

20 Hours ECE



Information and Guidance

For Parents - Current from 1 July 2010

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GENERAL

What is *20 Hours ECE*?

20 Hours ECE is where the Government will fully fund the cost of early childhood education (ECE) for up to 6 hours per day, and up to 20 hours per week. ECE services cannot charge any fees for hours claimed as *20 Hours ECE*.

When did *20 Hours ECE* start?

20 Hours ECE was launched on 2 July 2007 as Free ECE. All three and four year olds (and five year olds with a transition-to-school plan) were eligible to receive it, and it could be offered by all teacher-led ECE services and some kōhanga reo.

What changes have occurred?

- **from 1 February 2011** teacher-led early childhood services can also ask parents for 'Optional Charges' within their *20 Hours ECE* entitlement for the service having more than 80% registered teachers.
- **from 1 July 2010** five year olds and those attending Playcentres and kōhanga reo are be eligible for 20 hours of ECE without being required to pay fees
- **from 1 March 2009** the requirement for a separate attestation form for *20 Hours ECE* was removed. Parents can now make this declaration within their child's Enrolment Agreement Form. ECE services can choose to use the sample Enrolment Agreement Form contained in the new [ECE Funding Handbook](#) or use their own form, as long it covers all the requirements
- **On 31 January 2009** The Minister of Education renamed the Free ECE 20 hours early childhood education programme as *20 Hours ECE*

Why provide *20 Hours ECE*?

The Government funds *20 Hours ECE* because it believes that giving young children the best possible start in life is vitally important, and that quality ECE builds the lifelong foundations of successful learning.

By reducing the cost to families, *20 Hours ECE* encourages parents to enrol their children in ECE or to increase the time their children spend in ECE. *20 Hours ECE* helps parents to have more choice about how their children can regularly participate in ECE while balancing their role as a parent with other needs (such as work and study).

Why is *20 Hours ECE* up to 20 hours a week?

20 hours a week encourages increased participation in high quality ECE. Research shows that children are likely to benefit more from high quality ECE if their participation is regular and frequent.

Why is it up to six hours a day?

20 Hours ECE is available for up to six hours a day so that it matches how the Government already funds ECE services, which is also for up to six hours per day.

Who is eligible to get *20 Hours ECE*?

All three, four and five year olds enrolled at an ECE service that offers *20 Hours ECE* can get up to six hours per day, up to 20 hours per week of early childhood education where no fee can be charged for those hours. *20 Hours ECE* starts when a child turns three and finishes when they are enrolled in, and attending, school.

When does eligibility to *20 Hours ECE* end?

Children are legally required to be enrolled in school by their sixth birthday. The last day that can be claimed as *20 Hours ECE* is, therefore, the day **before** a child's sixth birthday.

Do five year old children still need a transition-to-school plan?

A transition-to-school plan is no longer required in order for five year old children with special education needs to access *20 Hours ECE*; however the transition-to-school plan is good practice to support children to successfully transition to school with their peers. For more

information about the transition-to-school plan contact Ministry of Education Special Education. Contact details can be found at www.minedu.govt.nz

Can children who are not New Zealand residents be enrolled in 20 Hours ECE?

Yes. Any three, four or five year old child in New Zealand can be enrolled in ECE and receive 20 Hours ECE even if they are not a New Zealand resident or citizen.

Is 20 Hours ECE income tested?

No. 20 Hours ECE is available to any three, four or five year old who is enrolled in a teacher-led ECE service, kōhanga reo or Playcentre that offers 20 Hours ECE. This is regardless of income, ethnicity, work status, immigration status, family situation or any other factor.

Who can offer 20 Hours ECE?

From 1 July 2010 all licensed teacher-led ECE services, kōhanga reo and Playcentres can offer 20 Hours ECE.

What's the difference between teacher-led and parent-led ECE services?

Teacher-led ECE services

A teacher-led ECE service is one where one or more ECE qualified and registered teachers are responsible for the overall programme in the ECE service. A qualified teacher would have a Diploma of Teaching in ECE or an equivalent qualification. A wide range of ECE services are led by teachers, ranging from kindergarten to private ECE services and home-based ECE services.

