



**Parkdale Preschool Association
Policy Document**

Policy No. AO1-07-00	Title: Fees
	Function: Administration and Operations
	Review Cycle: 12 months

Document/Revision History

Policy Revision #	Issue Date	Description of Changes	Superseded Document #

Purpose

This policy will provide a clear set of guidelines for:

- The setting, payment and collection of fees
- Ensuring the viability of **Parkdale Preschool** by setting appropriate fee charges
- Equitable and non-discriminatory application of fees across the programs provided.

Policy statement

Values

Parkdale Preschool is committed to:

- Providing responsible financial management of the centre, which includes establishing fees that will result in a financially viable centre while keeping user fees at the lowest possible level
- Providing a fair and manageable system for dealing with the non-payment and/or inability to pay fees/outstanding debts
- Ensuring there are no financial barriers for families wishing to access an early childhood program for their child/ren
- Maintaining confidentiality in relation to the financial circumstances of parents/guardians
- Advising users of the centre about how the programs are funded, including government support and parent fees
- Providing equitable access for families eligible for the kindergarten fee subsidy.

Scope

This policy applies to staff, the committee and to parents/guardians whose child/ren is/are attending, or who wish to enrol a child at **Parkdale Preschool**.

Background and legislation

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) provides per capita funding as a contribution towards the costs of providing the four-year-old kindergarten program. Income from other sources, primarily fees, is required to meet all the additional costs incurred by the service in the delivery of the children's program. In addition, the kindergarten fee subsidy enables eligible families to attend the four-year-old kindergarten program at no cost, or a minimal cost.

Funding is also available to eligible three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection, to access ten hours of kindergarten in the funded program; where there is a shortage of places, they may access a three-year-old program free of charge. There is no other funding available for the three-year-old program.

The DEECD requires that funded centres have in place, and communicate to families, a comprehensive written fees policy:

- The Fee schedules ([Attachments 7](#) and [8](#)) detail the fees charged by the centre and the arrangements for the payment of fees, as required under regulations 40(1)(e) and 41(2)(b) of the Children's Services Regulations 2009.

The *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria update* outlines the criteria to be covered in the policy.

Relevant legislation may include but is not limited to:

- Children's Services Regulations 2009 (CSR)
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 1995*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

Definitions

Commonwealth Child Care Benefit (CCB): Child Care Benefit is a Commonwealth Government payment to help families who use either approved or registered childcare. All eligible families can receive some Child Care Benefit.

Approved care: Care provided by a service provider that has been approved by the Family Assistance Office to receive Child Care Benefit payments on behalf of eligible families. Most long day care, family day care, before- and after-school care are approved childcare providers.

Registered care: Care provided by nannies, grandparents, relatives or friends, kindergartens, occasional care centres and outside school hours care centres that are registered with the Family Assistance Office. Eligible families can receive some reimbursement of costs when using a registered care provider.

DVA Gold Card: A Department of Veterans' Affairs health card for all conditions for Australian veterans.

Enrolment application fee: A payment to cover administrative costs associated with the enrolment application of a child for a place in a program at the centre.

Excursion/entertainment/centre event charge: An additional charge required to meet the cost of special events or excursions that occur in response to emerging children's program needs. Events that are planned ahead and are included as an expenditure item in the centre's budget do not incur an additional charge. (Refer to the Excursions/centre events policy for further details.)

Fees: A charge for a place within a program at the centre.

Kindergarten fee deposit: A charge to secure a place that has been offered in a program at the centre. This is deducted from Term 4 fees upon attendance at a working bee.

Health care card: A Commonwealth Government entitlement for low-income earners (incorporating the foster child health care card, the ex-carer allowance (child) health care card and the low-income health care card).

Kindergarten fee subsidy (KFS): A state government subsidy paid directly to the funded organisation to enable eligible families to attend a funded kindergarten program or funded three-year-old place at no cost (or minimal cost)

Kindergarten fee subsidy—fees policy: Provides operational guidelines for funded organisations providing a kindergarten program, in administering the kindergarten fee subsidy.

Kindergarten program: A universal early childhood educational program, funded by the state government, for children in the year prior to commencing primary school.

