



Australian Government  
Department of Education

# Additional Child Care Subsidy child wellbeing

Guide for early childhood education and care  
providers and services





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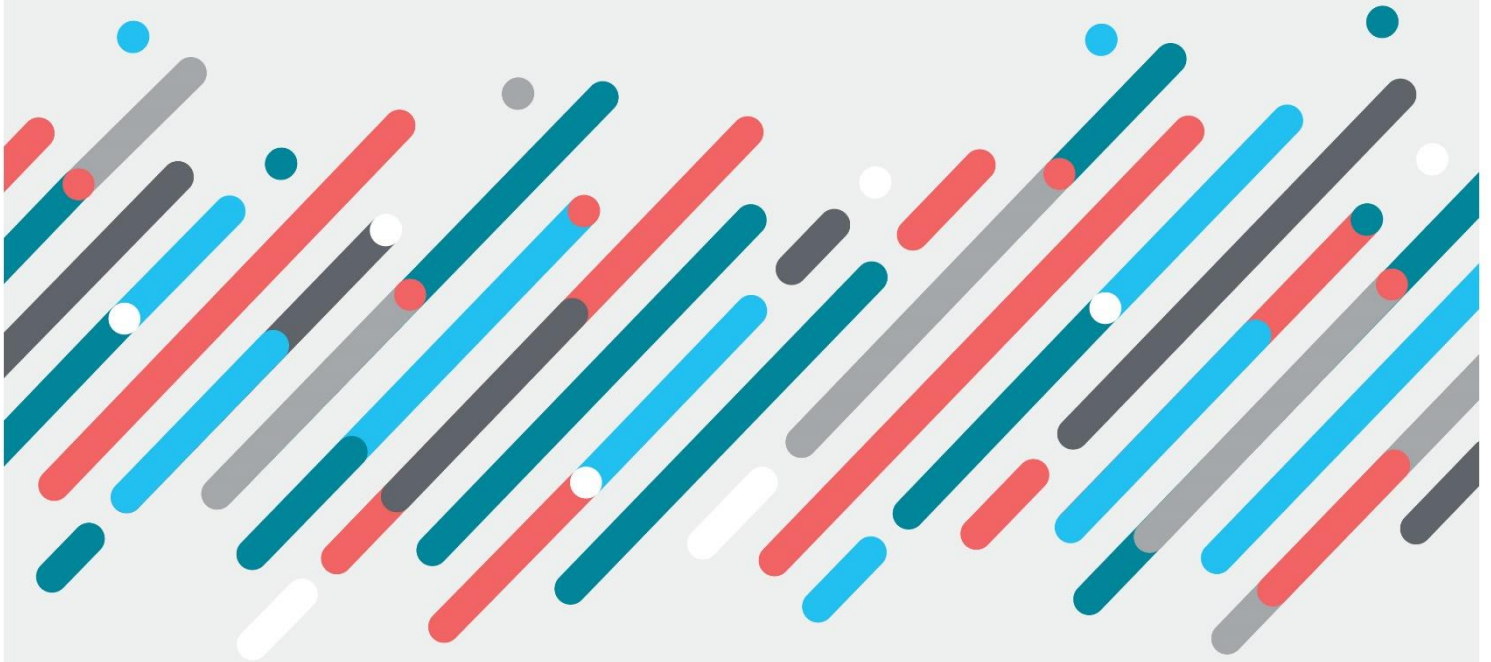
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**Our website is the best place to get the latest information about early childhood education and care policies and programs.**

You can also:

- [subscribe to get our weekly newsletter](#)
- [join our Facebook Group for Child Care Subsidy approved providers and services.](#)

We've identified the relevant web pages at the start of each chapter in this guide.



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## About this guide

Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) child wellbeing provides help with the cost of early childhood education and care. It's for families who care for a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect.

Providers play an important role in connecting families to ACCS child wellbeing. Families cannot apply themselves.

Your role as a provider includes:

- identifying children at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- talking to families about support options
- applying for the child wellbeing subsidy on behalf of eligible families
- notifying appropriate support agencies
- following any mandatory reporting obligations in your jurisdiction.

The following information is designed to guide you through the process of administering ACCS child wellbeing. You can also [view this information on our website](#).

If you have questions, you can email the Child Care Subsidy Provider Helpdesk at [ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au](mailto:ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au).

Families can find out more about ACCS on the [Services Australia website](#). Families who think they may be eligible for ACCS child wellbeing should speak to their provider.

# About the child wellbeing subsidy

① Visit our website for the most up to date information

[www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/additional-child-care-subsidy/child-wellbeing-subsidy/about-child-wellbeing-subsidy](http://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/additional-child-care-subsidy/child-wellbeing-subsidy/about-child-wellbeing-subsidy)

ACCS child wellbeing provides help with the cost of early childhood education and care. It's for families who care for a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect. This chapter outlines eligibility criteria, subsidy amount and time limits.

## Eligibility

The child wellbeing subsidy helps children at risk of serious abuse or neglect.

Families must meet criteria to get the subsidy. The parent or carer must:

- be eligible for [Child Care Subsidy \(CCS\)](#)
- care for a child who is at risk of serious abuse or neglect.

In rare cases, you may identify a child at risk whose parent or carer is not eligible for CCS. If this happens, you – the provider – may be able to get the subsidy on behalf of the child. We provide more information about what to do in this scenario under [establishing eligibility](#).

## Subsidy amount

Eligible families will get up to 100 hours of subsidised care per fortnight.