Parent-led ECE services

In parent-led ECE services, the parents/whānau of the children are primarily responsible for implementing the curriculum and working with the children. The parents/whānau may manage the ECE service. Parent-led ECE services do not usually employ teachers and do not have to meet the teacher registration requirements. Examples of parent-led ECE services include Playcentre, most kōhanga reo and playgroups.

Do ECE services have to offer 20 Hours ECE?

No, it is up to individual eligible ECE services to decide whether they offer 20 Hours ECE.

Why are private ECE services able to offer 20 Hours ECE?

Privately owned ECE services must meet the same licensing requirements and funding rules as community based ECE services in order to be funded by the Ministry of Education. By ensuring that private and community based ECE services are eligible to offer 20 Hours ECE the Government is giving parents a greater choice of ECE services to enrol their children in.

HOW IT WORKS FOR PARENTS

How do I find ECE services in my area that are offering 20 Hours ECE?

You can search the [ECE Listing](#). The ECE Listing provides details of all ECE services in New Zealand and is updated every month. You can search for ECE services in your area and the ones that offer 20 Hours ECE are shown with a flag beside them. You can also restrict your search to show only ECE services that offer 20 Hours ECE in your area.

If you already have an ECE service in mind; you can contact it directly and ask if it offers 20 Hours ECE.

If I am employing my own nanny directly, can I get 20 Hours ECE?

Home-based ECE services are eligible to offer 20 Hours ECE. Home-based ECE services operate in many different ways. Your nanny will need to be part of a licensed home-based ECE service, and the home-based service provider needs to ensure you do not pay fees either to them or the nanny for the hours of 20 Hours ECE. The Ministry of Education provides funding for 20 Hours ECE to ECE services, not to individual people who work for ECE services.

How do I register my child for 20 Hours ECE?

If you would like to register for 20 Hours ECE, you will first need to talk to your child's ECE service. If you have not yet chosen one you can find one in the [ECE Listing](#).

Once you have chosen an ECE service, you will need to complete and sign an Enrolment Agreement Form, and attest (confirm) which days and hours you will claim as your child's *20 Hours ECE* entitlement.

The *20 Hours ECE* attestation may be part of the Enrolment Agreement Form, or a separate form. Your ECE service should give you this to complete shortly before your child turns three (or when you enrol your three, four or five year old). Your ECE service can help you complete the information required. This attestation must be completed before any *20 Hours ECE* can be claimed.

Do I need to tell the Ministry of Education that my child is using *20 Hours ECE*?

No, you are not required to advise the Ministry of Education or send any forms in. Your ECE service claims *20 Hours ECE* funding directly from the Ministry of Education. All you need to do is make sure you are providing your ECE service with the correct information.

Do I need to enrol for a minimum number of days to access *20 Hours ECE*?

The Ministry of Education does not have a minimum number of hours per child that must be claimed to access *20 Hours ECE*; however, some ECE services have enrolment policies which have minimum hours and days of enrolment.

The Ministry of Education does not get involved in ECE service's enrolment policies. These are at the ECE service's discretion and will be set out in your Enrolment Agreement Form. In saying that, ECE services cannot restrict the hours in which it offers *20 Hours ECE* to certain hours or days that it is open. Enrolment policies must apply to all children - not just those using *20 Hours ECE*.

How often do I need to sign the *20 Hours ECE* attestation?

The *20 Hours ECE* attestation needs to be updated and signed by parents every time there is a change to the Enrolment Agreement Form for a child who is receiving *20 Hours ECE*.

Who is responsible for keeping *20 Hours ECE* attestations accurate?

The ECE service and parent are both responsible for this. The ECE service is responsible for ensuring parents know what needs to be done. The parent is responsible for completing the attestation, and providing the ECE service with the correct information.

How is *20 Hours ECE* funding paid?

20 Hours ECE funding is paid directly to ECE services. *20 Hours ECE* payments are aligned with the current funding system. Paying money directly to ECE services rather than to parents means parents don't need to directly apply for funding, and ensures that the money goes towards providing high quality ECE.

What can I claim as *20 Hours ECE*?

You can select any hours during the week to use as *20 Hours ECE*, as long as:

- they are hours that your child is enrolled to attend an ECE service, and
- they do not exceed six hours a day and 20 hours a week.

Can I use *20 Hours ECE* at more than one ECE service?