Late-collection charge: A charge that may be imposed by the committee when parents/guardians are late to collect their child/ren from the program (see Attachment 1, 'Setting fees and other charges')

Other charges: A charge for items not directly related to the provision of the children's program, such as sun hats.

Refundable levy: A payment that is refunded on participation in a specific activity, such as a working bee.

Retained (non-refundable) levy: A charge that covers the cost of replacing volunteer labour with paid labour/services.

Three-year-old kindergarten: An unfunded program for three-year-old children provided by an early childhood teacher.

Visas A–F: Bridging visas for asylum seekers.

Visas 447, 451, 785 and 786: Temporary Commonwealth Protection/Humanitarian visas.

Visas 200–217: Temporary Commonwealth refugee and special humanitarian visas.

Voluntary parent/guardian contribution: A voluntary payment for items not directly related to the provision of the children's program. The voluntary contribution is not a condition of attending the centre.

Sources and related centre policies

Sources

- *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria, update 2008*
- DEECD 2008, *Kindergarten fee subsidy—fees policy*
- The centre's constitution
- Child Care Services Handbook

Centre policies

- Complaints and grievances
- Delivery and collection of children
- Enrolment
- Excursion/centre events
- Inclusion and equity
- Privacy
- Program participation

Procedures

The committee is responsible for:

- Ensuring that this policy is based on the principles of the *Kindergarten fee subsidy—fees policy*
- Implementing and reviewing this policy, in consultation with the parents/guardians and staff and in line with the requirements of the DEECD *Victorian kindergarten, policy, procedures and funding criteria*

- Developing a fee policy that balances the capacity of parent's capability to pay, providing a high-quality program and maintaining service viability
- Considering any issues regarding fees that may be a barrier to families enrolling at **Parkdale preschool** and removing those barriers wherever possible
- Considering options for payment when affordability is an issue for families—for example, payment 'in kind' or accessing grants, such as foundations and service clubs
- Clearly communicating this policy and payment options to families in a culturally sensitive way in the family's first language where possible
- Setting fees according to the guidelines outlined in [Attachment 1](#), 'Setting fees and other charges', of this policy
- Providing a copy the Fee schedules ([Attachments 7](#) and [8](#)), to all parents/guardians upon enrolment of their child and making the Fees policy readily accessible at the centre (CSR r40[1f] and 41b)
- Collecting and receipting all fees as per the guidelines outlined in [Attachments 3](#) and [4](#) of this policy
- Documenting the type of concession card and expiry date of eligible concession card holders
- Complying with the centre's Privacy policy in regard to any information it receives relating to the financial situation of parents/guardians and the payment/non-payment of fees
- Notifying parents/guardians within twenty-eight days of any changes to the arrangements for the payment of fees (CSR, r42)
- Ensuring a notice outlining the fees charged by **Parkdale Preschool** is displayed prominently in the main entrance to **Parkdale Preschool** as required by CSR r40f.

The staff are responsible for:

- Informing the committee of any complaints or concerns that have been raised regarding the fees at the centre
- Referring parents'/guardians' questions in relation to this policy to the **Parkdale Preschool**
- Assisting the **Parkdale Preschool** as required in sighting supporting documentation for parents'/guardians' eligibility to access the kindergarten fee subsidy.

The parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Reading the Fee schedules ([Attachments 7](#) and [8](#))
- Signing and complying with the Fee payment agreement form ([Attachments 5](#) and [6](#))
- Notifying the contact person if experiencing difficulties with the payment of fees
- Providing the required documentation to enable the service to claim the kindergarten fee subsidy for eligible families.

Evaluation

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes, the committee will:

- Assess the effectiveness of the payment options and procedures for the collection of fees

- Review the current budget to determine fee income requirements
- Take into account feedback from staff and parents/guardians regarding the policy
- Monitor complaints and incidents regarding the policy
- Review the number of families experiencing financial hardship and the effectiveness of the procedures for late payment and support offered
- Monitor the number of families/children excluded from the centre because of the non-payment of fees.

