEMENTS

- Stepping Stone (SA) Childcare & Early Development Centres Pty. Ltd. aim to provide a quality education and care service to families at an affordable price.
- Account Holder details will remain confidential and be stored appropriately. Individual families may access their own records at any time.

PROCEDURE

Setting of Fees

- The operational budget is reviewed annually (or at the discretion of management) to determine the level of income required to meet the Centre's ongoing operational expenses for the ensuing year / period. The child care fees are reviewed to ensure that the service is able to continue to meet its operational expenses.
- Fees are subject to change and may vary from time to time.

On Enrolment

- All families must sign the Enrolment (CWA) Form and Fee Policy where indicated, as confirmation of acceptance of the terms and conditions regulating the payment of fees.
- **An upfront payment of \$50.00 per child is required on enrolment. If you elect not to commence care this will be retained to cover the administrative costs incurred, however if you do commence care this amount will be used as a payment towards your Bond.**
- A bond equal to 2 weeks of your child care fees less your Child Care Subsidy (CCS) entitlement is required to be paid upfront before commencement of care. The bond will be adjusted as your care arrangements change, fees increase and/or Child Care Subsidy changes. The bond is reflected on your weekly tax invoice.

Payment of Fees

- Tax invoices are issued weekly and will be emailed directly to you. If you would like a paper copy of your tax invoice, please speak to your Centre Director.
- Fees are due 1 week after commencement of care and must continue to be paid **in full** weekly or fortnightly as per payment cycle.
- Families may transfer between our various Stepping Stone (SA) Centres, however all outstanding fees need to be paid in full prior to transferring across to the new centre.

Note: All fees must be paid within the week the payment is due.

Bond

- The bond will be adjusted as your care arrangements change, fees increase and/or CCS changes.
- In the event that you leave the centre and have provided us with at least 2 weeks' notice in writing to cancel your child's care, your bond will be refunded to cover the cost of your final 2 weeks of care providing your fees are up to date. Please ask your Centre Director for a 'Leaving Care' form or you can download this from our website under 'Parent Resources' (www.steppingstonesa.com.au).
- If you choose to withdraw from care and have not provided the 2 weeks' notice or any part thereof in writing, you will be liable for 2 weeks care at full fees. Your bond will be retained in lieu of the notice.

Receipting of Fees

- Manual receipts will be issued for all payments made directly at the centre and are to be kept as proof of payment.
- Your tax invoice will display the amount you have paid.
- Fees may be paid at any time during operating hours. Families may pay by direct bank transfer, EFTPOS, Credit card or Manual Credit card. **(AMEX and DINERS cards are NOT accepted)**

Receipting of Fees (continued)

- If paying over the internet, the reference must show the account name and the service your child attends. If in the event an internet payment does not display the correct reference, all fees levied by the bank/credit union etc to trace the remitter details, will be charged back to the account holder/person responsible for fee payment.

Non Payment of Fees / Debt Management Procedure

- Families who have outstanding fees will in the first instance be approached by their Centre Director and/or Assistant Director requesting immediate payment.
- In the event of non-payment of outstanding fees, or failure to make contact with your Centre Director and/or Assistant Director, your child's care will be suspended and the outstanding fees referred to the Magistrates Court.
- All costs associated with recovering the outstanding fees, including but not limited to, court fees or any other fees will be for the responsibility of the account holder.
- If a debt is referred to the Magistrates Court, the account holder is at risk of having that debt recorded against their Credit Rating.
- If care is cancelled, families will not be able to use any Stepping Stone (SA) Centre until the outstanding fees are paid in full.
- On the second occasion a family allows their account to become overdue without negotiating alternative arrangements with their Centre Director, the child/ren will be permanently excluded from all Stepping Stone (SA) Childcare & Early Development Centres.

