

Thursday 2 April 2020

### **Updated Information - COVID-19 and Childcare Relief Package**

Dear Families,

An announcement was made by the Australian Government today that seeks to support children of essential workers and vulnerable children with child care during this COVID-19 pandemic. This package seeks to deliver a level of hip pocket relief and help the Early Childhood Learning and Care sector make it through to the other side of this crisis.

In an attempt to ensure the continued care of children, this “Childcare Overhaul” is a positive step in ensuring Busy Bees’ mission to provide children the best start in life and to assist families who are working to support the community through the COVID-19 crisis.

We are proud that many families in essential services roles are working hard to support the community and that in turn you are relying on us to remain open to support you. We thank you for your patience, understanding and support at this unprecedented time. What this package provides is a degree of certainty in what we know to be very uncertain times.

The safeguarding of the health and wellbeing of our children, staff and the wider community is our top priority and we will continue to act in accordance with the latest public health advice and other directives provided by the Australian Government. As a result, at this time, priority will be given to working parents who have no alternate care options for their children, vulnerable and disadvantaged children, and parents with pre-existing enrolments as at 1<sup>st</sup> March. We request that this directive, as provided by the Australian Government, be respected when dealing with Busy Bees staff. At this stage we will not be taking any new enrolments or increasing any existing enrolments until we have addressed these priority families as per the Australian Government directives.

From here, Busy Bees will work in accordance with the Australian Government Guidelines to map out what this will now look like for our Busy Bees Families.

As we work through the detail behind these announcements, I thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation in relation to this important matter.



Below are some FAQs that we have prepared that we believe might assist addressing any immediate questions you may have.

For the latest on COVID-19 please refer to the following Australian Government website:  
<https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

COVID-19 Factsheets issued by the Australian Government's Department of Education can be found at this link: <https://education.govcms.gov.au/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

As well as the latest updates on the Busy Bees Australia website  
<https://www.bliss.edu.au/covid-19-awareness-updates/>

**Frequently asked Questions:** Federal Government Childcare Relief Package announcement 2 April 2020

**Q.** What is the new child care payment under the Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package?

**A.** The new payment under the Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package is a payment to support Child Care Services to remain open and to ease the financial burden on working families who need to access care. These payments will ensure services can remain open, and families who need it can access care.

**Q.** Am I considered a Family that needs to access care due to Covid-19

**A.** Minister for Education, Dan Tehan advised on the 2 April 2020 that the childcare package is to ensure childcare services remain open to serve families that **need to work** and to **support vulnerable children**.

**Q.** Am I deemed an Essential Worker?

**A.** A person is deemed an Essential Worker if they are actively working during the COVID-19 situation.

**Q.** I have a current enrolment, do I need to do anything

**A.** No, your current booking will continue.

**Q.** I am choosing to isolate my children and family at home as per the Australian Government recommendations and not attending the childcare service, what occurs with my fees?



A. As of 5 April 2020 there will be no cost to parents with existing enrolments if the child does not attend care.

Q. Can I increase my current enrolment from the 6 April 2020?

A. The new child care payment was announced by the Australian Government 2 April 2020 to serve families that **need to work** and to **support vulnerable children**

All current bookings as of Thursday 2 April 2020 will continue.

Priority will be given to working parents who have no alternate care options for their children, vulnerable and disadvantaged children, and parents with pre-existing enrolments as at 1 March 2020.

We request that this directive, as provided by the Australian Government be respected when dealing with Busy Bees staff. ***At this stage we will not be taking any new enrolments or increasing any existing enrolments until we have addressed these priority families as per Government directives.***

Q. If I have chosen to self-isolate and I am not deemed an essential worker can my child return to the service?

A. Families should continue to follow the Australian Governments recommendation to remain at home and to assist with reducing the COVID-19 curve.

To assist with the management of the required Education and Care Services National Regulations, specifically the required staff to child ratios, all new enquiry requests are to be emailed to [support@bliss.edu.au](mailto:support@bliss.edu.au)

The Enrolment team will review the request and confirm the enrolment availability taking into account the Australian Government's objectives relating to essential workers and vulnerable families.

Q. When will I know the outcome of my new booking enquiry?

A. As you can appreciate, we need to work through each family's individual circumstances. The priority of enrolments will be for families that **need to work being an Essential Worker** and to **support vulnerable children**.



We are unable to place a timeframe at this stage, as we continue to work with the Australian Government, our Enrolments Team and third party software providers as we navigate this uncharted territory.

**Q.** If I am existing family what do I do right now?

**A.** If you are a family that needs to work and you have no alternate care options for your child or are a family in a vulnerable situation please continue to attend as per your existing enrolment.

If you are a family that can continue to keep your children at home as per the Australian Government requirements we ask that you continue to do so and your current booking will be secure.

**Q.** If I obtain a new job or my current job requires me to increase my work commitments and I have no alternate care arrangements can I increase days?

**A.** Please contact [support@bliss.edu.au](mailto:support@bliss.edu.au) so we can assist with your specific situation as per the Australian Government guidelines.

**Q.** What is the notice period if I cancel my child's bookings under the Childcare Relief Package from the Australian Government?

**A.** Four week's written notification is required in advance when cancelling care and any outstanding fees must be paid in full on completion.

**Q.** What do I do right now?

**A.** Be patient and we shall continue to communicate to families all relevant updates.

Warm Regards,  
Robert Hughes  
Chief Executive Officer