Families will also get the lower of either:

- 100% of the fee charged where it's equal to or below the hourly rate cap
- up to 120% of the hourly rate cap where the fee charged is above the hourly rate cap.

In most cases, this will cover the full cost of care.

However, if a child uses more than 100 hours of care per fortnight or you charge fees above the hourly rate cap, the family may have to pay a fee.



### Example: when a child uses more than 100 hours of subsidised care per fortnight

Natalie is eligible for ACCS child wellbeing for her daughter Alenna. Alenna attends care for 12 hours a day, 5 days a week; or 120 hours per fortnight. ACCS child wellbeing covers 100% of Alenna's fees, for 100 hours per fortnight. As Alenna attends care for 120 hours per fortnight, Natalie must pay full fees for the remaining 20 hours of care per fortnight.

### Example: when a service charges above the hourly rate cap

Flo's child is considered at risk. Her provider has given her access to ACCS child wellbeing for 6 weeks. The Centre Based Day Care service that Flo's child attends charges \$18 per hour, which is above the 2024-25 hourly rate cap of \$14.29. ACCS child wellbeing will cover up to 120% of the hourly rate cap, which is \$17.15. Flo must pay a gap fee of \$0.85 per hour.

Families may be able to get more subsidised hours and/or an increased subsidy rate in exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances:

- are unexpected and well outside of a family's regular arrangements
- have an out of the ordinary impact on a family
- are generally temporary or time-limited
- do not include where an individual is routinely working longer hours.

Families can apply to Services Australia directly for more subsidised hours. Families should call the [Centrelink families line](#) to discuss their circumstances. Services Australia assesses all exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

Providers can email [childwellbeing@education.gov.au](mailto:childwellbeing@education.gov.au) on behalf of a family to request an increased subsidy rate, or to request more subsidised hours for a child on a provider eligible arrangement.

## Time limits

You can give a family immediate access to ACCS child wellbeing with a certificate for up to 6 weeks, per child, each year.

If you think a family requires continued access to the subsidy after 6 weeks, you can apply for determinations for longer periods.

For most children, you can apply for a determination for up to 13 weeks at a time.

You can apply for a determination of up to 52 weeks at a time if the child is:

- in formal foster care
- in a formal kinship care arrangement
- on a long-term protection order.

## Debts

Sometimes, you may receive an ACCS child wellbeing payment that you or the family were not entitled to.

If this happens, the amount will become a debt due to the Australian Government. Depending on who was at fault, you or the family must repay the debt.

If you incur the debt because of a false or misleading statement the family gave you, the family must repay the debt.

If you incur a debt because of something you did, such as making a false or misleading statement or failing to comply with Family Assistance Law, then you must repay the debt.

We have more information for providers about [overpayments and debts](#) on our website. If families have questions about debts, please refer them to Services Australia.

# Identifying a child at risk

① Visit our website for the most up to date information

[www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/additional-child-care-subsidy/child-wellbeing-subsidy/identifying-child-risk](http://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/additional-child-care-subsidy/child-wellbeing-subsidy/identifying-child-risk)

If you identify a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect, their family may be eligible for ACCS child wellbeing. This chapter outlines when a child is considered at risk.

## Categories of risk

There are 2 groups of children who may be considered at risk for the purposes of ACCS child wellbeing. These are:

- children who you identify as being at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- children who have already been assessed as being at risk under state or territory law.

We must make an assessment about any children who you identify as being at risk. We do not need to make an assessment when a child has already been identified as being at risk by state or territory law.

## Children you identify as being at risk

A child is considered to be at risk of serious abuse or neglect if the child is experiencing or is at risk of experiencing harm. This can be a result of being subject to, or exposed to, one or more of the following:

- serious physical, emotional or psychological abuse
- sexual abuse
- domestic or family violence
- neglect – that is, a failure to be provided with the basic needs that are essential for the child’s physical and emotional wellbeing.

This can include events that:

- occurred in the past
- are occurring in the present
- are likely to occur in the future.

A child can be at risk even if:

- the abuse or neglect was not intentional – for example, a parent who falls seriously ill may not be able to meet their child’s basic physical and emotional needs
- the child did not directly experience the events – for example, a child whose parent experiences violence at the hands of their partner may be harmed, even if the child doesn’t experience violence themselves.

There are some circumstances that, on their own, do not constitute a child being at risk. These include:

- family income
- ethnic, cultural, religious or racial background
- location
- socio-economic status
- whether the child is likely to benefit from early childhood education and care programs



- disability, severe illness or mental illness
- the child being in informal foster care or informal kinship care arrangements.

The circumstances must put the child at risk of harm for the family to be eligible for ACCS child wellbeing.

We have [examples in the next chapter](#) to help you understand when a child would be considered at risk.



It is a good idea for staff at your service to be familiar with common indicators of abuse or neglect. Find more information about child abuse and neglect on the [Australian Institute of Family Studies website](#).

## Children identified as at risk under state or territory law

A child is also considered at risk if they are:

- in formal foster care
- taken to be at risk of serious abuse or neglect in accordance with the relevant State/Territory child welfare legislation, and, for instance, may be subject to a formal kinship arrangement or long term protection order.

### Foster care

For the purposes of ACCS child wellbeing, a child is in formal foster care if the child is being cared for:

- by a person other than the child's parents; and
- outside the child's home; and
- under arrangements made by a State/Territory body or Court/Tribunal authorised to do so; and
- not in premises managed by professional staff whose duties include caring for the child and other children in similar situations.

