

Fee relief in community and mobile preschools

In 2026, fee relief is increasing for families who need it the most. Fee relief funding at eligible community and mobile preschools reduces fees by up to \$4,456 per year.



Fee relief is available to children aged 3-5 years old through the 2026 Start Strong for Community Preschools program. Fee relief is paid to the community or mobile preschool you nominate and passed on to you as a reduction to your fees.

Your service will let you know if fee relief has been applied to reduce your fees, such as through a regular invoice or statement.

You will still need to pay any remaining fees and/or levies after the fee relief has been applied.

How is my fee relief calculated?

In 2026, there will be 2 categories of fee relief:

- children eligible for the maximum fee relief rate can receive up to \$4,456 depending on the hours they are enrolled
- all other children can receive up to \$3,565 depending on the hours they are enrolled.

Children eligible for the maximum rate of fee relief are:

1. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.
2. Children from low-income families.
3. Children with disability or additional needs.
4. Children enrolled in a service:
 - in a regional or remote area
 - in an area of greater socio-economic disadvantage, or
 - operated by an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation.

See [Appendix 1.2](#) of the 2026 program guidelines for fee relief rates.

Per child hours of enrolment per year	Indicative average hours per week, based on a 40-week year	Percentage of per child base rate received	Maximum Funding Rate	Other Funding Rate
600 hours or more	15 hours or more	100%	\$4,456	\$3,565
480 to less than 600 hours	12 to less than 15 hours	80%	\$3,565	\$2,852
400 to less than 480 hours	10 to less than 12 hours	70%	\$3,120	\$2,496
320 to less than 400 hours	8 to less than 10 hours	60%	\$2,674	\$2,139
Greater than 240 to less than 320 hours	Greater than 6 to less than 8 hours	50%	\$2,228	\$1,783
240 hours or fewer	6 hours or fewer	40%	\$1,783	\$1,426

- **Example 1:** If your child is enrolled for 15 hours across 2 days a week (based on a 40-week year), and is eligible for the maximum rate of fee relief, your fee relief will be \$4,456 across the year.
- **Example 2:** If your child is enrolled for 15 hours across 2 days a week (based on a 40-week year), and is not eligible for the maximum rate of fee relief, your fee relief will be \$3,565 across the year.
- **Example 3:** If your child is enrolled for 7.5 hours for one day a week (based on a 40-week year), and is eligible for the maximum rate of fee relief, your fee relief will be \$2,228 across the year.
- **Example 4:** If your child is enrolled for 7.5 hours for one day a week (based on a 40-week year), and is not eligible for the maximum rate of fee relief, your fee relief will be \$1,783 across the year.

Can I get fee relief from more than one service?

No, you can only access fee relief from one eligible service at any given time.

An eligible service may include a community preschool or long day care service.

All parents or caregivers are required to complete a declaration form nominating which service you are choosing to receive your fee relief from. Your service will assist with this process. It is your choice which service you would like to receive fee relief from.

What information will I need to provide to access fee relief?

To access fee relief, you will need to complete a declaration form and a consent form and provide them to your service.

You will need to consent to your service sharing some of your child's information with the NSW Department of Education.

Your service will provide you with a declaration form and a consent form which explains what details are required and how the information will be used.

Will preschool continue to be free in 2026?

Community and mobile preschools are responsible for making their own policies, including setting fees and any additional charges, in consultation with their communities.

Fee relief funding supports community and mobile preschools to reduce the cost to families of accessing 600 hours of preschool per year.

What happens if my child is sick and does not attend the service for the day?

Your fee relief is linked to enrolment, not attendance and the amount does not change if your child is sick and does not attend one of their enrolled days. You will still receive reduced fees from your service.

Where can I find more information?

Speak to your service to better understand how the fee relief is being passed on to you.

For more information on fee relief, visit education.nsw.gov.au/startstrong

Contact us by emailing ecec.funding@det.nsw.edu.au