



Occasional Care Guide

Rationale

Occasional Care provides children an environment that encourages development of social, language and developmental skills. It supports children to practice separating from families for short periods. It also supports families to participate in activities such as appointments and wellbeing.

Availability

Occasional Care sessions are provided for up to four children under-two years of age, and for up to eight children two years or over. They are offered as funding and staffing permits on days and times that meet the needs of the community. These needs are reassessed each term. Occasional Care will generally operate at the same time as preschool session. All sessions are operated by qualified staff.

All enrolled families are provided with an opportunity to indicate preferences for care sessions prior to the commencement of each term. Parents/caregivers may book a child/ren in for one session of care at a time, unless the director deems there are special circumstances requiring additional sessions, or where the care places are not being utilised. Accessibility to more than one session of care per week is to be through casual bookings and is not deemed a regular booking.

Priority of Access

Priority of access to Occasional Care sessions is based on:

- Children who are or have been in care
- Children at risk of serious abuse and neglect
- Aboriginal children
- Children in families that include a person with a disability or health condition that impacts upon their parenting
- Children with a disability or additional needs
- Children in socially isolated families.

Where there are competing demands for Occasional Care places, the site leader will need to balance the priority guidelines with any difficulties the family may have in accessing other children's services.

Occasional Care Fees

Fees are set and reviewed by the Department for Education and Children's Services. If a family can produce a health care card they are entitled to a reduced fee. Fees are charged on a sessional basis and payment is to be made on the day of care, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Income evidence must be sighted at least once in a 12 month period. Copies are not to be retained by the Centre. A family's financial information including income levels shall be managed in a confidential



manner at all times.

The fee level applicable at the start of a term will apply for the whole term. In the instances that the level changes during a term, then the lower level will apply for the whole term for reporting purposes, i.e. a family present with a concession card in week 5 of term then the level 1 fee is applied for the whole term including weeks 1 to 4.

The DFE Occasional Care program is not an approved service for Child Care Benefit (CCB). Therefore families accessing the service cannot claim CCB or Child Care Tax Rebate (CCTR).

Sibling Fees

Families with more than one child enrolled receive a 50% reduction of the fee for the second and any subsequent children attending in the same term.

Non-Attendance

Fees will be charged for all booked sessions including those not attended unless the place is filled from the current waiting list.

References

DFE (2024) *Occasional Care Program Procedure*.

<https://edi.sa.edu.au/library/document-library/shared/occasional-care-program-procedure.pdf>

These provide more detailed information and Copies are available from the Ardtornish Children's Centre.