



# Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme

Funding guidelines for Long Day Care Services

## About these guidelines

### Purpose

The Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme (QKFS): Funding Guidelines for Long Day Care Services provides long day care (LDC) services offering an approved kindergarten program provides detailed information about:

- eligibility criteria
- claiming
- subsidies
- data, reporting and monitoring once funding has been provided.

### How to use

This guide is designed to provide specific guidance around the administration of Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme (QKFS) funding and should be read in conjunction with the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme: Program Delivery Guidelines for Approved Kindergarten Program Providers.

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# 1. Eligibility Criteria

To claim QKFS funding, services must be approved as a Kindergarten Program Provider (KPP).

To be eligible for KPP approval, a LDC provider must:

- hold a current service approval under the Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) or a service approval for a Centre Based Child Care Service, under the Education and Care Services Act 2013;
- be approved to receive Commonwealth Child Care Benefit (CCB) payments on behalf of eligible families within the kindergarten program; and
- demonstrate that the proposed learning program to be offered:
  - a) will be based on the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline or an alternative kindergarten learning guideline accredited by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority;
  - b) will operate for at least 600 hours per year, typically for 15 hours per week and 40 weeks per year. Any other model must be agreed by the Department of Education, Training and Employment (the Department);
  - c) will have a fee structure that is not a barrier to access. For instance, it is expected that the fee for attending a kindergarten program at a LDC service should not be more than the daily fee charged for 3 to 5 year old children who access long day care;
  - d) be provided for children in the year prior to Prep (i.e. children who are at least 4 years old by 30 June in the year they participate); and
  - e) will be delivered by a [qualified early childhood teacher](#).

The Department will assess and approve a LDC as a KPP based on the criteria detailed above and information provided by regional officers as part of their routine Assessment and Rating visits under the Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) or a service approval for a Centre Based Child Care Service, under the Education and Care Services Act 2013 (or other applicable child care legislation).

If KPP approval is granted, the service will be issued a KPP certificate.

Unsuccessful applicants will be advised in writing of the reasons for not approving their KPP application and have a right of review. Requests for review are to be submitted in writing to the Department.

Without limiting any other rights it might have, the Department may suspend or revoke the approved KPP status at any time the service fails to meet any of the eligibility criteria.

If KPP approval is suspended or revoked the Department will automatically suspend the service's eligibility to receive QKFS funding. The Department will advise the LDC in writing of the decision to suspend or revoke their KPP approval.

## 2. Subsidies

Funding is provided in the form of various subsidy payments that aim to ensure cost is not a barrier for families accessing the kindergarten program.

Fees should be responsive to the local community, considering parents' capacity to pay and service needs, while maintaining a high quality of early education. Fees should not be a barrier to access as:

- subsidies are provided to assist with the costs of delivering an approved kindergarten program; and
- additional subsidies are provided to reduce costs for families and to assist with the costs of attracting and retaining teachers in remote locations.

All subsidy rates can be found on the Department's website.

### 2.1 Standard per Child Subsidy

The standard subsidy is paid on a per child basis for each eligible-age child. Each eligible child can only access funding for one approved kindergarten program at a time.

Pro-rata amounts will be paid for children enrolled for less than the full 40 weeks of the program.

Younger children (not 4 years old by 30 June in the year they participate) may participate in a kindergarten program where vacancies exist but are not eligible to be included in the QGrants quarterly claim.

The standard subsidy is indexed annually in July as determined by the State Treasurer.

### 2.2 Remote Area Subsidy

The remote area subsidy is to be used to attract and retain qualified early childhood teachers in remote areas.

The subsidy is a per-child loading on the standard subsidy for services operating in areas classified as remote and very remote using the ABS Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA).

### 2.3 Low Socio-Economic Subsidy

This subsidy is to be used by services to reduce out-of-pocket expenses for all families with eligible children participating in the kindergarten program.

The subsidy is a per child loading on the standard subsidy for services operating in locations within the bottom 20% of Statistical Local Areas (SLAs), using the ABS Socio Economic Indexes (SEIFA).

## 2.4 QKFS Plus Kindy Support

QKFS Plus Kindy Support is provided to services to reduce out-of-pocket expenses for eligible families by providing access to low or no cost kindergarten programs.

QKFS Plus Kindy Support is calculated and paid in arrears based on a standard quarterly rate.

To be eligible for QKFS Plus Kindy Support a family must meet one of the criterion below.

- The family (including foster families), or the child, must present one of the following:
  - a current Australian Government Health Care Card (HCC). The HCC should be sighted each quarter and a copy kept by the service. The HCC must name the enrolled child, whether it is the child's own card or a card belonging to their parent/guardian;
  - a current Australian Government Pensioner Concession Card (automatic HCC entitlements);
  - Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card or White Card; or
  - Formal communication, such as a letter, from the relevant agency stating the intent to issue a HCC; OR
- The child identifies as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and the family chooses to identify them as such on their enrolment form; OR
- The family has 3 or more children, of the same age, enrolled in the same year. QKFS Plus Kindy Support is available for each child enrolled in a program. Proof of date of birth for these children is required to claim QKFS Plus Kindy Support. The Department will consider circumstances where three or more kindergarten-aged children are not able to attend the same service. In this situation please provide written advice to the Department via [QKFS.LDC@dete.qld.gov.au](mailto:QKFS.LDC@dete.qld.gov.au).

