

Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme

Eligibility and subsidies

What are the eligibility requirements to receive funding?

There are specific eligibility requirements to become an Approved Kindergarten Program Provider (Approved KPP) and subsequently be eligible to claim applicable subsidies under the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme (QKFS).

The service must meet all of the following to be eligible for QKFS funding:

- have a current service approval under the Education and Care Services National Law or *Education and Care Services Act 2013*
- have approval to receive the Commonwealth Government Child Care Subsidy (CCS) (Long Day Care services only)
- have a rating of 'Working Towards National Quality Standard (NQS)' or higher, if the service has been assessed and rated against the NQS by the Regulatory Authority in Queensland.

Each child must be enrolled and participating in an Approved Kindergarten Program that:

- is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher (ECT)
- has and delivers an Approved Kindergarten Program based on the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline (QKLG) (or alternative accredited by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA))
- is provided for children in the year before Prep (i.e. must turn four years old by 30 June in the kindergarten year)
- is provided for 15 hours a week for 40 weeks, or 600 hours a year
- has a fee structure that is not a barrier for families to access the Approved Kindergarten Program
- develops and uploads a Transition Statement using the online application in the QCAA Portal (OR if parent/carer consent is not provided, the ECT uses the MS Word version of the template) for each child's family in November of the Kindergarten year.

*These criteria must be applied individually to **each child enrolled** in the Approved Kindergarten Program each week to be considered eligible as part of the QKFS claims process. Children accessing delayed entry to Prep may be claimed, as long as they meet all of the other QKFS eligibility requirements.

What subsidies are available under the QKFS?

There are four subsidies available under the QKFS. The funding is based on the individual circumstances of the service and the enrolled children/families. Each subsidy has specific criteria for which the funding **must** be used for and/or how it is to be applied. These are listed under the following categories:

- **QKFS Standard per child Subsidy (Standard Subsidy):** is provided to support and enhance the delivery of an Approved Kindergarten Program and ensure cost is not a barrier for families. No part of the Standard Subsidy is to be used generally across the service or to support the operation of the business or operations of the Approved Provider.
- **Remote Area Subsidy (based on Accessibility/ Remoteness Index of Australia [ARIA]):** provides additional support for services classified as remote and very remote areas of Queensland. This subsidy **must** be used to attract and retain a qualified ECT. Eligibility for the ARIA is automatically determined as part of the Approved KPP application.
- **Socio-Economic Subsidy (based on Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas [SEIFA]):** provides additional support to further reduce fees for families. This subsidy **must** be used to reduce expenses for all families with eligible children in the Approved Kindergarten Program applied to parent fees at the service level. Eligibility for SEIFA is automatically determined as part of the Approved KPP application based on the data from the **Australia Bureau of Statistics**.
- **QKFS Plus Kindy Support (QKFS Plus Subsidy):** provides all services with additional funding for a fee reduction, or no fees, for eligible families. To claim the QKFS Plus Subsidy, the family (including foster families), or the child must have either an Australian Government health care card; current Australian Government Concession Card; Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card or White Card; evidence of formal foster or kinship care arrangements; identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander; the family has three or more children of the same age, enrolled in the same year; the child is identified as living in a formal child protection out-of-home-care arrangement; or the family and child have entered Australia under the Australian Government's Refugee and Humanitarian Program, or is in the process of seeking asylum and holds a temporary visa.



Table 1

Table 1 provides a summary of the current subsidies and the specified purposes for what each subsidy must be used for.

