CCMS: Choosing the right CCMS Software for your service

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February 2009
Summary

With the large range of different CCMS software currently available, choosing the right one for your service can be a difficult task especially if you are not sure what to look for.

With this in mind, we took a look at 14 different products and reviewed the costs, available support and training, performance, ease of use, reporting and backup features.

We looked at:

- BrainChild
- CentreCalc CCMS
- Child Care Central (Web-based)
- ChildCarePlus Child Care
- Future Blocks (Web-based)
- Heartbeat4Kidz
- HubWorks (Web-based)
- Kids Wizz
- KiinCare
- Kindy Manager
- NumeroPro
- QikKids
- SmartFees CCMS

Please note there are currently 23 approved software providers registered with DEEWR (www.deewr.gov.au). All providers were contacted and asked to provide a demonstration. 14 providers supplied us with a demonstration.

How the trials were conducted

Each software product was trialled against set criteria for exactly three hours using the demo software provided. Each company was also given the opportunity to guide us through their product.

When you are choosing your software, there are many things to consider other than just the cost. For this reason, we have weighted each criteria to give you a guide on how important we believe each is, and to allow you to make comparisons in each of the areas.

How you can use this information to guide your purchase

When choosing your software, first you should consider your needs – Do you want a basic system that manages CCB, child enrolment and attendances? Or do you want a comprehensive system that also manages your human resources and accounting requirements? Do you want a web based system or would you prefer a locally hosted system? The specifications table will help you narrow down which of the products will meet your needs.

Once you have a short list of software you can then start to compare the specific software product to decide which is most suitable for you. By weighting the criteria, we have given an indication of the importance we have given each and aspects we have considered under each heading are detailed later in this review. Only once you have considered all these factors do we recommend that you look at price.
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<tr>
<th>Software</th>
<th>Available Training &amp; Support</th>
<th>REPORTING FUNCTIONS</th>
<th>Additional Features</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BrainChild</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>REPORTING FUNCTIONS</td>
<td>Additional Features</td>
<td>Backup utility built into the program; Backup prompts (can turn function off)</td>
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<td>∑ (Please note that this is NOT necessarily an exhaustive list. Please contact the software provider for a complete list of reporting functions.)</td>
<td>• Can run multiple services from the same database; Direct Debit facility is available; Ability to create attendances to any future date; Ability to create accounts to any period in the future; Public Holidays can be marked as absent for all booked children in one go; Comprehensive automatic fee structure calculation; Ability to set up and apply regular deduction such as annual registration fee; Links to Centrelink forms; Networkable; Can export to MYOB</td>
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<td>∑ Financial Reports</td>
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<td><strong>CentreCalc</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>BACKUP AND UPDATES</td>
<td>• Backup utility built into the program; Backup prompts (can turn function off) Automatic upgrade prompt every 4 weeks</td>
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**Specification Table**

**BrainChild** has been established for 13 years. They currently have 4 staff with approx 200 small businesses of which 60 are child care centres.

**CentreCalc**
Operates from both Brisbane and Melbourne. Head Office is in Melbourne. Established 15 years with a change of ownership 4 years ago. Currently have 4 staff with approx 450 customers throughout Australia.
## Specification Table

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<td><strong>Child Care Central</strong></td>
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<td>• Parent/guardian log in – allows parents to access their own details and accounts;</td>
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<td>• Each users access can be fully personalised to their role in the service;</td>
<td>• Updates are all automatic and seamless</td>
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<td>• Employee certification reminders (working with children checks; qualifications etc);</td>
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<td>• Automated calculation of vacancies for government reporting;</td>
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<td>• Automated interface with CCMS each night;</td>
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<td>• Full visibility of all CCMS payments made to their service;</td>
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<td>• Ability to print or email invoices;</td>
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<td>• Can be linked to more extensive administration support services also offered by Child Care Central.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ChildCarePlus</strong></td>
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<td>• All reports are configurable;</td>
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<td>• There is a ‘Planner Functionality’ program available which allows;</td>
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<td>– Staff to see quickly who is currently booked into a room on which day;</td>
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<td>– Staff to test the movement of children between rooms to maximize room and centre occupancy;</td>
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<td>– Staff to see the position of children month’s ahead so new bookings can be made.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A free web demo of the ‘Planner Functionality’ is available.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Manual backup to disk, memory stick or off-site server.</td>
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<td>• No prompts to back up</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Manual updates</td>
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</table>