Attachments

[Attachment 1](#): Setting fees and other charges

[Attachment 2](#): Subsidies and discounts

[Attachment 3](#): Invoicing, receipting and collection of fees

[Attachment 4](#): Procedures for late payments/refunds

[Attachment 5](#): Fee payment agreement—four-year-old (funded) kindergarten program

[Attachment 6](#): Fee payment agreement—three-year-old kindergarten program

[Attachment 7](#): Fee schedule—four-year-old (funded) kindergarten program

[Attachment 8](#): Fee schedule—three-year-old kindergarten program

Authorisation

This policy was adopted by the **Parkdale Preschool** committee of management at a committee meeting on.

Review date: 17/NOV/2010

Setting fees and other charges

1. Fees

As part of the budget development process, the committee sets fees for the programs for the following year (prior to letters of offer being sent out), taking into consideration:

- Funding requirement to provide a minimum of ten hours per week (four-year-old program)
- Funding requirement to provide eligible concession card holders with access to ten hours per week of the funded kindergarten program at no cost
- Financial viability
- Fees charged by similar centres in the area
- Level of government funding, including the kindergarten fee subsidy, provided for the program
- Availability of other income sources, such as grants
- Capacity of parents/guardians to pay
- Reasonable expenditure, ensuring agreed program quality/standards
- Requirements of the *Kindergarten fee subsidy—fees policy*.

2. Payment options and procedures

The committee will regularly review the payment options and procedures to ensure that they are inclusive and sensitive to families' cultures and financial situations. Procedures for payment will be flexible and clearly communicated to all families.

3. Refundable levies

The committee is committed to making early childhood education affordable for all families and providing families with access to the full benefit of state and Commonwealth subsidies. Refundable levies will only be introduced if necessary and in accordance with details in this policy.

A refundable levy may be introduced when the committee identifies an opportunity to replace paid labour with voluntary labour. Payment will be refunded to parents/guardians on participation in specified activities. A range of specified activities will be offered to enable families with different time availability, skills and interests to access the refund. This is not intended to be a barrier to participation and families experiencing difficulties with this should discuss any issues with the finance officer.

The committee will review annually the application of any refundable levies as defined in this policy.

4. Fundraising

Fundraising is important: it pays for additional/expensive items while bringing together families and the wider community. Participation in fundraising is voluntary; however, the support of every family evens the load.

The committee will ensure that fundraising income is kept separate from the centre's operating budget, and that families will be informed about expenditure of fundraising income.

5. Notification of fee changes during the year

Fees set for the year would only be reviewed in extraordinary circumstances; for example, if attendance rates fall below the budget 'break even' point. Parents/guardians will be given notice one term in advance of any required fee increase. Parents/guardians will be provided an option of requesting a payment plan.

Kindergarten fee deposit

A deposit fee of \$100 is payable when an offer for a place in a program is provided in order to secure the place. This deposit is NOT refundable or transferable under any circumstances and will be deducted from the fourth term fees if a family has participated in one or more working bees during Term 1, 2 or 3.

During Term 4, a cheque will be forwarded to:

- Families who complete a Term 4 working bee and have paid their fourth term fees in full
- Families who have chosen to pay their fees up front and have participated in one or more working bees during the year.

An option for families to donate this deposit to the kindergarten is available.

Subsidies and discounts

Kindergarten fee subsidy

Children attending the four-year-old (funded) kindergarten program are eligible for the kindergarten fee subsidy (KFS) if the parent/guardian/or the child has a:

- Commonwealth Health Care Card
- Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card
- Asylum-seeker Bridging Visas A–F
- Visas 200–217
- Temporary Protection Visas 447, 451, 785, 786
- Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card.

Or the child:

- Is identified on the birth certificate as a triplet or quadruplet
- The other two or three children on the birth certificate are attending a funded kindergarten program.

To obtain the KFS, supporting documentation *must* be sighted by the finance officer prior to or at the commencement of Term 1 or when the child becomes eligible. The type of concession card and expiry date will be recorded on the child's file. Further documentation will be required upon the expiry of the card to maintain eligibility.

Note: Due to privacy reasons, unique identifiers such as concession card numbers will not be recorded.