Yes. If your child attends more than one eligible ECE service, you may split the hours claimed across both ECE services, as long as:

- no more than 20 hours a week and six hours a day are being claimed, and
- you do not claim the same hours twice.

What will the Government do if parents access more than 20 hours a week?

Parents who are proven to have made a false declaration on attestations may be prosecuted under the Crimes Act 1961. ECE services will not be penalised (and will not have funding removed) if false claims have been made by parents (provided ECE services follow the correct process to ensure attestations are completed, signed, and kept up to date).

What if my child is absent?

ECE services cannot charge fees for the hours claimed as *20 Hours ECE*. This applies whether the child attends or not and whether the ECE service is open or not.

ECE services can claim *20 Hours ECE* funding for your child for up to three weeks after their first absence. If your child is frequently absent you will need to update your Enrolment Agreement Form and attestation to ensure you can continue to receive *20 Hours ECE* for your child.

What do I need to do if I change my child's ECE hours?

If you change your child's ECE arrangements with your ECE service, you must update your child's Enrolment Agreement Form and attestation.

Can I carry 20 Hours ECE hours over if I don't use them in one week?

No. Your child can access up to six hours a day to a maximum of 20 hours a week of *20 Hours ECE*. You cannot carry these hours over to another week.

If the ECE service my child currently goes to closes for the school holidays, can I use 20 Hours ECE at another ECE service, during the school holiday breaks?

Yes. If the ECE service that your child attends closes for school holidays, you can use those *20 Hours ECE* hours at another ECE service.

To do this, you must enrol your child and complete a new attestation (or update the child's existing attestation) at the ECE service that your child will attend during the school holidays to show the hours of *20 Hours ECE*.

What is available for children that cannot access 20 Hours ECE?

The Government provides significant support for ECE participation. The main forms of funding are:

- the **ECE Funding Subsidy** – this is for all children who attend licensed ECE services. This subsidy assists ECE services with cost of providing ECE, so that parents do not have to pay full cost. ECE services receive this funding directly from the Ministry of Education, and
- the Work and Income **Childcare Subsidy** – this is for families who have incomes below certain limits.

What is the Childcare Subsidy?

Where parents are charged fees for hours outside of *20 Hours ECE* and have income below certain limits, they may be eligible for Work and Income's **Childcare Subsidy** to help cover their childcare costs. The Childcare Subsidy can be claimed up to 28 days after a child's fifth birthday. For more information on the Childcare Subsidy, refer to www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz or call 0800 559 009.

Can I claim the Childcare Subsidy and 20 Hours ECE?

- Childcare Subsidy cannot be paid for the same hours that *20 Hours ECE* is claimed,
- Every hour of *20 Hours ECE* claimed reduces the Childcare Subsidy entitlement by one hour,
- Parents eligible for the Childcare Subsidy can choose between the Childcare Subsidy and *20 Hours ECE*, and
- Parents can receive a mix of *20 Hours ECE* and the Childcare Subsidy if their Childcare Subsidy entitlement is for more hours than the *20 Hours ECE* hours.

Example 1

A parent is entitled to 50 hours of Childcare Subsidy and claims 18 hours of *20 Hours ECE*. The parent is still entitled to Childcare Subsidy for the remaining 32 hours.

Example 2

A parent previously received nine hours of Childcare Subsidy, but now chooses to claim 12 hours of *20 Hours ECE*. The parent now receives 12 hours of *20 Hours ECE*, but no Childcare Subsidy hours can be claimed anymore as the nine hours have been replaced by *20 Hours ECE*.

More information on the Childcare Subsidy can be found at www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz or by calling 0800 559 009.

What will happen to my fees for ECE?

ECE services cannot charge fees for the hours of *20 Hours ECE*; however they can require you to pay fees for your child's other hours of enrolment. ECE services may set fees on an hourly, daily, sessional, or weekly basis. The ECE service must be able to show you how it is only charging you fees for the hours outside of *20 Hours ECE*.

Can ECE services increase their fees for the other hours, outside of 20 Hours ECE?

Outside *20 Hours ECE*, ECE services determine their fee levels. If ECE services' costs rise, it is reasonable to expect that their fees may rise also, to ensure the ECE service remains sustainable.