These children are considered at risk for as long as the arrangement remains in place under state or territory law. You must have evidence showing the arrangement with the state or territory, such as a court order.

The Department also considers formal kinship care arrangements as eligible, in addition to formal foster care.

Foster and kinship carers should lodge a CCS claim as early as possible. You may be able to access ACCS child wellbeing on behalf of the carer, while they are being assessed for CCS, for up to 13 weeks under a provider eligible arrangement. We provide more information about what to do in this scenario under [establishing eligibility](#).

### Long-term protection orders

For the purposes of ACCS child wellbeing, a protection order is an order made under a state or territory law that gives a state or territory department or statutory authority responsibility for, or supervision of a child.

### Emergency care

Children placed in emergency care by a state or territory government may be considered at risk.

If the emergency carer will continue to be the child's foster or kinship carer, you can apply for ACCS child wellbeing on their behalf. The carer should lodge a CCS claim as soon as possible.

If the emergency carer will only care for the child on a short-term basis, they are unlikely to be eligible. In this circumstance, you should enrol the child under an [arrangement with an organisation](#). The child will not receive CCS or ACCS.

## Residential and other care types

Children in the care of someone other than their parent or a foster/kinship carer are generally not eligible for CCS or ACCS. This includes children in:

- residential care
- group homes
- 24/7 Family Day Care.

These children should be enrolled under an [arrangement with an organisation](#). They will not receive CCS or ACCS.

## If you're unsure

If you're unsure whether a child is considered at risk for the purposes of ACCS child wellbeing, you can contact the CCS Provider Helpdesk for advice via email at [ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au](mailto:ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au).

You may also choose to refer the family to a support agency in the meantime. We have more information about support agencies under [reporting obligations](#).

# Examples to help you understand when a child is at risk

① Visit our website for the most up to date information

[www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/additional-child-care-subsidy/child-wellbeing-subsidy/examples-help-you-understand-when-child-risk](http://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/additional-child-care-subsidy/child-wellbeing-subsidy/examples-help-you-understand-when-child-risk)

We've developed examples to help you understand when a child at your service may be considered at risk of serious abuse or neglect for the purposes of ACCS child wellbeing.

## Assessing harm

The following examples illustrate circumstances where a provider may assess a child is at risk. These examples are fictional and do not feature real people.

### When a child does not meet the definition of at risk under state or territory law

Balendra's parents separated recently and are currently sorting out their living arrangements. Balendra's educators notice his attendance has become very random. They also notice he wears the same clothes most days and does not bring food, despite families being expected to supply food.

Following a conversation with Balendra's parents, you determine that he is at risk of neglect. You make a file note of the conversation, outlining your concerns and why you believe Balendra is at risk.

Balendra does not meet the definition of at risk or in need of protection under state or territory law. However, his family's circumstances put him at risk of neglect, so he does meet the definition of at risk for the purposes of ACCS child wellbeing. You may issue a child wellbeing certificate so Balendra can attend care without his family having to worry about fees.

### Emerging risk

Tim and his daughter, Brianna, have lost their temporary accommodation. Tim has let his service know that he and Brianna are living with friends until they find something more permanent. While Brianna seems fine and Tim is searching for stable accommodation, the circumstance suggests that Brianna may experience neglect in the future. The risk is real and apparent as Tim and Brianna do not have access to permanent accommodation.

In this circumstance, you may give Brianna access to ACCS child wellbeing based on the real and apparent risk that Brianna may be harmed in the future. When granting access based on an emerging risk, you must have evidence showing the risk continues to remain real and apparent. This could include evidence of significantly different or unusual behaviour.

## Circumstances where a child is not necessarily at risk

The following examples illustrate circumstances that, on their own, do not necessarily mean that a child is at risk.

## Family income

Lucy and Camille receive income support as their family's sole source of income. While this can be financially challenging, on its own, it does not put their child Jack at risk of serious abuse or neglect.

However, Camille spends most of the income support on gambling. As a result, Jack regularly misses meals. These circumstances, when considered in full, would meet the definition of being at risk of neglect. The family's income is part of the context, but not the sole reason that Jack is being neglected.

## Ethnic, cultural, religious or racial background

Amez's family are refugees from Iraq and do not speak English. His family fled racial persecution in Iraq and are living in a town in regional Australia. There are no other families with a similar background in Amez's town. Amez's ethnicity alone does not mean that he is at risk of serious abuse or neglect.

However, Amez's mother Ashti suffers from serious post-traumatic stress disorder from her experiences in Iraq. Ashti does not have friends or family nearby to provide support. Ashti's emotional state sometimes impacts on her ability to meet Amez's basic needs. In this circumstance, Amez's background has contributed to the circumstances placing him at risk of neglect but is not a reason by itself to assume neglect is happening.

## Location

Bernard and his 4-year-old daughter, Kirra, live in a remote part of the Northern Territory. Kirra would not be considered at risk of serious abuse or neglect based on her location alone. However, Bernard experiences bouts of severe depression and avoids interacting with Kirra during these episodes. While family try to check in with Bernard and Kirra periodically, their location makes these visits infrequent. Bernard regularly leaves Kirra unattended for many hours with inadequate amounts of food and mental stimulation, and their family is not aware of this until after the fact.

As there is evidence of neglect, Kirra would meet the definition of at risk. If Bernard and Kirra lived closer to their family, they may receive enough support to prevent Kirra from being at risk. In this circumstance, location is only a contributing factor. It is Bernard's behaviour when he is experiencing a depressive episode that places Kirra at risk.

