



Emails to the early childhood education and care sector

2022

21 December 2022.....	14
Have a happy holiday season	14
Obligation: reporting details of new PMCs	15
Useful information	15
16 December 2022.....	17
South Australia floods: period of emergency declared	17
14 December 2022.....	19
CCS and the summer holidays	19
Wrap on NQF performance report	19
Preparing for an emergency	19
StartingBlocks.gov.au: find child care.....	20
Why might a family get less CCS?	20
Obligation: reporting changes to contact details	21
Useful information	21
7 December 2022.....	23
Changes to inducements from 2023	23
Holiday shutdown information.....	24
Update from CCS Helpdesk.....	24
Request for proposals: sector research.....	24
Obligation: reporting a name change.....	25
Useful information	25
Join the conversation.....	25
6 December 2022.....	26
NSW flood update: period of emergency extended in Lachlan Shire	26
For action	27

30 November 2022	28
Update from CCS Helpdesk.....	28
Preparing for an emergency	28
Poll: what do you know about PMCs?.....	28
Obligation: reporting change of address	29
If you get an infringement	29
International Day of People with Disability	30
CCS System maintenance	31
Useful information	31
29 November 2022	32
NSW flood update: period of emergency extended in Lachlan Shire	32
23 November 2022	34
Victoria flood update: period of emergency declared for Mornington Peninsula.....	34
23 November 2022	36
Cheaper Child Care: it's law	36
Changes to inducements from 2023.....	36
Facebook group reaches 5,000 members	37
How we help in an emergency	37
Explainer: background checks	37
Obligation: reporting temporary service closure	38
Resource on inclusion for educators	38
Financial help for very remote teachers.....	39
Useful information	39
22 November 2022	40
NSW floods support update: period of emergency declared in Edward River in Riverina	40
21 November 2022	42
Floods update: emergency support extended to five more Local Government Areas in NSW	42
16 November 2022	44
Check out our new Facebook guides.....	44
Feedback from our communication survey.....	44
Explainer: fit and proper requirements	45
Obligation: reporting a sudden or unexpected permanent service closure	45
Fraud Awareness Week	46
Useful information	46
15 November 2022	48
Floods: period of emergency extended in parts of NSW and ends in Victoria	48



9 November 2022	50
NQF snapshot: more services meeting standards	50
Update: ACCC child care price inquiry	50
Have you completed our survey?	51
Changes to In Home Care	51
Explainer: can the role of a PMC be delegated?	52
Obligation: reporting permanent service closure	52
CCS System maintenance	53
Useful information	53
9 November 2022	54
Period of emergency extended in Forbes Shire	54
8 November 2022	56
Emergency support: for more flood-affected regions in NSW and Victoria	56
2 November 2022	58
Flood emergency: update about support.....	58
Have your say on our channels.....	58
Explainer: persons responsible at the service	58
Obligation: reporting vacancies.....	59
Balancing: families must confirm their incomes	59
Useful information.....	59
31 October 2022	61
Floods: support extended to more LGAs in NSW, Vic, and ends tomorrow.....	61
26 October 2022	63
Federal Budget: \$4.5 billion to deliver more affordable child care	63
Support for flood-affected regions.....	63
Explainer: Persons with management or control obligations	64
Obligation: reporting opening hours	65
Communication survey: tell us what you think	65
Useful information	65
23 October 2022	68
Floods update: support for more LGAs in NSW, periods of emergency extended in NSW, Vic, Tas	68
19 October 2022	70
Victorian floods: we've declared a period of emergency in another 24 LGAs	70
19 October 2022	72
Survey: have your say on our channels	72
Explainer: who is a person with management or control?	72



Obligation: reporting fees.....	73
Get involved in Children’s Week.....	74
What happens if you get an infringement?.....	74
Do you see our Facebook posts?	75
Useful information	76
Good to know	76
16 October 2022	77
Floods: period of emergency declared in Victoria, Tasmania and NSW	77
12 October 2022	79
NSW floods: period of emergency declared.....	79
12 October 2022	81
Trialling intensive support for disadvantaged children	81
Our messaging: do our survey and tell us what you think	81
Ministers address ECA conference	82
FDCA conference scholarships.....	83
Explainer: persons with management or control	83
Obligation: submitting session reports.....	84
Useful information	84
5 October 2022	86
Preparing for emergencies	86
Traineeships helping to develop workforce	86
Released: September quarter 2021 data	87
NQF eLearning modules	87
Poll: what do you know about PMCs?.....	88
Useful information	88
28 September 2022	90
Cheaper child care	90
Helpdesk closed on Monday.....	91
Useful information	91
21 September 2022	93
Public holiday and Child Care Subsidy	93
Understand session reports.....	94
Balancing has started.....	94
Useful information	95
14 September 2022	96
Public holiday and CCS.....	96



Another milestone in workforce strategy	96
Now live: education.gov.au	97
Resources to support children with disability	97
Facebook group: helping you get answers	97
Useful information	98
7 September 2022	99
New evidence rules for additional absences.....	99
Coming soon: education.gov.au	99
Amending 2021–2022 session reports	99
Fill out all fields in part A for your service	99
Fact sheets: supporting children's development	101
Useful information	101
31 August 2022	103
New: Becoming an approved provider	103
What happens if you get an infringement?.....	103
COVID-19: immunisation advice for families.....	104
Share with families: myGov is changing	104
Useful information	104
24 August 2022	106
Amending 2021–2022 session reports	106
2021 National Workforce Census report now available	107
Strike action on 7 September	107
Useful information	108
17 August 2022	109
Little Scientists Early STEM Awards	109
Compliance pilot project already producing results	109
Share with families: myGov is changing	110
Useful information	110
10 August 2022	111
NQF Snapshot: 88% of services meeting or exceeding standards	111
Understand provider obligations.....	111
Early childhood strike action on 7 September.....	111
Inclusion Support Program: Innovative Solutions cap lifted	112
Useful information	112
3 August 2022	113
Tomorrow is National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Day.....	113



Session reports close on Sunday	114
Enrolment notices must be accurate.....	114
Useful information.....	115
27 July 2022	116
Debt explainer: how overpayments occur	116
Develop workers for your service.....	116
Reminder: updating enrolments	117
Facebook group: have you joined yet?.....	117
Get help to fill entry-level roles	118
Useful information.....	118
20 July 2022	119
Top tips on session reports.....	119
AERO case studies: family engagement	120
Reminder: session reports deadline	120
Facebook group: resources to share	121
Register: Healthy Harold program.....	121
NSW floods: period of emergency ending.....	121
Useful information.....	122
13 July 2022	123
Reminder: new CCS year has begun.....	123
New Healthy Harold program.....	124
Session reports cut off 7 August.....	124
Our Facebook group continues to grow	125
Useful information.....	125
12 July 2022	126
NSW floods: period of emergency extended for 9 LGAs.....	126
8 July 2022	127
NSW flood update: period of emergency extended to 8 more LGAs.....	127
7 July 2022	128
NSW update: period of emergency extended, new LGAs added	128
6 July 2022	129
Changes to emergency support.....	129
CCS rates increase next week.....	129
Session reports cut off on 7 August.....	130
Survey: inform new learning system	130
We're now Department of Education	130



Stand up! It's NAIDOC Week.....	131
Wage support for apprentices and trainees.....	131
Useful information.....	131
5 July 2022.....	133
NSW update: period of emergency declared.....	133
4 July 2022.....	134
NSW weather events: emergency update.....	134
29 June 2022.....	136
Child Care Subsidy rates increase on 11 July.....	136
CCS balancing deadline tomorrow.....	137
Connected Beginnings site for Adelaide.....	137
Reminder: COVID-19 support extended.....	138
CCS eligibility: 26-week rule.....	138
Handy resource.....	139
Good to know.....	139
Facebook group.....	140
24 June 2022.....	141
COVID-19 support extended to June 2023.....	141
22 June 2022.....	142
Workshop discusses Inclusion Support Program.....	142
Families first at AIFS conference.....	142
CCS eligibility: 26-week rule starts soon.....	143
Balancing deadlines in 1 week.....	144
Jobs Fairs: helping you find staff.....	144
Facebook group: get connected.....	144
Handy resource: child mental health.....	145
Good to know: combined families.....	145
15 June 2022.....	146
New learning and development resources.....	146
Explainer: absences and public holidays.....	146
CCS eligibility: 26-week rule.....	146
Combined families get higher CCS soon.....	147
Wage support for trainees.....	148
Facebook group.....	148
Good to know.....	148
Handy resource.....	149



8 June 2022	150
Join our Facebook group, expand your network	150
ATO ensuring you meet your obligations	150
Help stop the flu in 2022	151
Combined families get higher CCS soon	152
Exhibit at a Jobs Fair near you	153
Just published: NQF statement.....	153
Handy resource	154
Good to know	154
1 June 2022	155
Help stop the flu in 2022	155
Combined families get higher CCS soon	155
CCS eligibility: 26-week rule starts soon.....	156
Balancing: 30 June deadline for families	157
Explainer: how providers are notified about debt	158
Handy resource	159
Good to know	159
27 May 2022	160
National Reconciliation Week 2022 starts today	160
Actions to make change.....	160
Find an event near you	160
Resources.....	160
Closing the Gap.....	161
Share how you're getting involved.....	161
Helpdesk closed Monday 30 May.....	161
25 May 2022	162
How Connected Beginnings is Closing the Gap	162
Little Scientists recognises best-practice STEM.....	163
Exhibit at a Jobs Fair near you	163
Handy resource	164
Good to know	164
Connect with Colleagues on Facebook.....	164
18 May 2022	166
Last chance: ACCS survey closes tomorrow	166
Help for educators to learn about reconciliation	166
Local Area Emergency declared in Queensland	167



Connect with colleagues on Facebook	167
Good to know	167
11 May 2022	168
ACCS survey closes soon	168
Exhibit at a Job Fair near you	168
Wage support for apprentices and trainees	169
Handy resource	169
Good to know	170
Facebook group	170
4 May 2022	171
Survey: have your say on ACCS	171
Explainer: Debt and balancing	171
Get help filling entry-level roles	172
Help a job seeker secure work	172
Facebook group	173
Handy resource	173
Good to know	173
27 April 2022	174
Facebook group helping services connect	174
Balancing: 30 June income deadline	174
Wage support for apprentices and trainees	175
Support job seekers in your region	175
Next week: have your say on ACCS	175
20 April 2022	177
Join our Facebook group	177
Get help finding staff	177
Exhibit at a Job Fair	178
Handy resource	178
Good to know	178
13 April 2022	179
Explained: balancing Child Care Subsidy	179
NSW and QLD flood support payments	181
Financial help for very remote teachers	181
Handy resource	181
Good to know	181
12 April 2022	183



NSW floods: Local Area Emergency declared.....	183
6 April 2022.....	185
Join our Facebook group	185
Report now available: 2021 Australian Early Development Census	186
Debt explainer: What is offsetting?.....	186
Workforce Contact Centre.....	187
Upcoming Jobs Fairs to help you find staff.....	187
Handy resource	188
Good to know	188
1 April 2022.....	190
NSW floods: Local Area Emergency declared.....	190
30 March 2022	192
Grants for new services in regional and remote communities	192
Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements subsidy extended	192
CCS balancing: 30 June deadline approaching	193
Approaching deadlines	193
Eligibility for higher CCS.....	193
Handy resource	194
Good to know	194
23 March 2022	195
CCCF Special Circumstances grant funding increased	195
Child Care Package evaluation report available	195
Upcoming Jobs Fairs to help you find staff.....	195
Handy resource	196
Good to know	196
16 March 2022	197
Emergency update: NSW and QLD floods	197
States and territories sign on to preschool reform agreement	197
Financial help for very remote teachers.....	197
Upcoming Jobs Fairs to help you find staff.....	198
Relocation Assistance program	198
Handy resource	199
Good to know	199
16 March 2022	200
New South Wales and Queensland floods: emergency support extended	200
11 March 2022	201



Flood support payments.....	201
New South Wales.....	201
9 March 2022.....	203
Floods: support payment announced.....	203
9 March 2022.....	205
Emergency support: NSW and QLD floods.....	205
Higher Child Care Subsidy is here.....	205
Evidence required for ACCS (child wellbeing) applications.....	205
Be You: supporting children’s mental health.....	206
JobTrainer Fund: free or low fee training courses.....	206
Upcoming Jobs Fairs to help you find staff.....	207
Handy Resource.....	207
Good to know.....	207
7 March 2022.....	210
The higher Child Care Subsidy is here.....	210
5 March 2022.....	212
COVID-19 support for Western Australia.....	212
4 March 2022.....	214
Queensland and NSW floods: emergency support expanded.....	214
2 March 2022.....	217
Starts Monday: higher subsidy for families with multiple children.....	217
Explainer: Debt.....	218
Webinar: building skills for resilience in disaster recovery.....	218
Commonwealth scholarship program.....	219
Handy resource.....	219
Good to know.....	219
28 February 2022.....	221
QLD floods: Local Area Emergency declared.....	221
28 February 2022.....	223
NSW floods: Local Area Emergency declared.....	223
23 February 2022.....	225
Higher Child Care Subsidy starts soon.....	225
NSW before and after school care voucher.....	226
We’re surveying families.....	227
Upcoming Job Fairs to help you find staff.....	227
Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements subsidy.....	228



Handy resource	228
Good to know	229
17 February 2022	230
WA bushfires: Local Area Emergency declared	230
16 February 2022	232
COVID-19 update	232
Preparing for an emergency	233
Commonwealth scholarships now available	233
Handy resource	234
Good to know	234
16 February 2022	235
Victoria storms: Local Area Emergency declared	235
14 February 2022	236
StartingBlocks.gov.au – new features are here	236
9 February 2022	238
Some families will soon get a higher subsidy	238
COVID-19 update	239
Compliance pilot project.....	239
High volume of CCS provider applications	240
Apply for Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements subsidy	240
Handy resource	241
Good to know	241
2 February 2022	242
COVID-19 update	242
Getting CCS for absences before and after care	242
Debt Explainer.....	243
Support for early childhood providers	243
New ACECQA web resource	244
Handy resource	244
Good to know	244
27 January 2022	245
COVID-19 update	245
Higher Child Care Subsidy from 7 March.....	245
StartingBlocks.gov.au: find out what’s changing.....	246
Child care discount for early childhood workforce	246
Video: caring for relatives.....	247



Fee reporting and changes to your service	248
Handy resource	249
Good to know	249
27 January 2022	250
More COVID-19 support for early childhood sector.....	250
25 January 2022	252
Northern Beaches storm – Local Area Emergency declared	252
19 January 2022	254
COVID-19 update	254
National framework for managing COVID-19 in education.....	255
Child care discount for early childhood workforce from next week	255
Video: educators who are not provider care.....	256
Helpdesk closed next Wednesday	256
Handy resource	257
Good to know	257
18 January 2022	258
COVID-19 in the Northern Territory	258
12 January 2022	259
Higher CCS from March	259
Video: caring for close family members	259
Preparing for an emergency	260
COVID-19 update	260
Be You professional learning	261
Handy resource	261
Good to know	261
12 January 2022	262
Update: Queensland flooding - Local Area Emergency declared.....	262



Have a happy holiday season

We would like to recognise and thank you for your commitment to early childhood education and care in 2022. We wish you a safe and happy holiday season.

Information about summer shutdown

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Helpdesk will close from 12.30pm (AEDT) this Friday and reopen at 9am (AEDT) on Tuesday 3 January. If you need help during this period, refer to our [resources for providers](#).

Session reports submitted on 22, 23, 29 and 30 December may experience short delays in processing or payment due to public holidays. If you close early on Friday, you must report shorter sessions of care.

Find information about session reports, absences, gap fees and closures over the summer holidays [on our website](#).

Stay water safe

Stay alert this summer and keep children under your care safe, especially during water-based play.

Your policies and procedures must ensure you:

- adequately supervise children at all times
- have at least one staff member with a current first aid qualification on duty and present at the service
- take reasonable precautions to protect children from harm, injury, and potential hazards.

ACECQA has [guidance on developing water safety policy and procedures](#). It's a good time to make sure your policies and procedures are up to date.

You can report concerns about the quality or safety of a service to your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

Also, visit [Community Early Learning Australia](#) for tips on developing responsible habits surrounding water use and conservation.

Stay COVID-19 safe

Support will be available for services and families impacted by COVID-19 over summer and into 2023.

All children have an extra 10 allowable absences this financial year. This brings the total number of absences to 52. Families can access additional absences if they have used their annual allocation, in [certain circumstances](#).



You can also waive gap fees and get CCS if a child is unable to attend care for [one of three reasons](#).

Learn more about COVID-19 support [on our website](#).

Prepare for emergencies

Emergencies can occur without warning, so it's important to be prepared and reduce risks.

Help is available to you in the event of an emergency, including bushfires, storms, floods, and droughts.

Find information to help you prepare [on our website](#).

Help families find you

[StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) is the one place where families can find and compare early childhood education and care services.

Make sure your fee and vacancy details are current so families can find you in the new year. Do this through the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

Obligation: reporting details of new PMCs

Each week we're highlighting a task that providers must perform under Family Assistance Law.

You must report the name and contact details for new:

- persons with management or control of the provider (PMCs)
- person responsible for the day-to-day operation of a service (persons responsible at the service).

You must also declare that the required checks for these people are complete. Where they are required to have a working with children check, you must provide details of that check in the Child Care Subsidy System. You must show evidence of these checks if we ask.

This task can only be performed by a PMC.

You must report within 7 days after the new person starts. Report through the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.

If you fail to meet your obligations on time you may receive an [infringement](#).

Find a [list of obligations, tasks and timeframes](#) on our website.

Useful information

Handy resource

Don't forget you can find all our newsletters from 2022 and previous years [on our website](#).



Read past newsletters to find information on important topics.

Good to know

This year, we launched our [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#), with over 5000 of you joining our community.

If you haven't already, join the group and share it with your colleagues to continue to learn, explore, and connect with us and others in your sector in 2023.

Please also encourage staff at your service to [join our mailing list](#).



South Australia floods: period of emergency declared

We've declared a period of emergency for the early childhood education and care sector in Renmark Paringa, South Australia, following flooding.

The period of emergency applies from 15 to 27 December 2022 for services and families in the Renmark Paringa Local Government Area (LGA).

See the [full list of affected LGAs](#) on our website. We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates here as required.

Sector-specific support

The following support is available for services and families in affected regions **during** the period of emergency:

- services can continue to get Child Care Subsidy (CCS) if they close as a direct result of the emergency
- services can waive gap fees if a child doesn't attend, or their service is closed, during the emergency
- children will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the period of emergency.

The following support is available to help services and families recover after an emergency:

- Families may be able to access additional absences, if they've exhausted their allowable absences, after the emergency.
- The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) special circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as an emergency. Affected services should apply after an event has occurred and they have accessed other disaster support.
- Families experiencing temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#). Families should apply through their [Centrelink online account](#).

Full details of support are available [on our website](#).

Other government support

Individuals and services in affected areas may also be eligible for other government support:

- The Australian Government provides payments and help for people affected by natural disasters. Individuals can find out if they are eligible for support on the [Services Australia website](#).



- Your state government may provide support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Go to sa.gov.au.

For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the Provider Entry Point (PEP) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your state or territory regulatory authority.
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the PEP or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on StartingBlocks.gov.au to help families looking for care. Do this via the PEP or your third-party software.
- Join the Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group for alerts and updates.

Keep an eye on the [South Australia State Emergency Service website](#) for current emergency information in your region.



CCS and the summer holidays

Here's what you need to know about the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) ahead of the summer holidays:

- The CCS Helpdesk will close from 12.30pm (AEDT) on Friday 23 December and reopen at 9am (AEDT) on Tuesday 3 January.
- Session reports submitted on 22, 23, 29 and 30 December may experience short delays in process or payment due to public holidays.
- If your service is closing early on Friday 23 December, you must report shorter sessions of care.

We've published information on [gap fee waiving, absences and more on our website](#) to help you prepare for the holidays.

If you need help during this holiday period, please refer to our [resources for providers](#).

Wrap on NQF performance report

Each year, the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) releases a National Quality Framework (NQF) performance report which summarises quality ratings for services across the year.

The annual performance report shows:

- 92% of NQF-approved services (16,984) are Meeting National Quality Standards (NQS) or above for children's health and safety
- 91% of services are Meeting NQS or above for educational programs and practice – the highest proportion since the NQF's foundation
- more services than ever (84%) in the most disadvantaged areas of Australia are Meeting NQS or above.

Learn more by reading the 2022 annual performance report on the [ACECQA website](#).

Preparing for an emergency

Help is available in the event of an emergency, including bushfires, storms, floods, and droughts.

Emergencies can strike without warning, so it's important to prepare for all emergencies and reduce risks.

To help you prepare, see our [help in an emergency webpage](#).





StartingBlocks.gov.au

The only website with all approved early childhood services



StartingBlocks.gov.au: find child care

Did you know your fees, vacancies, quality ratings and inclusions are published on the Starting Blocks website? So make sure your details are up to date so families can find you in 2023.

StartingBlocks.gov.au is the one place where families can find and compare child care services.

Families can:

- find local services and view their vacancies, costs, quality ratings and inclusions
- compare services side-by-side
- estimate their out-of-pocket costs
- get information and advice about education, children's development, and parenting.

Update your details via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software to help families find your service.

Why might a family get less CCS?

There are many reasons why families may get less CCS. You won't receive a specific explanation when this happens as it's a private matter between the family and Services Australia.

Reasons why a family could receive a reduced amount of CCS include:

- change of circumstances – including activity level or income estimate changes
- automatic additional withholdings – in cases of a CCS overpayment (debt) an additional 20% is withheld from a family's fortnightly entitlement payment
- CCS balancing – in cases where a family has not met the first deadline requirement to lodge their tax return by the end of the following financial year.



You should charge families based on the eligibility and entitlement details available to you at the time.

You should not invoice families using estimates of an expected fee reduction. This is because the actual amount of CCS paid in any fortnight (if any) may vary.

Refer to our [overpayments and debts](#) webpage for more information.

Obligation: reporting changes to contact details

Each week we're highlighting a task that providers must perform under Family Assistance Law.

You must report changes to provider and service contact details. This includes changes to:

- email address
- website address
- telephone number
- fax number.

This task can be performed by:

- a person with management or control (PMC)
- a person responsible for the day-to-day operation of a service (for their service only).

You must report changes to contact details within 14 days after the change.

If you fail to provide notifications on time you may receive an infringement.

Report changes to contact details through your third-party software or the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#).

Find a [list of obligations, tasks and timeframes](#) on our website.

Useful information

Handy resource

Workforce Australia offers 3 ways to get help with your recruitment needs. You can:

- do it yourself through the online service
- get personalised services through a national network of providers
- connect with a workforce specialist when you have large-scale recruitment needs.

Workforce Australia for Business can help you:

- advertise vacancies and search for candidates



- connect with a Workforce Australia or Apprenticeship Network provider in your area.

From Workforce Australia for Business you can also find out about:

- financial incentives
- programs that help job seekers understand your industry
- subsidised accredited training
- access resources for workforce planning
- programs and services for businesses and industries.

Visit [Workforce Australia for Business](#) to learn more.

Good to know

The CCS Helpdesk has streamlined the way it manages your enquiries. We appreciate your patience as system updates take place.

The helpdesk remains open 9am to 5pm AEDT Monday to Friday. However, you may experience short delays.

You may also notice the look and feel of emails from the helpdesk has changed. Please do not remove the ETKN tracking number from any correspondence with the helpdesk. It is a 12-digit number starting with ETKN that will facilitate your requests.

This advice also applies to correspondence with the Inclusion Support Portal Helpdesk.

The way you contact the helpdesk has not change. Call 1300 667 276 or [send an email](#).

If you have a general question, you can also [start a conversation in our Facebook group](#). Please continue to direct enquiries that contain personal information to the helpdesk.

Join the conversation

The [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is your place to learn, explore and connect with us and others in your sector.



Changes to inducements from 2023

From 1 January 2023 early childhood education and care providers may offer only certain types of inducements.

An inducement is an incentive offered by a provider to secure, increase or maintain a child's enrolment.

From January, inducements that are financial or not directly associated with the quality or provision of education or care services will not be allowed. Some examples of inducements not allowed may include:

- cash or vouchers
- iPads, tablets or other electronic devices
- other gifts.

Third parties may not offer a family an inducement to enrol at your service, either.

By 1 January 2023, you must:

- stop offering inducements that are not allowed
- ensure any services or educators under your approval stop offering inducements that are not allowed
- update your marketing material, both printed and online, to remove inducements not allowed.

Services you can continue to offer

Discounted or free care is not affected by this ban and may still be offered. However, fee discounts must be reported correctly if any Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is being claimed.

Offering transport to or from a service is allowed if this is part of your normal business practice. You may also include extra-curricular activities as part of a session fee. You must ensure the correct billing practices are applied.

You can still advertise your service to prospective families and offer free site visits or trial periods. You may also issue marketing merchandise to the value of \$30 per complying written arrangement.

The measure is part of the Government's commitment to improving the transparency of child care fees. It supports a fairer market across the sector. This ban will be introduced through rule 48B of the Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017 from 1 January 2023.

We may take action against providers that continue to offer inducements not permitted under the law. This could include:



- putting conditions on your approval
- issuing an infringement notice and penalty
- suspending or cancelling your approval.

If you have questions, contact the CCS Helpdesk on 1300 667 276 or [by email](#).

If you think a provider is offering inducements that are not allowed after 1 January 2023, you can tell us. Call 1800 664 231 or [email the tip-off line](#).

Holiday shutdown information

The CCS Helpdesk will close for the Christmas/New Year period. It will close from 12.30pm (AEDT) on Friday 23 December 2022 and reopen at 9am (AEDT) on Tuesday 3 January 2023.

If you need help during this period, please refer to our [resources for providers](#).

We've pulled everything you need to know into [one page on our website](#). It contains information on session reports, attendances, absences and service closures.

Update from CCS Helpdesk

The CCS Helpdesk is streamlining the way it manages your enquiries. We appreciate your patience over coming weeks as system updates occur.

The Helpdesk remains open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday until it closes for the holidays at 12:30pm on Friday 23 December. However, you may experience short delays.

You may also notice the look and feel of emails from the Helpdesk will change. Please do not remove the ETKN tracking number from any correspondence with the Helpdesk. It is a 12-digit number starting with ETKN that will facilitate your requests.

This advice also applies to correspondence with the Inclusion Support Portal Helpdesk.

The way you contact the Helpdesk will not change. Call 1300 667 276 or [send an email](#).

If you have a general question, you can also [start a conversation in our Facebook group](#). Please continue to direct enquiries that contain personal information to the Helpdesk.

Request for proposals: sector research

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) is seeking proposals to help identify strategies to improve pay and conditions in the early childhood education and care sector.

This research has been commissioned as part of the [National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy](#).

[Read more and submit a tender on the ECA website](#).



Obligation: reporting a name change

Each week we're highlighting a task that providers must perform under Family Assistance Law.

You must report a change to the name of the provider and any of its services. When you do report a name change, you must also provide evidence.

This task can only be performed by a person with management or control (PMC).

You must report the name change within 14 days after the change. Providers who fail to provide notifications on time may receive an infringement.

Report a name change through your third-party software or the [PEP](#).

Please note: if the reason your provider name is changing is because of a change in legal entity this can affect your provider approval.

Find a [list of obligations, tasks and timeframes](#) on our website.

Useful information

Handy resource

Be You [has information](#) to help you make sure your end-of-year celebrations are inclusive and accommodate people of different cultures and faiths.

Good to know

Our [Child Care Package page](#) has everything you need in one place, including information on:

- Child Care Subsidy
- Additional Child Care Subsidy
- Community Child Care Fund
- Inclusion Support Program
- your provider obligations.

Join the conversation

The [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is your place to learn, explore and connect with us and others in your sector.



NSW flood update: period of emergency extended in Lachlan Shire

We've extended the period of emergency for services in the Lachlan Shire in New South Wales because of flooding.

The period of emergency applies until 13 December 2022.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates here as required.

[See a list of emergency declarations and support by region on our website.](#)

Sector-specific support

The following support is available for services and families in affected regions **during** the period of emergency:

- services can continue to get Child Care Subsidy (CCS) if they close as a direct result of the emergency
- services can waive gap fees if a child doesn't attend, or their service is closed, during the emergency
- children will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the period of emergency.

The following support is available to help services and families recover **after** an emergency:

- Families may be able to access additional absences, if they've exhausted their allowable absences, after the emergency.
- The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) special circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as an emergency. Affected services should apply after an event has occurred and they have accessed other disaster support.
- Families experiencing temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#). Families should apply through their [Centrelink online account](#).

Full details of support are available [on our website](#).

Other government support

Individuals and services in affected areas may also be eligible for other government support:

- The Australian Government provides payments and help for people affected by natural disasters. Individuals can find out if they are eligible for support on the [Services Australia website](#).



- Your state government may provide support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Go to nsw.gov.au.

For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on StartingBlocks.gov.au to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join the [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on the [NSW State Emergency Service website](#) for current emergency information in your region.



Update from CCS Helpdesk

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Helpdesk is streamlining the way it manages your enquiries. We appreciate your patience over coming weeks as system updates take place.

The helpdesk will open at 10am AEDT on Monday 5 December. It will resume normal business hours from Tuesday. However, you may experience short delays.

You may also notice the look and feel of emails from the helpdesk has changed. Please do not remove the ETKN tracking number from any correspondence with the helpdesk. It is a 12-digit number starting with ETKN that facilitates your requests.

This advice also applies to correspondence with the Inclusion Support Portal Helpdesk.

The way you contact the helpdesk will not change. Call 1300 667 276 or [send an email](#).

If you have a general question, you can also [start a conversation in our Facebook group](#). Please continue to direct enquiries that contain personal information to the helpdesk.

Preparing for an emergency

As we enter summer, it's a good time to make sure your service is prepared for an emergency.

Different emergencies require different planning, and [we have a webpage to help](#) you prepare.

On this page you'll find:

- what is a local emergency
- preparing for an emergency
- help during an emergency
- recovering after an emergency
- information by state and territory.

[Read up on help available in an emergency, and how to prepare.](#)

Poll: what do you know about PMCs?

Now that we've finished our explainer series on persons with management or control (PMCs), we want to hear from you if this information helped you better understand your obligations.

Tell us what you know about PMCs through this [quick poll in our Facebook group](#). And [join the group](#) if you haven't already.



We've collated all our PMC explainers in this [handy guide](#) in our Facebook group if you need a refresher. We also have more detailed information [on our website](#).

Obligation: reporting change of address

Each week we're highlighting a task providers must perform under Family Assistance Law.

You must report any change of physical or postal address for the provider and any of its services.

Only a person with management or control (PMC) can perform this task.

You must report the change of address no later than 30 days before the change.

Report a change of address through your third-party software or the [Provider Entry Point](#).

Providers who fail to provide notifications on time may receive an infringement.

[Find a list of obligations, tasks and timeframes on our website.](#)

If you get an infringement

We issue infringements to providers that don't follow the rules under Family Assistance Law (FAL). Providers must make sure that they, their employees and educators follow the rules.

An infringement is a fine, like a parking ticket.

[Learn more about infringements on our website.](#)

We send infringements by email and by post. Emails will come from ccinfringements@education.gov.au. Please add this address to your safe list and check your mail often.

Infringements can be issued for:

- not correctly reporting your fee information
- failure to meet reporting requirements, such as keeping contact details and PMCs up to date
- failure to submit session reports within required timeframes.

See the [list of FAL civil penalty provisions](#), and check out this [handy table of reporting obligations](#).

If you get an infringement, you must pay the fine within 28 days.

Our website has resources to help you avoid an infringement, including:

- information about the [Child Care Package](#)
- information about [your obligations](#)



- [table of reporting obligations, tasks and timeframes](#)
- [short videos](#) covering common compliance issues
- [handbooks, guides and task cards](#) on key programs.

International Day of People with Disability



This Saturday is International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD). It's a day observed by the United Nations to increase awareness, understanding and acceptance of people with disability.

An estimated 4.4 million Australians have a disability.

Australian of the Year Dylan Alcott (pictured) shared an inspiring [video message](#) of his experience of inclusiveness and living with disability.

Watch [Dylan's video](#), get involved and join the celebration.

Do you have ways you and your service are planning to get involved? Share your stories using the hashtag #IDPWD in our [Facebook group](#).

[Visit the IDPWD website for more information.](#)

Disability Discrimination Act resources

ACECQA has [resources on its website](#) to help you be more inclusive of those with disabilities. These include tip sheets and infographic posts to print and display for staff at your service.

[Check out ACECQA's resources.](#)



CCS System maintenance

The CCS System will be unavailable from 10pm (AEDT) Friday until 10am Sunday.

If you are trying to submit transactions, including session reports during this period, they may not be successful and you may receive errors.

Useful information

Handy resource

We've collated our Facebook posts on important topics into [helpful reference guides](#). The guides present the information in stages and in a central place that's easy to find.

So far, we have guides on CCS overpayments and debt and persons with management and control.

[Share the guides](#) with your colleagues and pass on any feedback you have [in the group](#).