Child Care Benefit—Registered care (CCB)

The **Parkdale Preschool** is a registered care provider and parents/guardians can claim CCB for the three- and four-year-old programs, providing they meet the Family Assistance Office (FAO) work/training/study test. The rate is set by the Commonwealth Government and is claimed directly by parents/guardians from the FAO. Claims can only be made after fees have been paid in full. A CCB receipt will be issued upon request by the centre at the end of each term.

Parents/guardians can access information at www.familyassist.gov.au, or contact the local FAO.

Invoicing, receipting and collection of fees

Fee information will be provided to parents/guardians with the information sent to parents prior to enrolment. Fee information provided will include:

- Fee payment agreement ([Attachments 5](#) and [6](#))
- Fee schedule ([Attachments 7](#) and [8](#)).

Procedure for fees collection

The annual fee will be invoiced in five periods:

- On acceptance of a place, the kindergarten fee deposit invoice will be issued
- At the start of each year an invoice for Term 1 fees will be issued
- Terms 2, 3 and 4 as outlined in step 4 below.
 1. Fees notices are to be distributed on the third last Friday of the term, to be due for payment by the last week of that term. The exception is term 1 when fees are due the first week.
 2. Families commencing at the centre at other times will be invoiced with payment terms of two weeks from the commencement date.
 3. All families, including those eligible for the kindergarten fee subsidy, will receive an invoice detailing the charges for the period invoiced and the amount owing (if any).
 4. Invoices not collected from pockets will be sent by mail to parents/guardians.
 5. All fees will be collected by the finance officer.

Method of payment

Details of payment will be specified on the invoice: payment can be made by cheque, money order, direct debit using the internet, or by direct deposit at a branch of the Bendigo Bank. Payments or direct debit notifications are to be deposited into the **fee box inside the kindergarten**.

Issue of receipts

Receipts will be provided on request. The receipt for Term 1 fees will be sent by mail; and for the remaining terms, placed in each Childs pocket.

Receipts for claiming Child Care Benefit—will be provided at the end of Term 2 and term 4.

Late enrolments

For children enrolled after the commencement of Term 1, an invoice will be issued pro rata, the child is able to commence the program immediately and the fee invoice will need to be paid in full within fourteen days of commencement.

Children turning three during the year

Payment in full from the first day of Term 1 will apply if a place is reserved for a child. Children can commence the program when they have turned three. Procedures for late payments/refunds

Procedures for late payments/refunds

Difficulty in paying fees

Parents/guardians experiencing difficulty in paying fees are requested to contact the finance officer to arrange suitable alternative payment arrangements, such as an instalment plan.

Late payment/non-payment of fees procedure

If the parents/guardians have not communicated the reasons for late or non-payment of fees, the following procedures will be implemented:

Step 1: A written reminder notice will be sent after **2 weeks** of the due date stating fees are overdue, giving ten working days for payment. A copy of the current fees policy summary will be included and support options available. A copy of this letter will be kept on file. The letter will encourage the parents/guardians to contact finance officer. If contact is made, a record of the conversation will be recorded, a copy sent to the parents/guardians (if required) and a copy placed on file.

Step 2: If payment has not been received by the specified date or no contact has been made with the finance officer, the parents/guardians will be contacted by telephone to discuss alternative payment options and to develop an agreed payment plan. Minutes of contact/conversation will be kept on file. If a payment plan is agreed on, both parties will sign the agreed plan and a copy will be given to the parents/guardians and placed on file.

Step 3: If the parents/guardians fail to make a payment, the committee will issue a second and final letter, requesting full payment within 10 working days, or attendance at a meeting to discuss alternative payment options (as per Step 2). The letter will be sent by registered mail and will include information on support options available.

Step 4: If the parents/guardians continue with the non-payment of fees, the committee will continue to offer the parents/guardians support and assistance as per available options outlined in the 'Fees policy'.

Step 5: If the payment plan drawn up and signed by both parties is not adhered to, the follow-up process will commence at Step 2.

Step 6: If, at the committee's discretion, a decision is made to withdraw the child's place at the centre, the parents/guardians will be provided fourteen days' notice by registered mail.

The finance officer and any committee involved will ensure the Privacy policy of the centre is complied with and staff will not be involved in any stage of this process. Staff may be consulted on a child's attendance rates and any other information required for the finance officer to fulfil their role. The finance officer and any other committee members involved will ensure the centre's Privacy policy is complied with in relation to the family's financial/personal situation.