## Disability, severe illness or mental illness

Disability, severe illness or mental illness does not necessarily mean that a child will be at risk. In some cases, however, these circumstances may result in a parent or carer not being able to care for their child when they normally would do so. Although there is no intent, this may result in a child being at risk of serious abuse or neglect.

Emma's mother, Anita, relies on a wheelchair for mobility and has been formally recognised as a person with disability. Anita is otherwise healthy, able to drive a car, looks after Emma daily and has the support of her husband, Joe. Emma would not be considered at risk of serious abuse or neglect.

Thanh's mother has a psychiatric condition that is managed with medication. When Thanh's mother stops taking her medication, she forgets to purchase food and prepare meals. In this circumstance, Thanh's mother's failure to take her medication puts Thanh at risk of neglect. The psychiatric condition alone does not put Thanh at risk.

Evidence needs to address the type and extent of disability, severe illness or mental illness, and how it impacts the child.

# Talking with the family

① Visit our website for the most up to date information

[www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/additional-child-care-subsidy/child-wellbeing-subsidy/talking-family](http://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/additional-child-care-subsidy/child-wellbeing-subsidy/talking-family)

If you think a family is eligible for Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) child wellbeing, it's important to have a conversation with them before applying on their behalf. This chapter has guidance on talking to families.

## When to have the conversation

Have a conversation with the family **before** you apply for ACCS child wellbeing for them. You must have their **informed consent** before applying.

Engaging with families early can:

- prevent issues from escalating
- support families to be decision makers in the process
- provide families with an opportunity to explore the benefits of the child wellbeing subsidy
- ensure families are aware of support services and agencies.

In some cases, you may consider delaying the conversation. For example:

- if not doing so could result in the family withdrawing their child from care
- if you need time to engage a support service to support the family during the conversation.

## Having the conversation

You should have open and transparent conversations with families about ACCS child wellbeing and what it means for them. Exactly what to say and how to frame the conversation will depend on:

- your relationship with the family
- whether there is a sense of urgency.

If you do not already have a relationship with the family, it may help to build rapport with them before you have the conversation. Ultimately, you should ensure:

- the family remains at the heart of decision making
- they feel valued in the process.

Below is general guidance on your approach when talking with families.

## Be sensitive

Always approach the conversation in a warm, culturally sensitive manner.

Be aware that the term “at risk of abuse or neglect” can be distressing for families. Cultural and societal pressures and stigmas will inform the family’s view of this term. Build your own understanding of the family’s perspective before starting the conversation.

Respect the family’s right to privacy.

Ask the family for their preference on the time, date and location of the meeting.

Invite the family to have a support person accompany them.

Be sensitive to the family’s unique cultural circumstances. For example, if there is a language barrier, a translator or other support may be needed.

## Be empathetic and avoid judgement

Determining that a child is at risk does not necessarily mean that parents or carers have done something wrong.

A child can be at risk due to factors outside the family’s control. For example a parent may be temporarily unable to meet their child’s basic needs due to:

- serious illness or injury
- issues with social and emotional wellbeing.

There may be family violence or court orders in place. These can prevent family members:

- accessing finances
- moving freely in places where there are support services.

## Provide clear information

Families must be able to provide **informed consent** to you applying for ACCS child wellbeing on their behalf.

You should clearly describe ACCS child wellbeing and what the payment means for the family, including:

- what the eligibility criteria are
- how many hours of care the family will have access to
- subsidy rates
- length of coverage
- what the family need to do
- evidence required e.g., letter of support
- the requirement for you to make a referral to a support agency.

When applying for ACCS child wellbeing, you must refer families to a support agency and identify the child is at potential risk of abuse or neglect. Your discussion should cover this. You should also discuss the kind of support that would best suit the family.

You should tell the family that when you apply for ACCS child wellbeing, they will be notified via:

- a notification in their myGov account, or
- a letter from Services Australia.

They may also be contacted by the support agency.

## Provide practical help

Ask families if they would like help with practical tasks, like:

- navigating myGov
- contacting Centrelink.

Provide information about services they may not be aware of.

## Focus on benefits

ACCS child wellbeing can help children access quality education and care. This in turn can help children:

- improve their social and emotional wellbeing
- meet their developmental milestones
- be ready for big school.

ACCS child wellbeing can also help parents. Importantly, it can reduce financial pressure from child care. It can also help parents prioritise their wellbeing while their child is in care, by doing things like:

- looking for work
- studying or training
- attending appointments with health or social welfare professionals.

## Respect the family's decision

You should not insist on applying for ACCS child wellbeing if the family:

- does not agree that their child is at risk
- if they are not comfortable accessing the subsidy.

In these cases, you should:

- Have an open door policy. Families may like to take time to think and return to the discussion at a later time.
- Provide the family with contact information for support agencies. They might prefer to engage with their preferred service.

Regardless of the family's view, you must follow any mandatory reporting obligations in your state or territory. We have more information on our [reporting obligations](#) page.



### Example: starting the conversation



'I understand home life has been a bit difficult and Hayley doesn't seem to be herself at the moment. If you like, I can provide details of a number of support services that might help.

## First Nations families

First Nations children have a right to access culturally safe and responsive services and support.

Providing sensitive, culturally safe and responsive advice and support to First Nations families:

- builds trust
- genuinely supports families
- helps children stay connected to early education and health services, and their community.

