Fees for child care to increase Nov. 1

Youth activity costs also rising on Army bases in Europe Page 3

Child-care, youth activity fees go up Nov. 1

BY SANDRA JONTZ

Stars and Stripes

Child-care costs and youth activity registration fees at Army bases throughout Europe are increasing beginning Nov. 1, with families earning higher salaries seeing the greatest increase in prices, officials say.

Monthly fees are increasing by 2 percent to 16 percent in five of the six income-based categories for full-day child care, and 6 percent to 10 percent for before- and after-school care programs. Fees remain unchanged only for those in Category 1, or families who earn up to $28,000 a year.

The Installation Management Agency-Europe Morale, Welfare and Recreation division, based in Heidelberg, Germany, is bumping up fees in order to comply with fee ranges set by the Defense Department's Child Development Program.

"The fee adjustments are being made to ensure that child-care costs are equitable for all families based on total family income," according to a news release announcing the fee increases. "This means that each family pays approximately the same percentage of its total family income, about 10 percent for full-day care."

The Air Force does not have a standard fee policy for all its child-care services in Europe, U.S. Air Forces in Europe spokeswoman Master Sgt. Lynda Valentine said Friday. The fees vary from base to base and are all with the Department of Defense-approved range, she said.

Navy officials in Europe did not respond to questions about their child-care and youth program fees.

For the 44 percent of Army child-care customers who fall in the middle-income categories (those who earn $28,001 to $55,000 annually), the increases translate to a $6 to $36 monthly increase for full-day child care, the release states.

Rates are broken down into six categories based on total family income, including wages and allowances, but without factoring in cost-of-living allowance or post allowance.

"There are many, many discounts that are available, however, to parents, and we encourage them to seek them out," said Cherri Verschragen, the IMA-Europe Child and Youth Services program manager.

Discounts vary between commands, but, across the board, parents receive a 10 percent discount for each additional child enrolled in programs, she said. Parents, too, can receive up to a 10 percent discount if they volunteer their time to child-care services, be it reading stories to children, chaperoning on field trips, or sewing pillows, she said.

"Whatever your talent, you can make it work for you," Verschragen said in a phone interview.

Parents can squeeze out discounts for youth sports registration fees, too, by volunteering to coach a sport, enrolling more than one child during the same season, or if their middle school- and high school-age children volunteer to help for youth programs, Verschragen said.

Fees that families pay cover costs for salaries and training for 75 percent of the staff who work directly with children, the release states. Remaining child-care costs are paid through appropriated funds provided by Congress, and foot the bill for such things as facilities, administration, equipment, supplies and food.

Youth sports and activity fees are increasing at the same time, and are the same for all those who participate. The heftiest increase, $24, will be in football, lacrosse and roller hockey programs, with a new fee of $84.

The new fee for soccer, flag football, cheerleading, will be $36; the new fee for baseball, softball, basketball and field hockey will be $46.

Fees for sports such as competitive swimming and ice hockey are set at local command levels.

Since bonuses and discounts vary between Army bases, Verschragen encourages parents to visit their local CYS registration offices for details.

E-mail Sandra Jontz at: jontzs@estripes.osd.mil

New child-care fees

Monthly fees for child care at Army bases in Europe are going up in November. Families earning higher salaries will see the biggest increase, while fees will remain unchanged for those in category 1, or families who earn up to $28,000 a year. Here is a look at how the fees will change:

Category	Salary range	Full day current rate	Full day new rate	Monthly increase	Before and after-school care current rate	Before and after-school care new rate	Monthly increase
1	$0 to $28,000	$196	$196	$0	$120	$120	$0
2	$28,001 to $34,000	$264	$270	$6	$166	$176	$10
3	$34,001 to $44,000	$318	$334	$16	$184	$202	$18
4	$44,001 to $55,000	$376	$412	$36	$220	$242	$22
5	$55,001 to $70,000	$432	$496	$64	$252	$278	$26
6	$70,001 - and up	$490	$568	$78	$296	$326	$30

Source: Installation Management Agency-Europe Morale, Welfare and Recreation division

Stars and Stripes