



# BRINGING YOUR FAMILY TO AUSTRALIA

**A guide to bringing your family members with you to Australia while you are studying at the University of Sydney.**



Congratulations! You have been accepted to one of the world's leading higher education institutions. We are delighted you have chosen to continue your studies at the University of Sydney.

Before you leave home, there are a few arrangements you need to make or plan for if you are bringing your family with you from overseas.

This guide aims to give you a deeper understanding of how things work in Australia in terms of childcare and schooling that may differ from your home country.



## CHILDCARE



Childcare can be a stress point for parents in Sydney. You may find that the system of childcare is quite different in Australia compared to your home country.

### Childcare in Australia

In Australia all childcare centres, including family daycare, must register with the Department of Family and Community Services and meet the National Quality Standards to ensure safe and quality care for children and families. The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) is responsible for ensuring family daycare providers deliver high levels of care under the National Quality Framework. Carers must meet national standards in early childhood education and care, as well as planning, administration and communication requirements. All carers must also pass a police or criminal history check prior to commencing work in family daycare and must be fully insured, have a current first aid certificate and maintain a safe environment.

Some things to consider when choosing childcare arrangements are:

- the age and interests of your child
- the hours of care you require
- whether you work/study full-time or part-time
- whether you need regular or occasional care
- the geographic location of the service
- whether you have a car or need to rely on public transport.

[My child website](#) includes a searchable database of local child care centres as well as a fact sheet that may help with important childcare decisions.

### Applications

Waiting lists for any type of childcare in Sydney can be very long, especially for children under two. Depending on your circumstances, **you may be on the waiting list for up to two years**. Submit as many applications as you can to different childcare centres around the area you live or are planning to live in and nearby campus. Submitting waiting list applications are usually free of charge.

If you're coming to Sydney University from abroad, you should submit your waiting list application before leaving your home country.



## Fees

Childcare fees will vary depending on individual providers, the type of care they offer and what it is included in the fee, including whether food and nappies are provided.

The prices can vary from \$70/day to \$180/day. It is important to budget this before planning to move to Australia with your family.

Most international students are not eligible for **Child Care Subsidy** therefore are liable for paying the full fee per day.

However, international students who receive direct financial assistance through an Australian government scholarship may be eligible to receive the child care subsidy depending on their circumstances. Refer to the **residence rules** to see whether you are eligible for fee assistance.

### Childcare on campus

There are 4 childcare centres located close to the main Camperdown/Darlington Campus and 1 centre located close to Cumberland Campus. You can view further details on our [childcare information website](#).

Whether you choose a preschool, daycare, occasional care or any private arrangement, finding the type of child care that best suits the needs of your child and family is an important factor in the successful placement of your child in a children's service.

### Types of Children's Services:

- Long daycare
- Family daycare
- Preschool
- Occasional care
- Private arrangements

Understanding the difference in service types may help you in your decision making.

#### ○ Long daycare (for children aged 0-5)

Long daycare centres, also known as childcare centres, are primarily for children from birth—to—5 years old. They're run by private companies, local councils, community organisations, individuals, non-profit organisations or by employers for their staff. Generally, they're located in a building or part of a building that's been created specifically for the purpose, and the children are usually grouped in rooms according to age and developmental stage.

Childcare centres are run by a mix of professional and other staff, and most have an early education component to their programme. They usually operate between 7:30am and 6:00pm, and many offer meals throughout the day.

Find your nearest childcare [here](#).

#### ○ Family daycare (for children aged 0-12)

A family daycare service is a network of trained and registered educators who provide care for other people's children in their own homes. Educators have been carefully selected, supervised and operate under the Education and Care Services National Regulations and receive regular compliance checks. With family daycare, children aged between 6 weeks and 12 years are nurtured in a small group setting and, through the educators' individualised programming, are encouraged to further develop their skills and knowledge. Family daycare services offer very flexible hours, and provide children with the comfort of a nurturing home environment.

Find your nearest family daycare [here](#).



### ○ **Preschool (for children aged 3-6)**

Preschools are government approved services and provide early education and care for children aged between 3 and 6 years. Some are licensed to take children as young as 2 years of age.

Most preschools operate in line with public school terms but can have varying attendance patterns – many operate between 9.00am and 3.00pm, some between 8.00am and 4.00pm, and others have morning and afternoon sessions.

Most preschools are community-based not-for-profit services. They employ professional teachers and educators who run their programs and manage the preschool in collaboration with parents on the management committee.

To learn more about preschools and early childhood education, visit [mychild.gov.au](http://mychild.gov.au)

You can use the online tool to find preschools that are stand alone or part of a school. You can search by location (state, region, suburb, town, or postcode).