Good to know

The [Launch into Work](#) program can help you identify and prepare job seekers with the right values and attributes for entry-level roles in early childhood.

Services with multiple entry-level vacancies can work with us to co-design and deliver a pre-employment project for job seekers.

These projects include training, work experience and mentoring to help job seekers move into sustainable employment in your business.

[Learn more about the Launch into Work program](#).

Join the conversation

The [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is your place to learn, explore and connect with us and others in your sector.



NSW flood update: period of emergency extended in Lachlan Shire

We've extended the period of emergency for services in the Lachlan Shire in New South Wales because of flooding.

The period of emergency applies until 6 December 2022.

Meantime, the period of emergency will end tonight in other previously affected areas of NSW.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates here as required.

[See a list of emergency declarations and support by region on our website.](#)

Sector-specific support

The following support is available for services and families in affected regions **during** the period of emergency:

- services can continue to get Child Care Subsidy (CCS) if they close as a direct result of the emergency
- services can waive gap fees if a child doesn't attend, or their service is closed, during the emergency
- children will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the period of emergency.

The following support is available to help services and families recover **after** an emergency:

- Families may be able to access additional absences, if they've exhausted their allowable absences, after the emergency.
- The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) special circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as an emergency. Affected services should apply after an event has occurred and they have accessed other disaster support.
- Families experiencing temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#). Families should apply through their [Centrelink online account](#).

Full details of support are available [on our website](#).

Other government support

Individuals and services in affected areas may also be eligible for other government support:



- The Australian Government provides payments and help for people affected by natural disasters. Individuals can find out if they are eligible for support on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state government may provide support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Go to [nsw.gov.au](#).

For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join the [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on the [NSW State Emergency Service website](#) for current emergency information in your region.



Victoria flood update: period of emergency declared for Mornington Peninsula

We've declared a period of emergency for services in the Mornington Peninsula Shire.

The period of emergency applies from 14 to 22 November.

[See a list of emergency declarations and support by region on our website.](#)

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates here as required.

Sector-specific support

The following support is available for services and families in affected regions **during** the period of emergency:

- services can continue to get Child Care Subsidy (CCS) if they close as a direct result of the emergency
- services can waive gap fees if a child doesn't attend, or their service is closed, during the emergency
- children will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the period of emergency.

The following support is available to help services and families recover **after** an emergency:

- Families may be able to access additional absences, if they've exhausted their allowable absences, after the emergency.
- The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) special circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as an emergency. Affected services should apply after an event has occurred and they have accessed other disaster support.
- Families experiencing temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#). Families should apply through their [Centrelink online account](#).

Full details of support are available [on our website](#).

Other government support

Individuals and services in affected areas may also be eligible for other government support:

- The Australian Government provides payments and help for people affected by natural disasters. Individuals can find out if they are eligible for support on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state government may provide support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Go to [vic.gov.au](#).



For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join the [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on the [Victoria State Emergency Service website](#) for current emergency information in your region.



Cheaper Child Care: it's law

The Australian Government's Cheaper Child Care legislation passed through the Australian Parliament today.

This means the \$4.5 billion to deliver more affordable child care, announced in the Federal budget in October, becomes law.

Under the legislation, Child Care Subsidy (CCS) rates will increase from July 2023.

The number of subsidised ECEC hours available to First Nations families will also increase.

Read the [media release from Minister for Education the Hon Jason Clare MP and Minister for Early Childhood Education the Hon Dr Anne Aly MP](#).

Changes to inducements from 2023

Early childhood education and care providers may offer only certain types of inducements from 1 January 2023.

An inducement is an incentive offered by a provider to secure a child's enrolment.

From January, inducements that are financial or not directly associated with the quality or provision of education or care services will not be allowed.

Some examples of inducements not allowed may include:

- cash or vouchers
- iPads, tablets or other electronic devices
- other gifts.

Discounted or free care is not affected by this ban and may still be offered. However, fee discounts must be reported correctly if any CCS is being claimed.

You can still advertise your service to prospective families and offer free site visits or trial periods. You may also issue marketing merchandise to the value of \$30 per complying written arrangement.

By 1 January 2023, you must:

- stop offering inducements that are not allowed
- ensure any services or educators under your approval stop offering inducements that are not allowed
- update your marketing material, both printed and online, to remove inducements not allowed.

The measure is part of the Australian Government's commitment to improving the transparency of child care fees. It supports a fairer market across the sector.



We may take action against providers that continue to offer inducements not permitted under the law. This could include:

- putting conditions on your approval
- issuing an infringement notice and penalty
- suspending or cancelling your approval.

If you have questions, contact the CCS Helpdesk on 1300 667 276 or [by email](#).

If you think a provider is offering inducements that are not allowed after 1 January 2023, you can tell us. Call 1800 664 231 or [email the tip-off line](#).

Keep an eye on this newsletter and [join our Facebook group](#) for updates.

Facebook group reaches 5,000 members

Our Facebook group for ECEC providers has reached a milestone 5,000 members.

You've told us in our [communication survey](#) that you value the Facebook group as a place to learn from us and others in the sector. We look forward to continuing to grow the group and connecting with you there.

A big thanks to everyone who has already joined. If you know someone who is not a member, [invite them to take part](#).

Meantime, if you have feedback about the Facebook group or how we communicate with you, please take 3 minutes to tell us via [our survey](#).

How we help in an emergency

Help is available for families and ECEC services in the event of an emergency, like bushfires, storms or floods.

Our website has resources to help you prepare for an emergency and has information on support, which includes gap fee waivers, extra absences and support for service closures.

[Go to our website for more information](#).

Also, for the latest details on [emergency support by region see our website](#).

Explainer: background checks

The following information will help you comply with your obligations under Family Assistance Law. Find details of [your obligations](#) on our website.

Certain people at a service must have background checks. Providers must have evidence of these checks.

You must show evidence that persons with management or control of the provider (PMCs) have the following checks:



- National Police Check
- working with children check
- National Personal Insolvency Index check
- evidence the person is not on ASIC's banned and disqualified register
- a current and historical personal name extract search of ASIC records.

Family Day Care educators and In Home Care educators must provide evidence of these background checks:

- National Police Check
- working with children check.

[Learn how to obtain checks and what evidence you need to provide on our website.](#)

Different checks may be required under National Law. [Contact your state or territory regulatory authority for more information.](#)

Obligation: reporting temporary service closure

Each week, we're highlighting a task that providers must perform under Family Assistance Law.

You must report when you suddenly or unexpectedly need to temporarily close a service.

This task can only be performed by a PMC.

You must report the sudden or unexpected temporary closure within 24 hours.

Report temporary closures through your third-party software or the Provider Entry Point (PEP).

If you plan to temporarily cease operating, for example due to planned building renovations, you should request a [voluntary suspension of your CCS approval](#).

See a list of [obligations, tasks and timeframes on our website](#).

Resource on inclusion for educators

The Inclusion Support Program (ISP) provides help for eligible child care services to address barriers to inclusion for children with additional needs.

A new resource for educators is live on the [NSW/ACT Inclusion Agency website](#).

[Big Situations](#) is a learning module designed to help educators respond to challenges and build their confidence and resilience.

Educators don't have to know everything or feel pressured to fix big situations, but they can help them feel confident by ensuring their access to the support and resources.

While Big Situations is hosted on the NSW/ACT IA Agency website, it is relevant to educators in all states and territories.

[Access the resource](#) and share it with your educators.



Financial help for very remote teachers

Early childhood teachers at very remote Centre Based Day Care services with Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) debts may be eligible for financial assistance.

The Australian Government provides two types of assistance. We can:

- waive indexation on accumulated HELP debt
- reduce accumulated HELP debt.

Applications for reduction of accumulated HELP debts will be available from 2023.

Check if your service is in a [very remote area](#).

[Learn more about financial assistance for very remote teachers](#).

Useful information

Handy resource

Did you know we publish [past newsletters on our website](#)?

Read our past newsletters to find information on important topics.

Good to know

The CCS Helpdesk will close early tomorrow (Thursday) at 4pm. It will be reopen Friday from 9am (AEDT).

You can contact the helpdesk at any time via email at ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au.

Join the conversation

The [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is your place to learn, explore and connect with us and others in your sector.



NSW floods support update: period of emergency declared in Edward River in Riverina

We've declared a period of emergency for services in Edward River Council, in the Riverina, New South Wales.

The period of emergency applies from 21 to 29 November.

This follows other emergency extensions and declarations [announced yesterday](#).

[See a full list of emergency declarations on our website](#).

Meantime, the period of emergency will end tonight in most other previously affected areas of NSW.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates here as required.

Sector-specific support

The following support is available for services and families in affected regions **during** the period of emergency:

- services can continue to get Child Care Subsidy (CCS) if they close as a direct result of the emergency
- services can waive gap fees if a child doesn't attend, or their service is closed, during the emergency
- children will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the period of emergency.

The following support is available to help services and families recover **after** an emergency:

- Families may be able to access additional absences, if they've exhausted their allowable absences, after the emergency.
- The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) special circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as an emergency. Affected services should apply after an event has occurred and they have accessed other disaster support.
- Families experiencing temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#). Families should apply through their [Centrelink online account](#).

Full details of support are available on [our website](#).

Other government support

Individuals and services in affected areas may also be eligible for other government support:



- The Australian Government provides payments and help for people affected by natural disasters. Individuals can find out if they are eligible for support on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state government may provide support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Go to [nsw.gov.au](#).

For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join the [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on the [NSW State Emergency Service](#) for current emergency information in your region.



Floods update: emergency support extended to five more Local Government Areas in NSW

We've declared a period of emergency in additional Local Government Areas (LGAs) in New South Wales and extended the duration of the emergency in other NSW LGAs because of the floods.

[See a list of where and when we've declared a period of emergency.](#)

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates here as required.

Period of emergency declared

A period of emergency applies from 18 to 29 November in these 5 NSW LGAs:

- Eurobodalla Shire Council, Inverell Shire Council, Orange City Council, Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council and Wentworth Shire Council.

Period of emergency extended

We've also extended the period of emergency in place for the Forbes Shire and Lachlan Shire until 29 November.

Period of emergency ending

The period of emergency ends for all other regions in NSW at 11.59pm tomorrow (Tuesday 22 November).

Support is available to help services and families recover after an emergency. See details below.

Sector-specific support

The following support is available for services and families in affected regions **during** the period of emergency:

- services can continue to get Child Care Subsidy (CCS) if they close as a direct result of the emergency
- services can waive gap fees if a child doesn't attend, or their service is closed, during the emergency
- children will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the period of emergency.

The following support is available to help services and families recover **after** an emergency:

- Families may be able to access additional absences, if they've exhausted their allowable absences, after the emergency.
- The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) special circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as an emergency. Affected services should apply after an event has occurred and they have accessed other disaster support.



- Families experiencing temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#). Families should apply through their Centrelink online account.

Full details of support are available [on our website](#).

Other government support

Individual and services in affected areas may also be eligible for other government support:

- The Australian Government provides payments and help for people affected by natural disasters. Individuals can find out if they're eligible for support on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state government may provide support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Go to [nsw.gov.au](#).

For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join the [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on the following websites for current emergency information in your region: [NSW State Emergency Service](#).



Check out our new Facebook guides

Our [Facebook group](#) is a place where we share information to keep you informed on the latest programs, policies and announcements, as well as your obligations under Family Assistance Law.

We've collated our posts on important topics into [helpful reference guides](#). The guides present the information in stages and in a central place that's easy to find.

So far, we have guides on Child Care Subsidy overpayments and debt and persons with management and control.

Share the [guides](#) with your colleagues and pass on any feedback you have in the group.

If you're not a member of our group yet, [join now](#).

Also, we ask all members to turn on notifications in the group so you don't miss anything from us.

To do this:

- make sure you have joined the Facebook group
- click the drop-down menu on the 'joined' button on the group's homepage
- select the 'manage notifications' button
- tick 'all posts' in the in-app notifications section, and 'highlights' in the push notifications section.

Feedback from our communication survey

We continue to receive useful feedback from you via our [communication survey](#).

So far, you've told us that the different roles of the Commonwealth and state and territory departments of education can be confusing.

In short, we are the Commonwealth Department of Education. We're responsible for administering Child Care Subsidy and through this newsletter we share:

- important information about the Child Care Subsidy
- guidance regarding your obligations under Family Assistance Law
- policy and program announcements from the Australian Government.

The state and territory education departments help you with child safety, teaching and learning, and service approval. Plus, they administer the National Quality Framework.

Meantime, if you haven't already, we'd love you to complete our [3-minute survey](#).



Explainer: fit and proper requirements

The following information will help you comply with your obligations under Family Assistance Law (FAL). Find details of [your obligations](#) on our website.

Providers, persons with management or control (PMCs) and persons responsible at the service must be considered by us to be 'fit and proper' to handle public money. This does not mean they have to be athletic.

Fit and proper means the person is:

- **competent** – they have the skills, knowledge and experience needed to comply with FAL
- **of good character** – they are diligent, honest and have good judgement and integrity
- **law abiding** – not disqualified by law from performing their role
- free of conflicts of interest.

Whether a person is fit and proper is determined based on FAL. This sets out the matters that must be considered, which include:

- evidence of law-breaking
- court proceedings and convictions or findings of guilt
- past administrative decisions relating to a person's suitability to be involved in child care
- evidence of fraud or dishonesty
- history of managing public funds
- any past or current debts to the Commonwealth
- record of financial management, including any instances of bankruptcy, insolvency or administration
- potential conflicts of interest
- any other matter relevant to the suitability of the provider and their staff
- any other matter we consider relevant.

Different fit and proper requirements apply under National Law. Contact your [state or territory regulatory authority](#) for more information.

[Read more about fit and proper requirements on our website.](#)

Obligation: reporting a sudden or unexpected permanent service closure

Each week we're highlighting a task that providers must perform under Family Assistance Law.



You must report the sudden or unexpected permanent closure of a service.

This task can only be performed by a PMC.

You must report within 24 hours of the sudden or unexpected permanent closure.

[Complete this form](#) and email it to CCSassessments@education.gov.au. Two PMCs must sign the form, unless only one PMC is listed.

Failure to comply with your obligations can result in compliance action, such as an infringement.

Find a [list of obligations, tasks and timeframes](#) on our website.

Fraud Awareness Week



This week is Fraud Awareness Week.

Fraud Week encourages business leaders and employees to act to minimise the impact of fraud. See how you can get involved at fraudweek.com.

Tip-offs on fraud are an important part of the department's fraud control efforts. If you know of potentially fraudulent behaviour, please let us know on 1800 664 231 or tipoffline@education.gov.au.

It's also a good time to do a quick compliance check-up. Find details of [your obligations](#) on our website and make sure your services are complying.

Useful information

Handy resource

This Sunday marks [World Children's Day](#). It's UNICEF's annual day of action for children, by children.

The United Nations is encouraging children to make their voice heard on topics that affect them most, like education, mental health and discrimination.



Check out [Chisomo's story](#), of how mixed sport gave her a space to feel included. UNICEF will share encouraging videos like this over the coming days, so keep an eye out.

Good to know

A period of emergency is in place for parts of New South Wales affected by severe weather and flooding.

On our website you'll find:

- [a list of affected regions and dates for support](#)
- [details of support available during the emergency](#).

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

Join the conversation

The [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is your place to learn, explore and connect with us and others in your sector.



Floods: period of emergency extended in parts of NSW and ends in Victoria

We've declared a period of emergency in additional parts of New South Wales affected by flooding.

[See a list of where and when we've declared a period of emergency.](#)

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates here as required.

Period of emergency declared

The period of emergency applies from 11 to 22 November in the following NSW Local Government Areas (LGAs):

- Bathurst Regional Council, Oberon Council, Shellharbour City Council, Uralla Shire.

Period of emergency extended

We've also extended the period of emergency for Forbes Shire and Lachlan Shire in NSW from 16 to 22 November.

Period of emergency ending

The period of emergency will end for all other regions in NSW and Victoria today (Tuesday 15 November).

Support is available to help services and families recover after an emergency. See details below.

Sector-specific support

The following support is available for services and families in affected regions during the period of emergency:

- services can continue to get Child Care Subsidy (CCS) if they close as a direct result of the emergency
- services can waive gap fees if a child doesn't attend, or their service is closed, during the emergency
- children will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the period of emergency.

The following support is available to help services and families recover after an emergency:

- Families may be able to access additional absences, if they've exhausted their allowable absences, after the emergency.



- [The Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) special circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as an emergency. Affected services should apply after an event has occurred and they have accessed other disaster support.
- Families experiencing temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#). Families should apply through their [Centrelink online account](#).

Full details of support are available [on our website](#).

Other government support

Services in affected areas may also be eligible for other government support:

- The Australian Government provides payments and help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out if you're eligible for support on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state government may provide support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Go to [nsw.gov.au](#) or [vic.gov.au](#).

For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join the Australian [Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on the following websites for current emergency information in your region:
 - [NSW State Emergency Service](#)
 - [Victoria State Emergency Service](#).



NQF snapshot: more services meeting standards

Each quarter, ACECQA releases a National Quality Framework (NQF) snapshot which summarises quality ratings for services.

The latest report shows:

- 88 per cent of NQF-approved services (13,524) are Meeting National Quality Standards (NQS) or above.
- That's a significant increase from 2013 when 56 per cent of services were rated as Meeting NQS.
- 68 per cent of services have improved their overall quality rating from Working Towards NQS to Meeting NQS or above.

The report noted this was further evidence of the continued improvement in the quality of early childhood education and care services.

[Explore the report on the ACECQA website.](#)

Update: ACCC child care price inquiry

The [Australian Competition and Consumer Commission \(ACCC\)](#) is preparing to engage with the early childhood education and care sector for its inquiry into child care prices.

On 28 October, Treasurer the Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP, [instructed the ACCC](#) to consider:

- costs incurred by providers and services, including labour, land, finance, regulatory compliance and consumables
- prices charged since 1 January 2018
- how costs and prices differ by provider characteristics, types of care and other factors
- factors that affect supply, demand and competition in the market
- the impact of the above factors on provider viability, quality and profits
- the impact and effectiveness of existing price regulation mechanisms and any impediments to these mechanisms.

The ACCC will provide its interim report to the Treasurer by 30 June 2023, and the final report by 31 December 2023.

The findings will feed into the Productivity Commission's review into the early childhood education and care sector.



In [welcoming the inquiry](#), ACCC Chair Gina Cass-Gottlieb said the ACCC expected to shortly start engaging with the sector.

‘We will be publishing an indicative consultation schedule on [our website](#),’ she said.

Watch here for further updates.

Have you completed our survey?

There’s still time to tell us what you think about our communications with the early childhood sector via our [short survey](#).

We’re looking for your feedback on:

- our website
- this weekly newsletter
- our Facebook group
- our short explainer videos.

The survey will only take a few minutes to complete. You’ll be anonymous, and the information you provide us will help us as to improve how we communicate.

Many of you have told us how much you value this weekly newsletter. You can share it with your colleagues by clicking the envelope icon at the bottom of this email. Also, anyone can subscribe by [completing this form](#).

[Complete the survey now.](#)

Changes to In Home Care

We’re making administrative changes to In Home Care (IHC) to improve consistency and transparency of decisions.

The changes include:

- extending the maximum eligibility period from 3 to 6 months
- providing a formal review process for services and families
- simplifying the process for services to apply to increase or decrease their places
- improving the process for families to be assessed for IHC and notify any changes to their circumstances.

We’ve published new resources to support these changes, including:

- new [place allocation and reduction procedures](#)
- new [eligibility assessment procedures](#)



- [new forms](#) for services, families and IHC Support Agencies.

The changes reflect feedback from the sector and have been developed in consultation with IHC Support Agencies.

IHC services have been contacted directly about the changes.

[Learn about In Home Care and access the new resources on our website.](#)

Explainer: can the role of a PMC be delegated?

The following information will help you comply with your obligations under Family Assistance Law. Find details of [your obligations](#) on our website.

The role of a person with management or control of the provider (PMC) may be delegated.

However, if a person [fills a role identified in this table](#), they are a PMC regardless.

Some providers have formal delegations. They establish these through:

- governance rules
- constitutions, or
- acts of parliament.

Here are some examples to help you understand:

A regional manager for a large provider. While the directors of the company are taken to be PMCs, the regional manager is also a PMC. This is because they make executive decisions of behalf of the provider.

A general manager in charge of the community services branch of a local council. This person is a PMC because they make decisions about the child care service without approval from a higher authority. Some of the general manager's responsibilities – like decisions about major spending – are delegated to subordinate officers. These officers are also considered PMCs.

[Read more about PMCs on our website.](#)

Obligation: reporting permanent service closure

Each week we're highlighting a task that providers must perform under Family Assistance Law.

You must report the permanent closure of any service.

This task can only be performed by a PMC.

You must report the permanent closure of a service at least 42 days before the intended closure date. If your service closes suddenly or unexpectedly, [a different timeframe applies](#).



[Complete this form](#) and email it to CCSassessments@education.gov.au. Two PMCs must sign the form, unless only one PMC is listed.

Find a [list of obligations, tasks and timeframes](#) on our website.

CCS System maintenance

The Child Care Subsidy System will be unavailable from midnight (AEDT) on Friday until 6pm on Sunday.

If you are trying to submit transactions, including session reports during this period, they may not be successful and you may receive errors.

Useful information

Handy resource

ACECQA has resources to help you understand your obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and put them into practice at your service.

[Find an information sheet, fact sheets, tip sheets and posters on the ACECQA website.](#)

Good to know

A period of emergency is in place for parts of New South Wales and Victoria affected by severe weather and flooding. On our website you'll find:

- [a list of affected regions and dates for support](#)
- [details of support available during the emergency.](#)

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

Join the conversation

The [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is your place to learn, explore and connect with us and others in your sector.



Period of emergency extended in Forbes Shire

We're extending the period of emergency for services and families in Forbes Shire, New South Wales.

The period of emergency was scheduled to end on 1 November. It will now continue from 2 to 15 November.

This follows other emergency extensions and declarations [announced yesterday](#).

[See a full list of emergency declarations on our website](#). We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates here as required.

Sector-specific support

The following support is available for services and families in affected regions **during** the period of emergency:

- services can continue to get Child Care Subsidy (CCS) if they close as a direct result of the emergency
- services can waive gap fees if a child doesn't attend, or their service is closed, during the emergency
- children will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the period of emergency.

The following support is available to help services and families recover **after** an emergency:

- Families may be able to access additional absences, if they've exhausted their allowable absences, after the emergency.
- The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) special circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as an emergency. Affected services should apply after an event has occurred and they have accessed other disaster support.
- Families experiencing temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#). Families should apply through their [Centrelink online account](#).

Full details of support are available [on our website](#).

Other government support

Services in affected areas may also be eligible for other government support:

- The Australian Government provides payments and help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out if you're eligible for support on the [Services Australia website](#).



- Your state government may provide support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Go to nsw.gov.au.

For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on StartingBlocks.gov.au to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join the [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on the [NSW State Emergency Service](#) for current emergency information in your region.



Emergency support: for more flood-affected regions in NSW and Victoria

We've declared a period of emergency in additional parts of New South Wales and Victoria affected by flooding. We've also extended the period of emergency already in place in a small number of areas in NSW and Victoria.

[See a list of where and when we've declared a period of emergency](#). We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates here as required.

Period of emergency declared

In NSW, the period of emergency applies from 5 to 15 November in the following Local Government Areas (LGAs):

- Bega Valley Shire, Junee Shire, Muswellbrook Shire, Nambucca Valley, Shoalhaven City, Snowy Monaro Regional, Snowy Valleys, Temora Shire, Unincorporated Area (Far West Region), Walcha and Yass Valley.

In Victoria, the period of emergency applies from 3 to 15 November in the following LGAs:

- East Gippsland Shire, Hindmarsh Shire, Mildura Rural City, Southern Grampians Shire, Towong Shire.

Period of emergency extended

We've also extended the period of emergency for **regions in NSW and Victoria** where access to many services continues to be affected by major flooding.

The period of emergency will be extended from 9 to 15 November for these LGAs:

- Lachlan Shire and Lismore City in NSW
- Campaspe Shire in Victoria.

Period of emergency ending

The period of emergency will end for all other regions in NSW and Victoria today (Tuesday 8 November).

Support is available to help services and families recover after an emergency. See details below.

Sector-specific support

The following support is available for services and families in affected regions **during** the period of emergency:



- services can continue to get Child Care Subsidy (CCS) if they close as a direct result of the emergency
- services can waive gap fees if a child doesn't attend, or their service is closed, during the emergency
- children will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the period of emergency.

The following support is available to help services and families recover **after** an emergency:

- Families may be able to access additional absences, if they've exhausted their allowable absences, after the emergency.
- The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) special circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as an emergency. Affected services should apply after an event has occurred and they have accessed other disaster support.
- Families experiencing temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#). Families should apply through their [Centrelink online account](#).

Full details of support are available [on our website](#).

Other government support

Services in affected areas may also be eligible for other government support:

- The Australian Government provides payments and help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out if you're eligible for support on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state government may provide support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Go to [nsw.gov.au](#) or [vic.gov.au](#).

For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join the [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on the following websites for current emergency information in your region:
 - [NSW State Emergency Service](#)
 - [Victoria State Emergency Service](#).



Flood emergency: update about support

A period of emergency applies in some regions across New South Wales and Victoria that continue to be affected by flooding. The period of emergency ended in most regions yesterday.

[See a list of where and when we've declared a period of emergency.](#)

Learn about [support available during and after a period of emergency.](#)

Have your say on our channels

There's still time to tell us what you think about our communications with the early childhood education and care sector via our [short survey](#).

We're looking for your feedback on:

- our website
- this weekly newsletter
- our Facebook group
- our short explainer videos.

The survey will only take a few minutes to complete. You'll be anonymous, and the information you provide us will help us to improve how we communicate.

[Complete the survey now.](#)

Explainer: persons responsible at the service

The following information will help you comply with your obligations under Family Assistance Law. Find full details of [your obligations](#) on our website.

Providers must notify us about persons responsible for the day-to-day operation of a service.

We call these people 'persons responsible at the service'. They are nominated by a person with management or control of the provider (PMC).

They work in the service, taking part in the decision-making and daily operations at the service. They are commonly managers, directors or coordinators.

Persons responsible at the service can be from external management agencies.

A person responsible at the service has similar obligations to a PMC, but at the service level.

[View this table for the range of obligations and tasks a person responsible at the service must complete.](#)

[Join our Facebook group](#) to get regular reminders and alerts to help you stick to these timeframes.



Obligation: reporting vacancies

Each week we're highlighting a task that providers must perform under Family Assistance Law.

You must report the number of anticipated vacancies for each service. You must report anticipated vacancies for each day of the following week. Vacancies are automatically published on StartingBlocks.gov.au.

This task can be performed by:

- a person with management or control (PMC)
- a person responsible for the day-to-day operation of a service (for their service only).

You must report vacancies by 8pm (AEST/AEDT) each Friday.

Report vacancies through your third-party software or the Provider Entry Point (PEP).

Find a [full list of obligations, tasks and timeframes](#) on our website.

Balancing: families must confirm their incomes

Services Australia is balancing Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for the 2021–22 financial year. It's a good time to check in with your families and remind them to confirm their income if they haven't already.

All families need to confirm their income before their CCS can be balanced. Families confirm their income by lodging their tax return or [telling Services Australia they don't need to lodge a tax return](#) and confirm their income.

Services Australia will send families an outcome once their CCS has been balanced.

If families need more information, encourage them to go to the [Services Australia website](#).

Families can connect with Services Australia on social media to ask general questions about family payments. They should search for the [Family Update](#) page on Facebook.

Useful information

Handy resource

Did you know we publish past newsletters on our website?

Read our [past newsletters](#) to find information on important topics.



Good to know



Child care fees, vacancies, quality ratings and inclusions are published on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](https://www.startingblocks.gov.au).

Please ensure your details are up-to-date in the [Child Care Subsidy System](#). This includes fee and contact details. Once you update these details, they will be automatically published on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](https://www.startingblocks.gov.au).

Join the conversation

The [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is your place to learn, explore and connect with us and others in your sector.

Make sure you see our posts by turning on notifications. You can do this by:

- joining the [Facebook group](#)
- clicking the drop-down menu on the 'Joined' button on the group's homepage
- selecting the 'manage notifications' button
- ticking 'all posts' in the in-app notifications section, and 'highlights' in the push notifications section.



Floods: support extended to more LGAs in NSW, Vic, and ends tomorrow in other regions

Period of emergency declared

We've declared a period of emergency for more regions in New South Wales and Victoria affected by flooding.

See our [table of emergency support](#) for all regions and dates.

The period of emergency applies from 28 October to 8 November for the following **NSW** Local Government Areas (LGAs):

- Balranald Shire, Bland Shire, Central Darling Shire, Coolamon Shire, Cootamundra-Gundagai, Hawkesbury City, Hilltops, Kyogle, Lismore City, Lockhart Shire, Richmond Valley and Upper Hunter Shire.

The period of emergency applies from 27 October to 8 November for the following **Victorian** LGAs:

- Baw Baw Shire, Mornington Peninsula Shire, Nillumbik Shire, Surf Coast Shire.

Period of emergency extended

We've also extended the period of emergency for regions where access to many services continues to be affected by major flooding.

The period of emergency will be extended for the period from 2 November to 8 November for these LGAs in **Victoria**:

- Campaspe Shire and Greater Shepparton City.

Period of emergency ending

The period of emergency will end for all other regions in NSW, Victoria and Tasmania on Tuesday 1 November.

Support is available to help services and families recover after an emergency. See details below.

Support during an emergency

The following support is available for services and families in affected regions **during** a period of emergency:

- services can continue to get Child Care Subsidy (CCS) if they close as a direct result of the emergency
- services can waive gap fees if a child doesn't attend, or their service is closed, during the emergency
- children will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the period of emergency.



Full details of support are available [on our website](#).

Support after an emergency

The following support is available to help services and families recover **after** a period of emergency ends:

- Families may be able to access [additional absences](#), if they've exhausted their allowable absences, after the emergency.
- The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) special circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as an emergency. Affected services should apply after an event has occurred and they have accessed other disaster support.
- Families experiencing temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#). Families should apply through their [Centrelink online account](#).

General support

Services in affected areas may also be eligible for other government support:

- The Australian Government provides payments and help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out if you're eligible for support on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state government may provide support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Go to [nsw.gov.au](#), [vic.gov.au](#) or [tas.gov.au](#).

For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join the [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on the following websites for current emergency information in your region:
 - [NSW State Emergency Service](#)
 - [Victoria State Emergency Service](#)
 - [Tasmania State Emergency Service](#).



26 October 2022

Federal Budget: \$4.5 billion to deliver more affordable child care



Early childhood education and care (ECEC) was at the centre of last night's Federal Budget with the Australian Government committing \$4.5 billion to deliver more affordable child care.

In his Budget address, the Treasurer announced the Government will spend:

- \$4.5 billion to improve affordability and access, including increasing Child Care Subsidy (CCS) rates from July 2023, protecting CCS against fraud and non-compliance, and providing a minimum of 36 hours of subsidised early learning for First Nations children.
- \$10.2 million to establish a partnership between Australian governments and First Nations representatives to develop community-led policies and programs.
- \$10.8 million to fund the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to investigate the drivers of early childhood education and care costs. The findings will feed into the Productivity Commission's review into the ECEC sector.

The measures are subject to legislation passing through the Australian Parliament.

[Read more in our Budget announcement.](#)

Support for flood-affected regions

We've declared a period of emergency in parts of New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania affected by severe weather and flooding.



Last week, we included Yarra City in Victoria as an affected Local Government Area (LGA). This was incorrect, and we apologise for any confusion caused.

Timeframes for support vary depending on where services are located.

On our website you'll find:

- [a list of affected regions and dates for support](#)
- [details of support available during the emergency](#).

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required. Make sure your details are up to date in the [Child Care Subsidy System \(CCSS\)](#).

Explainer: Persons with management or control obligations

The following information will help you comply with your obligations under Family Assistance Law. Find details of [your obligations](#) on our website.

All approved providers must identify their persons with management or control of the provider (PMCs) in the CCSS. Each PMC must:

- have an individual PRODA account
- be linked to the provider in the CCSS
- keep their information up to date and correct in the CCSS
- notify the department when they join or leave an approved provider or service
- be considered [fit and proper](#) by us
- have all necessary [background checks](#)
- provide evidence of background checks to the department when asked.

If PMC information is incorrect in the CCSS:

- we cannot contact you
- we cannot communicate essential information to you
- families may not get their CCS payments
- we may issue an infringement.

Also, PMCs have obligations and tasks they must perform. [View this table for a list of PMC obligations, tasks and timeframes](#).

[Join our Facebook Group](#) to get regular reminders and alerts to help you stick to these timeframes.



Obligation: reporting opening hours

Each week we're highlighting a task that providers must perform under Family Assistance Law.

You must report each service's operational hours and days. Opening hours are automatically published on StartingBlocks.gov.au.

This task can be performed by:

- a person with management or control
- a person responsible for the day-to-day operation of a service (for their service only).