### Child Care Central

- **Support**: 1:3 Ratio Phone Online forms Online demonstrations Online support
- **Training**: Online video (included in set up costs) Remote desktop & Onsite (at additional cost) Soft copy manuals Online manuals Classroom teaching (additional cost)

### ChildCarePlus

- **Support**: 1:6 Ratio Phone Email Online Web Demo’s
- **Training**: Online video (included in set up costs) Onsite (at additional cost)

**REPORTING FUNCTIONS**

(Please note that this is NOT necessarily an exhaustive list. Please contact the software provider for a complete list of reporting functions.)

- **Child/Family Reports**
  - Immunisation
  - Allergy
  - Special care list
  - Birthday
  - Sign in sheets
  - Rolls
  - Incident reports

- **Centre/Staffing Reports**
  - CCMS payments
  - Profit/loss
  - Balance sheet
  - Expense transactions
  - Fees owing
  - Account balances
  - Revenue
  - Total fees
  - Gap fees

- **Financial Reports**
  - Customer statement
  - Weekly receipts
  - Funds outstanding/bad debts
  - Income report
  - Invoice/weekly receipt
  - Banking/EFTPOS/direct banking reports
  - Customer balances
  - Fees

**Additional Features**

- Parent/guardian log in – allows parents to access their own details and accounts;
- Each users access can be fully personalised to their role in the service;
- Employee certification reminders (working with children checks; qualifications etc);
- Automated calculation of vacancies for government reporting;
- Automated interface with CCMS each night;
- Full visibility of all CCMS payments made to their service;
- Ability to print or email invoices;
- Can be linked to more extensive administration support services also offered by Child Care Central.

**Web Based**

- **Support**: 1:3 Ratio Phone Online forms Online demonstrations Online support
- **Training**: Online video (included in set up costs) Remote desktop & Onsite (at additional cost) Soft copy manuals Online manuals Classroom teaching (additional cost)

**REPORTING FUNCTIONS**

(Please note that this is NOT necessarily an exhaustive list. Please contact the software provider for a complete list of reporting functions.)

- **Child/Family Reports**
  - Immunisation
  - Allergy
  - Special care list
  - Birthday
  - Sign in sheets
  - Rolls
  - Incident reports

- **Centre/Staffing Reports**
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  - Profit/loss
  - Balance sheet
  - Expense transactions
  - Fees owing
  - Account balances
  - Revenue
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  - Gap fees

- **Financial Reports**
  - Customer statement
  - Weekly receipts
  - Funds outstanding/bad debts
  - Income report
  - Invoice/weekly receipt
  - Banking/EFTPOS/direct banking reports
  - Customer balances
  - Fees