### ○ **Occasional care**

**Occasional Care (OCC)** is a centre-based form of childcare. OCC services are responsive to the needs of the general community and provide flexible care which allows parents to meet their work-related and non-work-related commitments. Families can access OCC regularly on a sessional basis, or intermittently as required. OCC services do not offer full-time, all day care except in extenuating circumstances. OCC provides families with the flexibility to leave children in an early childhood learning environment on days and hours that best meets their needs. OCC can provide care at short notice and immediate emergency care depending on availability. OCC services charge fees that reflect the amount of time a child spends in care. OCC is available to all children, however most of the children in care will not have started school.

### ○ **Private arrangements**

#### **Ongoing**

Nannies and au pairs (a non-Australian resident with a temporary working visa) provide childcare in your home, often in a live-in situation. They may also provide additional home duties including cooking and light cleaning. Depending on your individual arrangements and needs, a nanny or au pair may provide childcare at any time of the day or night, including on weekends and during school holidays, often working 25-35 hours per week. The cost of nannies and au pairs can vary widely depending on whether they are employed on a weekly salary or hourly rate, and whether their pay includes any food or board.

Nannies and au pairs can be sourced privately or through a specialised recruitment agency that can simplify the process and assist you to find an experienced, qualified carer for a fee.

#### **Casual**

Babysitters offer short term, occasional care arrangements, usually in your own home.

Babysitters are not generally expected to be qualified and offer their services at a negotiated hourly rate, usually paid cash in hand.

Babysitters are often students or local people with other commitments and undertake babysitting as a casual work opportunity, so their availability can be variable but can often be arranged at short notice. Babysitters are often recommended by word-of-mouth or can be found on a range of websites, some that include a vetting process to assist you to locate a carer that meets your needs.

Some websites/agencies to assist you to locate a nanny, au pair or babysitter include:

- [Find a babysitter](#)
- [Juggle Street](#)
- [Sitr](#)
- [The Nanny Collective](#)

**Please note:** if you make private childcare arrangements you are generally not eligible for any Childcare Subsidy from the Australian government.



## SCHOOLING INFORMATION



In New South Wales schooling is compulsory for all children aged 5 to 17 years. **By law all children must be enrolled in school by their 6th birthday.**

### Types of schools in NSW

There are two types: NSW government operated schools (also known as public schools) and independent private schools.

#### ○ NSW public schools

As an international student studying in New South Wales you can enrol your dependent children in NSW government schools (public schools). Your dependent children can only be enrolled while you are studying full-time in New South Wales and your children's enrolment must not exceed the period stated on the visa.

Government schools have strict enrolment zones (or catchment areas) where students must live to be eligible to enrol at the school. Use this [school finder](#) to find your nearest school.

### Enrolment requirements

Temporary residents must hold a valid visa and meet the [General conditions of enrolment](#) to enrol in a NSW government school.

For enrolment conditions of each visa subclass, refer to the [Visa subclasses and enrolment conditions](#) fact sheet.

### Fees

Most temporary resident students pay the temporary resident administration fee and education fee to enrol in a NSW government school. Students, on a full scholarship who are studying a Post Graduate Doctorate (PhD) at Sydney University or an Australia Awards Scholar could be eligible for a fee exemption. View [Education Fee](#) fact sheet for more information.

### How to apply

You will need to register your child with the NSW Department of Education International (DEI) by filling out the [Application form for an Authority to Enrol](#).

You will need to attach proof of your child's DEI registration to your application for your dependents' visa. Registering your children with DEI does not mean they are enrolled in a specific school: this will depend on where you will live in Sydney and you will be able to arrange this once you settle in. DEI registration can take some time, so you should begin this process as early as possible.



## o Independent private schools

The term 'private school' refers to any primary or secondary school that is not administered by the State government.

Independent private schools do not have enrolment zones but many have long waiting lists. Some private schools have specific entry and eligibility criteria and may require applicants to take a qualifying entrance exam. Independent private schools set their own school fees and are often very expensive.

There are around 500 private schools in Sydney. You can find a list of private schools in Sydney [here](#).

## How schooling is organised in NSW

### Learning stages

Schooling in NSW is organised into seven stages of learning across primary and secondary school.

Primary School from Kindergarten to Year 6 (K-6) encompasses four stages of learning:

- Early Stage or Foundation = Kindergarten (starting from five years of age)
- Stage 1 = Years 1 and 2
- Stage 2 = Years 3 and 4
- Stage 3 = Years 5 and 6

Secondary School from Year 7 to Year 12 (High School) encompasses three stages of learning:

- Stage 4 = Years 7 and 8 (starting around 12 years of age)
- Stage 5 = Years 9 and 10 (eligible for the Record of School Achievement or RoSA from around 16 years of age)
- Stage 6 = Years 11 and 12 or High School (finishing around 18 years of age)

### School terms

The NSW school year usually begins late January each year and is broken up into four terms of approximately 10 weeks.

Each term is separated by holidays of around two weeks. The school year finishes in December (the exact date depends on the school and sector)

and is followed by a break of five to six weeks before the next school year begins.