Fees for Absences

- **Absent due to Sickness or day off.**
 - ❖ Normal fees will apply.
 - ❖ The number of absences your child has used in the current financial year can be found on your tax invoice.
- **Absent with prior written notification stipulating all dates child/ren will be absent from the centre** e.g. operation, family holidays etc.
 - ❖ For a discounted rate to apply, the child/ren must be absent for a minimum of one operating week.
 - ❖ In the case of Annual Leave the Centre Director will apply a discounted rate for up to a maximum of 4 weeks. Any holidays above 4 weeks will be charged at full fee.
 - ❖ In exceptional circumstances, where a family requires extended leave, the family should discuss their options with their Centre Director.
- **Absent due to Public Holiday.**
 - ❖ Normal fees will apply.
- **Absent due to Christmas Closure (EXCLUDING Public Holidays):** The Centre may be closed for a nominated period of time between Christmas Eve and New Year. In this event, notification will be provided in advance. No charge will be incurred by families for the nominated closure days.
- **Centre closure due to a Catastrophic event**
 - ❖ Normal fees will apply for any booked sessions.

Permanent Change to Bookings

- Two (2) weeks' notice is required in writing to change bookings. A form is available from the Centre Director and/or Assistant Director.

Extra Bookings

- Accounts must be up to date before extra bookings will be accepted.
- Extra bookings must be requested in writing.

Casual Bookings

- Casual bookings are accepted (*if vacancies are available*) and **MUST** be paid for when dropping your child off.
- 48 hours notice must be given to cancel any pre-arranged casual bookings or full fees will apply.

Confirming Enrolments

- All new enrolments must be confirmed through the mygov website or app.
- When enrolling your child/ren at the centre, the account holder will receive an enrolment notification via the mygov website or app, which will need to be confirmed **prior** to your child/ren commencing care.
- If you do not confirm your child/rens enrolment, you will not receive any CCS and will be charged at full fee.
- If you disagree with the details of your child/rens enrolment, please speak directly to your Centre Director. If your child commences care or continues care whilst their enrolment is disputed you will not receive any CCS and will be charged at full fee.

Drop off or Pick up Outside of Session Times

- If your child is booked in for a 10 hour session and exceeds the 30 minute grace period (eg. is present in the centre between the hours of 6:30am-7:00am and/or 6:00pm-6:30pm) an admin fee will be applied to your account for each period that you are outside of the session times.
- Admin fees will be applied for any times that exceed the nominated session hours.

After Hours Collection

- Late fees will be charged when children remain at the centre after 6:30pm. Any part of the first 15 minutes will be at a fee of \$50.00 per child and then at a rate of \$2.00 per minute, per child; except at the discretion of the Centre Director and under exceptional circumstances.

Finalising care arrangements

- Two weeks' notice is to be provided in writing if you wish to cancel care. This is the only accepted method of notification. Please ask your Centre Director for a 'Leaving Care' form or you can download this from our website under 'Parent Resources' (www.steppingstonesa.com.au).
- You are responsible for ensuring your account is finalised before the last day of attendance.
- In the event that your child is absent for any days prior to and including the last day of care you will not be able to claim CCS and will be liable for full fees.
- The bond will be withheld if you choose to withdraw from care and have not provided the 2 weeks' notice or any part thereof in writing and you will be liable for the full fees in lieu of notice.
- If your child is absent for 2 weeks without notification to the centre your child's care will be cancelled, the bond forfeited and full fees will be applied.

Difficulties with payment of Fees

- If you are experiencing financial hardship or a change to your family circumstances which affects your ability to pay your child care fees please feel free to talk to your Centre Director.
- Additional support may be available from Centrelink.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

- Assistance with the cost of fees is available from Centrelink. For further information please call on 136 150 or visit their website <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/centrelink>
- It is your responsibility to ensure that you have applied and have been approved for CCS prior to the commencement of care. Please note; if your child starts care without this approval you will be liable for full fees pending receipt of CCS.
- Your tax invoice will display the amount of CCS being received and deducted from the full fee.
- Where arrival and departure times on digital attendance records have not been entered and verified by the Parent/Guardian, the family is at risk of losing their CCS entitlements. In the event that this occurs the family is liable for the full fee for the day/s where the digital signature has not been recorded/verified.
- It is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian to ensure the information supplied is accurate at all times.
- CCS will only be applied if your child's immunisation is current. It is the families' responsibility to ensure the immunisation schedule is followed and to follow up with Centrelink in the event that CCS is withdrawn for this reason.