**Additional Features**

- Parent/guardian log in – allows parents to access their own details and accounts;
- Each users access can be fully personalised to their role in the service;
- Employee certification reminders (working with children checks; qualifications etc);
- Automated calculation of vacancies for government reporting;
- Automated interface with CCMS each night;
- Full visibility of all CCMS payments made to their service;
- Ability to print or email invoices;
- Can be linked to more extensive administration support services also offered by Child Care Central.
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<tr>
<td>Future Blocks</td>
<td>Support 1:2Ratio Phone Email</td>
<td>• Parent and child roll books&lt;br&gt;• Attendance roll books&lt;br&gt;• Sign-in sheets&lt;br&gt;• General documents, eg. Direct Debit Form, Disclaimer, Privacy Notice, Terms &amp; Conditions etc.&lt;br&gt;• CCB parent payments and receipts&lt;br&gt;• Class usage report&lt;br&gt;• Vacancy report</td>
<td>• Parents have access to their own account over the internet;&lt;br&gt; • Designed to work with MYOB, QuickBooks and other accounting packages including GST reporting;&lt;br&gt; • Multi-user login;&lt;br&gt; • Multi-computer use;&lt;br&gt; • Enrolment and Attendance creation wizard (takes you through the steps of creating an enrolment and/or attendance);&lt;br&gt; • CCB estimator;&lt;br&gt; • Bills in advance;&lt;br&gt; • Automatically enter Direct Debit and received CCB to parents accounts;&lt;br&gt; • Parents can elect the frequency of the payments;&lt;br&gt; • Common forms and templates for service use.</td>
<td>• Automatic backups throughout the day in the background.&lt;br&gt; • Updates are all automatic and seamless</td>
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<tr>
<td>Web Based</td>
<td>Training Initial set up done</td>
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<td>Online (included in set up costs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heartbeat4 Kidz</td>
<td>Support 1:30 Ratio Phone Online</td>
<td>There are several reporting features available&lt;br&gt;There are several reporting features available&lt;br&gt;There are several reporting features available</td>
<td>• Direct Debit, Bpay etc are available.&lt;br&gt; • Is also compatible with EzyDebit and other similar systems.&lt;br&gt; • A Report Wizard function allowing clients to develop reports for their own needs.</td>
<td>• Manual backup to disk, memory stick or server.&lt;br&gt; • Backup prompts after 7 days of last back up.&lt;br&gt; • Online updates installed manually</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Training Help files (included in set up costs)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Software**
- Future Blocks
- Heartbeat4 Kidz

**Support**
- Future Blocks: 1:2 Ratio Phone Email<br>Online manuals<br>Training: Initial set up done Online (included in set up costs)
- Heartbeat4 Kidz: 1:30 Ratio Phone Online<br>Training: Help files (included in set up costs)

**Training**
- Future Blocks: Initial set up done Online (included in set up costs)
- Heartbeat4 Kidz: Help files (included in set up costs)

**Available Training & Support**
- Available Training & Support: Available training & support;

**REPORTING FUNCTIONS**
(Please note that this is NOT necessarily an exhaustive list. Please contact the software provider for a complete list of reporting functions.)
- Child/Family Reports: Parent and child roll books<br>Attendance roll books<br>Sign-in sheets<br>General documents, eg. Direct Debit Form, Disclaimer, Privacy Notice, Terms & Conditions etc.<br>CCB parent payments and receipts<br>Class usage report<br>Vacancy report
- Centre/Staffing Reports: CCMS transaction history<br>CCMS unprocessed attendances<br>Scheduled payments<br>Credit card expiry dates<br>Parents account statements<br>Debtors – who owes money<br>Accounts receivable
- Financial Reports: Parents have access to their own account over the internet;<br> • Designed to work with MYOB, QuickBooks and other accounting packages including GST reporting;<br> • Multi-user login;<br> • Multi-computer use;<br> • Enrolment and Attendance creation wizard (takes you through the steps of creating an enrolment and/or attendance);<br> • CCB estimator;<br> • Bills in advance;<br> • Automatically enter Direct Debit and received CCB to parents accounts;<br> • Parents can elect the frequency of the payments;<br> • Common forms and templates for service use.

**Additional Features**
- Additional Features: Parents have access to their own account over the internet;<br> • Designed to work with MYOB, QuickBooks and other accounting packages including GST reporting;<br> • Multi-user login;<br> • Multi-computer use;<br> • Enrolment and Attendance creation wizard (takes you through the steps of creating an enrolment and/or attendance);<br> • CCB estimator;<br> • Bills in advance;<br> • Automatically enter Direct Debit and received CCB to parents accounts;<br> • Parents can elect the frequency of the payments;<br> • Common forms and templates for service use.