Check school [term and holiday](#) dates for NSW public schools.

## English as a second language

There are no English language entry requirements for primary school children from Kindergarten to Year 5.

For students in Year 6, going into high school, and Year 7 to Year 12, English language proficiency is a requirement.

If your child speaks a language other than English as their first language and they are not proficient then they may be eligible to attend intensive English lessons that run for 10 to 12 weeks.

- [Chatswood Intensive English Centre](#)
- [Marrickville Intensive English Centre](#)

TAFE NSW Institutes also provide English Preparation for high school students.

- [Sydney Institute Ultimo College](#)

Visit [English as an Additional Language or Dialect \(EAL/D\)](#) for more information.

If other family members that are non school aged dependant need to improve their English, they might consider enrolling in one of the following English programs:

- Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP): funded by the Australian Government and provides up to 510 hours of free [English language lessons](#) to eligible migrants and humanitarian entrants
- [CET](#): The Centre for English Teaching contributes to the University of Sydney's efforts to support international students through the provision of preparatory English language courses.
- [English Australia](#): the national peak body for the English language sector of international education in Australia. English Australia represents over 100 member colleges throughout Australia that provide quality English language programs to students and professionals from around the world.



# BUDGETING



Living in Sydney with your family can be costly. It is crucial that you develop a reasonable family budget before you come to Australia. Learning to budget and being aware of [available resources](#) can be really helpful when trying to manage your money while at university.

## Living costs

Plan for your everyday expenses and accommodation. Understand the [living costs](#) you're likely to face as a student in Sydney and keep to a realistic budget.

Costs of living in Sydney include:

- **Accommodation**

You may find that in general rental accommodation in Sydney is much more expensive than in your home country. We advise that you start familiarising yourself with options for long term accommodation and their prices. Explore student accommodation options both on and off campus with [Sydney University Student Accommodation](#).

- **Childcare**

The average cost of long daycare (8am to 6pm) in Sydney are approximately between \$70 - \$190 per day.

- **School fees**

Apart from the school fees you will need to consider other costs such as uniforms, books, stationery, excursions and some schools request voluntary contributions.

Most schools operate from 9am to 3pm so you may need to pay for before school and after school care that costs around \$20 - \$40 per session.

- **Health insurance expenses**

[Overseas Student Health Cover](#) is compulsory for international students. Costs will depend on your insurance provider, dependents and your level of cover. Check with your insurance provider for rates for your selected cover.

- **Additional living expenses**

A weekly grocery bill for one person is usually between \$80 - \$280. Depending on the size of your family your bill can be higher. You can save money by buying groceries at supermarkets including [Coles](#), [Woolworths](#) and [Aldi](#). Shopping at fresh food markets like [Paddy's Market](#) can save you money too.

Don't forget to budget for other incidental expenses like clothes, shoes and toiletries.

The Australian government website [MoneySmart](#) has lots of information and advice about a range of financial issues, including a section specifically for students on how to live on student budget.



# NETWORK GROUPS AND OTHER RESOURCES



## NETWORKS FOR PARENTS

### Student Parents and Carers Network

The USYD Student Parents and Carers Network can help you to develop friendships, share experiences and advice with other students who have children in their care. Join the [Facebook group](#) to share tips, experiences and learn about events for you and your family.

### Playgroups

Playgroups are small, free, informal groups of children and their parents/carers who meet in the local community, often in a community hall. They are aimed at children aged between one and five years and provide opportunities for children to play and interact with other children, and for parents to meet other parents. There are also playgroups aimed at specific cultural groups. Visit the [Playgroup NSW](#) website to find out more about playgroups and locate those in your local area.

### Public Libraries

Most [public libraries](#) across Sydney run free programs for children under 5 during school term on weekdays. Many offer Rhyme Time (aimed at 0-2 years) and Story Time (aimed at 3-5 years) sessions in a friendly environment. Many libraries also offer workshops for older children during school holidays.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

### [childcarefinder.gov.au](http://childcarefinder.gov.au)

This website is an initiative of the Australian Government. It provides information for families, focusing on early childhood learning and child care.

### [Sydney University Career Centre](#)

You can advertise for a babysitter or nanny on the database provided here. This can be accessed by enrolled students of the University who are seeking casual or part-time work.

### [Australian Government Department of Human Services](#)

The Family Assistance Office provides information about the Parenting Payment; Family Tax Benefit; Child Care Subsidy; Jobs and Education and Training Child Care Fee Assistance.

**Child Care Access Hotline** – Phone: 1 800 670 305

### [Raising children](#)

This is the Australian Government parenting advice website. It contains useful information for parents at every stage of their child's development.

**For more information contact:  
Childcare Information Office**

**E:** [child.care@sydney.edu.au](mailto:child.care@sydney.edu.au)

**Phone:** +61 2 8627 2004

[sydney.edu.au/students/childcare.html](http://sydney.edu.au/students/childcare.html)