The South Australian Public Health Act 2011 ('the Act') requires Early Childhood Services to keep a copy of all immunisation records (Immunisation History Statement) provided for each child enrolled in or attending that centre and for the period of the child's enrolment.

Child Care Subsidy (continued)

- CCS cannot be claimed for the late collection fees or admin fees.
- During care, if your CCS payment is cancelled, then it is the account holder's responsibility to follow through with Centrelink. During this time regular payments are still required. If the matter is not resolved in a timely manner, the account holder will be required to contact Centrelink in the presence of the Centre Director who will assist in resolving the matter.

Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS)

- Assistance with the cost of fees is available from Centrelink.
- Types of payments under the ACCS:
 - ❖ Additional Child Care Subsidy – Child wellbeing
 - ❖ Additional Child Care Subsidy – Grandparent
 - ❖ Additional Child Care Subsidy – Temporary financial hardship
 - ❖ Additional Child Care Subsidy – Transition to work
- It is your responsibility to ensure that you have been approved for ACCS. This can be done via your Centrelink online account. Please note; if your child starts care or is in care without this approval you will be liable for full fees (less any approved CCS) pending receipt of ACCS.

For further information, contact the Centre Director at your service.

PAYMENT OF FEES BY ELECTRONIC TRANSFER OR DIRECT CREDIT

Stepping Stone (SA) Childcare & Early Development Centres Pty. Ltd recognises that it is often convenient for families to pay their fees by Internet Banking or in person at a local Bank branch.

We are happy for families to use this method of payment but we request that you ensure that your payment details meet our requirements. As we operate only one bank account it is imperative that we know which of our Centres needs to be credited with the payment.

Could you therefore please ensure that your Electronic Transfer or Direct Credit appears on our Bank Statement with the following details:

- The **Account Name** shown on your account (**not the child's name**)
- The **Location** of the centre your family uses

E.g. **K Smith MV**

Kylie Smith at Morphett Vale

Our Bank details are shown on the top of your tax invoice, but we have repeated them below for your convenience.

Account Name: Stepping Stone (SA) Childcare & Early Development Centres P/L

BSB: 105-900

Account No: 158395540

Lodgement Ref: Account Name & Centre location (as example above)

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to talk to your Centre Director.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Management

Stepping Stone (SA) Childcare & Early Development Centres Pty Ltd

FEE POLICY ACCEPTANCE

Method of payment:

- Eftpos
- Internet Banking Transfer
- Manual Credit Card
- Other:

1. I have read and accept the fee policy and procedures.
2. I have negotiated with the Centre Director to pay my fees WEEKLY / FORTNIGHTLY (please circle)
3. I am aware of the consequences for the non-payment of fees as agreed herein.
4. I am aware of the Bond requirements, and agree to the conditions as set out in the fee policy.
5. I am aware that in the event an internet payment does not display the correct reference, all fees levied by the bank/credit union etc to trace the remitter details, will be charged back to the account holder/person responsible for fee payment.
6. I am aware that it is my responsibility to ensure the approval of CCS prior to commencement of care. In the event that CCS is not approved I will pay full fees until CCS is approved and received.
7. I am aware that it is my responsibility to ensure the approval of ACCS prior to commencement of care. In the event that ACCS is not approved I will pay full fees until ACCS is approved and received.
8. I am aware if I wish to cancel my child/s care I need to provide the Centre with at least 2 weeks' notice in writing.
9. I understand that any changes to my child/s bookings must be requested in writing.
10. I understand that the fees are subject to change and may vary from time to time.

Parent/Guardian Name (linked to CCS):

Parent/Guardian Signed: Date: / /