**Backup and Updates**
- Backup and Updates: Automatic backups throughout the day in the background.<br> • Updates are all automatic and seamless.
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| HubWorks          | Support 1:12 Ratio Phone Email Online manu Return calls | • Emergency contacts  
• Allergy/dietary requirements  
• Child registration forms | • HubWorks has bio-metric systems available such as tag cards (swipe cards); mobile access – where parents can sms their child’s unique code if their child is going to absent.  
• Reporting lists are standard and customisable also.  
• Can be used for multi-services | • Automatic backups in the background.  
• Updates are automatic and seamless |
| Kids Wizz (previously School Care) | Support 1:87 Ratio Phone Online | No reports currently available                                                       | • Designed as a 3-tier networked system that can support multiple databases and users simultaneously. All data operations are performed by a custom middle-tier server located centrally with the data. | If hosted by Kids Wizz:  
• Automatic back up after every CCMS function  
If hosted locally:  
• Manual backup to disk, memory stick or server.  
• No prompts to back up |
| KiinCare          | Support 1:86 Ratio Phone Online Training DVD | • Parents details list  
• Contact report  
• Immunisation report  
• Absentee report  
• Access restrictions list | • ABA billing  
• Multi-centres  
• Security levels  
• Networkable  
• Templates are available including:  
  – Parent enrolment  
  – Child enrolment  
  – Waiting list application  
  – Medication form  
  – Accident/incident form  
  – Labels  
  – Emergency contact labels  
  – Award certificates  
  – Checklists  
  – Fee reminder letters | • Manual backup to disk, memory stick or server.  
• No prompts to back up  
• Manual updates by disk or online  
• Back up can also be set up to automatic  
• Back up utility built in |
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<td><strong>Kindy Manager</strong>&lt;br&gt;was founded by Phillip Hamilton 10 years ago. There are 3 staff with 500 customers Australia-wide.</td>
<td><strong>Support</strong> 1:167 Ratio Phone Email Online <strong>Training</strong> Online video Manual</td>
<td>● Child and family details&lt;br&gt;● Allergies list&lt;br&gt;● Sign in sheets&lt;br&gt;● End of week reporting&lt;br&gt;● Teachers rolls&lt;br&gt;● Waiting list&lt;br&gt;● Absentee lists&lt;br&gt;● Attendances reports&lt;br&gt;● Receipts and statements&lt;br&gt;● Bank deposit listing&lt;br&gt;● Payments reports&lt;br&gt;● Surcharges reports&lt;br&gt;● Receipts summaries – shows the yearly payments&lt;br&gt;● Ability to export info out to Excel;&lt;br&gt;● People coming from other software companies, can transfer data over to Kindy Manager;&lt;br&gt;● B-Pay function is available;&lt;br&gt;● Ezi-Debit function is available</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Manual backup to disk, memory stick or server.</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>No prompts to back up</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Manual updates online</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NumeroPro</strong>&lt;br&gt;Has been established for 20 years There are currently 11 staff with 500 clients.</td>
<td><strong>Support</strong> 1:83 Ratio Phone Online <strong>Training</strong> Phone Each centre has a personalised CCMS-trained account manager</td>
<td>● Age listing&lt;br&gt;● Birthday list&lt;br&gt;● Health report&lt;br&gt;● Dietary requirements / allergy reports&lt;br&gt;● Routines of the day&lt;br&gt;● Attendance registers&lt;br&gt;● Contact details list&lt;br&gt;● Vaccination report&lt;br&gt;● Wait list report&lt;br&gt;● Weekly roll&lt;br&gt;● Absence report&lt;br&gt;● Sign in/out sheets&lt;br&gt;● Enrolment Status List&lt;br&gt;● Attendance week summary report&lt;br&gt;● School Care report&lt;br&gt;● Bus roster&lt;br&gt;● Long Day combination report&lt;br&gt;● Banking deposit report&lt;br&gt;● Banking report – receipts&lt;br&gt;● Bond reports&lt;br&gt;● Customer account