



## Payment Policies



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## **Policies for Payment to Home Child Caregivers**

Home Child Care Caregivers receive payment based on the child's established enrolled rate. "Payment by enrolment" means that caregivers receive payment for days the child is present and absent according to an established policy.

The attached policies may be amended from time to time by the Home Child Care Program.

The attached policies are intended to reflect the most common billing issues. The Home Child Care Program will provide a final decision on circumstances not specifically dealt with in these policies.

## **Receiving Payment for Care Provided**

- For families who are eligible for subsidy, the subsidy caseworker will determine an enrolled rate for each child's care based on the parent's hours of work or school and transportation needs. Payment will be calculated based on the approved rate schedule and the enrolled rate assigned for each child. Caregivers and parents will receive a Confirmation of Fee Assistance (CFA) letter detailing the approved rate and schedule of care.
- Full fee families choose their own rate of care based on need. Payment will be based on the agreed schedule for each child. Caregivers and parents will receive a Confirmation of Fee Agreement (CFA) letter detailing the agreed upon rate and schedule of care.
- A start date for care in Home Child Care is set by the Home Child Care Consultant.
- Caregivers will record the child's attendance or absence daily, including time of arrival and departure, and include additional comments as required.
- Caregivers will confirm children's attendance prior to all statutory holiday dates.
- Parents must verify their child's attendance and absence by signing the Attendance form (to be submitted by the caregiver electronically by the 5<sup>th</sup> business day of the following month). Parents should ensure that they obtain and keep a copy of the attendance form for their records.
- Caregivers are responsible to collect the parent contribution from the parent and provide receipts. The Region will deduct the parent contribution from the caregiver's payment.
- A direct deposit is made to the caregiver's bank account on the 24<sup>th</sup> of each month for care completed in the previous month.

- Attendance forms must be retained for one year however, Canada Revenue Agency recommends keeping all business records for seven years. Attendance records are considered final after one calendar year and no changes will be made.
- A minimum of one week notice will be given to the caregiver when there is a reduction in the rate of care required.

## **Payment by Enrolment**

The enrolled rate is indicated in the confirmation of Child Care Fee Assistance/ Agreement letter.

Children attending school may have two rates:

- An enrolled rate for when the child is in school.
- A Non Instructional day rate which may include any of the following:
  - March Break
  - Professional Development Days
  - Christmas Break
  - All Statutory Holidays
  - Summer
  - Snow Day

## **Start Date and End Date**

For families receiving Child Care Subsidy, payment will begin on the placement start date and will automatically end on the end date on the Confirmation of Child Care Fee Assistance letter or when the parent is no longer eligible.

For Full Fee Paying families, payment will begin on the placement start date and families are required to provide 2 weeks notice of their plan to end care.

## **Withdrawal with Notice**

Parents and/or Home Child Care staff will, whenever possible, give caregivers a minimum of two weeks notice when a child is leaving the caregiver's care. The caregiver will receive payment for the enrolled days in the 14 day period immediately following the notice. If notice is given before 12 noon, that day will be the first day of notice. In the case of families using varied days/rates, the days of notice will be based on the care used in the previous 14 day period. Parents are responsible for their parent contribution payment during all periods of withdrawal.

## **Withdrawal without Notice**

If a child stops using care without the required two week notice to the caregiver or to the

program, the caregiver will receive payment for the enrolled days in the 14 day period following the child's last day of care. Parents are responsible for their parent contribution payment during all periods of withdrawal.

This notice period will not be paid if a caregiver is unavailable to do care, requests the child to be transferred, if the caregiver's agreement is terminated, or if the child remains in the caregiver's care under a private agreement. If the caregiver is able to fill the space in her home with another child who is placed through the Home Child Care program, the payment cannot be duplicated

In all cases, withdrawal without notice may only be billed with the permission of the Home Child Care Consultant

### **Alternate Care/New Placements**

If a parent confirms an alternate or a new care placement with a caregiver and consultant but the child does not start or the parent does not use the alternate care, the caregiver will receive payment for the expected days in the 7 day period following the expected start date.