When talking with First Nations families about ACCS child wellbeing, you should:

## Welcome families to include an advocate

First Nations families may feel safer if they can have a support person during these conversations. It is the family's choice who this person is. They could be:

- someone with cultural authority
- a supportive family member or friend
- a family support agency worker.

This person may offer to lead the discussion with the family.

## Listen

Invite the family to take the lead. Listen to their experiences and needs in a non-judgemental manner.

Ensure the family and the support person feel comfortable sharing their views or asking questions.

## Take time

Not all things need to be discussed or decided in one conversation. Ask the family if they would like to stop for a break.

Check with the family that they are OK with how the conversation is going.

Respectfully check you have understood the family and support person. Check everyone understands the next steps.

## Be flexible

If a family has had problems with a program, service or person, work with them to find an alternative they prefer. Find out if they've heard about other services in their community.

## Focus on benefits

Explain that ACCS child wellbeing is about doing things to help:

- keep the child and the family together, in their home and in their community
- improve the child's social and emotional wellbeing
- the child reach their developmental milestones
- the child be ready for big school.

## Gain informed consent

You must have the family's informed consent before applying for ACCS child wellbeing. More information on this is in the "Provide clear information" section above.

## Resources for providers and services

Some First Nations families may not trust government help or services, having experienced government-led mistreatment and injustice in the past. This can act as a barrier to families engaging with services and support that they're entitled to.

There are a range of resources you can access to help you have culturally safe conversations with First Nations families.

[Stronger, Safer, Together](#) is published by SNAICC. It's for services that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

You can find other resources on [Indigenous.gov.au](https://www.indigenous.gov.au) and [the Department of Social Services website](#).

[Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021 to 2031](#) sets out an ambitious ten-year plan to help children in Australia to grow up safe and supported in their families, communities and culture.

## Building relationships with First Nations support services

First Nations support services offer support that is:

- culturally responsive and grounded
- holistic
- community sensitive
- culturally competent to be responsive to the needs of First Nations children and families.

They play a significant role in providing early childhood education and care. Developing strong, ongoing relationships with these services will help you:

- develop effective and culturally competent services for First Nations children
- build trust and work effectively with families and communities.

Building these relationships will help you reach the best outcomes for First Nations families, so it's well worth your time and focus.

## Establishing eligibility for child wellbeing

 Visit our website for the most up to date information

<http://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/additional-child-care-subsidy/child-wellbeing-subsidy/establishing-eligibility-child-wellbeing>

Before applying for ACCS child wellbeing on behalf of a family, you must take steps to establish their eligibility. You must also ensure the child is enrolled correctly so the subsidy can be paid.

### Families must be eligible for Child Care Subsidy

Families can only get ACCS child wellbeing once they've:

- lodged a CCS claim, and
- been assessed as CCS eligible.

Services Australia cannot pay the child wellbeing subsidy until after this has occurred.

Families can lodge a CCS claim via their [Centrelink online account](#).



**It is critical that you discuss this requirement with the family if they haven't already lodged a CCS claim.** Services Australia can only backdate payments up to 28 days before the family lodged their successful claim. Families may miss out on payments if they delay. If you cannot identify a CCS-eligible parent or carer for a child at risk, you – the provider – may be able to get the subsidy on behalf of the child. We have more information on this scenario below.

### Children must meet immunisation requirements

A key requirement of CCS eligibility is that children meet [immunisation requirements](#).

If a child does not meet the CCS immunisation requirements, their CCS claim will not be approved. The family will need to make a new claim once the child has met the immunisation requirements.

### You must enrol the child correctly

You must ensure the child is enrolled correctly. Families may miss out on payments if their child is not enrolled correctly.

There are 2 types of enrolments that you can use in order to receive ACCS, depending on the circumstances.

## Complying Written Arrangement

In most cases, you must enrol the child under a Complying Written Arrangement (CWA).

A CWA enables Services Australia to make CCS and ACCS payments.

Learn [how to enrol a child under a CWA](#).

## Provider Eligible Arrangement

In very limited circumstances, you may be able to enrol the child under a Provider Eligible Arrangement (PEA).

A PEA enables Services Australia to pay the subsidy directly to you – the provider – when you cannot identify a CCS-eligible parent or carer.

Just like any other enrolment, the PEA must include the child’s CRN. The child’s parent or carer will need to provide you with the child’s CRN before you can create a PEA. If the child does not have a CRN, the parent or carer will need to contact Services Australia to organise one.

A PEA cannot be used for In Home Care. This is because In Home Care is only available for families who are CCS-eligible.

We outline the two circumstances where you may be permitted to use a PEA below.

Circumstance	What families must do	What providers must do
You may use a PEA when a child is at risk but their parent or carer is not eligible for CCS. For example, because the parent or carer does not meet the <a href="#">CCS residence rules</a> .	The family must give you the child’s Customer Reference Number (CRN).	You must email <a href="mailto:childwellbeing@education.gov.au">childwellbeing@education.gov.au</a> before enrolling the child. We’ll confirm whether there is a CCS-eligible parent or carer and confirm whether the use of a PEA is appropriate.  If you identify a CCS-eligible parent or carer at any point, you must end the PEA and enter into a CWA with the family.
You may use a PEA, for up to 13 weeks, for children in formal foster care or formal kinship care. This ensures these children have access to the subsidy while their carer is assessed for CCS.	The child’s carer should lodge a CCS claim before the 13-week period ends, in order to continue receiving the subsidy.	You should encourage the child’s carer to lodge a CCS claim before the 13-week period ends. You must enter into a CWA with the carer once they’ve been assessed as eligible for CCS.