What if I think the fees my ECE service is charging are too high?

The first thing you should do is discuss the fees with your ECE service and request an explanation for the fee increase or fee levels. If your concerns are not addressed, you can make a complaint to the ECE service under their complaints policy. If you have concerns about how the ECE service is responding to your complaint, you should then contact your local Ministry of Education office.

What will the Ministry do if ECE services charge fees for 20 Hours ECE?

In the first instance, you should discuss the charges with the ECE service. If these concerns are not addressed, you can make a complaint with the ECE service under their complaints policy. If your concerns are still not resolved then you should contact your local Ministry of Education office.

The Ministry may contact the ECE service to discuss the nature of the complaint. If the complaint is upheld, the Ministry will encourage the ECE service to rethink their fees policy. If the ECE service does not rectify the problem (i.e. by either refunding money to the parents, or by not claiming *20 Hours ECE* funding for the period which they charged fees), then:

- the Ministry Resourcing Audit team may become involved and *20 Hours ECE* funding may be recovered;
- the ECE service may be prevented from claiming *20 Hours ECE* funding in future.

Can the Ministry help me if I have problems with my ECE service?

The Ministry responds to parent's complaints about ECE services. In the first instance, the Ministry checks that parents have discussed their complaint with their ECE service. If the complaint is about breaches of *20 Hours ECE* funding rules, the Ministry will discuss the *20 Hours ECE* rules with the ECE service to ensure they are being correctly followed.

Where can I find more information about 20 Hours ECE?

More information about *20 Hours ECE* can be found at www.minedu.govt.nz/parents. The Ministry's '*20 Hours ECE* Information for Parents' sheet is available to download.

You can also ask for more information from your ECE service as they should be able to explain the rules and may provide you with a copy of the '*20 Hours ECE* Information for Parents' sheet.

Who can I contact if I have questions about 20 Hours ECE?

General information about *20 Hours ECE* can be found at www.minedu.govt.nz/parents.

If you have further queries and your child is already enrolled in ECE, you should speak to your ECE service.

If your query is about your ECE service, contact your local Ministry of Education office. Contact details can be found at www.minedu.govt.nz or are listed in your local phone book.

If your child is not enrolled in ECE, or your ECE service is unable to answer your questions, you can email 20hoursece@minedu.govt.nz, or call 0800 ECE (0800 323 323).

FEES

What fees can ECE services charge?

ECE services are not able to charge fees for the hours of *20 Hours ECE*, but they are able to charge fees for the hours outside the *20 Hours ECE* for three, four and five year olds, and for other children, as is standard practice.

Why can't ECE services charge fees for 20 Hours ECE?

A condition of claiming *20 Hours ECE* funding is that the hours provided as *20 Hours ECE* are free of compulsory fees. This means that parents must not pay a compulsory fee for the hours claimed as *20 Hours ECE*.

What if parents directly pay the wages of their home-based educator?

Parents must not pay a compulsory fee for the hours claimed as *20 Hours ECE*, either to the service provider or to the educator. If this occurs, the service provider must fully reimburse parents for the compulsory fees they have paid for the hours covered by *20 Hours ECE*.

Can an ECE service charge fees for hours on public holidays that would normally be 20 Hours ECE?

No. ECE services cannot charge any fees for access to *20 Hours ECE* – even on public holidays.

If a child was enrolled for a public holiday and those hours were attested as *20 Hours ECE* - no fees can be charged. The funding rates for *20 Hours ECE* already take into account costs incurred by services on public holidays.

Can ECE services charge a one off administration fee to cover the cost of administering 20 Hours ECE?

No. Parents must not be charged fees for *20 Hours ECE*. ECE services must not charge an administration fee to set up *20 Hours ECE*.

Can ECE services charge a one off enrolment fee?

A one off enrolment fee can be charged provided the enrolment fee is not just for children receiving *20 Hours ECE* funding or an additional fee for an enrolled child moving to receiving *20 Hours ECE*. A one off enrolment fee can be charged because ECE services are able to set their own enrolment policies, and this can include a one off fee to cover the purchase of items such a book on your ECE service's philosophy or the purchase of portfolio folders.

ECE services offering *20 Hours ECE* must ensure any one off enrolment fee does not prevent children from accessing *20 Hours ECE*.