Debt recovery

The committee reserves the right to take action to recover debts owing to the centre. This can include the engagement of debt collectors. Using a debt collector will be considered as a final

option after attempts to implement other payment procedures have been offered.

Refund of fees

Fees are non-refundable. Refunds/pro rata refunds apply only in the following cases:

1. Fees and Deposits are not refundable under any circumstances including but not limited to the following circumstances; child's short-term illness; public holidays; family holiday during operational times; closure of the centre for one or more days when a qualified staff member is absent and a qualified reliever is not available; closure of the centre for staff training days; or closure of the centre in extreme and unavoidable circumstances.
2. If a family becomes eligible for the kindergarten fee subsidy during a term, a full refund of the applicable term fees (and fee deposit for Term 1) will be provided. Note that fees may apply for programs offered for more than ten hours per week.
3. On commencement of Term 1, no partial refunds for term fees will be available (except as applied in point 2 above). If the child leaves before the end of the term, no pro-rata refund will be available for that term. Written notice of departure is required prior to the invoicing period for the next term.
4. The committee may consider a partial refund in exceptional circumstances. Applications for a refund must be in writing and must clearly outline the reasons why the child ceased to attend the centre. Any refund will be at the discretion of the committee and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. An administration fee may be applied.



Fee payment agreement 2011

Four-year-old (funded) kindergarten program

Please complete this form and return it to **Parkdale Preschool** by **17 November 2010**.

Fee payment contract

Given name of child: _____

Parent's/guardian's full name: _____

- I/we acknowledge that the four-year-old kindergarten program is partly funded by the state government, with the balance of the funds coming from fees paid by parents/guardians.
- I/we understand that I/we are only entitled to obtain the kindergarten fee subsidy while I/we have a current Health Care Card/Pensioner Concession Card/Visas 200–217/447/451/786/785, Bridging Visas A–F, Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Gold Card, Temporary Protection/Humanitarian Visas 447, 451,785 or 786, Asylum-seekers Bridging Visas A–F, Refugee or Special Humanitarian Visas 200–217, or have triplets or quadruplets attending a funded kindergarten program. If my/our eligibility lapses, then full payment of fees is required from the beginning of the following term.
- I/we agree to pay fees by the due date on the invoice.
- I/we understand that term fees are non-refundable.
- I/we acknowledge that if fees are not paid by the due date, the committee will implement the Fees policy late payment of fees procedures, which could result in the cancellation of my child's place at the centre.
- I/we agree that if our financial circumstances change and I/we are unable to pay as agreed, we will immediately notify the **Director or the Finance Officer** to discuss alternative payment options.
- I/we acknowledge that I/we have received and read the centre's Fee policy summary, which sets out the procedure for fee payment.

Kindergarten fee subsidy

Please indicate if you are eligible for one of the following concessions:

Health Care Card Pensioner Concession Card Visas 200–217/447/451/786/785

Bridging Visas A–F DVA Gold Card Asylum-seeker Bridging Visas A–F,

Temporary Protection/Humanitarian Visas 447, 451,785 or 786

Refugee or Special Humanitarian Visas 200–217 Triplets or Quadruplets

Supporting documentation will need to be sighted at commencement at **Parkdale Pre-school** by the **Director or Finance Officer** and on expiry. If your eligible card status changes over the year, please advise the centre and you will be invoiced for any outstanding amount.

Signed (parent/guardian): _____ Date: _____

Note: Invoices, receipts and collection of fees will be in accordance with the **Parkdale Pre-school Fees** policy.



Fee payment agreement 2011

Three-year-old kindergarten program

Please complete this form and return it to **Parkdale Pre-school** by **17 November 2010**.