You must report your opening hours within 14 days of:

- starting the service
- receiving CCS approval
- changing operational hours or days.

Report opening hours through your third-party software or the Provider Entry Point (PEP).

See a [list of obligations, tasks and timeframes on our website](#).

Communication survey: tell us what you think

We've been asking for your thoughts on our communication channels – and it's been great getting your feedback.

One of the things you have told us is that you want to be able to access our previous email newsletters. For those who don't know, we keep them [on our website](#) as a searchable document.

If you haven't done so, tell us what you think of our communications in this [3-minute survey](#).

We want to know what you find helpful and where we can improve.

Your feedback will stay anonymous. [Complete the short survey now](#).

Useful information

Handy resource

We've got information about becoming an approved provider on our website. The information is for:

- prospective providers who intend to apply for CCS approval
- existing providers who intend to add or remove a service from their approval
- prospective or existing providers who have purchased a service



- existing providers who have undergone a restructure of their legal entity.

Find step-by-step guidance on our website about the approval process, including:

- the two types of approval required
- checking your eligibility
- getting ready to apply
- submitting your application
- what you need to know after you apply
- adding, removing or relocating a service
- suspension of approvals.

[Find out more on our website.](#)

Good to know



This week is Children's Week. It's a time that celebrates the rights of children to enjoy childhood, and to let them demonstrate their talents, skills and achievements.

The department is proud to be the major sponsor of the week.

The theme for this year is based on Article 27 from the United Nations convention on the rights of the Child: 'All Children have the right to a standard of living that supports their wellbeing and healthy development.'

Go to the [Children's Week website](#) for ways to get involved.

Join the conversation

The [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is your place to learn, explore and connect with us and others in your sector.

Make sure you see our posts by turning on notifications. You can do this by:

- joining the [Facebook group](#)



- clicking the drop-down menu on the 'Joined' button on the group's homepage
- selecting the 'manage notifications' button
- ticking 'all posts' in the in-app notifications section, and 'highlights' in the push notifications section.



Floods update: support for more LGAs in NSW, periods of emergency extended in NSW, Vic, Tas

We've [declared a period of emergency](#) for more Local Government Areas (LGAs) in New South Wales, from 20 October to 1 November, because of severe weather and flooding.

We've also extended the periods of emergency already in place for parts of NSW, Victoria and Tasmania until 1 November.

Please see our [table of emergency support](#) for specific regions and date ranges.

Sector-specific support

The following support is available for services and families in affected regions **during** the period of emergency:

- services can continue to get Child Care Subsidy (CCS) if they close as a direct result of the emergency
- services can waive gap fees if a child doesn't attend, or their service is closed, during the emergency
- children will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the period of emergency.

The following support is available to help services and families recover **after** an emergency:

- Families may be able to access additional absences, if they've exhausted their allowable absences, after the emergency.
- The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) special circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as an emergency. Affected services should apply after an event has occurred and they have accessed other disaster support.
- Families experiencing temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#). Families should apply through their [Centrelink online account](#).

Details of support are available [on our website](#).

Other government support

Services in affected areas may also be eligible for other government support:

- The Australian Government provides payments and help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out if you're eligible for support on the [Services Australia website](#).



- Your state government may provide support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Go to vic.gov.au, tas.gov.au or nsw.gov.au.

For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on StartingBlocks.gov.au to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join the [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on the following websites for current emergency information in your region:
 - [Victoria State Emergency Service](#)
 - [Tasmania State Emergency Service](#)
 - [NSW State Emergency Service](#).



Victorian floods: we've declared a period of emergency in another 24 LGAs

Update: We incorrectly included Yarra City as an affected Local Government Area (LGA). It was not one of the LGAs where a period of emergency was declared.

We've declared a period of emergency in another 24 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Victoria because of recent severe weather and flooding.

The LGAs are Ararat Rural City, Ballarat City, Banyule City, Boroondara City, Brimbank City, Colac Otway Shire, Glenelg Shire, Golden Plains Shire, Greater Geelong City, Hume City, Indigo Shire, Manningham City, Melbourne City, Moorabool Shire, Mount Alexander Shire, Moyne Shire, Swan Hill Rural City, Warrnambool City, Whittlesea City, Wodonga City, Wyndham City, Yarra City, Yarra Ranges Shire and Yarriambiack Shire.

The period of emergency applies in these LGAs from **18 October** to **24 October**.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

See the [list of affected regions and key dates for emergency support](#) on our website.

Sector-specific support

The following support is available for services and families in affected regions during the period of emergency:

- services can continue to get Child Care Subsidy (CCS) if they close as a direct result of the emergency
- services can waive gap fees if a child doesn't attend, or their service is closed, during the emergency
- children will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the period of emergency.

The following support is available to help services and families recover after an emergency:

- Families may be able to access additional absences, if they've exhausted their allowable absences, after the emergency.
- The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) special circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as an emergency. Affected services should apply after an event has occurred and they have accessed other disaster support.
- Families experiencing temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#). Families should apply through their [Centrelink online account](#).



Details of support are available [on our website](#).

Other government support

Services in affected areas may also be eligible for other government support:

- The Australian Government provides payments and help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out if you're eligible for support on the [Services Australia website](#).
- The [Victorian Government](#) may provide support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster.

For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join the [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook](#) group for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on the [Victoria State Emergency Service](#) website for current emergency information.



Survey: have your say on our channels

Tell us what you think of our communications in this [3-minute survey](#).

We share important information about early childhood policies and programs and your obligations via:

- [our website](#)
- this weekly newsletter
- [our Facebook group](#)
- short explainer videos.

Now is your chance to tell us what you think of these channels. You'll be anonymous, and the information you provide us will help us as to improve how we communicate.

[Complete the short survey now](#). You are welcome to share the survey link with colleagues.

Thank you to everyone who has completed the survey so far. We're already taking your feedback on board. We're aware of issues with links and redirects on our website and are working to resolve this for you.

We look forward to hearing more of your insights and suggestions.

Explainer: who is a person with management or control?

The following information will help you comply with your obligations under Family Assistance Law (FAL). Find details of [your obligations](#) on our website.

Certain people at your organisation are considered persons with management or control (PMCs). You must tell us who your PMCs are and notify us of their contact details. Mandatory checks also apply to all PMCs.

You cannot choose to omit someone as a PMC if they meet the below definition.

PMCs take part in the decision-making or management of the **provider**. They:

- make executive or legal decisions on behalf of the provider
- are a member of the group that makes executive or legal decisions on behalf of the provider
- have authority, responsibility, or significant influence over planning, directing or controlling the provider



- are in charge of the day-to-day operations of the provider
- are in charge of the day-to-day operations of a service.

The provider is the legal entity. Broadly, PMCs are:

- executive officers
- board members
- company office holders
- partners in a partnership
- members of the body corporate
- partners or members of the organisation's governing body
- service directors
- service managers
- authorised supervisors
- people from external management agencies
- people in management positions
- anyone listed as a 'responsible person' on behalf of a registered charity.

Any person who performs these roles for a provider is automatically considered a PMC. You cannot choose to omit someone as a PMC if they perform these roles.

PMCs can be different for each organisation type. [Check this table for PMCs in different organisation types.](#)

Obligation: reporting fees

Each week we're highlighting a task that providers must perform under FAL.

Details: You must report the fees charged at each of your services. You must report the fee before any reductions or discounts are applied. Fees are automatically published on StartingBlocks.gov.au. Read more about [fees](#) on our website.

Who can perform

This task can be performed by:

- a PMC
- a person responsible for the day-to-day operation of a service (for their service only).

Timeframe

You must report fees within 14 days of:



- receiving Child Care Subsidy approval
- starting a service
- changing your current fees.

How or where

Report fees through your third-party software or the Provider Entry Point (PEP).

Find a [list of obligations, tasks and timeframes](#) on our website.

Get involved in Children's Week



Children's Week is 22 to 30 October.

Children's Week celebrates the right of children to enjoy childhood. It offers children the opportunity to demonstrate their talents, skills and achievements. The department is the major sponsor of this special week.

The theme for 2022 is based on Article 27 from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: 'All children have the right to a standard of living that supports their wellbeing and healthy development'. Each year the Children's Week Council of Australia selects an article to celebrate.

Organisations across the country hold events and activities to celebrate Children's Week. Activities include award nominations, programs, workshops, picnics, and more.

See how you can get involved on the [Children's Week Council of Australia's website](#).

What happens if you get an infringement?

We issue infringements to providers that don't follow the rules under FAL. Providers must make sure that they, their employees and educators follow the rules.

An infringement is a fine, like a parking ticket. Read more about [infringements](#) on our website.

We send infringements by email and by post. Emails will come from ccinfringements@dese.gov.au. Please add this address to your safe list and check your mail often.

There are many FAL obligations that contain a civil penalty offence for which we can issue an infringement. Some examples include:

- not correctly reporting your fee information
- not submitting enrolment notices or session reports on time
- not passing on or remitting a fee reduction amount
- failing to meet notification requirements
- failing to keep records.

See the list of [FAL civil penalty provisions](#).

If you do get an infringement, you must pay the fine within 28 days.

Our website has resources to help you avoid an infringement, including:

- information about the [Child Care Package](#)
- information about [your obligations](#)
- a [table of reporting obligations, tasks and timeframes](#)
- a [series of short videos](#) covering common compliance issues
- [handbooks, guides and task cards](#) on key programs.

Do you see our Facebook posts?

We use our [Facebook group](#) to update you on policy and program news and announcements. We also post information to help you comply with FAL.

Turning on post notifications means you won't miss this important information and you'll see the posts in your Facebook feed.

To do this:

- make sure you have joined the [Facebook group](#)
- click the drop-down menu on the 'Joined' button on the group's homepage
- select the 'manage notifications' button
- tick 'all posts' in the in-app notifications section, and 'highlights' in the push notifications section.

Go now to the [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) to turn on the notifications.



Useful information

Emergency update

We've declared a period of emergency in parts of New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania affected by flooding. Timeframes for support vary depending on your location.

On our website you'll find:

- [a list of affected regions and key dates for support](#)
- [details of support available during the emergency.](#)

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required. Make sure your details are up to date in the [Child Care Subsidy System](#).

Good to know



This week is [Early Learning Matters Week](#).

Organised by Early Childhood Australia, the initiative brings together early childhood educators, parents, carers and community leaders around Australia to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of early learning and the difference the profession makes.

The theme for this year is 'Learning through play'.

Find resources and ideas to get involved on the [Early Learning Matters website](#).



Floods: period of emergency declared in Victoria, Tasmania and NSW

We've declared a period of emergency for the early childhood education and care sector in parts of Victoria and Tasmania following severe weather and flooding. We have also expanded emergency provisions for NSW.

Victoria

In Victoria, the period of emergency applies from 13 to 24 October 2022 for the following Local Government Areas (LGAs):

Alpine Shire, Benalla Rural City, Buloke Shire, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, City of Greater Bendigo, City of Greater Shepparton, Corangamite Shire, Gannawarra Shire, Hepburn Shire, Horsham Shire, Loddon Shire, Macedon Ranges Shire, Mansfield Shire, Maribyrnong City Council, Mitchell Shire Council, Moira Shire, Moonee Valley City, Murrindindi Shire, Northern Grampians, Pyrenees Shire, Rural City of Wangaratta and Strathbogie Shire.

Tasmania

In Tasmania, the period of emergency applies from 13 to 24 October 2022 for the following LGAs:

Break O'Day, Burnie, Central Coast, Central Highlands, Circular Head, Devonport, Dorset, Flinders, George Town, Kentish, Latrobe, Launceston, Meander Valley, Northern Midlands, Waratah-Wynyard, West Coast and West Tamar.

New South Wales

In NSW, the existing period of emergency, which started on 10 October, has been extended to include 17 to 24 October 2022 and 4 LGAs have been added. The additional LGAs are:

Central Coast, Coonamble, Goulburn-Mulware and Parkes.

We'll update the [list of affected LGAs](#) on our website on Monday. We wanted to let you know about the support available straight away.

Sector-specific support

The following support is available for services and families in affected regions **during** the period of emergency:

- services can continue to get Child Care Subsidy (CCS) if they close as a direct result of the emergency
- services can waive gap fees if a child doesn't attend, or their service is closed, during the emergency



- children will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the period of emergency

The following support is available to help services and families recover **after** an emergency:

- Families may be able to access additional absences, if they've exhausted their allowable absences, after the emergency.
- The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) special circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as an emergency. Affected services should apply after an event has occurred and they have accessed other disaster support.
- Families experiencing temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#). Families should apply through their [Centrelink online account](#).

Full details of support are available [on our website](#).

Other government support

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join the [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on the following websites for current emergency information in your region:
 - [Victoria State Emergency Service](#)
 - [Tasmania State Emergency Service](#)
 - [NSW State Emergency Service](#).



NSW floods: period of emergency declared

We've declared a period of emergency for the early childhood education and care sector in parts of New South Wales following severe weather and flooding.

The period of emergency applies from 10 to 17 October 2022 for services and families in affected Local Government Areas (LGAs).

See the [full list of affected LGAs](#) on our website. We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates here as required.

Sector-specific support

The following support is available for services and families in affected regions during the period of emergency:

- services can continue to get Child Care Subsidy (CCS) if they close as a direct result of the emergency
- services can waive gap fees if a child doesn't attend, or their service is closed, during the emergency
- children will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the period of emergency.

After the period of emergency, families can access additional absences if they've exhausted their allowable absences:

- for 28 days if a child is unable to attend
- for 7 days if a family decides the child should not attend.

Affected families may be eligible for extra help with the cost of child care through the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#). Families should apply through their [Centrelink online account](#).

The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) special circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as an emergency. Affected services can [apply on our website](#). Applicants should request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other disaster support.

Full details of this support are available [on our website](#).

Other government support

Services in affected areas may also be eligible for other government support:

- The Australian Government provides payments and help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out if you're eligible for support on the [Services Australia website](#).



- The NSW Government has support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Find information on the [NSW Government website](#).

For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join the [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on the [NSW State Emergency Service website](#) for current emergency information in your region.



Trialling intensive support for disadvantaged children

The Australian Government has committed \$9.5 million to support a trial led by the Parkville Institute of an intensive early childhood education and care model at four new sites.

The model helps disadvantaged children to bridge the gap to school readiness and offers:

- high quality, intensive early education and care
- infant mental health and family support
- access to services to redress harm and overcome trauma
- support for at-risk and disadvantaged children's learning and development.

The model is for children from birth up to three years. It is part of the Australian Government's commitment to scale up evidence driven programs to lift participation in quality early childhood education and care and improve school readiness.

The Parkville Institute is leading and overseeing the delivery of the trial. Australian Government funding is supplemented by philanthropic and state and territory government support.

The first site has been announced in Richmond, Victoria.

Read more about the trial on the [Parkville Institute website](#).

Our messaging: do our survey and tell us what you think

We craft our communications to help you better understand the Australian Government's early childhood and child care policies and programs, and your obligations under Family Assistance Law.

It's vital that we know we're hitting the mark – which is why we'd love you to complete this [3-minute survey](#) on the effectiveness of our communications.

We want feedback on what you think of our:

- [website](#)
- this weekly newsletter
- [explainer videos](#)
- [Facebook group](#).



You'll be anonymous, and the information you provide us will help us to improve how we communicate.

[Complete the short survey now.](#)

Ministers address ECA conference



Minister for Education the Hon Jason Clare MP and Minister for Early Childhood Education the Hon Dr Anne Aly addressed Early Childhood Australia's national conference in Canberra last week.

Minister Clare, pictured, gave the [opening address](#), acknowledging the sector faced a shortage of educators and teachers. He said the government was implementing the [National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy](#), but further measures would be needed.

More than 2200 delegates attended the three-day conference, with the theme "Passion to power: our future profession".

Dr Aly gave the closing address, where she emphasised the need for collaboration to address workforce challenges. "We need all governments, service providers and educators to work together to attract, train and retain more people to sustain the workforce," she said.

Other speakers included Australian of the Year Dylan Alcott and former Prime Minister Julia Gillard.

We sponsored 5 educators and workers so they could attend the conference in person, and another 5 to take part online.



FDCA conference scholarships



We helped fund 10 educators and workers so they could attend the Family Day Care Australia national conference in Hobart last month.

Pictured, from left, are scholarship recipients Tricia from Queensland, Erika from Western Australia, Mary from South Australia, Alicia from WA, and Chao from Victoria.

Family day care professionals, sector experts and representatives from early childhood organisations met for two jam-packed days at the conference, which included 24 workshops, and opportunities for meaningful networking and collaboration. It was the 10th national conference for FDCA.

Explainer: persons with management or control

The following information will help you comply with your obligations under Family Assistance Law. Find full details of [your obligations](#) on our website.

Early childhood education and care providers have specific legal obligations. These obligations are completed by certain people. We call these people 'persons with management or control of the provider'. They are also called 'persons with management or control' or simply 'PMC'.

Providers must identify their PMCs to us – it's the law. PMCs must:

- be included in applications for provider approval
- notify the department when they join or leave an approved provider or service
- be fit and proper
- be registered in PRODA and linked to the provider



- provide correct and current contact information in the Child Care Subsidy (CSS) System
- complete specific tasks.

If PMCs don't do these things, the provider may:

- not be approved to run a child care service
- lose approval to run a child care service
- receive an infringement.

We'll share more explainers on PMCs and their obligations in coming weeks.

If you haven't already, [subscribe to our newsletter](#) and join our [Facebook group](#) to follow along and ensure you're doing the right thing.

Obligation: submitting session reports

Each week we're highlighting a task that providers must perform under Family Assistance Law.

Details: You must submit accurate session reports on time.

Who can perform: This task can be performed by:

- a person with management or control (PMC)
- a person responsible for the day-to-day operation of a service (for their service only).

Timeframe: You must submit session reports within 14 days after the end of the week in which the session of care was provided.

How or where: Submit session reports through your third-party software or the Provider Entry Point (PEP).

Find a [full list of obligations, tasks and timeframes](#) on our website.

Useful information

Handy resource

As weather events occur across the country, we encourage you to familiarise yourself with our [help in an emergency page](#).

Here you'll find information about support measures for the sector in the event of an emergency.

Good to know

The CCS Helpdesk is closed today for a team training session. It will be reopen tomorrow from 9am (AEDT).



You can contact the helpdesk at any time [via email](#).

Join the conversation

The [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is your place to learn, explore and connect with us and others in your sector.



Preparing for emergencies

As weather events occur across the country, we encourage you to look at our [help in an emergency page](#).

You can find information about support measures for the sector in the event of an emergency.

We'll monitor the situation and provide updates as required.

Make sure your contact details, particularly email addresses, are up to date in the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) System. Check this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

Traineeships helping to develop workforce



Are you looking for new ways to develop a high-quality early childhood education and care workforce?

In the case of one provider we feature, nothing beats giving new recruits that on-the-job experience as early as possible.



Jenny's Early Learning Centres in Bendigo has found success employing trainees and supporting them to become qualified, with the help of the [Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System](#).

Pictured above, left to right, are Shelly, Chelsea and Darren from Jenny's ELC, which has put traineeships at the heart of developing an energetic workplace culture.

Read how Jenny's ELC is leveraging traineeships in a time of workforce challenges, and the provider's top tips, on [our website](#).

Government workforce initiatives are a practical way to attract passionate people to the profession, while addressing workplace issues in early education.

Discover [workforce initiatives and how they could apply to your service on our website](#).

Released: September quarter 2021 data

The [September quarter 2021 report](#) is available.

Each quarter we issue a summary of data about the early childhood education and care sector. It includes data on:

- number of children and families using approved care
- number of First Nations families using care
- cost of care
- number and types of services in Australia.

Key findings

In total, 1.4 million children from about 1 million families attended a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approved service. Of these, 1.3 million children were eligible for CCS.

Almost 48% of children aged 0 to 5 years and 32.5% of children aged 0 to 12 years used approved care.

On average, children attended care for 26.8 hours per week.

The Australian Government paid \$2.63 billion in CCS and Additional Child Care Subsidy.

The average hourly fee across all care types, excluding In Home Care, was \$10.55. This was a 1.4% increase from the June 2021 quarter.

[Read the full report on our website](#).

NQF eLearning modules

[National Quality Framework \(NQF\) eLearning modules](#) are now available.



The program:

- provides professional development for educators who are new to the sector
- supports current educators to better understand their role within the sector.

There are 4 self-paced modules:

- introduction to the children's education and care sector
- overview of the NQF
- law and regulations
- National Quality Standard.

Learn more about the [National Quality Framework](#).

Find the [NQF eLearning modules on ACECQA's website](#).

Poll: what do you know about PMCs?

Over the next couple of months, we're going to share information about persons with management or control of a provider and their obligations.

We often refer to these people as 'PMCs'

Before we start, we want to hear from you. Head to our Facebook group and [tell us what you know about PMCs through a quick poll](#).

If you haven't already, be sure to [join our Facebook group](#) for tips, announcements and reminders in your feed.

Useful information

Handy resource

Our website has all you need to know about providing child care and claiming CCS. Plus, you'll find information on programs, policies and new announcements.

Visit education.gov.au/child-care-package

Good to know

[Be You](#) has consultants that can help guide educators in professional learning opportunities, supporting them by identifying strengths, service goals and mental health priorities.

[Learn more about Be You consultant support](#).



Join the conversation

The [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is your place to learn, explore and connect with us and others in your sector.



Cheaper child care

This week the Australian Government introduced its Cheaper Child Care legislation to Parliament. Read what the proposed changes mean for you and your families.

Don't miss important information about these changes. We'll provide updates over the coming months via:

- our [Facebook group](#)
- our [weekly newsletter](#)
- our [website](#).

Changes to Child Care Subsidy

The Government will increase the Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

Subject to the passage of legislation, from July 2023 the Government will:

- lift the maximum CCS rate to 90% for families earning \$80,000 or less
- increase CCS rates for around 96% of families with a child currently in care earning under \$530,000
- keep higher CCS rates for families with two or more children aged 5 years or under in care.

[Read the ministerial media release.](#)

Changes to the activity test for families with First Nations children in care

First Nations children will get more hours of subsidised child care per fortnight.

Subject to the passage of legislation, from July 2023 families will get at least 36 hours of subsidised care per fortnight for each First Nations child in their care and attending child care.

This will directly support [Closing the Gap](#) target 4, designed to improve early childhood outcomes for First Nations children. Having access to at least 36 hours of early childhood education and care:

- helps children become school-ready
- improves learning outcomes
- improves development outcomes.

Families will still need to pay the gap fee.

[Read the ministerial media release.](#)



New policy partnership to improve outcomes for First Nations children

The Government has announced a new policy partnership to improve outcomes for First Nations children and families.

The Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership (ECCP) will bring together Australian governments and First Nations representatives to develop recommendations that improve early childhood outcomes for First Nations children.

The ECCP will enable First Nations peoples to work in genuine partnership with governments to drive community-led, early childhood outcomes.

The ECCP is part of the Australian Government's commitments to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

The ECCP has been co-designed with:

- [SNAICC](#), the national peak body for First Nations children and families
- Commonwealth departments with responsibility across early childhood education and care, maternal and child health, child safety and families.

Read more about the department's [Closing the Gap measures](#).

We'll report on the progress of the ECCP through our sector newsletter and in our [Facebook group](#).

Helpdesk closed on Monday

The CCS Helpdesk will be closed for a public holiday on Monday 3 October. It will re-open at 9am (AEST) on Tuesday 4 October.

You can contact the helpdesk anytime by email at ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au. We will respond during business hours.

Useful information

Handy resource

New resources are available to help you understand your obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) and put them into practice at your service.

Find an [information sheet, fact sheets, tip sheets and posters](#) on ACECQA's website.

Good to know

You may be eligible for financial assistance from the Australian Government to help with hiring, training and retaining an apprentice or trainee.

The Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System encourages developing trainees in [priority occupations](#), including early childhood education and care.





Learn more about the [Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System](#).

Join the conversation

The [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is your place to learn, explore and connect with us and others in your sector.



Public holiday and Child Care Subsidy



CCS and public holidays

Normal public holiday provisions will apply on 22 September

education.gov.au/announcements/early-childhood

Tomorrow (Thursday) is a public holiday to mark the National Day of Mourning for Her Majesty The Queen.

CCS Helpdesk closed Thursday

The CCS Helpdesk will be closed for the national public holiday. It will reopen at 9am (AEST) on Friday. You can contact the helpdesk at any time [via email](#).

Claiming CCS

Normal public holiday provisions apply:

- services can submit absences and claim Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for children who would usually attend
- providers that charge a family for an allowable absence on this day must collect gap fees from the family.

[Read more about absences on our website.](#)

Payment of CCS

Payment of CCS to services will be affected by the national public holiday.

Services Australia advises of these timings:

- for session reports submitted yesterday (Tuesday), funds are expected to be released to bank accounts on Friday



- for session reports submitted today (Wednesday), funds are expected to be released to bank accounts on Monday
- no payments will be made tomorrow (Thursday) because of the public holiday
- for session reports submitted from Friday, payments will be made as per normal.

Understand session reports

Child care providers must submit accurate session reports on time – it's the law. Services Australia uses session reports to calculate and process CCS payments.

We've developed web content to help you get this process right, and to answer your questions about:

- what is a session of care
- why session reports must be submitted accurately and on time
- how to submit session reports and what to include in them
- how and when to update session reports.

[Learn about session reports.](#)

If you need more information about session reports, contact the CCS Helpdesk on 1300 667 276 or [via email](#).

Balancing has started

Services Australia has started balancing CCS for the 2021–22 financial year.

All families need to confirm their income with Services Australia before their CCS can be balanced.

Services Australia will send families an outcome once it has balanced their CCS.

How do families confirm their income?

Families confirm their income by:

- lodging their tax return, or
- [telling Services Australia they don't need to lodge a tax return](#) and providing Services Australia with the actual income they earned. They'll need to do this even if they've already told the Australian Taxation Office they don't need to lodge. Families can advise Services Australia via myGov or Express Plus Mobile App.

If a parent separates from their partner, Services Australia will also need their ex-partner's income. If a parent has any concerns about confirming their ex-partner's income they should call the [Families line](#).

How can I help families at my service?

The balancing process is primarily a matter between families and Services Australia.



We have [resources on our website](#) that you can share with families to help them understand the process.

Who should families contact for help?

Encourage families to go to the [Services Australia website](#) or to contact Services Australia directly.

Families can connect with Services Australia on social media to ask general questions about family payments. They should search for the [Family Update](#) page on Facebook.

Useful information

Handy resource

Explore Australian Government initiatives that support the early childhood education and care workforce.

[Read about workforce initiatives.](#)

Good to know



Child care fees, vacancies, quality ratings and inclusions are published on the [Starting Blocks website](#).

Please ensure your details are up-to-date in the [Provider Entry Point](#) or in your third-party software. This includes fee and contact details. Once you update these details, they will be automatically published on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#).

See our [task card on reporting fees or updating your organisation details](#) for more information.

Join the conversation

The [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is your place to learn, explore and connect with us and others in your sector.



Public holiday and CCS

Thursday 22 September has been declared an official public holiday to mark the National Day of Mourning for Her Majesty The Queen.

Claiming CCS

Normal public holiday provisions apply:

- services can submit absences and claim Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for children who would usually attend
- providers that charge a family for an allowable absence on this day must collect gap fees from the family.

[Read more about absences on our website.](#)

Payment of CCS

Payment of CCS to services will be affected by the national public holiday.

Services Australia advises of these timings:

- for session reports submitted on **Tuesday 20 September**, funds are expected to be released to bank accounts on Friday 23 September
- for session reports submitted on **Wednesday 21 September**, funds are expected to be released to bank accounts on Monday 26 September
- no payments will be made on **Thursday 22 September** because of the public holiday
- for session reports submitted from **Friday 23 September**, payments will be made as per normal.

CCS Helpdesk

The CCS Helpdesk will be closed for the national public holiday. It will reopen at 9am on Friday 23 September. You can contact the helpdesk at any time [via email](#).

Another milestone in workforce strategy

Access to early childhood education and care and workforce-related issues were major topics of conversation at the Jobs and Skills Summit held at Australian Parliament House in Canberra on 1 to 2 September.

We welcome the release by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority of the [implementation and evaluation plan](#) for the 10-year National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy, *Shaping Our Future*.



The national workforce strategy is an important piece of work for the early childhood education and care workforce.

Learn more in our [announcement marking this next step in delivering the national workforce strategy](#).

Now live: education.gov.au

You can now find information about our programs and initiatives on the Department of Education's new website, education.gov.au.

Information for the early childhood sector is available at:

- www.education.gov.au/child-care-package
- www.education.gov.au/early-childhood

You'll still have access to the same information and resources from our old site.

Resources to support children with disability

New resources are available to help you understand your obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) and put them into practice at your service.

The DDA requires that services support children with disability to access and take part in early childhood education and care in the same way as other children.

This means that services must make reasonable adjustments to fit the requirements of children with disability. It also means that children with disability and their parents and care givers are not victimised because of their disability.

All services must comply with the DDA and failure to do so is unlawful.

The new resources include an [information sheet, fact sheets, tip sheets and posters](#).

They outline obligations and provide guidance on what they mean in practice. They are available to all services both those covered by the National Quality Framework and those that are not.

The resources are available on [ACECQA's website](#).

Preschools are covered by the Disability Standards for Education 2005. Resources for preschools are on [our website](#).

Facebook group: helping you get answers

The [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is your place to learn and get answers.

This month, we want to hear what questions you have around CCS balancing. [Leave a comment on our question thread and we'll get back to you.](#)



Our Facebook members raise all sorts of questions – and often help each other out. Otherwise, we can help.

[Join our group and be a part of the conversation.](#)

Useful information

Handy resource

Find guides to help you plan and run your service at business.gov.au.

The guides include tools and templates for business planning, budgeting and risk management, and more. For example, there is a great page on how to [monitor the financial health of your business](#). This can help you identify potential problems early and make changes.

[Explore business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au).

Good to know

All families have 52 [allowable absences](#) for the 2022–23 financial year.

Families can access additional absences, in certain circumstances, if they've used their 52 days. This includes if a child's household has a COVID case and provides you with:

- a medical certificate
- result of a pathology test or
- government notice.



New evidence rules for additional absences

There are changes to the types of evidence families can show to get additional absences for COVID-19 reasons.

If a child uses up their 52 allowable absences, they can access additional absences if they or a member of their immediate household gets COVID-19.

To access these additional absences, families can now use a positive COVID-19 test result from a pathology service as evidence.

This change means families can show one of the following types of evidence:

- a medical certificate, or
- evidence of a positive COVID-19 test result from a government agency or pathology service.

We provide information about managing COVID-19 and absences on our website. [Share this page](#) with families or print it out and display it at your service.

Coming soon: education.gov.au

From Friday, [education.gov.au](https://www.education.gov.au) will be the place to find programs and initiatives from the Department of Education.

Information about the Child Care Package, your obligations and all our programs will be available on the new website.

Amending 2021–2022 session reports

The Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS) has closed for the 2021–22 financial year. You must [submit an application](#) to amend session reports from that financial year.

You must do this if you realise you have submitted incorrect session reports. We can only give you access to the session reports in the CCSS if you provide all the required details.

See the below tips so we can approve your request.

Fill out all fields in part A for your service

You must provide your service details under part A. These should not be the provider details.

If you need to amend multiple reports, use a spreadsheet

A separate form is required for each family.



If you are applying to amend data for multiple children or weeks, you may provide information in Part B, Part C and Part D in an Excel spreadsheet. This will only be accepted if the relevant information is provided in full.

[Download an example spreadsheet on our website](#)

Understand the difference between current data and intended changes

Current data is what the system currently reflects.

Intended data is what you want the sessions to reflect after the changes are applied.

Explain why the change is required

You must provide details outlining why the change is required.

You must also identify whether the change is:

- a new submission
- an amendment to an existing report
- withdrawal of an existing report.

If you are changing from one guardian to another, you need written evidence from the family.

Provide supporting evidence

Providing evidence will help us assess your application. Supporting evidence may include:

- attendance records
- statements of entitlement
- enrolments or Complying Written Arrangements
- evidence of casual bookings
- evidence of payment of gap fees, including receipts or EFT records.

If you don't provide sufficient information, we may ask you to provide further evidence.

An authorised person must sign the form

The form must be signed by a

- [person with management or control](#) (PMC), or
- a person responsible for the day-to-day operation of a service (for their service only).

The individual must provide their PRODA RA number.



Fact sheets: supporting children's development

Be You has [fact sheets about children's development](#) as they transition through different stages in their lives.

Transitions are periods of change and they can be big or small. For example, a child's transition from home to an early learning service for the first time.

Educators and early learning services can play an important role in helping children as they develop throughout childhood.

[Explore the fact sheets on the Be You website.](#)

Useful information

Handy resource

Today is [Indigenous Literacy Day](#). It's a day to celebrate the stories, cultures and languages of First Nations peoples.

Here are two great ways to get involved:

- The Indigenous Literacy Foundation is [broadcasting a digital event](#) that shares a snippet of life in remote Australia and showcases diversity of First Nations peoples' cultures, languages and stories.
- The National Centre for Australian Children's Literature has produced a [free database for educators](#) to find children's books by and about Australia's First Nations peoples.