Can services continue to charge to put people's names on our waiting lists?

ECE services can continue to charge a fee for putting children on their waiting list.

OPTIONAL CHARGES AND DONATIONS

What is an Optional Charge?

An Optional Charge is a request for a payment for specific additional features. Parents can choose whether or not to pay Optional Charges depending on whether they want the additional feature. ECE services cannot request parents pay an Optional Charge for aspects that are required by regulation.

When an ECE service requests this type of payment from a parent, they must specify the extra activities or items covered by the Optional Charge. Such activities may include weekly visits by a dance or music teacher or excursions to the zoo. Items may include things parents could provide themselves, such as food, sunscreen and sunhats. Optional charges can also be asked for higher adult:child ratios than required by regulation.

From 1 February 2011 teacher-led early childhood services can also ask parents for 'Optional Charges' within their *20 Hours ECE* entitlement for the service having more than 80% registered teachers (based on the funding rate they receive).

Are there areas of provision that ECE services cannot include as an Optional Charge?

Yes. ECE services cannot request an Optional Charge for any of the following:

- aspects of ECE provision required by regulation,
- general contributions towards the cost of high quality education and care provided by the service, or due to the service being well regarded and popular; **or**
- having a higher proportion of ECE qualified and registered teachers than is required by regulation (this is because the cost of qualified and registered teachers is recognised in the ECE Funding Subsidy rates through the Staff Hour Count) – Applies until 1 February 2011.
 - However, from 1 February 2011 teacher-led early childhood services can ask parents for 'Optional Charges' within their *20 Hours ECE* entitlement for the service having more than 80% registered teachers, as from that date the Ministry will no longer be funding the costs associated with employing more than 80% registered teachers in its funding rates.

How do ECE services record a parent's agreement to pay an Optional Charge?

ECE services must record a parent's agreement to pay an Optional Charge on the Enrolment Agreement Form and this must be signed and dated by the parent.

The Ministry's sample Enrolment Agreement Form contains all the required information that must be included if an ECE service has an Optional Charge. The Enrolment Agreement Form must include:

- advice to parents that payment of the Optional Charge is voluntary and there is no penalty for non-payment, but if parents agree to pay an Optional Charge the payment can be enforced or the additional features paid for by the Optional Charge withdrawn,
- a list of the specific items covered by the Optional Charge, and
- information on the duration of the Optional Charge agreement and how the parent can change their agreement to pay an Optional Charge.

What can ECE services do if parents do not agree to pay Optional Charges?

Optional Charges are not compulsory. Agreement to pay an Optional Charge cannot be a condition of initial or continued enrolment.

If a parent does not agree to pay Optional Charges, ECE services can withhold the additional features paid for by the Optional Charge. By agreeing not to pay parents are agreeing to not have access to the additional activities or items.

Some ECE services might not stop children from getting the additional activities or items, but they are within their rights to exclude a child from these extras.

Do ECE services have to give parents the chance to change their minds about Optional Charges? How often?

The Optional Charges agreement between ECE services and parents must include how long the agreement will last, and what the rules are about making changes to the agreement. ECE services need to provide 'reasonable opportunities' for parents to change their minds: what is reasonable will differ, but in most cases parents should have at least one opportunity to opt out. Either parents or the ECE service may initiate a change to the agreement, but both must agree on the changes.

ECE services cannot make agreement to pay an Optional Charge a condition of initial or continued enrolment.

What can ECE services do if parents stop paying Optional Charges?

If a parent has agreed to pay an Optional Charge, and has stopped paying without following the ECE service's review process, the ECE service can enforce the payment just as it would enforce a fee normally, or it can withdraw the additional activities or items paid for by the Optional Charge.

If parents stop paying Optional Charges it would be reasonable to give parents the opportunity to change their minds about receiving the additional features covered by the charge. Parents must continue to pay the Optional Charge until both parties agree to changes.

Do Optional Charges need to be approved by the Ministry?

ECE services can set their own Optional Charges, and it's good practice for ECE services to talk with parents and check their willingness to pay. The Ministry will only become involved if a parent is charged fees for *20 Hours ECE*, the Optional Charge is for activities or items required by regulation, or if parents are compelled to pay Optional Charges that they have not agreed to in writing.

