



Mt Martha Preschool Fee Information for Families

Why fees are necessary

Although the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) contributes per capita funding towards the costs of providing a four-year-old kindergarten program, services need to meet the balance of costs by charging fees and fundraising activities.

DEECD provides a Kindergarten Fee Subsidy that enables children from eligible families to attend a four-year-old kindergarten program free of charge, or at a minimal cost.

DEECD also provides funding to assist eligible three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection, to access kindergarten programs.

How fees are set

During the annual budgeting process, the preschool's Committee of Management sets fees for the service's programs, taking into consideration:

- the financial viability of the service
- the level of government funding provided for the program, including the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy
- the availability of other income sources, such as grants
- the fees charged by similar services in the area
- the capacity of parents/guardians to pay fees
- reasonable expenditure in meeting agreed program quality and standards.

Other charges

Mount Martha Preschool requires families to pay an **enrolment deposit** to secure their child's place at the service. The deposit comprises the first-term fees and is payable on acceptance of enrolment.

(Please note that families eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy are not required to pay the deposit. Families experiencing hardship should discuss any difficulties with the service.)

The Committee of Management reserves the right to implement a **late collection charge** when parents/guardians are repeatedly late to collect their child from the service. This charge will be set at a level determined by the Committee of Management.

Statement of fees

A statement of all fees and charges (including the enrolment deposit and late collection charge) for four-year-old and three-year-old kindergarten will be provided to families on enrolment. These are also displayed at the front entrance of the premises.

Fundraising

As not all service costs are covered by DEECD per capita funding and fees, fundraising is undertaken to meet the balance and/or pay for additional items for the service. While participation in fundraising is voluntary, the support of every family is encouraged. Fundraising activities are also an opportunity for families and communities to come together.

Subsidies

Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (4-year-old programs only)

Families who may be eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (4-year-old programs only) include those who are:

- Health Care Card holders
- Pensioner Concession Card holders
- Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card holders
- Temporary Protection/Humanitarian Visas 447, 451, 785 or 786
- asylum seekers on Bridging Visas A–F
- Refugee and Special Humanitarian Visa 200–217
- Resolution of Status (RoS) visa, Class CD, subclass 851
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children
- triplets or quadruplets attending a funded kindergarten program in the same year.

Supporting documentation must be sighted by the service on acceptance of a place or on commencement in the program. Relevant concession documentation must be sighted by the administration officer each term to ensure ongoing eligibility. Families are eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy for the full term in which their concession is valid. Please note that eligibility conditions change from time to time – contact the service for further information.

Early Start Kindergarten Fee Subsidy

Three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children known to Child Protection are eligible to attend free of charge an early childhood program planned and delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher. The service receives funding for children who meet the eligibility criteria. Contact the service for further information.

Payment of fees

The Committee of Management will regularly review payment options and procedures to ensure that they are inclusive and sensitive to families' cultural and financial situations.

Fees will be invoiced to parents/guardians directly and must be paid by the date indicated on the invoice. Each invoice will be accompanied by payment instructions. The first term's fees must be received in full prior to the child commencing at the service. For children enrolled after the commencement of a term, a pro rata invoice will be issued and must be paid in full within 14 days of the child's commencement at the service. Receipts will be provided for all fee payments **upon request**.

An up-front payment of the full year's fee, which is subject to a 10 per cent discount, will be accepted up to and including the Annual General Meeting. There is no discount on annual payment of fees after this date.

Parents/guardians experiencing difficulty in paying fees should contact the service's Administration Officer to arrange an alternative payment plan. We respect all families' privacy; all staff comply with the service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*.

Fee payment methods

Please pay term fees via bank transfer:

Mount Martha Preschool

BSB: 633 000

Acc: 1432 88272

Alternatively, payment can be made in cash directly to the Administration Officer or a staff member. Cash must be placed in an envelope clearly marked with your **child's name, payment amount, the term being paid for** and the **parent/guardian's name**. The staff member who takes your payment will need to verify the cash amount before you place it in the fees box in the foyer.

Non-payment of fees

In the event that a family is late in paying fees, the service will send a reminder letter or email nominating a payment date. This communication will include information on support options available to the family, including a payment plan.

If there is no acknowledgment of the contact and payment is not received within one week, the Administration Officer will phone the parent/guardian to discuss the non-payment.

If after a further seven days no payment is received, the preschool will issue a second and final letter or email notifying the family that the child's place at the service will be withdrawn unless payment is made or a payment plan is entered into within a specified period of time.

Although the Committee of Management will continue to offer support to families suffering ongoing financial hardship (that is, the establishment of a payment plan), in cases where fees remain unpaid we do reserve the right to employ the services of a debt collector to retrieve monies owed.