Good to know

Tomorrow is [R U OK?Day](#), a national day of action to remind people it's okay to ask someone if they're okay or not.



R U OK? found that one in ten Australians feel asking someone "are you OK?" is a conversation better had with an expert. But checking to see if someone is struggling isn't something you need a qualification for.

[Get involved and access resources on their website](#)

Join the conversation

The [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is your place to learn, explore and connect with us and others in your sector.





New: Becoming an approved provider

We've updated the information about [becoming an approved provider](#) on our website.

The information is for:

- prospective providers who intend to apply for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approval
- existing providers who intend to add or remove a service from their approval
- prospective or existing providers who have purchased a service
- existing providers who have undergone a restructure of their legal entity.

Providers must be approved to operate a child care service and administer CCS in Australia. You must be approved by the Australian Government and your state or territory government.

Find step-by-step guidance on our website about the approval process, including:

- the two types of approval required
- checking your eligibility
- getting ready to apply
- submitting your application
- what you need to know after you apply
- adding, removing or relocating a service
- suspension of approvals.

[Find out more on our website.](#)

What happens if you get an infringement?

We issue infringements to providers that don't follow the rules under Family Assistance Law (FAL). Providers must make sure that they, their employees and educators follow the rules.

An infringement is a fine, like a parking ticket. Find out more about [infringements](#) on our website.

We send infringements by email and by post. Emails will come from ccinfringements@dese.gov.au. Please add this address to your safe list and check your mail often.

Infringements are issued for a range of reasons. Some examples include:

- not correctly reporting your fee information
- failure to meet reporting requirements, such as keeping contact details or details of persons with management or control (PMC) up to date
- failure to submit session reports on time.



See the [full list of FAL civil penalty provisions for which we can issue an infringement](#).

Our website has a range of resources to help you avoid an infringement, including:

- information about the [Child Care Package](#)
- information about [your obligations](#)
- a [comprehensive table of reporting obligations, tasks and timeframes](#)
- a [series of short videos](#) covering common compliance issues
- [handbooks, guides and task cards](#) on key programs.

COVID-19: immunisation advice for families

The Department of Health and Aged Care has published new information regarding COVID-19 vaccines and children aged 6 months to under 5 years old.

We encourage you to share the resources available on the [childhood immunisation community kit](#) with families at your service.

The kit contains:

- helpful information for parents and guardians
- a [poster](#) with the latest information on the Moderna vaccine
- fun and educational activities for children to teach them how to stay safe, even if they can't be vaccinated.

Share with families: myGov is changing

The look and feel of myGov is changing from Monday.

Families don't need to do anything. myGov will continue to be a central place to find, access and manage government payments and services.

Services Australia has resources you can share with families so they're aware of what's changing.

Find a poster and fact sheet to display at your service in the [eKit on Services Australia's website](#). The fact sheet is available in 11 languages.

Useful information

Handy resource

Understand your obligations under FAL with our [compliance video series](#).

We've got videos about:

- what to do if children are absent from care or on holidays
- rules for Family Day Care educators who care for relatives



- what you need to know about fee reporting
- when to notify us about changes to your service and more.

Good to know



National Child Protection Week starts this Sunday.

This year's theme shines a light on children growing up safe and supported. Early childhood services play an important role in sharing National Child Protection Week messages with staff and the local community.

Find ideas for educators on the [National Child Protection Week website](#).

Join the conversation

The [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is your place to learn, explore and connect with us and others in your sector.



Amending 2021–2022 session reports

The Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS) has closed for the 2021–22 financial year. You must [submit an application](#) to amend session reports from that financial year.

You must do this if you realise you have submitted incorrect session reports. We can only give you access to the session reports in the CCSS if you provide all the required details.

See the below tips to ensure we can approve your request.

Fill out all fields in part A for your service

You must provide your service details under part A. These should not be the provider details.

If you need to amend multiple reports, use a spreadsheet

A separate form is required for each family.

If you are applying to amend data for multiple children or weeks, you may provide information in Part B, Part C and Part D in an excel spreadsheet. This will only be accepted if the relevant information is provided in full.

[Download an example spreadsheet on our website.](#)

Understand the difference between current data and intended changes

Current data is what the system currently reflects.

Intended data is what you want the sessions to reflect after the changes are applied.

Explain why the change is required

You must provide details outlining why the change is required.

You must also identify whether the change is:

- a new submission
- an amendment to an existing report
- withdrawal of an existing report.

If you are changing from one guardian to another, you need written evidence from the family.

Provide supporting evidence

Providing evidence will help us assess your application. Supporting evidence may include:

- attendance records



- statements of entitlement
- enrolments or Complying Written Arrangements
- evidence of casual bookings
- evidence of payment of gap fees, including receipts or EFT records.

If you don't provide sufficient information, we may ask you to provide further evidence.

A PMC must sign the form

The form must be signed by a [person with management or control](#) (PMC). The PMC must provide their PRODA RA number.

2021 National Workforce Census report now available

We've published the results of the 2021 Early Childhood Education and Care National Workforce Census.

Last year you participated in the nationwide census to help us develop and measure policies and programs for the early childhood sector.

Information collected included:

- details on service usage
- children with additional needs
- access to preschool programs
- staffing information, including demographics, qualifications, wages, and current study.

The information will inform early childhood education and care policy. It will also help ensure that children and their families receive quality early learning and care.

The 2021 National Workforce Census achieved a 99% response rate. Thank you to everyone who took part.

[Read the report on our website.](#)

Strike action on 7 September

We're aware that some early childhood educators may strike on 7 September.

A reminder that you cannot claim Child Care Subsidy (CCS) when your service is closed, except on a [public holiday by law](#) or during a [period of emergency](#).

Guidance about industrial action for employers and employees is available on the [Fair Work Commission website](#).



Useful information

Handy resource

Keep up to date with COVID-19 advice from the Australian Government and all state and territory governments on [ACECQA's website](#).

Good to know



[Wear It Purple Day](#) is this Friday 26 August. Wear purple to foster supportive, safe, empowering and inclusive environments for rainbow young people.

Join the conversation

The [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is your place to learn, explore and connect with us and others in your sector.



17 August 2022

Little Scientists Early STEM Awards



This National Science Week, early childhood educators around Australia are being celebrated for their inspiring work in the biennial [Little Scientists Early STEM Awards](#).

The awards celebrate the commitment and dedication of early childhood educators commitment to inquiry-based learning in early STEM education.

The national award went to The Professor Lynn Corcoran Early Learning Centre: FROEBEL Parkville for their project *"It takes a 100 years to grow a tree"* which saw children work with their educators to learn more about time through multiple strands of inquiry.

The Outstanding STEM Leader was awarded to Christy-Lee Antonas, the Educational Leader at Hensman Street Elementary, who ensures that her STEM work is based on rights, sustainability, advocacy and boosting children's sense of agency.

There are also 7 state and territory winners who have all showcased originality in their approach to teaching STEM. For more information on the awards and winners visit [Little Scientists Early STEM Awards](#).

Congratulations to all the winners!

Compliance pilot project already producing results

Earlier this year, we began a [compliance pilot project](#) to detect and prevent fraud and it's already producing results.

By sharing data, intelligence and investigation activity with NSW and Victoria, we have:



- helped a number of providers improve their compliance and business practices by providing education to improve their understanding of their obligations
- suspended and cancelled some providers who intentionally broke the law.

Based on these results, the long-term objectives of the pilot project are on track to:

- help us roll out targeted compliance and fraud control activities nationally
- help lift the overall quality of the sector
- identify opportunities to support providers who do the right thing without tying them down with red tape and regulation.

You can always report suspected fraud to our tip off line. If you see something that doesn't look right, you can report it anonymously to 1800 664 231 or send an email to tipoffline@education.gov.au.

Share with families: myGov is changing

The look and feel of myGov is changing on 5 September.

Families don't need to do anything – myGov will continue to be a central place to find, access and manage government payments and services.

Services Australia has resources you can share with families so they're aware of what's changing.

Find a poster and fact sheet to display at your service in the [eKit on Services Australia's website](#). The fact sheet is available in 11 different languages.

Useful information

Handy resource

Service Australia has [information about the Child Care Subsidy in 14 different languages](#).

Print and display the fact sheets at your service, or share them with your families.

Good to know

Did you know we have a Facebook group for providers and services to connect with us and each other?

Join the [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) and:

- ask the community a question
- share resources directly with your networks
- get tips, announcements and reminders in your Facebook feed.

We had one member asking some important questions around [updating their fees on Starting Blocks](#). Are your fees up to date? Do this via the [PEP](#) or through your third-party software.



NQF Snapshot: 88% of services meeting or exceeding standards

ACECQA has released its latest [National Quality Framework \(NQF\) Snapshot](#), which finds 88% of services are meeting or exceeding the [National Quality Standard \(NQS\)](#).

The results reflect the highest proportion of services rated Meeting NQS or above since quality ratings began in 2012.

More than two-thirds of services rated Working towards NQS improved their overall quality rating, demonstrating the sector's continuous improvement under the NQF.

ACECQA releases the NQF Snapshot quarterly. It tracks the sector's progress and improvement in rating against the NQS. The latest snapshot also includes data about temporary service closures related to COVID-19.

Find the NQF Snapshot, including an interactive online version, on [ACECQA's website](#).

Understand provider obligations

If you receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS), you must comply with your obligations under Family Assistance Law.

Our [provider obligations page](#) has information and resources to help you do the right thing. Find:

- a series of [short videos on key compliance topics](#)
- information about [persons with management or control](#), including a [table of obligations](#)
- information on [fit and proper requirements](#) and [mandatory background checks](#)
- information about the compliance action we take if you fail to meet your obligations.

Each page has a button at the bottom so you can tell us whether you found this information helpful. Let us know!

Early childhood strike action on 7 September

We're aware of the announcement from the United Workers' Union that early childhood educators may strike over pay and conditions on 7 September.

A reminder that you cannot claim CCS when your service is closed, except on a [public holiday by law](#) or during a [period of emergency](#).

Guidance about industrial action for employers and employees is available on the [Fair Work Commission website](#).



Inclusion Support Program: Innovative Solutions cap lifted

We've lifted the cap on [Innovative Solutions Support](#) projects.

Innovative Solutions Support funds flexible and responsive solutions to inclusion barriers. It is part of the Inclusion Support Program (ISP), which helps services care for children with additional needs.

We temporarily placed a \$10,000 cap on Innovative Solutions projects between 14 September 2021 and 30 June 2022. The cap has now been lifted.

Eligible services can apply for Innovative Solutions projects without a specified limit. You can apply for funding at any time.

Applications over \$10,000 are referred to the department by the Inclusion Development Fund Manager (IDFM) for approval.

For advice about applying for Innovative Solutions Support, [contact your local Inclusion Agency or the IDFM](#).

[Find more information about ISP on our website](#).

Useful information

Handy resource

Learn about [CCS overpayments, debts and how to avoid them](#) on our website.

Good to know

Did you know we have a Facebook group for providers and services to connect with us and each other?

Join the [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) and:

- ask the community a question
- share resources directly with your networks
- get tips, announcements and reminders in your Facebook feed.

Plus, learn what other services are doing to mark significant days and events.

We were thrilled to hear what one service got up to for National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day [on our recent post](#).



3 August 2022

Tomorrow is National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day



National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day is a time to celebrate the strengths and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

It's an opportunity for all Australians to show support and learn about the crucial impact that culture, family and community play in the life of every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child.

Children's Day has run annually since 1988 and is the initiative of [SNAICC – National Voice for our Children](#).

My Dreaming, My Future

This year's theme is **My Dreaming, My Future**.

Watch as the 2022 Children's Day Ambassador, Thomas Mayor, [talks about this year's theme and how you can celebrate](#).

Get involved

Each year, early childhood education and care services across Australia host events to celebrate Children's Day.

[Find ideas for celebrating](#) and [register your event](#).

You can also [download culturally appropriate resources and activities](#), including the [2022 activity sheet](#).

Let us know how you're celebrating in our [Facebook group](#).

Learn more on the [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day website](#).



Session reports close on Sunday

Don't forget to submit your session reports for the 2021–22 Child Care Subsidy (CCS) year by 11.59pm this Sunday.

The Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS) will be closed for the 2021–22 CCS year from Monday.

You won't be able to submit, vary or withdraw session reports for any period between 12 July 2021 and 10 July 2022.

You must submit complete and accurate session reports on time – it's the law. Failure to do so is an offence and may result in an infringement. It is also essential for [CCS balancing](#) to commence.

Learn more about session reports in the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#).

Enrolment notices must be accurate

If your enrolments are incorrect or missing important details, families may miss out on CCS.

Enrolment notices include details about a child, their parent or carer, the provider, and the agreed care arrangement.

Importantly, they **must** include the name, date of birth and Customer Reference Number (CRN) of:

- the child
- the parent or carer who is claiming CCS.

These details link the enrolment to a parent's CCS claim. If these details are missing or incorrect, Services Australia cannot pay CCS on behalf of a family.

List the correct claimant

A common mistake is to list the parent or carer who has not made a CCS claim. **Please ensure you have listed the correct individual so that CCS can be paid.**

While enrolment notices must list the individual claiming CCS, a Complying Written Arrangement can be made with either parent or carer.

Enrolment timeframes

You must submit an enrolment notice in the CCSS within 7 days from the end of the week in which you enrol a child. This is a requirement under Family Assistance Law.

If a family does not provide all the required information, you may still submit the enrolment to meet the above timeframe.

However, you must follow up with the family and update the enrolment notice as soon as possible. This will minimise payment delays and avoid payments going directly to the family.



Learn more about enrolments in the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#).

Useful information

Handy resource

The National Centre for Australian Children's Literature has a [free database](#) for educators to discover children's books by and about Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Good to know

We share news, updates and resources in our [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#).

Plus, it's a great place to ask a question. Recently, a member asked us about closing a Centre Based Day Care or Outside School Hours Care service early. [Take a look at the conversation](#).

Have a question of your own? [Join the Facebook group and ask us](#).



Debt explainer: how overpayments occur

Sometimes, providers receive more Child Care Subsidy (CCS) than they're entitled to. This is called an overpayment.

These usually happen when a service:

- retroactively closes or transfers ownership
- records a session of care with incorrect information (days, hours, fees).

If this happens, we'll use your future CCS payments to repay the difference. This is called offsetting.

Here's an example

A provider reports that a child attended 5 days of care during a certain week. Later, after receiving CCS, the provider realises the child only attended for 4 days. The provider amends the session report by removing the extra day.

As the provider received payment for 5 days when it was entitled to 4, it has been overpaid. The provider's future payments will be reduced until the difference is accounted for.

How to avoid overpayments

You can avoid overpayments by complying with your Family Assistance Law obligations. These include:

- telling us 42 days in advance before you close or transfer ownership
- submitting accurate session reports within 14 days after the end of the week in which the session of care was provided.

Read more about [overpayments on our website](#).

Develop workers for your service

The Launch into Work program can help you find suitable job seekers for your business, and prepare them to work in early childhood education and care (ECEC).

The program gives you another way to recruit people for entry-level roles.

If you have multiple vacancies, you can work with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations to create a pre-employment project for you to deliver.

A pre-employment project will incorporate:

- **work experience**, where a job seeker shadows staff in the workplace



- **mentoring**, where staff members share their knowledge and experience
- **training**, where job seekers complete units to develop essential skills to commence employment.

Job seekers who complete a pre-employment project can then transition to employment with you.

[Learn more about the Launch into Work program.](#)

Reminder: updating enrolments

If a family requests changes to a child's care arrangements, you need to update this within 7 days in the CCS System.

For families that tell you they are ceasing their enrolment, you'll need to enter the end date for the Complying Written Arrangement (CWA) when the family notifies you.

You must update an enrolment if:

- a family requests to end their child's care, or change other details. You will also need to update this in the CWA
- existing arrangement details are wrong.

You may commit an offence under Family Assistance Law, and be liable for a civil penalty, if you:

- don't notify us that information in an enrolment notice has become incorrect
- don't notify us that information has become available that should have been included in the enrolment notice
- don't ensure that changes to a CWA are in writing if that information becomes incorrect.

More information about updating and ending arrangements and enrolments can be found in the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#).

Facebook group: have you joined yet?

The [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) has **4000 members working in the early childhood education and care sector.**

Do you know someone who hasn't joined yet and would benefit? Tag them in the comments of a useful post and encourage them to join the conversation.

We recently had a [discussion about the signing of CWAs](#). While some services use physical forms, others are entirely digital. How does your service manage CWAs? Leave a comment and let us know.

Have another question? Start a conversation by submitting a post.



Get help to fill entry-level roles

The Workforce Contact Centre can help you fill entry level positions.

The centre can work with you to:

- advertise vacancies on the department's [Jobs Hub](#)
- help you advertise on the [Workforce Australia jobs board](#)
- connect you with employment services or Apprenticeship Network providers in your area
- provide information and connections to government programs such as:
 - wage subsidies
 - work experience
 - subsidised accredited training
- develop and apply new ways of recruiting.

To get in touch, email workforce@dese.gov.au.

Useful information

Handy resource

Providers have until 11.59pm on Sunday 7 August to submit session reports to Services Australia for the 2021–22 CCS year.

The Child Care Subsidy System will be closed for the 2021–22 CCS year from 8 August.

You will then be unable to submit, vary or withdraw session reports for any period of care between 12 July 2021 and 10 July 2022.

[For more information on reporting sessions of care, refer to the Child Care Provider Handbook.](#)

Good to know

Our [Child Care Package](#) page has everything you need in one place, including information on:

- Child Care Subsidy
- Additional Child Care Subsidy
- Community Child Care Fund
- Inclusion Support Program
- your provider obligations.

[Child Care Package page](#)



Top tips on session reports



Queries about session reports are among the most common calls to our Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Helpdesk.

Here are the top 4 things you need to know:

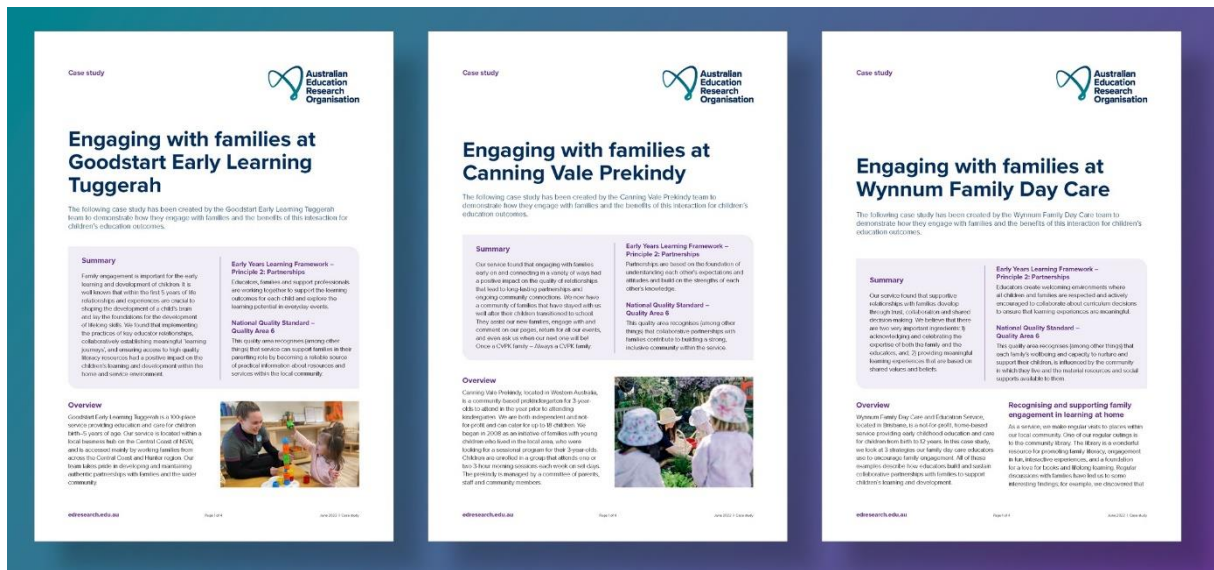
1. To get the correct amount of CCS, **submit accurate session reports on time** – in most cases **within 14 days** after the end of the week when the sessions were provided.
2. A session report must be submitted for **each child for each week a session of care has been provided** (including absences).
3. Session reports must contain **at least one session of care for a week**, recorded as either an attendance or absence.
4. Session reports must only include sessions of care for which an individual incurred a **genuine fee liability**.

Pictured above are James and Norbert, who are among the Helpdesk operators taking your calls.

More information on session reporting is in the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#).



AERO case studies: family engagement



The [Australian Education Research Organisation \(AERO\)](https://aero.org.au) has released case studies on three early childhood education and care services demonstrating good family engagement.

These case studies complement AERO's [Engaging with families for children's early learning and development](https://aero.org.au) practice guide, released in December 2021.

Read the case studies

[Wynnum Family Day Care & Education Service](https://aero.org.au), in Brisbane, is a not-for-profit, home-based service. It provides early childhood education and care for children from birth to 12 years.

[Goodstart Early Learning Tuggerah](https://aero.org.au), on the New South Wales Central Coast, is a 100-place service. It provides education and care for children birth to 5 years.

[Canning Vale Prekindy](https://aero.org.au), in the southern suburbs of Perth, is a community-based prekindergarten for 3-year-olds. It teaches children in the year before they attend kindergarten.

Share what you learned

We'd love to hear what you learned from the studies. Leave a comment on [our Facebook post](https://www.facebook.com/aero.org.au).

Reminder: session reports deadline

Providers have until 11.59pm on Sunday 7 August to submit session reports to Services Australia for the 2021–22 CCS year.

Completing session reports by this deadline is essential for balancing family CCS entitlements for last financial year.

The Child Care Subsidy System will be closed for the 2021–22 CCS year from 8 August.



You will then be unable to submit, vary or withdraw session reports for any period of care between 12 July 2021 and 10 July 2022.

You have an obligation to submit complete and accurate session reports on time. Failure to do so is an offence and may result in an infringement.

[For more information on reporting sessions of care, refer to the Child Care Provider Handbook.](#)

Facebook group: resources to share

Our [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is a source of useful resources for you and your families.

Did you know that [Services Australia has produced a CCS fact sheet in different languages](#)? You can print and display these at your service, or give them to families.

Have a question? Post in [our group](#) and we'll help you with the information you need.

Register: Healthy Harold program

Healthy Harold and his friends at [Life Ed](#) are visiting preschools and early learning centres with their new [Early Years Learning Program \(EYLP\)](#).

The EYLP supports children aged 3-5 through three new modules:

- Harold's Healthy Day
- Harold's Big Feelings
- Super Safe Harold.

Each module develops children's mental, physical and social foundations through interactive learning experiences.

The program aligns to the [Early Years Learning Framework](#) and [National Quality Framework](#), with online resources for educators and parents.

For more information on costs and to book a visit, visit [Life Ed's website](#).

NSW floods: period of emergency ending

The period of emergency in place for some Local Government Areas (LGAs) in NSW ends today.

This was for regions that experienced severe weather and flooding.

Our [table of emergency support by region](#) lists LGAs that were eligible for support during the period of emergency.

We continue to monitor the situation and will update you as necessary.



Read more about [support during a period of emergency](#).

Useful information

Handy resource

Child care fees, vacancies, quality ratings and inclusions are published on the [Starting Blocks website](#).

Having this information in one place helps parents choose the best early childhood education and care for their family.

[StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) is the only place to find all approved early childhood services.

Good to know

Sometimes, we publish [announcements on our website](#) that affect families.

You can print these and display them at your service.



Reminder: new CCS year has begun



The first Child Care Subsidy (CCS) fortnight of the 2022–23 financial year began on Monday.

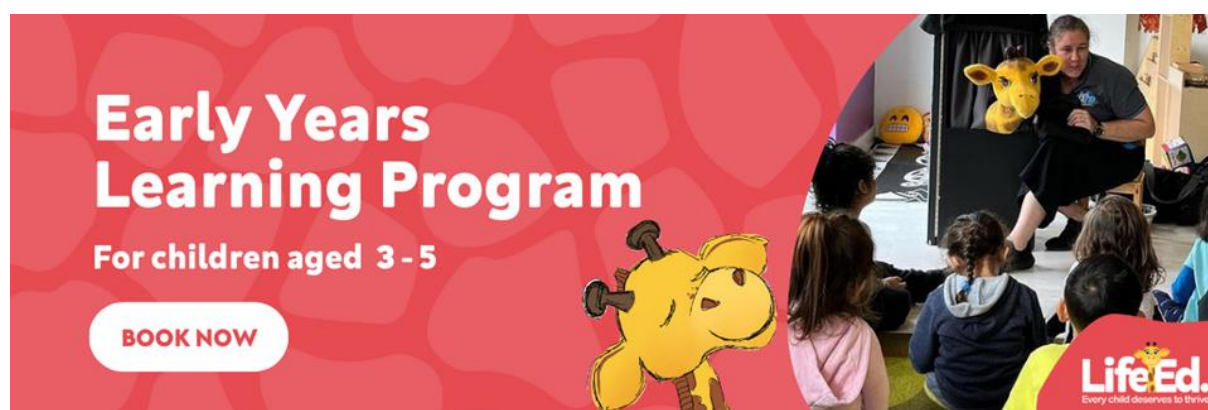
Of note:

- [CCS rates have increased](#) in line with the Consumer Price Index.
- **The 26-week rule has started.** Children who haven't used care at least once in the previous 26 weeks will no longer be eligible for CCS. Families can submit a new claim if their child recommences care.
- **Allowable absences have reset.** Children have 52 absences for the 2022–23 financial year.
- **You can [waive gap fees](#)** if a child is unable to attend care for one of three COVID-related reasons until 30 June 2023.
- **Combined families can now get the [higher CCS](#).** If your families have questions about the higher subsidy, direct them to Services Australia.

Do you have a question about any of these measures? Post a question or leave a comment in our [Facebook group](#).



New Healthy Harold program



Healthy Harold and his friends at [Life Ed](#) are visiting preschools and early learning centres with their new [Early Years Learning Program \(EYLP\)](#).

Funded by the Australian Government, the EYLP supports children aged 3-5 through three new modules:

- Harold's Healthy Day
- Harold's Big Feelings
- Super Safe Harold.

Each module develops children's mental, physical and social foundations through interactive learning experiences.

The program aligns to the [Early Years Learning Framework](#) and [National Quality Framework](#), with online resources for educators and parents.

For more information, and to book a visit for your centre, visit [Life Ed Australia's website](#).

Session reports cut off 7 August

Providers have until 11.59pm on Sunday 7 August to submit session reports to Services Australia for the 2021–22 CCS year.

Completing session reports by this deadline is essential for balancing family CCS entitlements for last financial year.

The Child Care Subsidy System will be closed for the 2021–22 CCS year from 8 August.

You will then be unable to submit, vary or withdraw session reports for any period of care between 12 July 2021 and 10 July 2022.

Providers have an obligation to submit complete and accurate session reports on time. Failure to do so is an offence and may result in an infringement.

[For more information on reporting sessions of care, refer to the Child Care Provider Handbook.](#)



Our Facebook group continues to grow

Our [Facebook group](#) for providers, services and educators is now three months old and already has almost 4000 members.

This group is your dedicated space to network and connect with others in the sector.

Did you see this [recent discussion](#) between members about services that offer sessional kinder programs?

Join the conversation in the [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#).

Useful information

Handy resource

Find previous early childhood updates on our [announcements](#) page.

Good to know

We have [extended the period of emergency](#) for 9 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in NSW that continue to be impacted by flooding. However support has ended as of today in other LGAs.

Check our [emergency support by region page](#) for eligible LGAs.

We continue to monitor the situation and will update you as necessary.

Read more about [support during a period of emergency](#).



12 July 2022

NSW floods: period of emergency extended for 9 LGAs

We've extended the period of emergency for parts of New South Wales that continue to be impacted by flooding.

The period of emergency now applies until **20 July 2022** for the following Local Government Areas (LGAs):

- Central Coast, Cessnock, Hawkesbury, The Hills Shire, Hornsby, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Port Stephens, Singleton.

[See the full list of affected regions and dates on our website.](#)

The following support will apply during the period of emergency:

- **you can get Child Care Subsidy** if you close your service as a direct result of the emergency, during the period of emergency
- **you can waive gap fees** if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the period of emergency
- **children will get extra absences** for the duration of the period of emergency.

Full details of this support are available on our [help in an emergency page](#).

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates.



NSW flood update: period of emergency extended to 8 more LGAs

We've extended the period of emergency in place for parts of New South Wales impacted by flooding and severe weather to 8 more Local Government Areas (LGAs):

- Cumberland, Mid-Coast, Muswellbrook, Nambucca Valley, Newcastle, Port Stephens, Randwick and Warren.

The period of emergency for these LGAs is from 4 to 13 July.

[See the full list of affected regions and dates on our website.](#)

The following support will apply during the period of emergency:

- **you can get Child Care Subsidy** if you close your service as a direct result of the emergency, during the period of emergency
- **you can waive gap fees** if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the period of emergency
- **children will get extra absences** for the duration of the period of emergency.

Full details of this support are available on our [help in an emergency page](#).

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates.



NSW update: period of emergency extended, new LGAs added

We've extended the period of emergency in place for parts of New South Wales, and Jervis Bay, impacted by flooding and severe weather.

The period of emergency now applies until 13 July 2022 and includes the following six additional Local Government Areas (LGAs) where the period of emergency is effective 4 July:

Bayside, Dungog, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Singleton and Upper Lachlan.

[See the full list of affected regions on our website.](#)

The following support will apply during the period of emergency:

- **you can get Child Care Subsidy** if you close your service as a direct result of the emergency, during the period of emergency
- **you can waive gap fees** if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the period of emergency
- **children will get extra absences** for the duration of the period of emergency.

Full details of this support are available on our [help in an emergency page](#).

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

Please watch our [emergency support by region page](#) for updates.



Changes to emergency support

In times of emergency, we may declare a period of emergency for the early childhood education and care sector.

The following measures will apply for any declared period of emergency in identified Local Government Areas (LGAs) or regions:

- **you can get Child Care Subsidy (CCS)** if you close as a direct result of the emergency, but only during the emergency
- **you can waive gap fees** if a child doesn't attend or your service is closed during the emergency
- **children will get extra absences** for the duration of the emergency.

Full details about this support are available on our [help in an emergency page](#).

Get notified

We'll notify services via email when a period of emergency is declared in your area. You'll also receive a notification via the Child Care Subsidy System.

Make sure your contact details, particularly email addresses, are up to date. Check this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

We also list [regions and timeframes where we've recently declared a period of emergency](#) on our website.

NSW weather event

We notified services in identified LGAs in New South Wales and Jervis Bay this week about the support available to them because of the weather emergency, including vast flooding.

We ask services to regularly check our [emergency support by region page](#) for updates.

This lists where a period of emergency has been declared, which triggers support.

CCS rates increase next week

CCS rates are increasing from Monday.

CCS rates are adjusted each July based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the previous December. That means the CCS family income thresholds and hourly rate caps will increase.

The new rates take effect on Monday, which is the start of the first CCS fortnight in the new financial year.



[Read about the changes to CPI rates on our website.](#)

Session reports cut off on 7 August

Providers have until 11.59pm on 7 August to submit session reports to Services Australia for the 2021–22 CCS year.

Completing session reports by this deadline is essential for balancing family CCS entitlements for last financial year.

The Child Care Subsidy System will be closed for the 2021–22 CCS year from 8 August.

You will then be unable to submit, vary or withdraw session reports for any period of care between 12 July 2021 and 10 July 2022.

Providers have an obligation to submit complete and accurate session reports on time. Failure to do so is an offence and may result in an infringement.

[For more information on reporting sessions of care, refer to the Child Care Provider Handbook.](#)

Survey: inform new learning system

We are developing a Learning Management System to help you understand your compliance obligations under Family Assistance Law.

The department has engaged consultants to conduct research and analysis of the sector's compliance learning needs.

We are asking you to take a survey, which will help us shape the design, content and delivery of system and its learning resources.

[Take the survey online.](#)

The survey closes on Sunday.

We're now Department of Education

The Department of Education, Skills and Employment has separated into the Department of Education and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, following the change of government.

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) will remain under the education portfolio and part of the new Department of Education.

The Hon Jason Clare MP is the Minister for Education, the Hon Dr Anne Aly MP is the Minister for Early Childhood and Youth, and Senator the Hon Anthony Chisholm is the Assistant Minister for Education.



ECEC information can still be found on the [DESE website](#) while a new website is developed.

Stand up! It's NAIDOC Week



It's NAIDOC Week – and this year's theme is Get up! Stand up! Show up!

NAIDOC Week is an opportunity for Australians to celebrate and recognise the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Here's how you can take part:

- find a [NAIDOC event](#) near you
- download and display the [NAIDOC Week poster](#)
- read the [teacher resource](#) for ideas
- print the [colouring-in sheets](#) for children.

[Read more about getting involved in NAIDOC Week on the official website.](#)

Wage support for apprentices and trainees

The Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System (AAIS) started on 1 July.