reports&lt;br&gt;● Overdue account reports&lt;br&gt;● CCB weekly variation report;&lt;br&gt;● Billing in advance&lt;br&gt;● KPI reports&lt;br&gt;● Automatic seamless billing facility&lt;br&gt;● Daily, weekly, and monthly financial reports&lt;br&gt;● Enrolment advance report&lt;br&gt;● DebiPro – collect fees via direct debit&lt;br&gt;● CommsPro – email capability for all communications&lt;br&gt;● PayrollPro – electronic management of timesheets and wages&lt;br&gt;● Fully networkable&lt;br&gt;● Ability to export reports&lt;br&gt;● Can have multiple users with varying security levels&lt;br&gt;● Can be hosted by Numeropro with no downtime&lt;br&gt;● Gap Fee calculator</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>If hosted by NumeroPro:</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Automatic back ups</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Automatic updates</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>No data loss or downtime</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>If hosted locally:</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Automatic backup to hard drive</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Automatic updates</strong></td>
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<td><strong>QikKids</strong>&lt;br&gt;A Brisbane-based company established for over 10 years with sales and training staff in NSW, VIC, WA. There is 41 staff with over 2,000 individual clients.</td>
<td>Support 1:49 Ratio&lt;br&gt;Phone&lt;br&gt;Online forum&lt;br&gt;Online Resource Library Manual&lt;br&gt;Training  Onsite (at additional cost)&lt;br&gt;QikCourse (see additional features)&lt;br&gt;Demonstration Software&lt;br&gt;Online Group Training&lt;br&gt;Phone conferencing.</td>
<td>• Contact reports&lt;br&gt;• Receipts/balance slips&lt;br&gt;• Medical&lt;br&gt;• DOB’s&lt;br&gt;• Birthdays&lt;br&gt;• Top Earners&lt;br&gt;• Photo Permission&lt;br&gt;• Detailed account and contact list</td>
<td>• Multi-centre with central admin facilities;&lt;br&gt;• Can have multiple users with varying security levels;&lt;br&gt;• Is fully networkable;&lt;br&gt;• Transaction Gateway – an additional feature (at an additional cost) for organising fee payments;&lt;br&gt;• Quoting calculator;&lt;br&gt;• Direct access to Microsoft Word and Excel so reports can be set out as a Word/Excel document.&lt;br&gt;• Payroll can be added for an additional cost&lt;br&gt;• QikKiosk allows parents to sign children in and out via a touchscreen. Staff can also use this for their timesheets&lt;br&gt;• All reports are fully customisable&lt;br&gt;• QikCourse – allows clients to select from a range of free or paid courses delivered over the internet or in group face:face sessions (available from March 2009).</td>
<td>If hosted by QikKids:&lt;br&gt;• Automatic back up and updates&lt;br&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SmartFees</strong>&lt;br&gt;was established 15 years ago in Melbourne with regional offices in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth. There are currently 9 staff with 350 clients, with more set to transition over the next few months.</td>
<td>Support 1:40 Ratio&lt;br&gt;Phone&lt;br&gt;Email&lt;br&gt;Training  Onsite&lt;br&gt;Phone (at additional cost)&lt;br&gt;Face:Face (available at additional cost)</td>
<td>• Mailing labels&lt;br&gt;• Receipts/invoices&lt;br&gt;• Allergy lists&lt;br&gt;• Birthdays&lt;br&gt;• CRN numbers&lt;br&gt;• Immunisation&lt;br&gt;• Enrolment report&lt;br&gt;• Booking report&lt;br&gt;• Attendance reports/sheets</td>
<td>• SmartFees can be integrated along with MYOB so that data on MYOB is updated when transactions are made through the software etc;&lt;br&gt;• Has a Direct Debit feature available;&lt;br&gt;• Email invoices directly to clients;&lt;br&gt;• Networkable;&lt;br&gt;• Can have multiple centres in one database;&lt;br&gt;• Can have more than one person accessing at a time</td>
<td>If hosted locally:&lt;br&gt;• Backup utility built into the program, prompts and user installed online updates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How the Software fared