Can ECE services still request donations? What is a donation?

ECE services can ask for a donation from parents, whether their children access *20 Hours ECE* or not. A donation is a voluntary contribution. There is no obligation to contribute and no enforcement of payment. Parents do not have to pay donations, but may wish to do so to support their ECE service.

HOW IT WORKS FOR ECE SERVICES

What support is available to ECE services deciding to offer *20 Hours ECE*?

ECE services should contact their local Ministry of Education office for assistance when deciding to offer *20 Hours ECE*.

There is also a range of online resources which ECE services can work through in their own time. These can be found at www.lead.ece.govt.nz.

These include:

- the new [ECE Funding Handbook](#),
- The *20 Hours ECE* Information for Parents sheet, and
- Self Paced Learning Modules for *20 Hours ECE*, the RS7 form, Absence rules and the Staff Hour Count.

Do ECE services need to change how they make decisions about who to enrol in order to offer *20 Hours ECE*?

No, the Ministry does not interfere in ECE services' enrolment policies. ECE services are required to have policies relating to governance and management, including enrolment and complaints. ECE services should discuss their enrolment policy with parents to prevent misunderstanding, and should ensure that their policies are non-discriminatory.

My ECE service doesn't currently accept fees from parents; can it offer *20 Hours ECE*?

If parents do not have to pay ECE services or anyone else to access ECE through an ECE service, then the ECE service can claim *20 Hours ECE*.

If parents have to pay someone else to access ECE through an ECE service (e.g. a home-based ECE service, where parents pay an educator rather than the ECE service), then the ECE service cannot claim *20 Hours ECE* until they ensure that parents do not have to pay for *20 Hours ECE*.

What Optional Charges can my service ask for?

Services can ask for Optional Charges for items or services above what they are required to provide in the regulations. Optional Charges must be for something specific. Examples could include food, a specialist teacher, higher adult:child ratios than required by regulation, or transport.

From 1 February 2011 teacher-led services can ask Optional Charges for having more than 80% registered teachers.

A service can ask parents to pay an Optional Charge for having more than 80% registered teachers if its most recent Ministry of Education payment advice notice advises that the service falls into the 80%+ funding band.

Once a payment advice notice advises a service that it has fallen into a lower funding band (e.g. 50-79%) the service can no longer ask parents to pay Optional Charges for having more than 80% registered teachers. These notices are received at the time of each funding drop every 4 months – so a service on regular funding would at the very most have to stop or resume asking for this Optional Charge three times a year.

Is it worth it for Playcentres to implement this policy?

Playcentres need to make that choice. The Playcentre Federation asked to be included in the 20 Hours ECE policy and this was granted by Government, effective from 1 July 2010.

How does my ECE service opt in to *20 Hours ECE*?

ECE services can choose to start offering *20 Hours ECE* at any time. ECE services 'opt in' to *20 Hours ECE* by claiming hours of *20 Hours ECE* funding.

If your ECE service is claiming *20 Hours ECE* you need to ensure it meets all the *20 Hours ECE* rules for the whole of that time. You must have current signed Enrolment Agreement Forms and *20 Hours ECE* attestations for every child your ECE service is claiming this funding for.

More information on how to start *20 Hours ECE* can be found in the question: "How do ECE services receive their first *20 Hours ECE* funding?"

How early do parents need to sign the attestation before the ECE service can claim 20 Hours ECE?

20 Hours ECE can be claimed from the day a parent has a completed and signed an Enrolment Agreement Form and attestation for *20 Hours ECE* in place for their child. *20 Hours ECE* cannot be claimed retrospectively.

What funding does an ECE service offering 20 Hours ECE claim?

Where a child is eligible to receive *20 Hours ECE*, is attending a participating *20 Hours ECE* service and has a completed and signed attestation, the service will claim the *20 Hours ECE* funding rate, instead of the ECE Funding Subsidy rate, for up to 6 hours per day, up to 20 hours per week, **per child**.

Where the child attends for additional hours over and above the *20 Hours ECE* hours, the *Plus 10 ECE* funding rate is claimed for up to 10 hours per week (ie a combined maximum across *20 Hours ECE* and *Plus 10 ECE* of 6 hours a day and 30 hours per week).