2021–22 Financial Year QKFS Subsidy Rates			
Subsidy	Kindergarten	Long Day Care	Funding purposes
Standard per child Subsidy (Standard Subsidy)	\$3,086.00	\$1,822.00	<p>The Standard Subsidy can ONLY be spent on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fee reduction for eligible kindergarten-age cohort only (must be less than all other age groups at the Approved KPP, including younger children who may be enrolled in the room where the Approved Kindergarten Program is being delivered); • quality and age-appropriate resources specifically for the kindergarten-age cohort; • improved entitlements for the ECT delivering the Approved Kindergarten Program, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ additional pay on top of their entitled ECT award wage; ▪ the provision of additional paid annual leave; ▪ lump sum bonus paid directly to the ECT; ▪ payment of additional programming hours or non-contact times for the ECT; and ▪ learning resources for the ECT to enhance their delivery of an Approved Kindergarten Program; • professional development for the ECT to assist them in delivering an Approved Kindergarten Program (this must be at the tertiary level or delivered by an accredited organisation and relevant to an Approved Kindergarten Program. For Long Day Care Services, it cannot include any professional development relative to the operation of the service); and • providing extra-curricular activities (provided all children undertake the activity, the ECT is present and participating, and the ECT includes the activity as part of their curriculum). <p><i>*Evidence to be retained may include receipts, invoices and ECT employment contracts/payslips.</i></p>
Remote Area Subsidy (ARIA)	\$1,543.00	\$911.00	<p>This subsidy must be used to attract and retain a qualified ECT. Strategies may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assisting the ECT with relocation costs; • subsidising rent for the ECT if rental costs are high in the local community; • paying significantly above award wages; • paying a bonus in addition to their wages; • providing additional paid annual leave; • subsidising flights to and from the community to the ECT's home base; and • providing help with fees if an ECT is working towards the completion of an approved ECT qualification (this does not include payment of a higher education loan program debt). <p><i>*Evidence to be retained may include ECT employment contracts/payslips, receipts and invoices.</i></p>
Socio-Economic Subsidy (SEIFA)	SEIFA 1 & 2 – \$1,388.70 SEIFA 3 & 4 – \$925.80	SEIFA 1 & 2 – \$455.50	<p>This subsidy must be used to reduce expenses for all families, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce the overall advertised fee for the Approved Kindergarten Program by the amount of this subsidy; OR • apply the subsidy individually to the fees of eligible kindergarten-aged children (four years old by 30 June). <p><i>*Evidence to be retained may include fee structures and fee statements.</i></p>
QKFS Plus Kindy Support (QKFS Plus Subsidy)	Up to \$3,414.00 (SEIFA 5 to 10)	Up to \$1,370.00 (SEIFA 3 to 10)	<p>Approved Providers must pass on the full quarterly subsidy amount to each eligible family, irrespective of the number of days/weeks the child was at the service (however cannot put the family's account into credit after covering all out of pocket costs). Approved Providers are encouraged to pass on the subsidy in a lump sum after the Child Care Subsidy has been applied each quarter, or to reconcile at the end of each quarter if passing on a weekly/fortnightly fee reduction. An example of how this applies to the service fees is included below.</p> <p><i>*Evidence to be retained may include fee structures, fee statements, enrolment forms, copies of a Health Care Card, Veterans Affairs Card, Pensioner Concession Card or other government document confirming eligibility.</i></p>
	SEIFA 1 & 2 – \$2,025.30 SEIFA 3 & 4 – \$2,488.20	SEIFA 1 & 2 – \$914.50	

*Approved Providers must retain evidence of how each subsidy has been spent for the purpose in which the funding was provided.

QKFS Plus Subsidy example:

The QKFS Plus Subsidy is a set quarterly amount paid to the Approved Provider, by the Department of Education, to pass on to eligible families by crediting the full subsidy amount to their fee statement. The QKFS Plus Subsidy is not paid in alignment with the 40-week Standard Subsidy. This subsidy can be added to families' statements in a quarterly lump sum, to assist in simplifying the process and to ensure the full amount has been provided.

QKFS Plus Subsidy provides additional support to eligible families to help them access a low or no-cost Approved Kindergarten Program. In some cases, the quarterly subsidy amount will cover the full out of pocket cost for the Approved Kindergarten Program hours. However, it may not cover the full-service fees as there may be a remaining long day care portion of the fees which the family will need to pay. The following example demonstrates this.

Child enrolled for 2 days per week (20 hours)	Quarterly fees	Based on 13 weeks – total hours enrolled for the quarter = 260 hours which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 195 hours (75%) of kindergarten learning program delivery (15 hours per week min. requirement) and • 65 hours (25%) of LDC
Fees	(\$200 x 13) = \$2600	
Less Australian Government Child Care Subsidy (CCS)	\$2210	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85% CCS applied to fees. Noting that 5% of the CCS is held by the Australian Government, provided to families at the end of the financial year.
Equals a remaining fee balance for the quarter	\$390	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% of the \$390 fee = \$292.50 kindy fee portion • 25% of the gap fee = \$97.50 LDC fee portion
Less quarterly QKFS Plus Subsidy	\$342.50	In this case the subsidy more than covers the cost of kindergarten (\$292.50) for the quarter.

For some families eligible for the QKFS Plus Subsidy, the quarterly subsidy amount will cover the full out-of-pocket cost for the Approved Kindergarten Program hours, however should this not occur, the Standard Subsidy can be utilised to reduce any remaining cost for the Approved Kindergarten Program.

For more information on QKFS eligibility and subsidies, please refer to the QKFS Funding Category Guidelines or contact the Grants Management and Funding Unit on (07) 3035 2244 or QKFS.LDC@qed.qld.gov.au

Kindergarten services funded under the Central Governing Body (CGB) model should contact their CGB for further information.