The program will build on the success of the Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements wage subsidy and replaces the previous Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program.

The AAIS provides incentives to eligible employers. It will be rolled out in two phases:

- from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2024, the AAIS will provide wage subsidies for eligible employers in priority occupations, including early childhood education and care
- from 1 July 2024, employers in priority occupations will be supported through a hiring incentive.

[Learn more about the Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System.](#)

Useful information

Handy resource

Are you part of our [Facebook group community](#)?



We share program and policy announcements, helpful links and resources for the sector all in one place. Plus, it's a great space to ask us questions directly, start a discussion with your peers and connect with colleagues in your industry.

Recently, a member asked a great question about Additional Child Care Subsidy and allowable absences. [See the conversation in the group.](#)

[Join the Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group.](#)

Good to know

- **The 26-week rule starts 11 July.** From next Monday, a child who hasn't used care at least once in the previous 26 weeks will no longer be eligible for CCS. Services Australia has notified impacted families. You do not need to take action.
- Allowable absences have reset for this financial year. All families have 52 allowable absences.



NSW update: period of emergency declared

We've declared a period of emergency for parts of New South Wales affected by severe weather, including flooding.

The period of emergency applies from **1 to 8 July** for families and services in the following Local Government Areas:

Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Camden, Campbelltown, Canterbury Bankstown, Central Coast, Cessnock, Fairfield, Georges River, Hawkesbury, Hornsby, Kiama, Lithgow, Liverpool, Northern Beaches, Penrith, Shellharbour, Shoalhaven, Sutherland, The Hills, Wingecarribee, Wollondilly and Wollongong, and (unincorporated territory) Jervis Bay.

The following support will apply during the period of emergency:

- you can get Child Care Subsidy if you close your service as a direct result of the emergency, during the period of emergency
- you can waive gap fees if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the period of emergency
- children will get extra absences for the duration of the period of emergency.

Full details of this support are available on our [help in an emergency page](#).

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

Please watch our [emergency support by region page](#) for updates.



NSW weather events: emergency update

We're closely monitoring the situation in New South Wales to determine the impact of current weather events on services and families.

As we determine periods of emergency for affected Local Government Areas (LGAs), we'll update our website. Please check our [emergency support by region page](#) for updates.

The following support is available for services and families in affected LGAs during a period of emergency.

Child Care Subsidy

You will continue to receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payments if you close your service as a **direct result** of the emergency – for example, if your service is not safe to enter or staff are unable to travel to the service because of the emergency.

If your service can operate during the period of emergency but you decide to remain closed, you won't receive CCS.

If you close, you must let us know as soon as possible via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

Gap fees

You can waive the gap fee for families if a child does not attend care, including if your service is closed, during the period of emergency.

Absences

Children who live or attend a service in an affected region will get extra allowable absences for the duration of the period of emergency. These will be automatically applied in the Child Care Subsidy System.

This means families won't have to use any of their 52 allowable absences during the period of emergency.

General support

The Australian Government provides payments and help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out if you're eligible for support on the [Services Australia website](#).

The NSW Government has support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Find information on the [NSW Government website](#).

The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) special circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as an emergency. Affected services can [apply on our website](#).



Applicants should request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other disaster support.

Affected families may be eligible for extra help with the cost of child care through the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#). Families must apply directly to Centrelink.

For action

- Join the [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Tell us if you temporarily close your service. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Keep an eye on the [NSW Government website](#) for current emergency information in your region.



Child Care Subsidy rates increase on 11 July

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) rates are increasing from 11 July.

CCS rates are adjusted each July based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the previous December. That means the CCS family income thresholds and hourly rate caps will increase.

The new rates take effect from 11 July, which is the start of the first CCS fortnight in the new financial year.

Combined annual income

The amount of CCS a family gets depends on their combined annual income.

New CCS family income thresholds	Subsidy %
Up to \$72,466	85%
More than \$72,466 to below \$177,466	Decreasing to 50%
\$177,466 to below \$256,756	50%
\$256,756 to below \$346,756	Decreasing to 20%
\$346,756 to below \$356,756	20%
\$356,756 or more	0%

New hourly rate cap

The maximum hourly rate we subsidise is based on the type of service you run.

Service type	New hourly rate cap (children below school age)	New hourly rate cap (school-aged children)
Centre Based Day Care	\$12.74	\$11.15
Outside School Hours Care	\$12.74	\$11.15
Family Day Care	\$11.80	\$11.80
In Home Care (per family)	\$34.64	\$34.64

The [2021–22 CCS rates](#) are available on our website.



CCS balancing deadline tomorrow



Families must take action by tomorrow to avoid losing CCS or getting a debt.

At the end of each financial year, Services Australia reconciles family payments, including CCS. This is to ensure families receive the correct amount of assistance for the year.

Tomorrow marks two deadlines for families:

- the first deadline for confirming 2020–21 income
- the second deadline for confirming 2019–20 income.

Families confirm their income by:

- lodging their tax return, or
- telling Services Australia they don't need to lodge a tax return. Families can complete an [Advise non-lodgement of tax return](#) using their [Centrelink online account](#) through [myGov](#) or through the [Express Plus Centrelink mobile app](#). They'll need to do this even if they've already told the Australian Taxation Office they don't need to lodge.

Action for providers

The balancing process is a matter between families and Services Australia.

You can help families by reminding them to confirm their income before tomorrow's deadline.

If families have questions, please direct them to the [Services Australia website](#).

Connected Beginnings site for Adelaide

A [Connected Beginnings](#) program to support more than 1,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children prepare for school will be set up in the northern suburbs of Adelaide.



The \$1.8 million investment by the department will establish a Connected Beginnings site at Kurna Plains Children's Centre in Salisbury/Playford.

[Connected Beginnings](#) is an Australian Government grants program and [Closing the Gap measure](#).

The program supports children from birth to school age and pregnant women. Through it, children can get steady, wrap-around support. This helps them meet the learning and development milestones needed for a smooth start to school and to get the best start in life.

Last year, the Australian Government committed \$81.8 million to expand Connected Beginnings from 24 to 50 sites nationally by 2025.

Read the [announcement on the new Connected Beginnings site in South Australia](#).

Reminder: COVID-19 support extended

Last week, we [announced an extension to COVID-19 support measures](#) for the early childhood education and care sector.

The following support will continue to be available to families and services until 30 June 2023:

- Families will get 52 allowable absences for the 2022–23 financial year. These absences will be applied automatically in the Child Care Subsidy System. Families do not need to take action.
- Families can use evidence of a positive COVID-19 test from a government agency to access additional absences. Additional absences are only available after a child has used their 52 allowable absences.
- We may pay CCS for absences that occur in the 7 days before a child's first day of care, or after their last day of care, if the child or a member of their immediate household must isolate with COVID-19. This is known as the absences before and after care rule.
- Services may waive the gap fee if a child is unable to attend care for one of 3 reasons.

Waiving the gap fee is a business decision, and is up to individual services. It is not mandatory.

Read details about [COVID-19 support](#) on our website.

CCS eligibility: 26-week rule

The new CCS eligibility rule is starting soon.

From 11 July, a child who hasn't used care at least once in the previous 26 weeks will no longer be eligible for CCS.

If a child has not attended care since 10 January, their CCS will cancel from 11 July. The rule will apply on an ongoing basis from this date. Families will need to submit a new CCS claim if the child re-commences care.



Services Australia has notified impacted families. You do not need to take action.

We will not raise CCS debts when applying the rule. Any changes to CCS entitlement will only apply from the date of cancellation.

Will the rule impact a family's higher CCS?

Families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care can get a [higher CCS](#) for their second child and younger children.

The 26-week rule may affect a family's entitlement to the higher CCS.

If a standard rate child's CCS eligibility ends, Services Australia will reassess all other children in the family to determine:

- the new standard rate child
- new subsidy rates.

If a child attends care again after their CCS is cancelled, the family can lodge a new claim for CCS.

The 26-week rule will not affect backpay made to combined families for any higher subsidy they were eligible for between 7 March and 30 June 2022.

If families have questions, please direct them to [Services Australia](#).

Handy resource

Next week is [NAIDOC week](#), an opportunity to celebrate and recognise the history, cultures and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

SBS has partnered with NAIDOC week to produce the National NAIDOC Week Educational Resources which are structured around this year's theme: **Get up! Stand up! Show up!**

[Read the NAIDOC week teacher resource](#).

And keep an eye on our [Facebook group](#) where we'll share activities and information to mark the week.

Good to know

Families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care can get a [higher CCS](#) for their second child and younger children.

Combined families will automatically start receiving the higher CCS from 1 July. They may also receive backpay from Services Australia for any higher subsidy they were eligible for between 7 March and 30 June 2022.

We have more [information for providers](#) on our website.



Services Australia has [information for families](#), including [examples that show how the higher CCS works](#).

Facebook group

The [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is your place to learn, explore and connect with us and others in your sector.

In a [recent conversation a member asked about anaphylaxis action plans](#). Have you got experience with developing these for your service? Leave a comment to share with your peers.

The [Facebook group](#) is your place to ask questions, start a discussion and engage with your colleagues in the sector.



COVID-19 support extended to June 2023

We're extending some existing COVID-19 measures for the early childhood education and care sector to 30 June 2023.

Absences

All families will get **52 allowable absences** for the 2022–23 financial year.

Families can access **additional absences**, in certain circumstances, if they've used their 52 days. This includes if a child is ill and provides you with a medical certificate.

From 1 March 2022, if a child or a member of their immediate household has COVID-19, the family may provide evidence of a positive COVID-19 test result from a government or health agency in place of a medical certificate.

We're also extending the exceptions to the **absences before and after care rule** for enrolments that start or end between 1 December 2021 and 30 June 2023.

See details about [absences and COVID-19](#).

Gap fees

Until 30 June 2023, you can waive the gap fee and continue to receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) if a child is unable to attend care for one of three reasons. These include:

- the child, or a member of their immediate household, must isolate with COVID-19
- the child is at a higher risk of severe disease from COVID-19
- the service, or a room at the service, is closed due to COVID-19.

See details about [gap fee waiving and COVID-19](#).



22 June 2022

Workshop discusses Inclusion Support Program



Department staff and Inclusion Support Program (ISP) providers discussed the program at a two-day workshop (pictured) in Canberra.

The workshop was a great face-to-face opportunity to network and discuss contractual and program delivery.

Attendees included our staff, contracted Inclusion Agencies, Inclusion Development Fund manager, and representatives from Services Australia.

Guest speakers from the National Disability Insurance Scheme spoke about the Australian Government's [Early Childhood Approach](#) and how it could benefit the ISP.

Learn more about the ISP [on our website](#).

Families first at AIFS conference



We helped sponsor students and educators so they could attend the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) conference in Melbourne.

Pictured are Phoebe Wallish (another sponsor), Hemavarni Doma, Carli Leishman, Sue Smith, Kerry Ladiges, Yuxi Li, Eloise Tognetti, Vicki Sclater, Amy Gill, Gina Scuffins, Bradley Burns, and AIFS director Sharman Stone.

Scholarships covered registration costs and travel for attendees, including those from rural and remote Australia.

Each year, policy makers, researchers, service providers and stakeholders gather at the AIFS conference to discuss issues affecting the sector. Central to this year's theme was putting families at the centre of decision making and policy.

You can read more about the work that AIFS does [on its website](#).

CCS eligibility: 26-week rule starts soon

A new Child Care Subsidy (CCS) eligibility rule is starting soon.

From 11 July, a child who hasn't used care at least once in the previous 26 weeks will no longer be eligible for CCS.

If a child has not attended care since 10 January, their CCS will cancel from 11 July. The rule will apply on an ongoing basis from this date. Families will need to submit a new CCS claim if the child recommences care.

Services Australia has notified impacted families. You do not need to take action.

We will not raise CCS debts when applying the rule. Any changes to CCS entitlement will only apply from the date of cancellation.

Will the rule impact a family's higher CCS?

Families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care can get a [higher CCS](#) for their second child and younger children.

The 26-week rule may affect a family's entitlement to the higher CCS.

If a standard rate child's CCS eligibility ends, Services Australia will reassess all other children in the family to determine:

- the new standard rate child
- new subsidy rates.

If a child attends care again after their CCS is cancelled the family can lodge a new claim for CCS.

The 26-week rule will not affect backpay made to combined families for any higher subsidy they were eligible for between 7 March and 30 June 2022.



If families have questions, please direct them to [Services Australia](#).

Balancing deadlines in 1 week

Families only have one week to confirm their incomes for 2019–2020 and 2020–2021.

The deadline for families to confirm their income for the 2020-21 financial year is 30 June 2022.

Families who didn't confirm their 2019-20 income by 30 June last year must confirm their at financial year's income by 30 June 2022 or incur a debt for the full amount of CCS they received.

[We have a video that explains the CCS balancing process.](#)

[You can also share a post from our Facebook Group.](#)

Jobs Fairs: helping you find staff

We host Jobs Fairs across the country to help employers, including those in early childhood education and care, find suitable staff.

Jobs Fairs are free face-to-face events where you can:

- promote current and upcoming vacancies to job seekers in your area
- connect with employment service providers.

See upcoming Job Fairs:

- [Sydney on Tuesday 28 June.](#)
- [Bendigo on Wednesday 29 June.](#)

For more information or to become an exhibitor, visit the [exhibitor information](#) page or email JobsFairs@dese.gov.au.

Facebook group: get connected

[The Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) **is your place to learn, explore and connect with us and others in your sector.**

We want to hear from you. A member [recently asked](#) about what happens when families receiving Additional Child Care Subsidy run out of allowed absences.

If you have your own question, make a post in the group, or comment to let us know the issues you want discussed.



Handy resource: child mental health

Can you identify if a child under your care needs mental health support?

If you are concerned about a child's wellbeing, start by writing down your observations and reflections. Then discuss them with an appropriate colleague to identify the child's strengths and potential needs.

Be You has helpful information on its [Before recommending additional support](#) fact sheet.

Good to know: combined families

Families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care can get a [higher CCS](#) for their second child and younger children.

Combined families will automatically start receiving the higher CCS from 1 July. They may also receive backpay from Services Australia for any higher subsidy they were eligible for between 7 March and 30 June 2022.

We have more [information for providers](#) on our website.

Services Australia has [information for families](#), including [examples that show how the higher CCS works](#).



New learning and development resources

The Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) has released new resources for the early childhood education and care sector.

Based on [AERO's Tried and Tested practices](#), these resources help promote children's learning and development by embedding skills in their daily learning experiences and interactions.

The resources are aimed at children 3-5 years, and cover:

- [executive function and self-regulation](#)
- [early numeracy](#)
- [early literacy](#).

[Learn more on the AERO website.](#)

Explainer: absences and public holidays

Services have asked us if they can open on public holidays and instead close for other religious holidays.

While services may choose to close on religious holidays, Child Care Subsidy (CCS) absences won't be payable for these days unless they coincide with:

- an existing public holiday
- a day during a local area emergency
- a day during a period when the service has been forced to close due to COVID-19.

Children who don't attend care due to a religious holiday can access allowable absences, assuming the service remains open.

We have more [information on absences on our website](#). A [list of public holidays](#) is on the Australian Government website.

CCS eligibility: 26-week rule

A new CCS eligibility rule is starting soon.

From 11 July, a child who hasn't used care at least once in the previous 26 weeks will no longer be eligible for CCS.

If a child has not attended care since 10 January 2022, their CCS will cancel from 11 July. The rule will apply on an ongoing basis from this date. Families will need to submit a new CCS claim if the child re-commences care.



Services Australia has notified impacted families. You do not need to take action.

We will not raise CCS debts when applying the rule. Any changes to CCS entitlement will only apply from the date of cancellation.

Will the rule impact a family's higher CCS?

Families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care can get a [higher CCS](#) for their second child and younger children.

The 26-week rule may affect a family's entitlement to the higher CCS.

If a standard rate child's CCS eligibility ends, Services Australia will reassess all other children in the family to determine:

- the new standard rate child
- new subsidy rates.

If a child starts to attend care again, after their CCS was cancelled, the family can lodge a new claim for CCS.

The 26-week rule will not affect backpay made to combined families for any higher subsidy they were eligible for between 7 March and 30 June 2022.

If families have questions, please direct them to [Services Australia](#).

You are welcome to [share the 26-week rule post on our Facebook Group](#).

Combined families get higher CCS soon

Families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care can get a [higher CCS](#) for their second child and younger children.

Combined families will automatically start receiving the higher CCS from 1 July.

They may receive backpay from Services Australia for any higher subsidy they were eligible for between 7 March and 30 June 2022.

Combined families are where both members of the couple get CCS for different children in their family. Services Australia counts all children in a combined family when determining entitlement to the higher CCS.

Services Australia will send a text message to combined families in early July to advise them the higher subsidy has started for combined families and that arrears may be paid. Families don't need to do anything.

The higher CCS started for most families on 7 March.

We have more [information for providers](#) on our website.



Services Australia has [information for families](#), including [examples that show how the higher CCS works](#).

Wage support for trainees

The Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements wage subsidy helps supports employers to engage new and recommencing apprentices and trainees.

The program closes to new entrants on 30 June.

Eligible employers who engage an apprentice or trainee between 5 October 2020 and 30 June 2022 may be eligible for a subsidy of 50% of gross wages, up to \$7,000 per quarter, for 12 months.

Employers who take part in the program may be eligible for the Completing Apprenticeship Commencements wage subsidy for apprentices and trainees that progress to a second or third year of training.

[Learn more about Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements and Completing Apprenticeship Commencements.](#)

A new Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System (AAIS) will start on 1 July. The program will build on the success of the Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements wage subsidy and replaces the previous Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program.

The AAIS will provide incentives to eligible employers. It will be rolled out in two phases:

- from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2024, the AAIS will provide wage subsidies for eligible employers in priority occupations, including early childhood education and care
- from 1 July 2024, employers in priority occupations will be supported through a hiring incentive.

[Learn more about the Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System.](#)

Facebook group

[The Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is your place to learn, explore and connect with us and others in your sector.

Members have been sharing [our post on the upcoming 26-week rule](#) with their families. There's also been a lot of discussion in the comments that you can join.

We want to hear from you. Comment or post and let us know the issues you want to discuss.

Good to know

At the end of each financial year, Services Australia reconciles family payments, including CCS. This is to ensure families receive the correct amount of assistance for the year.



The deadline for families to confirm their income for the 2020–21 financial year is 30 June 2022.

Families who failed to confirm their 2019–20 income by 30 June 2021 must confirm that income by 30 June 2022 or a debt will be raised for the full amount of CCS they received.

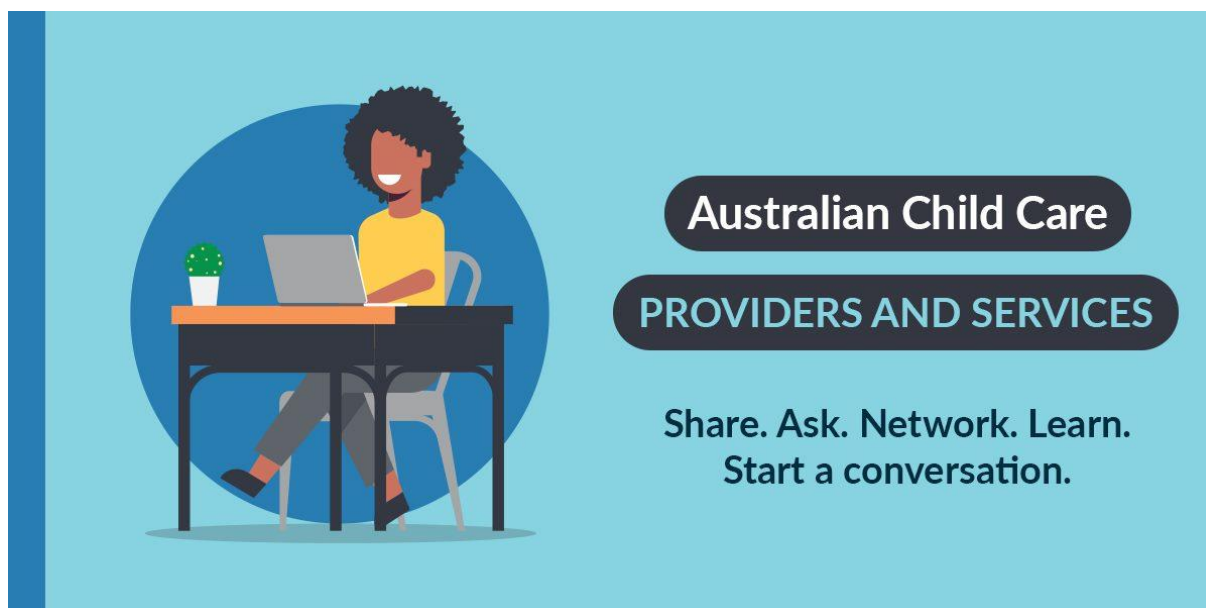
[We have a video to help you understand the CCS balancing process.](#) You can also [share it from our Facebook Group](#).

Handy resource

The [Child Care Provider Handbook](#) has useful information for providers who administer CCS.



Join our Facebook group, expand your network



[The Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is growing in popularity as a place for the sector to learn, explore and connect.

For instance, we've marked [National Reconciliation Week](#) by [sharing resources, activities and hearing your stories](#) in line with the week's theme: **Be Brave. Make Change.**

We encourage you to use the group – it's your space to:

- **SHARE** what you've learned, or looking forward to learning. Are you going to the [Be You Early Learning virtual](#) conference 8-9 June, for example?
- **ASK** your colleagues about something that's stumping you. Are you having trouble with some of the daily administration you face in your work? Or, are you looking for a template for a process that you know that should be more straightforward?
- **NETWORK** with others in like-minded services.
- But the group is also an opportunity to **LEARN** about the breadth of the early childhood education and care sector across our vast country.
- Or just **START** a conversation about a topic you care about.

ATO ensuring you meet your obligations

We work with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) under the Government Payments Program (GPP) to ensure providers do the right thing and don't exploit the system.

Most providers do the right thing, but some:



- unlawfully claim payments to which they are not entitled
- receive payments while not complying with tax and superannuation obligations.

We share data with the ATO about service providers that receive payments from us. This data helps the ATO to identify those not meeting their obligations.

If you are unsure about your obligations, contact the ATO on **13 11 42** from 8am to 6pm weekdays.

The [GPP data-matching program protocol](#) outlines how the ATO uses and collects data.

For more information, visit ato.gov.au/GPP.

Help stop the flu in 2022



Early childhood education and care providers and services can play an important role in protecting children, staff and communities from influenza.

Children, especially those under 5, can become seriously ill from the flu – which can sometimes be fatal.

The best protection against influenza is to receive an [influenza vaccine](#), which is safe, effective and free to all children from 6 months to under 5 years of age under the National Immunisation Program.

Children who do not have the influenza vaccination can continue to receive CCS.

[See Department of Health flu resources, including printable posters for your service.](#)

[Learn more about the flu vaccination for children at the Department of Health's website.](#)



Combined families get higher CCS soon

Families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care can get a [higher Child Care Subsidy \(CCS\)](#) for their second child and younger children.

Combined families will automatically start receiving the higher CCS from 1 July.

They may receive backpay from Services Australia for any higher subsidy they were eligible for between 7 March and 30 June 2022.

Combined families are where both members of the couple get CCS for different children in their family. Services Australia counts all children in a combined family when determining entitlement to the higher CCS.

Services Australia will send a text message to combined families in early July to advise them the higher subsidy has started for combined families and that arrears may be paid. Families don't need to do anything.

The higher CCS started for most families on 7 March.

We have more [information for providers](#) on our website.

Services Australia has [information for families](#), including [examples that show how the higher CCS works](#).

CCS eligibility: 26-week rule

A new CCS eligibility rule is starting soon.

From 11 July, a child who hasn't used care at least once in the previous 26 weeks will no longer be eligible for CCS.

If a child has not attended care since 10 January 2022, their CCS will cancel from 11 July. The rule will apply on an ongoing basis from this date. Families will need to submit a new CCS claim if the child recommences care.

Services Australia will notify impacted families. You do not need to take action.

We will not raise CCS debts when applying the 26-week rule. Any changes to CCS entitlement will only apply from the date of cancellation.

Will the rule impact a family's higher CCS?

Families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care can get a [higher CCS](#) for their second child and younger children.

The 26-week rule may affect a family's entitlement to the higher CCS.

If a standard rate child's CCS eligibility ends, Services Australia will reassess all other children in the family to determine:



- the new standard rate child
- new subsidy rates.

If a child starts to attend care again, after their CCS was cancelled, the family can lodge a new claim for CCS.

The 26-week rule will not affect any backpay made to combined families for any higher subsidy they were eligible for between 7 March and 30 June 2022.

If families have questions, please direct them to [Services Australia](#).

Exhibit at a Jobs Fair near you

We host Jobs Fairs across the country to help employers, including those in early childhood education and care, find suitable staff.

Jobs Fairs are free face-to-face events. Exhibiting at a Jobs Fair is a great way to:

- promote current and upcoming vacancies to job seekers in your area
- connect with employment service providers.

See upcoming Job Fairs:

- [Orange on Wednesday 15 June](#)
- [Melbourne on Friday 17 June](#)
- [Melbourne West on Tuesday 21 June](#)
- [Sydney on Tuesday 28 June.](#)
- [Bendigo on Wednesday 29 June 2022](#)

For more information or to become an exhibitor, visit the [exhibitor information](#) page or email JobsFairs@dese.gov.au.

Just published: NQF statement

The 2019 National Quality Framework Decision Regulation Impact Statement (DRIS) is now available online.

The DRIS is a statement on policy changes to the NQF. The statement responds to the NQF review, which was informed by feedback from the early childhood education and care sector.

The statement details changes to regulatory policy on safety concerns and compliance issues, which will be implemented in 2023.

[Read about the DRIS on ACECQA's website.](#)



Handy resource

Child care fees, vacancies, quality ratings and inclusions are now published on the [Starting Blocks](#) website.

Having this information in one place helps parents choose the best early childhood education and care for their family.

StartingBlocks.gov.au is the only place to find all approved early childhood services.

Let your colleagues and community know about Starting Blocks by sharing materials in our [content kit](#) on your channels.

Good to know

The CCS Helpdesk will be closed on Monday 13 June for the Queen's Birthday public holiday, which is celebrated in all states and territories on that day except Queensland and Western Australia.

The Helpdesk will re-open at 9am (AEST) on Tuesday.

You can contact the Helpdesk anytime by email at ccshelpdesk@dese.gov.au and we will respond during business hours.



1 June 2022

Help stop the flu in 2022



Early childhood education and care providers and services can play an important role in protecting children, staff and communities from influenza.

Children, especially those under 5, can become seriously ill from the flu – which can sometimes be fatal.

The best protection against flu is to receive an [influenza vaccine](#), which is safe, effective and free to all children from 6 months to under 5 years of age under the National Immunisation Program.

Hard-copy promotional materials that encourage parents to protect their children this winter by vaccinating have been mailed to services. We ask you to display these to further promote this important health message in your community.

Children who have not had a flu shot can continue to receive CCS.

[See Department of Health flu resources.](#)

[Learn more about the flu vaccination for children at the Department of Health's website.](#)

Combined families get higher CCS soon

Families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care can get a [higher Child Care Subsidy \(CCS\)](#) for their second child and younger children.



Combined families will automatically start receiving the higher CCS from 1 July.

They may receive backpay from Services Australia for any higher subsidy they were eligible for between 7 March and 30 June 2022.

Combined families are where both members of the couple get CCS for different children in their family. Services Australia counts all children in a combined family when determining entitlement to the higher CCS.

Services Australia will send a text message to combined families in early July to advise them the higher subsidy has started for combined families and that arrears may be paid. Families don't need to do anything.

The higher CCS started for most families on 7 March.

We have more [information for providers](#) on our website.

Services Australia has [information for families](#), including [examples that show how the higher CCS works](#).

CCS eligibility: 26-week rule starts soon

A new CCS eligibility rule is starting soon.

From 11 July 2022, a child who hasn't used care at least once in the previous 26 weeks will no longer be eligible for CCS.

If a child has not attended care since 10 January 2022, their CCS will cancel from 11 July 2022. The rule will apply on an ongoing basis from this date. Families will need to submit a new CCS claim if the child re-commences care.

Services Australia will notify impacted families. You do not need to take action.

We will not raise CCS debts when applying the 26-week rule. Any changes to CCS entitlement will only apply from a point in time going forward.

Will the rule impact a family's higher CCS?

Families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care can get a [higher CCS](#) for their second child and younger children.

The 26-week rule may affect a family's entitlement to the higher CCS.

If a standard rate child's CCS eligibility ends, Services Australia will reassess all other children in the family to determine:

- the new standard rate child
- new subsidy rates.



If a child starts to attend care again, after their CCS was cancelled, the family can lodge a new claim for CCS.

The 26-week rule will not affect any arrears payment made to combined families for any higher subsidy they were eligible for between 7 March and 30 June 2022.

If your families have questions, please direct them to [Services Australia](#).

Balancing: 30 June deadline for families

The end of financial year marks two important deadlines for families:

- the first deadline for confirming 2020–21 income
- the second deadline for confirming 2019–20 income.

Families must take action by 30 June to avoid losing CCS or incurring a debt.

2019–20 financial year

Most families confirmed their 2019–20 income before the first deadline on 30 June 2021.

Families who haven't confirmed their 2019–20 income must do so by 30 June 2022.

If they don't, they may need to pay back all the CCS they got for 2019–20.

More information about debts is available on [Services Australia's website](#).

They will also lose their CCS and Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) eligibility from the first CCS fortnight of the 2022–23 financial year.

You will need to direct these families to make a new claim if they wish to get a reduced fee again.

Families can only claim CCS again once they have:

- confirmed their income, and
- repaid any current or previous child care related debt, or
- entered into a repayment arrangement.

Families who miss the second deadline will also miss out on any top up of CCS for which they may have been eligible.

2020–21 financial year

All families must confirm their 2020–21 income before the first deadline on 30 June 2022.

If they don't, their CCS will stop. This means they'll need to pay full fees when they use child care.

Services Australia can start a family's CCS again, but only after they've confirmed their income. This means families may miss out on CCS.



How to confirm income

Families confirm their income by:

- lodging their tax return, or
- telling Services Australia they don't need to lodge a tax return. Families can complete an [Advise non-lodgement of tax return](#) using their [Centrelink online account](#) through [myGov](#) or through the [Express Plus Centrelink mobile app](#). They'll need to do this even if they've already told the Australian Taxation Office they don't need to lodge.

If a parent separates from their partner, Services Australia will also need their ex-partner's income.

If a parent is concerned that their ex-partner won't lodge their tax return by the deadline they should call the [Families line](#).

Action for providers

You can help families by reminding them to confirm their income before the deadline.

If families have questions, please direct them to the Services Australia website.

Explainer: how providers are notified about debt

Two types of debts can be raised:

- overpayments
- formal debts.

When the CCS System identifies an overpayment, it will automatically raise a debt and trigger offsetting.

Offsetting is the process in the CCS system where part of a service's payment is kept to repay a debt. This results in a reduced payment to the service.

Providers can use the Provider Entry Point or their third-party software to keep track of:

- payments
- debts, and
- where applicable, offsetting.

As well, all amounts offset will appear on a provider's payment advice.

The department issues formal debt notices for manual debts, such as for closed or non-compliant services. These notices will be on official departmental letter head, featuring the department's logo and the Commonwealth crest.

Manual debts are debts raised by the department that are not automatically issued within the CCS system.



The debt notice will outline:

- amount owing
- reason for the debt
- payment options and due date
- ways to request an extension to pay the debt or to request a review of the debt
- action that we will take if the debt is not paid within the timeframe, such as charging interest or legal proceedings.

Handy resource

This Friday is Mabo Day, which is commemorated each year on 3 June and marks the end of National Reconciliation Week.

This year is the 30th anniversary of the Mabo Decision, Eddie Koiki Mabo's challenge to the legal fiction of 'terra nullius' which led to the legal recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners and custodians of lands.

Learn more about Mabo Day and find National Reconciliation week information, resources and events on the [Reconciliation Australia website](#).

Plus, share what your service did to mark the week in our [Facebook group](#).

Good to know



The Hon Dr Anne Aly MP has been appointed Minister for Early Childhood Education.

Dr Aly will also serve as Minister for Youth. Jason Clare is the new Minister for Education.

We'll keep you updated on any changes to departmental arrangements.



National Reconciliation Week 2022 starts today

National Reconciliation Week – May 27 to June 3 – is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia.

This year's theme – **Be Brave. Make Change** – is a challenge to us to Be Brave and tackle the unfinished business of reconciliation so we can Make Change for the benefit of all Australians.

Actions to make change

Change begins with brave actions in your daily life – where you live, work, play and socialise.

Reconciliation Australia has a [list of actions to make change in 2022 and beyond](#).

Action 6 is about getting reconciliation into schools and early childhood.

A great way to do this is by committing to a [Reconciliation Action Plan \(RAP\) at your service](#).

Find more ideas for early childhood services on the [Narragunnawali website](#) and at [Learn our Truth](#).