When we tested each of the software programs, we rated them against a number of different criteria:

- Performance;
- Ease of use;
- Support and training available;
- Reporting; and
- Data back-up systems.

Although your service needs to decide which criteria are the most important to your service, we also allocated a general weighting to that criteria.

The following table shows scores in each of the criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Software</th>
<th>Startup Cost &amp; 1st Year Support</th>
<th>Ongoing Costs</th>
<th>Performance 40%</th>
<th>Ease of Use 25%</th>
<th>Support &amp; Training 20%</th>
<th>Reporting 10%</th>
<th>Back Up 5%</th>
<th>Overall 100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BrainChild</td>
<td>$1,755</td>
<td>$560</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>78</td>
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<td>$880</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>88</td>
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<tr>
<td>ChildCarePlus</td>
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<td>$1,650</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Blocks</td>
<td>$800</td>
<td>$800</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>79</td>
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<td>$330</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>71</td>
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<td>$770</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>63</td>
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<tr>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NumeroPro</td>
<td>$1,353</td>
<td>$858</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QikKids</td>
<td>$1,265</td>
<td>$495</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SmartFees</td>
<td>$2,874</td>
<td>$695</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Performance (40% of total score)

This is the bones of your software and the most important criteria for assessing which software product is best for you. We compared how well each product performs the functions it is meant to, as well as how easy it is to customise certain functions to suit individual needs of services.

All software products tested were able to perform tasks successfully, however some were easier and faster than others.

Strong Points: SmartFees

SmartFees performed very well overall in all areas including enrolling children; submitting attendances and billing families. The software also prompts you to query enrolments entered and has the ability to be customised easily to suit the individual needs of your service.

Challenges: Heartbeat4Kidz

Although Heartbeat4Kidz was able to perform all tasks successfully, generally tasks took longer to perform and were not as easy as other software available. This was mainly due to the overly cluttered screens.

Ease of Use (25% of total score)

No one wants to spend unnecessary time flicking through screens and navigating their way through software that is difficult to use or has screens that are overly cluttered with information. However, this also depends on individual preferences. Do you prefer to be able to see all information on one screen or dedicated screens with specific information only?

We looked at screen layouts – were they clear and easy to read or overly cluttered with information? Did data entry require navigating through a multitude of screens, and visually was the software easy to navigate? This is where the main differences between the software became apparent.

Strong Points: HubWorks & SmartFees

HubWorks is a web based system that is extremely intuitive and has the capacity for parents to log in and make changes to contact details etc. therefore, there is less data entry than most software. The layout is very clear and easy to read with minimal flicking through screens and the colour coded screens and buttons are so visual that navigation is a breeze.

SmartFees screen layouts are very clear with a windows design that most users will feel immediately comfortable with. All relevant information is on one screen with tabs to view additional information making navigation extremely simple and time saving.

Challenges: Kids Wizz & Heartbeat4Kidz

Kids Wizz had quite simple screens and layouts however, navigation and the need to flick back and forth through screens and the main menu made Kids Wizz the most difficult to use, with some tasks taking twice as long as some other products.

Heartbeat4Kidz has the most cluttered screens of all the trialled software. The layout of the screens appears disorganised which made navigation and ease of use difficult.
Support and Training (20% of total score)

The support and training available is an important aspect when comparing software. You want to be assured that you are going to be able to use the product you choose to its best advantage and that support is available when you need it.

When comparing what support and training is available we looked at the type and variety of support options available as well as the support staff:client ratio.

There was little difference in the support options available between software products; however, the main differences became apparent when comparing the support staff:client ratio. There are also two additional factors to consider, the first is the easier the product is to use and learn the less support will be required. The other is how long the software has been on the market; newer products will have better ratios to begin with but as more clients come on board this often changes.

**Strong Points: ChildCarePlus**

ChildCarePlus has the highest support staff:client ratio’s with the full range of support available including phone support during and after business hours, email support, online support including remote computer login where a technician can log onto your system to investigate problems and interactive online training is also available at no additional cost, as well as training at your service for an additional cost.