What is Plus 10 ECE and how do ECE services claim it?

Plus 10 ECE funding is paid at the same rate as the '2 and over' ECE Funding Subsidy. *Plus 10 ECE* has a different name because the eligible hours are counted differently.

The ECE Funding Subsidy is available for up to 6 hours per **child place** per day; but the *Plus 10 ECE* funding is available for up to 6 hours **per child** per day, and is only for children who are receiving *20 Hours ECE* at an ECE service.

How do ECE services receive their first 20 Hours ECE funding?

An ECE service might claim *20 Hours ECE* in advance or after beginning to provide *20 Hours ECE*, according to what suits it best.

By completing the *20 Hours ECE* funding advance claim (EC20) form some ECE services can choose to be funded in advance for their first *20 Hours ECE* claim. Playcentres and kōhanga reo have agreed not to apply for this advance funding for *20 Hours ECE*. ECE services may opt in at any time but can only receive an initial advance payment on a regular funding cycle payment date (1 March, 1 July or 1 November).

More information about funding and advances can be found in the [ECE Funding Handbook](#) and in the Self Paced Learning Module: Understanding *20 Hours ECE*.

How does 20 Hours ECE affect the way an ECE service accounts for absent children?

When a casual child is replacing an absent child who is receiving *20 Hours ECE* and an ECE service continues to claim *20 Hours ECE* funding in respect of the absence, the ECE service may not charge fees for the casual enrolment. Alternatively the ECE service could charge a fee and claim the ECE Funding Subsidy for the absent child. See the [ECE Funding Handbook](#) for more information on absences.

Can ECE services charge fees when they can no longer claim 20 Hours ECE for a child due to the child being absent (e.g. a child is absent for 3 or more weeks)?

The requirements for funding, including absences are included in the [ECE Funding Handbook](#). When an ECE service is no longer able to claim *20 Hours ECE* for a child the ECE service may charge fees to retain the child place.

How do multiple enrolments affect my ECE service?

If a child is enrolled in more than one ECE service, their parent can split their *20 Hours ECE* between the ECE services, or choose to allocate all hours to one ECE service.

This may mean that even if a child is enrolled for less than twenty hours at your ECE service, all their enrolled hours may not be able to be claimed as *20 Hours ECE*. This is of particular importance to sessional ECE services such as Playcentres that operate for less than 20 hours per week.

Can parents split 20 Hours ECE across several ECE services in amounts under an hour?

Yes, parents can split the up to 20 hours into amounts that are less than a full hour. For example, in one day a child may receive 2 and $\frac{1}{4}$ hours at Service A and 3 and $\frac{3}{4}$ hours at Service B, which is under the maximum of 6 hours per day. For ECE services processing their funding claims at the end of each funding period, they will add up all their Funded Child Hours (including part hours) and then round the total.

What do ECE services do if a child opts out of 20 Hours ECE?

If a child opts out of receiving *20 Hours ECE* at your ECE service, even though they are still attending and eligible to receive *20 Hours ECE*, you should ensure the Enrolment Agreement Form is changed so that it accurately records the date that they stopped receiving *20 Hours ECE*.

This situation might occur if a child changes to using the Childcare Subsidy, or if parents decide to attest their hours of *20 Hours ECE* to a different service.

Can my ECE service opt out of 20 Hours ECE? And how do we do this?

If an ECE service decides to stop providing *20 Hours ECE*, it would stop claiming *20 Hours ECE* on its RS7 form.

We recommend you discuss that decision with parents well before the date you stop offering *20 Hours ECE*. This will give parents the opportunity to review their budget to see if they can cover the additional fees as they will no longer receive *20 Hours ECE* from your ECE service.

Any advance *20 Hours ECE* funding your ECE service might have received would be reconciled in the next funding payment.

What happened to the 28 day rule for five year olds?

The **28 day rule** is no longer applicable because all five year olds are now eligible for *20 Hours ECE* until they attend school. As children are legally required to be enrolled in and attending school by their sixth birthday, this rule cannot be applied in the same manner to six year olds.

The 28 day rule for five year olds still applies to Work and Income's Childcare Subsidy –

More information on the Childcare Subsidy can be found at www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz or by calling 0800 559 009.