Fee payment contract

Given name of child: _____

Parent's/guardian's full name: _____

- I/we acknowledge that the three-year-old kindergarten program is not funded by the state government and that the centre cannot operate without receiving fees.
- I/we agree to pay fees by the due date on the invoice.
- I/we acknowledge that if fees are not paid within ten working days of the due date, the committee will implement the Fees policy late payment of fees procedures, which could result in the cancellation of my child's place at the centre.
- I/we understand that term fees are non-refundable.
- I/we agree that if our financial circumstances change and I/we are unable to pay as agreed, we will immediately notify the **Director or Finance Officer** to discuss alternative payment options.
- I/we acknowledge that I/we have received and read the centre's Fee policy summary, which sets out the procedures for fee payment.

Signed (parent/guardian): _____ Date: _____

Note: Invoices, receipts and collection of fees will be in accordance with the **Parkdale Preschool** Fees policy.



Fee schedule 2011

Four-year-old (funded) kindergarten fees

Hours: 11/11.5 hours per week

	Fees (\$)
Fee deposit	100.00
Term 1	255.00
Term 2	250.00
Term 3	250.00
Term 4	150.00
Total	1020.00

Payment of fees

Invoices will be issued **per term** and must be paid by the due date.

Kindergarten fee deposit

Parents/guardians are required to pay the fee deposit on offer of a place. This payment is retained as kindergarten fees. The amount will be deducted from term 4 fees. Payment will secure the child's place in the funded kindergarten program.

Kindergarten fee subsidy

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development provides a kindergarten fee subsidy when a parent/guardian or child holds a current Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card, Temporary Protection/Humanitarian Visas 447, 451,785 or 786, Asylum-seeker Bridging Visas A–F or Refugee or Special Humanitarian Visas 200–217 and families with triplets/quadruplets attending a funded kindergarten program in the same year. The subsidy is paid to the funded organisation to directly reduce fees paid by families, making the kindergarten program free or a minimal cost for eligible families. The supporting documentation must be sighted prior to the start of each term or when the family becomes eligible by the Director or Finance Officer. Note that the original or certified birth certificates of triplets/quadruplets must be sighted. Receipt of this subsidy means that eligible families will not be required to make fee payments for ten hours of kindergarten.

Child Care Benefit

The Commonwealth Government provides Child Care Benefit—Registered care to families who meet the work/training/study test. The amount payable is set by the government and is claimed directly by parents/guardians from the Family Assistance Office. Claims can only be made after fees have been paid in full. A Child Care Benefit receipt will be issued by the centre upon request.

Late-collection charge

The committee reserves the right to implement a late collection of children charge when parents/guardians are frequently late in collecting a child/ren. In these situations the following procedures will apply:

- The parent/guardian is between 15 and 30 minutes late in collecting their child. The fee will be based on \$10 for every ten minutes, or part there of, from the conclusion of the session.
- The parent/guardian is over 30 minutes late in collecting their child. The fee will be based on \$10 for every ten minutes, or part thereof, for the first 30 minutes from the conclusion of the session and then \$20 for every ten minutes or part thereof, after that.



Fee schedule 2011

Three-year-old kindergarten fees

Hours: 5 hours per week

	Fees (\$)
Fee deposit	100.00
Term 1	250.00
Term 2	250.00
Term 3	250.00
Term 4	150.00
Total	1000.00

Payment of fees

Invoices will be issued **per term**.

Fee deposit

Parents/guardians are required to pay the fee deposit on offer of a place. This payment is retained as fees. Payment will secure the child's place in the three-year-old program. This deposit is non-refundable.

Child Care Benefit

The Commonwealth Government provides Child Care Benefit – Registered care to families who meet the work/training/study test. The Child Care Benefit is claimed directly by parents/guardians from the Family Assistance Office and can only be claimed after fees have been paid in full. A Child Care Benefit receipt will be issued by the centre upon request.

Children turning three during the year

Children can commence the three-year-old program when they have turned three. Full fees will need to be paid until such time to maintain the child's place at the centre.

Late collection fee

A late collection fee may be applied to all programs, including three-year-old and funded kindergarten programs, when:

The parent/guardian is between 15 and 30 minutes late in collecting their child. The fee will be based on \$10 for every ten minutes, or part there of, from the conclusion of the session.

The parent/guardian is over 30 minutes late in collecting their child. The fee will be based on \$10 for every ten minutes, or part thereof, for the first 30 minutes from the conclusion of the session and then \$20 for every ten minutes or part thereof, after that.