



## Family Update

Friday 3rd April

Dear Families,

It's been a big week of announcements for the early childhood industry in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Earlier in the week we heard about the JobKeeper Payment and yesterday an announcement was made about the new Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package (ECEC). These announcements are great for our industry, our families and the long-term livelihoods of educators.

### **A summary of the ECEC announcement**

- From the 6th April 2020, the government will provide us a subsidy calculated from fees earned in the fortnight ending 2nd March 2020.
- The government has stated that childcare will become free for essential workers, vulnerable and disadvantaged children and previously enrolled children through this COVID-19 crisis until 28th June 2020.
- We need to continue to stay open.
- Families who left the service due to COVID-19 are encouraged to re-enrol.
- We are assessing not only the financial impact, but also what an increase in occupancy during this COVID-19 pandemic means to the health and safety of our families and educators.

Our inboxes have been flooded with requests to increase days and change to full time care. Before we assess these requests, we need to consider:

- At what capacity are we willing to operate the centres to reduce the risk of children and educators being contaminated? The priority is the safety of our children and team.
- We encourage families to increase days to help their work needs. However, if everyone increases their days and we then have a lot of unexpected absences, it will become very difficult for us to manage our rosters. We also want to ensure we have places available for families most in need.

Most of you understandably have questions how these measures will impact you. We have put together some FAQs to help deal with some of the common questions. Please note we expect to learn more every day, so things may change.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Is it now safe to send my child to child care?**

This is a decision each family needs to make on their own. Whilst we have increased our infection control protocols, we cannot guarantee your child will not become ill at our centre. Part of the reason we offered the 50% Home Isolation Support fee was to reduce the health risk at the centre. If we have an increase of families returning, or increasing days, this will of course increase the risk again. We ask only essential workers to send their child to the centre.

### **Will the care be free?**

Yes, the care is free. We believe we can charge for additional items like food, nappies, etc. We are considering introducing a nominal \$5 per day fee for all bookings to put towards food and nappies. We believe this will help us ensure families will only increase their days if they genuinely need them.

### **Can I increase my days immediately?**

For the next 2 weeks we will **only consider additional days as casual days**.

### **I have given 4 weeks' notice to cease care due to COVID-19. With this new announcement what are my options?**

We would love to keep your child at our centre. Your options are:

Cancel the 'cease care' and resume your normal booking if you want your child to attend; or

Cancel the 'cease care' and notify us that you want us to put your booking On Hold as your child will not attend through the COVID-19 crisis. This will allow us to hold your booking.

Please send us an email with which option above you would like to take.

### **I am not eligible for CCS. Will I be covered for the new package?**

CCS will be paused over this period therefore you will be covered.

### **Will I receive a refund owed prior to the new package?**

If any refunds are owing, they will be credited to your account. We ask that you wait for the next fee period and check your statement.

### **Can I stay On Hold until I am ready to come back to care?**

At this stage you can continue staying On Hold. We will send a communication closer to the date when we can no longer keep families On Hold. We will provide enough notice for you to decide what you want to do.

Again, we would like to thank everyone for their ongoing support and flexibility. We will continue to send updates as we learn more.

Please stay safe and healthy.

Yours sincerely

*Jarrod & Samantha MacDonald*