



Friday 8 May, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Busy Bees Early Learning Australia would like to thank each of you for persevering during the last few difficult months. This pandemic is monumental in its relevance and will no doubt be remembered for decades to come. Your resilience and patience are something that we appreciate, as our Busy Bees employees work tirelessly to look after your children, and ensure their safety at all times.

Several State/Territory Governments have announced various 'return to school' strategies over the coming weeks focused on re-opening classroom based education including school-based kindergartens. Please note that these 'return to school' based strategies do not extend to long day care settings as operated by the early learning sector including Busy Bees Australia. Our Childcare Services, like all other long day care operations, fall under the Federal Government's directives such as the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Relief Package and continue to remain open with priority of access to be provided to children of essential workers, vulnerable children and those existing children who have remained in care throughout the COVID-19 restrictions in place by the various Governments. Therefore unless you have confirmed your child's attendance at the service with the Service Manager and/or our Enrolments Team we ask that you continue to remain at home as we continue to work through the care requirements of families in line with Government requirements.

With the introduction of the ECEC Relief Package, in conjunction with the JobKeeper package, operators have restricted resources to support all families' enrolment needs primarily as our income being cut by at least 50% for normal levels under the ECEC Relief Package. As with all businesses, there is a need to remain financially viable. Based on this, we have recently applied for the Australian Government Exceptional Circumstance Supplementary Payment under the ECEC Relief Package. This additional funding is required to ensure we can meet the ongoing demand for childcare spaces and thus to assist you, our Families. This will also ensure that child to staff ratios (as per the National Childcare Regulations and Law) are upheld, and the high level of care and education, that is synonymous with the Busy Bees Brand, is maintained. Please also be aware that Busy Bees Australia, along with numerous other large operators and industry peak bodies, are actively working with the Federal Department of Education as part of a review of the ECEC Relief Package to identify solutions to the constraints being experienced by the sector under the combination of the ECEC Relief Package and the JobKeeper package in meeting the care needs across our collective families and communities. We are looking forward to a positive outcome in the very near future of this Government lead review.

So we are asking that you continue to work with us as we work through what is a very complex situation to ensure we can adequately meet all essential care needs while ensuring the health and wellbeing of the children and staff at our Services is maintained at the highest level as per the Government Regulations, Laws and guidelines.

Busy Bees Australia National Support Centre

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Busy Bees Early Learning Australia is the registered business name of Foundation Early Learning Limited ACN 168 187 979.
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To this end:

1. For the Families who applied for and were granted the '3 Step' plan (communicated on the 27 March) and as a result have held their children at home - we can confirm that your child's place in our Service is secure and will be available post COVID-19. Please note though that when we initially put in place the '3-step' plan we initially communicated a period of 23 March to 17 May however this was prior to the Government's announcement of the ECEC Relief Package which, at this stage, continues to 28 June - subsequent to the ECEC Relief Package announcement by the Government we further clarified and reiterated that your child's place was secure until the end of COVID-19 which at this point under the ECEC Relief Package is deemed within our sector to be 28 June. As indicated, the ECEC Relief Package has placed considerable constraints on operators and their ability to accept the return of children to care other than in situations where it is supporting essential workers or vulnerable children - as per the Government's guidelines. As such, per the Australian Government guidelines we ask families that are able, to continue to keep your child at home (noting the next point) and we confirm we are monitoring any updates from the Australian Government on a daily basis that may reduce restrictions and or lift the constraints placed upon the sector.
2. If your family's circumstances have changed and you are deemed as an essential worker, or your child is now deemed as disadvantaged or vulnerable please complete the Childcare Relief Package - Child Enrolment Application Request Form. The application will be assessed as quickly as possible by our Enrolments Team and/or Service Manager based on priority of access and capacity at the Service in line with the Australian Government funded Childcare Relief Package.

When approving our existing families back into the Service it is important to note that if your account fell into arrears pre the COVID-19 ECEC Relief Package, then we require your account to be bought back to the terms of our Fee Payment Policy which includes maintaining your fees one week in advance. (Please contact the Service Manager of the Service you attend to arrange for this to be paid prior to approval).

Busy Bees wish to remain as a consistent support for your child in these uncertain times. With the world around them reacting to the current news, it remains our mission to provide your child with a level of comfort and a routine that they can call upon each day, to give them the very best start in life. We also ask that you support our mission to do this and understand that we are doing our very best under the circumstances, and to respect this as we continue to work in this high past changing climate.

We wish to proactively plan for all future transitions including COVID-19 gradual restrictions by our Federal and State/Territory Government to ensure all Families are able to access needed early learning and care for their Children with minimal disruption.

Warm Regards

Robert Hughes
Chief Executive Officer