If a decision is made to withdraw the child's place at the service, the parents/guardians will be provided with 14 days' notice in writing.

Refund of fees

If a family becomes eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy during the term, a full refund of the applicable term fees will be issued. Fees may still apply for programs offering more than the required minimum hours per week.

If a family needs to withdraw from the kindergarten program prior to commencement, a refund of the monies paid, less a \$50.00 administration fee, will be made within 14 days of formal written notification (subject to the successful filling of the vacancy).

If a family needs to withdraw a child mid term, a refund will be provided within 14 days of written notification on a pro rata basis, less a \$50.00 administration fee (subject to the successful filling of the vacancy).

In general, fees are non-refundable (exceptional circumstances may apply – these are at the discretion of the Committee of Management). There will be no refund of fees in the following circumstances:

- a child's short-term illness
- public holidays
- family holiday during operational times
- closure of the service for one or more days when a qualified educator is absent and a qualified reliever is not available
- closure of the service for staff training days
- closure of the service due to extreme and unavoidable circumstances.

In addition, there will be no refund where a family chooses not to send their child to the program for the maximum number of hours for which they are enrolled.

Late collection fee

It is the responsibility of carers to collect children promptly at the conclusion of each session. While the Committee of Management recognises that this isn't always be possible (for example, due to involvement in an accident or other emergency) the committee also must pay staff who remain after their rostered finishing time to supervise remaining children.

Accordingly, a late collection fee will be applied to non-emergency situations where the parent/guardian is repeatedly late to collect their child. The fee will be calculated at \$15.00 for every 15 minutes, starting five minutes after collection time, at the discretion of teaching staff. A record book will be kept to document late collections and any late collection fees, which will be added to the following term's fee invoice.

Support services

Families experiencing financial hardship often require access to family support services. Information on these services is available from the kindergarten.

Child Care Benefit

The Commonwealth Government's **Child Care Benefit (CCB)** for registered care assists eligible families with the costs of kindergarten. It is administered through the Family Assistance Office.

Mount Martha Preschool Association Inc. is a registered care provider. Families can claim CCB for the three- and four-year-old kindergarten 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 from the FAO. Claims can only be made after fees have been paid in full. Parents/guardians can access information at www.familyassist.gov.au or contact the FAO directly 13 61 50.

Eligibility requirements: You and your partner (if applicable) must satisfy the work test at some time during the week (Monday to Sunday) in which the care was provided.

Work test

Working: Included full time, part time or casual work; self employment, paid leave, unpaid sick leave, paid or unpaid maternity leave, and setting up a business.

Voluntary work: Voluntary work for 15 hours or more per week; any voluntary or unpaid work to improve your work skills (some committee members may qualify under this section)

Looking for work: Studying/training including undertaking a course to increase your job prospects; attending a school, university or college

Other circumstances: Managing a disability, caring for an adult or a child who has a disability

Notification of fee changes during the year

Fees set for the year will only be altered in extraordinary circumstances – for example, if attendance rates fall below the service's financial 'break even' point. Parents/guardians will be notified one term in advance of any required fee increase and will be offered the option of a payment plan.

Mount Martha Preschool Complete Fees Policy

For a copy of the *Mount Martha Preschool Fees Policy* in its entirety, please contact a member of staff, Executive Committee member or the Administration Officer and a copy will be made available to you.

Mt Martha Preschool Fee Schedule 2016

4-year-old kindergarten (Government funded program)

Hours	Fees
15 hours per week	\$380 per term There are four terms per calendar year Other charges: Nil

3-year-old kindergarten (Unfunded program)

Hours	Fees
2.5 per week	\$250 per term There are four terms per calendar year Other charges: Nil

Schedule

Please note that invoices will be issued **one term in advance** and **must be paid by the due date**, as laid out below:

- Term 1 fees are to be paid upon enrolment (see 'Kindergarten enrolment deposit' below)
- Term 2 fees will be invoiced 10 March 2016, with **payment due 31 March 2016**
- Term 3 fees will be invoiced 2 June 2016, with **payment due 23 June 2016**
- Term 4 fees will be invoiced 25 August 2016, with **payment due 15 September 2016**.

Kindergarten enrolment deposit

Parents/guardians are required to pay a term's fee in advance upon being offered a place at this service. This enrolment deposit is non-refundable and will secure the child's place in the four-year-old (funded) kindergarten program.

Kindergarten Fee Subsidy

Families who are eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy will not be required to make enrolment fee payments.

Late collection charge

The Committee of Management reserves the right to implement a late collection charge when parents/guardians are frequently late in collecting a child.