**Challenges: CentreCalc**

CentreCalc has the lowest support staff:client ratio (1:113).

Reporting (10% of total score)

There is a wide variety of reporting functions available from most software trialled (for full details see specifications table). When comparing reports we looked at the usefulness of reports, how many reports were available, how clear the reports were on screen as well as in printed format and the ability to customise reports.

**Strong Points: CentreCalc**

CentreCalc already has a great range of available reporting functions built into the software that are clear and easy to read. However, the best feature is the Report Writer that enables you to develop and customise your own reports quite easily, so if there is particular information you want and the existing reports are not able to provide it, then you are able to just create your own!

**Challenges: HubWorks & Kids Wizz**

HubWorks had a good variety of reports, however, printing reports is a bit disappointing. To print a report you must open it as a PDF file with the program automatically naming the file for you. When our consultant tried to print some of the reports, the titles were not very specific or did not relate to the content of the report.

Kids Wizz rated lowest as it has no reporting functions currently available, however, reporting functions are being added in the near future.
Backup of System (5% of total score)

Computers and hard drives aren’t always as reliable as we would like them to be, for this reason, having a current backup of your data is crucial. However, with so many tasks to be juggled each day backing up data is something that many of us either forget to do, don’t do often enough or don’t do correctly.

A system that backs up your data automatically or prompts you to back up your data and that is relatively easy to do is definitely a bonus.

**Strong Points:** Child Care Central, Future Blocks, HubWorks & NumeroPro

These are all web based products and therefore have an automated backup system in place so you never have to worry. Of the non web based products BrainChild, CentreCalc, Heartbeat4Kidz, Kids Wizz and QikKids all automatically prompt you to back up your data at certain intervals.

**Challenges:** ChildCarePlus, KiinCare, Kindy Manager & SmartFees

These programs have no prompts for back up or any automatic back up functions. The backup of data and frequency is completely up to the user.

Costs

When considering the costs of software you need to keep two things in mind, the first is the initial set up cost which includes the purchase price as well as the first years support. The second is the ongoing yearly support fees.

**Initial Set Up Costs…**

…ranged from the cheapest being KindyManager at $550 to the most expensive being starCare at $3,620 with the average cost being around $1,300.

**Ongoing Yearly Fees…**

…ranged from the cheapest being Heartbeat4Kidz at $330 to ChildCarePlus at $1,650 with the average being around $600.

A table of fees presented on the next page classifies the software from cheapest to most expensive, broken into these two areas:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>SmartFees</td>
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<td>starCare</td>
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<td>$800</td>
<td>Future Blocks</td>
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<td>$858</td>
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<tr>
<td>$880</td>
<td>Child Care Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,650</td>
<td>ChildCarePlus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Contacts**

**BrainChild**  
www.brain-child.com.au  
0411 511 911

**CentreCalc CCMS**  
www.centrecalc.com.au  
1300 168 695

**ChildCare Central**  
www.childcarecentral.com.au  
1300 733 667

**ChildCarePlus Childcare & Accounting Software**  
www.childcareplus.com.au  
(07) 3723 7725

**Future Blocks**  
www.futureblocks.com.au  
1300 651 765

**Heartbeat4Kidz**  
www.heartbeat4kidz.com  
(07) 5574 2255

**HubWorks! CCMS Version 2.0**  
www.hubworks.com.au  
1300 769 110

**Kids Wizz**  
www.kidswizz.com.au  
(03) 9017 0954

**KiinCare**  
www.kiincare.com  
(02) 4721 3590

**Kindy Manager**  
www.kindymanager.com  
(07) 5594 0519

**NumeroPro**  
www.numeropro.com  
(07) 5585 5900

**QikKids**  
www.qikkids.com.au  
1300 853 144

**SmartFees**  
www.smartfees.com.au  
1800 242 922

**starCare**  
www.starcare.net.au  
(02) 4862 4000

*This review was conducted in October 2008 and all software providers were aware that their product was being reviewed.*