Find an event near you

During National Reconciliation Week, workplaces, schools, early childhood services, community groups, reconciliation groups, and people across the country are hosting events.

[Search for events near you](#) on the National Reconciliation Week website. You can also [add your event](#) to the calendar.

Resources

Reconciliation Australia has [resources to help your service get involved](#), including:

- colouring-in activities
- posters
- social media tiles.

The resources feature a [collection of bold, brave characters by contemporary Torres Strait Islander illustrator, Tori-Jay Mordey](#).

They show some of the different faces of Australians working for a just and equal society. They are a visual reminder that reconciliation is everybody's business.



Closing the Gap

In 2021, the Commonwealth released its first [Closing the Gap implementation plan](#).

Under the plan, the Commonwealth is investing \$122.6 million to improve the lives of thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children through better access to quality early childhood education.

Funding will be used to:

- expand the Connected Beginnings program
- expand the Community Child Care Fund Restricted grant
- replicate the successful Early Years Education Program trial across new sites
- trial a new early learning teaching model to strengthen literacy and numeracy.

Learn more about [how we're working to Close the Gap in early childhood](#).

[Read about how the Connected Beginnings program is making a difference in communities.](#)

Share how you're getting involved

We'd love to see how your service is getting involved with National Reconciliation Week 2022.

Why not share your completed colouring in or other activities in our [Facebook Group](#)? (Just note, we can't approve photos that include children's faces.)

Learn more and get involved on the [National Reconciliation Week 2022 website](#).

Helpdesk closed Monday 30 May

The CCS Helpdesk will be closed on Monday 30 May for the Reconciliation Day public holiday in the ACT. It will re-open at 9am (AEST) on Tuesday 31 May.

You can always contact the Helpdesk by email at ccshelpdesk@dese.gov.au and we will respond during business hours.



25 May 2022

How Connected Beginnings is Closing the Gap



The ground-breaking Connected Beginnings program, which helps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children prepare for school, has been showcased at [Early Childhood Australia's Reconciliation Symposium](#) in Darwin.

[Connected Beginnings](#) is for children from birth to school age and pregnant women. Through it, children get steady, wrap-around support. This helps them meet the learning and development milestones needed for a smooth start to school.

Connected Beginnings is making measurable gains for [Closing the Gap](#).

The Australian Government program began in 2016 and today operates at 24 sites across every state and territory. Buoyed by the program's success, the government is extending Connected Beginnings to another 25 sites.

Assistant Director for the program, Terese Christoff-Smith, told the symposium that one of the strengths of Connected Beginnings is how it adapts to the needs of individual communities.

Terese highlighted three success stories from the Northern Territory – at Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and on the island of Galiwin'ku.

Terese was joined on stage by community members from Groote Eylandt (pictured) who shared their Connected Beginnings experience in the Top End.

[Read more about the Connected Beginnings presentation on the DESE Newsroom](#)



Little Scientists recognises best-practice STEM



The biennial Little Scientists Early STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) Award celebrates early childhood services that have successfully implemented inquiry-based learning and child-led STEM exploration.

The award is open to all Australian early childhood services wishing to showcase their STEM-based projects.

Applications are also invited from educators and teachers for the inaugural Outstanding STEM Leader Award.

To enter visit the [Little Scientists 2022 Early STEM Award website](#). Entries close 31 May 2022

Exhibit at a Jobs Fair near you

We host Jobs Fairs across the country to help employers, including those in early childhood education and care, find suitable staff.

Jobs Fairs are a free face-to-face event. Exhibiting at a Jobs Fair is a great way to:

- promote current and upcoming vacancies to job seekers in your area
- connect with employment service providers.

See upcoming Job Fairs:

- [Warrnambool on Friday 27 May](#)
- [Toowoomba on Tuesday 7 June](#)



- [Bunbury on Wednesday 8 June](#)
- [Orange on Wednesday 15 June](#)
- [Melbourne on Friday 17 June](#)
- [Melbourne West on Tuesday 21 June](#)
- [Sydney on Tuesday 28 June.](#)

For more information or to become an exhibitor, visit the [exhibitor information](#) page or email JobsFairs@dese.gov.au.

Handy resource

The Workforce Contact Centre can help you fill entry-level positions. The centre can work with you to:

- advertise vacancies on the department's [Jobs Hub](#)
- help you advertise on the [jobactive jobs board](#)
- connect you with employment services or Apprenticeship Network providers in your area
- provide information and connections to government programs such as:
 - wage subsidies
 - work experience
 - subsidised accredited training
- develop and apply new ways of recruiting.

To get in touch, email workforce@dese.gov.au.

Good to know

Tomorrow is National Sorry Day, which acknowledges the historic mistreatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This is a chance to reflect on how we can all play a part in the healing process for our nation.

National Sorry Day is commemorated the day before National Reconciliation Week, which begins on Friday and runs until 3 June. The theme this year is **Be Brave. Make Change.**

Learn more about reconciliation and find resources on the [Reconciliation Australia website](#).

Connect with Colleagues on Facebook

[The Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is your place to learn, explore and connect with us and others in your sector.



In the group, we've posted a short explainer on the top four things you need to know to submit accurate session reports. [See it here.](#)

We want to hear from you. Comment on the post and let us know the issues you want discussed.



18 May 2022

Last chance: ACCS survey closes tomorrow

The Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) survey has been extended. The survey will now close tomorrow on Thursday 19 May.

If you have experience administering ACCS (child wellbeing), we encourage you to complete this [short survey](#).

Your answers will help inform our advice to government about improving access to early childhood education and care for vulnerable families.

Please also share the [survey link](#) with your colleagues.

For more information, visit the [Social Research Centre](#), or contact evaluation@srecentre.com.au.

Help for educators to learn about reconciliation



We funded travel scholarships so 10 educators could travel to Darwin for [Early Childhood Australia's Reconciliation Symposium](#).

The educators (pictured) came from: SDN Milperra Children's Education and Care Centre in NSW, Department for Education in South Australia, Warren Preschool Kindergarten in NSW, Camden Family Day Care in NSW, Goolwa Children's Centre in South Australia, Gamumbi Early Childhood Education Centre in NSW, Moranbah Neighbourhood Centre in Queensland, Escare in Western Australia, and Elizabeth Chifley Presbyterian Preschool in NSW.

The two-day symposium provided educators with opportunities to explore reconciliation within the sector, and for networking and professional development.



Local Area Emergency declared in Queensland

The Australian Government provides targeted support to providers, services and families in the event of a local emergency. This support is designed to help services recover quickly and ensure continuity of care for families.

Last weekend, we [declared a Local Area Emergency](#) (LAE) for the period 12 to 18 May after heavy rainfall in the Lockyer Valley, Southern Downs and Moreton Bay local government areas.

[Our table of emergency declarations](#) provides key dates and regions eligible for support.

We're monitoring the situation and will provide updates as required, including if other LAEs are declared.

Connect with colleagues on Facebook

[The Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is your place to learn, explore and connect with us and others in your sector.

[Here's a post on the top 4 things to know about session reports.](#) If you have any other questions, you can leave a comment.

Join the conversation and be part of the Early Childhood Education and Care online community.

Handy resource

Inclusion promotes belonging, protects the rights of children with developmental delay or disability, and fosters the mental health and wellbeing of children.

The [Be You Disability Inclusion Guide](#) provides information about inclusive practices and includes useful strategies, educator insights and tips, and other resources.

[Download the guide.](#)

Good to know

Families who have not confirmed their income for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 financial years have until 30 June 2022 to do so.

If they don't, their Child Care Subsidy will stop. This means they'll need to pay full fees when they use child care.

[Read about balancing deadlines.](#)



ACCS survey closes soon

We want to hear from staff who have experience with the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(ACCS\) \(child wellbeing\)](#).

We encourage you to [complete this short survey](#) if you have:

- spoken with families about the subsidy
- applied for an initial 6-week certificate for a family
- applied for further determinations for a family.

Participants will be asked for their thoughts on current eligibility language and length of support.

Your answers will help inform our advice to government about improving access to early childhood education and care for vulnerable families.

The survey is being conducted by the [Social Research Centre](#). No personal information will be collected and responses will remain anonymous.

The survey closes on Tuesday 17 May.

Please also share the [survey link](#) with your colleagues.

For more information, visit the Social Research Centre or contact evaluation@srecentre.com.au.

Exhibit at a Job Fair near you

The Australian Government hosts Jobs Fairs across the country to help employers, including those in early childhood education and care, find suitable staff.

Jobs Fairs are a free face-to-face event. Exhibiting at a Jobs Fair is a great way to:

- promote current and upcoming vacancies to job seekers in your area
- connect with employment service providers.

See upcoming Job Fairs:

- [South East Melbourne on Wednesday 18 May](#)
- [Broome on Thursday 19 May](#)
- [Port Macquarie on Tuesday 24 May](#)
- [Warrnambool on Friday 27 May](#)
- [Toowoomba on Tuesday 7 June](#)



- [Bunbury on Wednesday 8 June](#)
- [Orange on Wednesday 15 June](#)
- [Melbourne on Friday 17 June](#)
- [Melbourne West on Tuesday 21 June](#)
- [Ballina on Friday 24 June](#)
- [Sydney on Tuesday 28 June](#)

For more information or to become an exhibitor, visit the [exhibitor information](#) page or email JobsFairs@dese.gov.au.

Wage support for apprentices and trainees

The Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements wage subsidy supports employers to engage new and recommencing apprentices and trainees.

The program closes to new entrants on 30 June 2022.

Eligible employers who engage an apprentice or trainee between 5 October 2020 and 30 June 2022 may be eligible for a subsidy of 50% of gross wages (up to \$7,000 per quarter) for 12 months.

Employers who take part in the program may be eligible for the Completing Apprenticeship Commencements wage subsidy for apprentices and trainees that progress to a second or third year of training.

[Learn more about Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements and Completing Apprenticeship Commencements.](#)

A new Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System (AAIS) will commence on 1 July 2022. The program will build on the success of the Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements wage subsidy and replaces the previous Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program.

The AAIS will provide incentives to eligible employers. It will be rolled out in two phases:

- from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2024, the AAIS will provide wage subsidies for eligible employers in priority occupations, including early childhood education and care
- from 1 July 2024, employers in priority occupations will be supported through a hiring incentive.

[Learn more about the Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System.](#)

Handy resource

Check out the early learning STEM (science, technology, engineering, and maths) resources and training for educators.

There are also opportunities for families and children to take part in STEM activities.



[Learn more on our website.](#)

Good to know

Your fees, vacancies, quality ratings and inclusions are now published on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#).

Starting Blocks is the one place with all the information to help parents choose the best early childhood education and care for their family.

Go to [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#).

Facebook group

The [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is your place to learn, explore and connect with us and others in your sector.

Did you miss this great conversation about National Family Day Care Week? [Check it out here](#) and say hello if you run a Family Day Care centre.

[Join the conversation and be part of the ECEC online community.](#)



Survey: have your say on ACCS

We want to hear from staff who have experience with the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(ACCS\)](#) ([child wellbeing](#)).

We've commissioned the [Social Research Centre](#) to conduct a survey on ACCS (child wellbeing).

We encourage any staff who have experience here to take part in the survey. This may include staff who have:

- spoken with families about the subsidy
- applied for an initial 6-week certificate on behalf of a family
- applied for further determinations on behalf of a family.

Participants will be asked for their thoughts on topics, including:

- language we use to identify children at risk
- current length of support.

[Complete the short survey now.](#)

The survey will close on 17 May.

Your answers will help inform our advice to government about improving access to early childhood education and care for vulnerable families.

The survey will not collect personal information and responses are anonymous.

Please also share the [survey link](#) with your colleagues.

For more information, visit the [Social Research Centre](#) or contact evaluation@srcentre.com.au.

Explainer: Debt and balancing

While balancing is a matter between families and Services Australia, services have a role in supporting this process.

It is important that you:

- remind families to confirm their income before the deadline
- ensure all session reports are correct and submitted on time, before 30 June.

Submitting session reports accurately and on time is a requirement under Family Assistance Law.

Balancing occurs at the end of a financial year.



If a provider amends session reports for the previous financial year, after balancing has occurred, the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) will be managed with the family. This means that any outcome from changed sessions will flow to the family – either payment of additional CCS to the family or the raising of a debt.

In some instances, providers would then be required to charge families full fees for added sessions to retroactively reconcile the difference. This can be difficult, especially in instances where families no longer use the service.

Example

A service conducted a review of its records and realised that it had made a mistake in the previous financial year. After seeking approval from the department to amend these sessions, the service corrected the session by adding an extra day. As the family had completed balancing, any additional CCS payment was managed with the family, not the service.

Because of this, the service had to charge the family full fees for the added day.

In these situations, where a provider needs to amend or withdraw sessions from the previous financial year, the provider must apply to the department. A fact sheet on the process is available on our [website](#).

To find out more about overpayments and debt visit the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#).

Get help filling entry-level roles

The Workforce Contact Centre can help you fill entry-level positions.

The centre can work with you to:

- advertise vacancies on the department's [Jobs Hub](#)
- help you advertise on the [jobactive jobs board](#)
- connect you with employment services or Apprenticeship Network providers in your area
- provide information and connections to government programs such as:
 - wage subsidies
 - work experience
 - subsidised accredited training
- develop and apply new ways of recruiting.

To get in touch, email workforce@dese.gov.au.

Help a job seeker secure work

The Launch into Work program can help you identify and prepare job seekers with the right values and attributes for entry-level roles in early childhood.



Services with multiple entry-level vacancies can work with us to co-design and deliver a pre-employment project for job seekers.

These projects include training, work experience and mentoring to help job seekers move into sustainable employment in your business.

[Learn more about Launch into Work program.](#)

Facebook group

[The Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) is your place to learn, explore and connect with us and others in your sector.

[Join the conversation and be part of the ECEC online community.](#)

Handy resource

Explore Australia Government initiatives that support the early childhood education and care workforce.

[Read about workforce initiatives.](#)

Good to know

This week is National Family Day Care Week. It promotes the important role Family Day Care educators and services play in the development and wellbeing of over 90,000 children across Australia.

Family Day Care Australia (FDCA) has [resources](#) that can help you celebrate the week, including a programming guide and social tiles.

[Read more on FDCA website.](#)



Facebook group helping services connect

With over 2200 members, our [new Facebook group](#) is quickly becoming a popular forum to discuss what matters to you in early childhood education and care.

The group is a great resource to connect with others in your sector and to share ideas.

Plus, you can share any content on the group directly to your page to share with your Facebook network. Check out this [video](#) we posted which can help your families understand the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) balancing process.

Members have engaged in some great conversations already about:

- [CCS software they use for their service](#)
- [other organisations where they can network](#)
- [starting out in the sector, and how to navigate systems and software.](#)

[Join the conversation and be a part of the community.](#)

Balancing: 30 June income deadline

At the end of each financial year, Services Australia reconciles family payments, including CCS. This is to ensure families receive the correct amount of assistance for the year.

Families need to confirm their income after the end of the financial year for this to occur. This process is called balancing.

Families must confirm their income for the 2020-21 and 2019-20 financial years by 30 June this year to avoid losing CCS or incurring a debt.

How to confirm income

Families confirm their income by:

- lodging their tax return, or
- telling Services Australia they don't need to lodge a tax return. Families can complete an [Advise non-lodgement of tax return](#) using their [Centrelink online account](#) through [myGov](#) or through the [Express Plus Centrelink mobile app](#). They'll need to do this even if they've already told the Australian Taxation Office they don't need to lodge.

Action for providers

The balancing process is a matter between families and Services Australia.

You can help families by reminding them to confirm their income before the deadline.



If families have questions, please direct them to the [Services Australia website](#).

Wage support for apprentices and trainees

The Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements wage subsidy helps employers to engage new and recommencing apprentices and trainees.

The program closes to new entrants on 30 June.

Eligible employers who engage an apprentice or trainee between 5 October 2020 and 30 June 2022 may be eligible for a subsidy of 50% of gross wages (up to \$7,000 per quarter) for 12 months.

Employers who take part in the program may be eligible for the Completing Apprenticeship Commencements wage subsidy for apprentices and trainees that progress to a second or third year of training.

[Learn more about Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements and Completing Apprenticeship Commencements.](#)

The Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System (AAIS) will commence on 1 July 2022. The program will build on the success of the Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements wage subsidy and replaces the previous Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program.

The AAIS will provide incentives to eligible employers. It will be rolled out in two phases:

from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2024, the AAIS will provide wage subsidies for eligible employers in priority occupations, including early childhood education and care

from 1 July 2024, employers in priority occupations will be supported through a hiring incentive.

[Learn more about the Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System.](#)

Support job seekers in your region

The Local Jobs Program focuses on upskilling, reskilling and establishing employment pathways for job seekers across Australia.

Employment facilitators can work with you to develop employment and training opportunities in your region.

[See a list of employment regions and facilitators.](#)

[Learn more about the Local Jobs Program.](#)

Next week: have your say on ACCS

We want to hear from staff who have experience with the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(ACCS\)](#) (child wellbeing).



We've commissioned the [Social Research Centre](#) to conduct a survey on ACCS (child wellbeing). The survey starts next week.

We encourage any staff who have experience with ACCS (child wellbeing) to take part in the survey. This may include staff who have:

- spoken with families about the subsidy
- applied for an initial 6-week certificate on behalf of a family
- applied for further determinations on behalf of a family.

Participants will be asked for their thoughts on topics including:

- the language we use to identify children at risk
- the current length of support.

We will provide a link to the survey in next Wednesday's newsletter.



20 April 2022

Join our Facebook group



Our [Australian Child Care Providers and Services Facebook group](#) already has almost 2000 members.

Do you know someone working in the sector who hasn't joined? [Share our group](#) with them so they can:

- keep up to date with our early childhood policy and programs
- get information in times of emergency
- share our information directly from the group to Facebook pages, profiles or groups.

Check out this [great conversation](#) between providers about which Child Care Subsidy System software they use.

Get help finding staff

The Relocation Assistance to Take Up a Job program can help you find staff.

The program supports employers having difficulties finding suitable employees within their local government region.

Available vacancies must be for ongoing positions, including traineeships and apprenticeships.

Participants who take up ongoing work may be eligible for help with their moving costs.

[Learn more about Relocation Assistance to Take up a Job.](#)



Exhibit at a Job Fair

The Australian Government hosts Jobs Fairs across the country to help employers, including those in early childhood education and care, find suitable staff.

Jobs Fairs are a free face-to-face event. Exhibiting at a Jobs Fair is a great way to:

- promote current and upcoming vacancies to job seekers in your area
- connect with employment service providers.

See upcoming Job Fairs:

- [Ballarat on Thursday 28 April](#)
- [Mackay on Friday 29 April](#)
- [Dubbo on Wednesday 4 May](#)
- [Mildura on Friday 6 May](#)
- [Western Sydney on Tuesday 10 May](#)
- [Armidale on Friday 13 May](#)
- [Port Macquarie on Tuesday 24 May](#)
- [Warrnambool on Friday 27 May](#)
- [Orange on Wednesday 15 June](#)
- [Melbourne West on Tuesday 21 June](#)
- [North West Melbourne on Friday 1 July.](#)

For more information or to become an exhibitor visit the [exhibitor information](#) page or email JobsFairs@dese.gov.au.

Handy resource

[Be You](#) has a new video series on the [National Quality Standard](#). The videos provide insights and ideas about using Be You to support your quality improvement process.

[Watch videos here.](#)

Good to know

The CCS Helpdesk will be closed on Monday 25 April for Anzac Day. It will re-open at 9am (AEST) on Tuesday 26 April.

You can always contact the Helpdesk by email at cshelpdesk@dese.gov.au and we will respond during business hours.



Explained: balancing Child Care Subsidy



At the end of each financial year, Services Australia reconciles family payments, including Child Care Subsidy (CCS). This is to ensure families receive the correct amount of assistance for the year.

Families need to confirm their income after the end of the financial year for this to occur. This process is called balancing.

Approaching deadlines

The end of financial year marks two important deadlines for families:

- the first deadline for confirming 2020–21 income
- the second deadline for confirming 2019–20 income.

Families must take action by 30 June 2022 to avoid losing CCS or incurring a debt.

2019–20 financial year

Most families confirmed their 2019–20 income before the first deadline on 30 June 2021.

Families who haven't confirmed their 2019–20 income must do so by 30 June 2022.

If they don't, they may need to pay back all the CCS they got for 2019–20.

More information about debts is available on [Services Australia's website](#).

They will also lose their CCS and Additional Child Care Subsidy eligibility from the first CCS fortnight of the 2022–23 financial year.

You will need to direct these families to make a new claim if they wish to get a reduced fee again.

Families can only claim CCS again once they have:

- confirmed their income, and
- repaid any current or previous child care related debt, or
- entered into a repayment arrangement.

Families who miss the second deadline will also miss out on any top up of CCS for which they may have been eligible.

2020–21 financial year

All families must confirm their 2020–21 income before the first deadline on 30 June 2022.

If they don't, their CCS will stop. This means they'll need to pay full fees when they use child care.

Services Australia can start a family's CCS again, but only after they've confirmed their income. This means families may miss out on CCS.

How to confirm income

Families confirm their income by:

- lodging their tax return, or
- telling Services Australia they don't need to lodge a tax return. Families can complete an [Advise non-lodgement of tax return](#) using their [Centrelink online account](#) through [myGov](#) or through the [Express Plus Centrelink mobile app](#). They'll need to do this even if they've already told the Australian Taxation Office they don't need to lodge.

If a parent separates from their partner, Services Australia will also need their ex-partner's income.

If a parent is concerned that their ex-partner won't lodge their tax return by the deadline they should call the [Families line](#).

Action for providers

The balancing process is a matter between families and Services Australia.

You can help families by reminding them to confirm their income before the deadline.

If families have questions, please direct them to the [Services Australia website](#).



NSW and QLD flood support payments

The Australian Government is providing \$10,000 ECEC Flood Support Payments for services in flood-affected regions that close for 8 days or more.

The closure days must occur during an LAE after 23 February. They do not need to be consecutive.

[See our table of emergency declarations for key dates and regions eligible for support.](#)

We sent payment offers to providers with services in flood-affected areas in March.

You have until 11.59pm on 30 April to accept the offer, if you haven't accepted already.

Please check your provider-level email address and/or your junk mail.

Read about the support for services during the local emergencies [on our website](#).

Financial help for very remote teachers

Early childhood teachers at very remote Centre Based Day Care services with Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) debts may be eligible for financial assistance.

The Australian Government provides two types of assistance. We can:

- waive indexation on accumulated HELP debt
- reduce accumulated HELP debt.

Applications for reduction of accumulated HELP debts will be available from 2023.

[Check if your service is in a very remote area.](#)

[Learn more about financial assistance for very remote teachers.](#)

Handy resource

We have created a [Facebook group for early childhood education providers and services](#).

If you manage or work at a service, or are interested in what's happening in the sector, [join us on Facebook](#). We look forward to seeing you there soon.

Don't have Facebook? Don't worry. We'll continue sharing all important information and updates through this [email newsletter](#) and on [our website](#).

Good to know

The CCS Helpdesk will be closed on Friday 15 April and Monday 18 April for the Easter break. It will re-open at 9am (AEST) on Tuesday 19 April.



You can always contact the Helpdesk via email at ccshelpdesk@dese.gov.au.



NSW floods: Local Area Emergency declared

We have declared a Local Area Emergency (LAE) for the period 7 April to 14 April 2022 following recent flooding in parts of NSW.

[See our table of emergency declarations for key dates and regions eligible for support.](#)

The following support is available to services and families during the LAE.

Support payments

Services that close during the LAE should continue to submit session reports to receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payments.

The Australian Government is providing \$10,000 ECEC Flood Support Payments for services in flood-affected regions that close for 8 days or more. The closure days must occur during an LAE after 23 February. They do not need to be consecutive.

We sent payment offers to providers with services in flood-affected areas in March.

You have until **11.59pm on 30 April** to accept the offer, if you haven't accepted already.

Please check your provider-level email address and/or your junk mail.

If you no longer have access to the offer, please email ECECEmergencymanagement@dese.gov.au with the provider and service names and CRNs. If you need further help, contact the CCS Helpdesk on 1300 667 276.

[See our frequently asked questions for more information about the support payments.](#)

Absences

Children who live, or attend a service, in an [LAE-declared region](#) will get extra allowable absences for the duration of the LAE. They will be automatically applied in the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS) shortly.

This means families won't have to use any of their 52 allowable absences during the LAE.

Gap fees

Services in an [LAE-declared region](#) can waive the gap fee if a child does not attend, or the service is closed.

Services outside an [LAE-declared region](#) can waive the gap fee if a child that lives within an [LAE-declared region](#) does not attend care.



Temporary financial hardship

Families may get extra help with child care fees if they are experiencing temporary financial hardship due to the flood emergency.

Families can apply for Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship) through Services Australia online or call 180 22 66.

CCCF Special Circumstances grant

The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) Special Circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as a local emergency. Affected services can [apply on our website](#).

Applicants should request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other disaster support.

Other support

Families can call 1800 619 113, email ececd@det.nsw.edu.au or visit [Find ECEC providers](#) to be connected with alternative child care options if their regular service is unavailable.

The Australian Government provides payments and help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out if you're eligible for support on the [Services Australia website](#).

Check if you're eligible for financial assistance from the [NSW Government](#).

For action

- You must let us know if you temporarily close your service. You can do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the CCSS so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [NSW Government floods](#) website for alerts, updates and support.

We're monitoring the situation and will provide updates as required.



6 April 2022

Join our Facebook group



We have created a Facebook group for early childhood education providers and services.

Check out [Australian Child Care Providers and Services](#) on Facebook.

Our Facebook group is a space to:

- keep up to date with the department's early childhood policy and programs
- get relevant information in times of emergency
- access resources that can help you meet your obligations and deliver quality early childhood education and care
- share information directly from our group to your Facebook page, profile or group
- connect with others in your industry.

If you manage or work at a service, or are interested in what's happening in the sector, [join our Facebook group](#). We look forward to seeing you there soon.

Don't have Facebook? Don't worry. We'll continue sharing all important information and updates through [this newsletter](#) and on [our website](#).

Please note, when the Federal Election is called we will enter a caretaker period. During this time we will limit the amount and type of content we publish on social media. However, this is only short-term and we'll return to regular scheduling shortly.



Report now available: 2021 Australian Early Development Census

The findings from the 2021 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) are now available.

The AEDC is a national assessment conducted every 3 years to examine how children have developed by the time they start school. It is designed to show what is working well and where more work is needed to ensure all children can have the benefits of a strong start in life.

In 2021, data was collected on over 305,000 children in their first year of full-time school and from approximately 7,500 primary schools.

Teachers responded to around 100 questions that measure early childhood development across 5 domains:

- physical health and wellbeing
- social competence
- emotional maturity
- language and cognitive skills (school based)
- communication skills and general knowledge.

Key findings

AEDC data shows the percentage of children who were on track on 5 domains decreased for the first time since 2009 (from 55.4% in 2018 to 54.8% in 2021). Results also show a slight increase in the proportion of children who are developmentally vulnerable.

Results from the AEDC:

- support governments' implementation and monitoring of Closing the Gap targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- highlight the importance of investing in the early years, especially through high quality early childhood education and care and universal access to preschool.

For more information, visit [our website](#). Access the AEDC report on the [AEDC website](#).

Debt explainer: What is offsetting?

If you incur a debt, we'll take a percentage of your future Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payments to repay the amount you owe. This is called offsetting.

Offsetting results in a reduced CCS payment to the provider. We may offset up to 50% of your payment.



You must still pass on the full entitlement to families, even if the CCS payment has been reduced due to offsetting.

Example

A provider has a debt of \$1,000. They are due to receive a CCS payment of \$500. We'll use 50% of the payment (\$250) to offset the debt. The provider will receive \$250 and their debt will be reduced to \$750. The provider in this scenario must still pass on the full entitlement to families.

Providers can see any debts and offsets:

- through the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or their third-party software, and
- in payment advices.

Find more information on offsetting in the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#).

Workforce Contact Centre

The Workforce Contact Centre can help early childhood education and care services fill entry level positions.

The centre can work with you to:

- advertise vacancies on the department's Jobs Hub
- help you advertise on the [jobactive jobs board](#)
- connect you with employment services or Apprenticeship Network providers in your area
- provide information and connections to government programs such as:
 - wage subsidies
 - work experience
 - subsidised accredited training
- develop and apply new ways of recruiting.

To get in touch, email workforce@dese.gov.au.

Upcoming Jobs Fairs to help you find staff

The Australian Government hosts Jobs Fairs across the country to help employers, including those in early childhood education and care, find suitable staff.

Jobs Fairs are a free face-to-face event. Exhibiting at a Jobs Fair is a great way to:

- promote current and upcoming vacancies to job seekers in your area
- connect with employment service providers.



See upcoming Job Fairs:

- [Hunter on 7 April](#)
- [Central Coast on 12 April](#)
- [Gold Coast on 13 April](#)
- [Illawarra & South Coast on 19 April](#)
- [Ballarat on 28 April](#)
- [Mackay on 29 April](#)
- [Dubbo on 4 May](#)
- [Mildura on 6 May](#)
- [Western Sydney on 10 May](#)
- [Armidale on 13 May](#)
- [Port Macquarie on 24 May](#)
- [Warrnambool on 27 May](#)
- [Orange on 15 June](#)
- [Melbourne West on 21 June](#)
- [North West Melbourne on 1 July](#)

For more information or to become an exhibitor visit the [exhibitor information](#) page or email JobsFairs@dese.gov.au.

Handy resource

Families can visit StartingBlocks.gov.au to find information about child care in one place.

Child care fees, vacancies, quality ratings and inclusions are now published on the [Starting Blocks](https://StartingBlocks.gov.au) website. Having this information in one place helps parents choose the best early childhood education and care for their family.

StartingBlocks.gov.au is the only place to find all approved early childhood services.

Help us reach as much of the community as possible by sharing materials in our [content kit](#) on your own channels.

Good to know

Last week we declared an additional Local Area Emergency (LAE) for the period 29 March to 8 April 2022 following recent flooding in parts of NSW. Support is available to services and families during the LAE.



[See our table of emergency declarations for key dates and regions eligible for support.](#)

[Learn about support available to families and services on our website.](#)



NSW floods: Local Area Emergency declared

We have declared an additional Local Area Emergency (LAE) for the period **29 March to 8 April 2022** following recent flooding in parts of NSW.

[See our table of emergency declarations for key dates and regions eligible for support.](#)

The following support is available to services and families during the LAE.

Support payments

Services that close during the LAE should continue to submit session reports to receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payments.

The Australian Government is providing \$10,000 ECEC Flood Support Payments for services in flood-affected regions that close for 8 days or more. The closure days must occur during an LAE after 23 February. They do not need to be consecutive.

We contacted affected services about the payments in March. If you no longer have access to the offer, please email ECECEmergencymanagement@dese.gov.au with the provider and service names and CRNs. If you need further help, contact the CCS Helpdesk on 1300 667 276.

[See our frequently asked questions for more information about the support payments.](#)

Absences

Children who live, or attend a service, in an [LAE-declared region](#) will get extra allowable absences for the duration of the LAE. They will be automatically applied in the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS) shortly.

This means families won't have to use any of their 52 allowable absences during the LAE.

Gap fees

Services in an [LAE-declared region](#) can waive the gap fee if a child does not attend, or the service is closed.

Services outside an [LAE-declared region](#) can waive the gap fee if a child that lives within an [LAE-declared region](#) does not attend care.

Temporary financial hardship

Families may get extra help with child care fees if they are experiencing temporary financial hardship due to the flood emergency.

Families can apply for Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship) through Services Australia online or call 180 22 66.



Community Child Care Fund Special Circumstances grant

The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) Special Circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as a local emergency. Affected services can [apply on our website](#).

Applicants should request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other disaster support.

Other support

Families can call 1800 619 113, email ceccd@det.nsw.edu.au or visit [Find ECEC providers](#) to be connected with alternative child care options if their regular service is unavailable.

The Australian Government provides payments and help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out if you're eligible for support on the [Services Australia website](#).

Check if you're eligible for financial assistance from the [NSW Government](#).

For action

- You must let us know if you temporarily close your service. You can do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the CCSS so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on StartingBlocks.gov.au. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [NSW Government floods](#) website for alerts, updates and support.

We're monitoring the situation and will provide updates as required.



Grants for new services in regional and remote communities

As part of the 2022–23 Federal Budget, the Australian Government has announced it will provide \$19.4 million to fund up to 20 new services in disadvantaged regional and remote areas where there is a lack of suitable child care.

The funding will be provided under the [Community Child Care Fund Open Competitive grant](#). It will help establish new services in areas of high need. This will support greater workforce participation and better outcomes for children.

The funding round will open later in 2022. Information about the application process will be available on [GrantConnect](#) later this year.

Make sure your contact details are up to date in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Check your details via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements subsidy extended

As part of the 2022–23 Federal Budget, the Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements (BAC) wage subsidy has been extended to 30 June 2022.

Early childhood education and care services who take on new apprentices and trainees may be eligible for the BAC.