This notice period will not be paid if a caregiver is unavailable to do care, requests the child to be transferred, if the caregiver's agreement is terminated, or if the child remains in the caregiver's care under a private agreement. If the caregiver is able to fill the space in her home with another child who is placed through the Home Child Care program, the payment cannot be duplicated.

In all cases, withdrawal without notice may only be billed with the permission of the Home Child Care Consultant

### **Parent Contributions for Families who Receive Child Care Subsidy**

All Parent Contribution payments are the responsibility of the parent to pay directly to the caregiver. Prior to care starting, caregivers and parents will have a conversation to establish a clear understanding of the details of when these payments will be made to the caregiver.

- Parent Contribution payments are assigned per child per day. Parent Contributions are payable for each day the caregiver is eligible to bill. This includes all vacation, absent, sick, statutory holidays and withdrawal without notice days. The only time a parent contribution is not to be paid is when the caregiver is unavailable for care.
- When a family uses alternate care with another caregiver, the alternate caregiver will collect the parent contribution for the days the child was expected. Caregivers must notify their consultant when providing alternate care.

## **Overpayment or Underpayment to Caregivers**

The Region will require reimbursement for any overpayment or provide payment for any underpayment made to caregivers, regardless of why the error in payment was made.

- Home Child Care will verify the error and calculate the amount of overpayment or underpayment. The Region will go back 12 months preceding discovery of the error and calculate the amount owing.
- It is the Region's expectation that recovery of all overpayments will be adjusted on the next payment deposit following the discovery of the error.
- A repayment plan will be negotiated on a case by case basis, if required.
- All repayments will be discussed with the caregiver prior to any deductions being made.
- In the case of underpayments, payments will be made to the caregiver through direct deposit in the earliest possible pay period.
- Interest will not be added to either an overpayment or an underpayment.

## **Absent Day Policies**

### **For Full Fee Families**

Parents will be billed for all absent days including vacation, sick, statutory holidays and withdrawal without notice days according to the agreed upon rate and schedule of care.

These vacation/absent "VAC/ABS" days include all reasons that the child is absent when the child was expected in care and the caregiver was available to do the care. Parents will be billed for days when the child is sick ("S") or during withdrawal without notice ("W") periods.

Examples of absent days that parents will be billed for include:

- parent on vacation
- child vacation (camp, visiting a relative)
- parent has a day off of work (snow day, statutory holiday)
- other occasional absent days

This includes all statutory holidays that occur on the child's regularly scheduled day. Caregivers will confirm children's attendance prior to all statutory holidays.

Caregivers will receive payment for all absent days for sickness, vacation, statutory holidays and withdrawal without notice according to the agreed schedule for each child.

- Caregivers are not eligible for payment for absent days when they are unavailable to do the care
- All vacation/absent "VAC/ABS" days need an explanation written on the attendance register and recorded in WEBROA. A period of 3 absent "AB" days in a row without satisfactory explanation will be considered the beginning of the withdrawal without notice period.

### **Children attending school:**

The Confirmation of Fee Agreement (CFA) letter will specify Non Instructional School Days coverage.

If a parent provides a minimum of one week notice for an absence on a Non Instructional School Day, the child's absence will be billed at the enrolled rate.

If a parent does not provide a minimum of one week notice for an absence on a Non Instructional School Day, the child's absence will be billed at the full day rate.

Summer billing will be at the non-instructional rate or as per parent's schedule when varied.

### **For Families Eligible for Subsidy**

Caregivers will receive payment for days the child is absent up to a maximum of 30 days in a calendar year. Days are based on the calendar year and are prorated for those families whose start date with childcare subsidy is after January 1st.

The vacation/absent "VAC/ABS" days are connected to the child. If the child does not require care on a scheduled day an "absent or vacation" day may be billed by the caregiver. The vacation/absent "VAC/ABS" days belong to the child, not the caregiver.

