

Information for parents

From 1 July 2010 all three, four and five-year old children are able to go to early childhood education (ECE) services for six hours a day, 20 hours a week at no charge. *20 Hours ECE* applies to all teacher-led ECE services, kōhanga reo and Playcentres.

To get this support, your child must be enrolled in and going to an ECE service offering *20 Hours ECE*. You will have to decide which of the enrolled hours will be covered by the scheme. You can choose any hours your child is enrolled to attend, and you can't have more than six hours a day, 20 hours a week.

You will need to fill in an enrolment agreement, and confirm the days and hours you are claiming as *20 Hours ECE* on an attestation – which may be a separate form or part of your enrolment agreement. Your ECE service will give you these shortly before your child turns three (or when you are enrolling) and can help you complete them.

If your child goes to more than one ECE service, you can split the hours claimed as long as you don't claim for more than 20 hours a week or six hours a day. You can't claim for the same hours twice.

Fees

ECE services can't charge fees for the hours of *20 Hours ECE*, but they can charge for your child's other enrolled hours.

ECE services set fees on an hourly, daily, sessional or weekly basis. The service must be able to show you how they are only charging for the hours outside *20 Hours ECE*.

Optional charges

ECE services may request Optional Charges for additional features above regulation, or items you could provide for your own children. You can choose whether or not to pay Optional Charges. ECE services cannot refuse your child *20 Hours ECE* if you don't agree to pay them.

If you agree to pay a regular Optional Charge, you are committing to continue to pay that charge, and the ECE service can enforce payment. If you do not agree to pay an Optional Charge, you are agreeing that you do not want the ECE service to provide this additional feature. The ECE service must give you opportunities to review your decision.

Donations

ECE services can also ask for a donation. This is a voluntary contribution and does not have to be for anything specific.

Childcare subsidy

The Childcare Subsidy (CCS) is available through Work and Income. Parents and caregivers can choose between receiving CCS or *20 Hours ECE* or, in some cases, a combination of both payments.

This subsidy can't be claimed for the same hours as *20 Hours ECE*. Further information can be found at www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz or you can call Work and Income on 0800 559 009.

ECE funding subsidy

The Ministry of Education funds ECE services to subsidise the cost of all children attending early childhood education. These subsidies are available for up to 30 hours per week. Each hour of *20 Hours ECE* claimed replaces one of these hours.

Special Education

From 1 July 2010, a transition-to-school plan is not required for five-year-old children with special education needs to access *20 Hours ECE*; however the transition-to-school plan is good practice to ensure children transition to school with their peers. Contact Special Education for more information.

Responsibilities

Parents and caregivers:

- Discuss *20 Hours ECE* with your ECE service
- Keep attestations signed, up to date and accurate
- Keep a record of your child's enrolled hours and days (this is on a current copy of your enrolment agreement)

ECE services:

- Offer *20 Hours ECE*, where places are available:
 - to all eligible children
 - on all days and hours they are open
- Provide reasonable opportunities for parents to review their agreement to pay Optional Charges.

Questions

Your ECE service will be able to answer most of your questions. If you feel your questions about the service or its policies are not being answered adequately you can use their formal complaints policy.

If you need further information or help you can go to www.minedu.govt.nz/parents, call your local Ministry of Education office, email 20hours.ece@minedu.govt.nz, or call 0800 ECE ECE (0800 323 323)