**Children on a PEA must still meet the CCS immunisation requirements.** If you wish to enrol a child on a PEA who does not meet the immunisation requirements, or their immunisation status is unknown, you must [complete this form](#) and email it to [childwellbeing@education.gov.au](mailto:childwellbeing@education.gov.au). We’ll determine if the child can receive the subsidy under a PEA based on the circumstances. We can only make this determination if the child would be at increased risk if we did not do so.



# Reporting obligations

① Visit our website for the most up to date information

[www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/additional-child-care-subsidy/child-wellbeing-subsidy/reporting-obligations](http://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/additional-child-care-subsidy/child-wellbeing-subsidy/reporting-obligations)

This chapter outlines reporting obligations that apply when you identify a child at risk and apply for ACCS child wellbeing on behalf of their family.

## Making a child wellbeing referral

If you apply for ACCS child wellbeing on behalf of a family, you must refer the family to an appropriate support agency. This is a requirement under Family Assistance Law.

You must contact an agency that can provide support to the family. You must let them know the child is at risk and that you've applied for ACCS child wellbeing.

You must make a record of the referral via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

You must contact the support agency and make a referral. You do not need to remain in contact with the support agency.

## Support agencies

An appropriate support agency is:

- a state or territory department or agency that deals with matters relating to child welfare, or
- an organisation that deals with such matters on behalf of a department or agency.

This includes, but is not limited to, the following agencies:

- child safety/protection agencies
- parenting assistance, including Family Support Programs
- interpersonal conflict/separation/mediation services
- child and maternal health services, including antenatal services
- drug or alcohol or substance abuse services
- community health services, including publicly funded general practitioner services (but not private services), mental health services, counselling services, women's health services, bereavement counselling services (psychology or social work), psychiatric services or palliative care services
- domestic violence, rape victim support or other similar support services (including state or territory police)
- homelessness, crisis or public housing services
- financial or gambling counselling services
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and support services
- school readiness programs, school counsellors and other education-related services
- other early intervention services.



You should choose a support agency that is relevant to a family's circumstances. For example, a family experiencing homelessness may benefit from a referral to public housing services.

## Time limits for making a referral

There are time limits for when you must make the referral.

When issuing a certificate, you must notify a support agency within 6 weeks from when the certificate comes into effect.

When applying for a determination, you must notify a support agency before you apply.

We explain [certificates](#) and [determinations](#) in the following chapters.

## When you don't need to make a referral

You do not need to make a referral if:

- you have already made a referral for a child within the last 6 weeks
- you were advised of the risk to the child by an appropriate support agency.

## Mandatory reporting

You must also follow any reporting obligations in your state or territory. This is commonly referred to as mandatory reporting.

Making a referral to a support agency is a requirement under Family Assistance Law. It does not remove any mandatory reporting obligations required by your state or territory government.



Mandatory reporting obligations differ between states and territories. Stay up to date with the [latest advice from your state or territory government](#).

## Useful links by state and territory

We've compiled links to information about mandatory reporting and support agencies in each state and territory for your convenience.

This information is general guidance only. You must stay up to date with the mandatory reporting obligations in your state or territory. You may also identify other appropriate support agencies.

### Australian Capital Territory

Mandatory reporting	Support agencies
Check your obligations in <a href="#">Keeping Children and Young People Safe: A guide to reporting child abuse and neglect in the ACT</a> .	<a href="#">OneLink</a> <a href="#">Child and Family Centres</a> <a href="#">ACT Community Directory</a>
Make a <a href="#">Child Concern Report</a> to Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS).	

### New South Wales

Mandatory reporting	Support agencies
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<p>Check your obligations in the <a href="#">Mandatory Reporter Guide</a>.</p> <p>Make a report to the Child Protection Helpline on 13 21 11.</p>	<p><a href="#">NSW Department of Communities and Justice</a>  <a href="#">Child and family health services</a>  <a href="#">Family Preservation Programs</a>  <a href="#">Family Referral Service</a></p>
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## Northern Territory

Mandatory reporting	Support agencies
<p>Check your obligations on the <a href="#">NT Government website</a>.</p> <p>Make a report to the child protection reporting line on 1800 700 250.</p>	<p><a href="#">Families and Children Enquiry and Support (FACES) Hotline</a>  <a href="#">Northern Territory Council of Social Service</a></p>

## Queensland

Mandatory reporting	Support agencies
<p>Check your obligations on the <a href="#">Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services website</a>.</p> <p>Make a report to the <a href="#">Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Family and Child Connect</a></p>

## South Australia

Mandatory reporting	Support agencies
<p>Check your obligations on the <a href="#">Department for Child Protection website</a>.</p> <p>Make a report to the Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78.</p>	<p><a href="#">SA Directory of Community Services</a>  <a href="#">Child and Family Health Service</a></p>

## Tasmania

Mandatory reporting	Support agencies
<p>Check your obligations and make a report via the <a href="#">Strong Families Safe Kids advice and referral line</a> on 1800 000 123.</p>	<p><a href="#">Strong Families Safe Kids advice and referral line</a></p>

## Victoria

Mandatory reporting	Support agencies
<p>Check your obligations on the <a href="#">Department of Families, Fairness and Housing website</a>.</p> <p>Make a report to the <a href="#">child protection intake service</a> that covers the area in which the child lives.</p>	<p><a href="#">The Orange Door</a></p>