The table below tells you how the days are adjusted to the starting month:

<b>Starting Month</b>	<b>Number of VAC/ABS Days"</b>
January	30
February	27
March	25
April	22
May	20
June	17
July	15

August	12
September	10
October	7
November	5
December	2

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Examples of days that are eligible for payment include:

- parent and child on vacation
- child vacation (camp, visiting a relative)
- parent has a day off work or school (snow day, statutory holiday)
- other occasional absent days e.g. parent illness

A child may be on vacation for up to 4 weeks in a row. Parents of children who are absent for more than 4 weeks in a row will be referred to the Child Care Subsidy office where their continued eligibility will be determined.

- All vacation/absent "VAC/ABS" days need an explanation written on the attendance register and recorded in WEBROA. A period of 3 absent "AB" days in a row without satisfactory explanation will be considered the beginning of the withdrawal without notice period.
- Caregivers are not eligible for payment for absent days when they are unavailable to do the care or after the prorated vacation/absent "VAC/ABS" total for the calendar year has been used.
- Caregivers may collect payment from the parent for vacation/absent "VAC/ABS" days the child uses that go over the limits in the above table.
- Caregivers who are unclear on the number of absent days a child has used may call their Home Child Care Consultant. (Or check in the WEBROA program. Please refer to WEBROA manual.)
- Statutory holidays may be billed for if the statutory holiday falls on a day that the child normally uses care. If a child is in care on a statutory holiday, the caregiver must fill in the correct rate for the child's hours of care and write an explanation in the comment box on the attendance register, (i.e. child was present). However, if

the caregiver is unavailable or the child was not scheduled to attend, the caregiver cannot bill an absent "AB" day.

Statutory holidays are:

New Years Day	Family Day	Good Friday
Easter Monday	Victoria Day	Canada Day
Civic Holiday	Labour Day	Thanksgiving
Christmas Day	Boxing Day	

### **Sick Days "S"**

Payment will be made to the caregiver if one child in the family is absent due to illness. If siblings are also absent they will be recorded with a sick 'S' on the attendance form. The caregiver must contact the Home Child Care office if the child is absent for 3 days in a row, or earlier if the child has a communicable disease.

### **Children attending school:**

The Confirmation of Fee Assistance (CFA) letter will specify Non Instructional School Days coverage. For families who are eligible for subsidy, absences for Non Instructional School Days will be billed at the full day rate if the child was expected to attend.

If a parent provides a minimum of one week notice for an absence on a Non Instructional School Day, the child's absence will be billed at the enrolled rate.

If a parent does not provide a minimum of one week notice for an absence on a Non Instructional School Day, the child's absence will be billed at the full day rate.

Summer billing will be at the non-instructional rate or as per parent's schedule when varied.

### **Varied Rates**

The rate paid for absent days will be determined either from the approved reason for service or from a sample average billing week (e.g. week before and after).

Parents are to submit a written schedule in advance to the caregiver. This schedule must agree with rates on the Confirmation of Fee Assistance letter. If the child does not use the scheduled care due to his/her sudden illness or the illness of the parent, the

caregiver bills the appropriate sick "S" or absent "AB." The caregiver must give an explanation, along with the expected rate in the comment box on the attendance register.

If the child does not attend because the parent's work schedule has been changed or hours of work have been reduced, absent days may only be claimed if less than 24 hours of notice of the schedule change has been given to the caregiver by the parent.

## **Unusual Situations for Families Eligible for Subsidy**

### **Day Camp**

Children enrolled in a day camp program are not the responsibility of the caregiver during that time. Caregivers may only bill for the time before and after camp if consistent with the Confirmation of Fee Assistance letter. Parents and Caregivers must sign the Camp/ Recreation Agreement Form to confirm the period(s) for which a child will be out of child care attending camp and the caregiver is not eligible to bill.

### **Summer Playground**

Children under 5 years attending a community playground must be accompanied by the caregiver. Children over 5 years who participate in organized park activities, accompanied or unaccompanied by the caregiver, must have the Outdoor Play Supervision Agreement with details of the excursion completed. Caregivers remain responsible for the children at all times. If the parent gives permission for a child over 5 to go to a playground program without the caregiver, the caregiver is still fully responsible for the child and may bill the usual rate.

