

ABSENCES FROM CARE



SA MONTESSORI
quality early childhood education and care

Absences due to Public/Family Holidays and Illness

As per our Fee Schedules, SA Montessori charge ongoing fees, less any eligible Centrelink entitlements for all days booked, irrespective of any absences (eg public holidays, family holidays and sick days), apart from our closure periods over the end of year/new year. This is to:

- Secure and maintain your child's long-term position whilst your child is absent, instead of replacing the position with another waiting list family
- Cover the wage costs associated with having our highly qualified team of educators present each day of the year, and compensate staff who, like most other employees, are still entitled to be paid for public holidays when they would otherwise be working
- maintain ongoing operating costs during these periods. The overall costs associated with operating our high-quality service do not decrease when a single child is absent.

Due to our substantial internal and external waiting lists, SA Montessori is unable to discount fees due to absences or hold a position for your child whilst you are away on a family holiday without charging normal scheduled fees accordingly.

Centrelink Child Care Fee Assistance for Absences

The government will pay CCS for **42 absence days per child each financial year** across all services the child attends. These can be for any reason, and include public holidays, sickness and general holidays or unexpected circumstances. These days will not require proof of absence. Additional absences can be claimed once a family has used all of their initial 42 absence days. There is no limit on the number of additional absence days a recipient may claim, providing the absence days are taken for specified reasons, and supporting documentation, where required, is provided. Full fees (ie with no Centrelink entitlements) will be charged for any absence once 42 total absences have been reached (unless an additional absence is claimed with supporting documentation).

For further information: <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/child-care-subsidy-if-your-child-absent-from-child-care?context=41186#howmany>

Absences on First or Last days of Enrolment

Please note that Centrelink do not generally pay CCS for any absences before your child physically attends or after the last day your child physically attends care. Full fees will be charged for these periods of absences. If your child attends (or even partially attends) their first day or last day of enrolment as booked, then they are still eligible for any CCS due as per normal. However if you have an approved reason for your child's absence on their first/last day (eg child is ill) and you provide us with evidence (eg medical certificate), Centrelink *may* pay CCS for absences that occur within 7 days at the start or the end of an enrolment, including the first or last day.

For further information: <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/child-care-subsidy-if-your-child-absent-from-child-care?context=41186#howmany>

Overseas Holiday Absence Periods

If you are planning an extended holiday in the future, it may be wise to consider the fact that **if you are travelling outside of Australia, Centrelink will not provide CCS entitlements for absences once they have surpassed 6 'continuous weeks' in length.** Centrelink will also include our Christmas closure period during their definition of 'continuous weeks away' from the centre if your holidays/absences are immediately adjacent to this closure. Families can use their 42 allowable absences towards short-term travel overseas. However, families will stop being entitled for CCS after 6 weeks overseas until they return to Australia. CCS will also stop once a family has surpassed a total of 42 allowable absences within the current financial year. If your subsidy stops while you're outside Australia, you may have to submit a new claim when you return.

Effectively, this means that once you and your child are away overseas for more than 6 weeks, you will be charged full fees for your child's sessions (during all times the centre is open) in order that your child's placement is maintained at the centre whilst you are away, and ready for you to return to when you arrive back in Australia. If you will be away for longer than 6 weeks overseas **OR** if your total amount of absences within one financial year will surpass 42 absence days due to your scheduled holiday, please allow enough finances to cover **FULL FEES** for your enrolled sessions.

For further information: <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/travel-outside-australia-rules-for-child-care-subsidy?context=41186>

Other Lengthy Absence Periods

If you have been away from the centre for longer than 14 continuous weeks, Centrelink will automatically end your enrolment *within the Centrelink system*. Furthermore, no Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy is payable for any session of care that occurs after the last day a child physically attended care at the provider if the child is absent on their last day of the 14 week period. **This means that any CCS that had been provided during that 14 weeks will be revoked, and you will then need to pay back the resulting balance to the centre. This can sometimes be a significant amount.** Please note that Centrelink will include our Christmas closure period within their definition of '14 weeks away from the centre' if your holidays/absences is immediately adjacent to this closure period. **Please be aware of this, especially when planning holidays close to Christmas, or if you are planning time away from the centre for any reason!** The government will also require you to sign a new 'Complying Written Arrangement' with us before your Child Care Subsidy entitlements can be reinstated. You will then need to acknowledge a new Centrelink enrolment at the centre within MyGov (we will help you with this).

For further information: <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/child-care-subsidy-if-your-child-absent-from-child-care?context=41186>

The information in this document is general in nature based on the usual requirements set out by the Australian Government. The Government has discretion to make exceptions or temporary adjustments to these rules in exceptional circumstances, as has happened in relation to the Covid pandemic. We encourage all families to check the Services Australia website for current information and to contact Centrelink if you have any questions about your specific circumstances.