QKFS Plus Kindy Support can only be claimed once per child even where they meet multiple criterion outlined above.

Provided the child/family meet the eligibility requirements for QKFS Plus Kindy Support at any point during the semester they are entitled to funding for the full semester.

Once the service has used the QKFS Plus Kindy Support to meet the family's out-of-pocket costs, any balance can be retained by the service and applied towards the costs of delivering the kindergarten program.

Services must not change or increase their fees for children entitled to QKFS Plus Kindy Support above that payable by other families.

A family with an eligible child should not receive QKFS Plus Kindy Support funds above their out-of-pocket costs for the kindergarten program.

If a child's fees are fully covered by another source, such as an Australian Government fee-relief program, that family is not eligible for QKFS Plus Kindy Support and the service cannot claim for that child.

Where the Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate are being calculated with QKFS Plus Kindy Support, services are encouraged to explore all avenues to reduce or waive fees to families in line with the intent of the subsidy.

### 3. Claiming

Subsidy funding may be claimed by approved KPPs via [QGrants](#)<sup>1</sup> (the process will include acceptance of Queensland Government terms and conditions).

Funding will be distributed quarterly in arrears to approved KPPs based on submission of enrolment and program data via the QGrants claims process.

Zero enrolments must be reported for the week/s that services fail to fulfil the KPP eligibility requirements (e.g. Teacher absence greater than 10 consecutive days).

A subsidy is paid for each eligible child enrolled for 40 weeks in a calendar year, with pro-rata amounts paid for children enrolled for less than 40 weeks.

A service can only claim the QKFS subsidy for eligible children who are enrolled in the kindergarten program for a minimum of 15 hours per week.

Adjustments to funding claims may only be made in the quarter following the payment period concerned. Approved kindergarten program providers should notify the Department, via email to [QKFS.LDC@dete.qld.gov.au](mailto:QKFS.LDC@dete.qld.gov.au), of any errors in their claim as soon as detected.

Funding availability will commence from the program start date as determined via the KPP assessment process. The program start date is the date that the KPP program commenced delivery by a qualified teacher and meets all other KPP eligibility requirements. Funding can be back dated to the quarter in which the KPP application was submitted via QGrants.

Approved KPP LDC providers must maintain their KPP status as well as confirm that the following criteria are met for each quarter that QKFS funding is claimed via QGrants:

- appropriate public liability insurance of at least \$10 million was held;
- that the learning program offered:
  - was based on the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline or an alternative kindergarten learning guideline accredited by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority;
  - was operated for an appropriate number of hours during the quarter to ensure the criteria for operating at least 600 hours per year, typically 15 weeks and 40 weeks per year was met;
  - had a fee structure that was not a barrier to access;
  - was provided for children in the year prior to Prep; and
  - was delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher.

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<sup>1</sup> QGrants is an online grants management portal

Approved LDC KPP must also confirm that they agree with the Queensland Government's terms and conditions when completing a funding claim through QGrants. These terms and conditions are available at: [www.hpw.qld.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/ServiceAgreementShortForm.pdf](http://www.hpw.qld.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/ServiceAgreementShortForm.pdf).

## 4. Data, reporting and monitoring

KPPs are required to provide a range of data to enable the Department to monitor funding provided under QKFS.

Funding is provided quarterly in arrears based on actual enrolment numbers reported via the QGrants claims process. Services will be invited to lodge their QGrants claims within a 10 day period at the end of March, June, September and December each year. If a KPP is unable to deliver the kindergarten program during a quarterly period (e.g. loss of teacher), the KPP must submit a zero program delivery claim for that period.

All KPP approved services are required to participate in the annual Queensland Early Childhood Education and Care Census, which collects data on service information, child enrolments, demographic characteristics of children, kindergarten program delivery and staffing within the service.

The Department has the right to confirm the compliance of a KPP with the Queensland Government's standard funding terms and conditions, with these guidelines and with the QKFS: Program Delivery Guidelines for Approved Kindergarten Program Providers.

The Department may undertake planned or unplanned site visits to a KPP for the purpose of confirming compliance.

The Department (or another party engaged by the Department) has the right to conduct an audit of a KPP for the purposes of the Department's data collection and monitoring activities, or to examine accountability for the claiming and expenditure of government funds by the LDC.

The Department reserves the right to amend the reporting requirements for data collection purposes. Where possible, the Department will provide adequate advance notice of any changes to reporting to the KPP.