Where can ECE services get more 20 Hours ECE Attestation Forms?

20 Hours ECE Attestation Forms are no longer in print, as these separate forms are no longer required. The attestation information can now be included in your service's Enrolment Agreement Form. A sample Enrolment Agreement Form (which has all the required information) can be found on www.lead.ece.govt.nz.

Where can ECE services get more 20 Hours ECE Parent Information Booklets?

Parent Information Booklets are no longer in print, however, the replacement document: '*20 Hours ECE* Information for Parents' is available on www.lead.ece.govt.nz, and ECE services are encouraged to print this document to provide to parents.

FUNDING

What are the 20 Hours ECE funding rates?

The current funding rates for *20 Hours ECE* can be found at <http://www.lead.ece.govt.nz/ManagementInformation/Funding/>.

What are the 20 Hours ECE funding rates based on?

20 Hours ECE funding rates are based on the costs faced by ECE services, rather than the fees that ECE services receive from parents. 20 Hours ECE funding rates are based on 100 percent of the average cost of ECE provision to the regulated standard.

How often are the funding rates updated?

All ECE funding rates, including the 20 Hours ECE funding rates, are decided by Cabinet. They are reviewed annually through the Government's Budget process. The funding rates are usually adjusted annually at 1 July to take account of increases to the cost of ECE provision.

The Ministry will continue to seek ECE services' input through regular Operating Cost surveys and other ways such as through its Early Childhood Advisory Committee.

Why are there so many different funding rates?

The 20 Hours ECE funding rates reflect the existing ECE Funding Subsidy rate structure, and ensure that the funding system reflects the diverse ECE sector in New Zealand. There are different rates for different ECE service types, because they face varying costs.

What information is used to calculate the funding rates?

The rate is based on the data provided by ECE services in their Operating Cost surveys.

Examples of operating costs include educational resources, administration costs, professional services, utilities, and teachers' salaries. 20 Hours ECE rates also include funding for capital and property costs, such as rent and mortgage repayments and replacement of assets.

Why are there not regional differences in the rates?

When the operating cost information was collected, the Ministry found no evidence of consistent higher costs in any region. The information showed that the main differences in cost were due to the type of ECE service and proportions of registered teachers – both of which are both taken into account in 20 Hours ECE funding rates.

What should ECE services with high costs do?

For some ECE services that have higher than average costs or provide additional features, the 20 Hours ECE funding rates may not cover all costs. 20 Hours ECE has been designed to be flexible so that ECE services in this situation can consider options such as introducing Optional Charges for additional items or provision over the regulated standard, or requesting donations. This allows ECE services to continue to offer the level of provision their parents want, at the same time as offering 20 Hours ECE.

MONITORING

How many ECE services are offering 20 Hours ECE?

More ECE services are choosing to offer 20 Hours ECE each month and the Ministry of Education is continuing to provide support to ECE services.

Reports on the uptake of 20 Hours ECE are available [here](#).

Additional data about ECE, including more about 20 Hours ECE can be found [here](#).

What if there are not enough ECE places for children to enrol in 20 Hours ECE?

The Government expects ECE services to respond to demand for extra provision in most areas. 20 Hours ECE has been designed to be flexible so that ECE services can choose how it can work best for them and the parents who use them. Ultimately, the Ministry cannot require ECE services to offer 20 Hours ECE, and does not promise access to 20 Hours ECE for children.

How is 20 Hours ECE monitored?

- The number and location of ECE services providing 20 Hours ECE, and the Government spend on 20 Hours ECE are monitored through funding claims
- An indication of the number and ages of children receiving 20 Hours ECE in each ECE service is monitored through a question in funding claim forms
- ECE services' funding claims are audited to monitor and ensure compliance

- The number and type of questions and comments the Ministry receives about *20 Hours ECE* are monitored
- There are *20 Hours ECE* questions in the RS61 annual data collection

The Ministry also carries out random audits in local areas by comparing the attestations from the ECE services, to ensure that parents are not getting more than 20 hours of *20 Hours ECE* per week.

Does the Ministry monitor fees?

The Ministry monitors changes in fees through an enhanced Consumers' Price Index component for ECE to ensure ECE services do not unreasonably increase fees for non-*20 Hours ECE* hours.