## Western Australia

Mandatory reporting	Support agencies
<p>Check your obligations on the <a href="#">WA Government website</a>.</p> <p>Make a report to the <a href="#">WA Government</a>.</p>	<p><a href="#">Examples of appropriate support organisations</a>  <a href="#">Flowchart for providers</a>  <a href="#">Concerns for the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person</a></p>



# Issuing a child wellbeing certificate

① Visit our website for the most up to date information

[www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/additional-child-care-subsidy/child-wellbeing-subsidy/issuing-child-wellbeing-certificate](http://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/additional-child-care-subsidy/child-wellbeing-subsidy/issuing-child-wellbeing-certificate)

A certificate gives a family immediate access to ACCS child wellbeing for up to 6 weeks.

## What is a certificate?

If you believe a child is at risk and their family meets the eligibility criteria for ACCS child wellbeing, you may give them immediate access to the subsidy in the Child Care Subsidy System. This is known as issuing a certificate.

The decision to issue a certificate lies with the provider. You must ensure the child and their family is eligible, and you must have a conversation with the family, before issuing a certificate.

You can issue a certificate for up to 6 weeks, per child, every 12 months.

How many weeks you choose will depend on the family's circumstances and how long you believe the child will be at risk for. Each week of the certificate must include at least one day when the child is at risk.

If a child is still at risk 12 months from when you first issued a certificate, you will need to issue a new certificate for the child in order for ACCS child wellbeing to continue.

A certificate is only valid at the service where it was issued.

## Reporting obligations

Before applying for a determination, you must ensure you have notified a support agency as part of your reporting obligations when issuing the initial certificate. Refer to [reporting obligations](#) for more information.

## Evidence

You must keep records of observations and evidence that supports your assessment that a child is at risk. You do not need to submit the evidence to us when issuing a certificate, but we may ask to see it for auditing purposes.

## How to issue

Complete and issue a certificate via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.

See the following task cards for step-by-step guidance:

- [How to create a new ACCS child wellbeing certificate in the PEP](#)
- [How to make changes to ACCS certificates and determinations in the PEP](#)

You'll need to provide the following information on the certificate:

- the child's name
- the child's customer reference number (CRN)
- the start and end date

- confirmation that you will make, or have made, a referral to an appropriate support agency

You must be careful when issuing a certificate and ensure you select the correct dates. If you make a mistake, you will need to cancel and reissue the certificate which may affect any ACCS payments already made to your service.



**Certificates must start on a Monday, even if the child starts care on a different day.** The system will automatically default to the nearest Monday if you select another day of the week. Make sure to select the correct Monday under percentage calculation date.

## Backdating a certificate

You can backdate all certificates up to 28 days. You do not need additional evidence to do this.

You may request to backdate a certificate up to 13 weeks in the following exceptional circumstances:

- families affected by family or domestic violence
- families experiencing a serious illness, medical condition, mental health issue or hospitalisation that prevents the individual from working or caring for their child
- children a long-term protection order
- children in formal foster care
- families experiencing homelessness
- families affected by the harmful use of alcohol or drugs.

You can apply for extended backdating via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.

You must have evidence showing at least one of these circumstances applies. This is in addition to the evidence you must hold demonstrating the child is at risk.

If your evidence does not support any of the above exceptional circumstances, the certificate may not be approved for extended backdating and the certificate dates may change as a result.

## Cancelling a certificate

If it becomes apparent that the family's circumstances change and the child stops being at risk for any week during the certificate period, you must cancel the certificate.

You can cancel a certificate within 28 days of its start date in the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.

If you need to cancel a certificate after 28 days, you must notify Services Australia through the [PEP](#) or your third-party software. You should indicate the date from which the child was no longer at risk and confirm that you have evidence to support this decision.

You may also need to cancel and reissue a certificate if you issue it with incorrect dates. Please be mindful of the following when cancelling and reissuing a certificate:

- A replacement certificate cannot cross over the start or end date of a cancelled certificate. If you need to cover part of the period of a cancelled certificate, you'll need to issue 2 certificates – one to cover the dates outside the cancelled certificate, and another for the dates inside the cancelled certificate.
- If you need to backdate a replacement certificate by more than 28 days, you must be confident that the family meets exceptional circumstances criteria for extended backdating.

- If you cancel a certificate and a new certificate is not submitted and approved for the same period, we will recover any ACCS child wellbeing already paid.



#### **Example: cancelling and reissuing a certificate**

You issue a certificate from Monday 5 June 2023 to Sunday 16 July 2023. After issuing, you realise the dates are not correct. The correct dates are Monday 22 May 2023 to Sunday 2 July 2023.

In this scenario, you must cancel the original certificate and issue:

- one certificate from Monday 22 May 2023 to Sunday 4 June 2023
- a second certificate from Monday 5 June 2023 to Sunday 2 July 2023.

## Reviews

Services Australia may change or cancel a certificate if they are not satisfied the child was at risk for any week during the certificate period. You will be notified of any review decisions through the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.

# Applying for a child wellbeing determination

① Visit our website for the most up to date information

[www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/additional-child-care-subsidy/child-wellbeing-subsidy/applying-child-wellbeing-determination](http://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/additional-child-care-subsidy/child-wellbeing-subsidy/applying-child-wellbeing-determination)

If a child in receipt of ACCS child wellbeing will be at risk for longer than 6 weeks, you can apply for a determination. A determination gives families access to the subsidy for up to 13 weeks at a time.

