

Friday 5 June, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

You may be aware that there have been a range of media stories in the news pertaining to the COVID-19 ECEC Relief Package and if this will be ceased or extended from the 28 June, 2020. As of now, the Federal Government have made no further announcements, however once they have and we have been provided with relevant information please be assured that we shall provide an update to confirm what any announcement means for you and your family.

As more restrictions are being lifted, we are seeing an increase in attendance at our Services. Our Enrolments Team, Area Managers and Service Managers have continued to work with many families throughout the week to approve and re-enrol families into our Services. We have also been actively working with our waitlisted families, and our new enrolment enquiries, who are both eager and ready to commence care with us in the upcoming weeks and months. The result of which has meant that there are now limited spaces within our services. We ask that if you require additional permanent booked days based on your work and care requirements, that you to speak with your Service Manager promptly to secure these desired changes.

Please note that when approving our existing families back into our Services, it is important to note that if your account fell into arrears pre the COVID-19 ECEC Relief Package, that we will ask that your account be bought back to the terms of our Fee Payment Policy (which includes maintaining your fees two weeks in advance). Please contact the Service Manager of the location you attend to arrange for your account to be paid, to ensure your child's booked days and your care requirements are not jeopardised.

We are continuing to support families in returning to care each day and we appreciate your patience and understanding during these times as we have had many challenges to work through. Our continued focus is working with all families to return to care as soon as possible, with a desire to provide families with secure booked places and the ability to transition safely and securely into our Services, whilst still following policies and procedures.

### **Lighting UP with Gratitude**



Bliss Early Learning Services in Sydney and Melbourne 'lit up' their Services to symbolise a month of gratitude to our Essential Workers, Families, Educators and Communities on Monday 1 June, which I have loved watching. The displays in our Services, and the responses we've seen from Families has been amazing. This is just the

beginning, with a whole month still to go, I can't wait to see what further family and community engagement takes place. 'Lighting UP with Gratitude' has allowed us all to express our gratitude specifically to all our staff that have continued to work through this period and most importantly support the families of essential workers.

Families can further get involved by displaying a string of fairy lights at home, to symbolise a message of thanks and gratitude to our amazing staff. Another way to get involved is by taking time to write down your gratitude on the Gratitude Cards, located in the reception area at the Service. For those looking to do something virtual, please send through a Gratitude Email or post within the Services Facebook page and hashtags #lightupwiththanks #beststartinlife.

### **Child Care Subsidy – Helping your families to tick all the CCS boxes**

By now you should have received notification from the Department of Human Services or via your My Gov account advising families who have been receiving the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) that you need to confirm your income by the end of June for your CCS to continue into the new financial year.

There has been some confusion among families about which financial year this requirement relates to. Please note that the requirement does not relate to *this current financial year* (July 2019 - June 2020), which is not yet over.

Families who have received CCS in the 2018-2019 financial year (that is, for the period between July 2018 - June 2019, which finished at the end of June of last year), are required to confirm their income for that financial year, by 30 June 2020.

Families can do this by:

- lodging their Tax Returns with the Australian Tax Office; OR
- completing an 'Advise non-lodgement of tax return' with Centrelink, if you don't need to lodge a tax return.

CCS won't be active until you have confirmed your income, and CCS will not be back paid.

This is a friendly reminder, if you haven't done so already, to complete this task via your MyGov account or by contacting Centrelink, even though you aren't currently paying child care fees. As mentioned above, this is important because Centrelink will use this estimate to work out how much CCS and FTB you will receive for the **next financial year**.

### **What is CCS (Childcare Subsidy)?**

CCS helps with the cost of approved child care. Centrelink pays this subsidy directly to your child care provider to reduce the fees you pay.

### **Who can get it?**

To get CCS you need to meet [certain requirements](#). Centrelink will also consider your circumstances to work out [how much you can get](#).

### **How do I apply?**

If you want to get CCS when it starts again, and haven't already applied, you should [submit your claim](#) now.

Further information about updating your Family Income Estimate for the 2020-21 financial year can be found on the Services Australia website link here: <https://bit.ly/2YZbCJF> If you have any further questions in regards to the above, please visit the Services Australia website via the following link: <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/>



Please ensure you read our weekly communications thoroughly for up to date information on your child's enrolment whilst the Early Childhood Education & Care Relief Package is in place. This package is currently in place until 28 June (date subject to further decision by the Australian Government).

All communication sent to families can be located on the Bliss Website <https://www.bliss.edu.au/covid-19-awareness-updates/>

If you have any additional questions please do not hesitate in speaking with your Service Manager.

Warm Regards

Robert Hughes  
Chief Executive Officer