### **Job Search**

Parents who are already receiving Child Care Subsidy must request and be granted time to look for work by the Subsidy Caseworker. Caregivers will only receive payment if the job search coverage is granted. Approved days and hours of care will be confirmed in a revised Confirmation of Fee Assistance letter. The Home Child Care Consultant will confirm with the caregiver that job search coverage has been granted and that payment will continue.

### **Layoff**

There will be no payment for periods of layoff if two weeks notice has been given. The program will always guarantee notice equal to the enrolled days in a fourteen day period or, in the case of varied rates according to an average fourteen day period. If the layoff

is for more than a week, a term date will be established by the Child Care Subsidy Office.

### **Suspensions**

Caregivers must advise their Consultant immediately when a child is suspended from school. Payment for extended hours of childcare for a child who has been suspended from school may be covered for up to 3 days. Any school suspension longer than 3 days will need to be approved for payment by the HCC supervisor in consultation with the Subsidy supervisor. A plan must be developed for the child's return to school.

### **Labour Strike**

There will be no payment to caregivers during a labour *strike without prior approval from the Child Care Subsidy office.*

### **Parent Illness**

Caregivers can continue to care for a child when the parent is sick. The usual enrolled rate will apply. If the parent informs the caregiver that the illness will require more than three days away from work or school, the caregiver must inform the Home Child Care Consultant. The parent must notify their Child Care Subsidy Caseworker. The Home Child Care Consultant will inform the caregiver of the decision about continued coverage beyond the three days.

## **Some Questions about Caregiver Payment Situations for Families Eligible for Subsidy**

Question: What happens to my payment when all of a child's "Vacation/absent" days have been used?

**Answer:** Caregivers have signed a contract agreeing to adhere to the Region's payment policies. Caregivers will have been paid absent days as per the policy agreed to therefore no additional payment will be made by the Region. Caregivers do not need to submit a bill for pay periods they know will not be paid. Absent days in excess of the number available to be paid should be marked as Non-Paid "NP" on the attendance form and a note is to be added explaining that the child is out of Absent days.. Both the parent and the caregiver should keep track of the number of days used throughout the year. Caregivers may collect payment from the parent for vacation/absent days the child uses that go over the approved limits

**Question:** If a child starts care with one caregiver or child care centre, then transfers to another caregiver part way through the calendar year, does the vacation/absent day count start over?

**Answer:** No. The 30 days are per child per calendar year. Vacation/absent days are prorated for those families who start during the calendar year. Caregivers wondering about the number of vacation/absent days remaining may reference the child's attendance screen on WEBROA . Parents may call the Home Child Care Consultant for the information.

**Question:** During my (the caregiver's) vacation or period of brief illness, how will I be notified if a child's care "ends" or the family chooses to make other child care arrangements?

**Answer:** We will always give you two weeks notice of a child not returning to your home. If you are on vacation, notice will be provided to you (email or mail). Some of this notice period may coincide with the time you are away.

**Question:** If a child ends care at my home on the day before a statutory holiday and starts at a new caregiver the day after, who will be paid for the holiday?

**Answer:** Neither caregiver. The care has stopped in one home and has not yet started in the new location.

**Question:** I am expecting a child to start in my home. I have no communication with the parent or HCC Consultant to confirm that the child is coming. The parent and child do not show up, what can I bill?

**Answer:** Since there is no confirmation of a child starting, you would not submit a bill for payment. This applies to alternate care and to permanent placements.

**Question:** I am expecting a child to start in my home. All arrangements are confirmed with the parent and HCC Consultant. The placement does not start as expected. What do I get paid?

**Answer:** Withdrawal Without Notice. See policy.

**Question:** How is payment handled during caregiver and parent vacations?

**Answer:** If a caregiver and parents agree to be on vacation at the same time, caregivers may bill vacation "V" days for these families. Parents are responsible for paying the daily parent contribution during this period.

If a caregiver advises the parents of the days she will be unavailable and the

parents choose to also take this period as vacation, the caregiver may bill vacation "V" days. Parents are responsible for paying the daily parent contribution during this period.

If a caregiver advises the parents of the days she will be unavailable and the parent requires alternate care or makes private child care arrangements, the caregiver may not bill vacation "V" days. Parents are not responsible for the daily parent contribution during this period.