Eligible employers can receive a subsidy of 50% of an apprentice or trainee's gross wages. The subsidy will pay up to \$7,000 per quarter for wages paid in the 12-month period from the date of commencement.

To apply you must:

- engage the apprentice or trainee and commence training on or before 30 June 2022
- register through your Australian Apprenticeship Support Network Provider.

The new apprentice or trainee you nominate must:

- be engaged between 5 October 2020 and 30 June 2022
- be undertaking a Certificate II or higher qualification, including:
 - Certificate III or Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care
 - Certificate IV in School Aged Education and Care



- have a training contract formally approved by the State Training Authority.

Exclusions and existing worker eligibility will apply.

[Learn about Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements.](#)

CCS balancing: 30 June deadline approaching

Families must confirm their income by 30 June 2022 to avoid losing Child Care Subsidy (CCS) or incurring a debt.

At the end of each financial year, Services Australia reconciles family payments, including CCS. This is to ensure families receive the correct amount of assistance for the year.

Families need to confirm their income after the end of the financial year for this to occur. This process is called balancing.

Approaching deadlines

30 June 2022 marks two important deadlines for families:

- the first deadline for confirming 2020–21 income
- the second deadline for confirming 2019–20 income.

[Read about the consequences if families miss these deadlines on our website.](#)

How to confirm income

Families confirm their income by:

- lodging their tax return, or
- telling Services Australia they don't need to lodge a tax return.

Action for providers

The balancing process is a matter between families and Services Australia.

You can help families by reminding them to confirm their income before the deadline.

We have information and resources for providers [on our website](#).

If families have questions, please direct them to the [Services Australia website](#).

Eligibility for higher CCS

Families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care can now get a higher CCS.



Between 7 March and 10 July 2022, families can get the higher subsidy even if their eldest CCS-eligible child aged 5 or under is not using care.

This transition period will help families plan their child care arrangements.

From 11 July 2022 onwards, children who haven't used care in 26 consecutive weeks will no longer be eligible for CCS. This rule will first be applied to children who haven't used care for the 26-week period from 10 January to 11 July.

This may affect a family's entitlement to the higher subsidy.

If a standard rate child's CCS eligibility ends, Services Australia will reassess all other children in the family to determine:

- the new standard rate child
- new subsidy rates.

We will not reassess CCS payments for the 26-week period, for example between 7 March and 10 July 2022. The family must remain eligible during this period.

[Visit our website for more information about the higher CCS.](#)

Handy resource

The Guide to Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) has useful information for providers and services who administer ACCS payments.

[Read the guide on our website.](#)

Good to know

On 29 March the Treasurer the Hon Josh Frydenberg MP handed down the Australian Government's 2022–23 Budget.

- Learn more about the [2022–23 Budget](#) and what it means for education, skills and employment.
- Read the full Budget on Budget.gov.au.



CCCF Special Circumstances grant funding increased

The Australian Government has increased funding for the [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) Special Circumstances](#) to help more services impacted by COVID-19 or the recent floods.

The special circumstances grant helps services stay open when something unexpected happens. If your service has had to close due to a natural disaster, extreme weather or COVID-19, you may be eligible for a grant.

Read the [updated guidelines](#) and [frequently asked questions](#) to see if your service is eligible.

Child Care Package evaluation report available

The Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) has completed its evaluation of the Child Care Package.

AIFS collected and analysed a range of information to examine how the package has impacted providers, services and families.

Learn more about the evaluation and read the final report on the [AIFS website](#).

The Australian Government has released a response to the report. The response outlines:

- a summary of the government's support and activities since the introduction of the package
- a response to the recommendations in the final AIFS report
- an overview of the government's next steps to strengthen the early childhood education and care system.

Read the [Australian Government Response to the Child Care Package Evaluation](#) on our website.

The Child Care Package was established by the Australian Government in July 2018 and includes:

- Child Care Subsidy (CCS), which is paid to providers who pass it on to families as a fee reduction. [You can read more about CCS on our website](#).
- Child Care Safety Net, which comprises Additional Child Care Subsidy, Inclusion Support Program and Community Child Care Fund. [You can read more about the safety net on our website](#).

Upcoming Jobs Fairs to help you find staff

The Australian Government is hosting Jobs Fairs across the country to help employers, including those in early childhood education and care, find suitable staff.



The Jobs Fair is a free face-to-face event that gives providers an opportunity to promote current and upcoming vacancies and connect with employment service providers.

The next Job Fairs will be held in:

- Devonport on 25 March
- Barossa on 29 March
- Broome on 1 April
- Gold Coast on 13 April
- Melbourne on 2 June.

For more information or to become an exhibitor visit the [Exhibitor Information](#) page or email JobsFairs@dese.gov.au.

We will provide details on other job fairs across Australia. These events will follow COVID-safe event procedures.

Handy resource

Understand your obligations under Family Assistance Law with our compliance video series.

We've got videos about:

- what to do if children are absent from care or on holidays
- rules for Family Day Care educators who care for relatives
- when to notify us about changes to your service.

[Watch the videos on our website.](#)

Good to know

This week is Harmony Week, which celebrates Australia's cultural diversity and promotes inclusiveness, respect and a sense of belonging for everyone.

Find out what's happening near you, register an event at your service and find resources on the [Harmony Week website](#).



Emergency update: NSW and QLD floods

Today we extended the Local Area Emergencies (LAE) in place in New South Wales and Queensland. Support is available to services and families in flood-affected regions.

[Visit our website for more information about support during the LAE.](#)

Services Australia has information for people affected by the floods:

- [disaster assistance in South East Queensland](#)
- [disaster assistance in New South Wales](#)
- [natural disaster resources for community groups.](#)

We continue to monitor emergencies and update our website regularly. Please check back often.

States and territories sign on to preschool reform agreement

All state and territory governments have signed on to the National Preschool Reform Agreement.

The four-year agreement aims to strengthen the delivery of preschool and better prepare children for school.

The Australian Government will work with states and territories to implement the preschool reform agenda. The reform agenda includes:

- ensuring children receive Australian Government funding regardless of the preschool setting they attend from 2023
- using new enrolment and attendance measures from 2024
- delivering a new preschool outcomes measure from 2025.

[Learn more about the Preschool Reform Funding Agreement.](#)

Financial help for very remote teachers

Do you run a Centre Based Day Care Service in very remote Australia? Early childhood teachers at your service may be eligible for financial assistance.

The Australian Government supports teachers in very remote areas with Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) debts. The government can:

- waive indexation on accumulated HELP debt



- reduce accumulated HELP debt.

[Check if your service is in an eligible region](#) and let your teachers know.

[Applications for indexation waivers](#) are open.

[Learn more about financial assistance for very remote teachers.](#)

Upcoming Jobs Fairs to help you find staff

The Australian Government is hosting Jobs Fairs across the country to help employers, including those in early childhood education and care, find suitable staff.

The Jobs Fair is a free face-to-face event that gives providers an opportunity to promote current and upcoming vacancies and connect with employment service providers.

The next Job Fairs will be held in:

- Brisbane on 23 March
- Devonport on 25 March
- Barossa on 29 March
- Broome on April
- Gold Coast on 13 April
- Melbourne on 2 June.

For more information or to become an exhibitor visit the [Exhibitor Information](#) page or email jobsfairs@dese.gov.au.

These events will follow COVID-safe event procedures.

Relocation Assistance program

The Relocation Assistance to Take Up a Job program can help you find staff.

The program supports employers who are having difficulties finding suitable employees within their local government region.

Available vacancies must be for ongoing positions, including traineeships and apprenticeships.

Participants who take up ongoing work may be eligible for help with their moving costs.

[Learn more about Relocation Assistance to Take up a Job.](#)



Handy resource

Keep up to date with COVID-19 advice from the Australian Government and health departments across the country on [ACECQA's website](#).

There is also a great range of COVID-19 resources, including [information on educator wellbeing](#), [resources for vacation care services](#), [risk assessment guides](#) and more.

Good to know

We've updated the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#) following the introduction of the higher Child Care Subsidy on 7 March.

Access the online and print friendly versions of the handbook [on our website](#).



New South Wales and Queensland floods: emergency support extended

We've extended the current Local Area Emergencies (LAE) in place in New South Wales and Queensland until 18 March 2022. We've also expanded the LAE to more areas in New South Wales.

See our [table of emergency declarations](#) for a full list of regions and dates eligible for support.

Support available

Affected services and families in LAE-declared regions may be eligible for a range of support.

Support includes:

- \$10,000 ECEC Flood Support Payment for services in flood-affected regions that close for 8 days or more
- extra allowable absences during the LAE
- gap fee waivers where a child does not attend or a service is closed during the LAE
- Commonwealth and state government disaster payments.

We are contacting affected services about the ECEC Flood Support Payment.

[Learn more about these support measures on our website.](#)

For action

- Let us know if you temporarily close your service. You can do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.

Ensure families are aware they can apply for Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship) through Services Australia online or call 180 22 66.



Flood support payments

The Australian Government is providing \$10,000 ECEC Flood Support Payments for services in flood-affected regions that close for eight days or more.

[Read our announcement for more information on the support payments.](#)

We will contact eligible services shortly. Please ensure you have updated your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System. Do this via the [Provider Entry Portal](#) or your third-party software.

We continue to monitor emergencies and [update our website regularly](#). Please check back often.

There is a range of support available in NSW and QLD for affected services and families.

New South Wales

Families can call 1800 619 113, email ececd@det.nsw.edu.au or visit [Find ECEC providers](#) to be connected with alternative child care options if their regular service is unavailable.

Services and individuals can use the [Disaster Assistance Finder](#) to discover support they may be eligible for.

Keep an eye on the [NSW Government floods website](#) for alerts, updates and support.

Queensland

Services and individuals can use the [Disasters and Emergency page](#) to find out what assistance they are eligible for.

Keep an eye on the [QLD emergency page](#) for alerts, updates and support.

Temporary financial hardship

Families may get extra help with child care fees if they are experiencing temporary financial hardship due to the flood emergency.

Families can apply for Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship) through Services Australia online or call 180 22 66.

For action

- Let us know if you temporarily close your service. You can do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).



- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Ensure families are aware they can apply for Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship) through Services Australia online or call 180 22 66.



Floods: support payment announced

The Australian Government has announced a \$10,000 ECEC Flood Support Payment for services in flood-affected regions that close for more than 7 days.

Current emergencies

We've declared new Local Area Emergencies (LAE) for more areas in New South Wales and Queensland following flooding and severe rainfall. We've also extended existing LAEs.

[See our table of emergency declarations for a full list of regions and dates eligible for support.](#)

Support available

We're providing extra support during LAEs between 23 February and 30 June 2022. Services and families in [LAE-declared regions](#) can access the support measures below.

Please continue to submit session reports as usual. Emergency support, including additional absences, will be processed in the system soon.

Support payments

ECEC Flood Support Payments of \$10,000 are available to services in flood-affected regions that close for more than 7 days due to flooding. **If your service is located in an eligible region, you will receive an offer before 18 March.**

Services must meet the following conditions to be eligible for the payment:

- be located in an [LAE-declared region](#) after 23 February
- close for more than 7 days due to flooding – this could be due to physical damage to buildings, staff shortages or school closures
- waive the gap fee for families for the duration of the flood-related closure
- agree to provide priority access to families impacted by flooding, for example if a family relocates temporarily but wishes to resume their enrolment in the future.

Services that need further support can apply for a [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) Special Circumstances grant](#). Applicants should apply for a CCCF grant after an event has occurred and they have accessed other disaster support.

Absences

Children who live, or attend a service, in an [LAE-declared region](#) will get extra allowable absences for the duration of the LAE. They will be automatically applied in the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) System shortly.

This means families won't have to use any of their 52 allowable absences during the LAE.



Gap fees

Services in an [LAE-declared region](#) can waive the gap fee if a child does not attend, or the service is closed.

Services outside an [LAE-declared region](#) can waive the gap fee if a child that lives within an [LAE-declared region](#) does not attend care.

Financial support for families

Affected families may be eligible for extra help with the cost of child care through the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#). Families must apply directly to Centrelink.

Other support

The Australian Government provides payments and help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out if you're eligible for support on the [Services Australia website](#).

The NSW and Queensland Governments have support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Find out if you're eligible for support on your state government website:

- [Queensland Government](#)
- [New South Wales Government](#)

For action

- Let us know if you temporarily close your service. You can do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the state government websites for current emergency information in your region:
 - [Queensland Government](#)
 - [New South Wales Government](#).
- Learn more about help for the early childhood sector during an emergency [on our website](#).

We're monitoring the situation and will provide updates as required.



Emergency support: NSW and QLD floods

The Prime Minister has today [announced support for New South Wales and Queensland flood zones](#).

Support includes a \$10,000 payment for early childhood education and care services in flood-affected regions that close for more than 7 days.

We'll contact services in New South Wales and Queensland with more information soon.

We continue to monitor emergency situations and will update the information on [our website](#) as required. Please check back often.

Higher Child Care Subsidy is here

Families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care can now get a higher Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for their second child and younger children.

We have more [information for providers](#) on our website.

Services Australia has [information for families](#) on their website, including [examples that show how the higher CCS works](#).

Family entitlements

Services Australia is reassessing family entitlements this week. This will be completed before session reports are processed for the week 7 to 13 March 2022. You don't need to do anything on top of your existing reporting obligations to get the higher subsidy.

Families will receive a notification once their reassessment is complete.

Fee estimator

New features are now available on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#).

Families can use the CCS estimator to check how much their child care out of pocket costs might be. Results include the higher subsidy that families will get for their second child and younger children.

Evidence required for ACCS (child wellbeing) applications

Last year we extended the Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) (child wellbeing) backdating period from 28 days to up to 13 weeks where exceptional circumstances apply.



When backdating beyond 28 days you must provide evidence demonstrating the exceptional circumstance that prevented you from applying.

We continue to receive a large number of applications that do not include evidence of an exceptional circumstance. **These applications will not be approved.**

All applications must also include evidence that a child is at risk for the purposes of the subsidy.

You can check and upload additional evidence to a provisional application via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

More information is available in section 36 of the [Guide to ACCS \(child wellbeing\)](#).

[Learn more about ACCS \(child wellbeing\) on our website.](#)

Be You: supporting children's mental health

Establishing a good relationship with families is one of the best ways to support children's social and emotional wellbeing.

Be You has resources to help your educators support the children in their care by learning how to build good partnerships with families.

There are online professional learning modules that focus on:

- [Building family partnerships](#)
- [Children's social and emotional wellbeing.](#)

Plus, there is information on [developing communication skills for educators](#), and much more.

[Visit the Be You website for more.](#)

JobTrainer Fund: free or low fee training courses

The JobTrainer Fund is providing free or low fee additional training places for job seekers and young people, including school leavers, to upskill or reskill in areas of skills need.

Training places will be available to those enrolling in a child care qualification, regardless of their age or employment status.

[Check to see if your state or territory is participating.](#)

You can choose from a range of accredited diplomas, certificates, or short courses.

Available courses in early childhood education and care include:

- Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care (CHC30113)
- Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care (CHC50113).



Available courses may differ across the states and territories.

A list of participating states, occupations, training courses and providers is available on the [My Skills website](#).

Further information on JobTrainer is available on the [Your Career website](#).

Upcoming Jobs Fairs to help you find staff

The Australian Government is hosting Jobs Fairs across the country to help employers, including those in early childhood education and care, find suitable staff.

The Jobs Fair is a free face-to-face event that gives providers an opportunity to promote current and upcoming vacancies and connect with employment service providers.

Job Fairs will be held in:

- Latrobe Valley on 10 March
- Rockhampton on 11 March
- Albany on 16 March
- Sydney on 18 March.

For more information or to become an exhibitor visit the [exhibitor information page](#) or email JobsFairs@dese.gov.au.

These events will follow COVID-safe event procedures.

Handy Resource

Last week we announced more support to the early childhood sector in Western Australia in response to the evolving COVID-19 situation.

[Read our announcement for details about support.](#)

We regularly update the [COVID-19 information on our website](#). Please check back often.

Good to know

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Helpdesk will be closed for an ACT public holiday on Monday 14 March.

The CCS Helpdesk will reopen at 9 am (AEDT) on Tuesday 15 March.

The CCS Helpdesk can always be contacted by email at ccshelpdesk@dese.gov.au.





From today, families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care will get a higher Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for their second child and younger children.

Families may be eligible if they:

- earn less than \$354,305
- have more than one child aged 5 or under in child care.

Who gets the higher subsidy?

Services Australia will work out which children get the higher subsidy by:

- assessing all children in the family
- identifying the standard rate child, and
- identifying the higher rate children.

The standard rate child is usually the eldest CCS-eligible child aged 5 or under in the family. They get the standard CCS rate. Younger children will get a higher subsidy.

How much is the higher subsidy?

Eligible higher rate children will receive a 30% higher subsidy, up to a maximum of 95%.

Combined families

Most families will get the higher subsidy from today.

The Child Care Subsidy System is being enhanced to recognise combined families from July 2022. Services Australia will backpay the higher subsidy amount to affected families for the period March to July.

There is an option for combined families who want to get the higher subsidy immediately in March. But they must take action as soon as possible as claims can only be backdated for a maximum of 28 days.

Combined families who want more information should visit the [Services Australia website](#).

More information

We have more [information for providers](#) on our website.

Services Australia has [information for families](#) on their website, including [examples that show how the higher CCS works](#).



The higher Child Care Subsidy is here



From today, families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care will get a higher Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for their second child and younger children.

Families may be eligible if they:

- earn less than \$354,305
- have more than one child aged 5 or under in child care.

Who gets the higher subsidy?

Services Australia will work out which children get the higher subsidy by:

- assessing all children in the family
- identifying the standard rate child, and
- identifying the higher rate children.

The standard rate child is usually the eldest CCS-eligible child aged 5 or under in the family. They get the standard CCS rate. Younger children will get a higher subsidy.

How much is the higher subsidy?

Eligible higher rate children will receive a 30% higher subsidy, up to a maximum of 95%.



Combined families

Most families will get the higher subsidy from today.

The Child Care Subsidy System is being enhanced to recognise combined families from July 2022. Services Australia will backpay the higher subsidy amount to affected families for the period March to July.

There is an option for combined families who want to get the higher subsidy immediately in March. But they must take action as soon as possible as claims can only be backdated for a maximum of 28 days.

Combined families who want more information should visit the [Services Australia website](#).

More information

We have more [information for providers](#) on our website.

Services Australia has [information for families](#) on their website, including [examples that show how the higher CCS works](#).



COVID-19 support for Western Australia

The Australian Government is providing more support to the early childhood sector in Western Australia in response to the evolving COVID-19 situation.

Unlimited absences

Families in Western Australia will have unlimited allowable absences **between 3 March and 30 April 2022**.

Families won't have to use their 52 allowable absences for the 2021–22 financial year during this period. These absences will be automatically applied in the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) System later next week.

This is to help services and families manage unplanned absences during the peak of the Omicron wave.

You must continue to charge gap fees for absences, unless a family is eligible for a [gap fee waiver](#).

[Further details about unlimited absences are available on our website.](#)

Absences at the start or end of an enrolment

We don't usually pay CCS for any absences before a child's first, or after their last, physical attendance.

If an enrolment starts or ends between **3 March and 30 April 2022**, we will pay CCS for any absences that occur before a child's first, or after their last, day of care. Families may still need to pay the gap fee during this time, depending on the reason for the absence.

For all other enrolments between **1 December 2021 and 30 June 2022**, we may pay CCS for absences that occur up to **7 days** before a child's first, or after their last, day of care (inclusive of their first or last day of care).

We'll only pay these absences if a child, or a member of their immediate household, must isolate due to COVID-19. You don't need to charge the gap fee for these absences.

[Further details about these rules are available on our website.](#)

Financial support

Services in Western Australia can apply for a Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) Special Circumstances grant if they've had to close, or partially close, due to COVID-19.

[Details about the grant are available on our website.](#) The guidelines and application form will be updated soon.



Gap fee waiving

Services in Western Australia can continue to waive gap fees in certain circumstances. [Details about gap fee waivers are available on our website](#). Gap fee waiving provisions are in place until 30 June 2022.

Stay up to date

We regularly update the [COVID-19 information on our website](#). Please check back often.

Please ensure your contact details are up to date in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Check your details via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

You can also encourage relevant staff to [join our mailing list](#).



Queensland and NSW floods: emergency support expanded

Services and families in flood-affected regions can now access more allowable absences and gap fee waivers. We've also extended the emergency support to flood-affected regions in Sydney.

This extra support will apply for the duration of Local Area Emergencies (LAE) declared between 23 February and 30 June 2022.

Western Sydney

We've declared a new LAE in parts of **Western Sydney**. The LAE applies from **2 March to 9 March 2022** for all services in the following Local Government Areas (LGA):

Central Coast Council, Hawkesbury City Council, The Hills Shire Council, Penrith City Council, Blacktown City Council, Fairfield City Council, Canterbury-Bankstown, Liverpool City Council, Camden Council, Sutherland Shire Council.

South East Queensland and Northern New South Wales

We've extended the existing LAE in parts of **South East Queensland and Northern New South Wales**. The LAE now applies from **23 February to 9 March 2022** for all services in the following LGAs:

Queensland

Brisbane City Council, Ipswich City Council, Moreton Bay Regional Council, Somerset Regional Council, Gold Coast City Council, Logan City Council, Redland City Council, Scenic Rim Regional Council, Sunshine Coast Regional Council, Noosa Shire Council, Gympie Regional Council, Lockyer Valley Regional Council, Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council, North Burnett Regional Council, Toowoomba Regional Council, Southern Downs Regional Council, Fraser Coast Regional Council, South Burnett Regional Council.

New South Wales

Tweed Shire Council, Byron Shire Council, Ballina Shire Council, Kyogle Council, Richmond Valley Council, Lismore City Council, Clarence Valley Council, Coffs Harbour City Council, Bellingen Shire Council, Nambucca Valley Council.

We're monitoring the situation and will extend the LAEs if required.

Support available

The following support is now available to services and families in LAE-declared regions.



Absences

Children who live, or attend a service, in an LAE-declared region will get extra allowable absences for the duration of the LAE. They will be automatically applied in the Child Care Subsidy System shortly.

This means families won't have to use any of their 52 allowable absences during the LAE period.

Gap fees

Services in an LAE-declared region can waive the gap fee if a child does not attend, or the service is closed.

Services outside an LAE-declared region can waive the gap fee if a child that lives within an LAE-declared region does not attend care.

In the above scenarios, services can waive gap fees for the entire duration of the LAE period.

Services that close during the LAE will continue to receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payments.

Financial support for services

The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) Special Circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as a local emergency. Affected services can [apply on our website](#).

Applicants should request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other disaster support.

Financial support for families

Affected families may be eligible for extra help with the cost of child care through the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#). Families must apply directly to Centrelink.

Other support

A reminder that services and families may also be eligible for a range of Commonwealth and state government support. The following pages provide more information:

- [Services Australia](#)
- [Queensland Government](#)
- [New South Wales Government](#)

Check these sites often as the information is updated regularly.

For action

- Let us know if you temporarily close your service. You can do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.



- Update your vacancy details on StartingBlocks.gov.au. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on your state government website for current emergency information in your region:
 - [Queensland Government](#)
 - [New South Wales Government](#)
- Learn more about help for the early childhood sector during an emergency [on our website](#).



2 March 2022

Starts Monday: higher subsidy for families with multiple children



From 7 March 2022, families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care will get a higher Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for their second child and younger children.

The standard rate child will get the standard CCS rate. This is usually the eldest CCS-eligible child aged 5 or under in the family. Younger children will get a higher subsidy.

Eligible higher rate children will receive a 30% higher subsidy, up to a maximum 95%.

Families may be eligible if they:

- earn less than \$354,305
- have more than one child aged 5 or under in child care.

Families already getting CCS don't need to do anything. Services Australia will automatically increase the CCS for eligible second and younger children.

We have more [information for providers](#) on our website.

Services Australia has [information for families](#) on their website, including [examples that show how the higher CCS works](#).

Fee estimator

New features are now available on StartingBlocks.gov.au.

Families can use the CCS estimator to check how much their child care out of pocket costs might be. Results include the higher subsidy that families will soon get for their second and younger children.

Families can get an estimate at StartingBlocks.gov.au/fees-estimator.

Share the news with families

It's not too late to help families understand what's changing.

[Find prewritten social media and newsletter content on our website](#). There's also a [poster](#) and [factsheet](#) to display at your service.

If families have questions, please direct them to the [Services Australia website](#).

Explainer: Debt

The following information can help you avoid incurring a debt at your service.

If you close or transfer ownership of a service you may incur a CCS debt. This may happen if:

1. A provider does not tell us about the closure or transfer until after it has occurred. If you fail to notify us before you close or transfer ownership, we'll raise any CCS paid after the closure or transfer as a debt.
2. A provider amends or withdraws session reports after the closure or transfer. We'll raise a debt for all withdrawn sessions after the closure or transfer. We'll also raise a debt for sessions that are amended with fewer hours or days, or a lower fee.

How to avoid a debt

If you're closing or transferring ownership of a service, you must:

- Notify us at least 42 days before you [close or transfer ownership](#). Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.
- [Submit accurate session reports on time](#). If you need to amend or withdraw sessions, you must do so before you close or transfer ownership.

To find out more about overpayments and debt visit the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#).

Webinar: building skills for resilience in disaster recovery

Early learning services are a key support for children and families in times of natural disaster and community trauma.

Be You is hosting a panel of experts to discuss the topic of resilience on Tuesday 22 March at 3:30 pm (AEDT).



The discussion will focus on the role of educators in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people as part of disaster recovery and resilience.

[Register to attend the free In Focus webinar.](#)

Commonwealth scholarship program

Commonwealth scholarships now available.

Commonwealth scholarships are available for young Australians from select regions to undertake an eligible [VET qualification](#), including early childhood education and care qualifications at the following levels:

- Certificate III
- Certificate IV
- Diploma
- Advanced Diploma.

Applicants must:

- be between 15 and 24 years old or have exited the Australian Defence Force in the last 2 years
- not work or study full time at the time of applying
- live in a nominated region
- intend to enrol in an eligible VET qualification.

Applications are open until 11 March 2022.

[Find out more about the Commonwealth Scholarships for Young Australians Program.](#)

Handy resource

This week we declared Local Area Emergencies (LAE) for parts of [Queensland](#) and [New South Wales](#) following severe rainfall and flooding.

A range of support is available to services and families during an LAE. [Learn more about help before, during and after an emergency.](#)

Good to know

Tuesday 8 March is International Women's Day.

This year's theme, **Changing Climates: Equality today for a sustainable tomorrow**, recognises and celebrates the contribution of women and girls around the world who are working to build a sustainable future.



[See resources and find out how you can get involved on the UN Women website.](#)



QLD floods: Local Area Emergency declared

We have declared a Local Area Emergency (LAE) for the period **23 February to 4 March 2022** following severe rainfall and flooding in Queensland. The LAE includes all child care services in the following Local Government Areas (LGAs):

Brisbane City Council, Ipswich City Council, Moreton Bay Regional Council, Somerset Regional Council, Gold Coast City Council, Logan City Council, Redland City Council, Scenic Rim Regional Council, Sunshine Coast Regional Council, Noosa Shire Council, Gympie Regional Council, Lockyer Valley Regional Council, Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council, North Burnett Regional Council, Toowoomba Regional Council, Southern Downs Regional Council, Fraser Coast Regional Council and South Burnett Regional Council.

A range of support is available to families and services during an LAE. We're monitoring the situation and will provide updates as required.

If you have to close

Services that close during the LAE will continue to receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payments. You must continue to charge gap fees.

You must let us know if you temporarily close your service. You can do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

Support for families

Families can get CCS when their child is absent from care for up to 52 days in the current financial year.

Families in the above LGAs can get additional absences during the LAE period if they have used their 52 absences. Conditions apply to access these additional absences. Learn about [using additional absences](#) on our website.

Affected families may be eligible for extra help with the cost of child care through the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#). Families must apply directly to Centrelink.

Families looking for alternative care during an emergency can visit [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#).

Support for services

The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) Special Circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as a local emergency. Affected services can [apply on our website](#).

Applicants should request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other disaster support.



Other support

Families and services may also be eligible for other government support.

The Australian Government provides payments and help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out if you're eligible for support on the [Services Australia website](#).

The Queensland Government has information about financial assistance available to affected communities. Find out if you're eligible for support on the [Queensland Government website](#).

Check these sites often as the information is updated regularly.

For action

- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [Queensland Government website](#) for current emergency information in your region.
- Learn more about help for the early childhood sector during an emergency [on our website](#).



NSW floods: Local Area Emergency declared

We have declared a Local Area Emergency (LAE) for the period **23 February to 4 March 2022** following severe rainfall and flooding in New South Wales. The LAE includes all child care services in the following Local Government Areas (LGAs):

Tweed Shire Council, Byron Shire Council, Ballina Shire Council, Kyogle Council, Richmond Valley Council, Lismore City Council, Clarence Valley Council, Coffs Harbour City Council, Bellingen Shire Council and Nambucca Valley Council.

A range of support is available to families and services during an LAE. We're monitoring the situation and will provide updates as required.

If you have to close

Services that close during the LAE will continue to receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payments. You must continue to charge gap fees.

You must let us know if you temporarily close your service. You can do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

Support for families

Families can get CCS when their child is absent from care for up to 52 days in the current financial year.

Families in the above LGAs can get additional absences during the LAE period if they have used their 52 absences. Conditions apply to access these additional absences. Learn about [using additional absences](#) on our website.

Affected families may be eligible for extra help with the cost of child care through the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#). Families must apply directly to Centrelink.

Families looking for alternative care during an emergency can visit [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#).

Support for services

The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) Special Circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as a local emergency. Affected services can [apply on our website](#).

Applicants should request funding after an event has occurred and they have accessed other disaster support.



Other support

Families and services may also be eligible for other government support.

The Australian Government provides payments and help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out if you're eligible for support on the [Services Australia website](#).

The New South Wales Government has support for individuals and businesses impacted by a natural disaster. Learn more on the [New South Wales Government website](#).

Check these sites often as the information is updated regularly.

For action

- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [New South Wales Government website](#) for current emergency information in your region.
- Learn more about help for the early childhood sector during an emergency [on our website](#).



Higher Child Care Subsidy starts soon



From 7 March 2022, families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care will get a higher Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for their second child and younger children.

The standard rate child will get the standard CCS rate. This is usually the eldest CCS-eligible child aged 5 or under in the family. Younger children will get a higher subsidy.

Eligible higher rate children will receive a 30% higher subsidy, up to a maximum 95%.

Families may be eligible if they:

- earn less than \$354,305
- have more than one child aged 5 or under in child care.

Families already getting CCS don't need to do anything. Services Australia will automatically increase the CCS for eligible second and younger children.

We have more [information for providers](#) on our website, including a video explaining the higher subsidy.

Services Australia has [information for families](#) on their website, including [examples that show how the higher CCS works](#).

Combined families

The measure will capture diverse family circumstances, including combined families.

A combined family is where each parent or carer gets CCS for different children in their family.

The Child Care Subsidy System is being enhanced to recognise combined families from July 2022. Services Australia will backpay the higher subsidy amount to affected families for the period March to July.

There is an option for combined families who want to get the higher subsidy immediately in March. But they must take action as soon as possible as claims can only be backdated for a maximum of 28 days.

[See detailed information about combined families on our website.](#)

Fee estimator

New features are now available on StartingBlocks.gov.au.

Families can use the CCS estimator to check how much their child care out of pocket costs might be. Results include the higher subsidy that families will soon get for their second and younger children.

Families can get an estimate at StartingBlocks.gov.au/fees-estimator

Share the news with families

We've developed content you can easily share across your channels to help families understand the changes.

[Find prewritten social media and newsletter content on our website.](#) There's also a [poster](#) and [factsheet](#) to display at your service.

If families have questions, please direct them to the [Services Australia website](#).

NSW before and after school care voucher

Families with children in before and after school care can soon get \$500 toward the cost of care.

The voucher will be available for families with children aged 4 to 13 years who attend primary school in New South Wales.

Information for providers

This voucher scheme is run by the NSW Government. If you'd like to participate in this opt-in-scheme, [register with Service NSW](#).

We have more information for providers [on our website](#).

The vouchers will cover a family's gap fee. The family's CCS entitlement will not be reduced when using the voucher.



Information for families

Families can apply for the voucher through [Service NSW](#) between 28 February and 30 September 2022.

Vouchers can be redeemed with a registered before and after school care provider between 28 February and 31 December 2022. The credit on the voucher can then be used until 30 June 2023.

More information

Visit the [Service NSW](#) website for details about the scheme. If you have questions, contact the Services NSW BASC team at bascreform@det.nsw.edu.au or on 1300 244 145.

We're surveying families

We are working with ORIMA Research to survey families about how they use child care during COVID-19.

We have sent a letter to 15,000 families inviting them to take part in the survey. These families will receive a text with a link to the online survey.

The survey will be open between 23 February and 9 March 2022. It will focus on:

- the impact of COVID-19 on how families use child care
- awareness of support for families using child care during COVID-19
- awareness of other assistance to help families with the cost of child care.

If families at your service have been contacted about the survey, please encourage them to complete it.