## What is a determination?

If you believe a child will continue to be at risk after their 6-week certificate period ends, you can apply for further access to ACCS child wellbeing. This is known as applying for a determination.

You must use all 6 weeks of the certificate before a determination can be applied. You can submit a determination application during the certificate period. However, the start date must be after the end of the certificate.

Typically, you can apply for a determination for up to 13 weeks. You can apply for subsequent periods of up to 13 weeks if the child will continue to be at risk.

You can apply for a determination of up to 52 weeks if the child:

- is in formal foster care
- is in a formal kinship care arrangement
- is on a long term protection order.

You should apply for a determination as early as possible, if you think a child will continue to be at risk, to avoid gaps in payments.

Once approved, a determination is valid at any service a child attends.

## Reporting obligations

Before applying for a determination, you must ensure you have notified a support agency as part of your reporting obligations when issuing the initial certificate. Refer to [reporting obligations](#) for more information.

## Evidence

You must provide evidence when applying for a determination. The type of evidence you must provide will depend on the circumstances.

## Children you identify as being at risk

Services Australia must make an assessment about any children who you, the family or a third party has identified as being at risk. You must provide evidence of the circumstances that demonstrate the child is at risk of serious abuse or neglect.

## Children identified as at risk under state or territory law

We do not need to make an assessment when a child has already been identified as being at risk by state or territory law. This includes children:

- in formal foster care
- taken to be at risk of serious abuse or neglect in accordance with the relevant State/Territory child welfare legislation, and, for instance, may be subject to a formal kinship arrangement or long term protection order.

For these children, you only need documents that demonstrate these arrangements. This could include court orders or letters from child protection agencies. You don't need additional evidence about the type of harm the child is experiencing.

## Sourcing evidence

Evidence must be sourced from appropriate third-party organisations or professionals. Evidence must be obtained lawfully, preferably by the family or with their consent.

Appropriate organisations include:

- government and non-government organisations that provide early intervention, family support, or child protection services and programs
- organisations that provide services relevant to ACCS child wellbeing, including those related to mental health, family violence and family law, homelessness, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services schools.

Professionals who provide evidence must be qualified to give an independent assessment of a child's circumstances. This could include:

- medical professionals, such as doctors, nurses, emergency unit professionals, and psychologists
- welfare agency personnel and social workers
- school principals and teachers
- police officers
- lawyers.

You may give a [statutory declaration](#) for a child's first determination application if other sources of evidence are not available. In these rare cases, the statutory declaration must describe the steps you took to try and gather evidence and why you were unable to do so.

## Types of evidence

Acceptable types of evidence include:

- letters
- statements
- referrals
- case plans
- a statutory declaration
- documents from a child safety/protection agency
- any other documents that may be relevant.

## Evidence requirements

Evidence should contain a third-party's own independent assessment that clearly demonstrates the child is at risk of serious abuse or neglect. Evidence should make explicit reference to specific eligibility criteria and explain how the child or family meets the criteria.

Evidence must be no more than 6 months old from the start date of the determination.



You must notify Services Australia within 7 days if you become aware of any change to a:

- formal foster care or formal kinship care arrangement
- Long-term protection order that applies to that child.

Evidence must include the following information:

- the name of the child and their parent or carer
- the name and contact details of the organisation giving the evidence
- the date the evidence was provided.

Where it would be appropriate for the evidence to include it, you must also specify:

- the first name and last name of the person giving the evidence
- the title and/or position of the person in the organisation giving the evidence
- a written or electronic signature from the author.

Where possible, evidence should also reference how long the child is expected to be at risk for.

## How to apply

Apply for the determination in the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.

See the following task cards for step-by-step guidance:

- [How to create a new ACCS child wellbeing determination in the PEP](#)
- [How to make changes to ACCS certificates and determinations in the PEP](#)

You'll need to provide the following information on the determination:

- the child's name
- the child's customer reference number (CRN)
- the start and end date
- confirmation that you have made a referral to an appropriate support agency.

## Backdating a determination

You can backdate all determinations up to 28 days. You do not need additional evidence to do this.

You can apply to backdate a determination up to 13 weeks in the following exceptional circumstances:

- families affected by family or domestic violence
- families experiencing a serious illness, medical condition, mental health issue or hospitalisation that prevents the individual from working or caring for their child

- children a long-term protection order
- children in formal foster care
- families experiencing homelessness
- families affected by the harmful use of alcohol or drugs.

You can apply for extended backdating in your determination application via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.

You must include evidence in your application showing at least one of these circumstances applies. This is in addition to the evidence you must provide demonstrating the child is at risk.

If your evidence does not support any of the above exceptional circumstances, your determination application may not be approved for extended backdating and the determination dates may change as a result.

## Receiving an outcome

Services Australia are responsible for assessing determination applications. Once the application has been assessed, Services Australia will send you an outcome letter via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software. They will also notify the parent or carer directly.

If your determination is rejected, you can view the reason for rejection in the outcome letter.

If you'd like to request more information or a review of the decision, you can email [ACCS.CWB.Review@servicesaustralia.gov.au](mailto:ACCS.CWB.Review@servicesaustralia.gov.au).

If you are not satisfied after requesting a review, you can email Services Australia again and request a review from an Authorised Review Officer (ARO).

You may seek an appeal from the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) within 13 weeks of the ARO's decision. Find out more about the process on the [AAT website](#).