If families have questions about the survey, please ask them to contact us at ECECCovid19@dese.gov.au.

Upcoming Job Fairs to help you find staff

The Australian Government is hosting Jobs Fairs across the country to help employers, including those in early childhood education and care, find suitable staff.

The Jobs Fair is a free face-to-face event that gives providers an opportunity to promote current and upcoming vacancies and connect with employment service providers.

Job Fairs will be held in:

- Wagga Wagga on 25 February
- Cairns on 1 March
- Gold Coast on 4 March



- Latrobe Valley on 10 March
- Rockhampton on 11 March
- Albany on 16 March
- Sydney on 18 March.

For more information or to become an exhibitor visit the [exhibitor information](#) page or email JobsFairs@dese.gov.au.

These events will follow COVID-safe event procedures.

Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements subsidy

The Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements (BAC) wage subsidy closes to new entrants on 31 March 2022.

Early childhood education and care services who take on new trainees may be eligible for the BAC.

Eligible employers can receive a subsidy of 50% of a trainee's gross wages. The subsidy will pay up to \$7,000 per quarter for wages paid in the 12-month period from the date of commencement.

To apply you must:

- engage the trainee and commence training on or before 31 March 2022
- register through your Australian Apprenticeship Support Network Provider.

The new trainee you nominate must:

- be engaged between 5 October 2020 and 31 March 2022
- be undertaking a Certificate II or higher qualification, including:
 - Certificate III or Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care
 - Certificate IV in School Aged Education and Care
- have a training contract formally approved by the state training authority.

Exclusions and existing worker eligibility will apply.

[Learn about Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements.](#)

Handy resource

The week we observed [International Mother Language Day](#). This year also marks the beginning of the [UN International Decade of Indigenous Languages \(2022–2032\)](#).

These events give us an important opportunity to recognise that multilingualism can support inclusion in our communities.



The [Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care](#) provides culturally appropriate and preferred resources for carers, including [resources to support awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages](#).

Good to know

Last week we declared Local Area Emergencies (LAE) for parts of [Western Australia](#) and [Victoria](#) following severe weather events. A range of support is available to services and families during an LAE. [Learn more about help before, during and after an emergency](#).



WA bushfires: Local Area Emergency declared

We have declared a Local Area Emergency (LAE) for the period **4 February to 11 February 2022** following bushfires in Western Australia. This LAE includes all child care services in the following Local Government Areas (LGA):

- The Shires of Denmark, Bridgetown-Greenbushes, Plantagenet, Gnowangerup, Kent, Kondinin, Lake Grace, Kulin, Kondinin, Yilgarn, Mount Marshall, Dalwallinu, Moora, Victoria Plains, Toodyay, Northam, Beverley, Brookton, Wandering, Williams, West Arthur, Kojonup, Cranbrook, Broomehill-Tambellup, Katanning, Woodaniling, Dumbleyung, Wagin, Narrogin, Wickiepin, Cuballing, Pingelly, Corrigin, Bruce Rock, Narembeen, Merredin, Quairading, Cunderdin, Tammin, Kellerberrin, Nungarin, Westonia, Trayning, Wyalkatchem, Goomalling, Dowerin, Wongan-Ballidu, Koorda, Mukinbudin, York
- Albany City

A range of support is available to services and families during an LAE.

Support for families

Families attending services in the above LGAs can use additional absences during the LAE period if they have used their allowable absence days.

Families in Western Australia have 52 allowable absences for the current financial year. Most families will still have absences available.

Affected families may be eligible for extra help with the cost of child care through the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#). Families must apply directly to Centrelink.

The Australian Government provides a range of payments and services to individuals affected by a major disaster. [Services Australia has more information about emergency payments](#).

Support for services

The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) Special Circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as a local emergency.

If your service was affected by the recent bushfires, you can [apply on our website](#).

If your service closed

You must let us know if you temporarily closed your service during the emergency. You can do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).



More information

[Visit our website for more information about help before, during and after an emergency.](#)

Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.



COVID-19 update

We regularly [update our website](#) with information on COVID-19. Please check back often.

On 27 January 2022, the government announced more support for the early childhood education and care sector.

Until 30 June 2022, services can waive the gap fee and receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) if a child is unable to attend care for one of four reasons:

1. They, or a member of their immediate household, must isolate due to COVID-19.
2. The child is at a higher risk of severe disease from COVID-19.
3. The service, or a room at the service, is closed due to COVID-19.
4. The state or territory has restricted access to child care in a region due to COVID-19.

Additionally, families in states and territories significantly impacted by the Omicron wave can access unlimited additional absences for January and February, in addition to the 52 allowable absences this financial year. At this time, this does not include Western Australia.

These provisions are designed to help services and families manage unplanned absences due to COVID-19. The information below will help you apply these provisions correctly.

Requirements for waiving gap fees

It's important you know when you can and cannot waive the gap fee for a child that doesn't attend care.

Here are some examples of when you **cannot** waive the gap fee:

- when parents are anxious about sending their child to child care because they're worried about COVID-19
- when you close your service and there is no guidance from your state or territory advising you to close.

Many state and territory governments are not advising services to close in response to a COVID-19 case. Stay up to date with the latest information about managing a COVID-19 case in each state and territory through the [ACECQA website](#).

Services are encouraged to explore all options to remain open and provide care for vulnerable children and children of essential workers.

Requirements for absences

While families have unlimited allowable absences in January and February, services must continue to charge gap fees for these absences unless families are eligible for any of the four reasons to waive gap fees.



Services must not claim CCS for children who do not intend to commence care until after February.

Preparing for an emergency

Are you prepared for severe weather events, like bushfires, floods, storms and droughts?

Having a plan in place can reduce damage to property and ensure the safety of children and staff.

Watch our [short video](#) to learn about preparing for an emergency.

Find more information and resources about emergencies [on our website](#), including:

- what constitutes a local emergency under Family Assistance Law
- preparing for an emergency
- help during an emergency
- recovering after an emergency
- more information by state and territory.

Commonwealth scholarships now available

Commonwealth scholarships are available for young Australians from select regions to undertake an [eligible VET qualification](#), including early childhood education and care qualifications at the following levels:

- Certificate III
- Certificate IV
- Diploma
- Advanced Diploma.

Applicants must:

- be between 15 and 24 years old or have exited the Australian Defence Force in the last 2 years
- not work or study full time at the time of applying
- live in a nominated region
- intend to enrol in an eligible VET qualification.

Applications are open until **11 March 2022**.

[Find out more about the Commonwealth Scholarships for Young Australians Program.](#)



Handy resource

We've updated the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#) to reflect changes to absences. Please ensure you always refer to the most recent version.

[Go to the handbook](#)

Good to know

Child care fees, vacancies, quality ratings and inclusions are now published on StartingBlocks.gov.au. [Share this news](#).

[Go to content kit](#)



Victoria storms: Local Area Emergency declared

We have declared a Local Area Emergency (LAE) for the period **27 January to 2 February 2022** following severe storms in Victoria. This LAE includes all child care services in the following Local Government Areas (LGA):

Greater Geelong, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, Bass Coast Shire Council, Wyndham, Surf Coast Shire Council, Werribee, Melton, Moorabool, Hume, Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, City of Melbourne, Yarra, Moonee Valley, Moreland, Darebin, Banyule, Boroondara, Whitehorse, Stonnington, Port Phillip, Glen Eira, Bayside, Manningham, Maroondah, Knox, Monash, Casey, Greater Dandenong, Kingston and Frankston.

A range of support is available to services and families during an LAE.

Support for families

All families in Victoria have [unlimited allowable absences](#) throughout January and February 2022.

Affected families may be eligible for extra help with the cost of child care through the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#). Families must apply directly to Centrelink.

The Australian Government provides a range of payments and services to individuals affected by a major disaster. [Services Australia has more information about emergency payments](#).

Support for services

The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) Special Circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as a local emergency.

If your service was affected by the recent storms, you can [apply on our website](#).

If your service closed

You must let us know if you temporarily closed your service during the emergency. You can do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

More information

Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.

[Visit our website for more information about help before, during and after an emergency.](#)



StartingBlocks.gov.au – new features are here

New features are available on the StartingBlocks.gov.au website.



On StartingBlocks.gov.au families can:

- find local services and view their vacancies, costs, quality ratings and inclusions
- compare services side-by-side
- estimate their out-of-pocket costs
- get information and advice about education, children's development, and parenting.

Having this information in one place helps parents choose the best early childhood education and care for their family.

What has changed for providers and services?

Your service fees, vacancies, quality ratings and inclusions will now be published on StartingBlocks.gov.au.

Please update your communication products with this information and replace old phone numbers like the My Child Hotline and Child Care Access Hotline with links to StartingBlocks.gov.au.

All enquiries relating to Starting Blocks should be directed to StartingBlocks.gov.au.

The way you report your fees and information as required by Family Assistance Law will not change. You must still report through the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

When reporting fees, you must report:

- current hourly or session fees before Child Care Subsidy, discounts or reductions. If your service has a range of fees (for example, per educator or age group), you can report a typical or average fee.
- any changes to fees (within 14 days of the change).



If you need help, see the [task card on reporting fees](#) in the PEP or contact your third-party software provider.

See the new features, including the new Child Care Subsidy estimator on the StartingBlocks.gov.au website.

[Read more about the changes on our website.](#)



Some families will soon get a higher subsidy



From 7 March 2022, families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care will get a higher Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for their second child and younger children.

The standard rate child will get the standard CCS rate. This is usually the eldest CCS-eligible child aged 5 or under in the family. Younger children will get a higher subsidy.

Eligible higher rate children will receive a 30% higher subsidy, up to a maximum 95%.

Families may be eligible if they:

- earn less than \$354,305
- have more than one child aged 5 or under in child care.

Families already getting CCS don't need to do anything. Services Australia will automatically increase the CCS for eligible second and younger children.

We have more [information for providers](#) on our website.

Services Australia has [information for families](#) on their website, including [examples that show how the higher CCS works](#).

Share the news with families

We've developed content you can easily share across your channels to help families understand the changes.

[Find prewritten social media and newsletter content on our website.](#) There's also a poster and factsheet to display at your service.

If families have questions, please direct them to the [Services Australia website](#).

COVID-19 update

We regularly update [our website](#) with information on COVID-19. Please check back often.

Getting CCS for absences before and after care

On Thursday 27 January 2022, the Australian Government announced [more COVID-19 support for the early childhood education and care sector](#).

The support includes new rules for absences that occur at the start or end of an enrolment.

[Find more information about this support on our website and see detailed instructions for recording absences.](#)

Return to school in South Australia

Before and after school care services in South Australia can waive gap fees for children who don't attend, while the state government has restricted on-site school attendance.

[See dates for waiving gap fees on our website.](#)

Please keep an eye on the [South Australia](#) state education department website for term one information and updates.

Compliance pilot project

We are stepping up our efforts to detect and prevent child care fraud.

Throughout 2022, we are partnering with authorities in NSW and Victoria to:

- reduce regulatory burden on providers who do the right thing
- increase and streamline data sharing
- share intelligence
- boost intelligence capability and activity
- conduct joint monitoring
- strengthen compliance and enforcement outcomes.

Long term, this pilot project will:

- help us roll out targeted compliance and fraud control activities nationally
- help lift the overall quality of the sector



- identify opportunities to support providers who do the right thing without tying them down with red tape and regulation.

We'll report back later this year with an update on this pilot project.

Meanwhile, remember you can always report suspected fraud to our tip off line. If you see something that doesn't look right, you can report it anonymously to 1800 664 231 or send an email to tipoffline@dese.gov.au.

High volume of CCS provider applications

We are currently experiencing a high volume of CCS applications, which is impacting our assessment timelines.

There are things you can do when applying to help us process your application quickly:

- ensure you include all the mandatory information and documents, as we can't assess incomplete applications
- respond promptly if we request more information.

To find out how to apply, and what you need to include in your application, [visit our website](#).

Apply for Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements subsidy

The Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements (BAC) wage subsidy closes to new entrants on 31 March 2022.

Early childhood education and care services who take on new trainees may be eligible for the BAC.

Eligible employers can receive a subsidy of 50% of a trainee's gross wages. The subsidy will pay up to \$7,000 per quarter for wages paid in the 12-month period from the date of commencement.

To apply you must:

- engage the trainee and commence training on or before 31 March
- register through your Australian Apprenticeship Support Network Provider.

The new trainee you nominate must:

- be engaged between 5 October 2020 and 31 March 2022
- be undertaking a Certificate II or higher qualification, including Certificate III or Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care and Certificate IV in School Aged Education and Care
- have a training contract formally approved by the state training authority.

Exclusions and Existing Worker eligibility will apply.



[Learn about Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements.](#)

Handy resource

Find all our previous early childhood updates on our [announcements page](#).

[Go to announcements page](#)

Good to know

From 24 January 2022, child care providers can choose to [offer a discounted fee to employees](#) with children enrolled at one of their services.

[Learn more about workforce discounts](#)



COVID-19 update

We regularly update [our website](#) with information on COVID-19. Please check back often.

Getting CCS for absences before and after care

On Thursday 27 January 2022, the Australian Government announced [more COVID-19 support for the early childhood education and care sector](#).

The support includes new rules for absences that occur at the start or end of an enrolment.

If an enrolment starts or ends between 1 January and 28 February 2022, we'll pay Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for any absences that occur before the child's first day, or after their last day of care.

While the support is in recognition of the impact of the Omicron wave, the absences can be taken for any reason.

This does not apply in Western Australia as COVID-19 has not had a significant impact on child care attendance.

For all other enrolments, we'll pay CCS for absences that occur in the 7 days before the child's first day, or after their last day of care, if the child or a member of their immediate household must isolate due to COVID-19.

This applies in all states and territories from 1 December 2021 to 30 June 2022.

Action for providers

You must take action to ensure CCS is paid in these circumstances.

[See detailed instructions for recording absences in these circumstances on our website.](#)

Return to school in South Australia and Queensland

Before and after school care services can waive gap fees for children who don't attend, while the state or territory government has restricted on-site school attendance.

[See dates for waiving gap fees on our website.](#)

Please keep an eye on your state education department website for term one information and updates.

- [South Australia](#)
- [Queensland](#).



Debt Explainer

The following information can help you avoid incurring a debt at your service.

Child care services can incur debts for several reasons. The most common are due to:

- changes to sessions of care with fewer hours or days
- withdrawing session reports
- non-compliance
- retrospective closure or transfer of ownership.

Case study

A provider told the department they had transferred ownership of their service well after the transfer had occurred.

While the new owners were awaiting Child Care Subsidy approval, the previous owners let them use their credentials to submit sessions of care.

Once the department was notified:

- the service was cancelled
- a debt was raised for all sessions of care submitted after the transfer of ownership occurred.

What do providers and services need to do?

You must tell the department before you [close or transfer ownership](#).

You must also [submit accurate session reports on time](#). This must be done within 14 days after the end of the week in which sessions of care were provided.

This ensures we can calculate the amount of Child Care Subsidy or Additional Child Care Subsidy correctly.

To find out more about overpayments and debt visit the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#).

Support for early childhood providers

The Australian Government has a range of initiatives to support the early childhood education and care workforce.

The initiatives are designed to attract, develop and retain high-quality educators and early childhood teachers.

There is assistance available for providers to support job seekers, trainees and entry level roles.

You can find more information on our [initiatives webpage](#).



New ACECQA web resource

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) has developed a webpage to help you manage your service and minimise the impact of COVID-19.

The webpage provides links to regulatory authorities and state and territory health departments.

Important information and the latest updates are grouped by states and territories.

This page is updated regularly, so please check back often.

[See the updates on ACECQA's website.](#)

Handy resource

Check out the range of [early learning STEM resources and training](#) for educators. There are also opportunities for families and children to take part in STEM activities.

[Explore STEM resource page](#)

Good to know

The [CCCF Special Circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens. This could be when a natural disaster, extreme weather event or pandemic threatens the ability of eligible services to remain viable.

[Go to CCCF webpage](#)



COVID-19 update

Today the Australian Government announced more support for the early childhood education and care sector. [Read our announcement for details about support.](#)

We regularly update [our website](#) with information on COVID-19. Please check back often.

Northern Territory lockdowns

Support is available for services and families affected by the lockdowns in the Northern Territory. See [our website](#) for details on available support.

Return to school in South Australia and Queensland

Before and after school care services can waive gap fees for children who don't attend, while the state or territory government has restricted on-site school attendance. [See dates for waiving gap fees on our website.](#)

Higher Child Care Subsidy from 7 March

From 7 March 2022, families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care will get a higher Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for their second child and younger children.

The standard rate child will get the standard CCS rate. This is usually the eldest CCS-eligible child aged 5 or under in the family. Younger children will get a higher subsidy.

Eligible higher rate children will receive a 30% higher subsidy, up to a maximum 95%.

Families may be eligible if they:

- earn less than \$354,305
- have more than one child aged 5 or under in child care.

You don't need to do anything to help families get the higher rate but you can help families understand what's changing.

Help families understand higher CCS

Services Australia has [information for families on their website](#), including:

- who will get the higher subsidy
- how much the higher subsidy is
- when families will get the higher subsidy
- what families need to do.



There are also [examples that show how the higher CCS may work for different families](#).

Please encourage families at your service to read this information.

Stay up to date

We have more information for providers, including a short video, [on our website](#).

We'll provide more resources that you can share with families in the coming weeks. Please encourage relevant staff at your service to [join our mailing list](#).

StartingBlocks.gov.au: find out what's changing

From 7 February we will publish fees, vacancies, quality ratings and inclusions on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#).

There are other changes too, such as new website functions to help families find and compare child care.

On [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) families will be able to:

- find local services and view their vacancies, costs, quality ratings and inclusions
- compare services side-by-side
- estimate their out-of-pocket costs
- get info and advice about education, children's development, and parenting.

Having this information in one place helps parents choose the best early childhood education and care for their family.

What do I need to do?

- update your communication products with this information
- replace old phone numbers like the My Child Hotline and Child Care Access Hotline with links to [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#). All enquiries relating to Starting Blocks should be directed to [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#).
- you must still report your fees and information as required by Family Assistance Law through the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

[Read more about what's changing](#).

Child care discount for early childhood workforce

Providers can now offer a discounted fee to their educators whose children attend their service.

You can offer discounts to employees who:



- are employed, contracted or engaged as an educator or early childhood teacher, and
- are working at a Centre Based Day Care or Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) service, and
- have a child enrolled in early childhood education and care at a service where they work or that you own.

The discount will not affect the employee's CCS entitlement.

The optional measure is designed to help you attract and retain staff.

[Learn more about offering discounts.](#)

Video: caring for relatives



[Watch this video](#) to learn about the rules for Family Day Care educators who care for relatives in their extended family.

You cannot care for more relatives than non-relatives in a CCS fortnight. This is known as the 'less than 50% rule'.

Extended family includes nieces, nephews, cousins or grandchildren from either your side of the family or your partner's family.

Different rules apply when [caring for your own children or siblings](#).

The video is also available in the following languages: Amharic, Arabic, Assyrian, Dari, Dinka, French, Hazaragi, Nuer, Somali, Swahili and Sudanese Arabic.

[Learn more about caring for relatives in the Child Care Provider Handbook](#)



Fee reporting and changes to your service

In November we issued a small number of infringements to providers who haven't reported their fee information. This information will help you report your current fees and avoid getting an infringement.

Reporting your fees

Reporting fee information is a mandatory requirement under Family Assistance Law.

Your software does not report your fees automatically.

To report your fees, you must take action through the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. If you need help, see the [task card on reporting fees](#) in the PEP or contact your third-party software provider.

Once you take action, your fees will show up on [Child Care Finder](#) within 24 hours. From 7 February, your fee information will also be displayed on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#).

You must report:

- current hourly or session fees before CCS, discounts or reductions
- any changes to fees (within 14 days of the change).

If your service has a range of fees (for example, per educator or age group), you can report a typical or average fee.

Updating your information

It's also mandatory for you to report updated details of staff with management or control responsibilities.

Like fee reporting, this is a requirement under Family Assistance Law and is different to your obligations under National Law.

Persons with management or control are people who participate directly or indirectly in the decision-making or management of the provider (the legal entity) that operates the child care service.

If we issue an infringement to a provider who has not reported their fee information and we become aware that the people with management or control details are incorrect, we may issue an additional infringement notice. This infringement will be for failing to notify us of the correct people with management or control.

Providers need to ensure that specified personnel details are added to, and kept up to date, through the PEP. Only persons with management or control of the provider can add, update or remove the details of specified personnel for the provider.

You must report specified personnel information through the [PEP](#) or your third-party software. For further information, refer to How to Add Child Care Personnel in the PEP.



More information about staff with management or control is available in the [Child Care Provider Handbook](#).

[To find out more about infringements, visit our website.](#)

Handy resource

Help is available in the event of an emergency. We have information on our website, including a [short video](#).

[Go to our website](#)

Good to know

Early childhood teachers at very remote Centre Based Day Care services with Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) debts may be eligible for [financial assistance](#).

[Learn about eligibility](#)



More COVID-19 support for early childhood sector

The Australian Government is providing more support to the early childhood education and care sector in response to the evolving COVID-19 situation.

Gap fee waiving

There are now more reasons you can waive gap fees.

Until 30 June 2022, services can waive the gap fee and receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) if a child is unable to attend care for one of four reasons:

1. The child, or a member of their immediate household, must isolate due to COVID-19.
2. **The child is at a higher risk of severe disease from COVID-19.** This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
3. **The service, or a room at the service, is closed due to COVID-19.** This includes where a service closes based on general guidance from a state or territory government agency, or because educator to child ratios cannot be safely met as the educator/s must isolate. Written advice specific to the impacted service is not required.
4. **The state or territory has restricted access to child care in a region due to COVID-19.** This includes where the state or territory has restricted school attendance, in the case of Outside School Hours Care.

We provide more details about gap fee waiving [on our website](#).

Absences

Unlimited allowable absences

We're providing unlimited allowable absences throughout January and February 2022, in response to the Omicron wave.

Families won't have to use their 52 allowable absences for the 2021–22 financial year during this period. These absences will be automatically applied in the Child Care Subsidy System.

We may back pay you if a child had already exceeded their 52 absences in January. You must pass on the benefit to the family.

Unlimited absences do not apply in Western Australia.

Absences at the start or end of an enrolment

We don't usually pay CCS for any absences before a child's first, or after their last, physical attendance.



There are exceptions to this rule to support families who start or end an enrolment during the peak of the Omicron wave.

The following exceptions apply for services in all states and territories except Western Australia:

- From **1 January to 28 February 2022**, we'll pay CCS for any absences prior to a child's first day, or after their last day for enrolments that begin or end during this period. The absences can be taken for any reason.
- From **1 to 31 December 2021** and **1 March to 30 June 2022**, we'll pay CCS for any absences in the 7 days prior to a child's first day, or after their last day, if the child or a member of their immediate household must isolate due to COVID-19.

The following exceptions apply for services in Western Australia:

- From **1 December 2021 to 30 June 2022**, we'll pay CCS for any absences in the 7 days prior to a child's first day, or after their last day, if the child or a member of their immediate household must isolate due to COVID-19.

We'll provide more information soon about what you need to do to ensure absences are paid in these circumstances.

Support for service closures

Services can apply for a Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) Special Circumstances grant if they've had to close, or partially close, due to COVID-19, including in the absence of stay-at-home orders.

Find out how to apply for a CCCF Special Circumstances grant [on our website](#). The guidelines and application form will be updated soon.

Stay up to date

We regularly update the information [on our website](#). Please check back often.

Please ensure your contact details are up to date in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Check your details via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

You can also encourage relevant staff to [join our mailing list](#).



Northern Beaches storm – Local Area Emergency declared

We have declared a Local Area Emergency (LAE) for the period 19 to 25 December 2021 following severe storms in New South Wales. This LAE includes all child care services in the Northern Beaches Local Government Area (LGA).

A range of support is available to services and families during an LAE.

Support for families

Families attending services in the Northern Beaches can use additional absences during the LAE period if they have used

- their 42 absence days, and
- their 10 extra absences for the 2021–22 financial year.

Most families will still have absences available.

Affected families may be eligible for extra help with the cost of child care through the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#). Families must apply directly to Centrelink.

The Australian Government provides a range of payments and services to individuals affected by a major disaster. [Services Australia has more information about emergency payments](#).

Families looking for alternative care during an emergency can visit StartingBlocks.gov.au.

Support for services

The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) Special Circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as a local emergency. Affected services can [apply on our website](#).

If you have to close

You must let us know if you temporarily close your service. You can do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

For action

- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.



- Update your vacancy details in Child Care Finder. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [NSW Government disaster site](#) for current emergency information in your region.

More information

[Visit our website for more information about help before, during and after an emergency.](#)



COVID-19 update

We regularly [update our website](#) with information on COVID-19 restrictions, what this means for child care in affected states and territories, and support we offer. Please check back often.

Northern Territory lockdowns

Support is available for services and families affected by the lockdowns in the Northern Territory. See our [announcement](#) for details.

Return to school in South Australia and Queensland

Please keep an eye on your state education department website for term one information and updates.

- [South Australia](#)
- [Queensland](#)

School-aged children are eligible for Child Care Subsidy if face-to-face or formal remote schooling is not available. This applies to Centre Based Day Care, Family Day Care, Outside School Hours Care (including vacation care) and In Home Care services.

Before or After School Hours Care services can waive gap fees for children who don't attend, if the state or territory government has restricted on-site school attendance. Where restrictions last for more than 7 days, families who use Before or After School Hours Care services will receive additional allowable absences for the duration.

Support available

We want to remind you about support available to services and families impacted by COVID-19.

Gap fee waiving

Until 30 June 2022, services can waive the gap fee and receive CCS if a child is unable to attend care for one of three reasons:

1. They, or a member of their immediate household, must isolate due to COVID-19.
2. The service, or a room at the service, is closed due to COVID-19 on written advice from a state or territory government authority such as a health, education or regulatory agency.
3. The state or territory has restricted access to child care in a region due to COVID-19 (or has restricted school attendance in the case of Outside School Hours Care).

Services must not waive the gap fee for families in any other circumstances. If a family chooses to keep their child at home they may use their allowable absences, but must pay a gap fee to the service.



More information is available [on our website](#).

Allowable absences

All children have an extra 10 allowable absences for the 2021–22 financial year. This brings the total number of allowable absences to 52 and is on top of any absences provided during lockdowns.

Service closures

You need to tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. You can do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

National framework for managing COVID-19 in education

On 13 January 2022, National Cabinet agreed to a [national framework for managing COVID-19 in schools and early childhood education and care](#).

The framework aims to ensure all schools and early childhood services are open and can stay open, with as little disruption from COVID-19 as possible.

[Learn more about the framework](#).

Child care discount for early childhood workforce from next week

From 24 January 2022, providers can offer a discounted fee to educators they employ whose children are enrolled at one of their services.

The discount will not affect the employee's CCS entitlement.

This measure will help providers attract and retain their early childhood workforce.

[Learn more about offering discounts to educators](#).



Video: educators who are not provider care



[Watch this video](#) to learn what to do when a Family Day Care or In Home Care educator is absent or is not providing care.

You must not submit a session report for an educator who did not provide care.

Family Day Care and In Home Care session reports must only reflect the name and unique ID of the educator who actually provided care.

We may take compliance action if you fail to meet your obligations, including:

- putting conditions on your approval
- issuing an infringement
- suspending or cancelling your approval.

The video is also available in the following languages: Amharic, Arabic, Assyrian, Dari, Dinka, French, Hazaragi, Nuer, Somali, Swahili and Sudanese Arabic.

[Learn more about reporting sessions of care in the Child Care Provider Handbook.](#)

Helpdesk closed next Wednesday

The CCS Helpdesk will be closed for a public holiday on Wednesday 26 January 2022.

It will reopen at 10 am (AEDT) on Thursday 27 January 2022.

You can contact the CCS Helpdesk anytime [via email](#).



Handy resource

The National Centre for Australian Children's Literature has a [free database for educators](#) to discover children's books by and about Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

[Explore the database](#)

Good to know

Find all our previous early childhood updates on our [announcements page](#).

[Go to announcements](#)



COVID-19 in the Northern Territory

Support is available for services and families affected by the lockdowns in Yirrkala, and the Wessel Islands Archipelago, encompassing:

- Elcho Island including Galiwin'ku
- Wessel Island including Martjanba.

Details about the lockdowns are available on the [NT Government COVID-19 response website](#).

Gap fees

Services can waive gap fees for children who do not attend care during the lockdown period.

[See dates for waiving gap fees in each region on our website](#). Please check this page regularly.

Absences

All children have an extra 10 allowable absences for the 2021–22 financial year. This brings the total number of allowable absences available to 52.

More information

Learn more about [COVID-19 support for the early childhood education and care sector](#) on our website.



Higher CCS from March

From 7 March 2022, families with more than one child aged 5 or under in care will get a higher subsidy for their second child and younger children.

Families may be eligible if they:

- earn less than \$354,305
- have more than one child aged 5 or under in child care.

There's more information for providers and combined families [on our website](#). [See our short video](#) about the changes.

We'll provide more information for you to share with families soon.

Video: caring for close family members

[Watch this video](#) to learn about the rules for Family Day Care educators who care for their own children or siblings.

Family Day Care educators cannot receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) or Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) when caring for close family members.

This includes:

- your own child
- your partner's child
- your foster child, adopted child, kinship child or any child you have legal responsibility for, or
- your brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, step-brother or step-sister.

This is because care that normally occurs in a family is not eligible for CCS or ACCS.

Different rules apply if you care for relatives not listed above, such as nieces or nephews.

[The video](#) is also available in the following languages:

- Amharic
- Arabic
- Assyrian
- Dari
- Dinka
- French



- Hazaragi
- Nuer
- Somali
- Sudanese
- Swahili.

[Learn more about caring for relatives in Child Care Provider Handbook.](#)

Preparing for an emergency

Summer in Australia has traditionally been a time of severe weather events, including bushfires, floods, storms and droughts.

To help you prepare, take a look at our [help in an emergency webpage](#).

On this page:

- what is a local emergency?
- preparing for an emergency
- help during an emergency
- recovering after an emergency
- more information by state and territory.

COVID-19 update

We regularly [update our website](#) with information on COVID-19 restrictions, what this means for child care in affected states and territories, and support we offer. Please check back often.

Support available

We want to remind you about support available to services and families impacted by COVID-19.

Gap fee waiving

Until 30 June 2022, services can waive the gap fee and receive Child Care Subsidy if a child is unable to attend care because:

- they, or a member of their immediate household, must isolate due to COVID-19
- the service, or a room at the service, is closed due to COVID-19 on written advice from the state or territory government authority
- The state or territory has restricted access to child care in a region due to COVID-19.



Services must not waive the gap fee for families in any other circumstances. If a family chooses to keep their child at home they may use their allowable absences, but must pay a gap fee to the service.

More information is available [on our website](#).

Allowable absences

All children have an extra 10 allowable absences for the 2021–22 financial year. This brings the total number of allowable absences to 52 and is on top of any absences provided during lockdowns.

Service closures

You need to tell us if you are temporarily closing your service for any reason and for any period. You can do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

Be You professional learning

Are you working towards your Teacher Registration requirements? Do you want to learn about supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people?

Be You offers educators accredited professional learning that:

- centres around mentally healthy communities
- includes guidance on family partnerships, early support, responding together and learning resilience
- aligns with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
- includes 13 one hour professional learning modules you can complete.

[Find out more and register](#).

Handy resource

We've developed a [timeline for providers and services](#) that captures important milestones relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Go to the timeline](#)

Good to know

The Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) has published a [guide for ECEC services](#) on engaging with families to enhance children's early learning and development.

[Read the guide](#)



Update: Queensland flooding - Local Area Emergency declared

We have declared a Local Area Emergency (LAE) for the period **7 January to 14 January 2022** following severe weather and flooding in Queensland. This LAE includes all child care services in the following Local Government Areas (LGAs):

- Bundaberg
- Gympie
- Fraser Coast

A range of support is available to services and families during an LAE.

Support for families

Families attending services in the Bundaberg, Gympie and Fraser Coast LGAs can use additional absences during the LAE period if they have used their 42 absence days, plus their 10 extra absences for the 2021-2022 financial year. Most families will still have absences available.

Affected families may be eligible for extra help with the cost of child care through the [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(temporary financial hardship\)](#). Families must apply directly to Centrelink.

The Australian Government provides a range of payments and services to individuals affected by a major disaster. [Services Australia has more information about emergency payments](#).

Families looking for alternative care during an emergency can visit [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#).

Support for services

The [Community Child Care Fund \(CCCF\) Special Circumstances grant](#) helps services stay open when something unexpected happens, such as a local emergency. Affected services can [apply on our website](#).

If you have to close

You must let us know if you temporarily close your service. You can do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).

For action

- Update your contact details, particularly email addresses, in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.



- Update your vacancy details in [Child Care Finder](#). Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Ask families to maintain their enrolments. This will ensure their children receive continuity of care and early learning.
- Keep an eye on the [QLD Government's disaster site](#) for current emergency information in your region.

More information

[Visit our website for more information about help before, during and after an emergency](#)

